Minutes of Transition Network Board of Trustees Meeting

Thursday 29th June 2017

Trustees present: Henry, Peter Lipman, Hilary, Andrew, Joe, Clare, Tony (not during afternoon), Online: Peter Lefort , Ellen, Isabela

Staff in attendance: Sarah, Ainslie, Nicola

Apologies: None

1. <u>Check-in</u>

Roles:
Keeper of the record: Nicola
Keeper of the time: Andrew
Keeper of the heart: Joe
Keeper of the tech: Sarah
Keeper of avoiding jargon/ assumed knowledge: Joe

Isabela had been appointed at 10th February 2017 meeting but unable to attend, so she was now welcomed as a trustee.

2. <u>Previous minutes and actions</u>

<u>Minutes of 10th February 2017 Board meeting</u>:   Minutes **agreed.**

<u>Actions</u>:

Most actions done or under way.

<u>Potential Conflicts of interest for this meeting</u>:

Andrew: A KR Foundation representative (met through Climate Psychology Alliance) is now talking to Andrew about his projects.

Tony: Tony's work programme is in receipt of funding from the anonymous Foundation

Peter Lefort: Peter Lefort's work is in receipt of funding from Big Lottery Fund and he is talking to them about a climate change related project.

3. <u>Treasurer's Report and Salary Review</u>

Treasurers Report

Our projected forecast March 2018 reserves are currently £41,000. There is no room for complacency. Potential salary increases could reduce that reserve number.

Our forecast for next year (year to March 2019) does not include any funding from the anonymous Foundation yet. If we do secure £250,000 a year we still need to raise £100,000 for current costs/overheads for next year.

Treasurer's report raised issue of whether, to sign off our accounts to March 2017, we will need to demonstrate to the auditors that we are a going concern, that the Board would be able to say to the auditors the accounts for the year / 18 months ahead will be in surplus. Discussion of options of asking the anonymous Foundation for an early indication or re-negotiating the timetable for re-application with the anonymous Foundation – as it is will be a challenge for us to describe our direction while being in the middle of a strategy review.

If Transition Network makes a significant move to shared governance then that could have changes in the costs of the staff structure, but of course to make such changes we need to go through a process.

Salary Review

We should have reviewed salaries at the February 2017 meeting. Salary rates have been the same since April 2015. There are now increases in UK living costs. All the UK staff are in a pension scheme, currently at 1% employer contribution – this is due to rise to 2% in April 2018.

Financial implications of 1% 2% and 3% increases were set out in the paper. Trustees need to look at the financial implications for our reserves level, as well as what is a preferred level of remuneration to staff.

Discussion without staff present.

Decision: The board will allocate £5,000 for salary increases for the current year, to be distributed as follows:
Level 1 salary – no increase
Level 2 salary – for every £2 increase, Level 3 salary gets £3 increase.

Action: **Tony will do the calculations for new salary rates including for new recommended contractor rates. The final detailed decision is delegated to Tony and the co-chairs.**

Note on Contractor rates: The rates for the project contractors on the Municipalities in Transition project have been agreed now and should relate to current economic conditions, so will not be revised in relation to the new contractor rates.

4. Funding update

The trustees liked the inclusion of "Traffic lights" of relationships with existing funders in the board paper. They reminded Nicola that any questions to the board should be included and highlighted in the board paper.

Question of Transition Network being lead partner in application to Big Lottery Fund for a consortium project for paid peer support for groups in England:

Noted that we would be highly reliant on Localise West Midlands' role in the project. Andrew spoke for the good track record and reputation of Localise West Midlands. Our relationship with Localise West Midlands started through the REconomy UK project. Sarah said the consortium feels really engaged. Renew Wales people have the practical expertise, good evaluation of the model, sharing the model in an open way knowing that it needs to shift. People are thinking carefully what they are stepping up to, eg Permaculture Association offering to chair the project Steering Group.

Is the Transition movement not so connected in the West Midlands? The consortium had had an open discussion about the location of the regional pilot. It was felt to be a good idea to start in an area with less current networking, where the project is therefore meeting more need.

