Minutes of Transition Network Board of Trustees Meeting
Friday 15th September 2017

Trustees present: Peter Lipman, Hilary, Andrew, Joe, Clare, Tony, Isabela, Ellen (until 2.30pm)

Staff in attendance: Sarah, Nicola

Apologies: Peter Lefort, Henry

1. Check-in

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

2. Previous minutes and actions

Minutes of 29th June 2017 Board meeting: Minutes **agreed.**

Actions:

Most actions done or started.

Staff sickness/ health and wellbeing policy: Sarah and Clare met about policy; Clare has had a house move and Sarah and Clare have not yet met to pick this up again.

Staff rep on the Board: Staff meeting decided to hold an election by consent for 2 alternate representatives (for resilience) at the November staff meeting. No staff representative at this meeting.

Rob, Sarah, Henry, Peter Lipman and Ainslie will have a catch up about when Rob is acting as TN and when not, including in relation to HEC Paris business school.

Potential Conflicts of interest for this meeting:

Tony's work has funding from KR Foundation.

Peter Lipman is working as a consultant for the Global Sustainable Living programme for the anonymous Foundation (now beyond probation period).

Peter Lipman talking to Roger Ross about funding for his new CIC.

3. <u>Treasurer's Report</u>

Looking good for year to end March 2017. Not looking good for year to end March 2018.

Projecting almost £50,000 unrestricted reserves for March 2017 - acceptable though short of our £70,000 target.

Salary bill is temporarily lower due to Rob's sabbatical and Ben's sick leave, though Ben has just started back.

Very heavy reliance on one funder (the anonymous Foundation). We are preparing to resubmit an application for continued funding from the anonymous Foundation. If this was not successful this would be very serious, however indications are that this should not fail.

We need to build grant revenue for next year in order to cover existing costs in our current shape. We need to find £95,000 of core costs contributions.

There are two individuals who donate monthly to Transition Network. Should we run a campaign to ask people to donate regularly to Transition Network? Issues include - are we preventing revenue going to Hubs or Initiatives if TN asks for money?

Andrew: Crowdfunding campaign is also a communications opportunity, a chance to tell the world what we are doing. The important dimension is to emphasise the complementary nature of our work.

Sarah: It could be interesting to consider this idea of crowdfunding or promoting our donate button now. Taking money away from Hubs or initiatives is a concern. Can we be explicit about asking different people to fund us - not Transitioners but people who find the website interesting… Can we design something and where would we target it?

Hilary: There may be people who are interested in Transition but not actively involved in a group, but who would like to support the concept.

Tony: Personal view is that we shouldn't worry about "robbing" initiatives or hubs of money - we should trust people to find their own particular way to support Transition.

Regular direct debits OR a crowdfunding campaign for something specific - we should consider both of these.

Isabela: "Where do you put your money" "Where do you put your energy" - these are important questions - also being looked at in the Brazilian network.

Andrew, Tony, Joe: Happy to offer support to help this idea become a reality. (Joe can give direct experience from a recent crowd-funding campaign)

Annual Report text is available now, will be signed at the November Board

Action: Any requested changes please get to Nicola by 1 weeks time.

4. Funding update

Nicola: not very long since last board meeting with holidays in between so not a lot has changed. Using traffic lights, and on Tony's prompting, we're focusing on Roger Ross's continuing donations.

Peter Lipman: My experience is that once he likes something he continues to support it. He recently took initial steps towards setting up a foundation, but then decided such a structured approach wasn't for him. Peter Lipman will be meeting him soon.

Two big areas of work coming up: the anonymous Foundation and Joseph Rowntree Charitable Trust bids for renewed funding.

Tony: If all of our current potential bids succeed, how close do we get to closing the funding gap?

Nicola: We would still fall significantly short of what we need for next year. Also we haven't started designing the bid to the anonymous Foundation yet and there is always the possibility that we would want more of this to be distributed out to hubs or wider movement and so not contribute to our core costs.

Peter Lipman: Looking forward to exploration of where next with anonymous Foundation - good timing given the development of the Hubs Group etc.   Have been looking at other foundations - meeting someone from Lund shortly (but they are already supporting Rob). Also talking to someone from the Bertha Foundation. Peter Lipman will attend another EDGE funders gathering in November, but is conscious they have a very social justice focus.

Action: Peter, Henry, Sarah and Nicola to meet and work through some funding ideas.

5. Delivery Director's Report

Strategic Outcome 1: Communications
Looking for ways to test users reactions to our new website. We are having more voices from different parts of the world, for example interesting news from Hungary, as well as the guest editors. The counter side can be losing some of the coherence of the website. Ideas on this welcome, as well as ideas for social media and other channels to publicise new themes on the website.