Why is TN engaged in a UK specific activity and what is the relevance to non-UK work?
We do still have a specific England and Wales role, to support and connect 300-odd Transition initiatives. There is scope for this project to support the development in due course of an England England/Wales Hub in order to divest ourselves of that responsibility. One of the four emerging areas of convergence identified by staff in October 2016 is the mobilisation of resources to support and catalyse bottom-up activity, and this project will do that.

Hilary suggested that Board meetings could be organised with separate International and UK parts of the agenda?

Joe wanted to be kept involved in the Big Lottery application and the re-application to Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust.

Fondation Pour le Progres de l'Homme: We are still holding funds for Real Economy Lab. Not much current project progress, but Jules Peck of Real Economy Lab met Nicolas Krausz of FPH recently and FPH was happy.

Guerrilla Foundation: We had applied for funding; however Romy Kramer of Guerrilla Foundation told Peter Lipman recently that they are funding more radical activities instead.

We need to make more fundraising applications!

5. Delivery Director's Report

Outcome 2 – Support

Inner Transition: There was a lot of interest at the Hubs Gathering in Inner Transition. There is interest in the Inquiry process – to co-design, share and learn about what Inner Transition looks like in different parts of the world. Lots of potential from Hub representatives. Is there scope for fundraising?

What's the feeling about running another Transition Conference? We need to let go of the idea that all Transition events come from Transition Network. There is a Transition conference happening this year: the first Transition US conference in July 2017. The question becomes, what can Transition Network do to help these events? Some Hub representatives are delivering a virtual workshop at that conference.

Outcome 3 – Livelihoods (REconomy)

REconomy UK: The funded project has finished, all funded roles have ended. A meeting in Birmingham in April 2017 was held, looking at the future of local economies, as part of the legacy of the project. Discussions are ongoing to see there is scope to self-organise ongoing work on website, newsletter, community of practice (Jay Tompt of Transition Town Totnes is interested).

REconomy International: Sarah is spending more time than she'd like in engaging with the international REconomy process, trying to keep it grounded and connected to Hubs.

One Year in Transition: The UK One Year in Transition course has now successfully set up as its own organisation with a bank account - Bioregional Learning Centre. Bioregional Learning Centre have now made a separate funding bid to the anonymous Foundation. Isabel is still convening international One Year in Transition group for this financial year.

Outcome 5 – International

Preparation governance proposals for the Hubs Gathering: Nenad Maljkovic (Croatia), Josue Dusoulier (Brussels/Wallonie) and Stephen Hinton (Sweden) worked on this. Sarah also stepped in to work with this group, as a member of the Hubs Organisational Co-Design group.

How is progress on the Heart Circle, as decided at the Hubs Gathering? - see below in Hubs Gathering Reflection.

Agile community of practice: Nenad Maljkovic (Croatia) is setting up a Transition agile community of practice. This is not part of the Hubs Group, though some Transition Hub people will be involved. Transition Network does not have to have a role in this. We are not gatekeepers, but we need to have clarity on what channels independent projects can access.

In General
Trustees gave appreciation for Sarah and staff team, especially for the preparation and involvement at the Hubs gathering.

Sarah is feeling that her stretch across different areas of work is very large. The Organisational Development work is an area of challenge. The STIR group is having personal dynamics problems, which takes a large amount of energy and time. Sarah is getting support (including regular "one-to-two"s) from the co-chairs.

Support that is needed from the Board please: engagement and support for Sarah and the team to put capacity into the Organisational Development project and the Strategic Review.

6. Hubs Gathering Reflection

Hubs Gathering was held 24-27th May 2017 in Santorso, Italy. Around 50 attendees, including a few online participants in a blended meeting. There was a maximum of two representatives from each Hub. It felt more balanced between previous and new members of the Hubs Group, than 18 months previously in Seale Hayne.

External facilitators were used, for the first time. It was challenging for them. The facilitators said the list of intentions was undeliverable and people would be unhappy that everything had not been covered. It was well-organised by a group including Italian Hub members. The host families were lovely and the online pre-information was good.

A decision by consent process was held. We agreed a Purpose for the Hubs Group, and the setting up of a Heart Group for six months, for the task of designing and setting up a longer-term Heart group.