Reviewing our e-newsletter. Sam Allen, freelance contractor, is consulting on ways to make the newsletter more enticing and challenging. Possibly also hosting online conversations on themes/ articles (needs moderation and active management). Keen to host articles in different languages.

Celebrate the fact that the website is now mobile-accessible. This was done is a relatively low-cost way with a freelancer working with Sam Rossiter.

Strategic Outcome 3: Sustainable Livelihoods/ REconomy

UK funded REconomy project has now finished; Final funder report shared with the Board. Laura Outhart and Sam Allen did a great job in reporting and reflecting on the project. We are not seeking to continue with another phase of a funded UK project. One of the things that people were most interested in was the paid peer-to-peer support project Renew England, that is being fundraised for. People are keen that the social network around REconomy doesn't die away; discussing how to pass on our communication channels to a self-organised group to carry on? We need to be aware of our responsibilities to this group.

REconomy internationally has been holding online speaker events and webinar to compare approaches across countries. They held a blended meeting with a workshop at a Transition Germany event. Nenad and Jay Tompt putting a lot of energy in; is feeling a bit abstract. Some Hubs don't appreciate this approach and others are finding it energising.

Strategic Outcome 4: Demonstrating Impact

The Municipalities in Transition project is curently in the mapping phase, mapping where active engaged citizens are working with municipalities to increase sustainability and resilience in that area. Then they need to draw out tools and learning and starting to prepare for the pilot work.

Tony: This could be useful for the Municipalities project if they are looking at citizen participation: https://www.thersa.org/discover/publications-and-articles/reports/citizens-and-inclusive-growth https://medium.com/citizens-and-inclusive-growth
Action: to pass RSA citizens and inclusive growth report to the Municipalities in Transition team.

Recent approach from ICLEI (local governments for sustainability): they have launched a new urban transition alliance initiative, want to talk to us about partnering.

Strategic Outcome 6: Healthy organisational culture

Conflict around the STIR (Support, Training, Inner and REconomy) team. They have struggled with difficult personal dynamics and have been working quite separately rather than collaborating well together. Sarah has had support in this issue from Peter, Henry and Clare, Hilary also offering support. Going to look for a facilitator to design a process based on restorative circles process to see whether we can explore what is happening with this conflict and see if we can resolve it. Concern about the amount of time that this conflict is taking and interested in what could shift if we handle it well.

This is not about fundamental differences in work philosophy. Personal dynamics, plus culture change from entrepreneurial individuals to an organisation with more defined governance.

Working on our governance - as we try to shift our ways of working and look at power and decision-making, it is not surprising that conflict is happening. Josué Dusulier of the Brussels/Wallonie Hub says this process can bring things to the surface that were always there, and then we have to deal with them.

Joe: How do we measure our impact on Inner Transition - how do we know what it is and how we deliver it?

Sarah: In November there will be new resources on the website about Inner Transition. The Hubs Gathering started an inquiry into what is Inner Transition, what does it look like around the world. A lot of interest in the first international online meeting on this. Aim to find a way through that inquiry to explore what Inner Transition is and therefore what trainings do we deliver, how do we support this. The report to the anonymous Foundation gives a flavour of what Claire has been doing.

6. **Hubs Gathering Governance Agreement and Follow up**

The Hubs Group Governance Agreement was decided at the Hubs Gathering in May 2017.

We are now seeing the Municipalities in Transition team taking this approach. They have been using the advice process, for instance.

The decision making at the Hubs Gathering didn't finish cleanly; therefore for some people it didn't feel clear that the group had really made this decision. Didn't really get a chance to reflect on what had happened - we weren't left with clarity that the decision had been made. Henry has been interviewing people from Hubs for his MSc research and this has highlighted the difference in people's views.

We are just about to share back a survey where Hubs representatives shared their feedback on the process. The Organisational Co-Design group held a reflection meeting and we are about to share a video of that meeting.

Ellen: Within the Hubs Group, this is a community of practice, delivering good things and also making mistakes. In aiming to build a better world, we fall back into the old mistakes - as we are real people. Whenever non-conformist behaviour comes up we should not see it as a problem, but as a learning challenge; otherwise how can we help others?

Sarah: One practical implication for TN is that we need to decide, as a support organisation, two people with objection rights in the Hubs Group circle. Henry as co-chair and Sarah as Delivery Director held those roles during the 2017 Hubs Gathering.

Proposal: To continue with Sarah as Delivery Director and Henry as co-chair as holding TN's objection rights in the Hubs Group, to be reviewed as part of our own governance, for instance in April 2018.
No objection - DECIDED.