As decided, the Evolutionary Purpose of the Hubs Group is:

> To **connect** Transition Hubs, **sense** where the movement is now and where it needs to go next, **share** inspiration, ideas and practices, and **support** the growth and evolution of the global transition movement.

This process didn't end well, didn't feel complete. Some of the difficulties involved an individual who is opposed to setting up collective decision-making, values individual freedom instead. He has now stepped away from the Hubs Group. But what does that mean? He's not stepping away from working at an international level of scale in Transition and in his Hub. But he doesn't want to be involved in shared governance. There is an interesting opportunity to clarify what this means, possibly to test the new leaving process.

A careful reflection process on the closing down of the Organisational Co-Design group has since been held, facilitated by Sophy Banks. This has helped with the understanding of what happens when you explore questions of power. We want to share that reflection with Hubs, give them a chance to feed in and respond, do they need anything more? This all needs to be visible before we arrange the election to the Heart Group. We do want to move as quickly as possible towards that.

There was some frustration that there was not more time at the Hubs Gathering to share what's going on around the world. There was one workshop on that during the Open Space session. More of this could be useful in the strategy review.

Interest in setting up a Story community of practice emerged from informal discussions.

Heart dynamics and connections were made, these were really important. Trust was built between members of a big group. It was a global experience being together with people from so many different places. The work that was done to build trust was appreciated. Regarding the conflict(s),

we need to learn and practice empathy, understand the language, see different points of views. Hopefully the Heart Group can help with this.

Some people were frustrated by significant time being spent on sensorial activities rather than sharing and resolving tensions.

There was an experiment in holding the gathering as a blended meetings with some online participants. However, the number of people online was very small. Perhaps there was more disruption and time lost, than benefits from the online experience.

What did we learn?

The proposal and decision-making process was very challenging. A key piece of support we could offer Hubs would be ongoing training on understanding processes and respecting them. Peter Lipman personal reflection – one person's struggle doesn't override the needs of the rest of the room to share. Is there a gap in the UdN decision by consent model, about the deeper psychological situation going on, that people are just left to deal with it. The group needs to support facilitators to act with firmness. Some skills and depth of understanding are missing. Inner Transition can add something to that work. It would be good to explore this in the organisational development work.

There are a wide variety of views about how quick change should be towards international evolution. Many attendees said that what Transition Network does is important and appreciated, and the Hubs Group is not ready to step up to all of it. In contrast to the sense at the Seale Hayne 18 months ago, there doesn't feel like a big push to do things wildly different, but that the general direction of travel is good.

Action: **The agreement decided at the Hubs Gathering will be discussed at the September 2017 Board meeting.**

7. **Updating TN's strategic framework: proposals for the process**

Two proposals presented by Sarah. Decision by consent facilitated by Henry. Feedback from all, but objection rounds only by trustees.

Proposal 1

Clarifications:

What do we mean by a theory of change? - a description of how we think change happens.

Timescales? - proposal 1 is about what we do, proposal 2 is about how we do it (timescale included)

Feedback:

Feedback loops, will these be with and beyond the Transition movement? Response: need to include Hubs, the movement, staff and trustees; clear intention beyond the organisation, but not proposing to change wording.

Should it be Theories of Change? Response: Our strategic framework shouldn't imply that there is only one way of looking at change, but not wishing to change wording to Theories.

Not sure about the word Rigorous? Response: means evidence-based.

Our theories of change are embedded in Transition as a live movement. The phrase Practice of Change feels more appropriate to Transition. Response: Sarah amended proposal to say Practice of Change.

Objections: no objections

Proposal 1 as agreed:

That we develop a strategic framework for Transition Network, as a 'new paradigm' organisation working with complexity and emergence to catalyse and support a bottom up, social change movement, which consists of:

- A clear and responsive statement of organisational purpose;
- An evolving, clearly expressed and rigorous practice of change;
- Appropriate governance arrangements with defined accountabilities, roles, and decision-making processes which support and enable agile, self-managed activity;
- A mechanism for agreeing and keeping under review our areas of focus;
- A set of underpinning principles about how the organisation works; and
- Strong, dynamic and transparent feedback loops, which support us to respond appropriately to changing conditions in the field.

Proposal 2

A strategic review circle will be take responsibility for the design and implementation of processes which enable delivery of a strategic framework as specified above by March 2018. The strategic review circle will make use of the shared governance tools and processes introduced to us by UdN. Henry will be appointed by the board as lead link of the circle.

Points of clarification/additional information:

The strategic review circle will be responsible for designing and taking forward the strategic review, but the TN board will continue to hold responsibility for strategic decisions. As different elements of the strategic framework are developed, the strategy review circle will need to ensure appropriate collaboration/consultation with TN staff, hubsters, the wider movement and allies before bringing proposals to the board to be signed off.

We propose that, at the point it is set up, the strategic review circle will include the following roles:
- *Purpose & principles*

- *Theory of change*
- *Governance and organisational planning*
- *Feedback loops*
- *Harvesting learning from this process*

As lead link, Henry has the right to appoint people to roles (and to change those appointments over time if needed). He intends to ask for expressions of interest and indications of capacity from trustees and staff before making these appointments. If necessary, he and Sarah will explore with TN employees what work might need to be dropped or delayed to enable them to take on a particular role and with contractors whether there is scope to free up resources to provide appropriate paid time.

Clarifications:

Will the Strategic Review Circle only include people from within staff and board? - That's the current intention but we haven't clarified or limited this in the proposal. Henry can decide as lead link.

How was March 2018 arrived at as a timeframe for delivery? Challenging timing. - By March 2018 there should be something meaningful in each of those areas. There might be more to do after that.

End product is a Strategic Framework; is this the parameters or is this the strategy? - Instead of a Strategy, we are proposing a Strategic Framework.

Feedback:

Should we set some criteria about who should be in this circle? Should there be an international Hubs representative in the circle? Should this proposal specify feedback between the circle and the Board/wider organisation? Response: Not going to tie up the people that we will empower to do the work. Sarah doesn't feel a need to specify more about how and who would fill the roles, but happy that Henry has heard this feedback.

This proposal asks a lot of Henry. So we need to also all step up as trustees as well and engage in the process.

The lead link role isn't managerial - it is convening the team. There are options through the advice process to get help on the task. Response: Yes, this is not all the responsibility of the lead link, each role then has autonomy.

Very specific roles are mentioned in the additional information. Are those roles limiting? Response: The roles take care of that piece of the work, but each can create their own circle if necessary.

Using UdN's processes, Do we need to specify that UdN will help with guidance and support? Response: The governance circle makes decisions about the UdN accompaniment - they can decide whether this is part of the accompaniment, if they are involved to support.

We need to know enough about our strategy to apply to the anonymous Foundation in November 2017. Do we need to add a November stage date to this proposal? Response: Resisting the idea of staged dates. Henry and the circle know the fundraising situation - can engage with what can we do first.

In order to make quicker progress, can the team assembled use sprints, times of working together

more intensely? Response: Like the idea of sprints.

Objections:

Joe felt that if he was not appointed as part of the strategy circle, it would feel like he drops out of the process, can't get involved. Objection withdrawn as trusted in the process.

No further objections

PROPOSAL AGREED AS ABOVE

8.   Communications Plan Update

The Guest Editors programme has started! Challenges of editing submissions sensitively, and getting the submissions in on time. Can we find ways to get these piece reblogged and shared?

Story Project: A Story community of practice was initiated at the Hubs Gathering. 13 people met online this week. Some very different definitions of "story".
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Newsletter: Since February 2017, Mike Grenville left as newsletter editor. We have stopped the e-newsletter until we have redesigned what we do. Potentially segmenting the audience – tighter, smaller communication to different parts of our audience. We will do a series of surveys, working with Sam Allen of UK REconomy project. Will look at other organisations who have high responses through their comms/newsletter. Comment from Joe: the "Round-up" used to be inspiring, easy to share to show that "Transition is happening, here's inspiration from around the world".

Facebook: Facebook's social policies are concerning (for example receiving funding to target particular voters with misinformation; not removing terrorism-related information, support and funding). Should we no longer have a presence on facebook? Comments: although perhaps young people don't use facebook so much, groups such as Transition Town Tooting would struggle without it, and facebook does help local Transition work to be more inclusive. No decision to move away from facebook - maybe we should circulate more information?