Transition Network is defined in the Hubs Group as a Support Organisation. Maybe we should define "What is a Support Organisation" to open up the possibility that there isn't just TN as a support organisation. For example, the Brussels/Wallonie Hub increasingly holds a support organisation role towards French-speaking countries. Also there are non-Transition organisations that could be defined as support organisations to Hubs.

Andrew: Confidentiality - was the optimum level of transparency discussed?

Sarah: Not aware of much discussion in the Hubs group. There is an intention to form a community of practice on shared governance, where transparency would be key, we want to share learning and experience, exchange with other groups. Confidentiality really looks at respecting the confidentiality of people's experiences and stories rather than not sharing what we are doing.

Follow Up to the Hubs Gathering

The Brussels/ Wallonie Hub team remain concerned about the way that one attendee of the Hubs Gathering is operating in the Hubs space. They have left the Hubs Group but are still a co-ordinator of a Hub and a guardian of a community of practice. They applied to attend the Transition Train the Trainer course. When is it appropriate for TN to exercise power and when is it not? Sarah will be suggesting that these are concerns to raise with the Hubs Group.

Ellen: We should be inclusive. It was probably extreme not to allow this individual to attend the training course. These decisions should be taken by a peer group - for example the future Hubs Heart Circle.

Sarah: Also, if there is behaviour that causes concern, we should look at that.

Peter: TN should be careful in exercising power, at this delicate time when the Hubs Heart Group needs to feel into its role. We shouldn't overstep in taking ownership of this situation, in order to nurture the decision-making we took at the Hubs Gathering.

7. Dashboard Update

Tony: The commentary is helpful - we probably need slightly more commentary to help us interpret the numbers! The statistics seems to show that visitors are now staying longer on our website.

Facebook - would we take a stance on not using facebook? Facebook however is very effective.
Sarah: we are not considering removing ourselves from facebook and facebook discussion groups.

Joe: Are we using Bitly - a new kind of tinyurl, allows us to track where our hits are coming from?

Would like more about the relationship between our facebook and twitter and our website - how often are we sharing between them? Newsletter can be shareable as a website link, to help multiply readers? The key thing is to amplify what content is already available. Sarah: Sam Allen, Sam Rossiter and Ainslie are looking at this.

Hilary: For some statistics it is helpful to compare years rather than months - might want to look at the layout.

Sarah: the self-assessment process on the Hubs is giving us good information - for example the number of Transition initiatives they are in touch with, and their legal statistics. Share this next time.

Andrew: How we do on social media is the result of lots of decisions - how we talk to people, about what, how we allocate resources. This depends how ambitious we want to be for this type of communication. We need to steer interest towards where we want it to go. A pragmatic approach would be to assess our social media around the degree we can drive traffic to our website and

resources. Facebook can be used appropriately in this regard. Do we have an Instagram feed? Among some demographics, Instagram is much more popular than facebook. In terms of the balance of how much time we should spend on each platform, decisions about tone, it depends on how important we think each medium is. Should we have six-monthly reviews on which (and in what proportion) social media channels we should use?

8.   Strategic Review Update

Last Board meeting agreed the six elements of a new Strategic Framework to be produced by March 2018. Henry was appointed as lead link of the Strategic Review Circle:

Sarah: Governance and Organisational planning
Filipa: Feedback loops
Henry: Lead link and Harvesting learning
Naresh: Practice of Change
Nicola: Purpose and Principles

Early meetings have been held. Meeting fortnightly for sprint sessions to all work on it at the same time. Need to design a process that is open, connecting with the movement and Hubs and ally organisations. The November Away Days is an opportunity to work on this.

Sarah has set up a Governance and Organisational Planning sub-circle:
        Claire Milne - culture change
        Filipa - boundaries and connections
        Ben - transparency
        Peter Lefort - board role - how does a new governance model fit with the responsibilities of trustees, and two-way communication with the Board

The Governance and Organisational planning sub-circle will meet in October; the ambition by Spring 2018 is to be taking time to define what the areas of responsibility are and what the circles are that are responsible for them.

Joe: Feedback loops are really key. My concern is that the strategy should be shaped by Transitioners as much as possible. Its really important to hear from Transitioners early, rather than asking them to react to something quite formed.

Sarah: Key first step is horizon-scanning and the group will be considering if this is a separate role; or who holds it. ECOLISE will be surveying its 30 European members and this will be useful input from beyond the movement.

9.   November Away Days

November 2017 Away Days are the natural place to work on the Strategic Review with staff and board. We are not proposing to use the November Away Days for work with UdN.

The Strategy Review Circle will have ample content for these Away Days. At the staff meeting there was support for the idea of focusing the Away Days on the Strategic Framework. The other input

was about work we could do on our relationships, particularly in context of the conflict within the staff team.

Any views from trustees about what is important to cover at the Away Days?

Hilary: Away Days face to face becomes more important if we have more online Board meetings. "What does a support organisation look like" is a good lens to look at our Strategic purpose.

Andrew: The ways we communicate should flow from our organisational strategy. Does TN overwhelmingly have a support function; or are we by default a window on Transition to the wider world, we can invite people in who have no experience of Transition. We have to perform both functions. During the strategy review, its really important to discuss the audiences of engaged Transitioners and people new to Transition. Different energies in the way we speak to each audience; how do we allocate resources between them?

Tony: Interactions with policy-makers is also a question. Both inward and outward looking roles in the question of "What does a support organisation look like?"

Joe: Our relationship with Transition initiatives - there is still something here about how well we are informed at the ground level. What do we do that affects Transition initiatives, people on the ground? How can we measure that, how can we know?

Sarah: Heartened by these being key questions that fit within the Strategic Framework. Looking at organisational purpose through different lenses. Already seeing Purpose as a key part of the Away Days. The Feedback loops role is about how do we get information in, and how do we then react and respond to that as an organisation.

Away Days - an important stage in the process in terms of our application to the anonymous Foundation - this application will need to consist of what we know about our organisational purpose and other aspects, and the timetable for knowing the rest.

## 10.	Board development

1. What have been the most enjoyable aspects of your work with the TN board?

Henry: I've really enjoyed the meetings and awaydays - which I typically learn a lot from and come away from with energy. In general the feeling of learning has been one of the most satisfying.

2. What aspects of the board's role do we (collectively) do best?

Henry: I think we do a good job at 'holding' the organisation - providing some stability and resources to draw on when needed for the staff team.

3. What aspects of our work as, or with, the TN board could be improved:
	At and around meetings?
	Between meetings?

4. What's not clear about how the TN board operates?

Henry: It's not always clear how we make decisions. Sometimes it's not been clear how to get involved between meetings.

We also still have some tension and unclarity (although we have improved a lot I think) between our UK/England vs international roles

5. How might we improve the operation of the TN board overall?

Tony - what questions aren't on this list? Self assessment is always a tricky thing. What do staff think about the Board?

Sarah - this Board feels quite quiet, particularly outside meetings. There is a holding role for the staff - someone is seeing what you are doing, celebrating or challenging it. Does this Board respond when the staff team send things round.

Andrew - partly there is just so much material around and an unspoken shift in how we respond to that. A caution also - thinking as a Board member to not flood staff with information and responses, in response to hearing about overwork in the staff. Sometimes Andrew has emailed staff and also been met with silence! But knowing that more feedback would be enjoyed is good.

Joe - Henry's comment that it is not always clear how we make decisions - Joe agrees with this. Not always sure whether feedback is wanted, when his voice is welcomed. Enjoying being a trustee but can feel a bit lost sometimes, in the complexity of the Transition world.

Hilary - the platform where a conversation, a discussion where we can build on each other's comments - that would be great. Like contributing to thinking and discussions at Board meetings. Liked contributing to the fundraising work. Everybody having some space to contribute directly is good.

Tony - Competitive congratulations can annoy (email direct?). I can't remember if we have a Board terms of reference document - how we make decisions; that we could refresh our memory with at the start of each meeting?

Isabela - Amazed by the amount of work and reflection, documents that the Board produce. Something new. Really rich to go from local to national to international. Still looking for my place, should I talk or not? Amazing what the Board produces for us, for people who are doing Transition in their lives.

Andrew - agrees with Henry's comment about "when do we know when we've made a decision" - and how far that decision goes.

Sarah - also sees that it is not always clear that we are making a decision. Would be good to practice making more sociocratic decision-making. Don't have to do every decision like that. Decision making by consent is particularly valuable when it is important that there is ownership from the whole group, and/or that there might be unexpected answers. We should look for opportunities to use sociocrative decision-making; the feedback round gives a chance for people to be positive -

and the celebration of the decision should also be positive endorsement. Suggesting more practice on sociocratic decision-making.

The other part is this person in this role will make this decision, but they will seek advice. The group will trust them that they will come to a reasonable conclusion.

Action: Clear proposal to use Polis for the next stage of this discussion on Board development. See if Henry would like to lead on shaping these notes into a discussion on Polis. Otherwise Sarah and Peter to liaise about the next step.