Social media statistics: We are seeing Rob's absence on sabbatical in the communication statistics. Ainslie has tasked Sam with 1 hour a day twitter/facebook but the statistics are still dropping. We need to move to Instagram.

Website maintenance: We have now moved on from the Yoke agency.

9.   Dashboard Update and Organisational Development Baseline Report

Interesting that the Demain Guide "Making the Most of Tomorrow - your guide to organising a community screening of Tomorrow" dominates the downloads. There is obviously buzz and engagement around that film.

Organisational Development baseline report: this survey is a baseline, so we won't necessarily know what is key information until we see what changes. The survey has picked up that the experience of working as a contractor for TN can be less favourable than the experience of a

member of staff, this could be an aspect to monitor. There is a very large range of views expressed so any aspect where there is slightly more percentage of agreement is worth paying attention to.

10.   Open letter from Nenad on funding the work of individuals within our movement(s)

Nenad's request is that we think strategically about TN's role in resources flowing to individuals who are active in Transition. A particular example is given in the letter of the Open Collective platform which supports people to hold money collectively - Nenad is proposing that TN could be a fiscal sponsor for this.

There is a need for leaders in key places but there is no livelihood, there is a vulnerability. Is there a way of working with funders to support individuals rather than projects?

Comment from Ellen: Hub representatives mainly work voluntarily and this is not sustainable on a longer level. Can we have a strategy to allow a different way to sustain people who are active in Transition? Is it feasible right now for the network? Can we find parallel ways to work on this?

Who chooses which individuals could get funding and on what basis? In the past TN has said we will not choose who gets money; however since then we do provide funding (and make choices) through the Hubs seed funding grants.

There is general agreement that we should explore TN's role in this area. In the strategy review process we could look at: Do we prioritise the need for key individuals in Transition to be funded? What would Transition Network's roles be in that?

Action: Peter Lipman, Henry and Sarah to craft a response to Nenad's Open Letter that says what we will do.

Action: To include the exploration of TN's role in whether we prioritise the need for key individuals in Transition to be funded, in the strategy framework process.

11. Any Other Business

Peter Lipman will be meeting with Naresh, Rob, Ben, Sophy and Fiona to discuss how founders leave and move from their roles in TN. Ellen recommended the coaching and supporting role of an Elders Circle.

Reminder of forthcoming dates:

Friday 15th September 2017 - Board meeting - all online on zoom https://zoom.us/j/871452568

Thursday 9th and Friday 10th November 2017 - Away Days

Friday 1st December - Board meeting, Bristol

Action: Nicola to doodle for next year's Board meeting dates.

Henry is researching a Masters project on the Transition movement – if interested please get in touch with Henry

12. Reflections on the meeting

- Desire to see clearer water between international and UK work, so when we cut the ties it will be easier.

- More time on the ramifications of the decisions taken at the Hubs Gathering would have been good.

- People remotely don't engage as much in the meeting. How can we make online people more psychologically part of the meeting? It will be interesting in September's all on-line meeting.

- Is it possible to have longer to read the papers in advance?

- We have a responsibility to do as much as we can, as the most well-resourced Transition organisation.

- Would like to reflect about levels of resistance to the UdN process. Ellen - If the proposals are not modified, what is the sense of asking for feedback? Sarah - Its important to make mistakes and learn through doing the decision-making process. We could have spent some time reflecting afterwards. The feedback round felt rich. We did take account, we have listened and thought. If you feel your feedback isn't listened to, you need to judge does it now feel so much of a risk that I need to make an objection?

- Isabela - Was nervous before the meeting. Felt welcome and comfortable. Appreciate the effort on the technology – it was easy to understand. A lot of information. Taking this as time to grow personally and in the movement.

- Peter Lefort - Remote participation is very interesting. It will be useful for everyone to experience this next time. The technology and microphone has worked well. Finding the points of entry where I can take on more responsibility, is difficult to see.

- Ellen - this time technology worked better! One day online is exhausting. Happy to share the experience with Isabela as a fellow Keeper of the Global Perspective – felt less alone.

- Regretting not giving the Dashboard element more time, due to pressure of time.

- This meeting has felt inward-looking. Longing for "what's going on in the world, what's our response to this". Strategy circle could create an opportunity for online horizon scanning?

END