Trustee succession:

There is no consistency in past Board minutes and papers of whether trustees have 3 or 4 year terms. Looks like 4 years is most likely.

Hilary, Ellen and Andrew terms end in June 2018.

Tony's term ends in July 2019 and it is difficult to recruit treasurers

Peter Lipman's Co-chair term ends in November 2018.

Therefore there are trustee recruitment Issues coming up in 2018. If we need to recruit we will need to be clear what we are recruiting to.

11.   Municipalities in Transition governance proposal

Josué and Juan from the Municipalities in Transition team joined the meeting,

Josué - new governance model - you don't need to be in all the meetings, knowing everything. You are called to give advice when you are a stakeholder for a decision. However, having a right of objection means that you need to attend all meetings, need to be available to participate.

Juan - need to take into account the responsibility about objecting - it is a gift. Not just about the right of objection. The proposal is for someone from TN to be part of the core circle of the project, otherwise you can't object properly.

Tony - legal question about our liability to the funder. Seems that that is covered in having a right of objection. Just wanting to check whether this falls short of charity law or obligations to the funder.

Sarah - feels comfortable the option of having an objection right gives us what we need legally.

In the other option where TN is not represented in the core circle - still in there is the principle that anything that has an impact on TN as an organisation, the core team works with us to resolve that. To be an advisor is part of being a decision-making process.

If we don't get legal advice then we could be being negligent as Board members. The decision about whether to get advice is not easy.

This feels like a moment to trial this - part of a process of things being less connected. Does TN want to be part of the core team, or is everyone happy with the current core team? If everyone is happy, lets trial the core team as it is.

Tony - What would be most helpful operationally. TN is one of the delivery partners; not just holding the money and giving it out.

Sarah - The core team of Ana, Josue, Juan, Cristiano - there is work they are doing that doesn't need TN staff involvement. Certainly pieces where they need to work with TN staff to deliver (payments, communications, where these fit in wider TN resources). There would be a resource implication if we wanted a member of TN staff sitting in that core circle. But this would mean that staff member spending time in meetings they wouldn't otherwise be needed.

There is a domain of responsibility for the core circle and a domain of responsibility for the support circle. The core circle can make decisions except certain defined ones that need to be taken with someone from TN, because TN is legally responsible for the project.

Action: **Appoint a sub-group to move the Municipalities in Transition governance questions on more quickly than waiting for the whole Board; with the intention of moving towards the more hands-off model - as hands-off as is reasonable, including "the core circle inviting Sarah and Nicola when there are key decisions that involve TN's legal responsibility" - assuring ourselves that we can do that within English law.**

Sub-group - Peter Lipman, Tony, potentially Henry, Sarah

Offer from Josué to be available for questions and discussions with the sub-group.

Josué - Right now, do we carry on without someone from TN having objection rights, while this decision is being taken.

Peter - yes carry on as we are now, as there are checks and balances already. Aim for sub-group to meet relatively quickly.

12. Any Other Business

Dates

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

Friday 1st December - Board meeting, online

Doodle poll for other Board meetings.

Founders meeting

Peter Lipman, Naresh, Rob, Ben, Fiona, Sophy met to discuss experiences around being founders. A positive meeting, scoped out questions to explore, will meet again in November to dig into these questions. Example question: How can a founder move to being an elder, and what does that

mean?

13.   Review of the meeting

Ellen - much easier to hear and understand, meeting as all online. Board meetings where everybody connects remotely work better for me …. and save money, time and carbon footprint. Should we consider it?

Isabela - Face to face contact is also really important to bring us together. Enjoy seeing people more clearly in an online meeting.

Peter - Should we alternate face-to-face Board meetings with online Board meetings, two of each per year?

Tony - Blended meetings are difficult and privilege the people in the room. Given there are Away Days in person - quite comfortable with online Board meetings. Board meetings have lots of content and discussions/decisions. Away Days more experiential, deeper. Definitely would be comfortable with one physical Board meeting 3 online, plus Away Days in person.

Andrew: Neatness of online meetings - quite a leveller. One of the joys is real human connections. What is the optimum balance?   Could live with either alternating or 3 online 1 face-to-face.

Joe - it was important as a new member to meet face to face to start with. Easier to work online now that he has met. Takes less time in terms of travel. London-based trustees could always meet in the same space (with own computers!).

Clare - small groups can gather and then meet together online, otherwise collaboration can be weakened.

Joe- would find the alternate meetings a better balance.

Proposal - alternate meetings from December online meeting as a trial. With effort to attend Away Days face to face.

No objections DECIDED

Next online agenda will include more short breaks.

END