

Assembly Meeting held at the ISCA Centre, Summer Lane, Exeter on Tuesday 7th December 2010

Morning Session

1. Letter received from YW offering her apologies and giving an explanation of the current situation of the Board. Placed on record thanking YW for all of the hard work and service she has given to us in a very difficult time. This was greeted with a round of applause and the suggestion by GN that a bunch of flowers be sent to YW was unanimously agreed.
2. GN welcomed members to the Assembly.
3. There were no amendments to the minutes of the Assembly held on the 22nd June 2010 and these were accepted as a true and accurate record.
4. Matters Arising:
 - i) SCfD's application to become a charity. JS had a response from the charity commission and they are querying a number of points. One was that the members would appear to be the beneficiaries of the organisation but we are providing services to help deprived people – rural deprivation and rural isolation and disabled people – that type of remit and it is easy to see that we are a conduit to bring that about. Important that we make it clear to the Charity Commission that we act for the benefit for all people over 50 with specific reference to the other and that it is not the be all and end all. Wording has to be agreed by the Board: “ To reach out to the over 50 population of Devon especially the disadvantaged, vulnerable and those living in rural and urban isolation, to establish their needs and to feed them back to the appropriate authorities for action”. This will form part of the Strategic plan.
 - ii) SCfD is extremely fortunate for GN to take the Chairman's position as she has a wealth of experience in health care and the profession, and also to act as a CEO to keep us all on target. The Board are totally behind her 100%.
 - iii) GN - when we talk about isolation we don't talk just about rural isolation; eg when people come down to Devon to retire and their partner dies they are very often left on their own. This is classed equally as isolation and there is a high suicide rate in Devon because of this so therefore you get both rural and urban isolation.
 - iv) GN asked the members to report back what is happening in respect of care homes in their area. SCfD have become recently aware that DCC have not been able to sell their care homes. 1 - because TUPE pay their staff more than the independent sector and therefore a private purchaser would have trouble making a living. 2 - some of these care homes need so much updating work done on them it would work out extremely expensive and there is no way the purchaser could afford to do it. DCC have needed to reevaluate their situation and all groups need to keep their eyes on homes in their area.
 - v) BJ - what was GN's suggestion re the care homes and how we should relate to the county what is going on. GN - KC is an historian and keeps his eye on what is happening in the different levels of authority, he is brilliant at research and she is really glad she has his support as he keeps the SCfD up to date. KC said that the problems had been outlined by GN but we have to keep our fingers on this issue. We know that technically DCC cannot get rid of the homes but we don't know what they are going to do. BJ suggested that an early meeting should be held with DCC regarding this but KC informed the meeting that SCfD do have regular meetings with DCC as the next date was the 15th December.

TS said that this was a well worn path with privatisation; we know that where this occurs we get a rundown of facilities, problems with morale and failure of investment. He added that he was opposed to this whole type of thing and hoped we were not suggesting that staff are overpaid as there are appalling wages and conditions in this sector. He considered the whole thing to be obnoxious and asked what is the SCfD's message on this? GN answered the question by saying “the message we have given to Stuart Barker directly is that we are against it. They want to continue with care homes giving care and DCC have said there is to be no change of use or no selling of, or any parts of, council property and this is leasehold and not freehold. This council have built in safeguards and we have supported this. One of the forces for

selling, and I have to be fair, is the Department of Health and NHS's decision to look after people in their own homes and they are introducing nursing and care teams to do this so they can get people out of hospital quicker. As a nurse I view that with a dread and we have to monitor the situation closely."

The Health and Social group to take this forward and report back to the next Assembly.

RR asked that the NHS, which is also making cuts, also be included when look at issues arising from the current financial situation.

IM asked that the SCfD look at the health services.

KC added that over the past few months we have been responding to a number of consultations regarding the NHS on the format of what is due to happen. The four consultations we have responded to are commissioning for patients, improving the democratic legitimacy, regulating health care providers and transparency and outcomes. At the moment he is in the process of compiling a document which involves all four of these consultations and will get out to the members as soon as he is able.

- vi) BJ - SCfD had been trying to get onto the Overview and Scrutiny committee of DCC. GN - SCfD are being considered for it but she went to the last meeting as an observer; we always go as observers so we can monitor and we will continue to do that and continue to push for full membership.
- vii) BB - GP surgeries are required to take into account patient views before making decisions - it would be a good idea for members to get onto their local patient participation group and then the GP will know exactly what patients want - so we will be influencing upwards as well as downwards.
- viii) GN - letter she had received from the Tiverton branch regarding the long-promised director job descriptions. These would be out in the 2nd week of January 2011 ready for the AGM on the 4th March.
- ix) TS - glad that GN have given time for these other issues as he felt them more important than workshops. He asked what is the future of the SCfD as there were wild rumours sweeping Devon that the SCfD are going in with other organisations. GN - SCfD are in a big fight for funding. DCC have set up involvement workshops and we are participating in them as they want us to start working together with various organisations and look at what they are doubling up on so we are presenting our point of view. The first involvement workshop was on the 29th November and it is our case that we represent people at local groups, these groups meet and we have Assemblies, Conferences, ARMs and AGMs. GN said that it became apparent that we had a better method of communication than anyone else in the room so we pushed forward with this and it has gone down very well. There is another workshop next week and her intention is to report what has happened to all groups. Sue Younger-Ross from DCC said that we would probably lose some of our funding but definitely not lose all of it. GN and YW have a meeting with John Hart, leader of DCC, to put forward the case of the SCfD and she promised the meeting that she will keep every group informed.

GN went on to say that she had attended a meeting with Fusion at Isca House. The presentation was by two officers from national government who had come down from London because they had heard what was happening in Devon – a gold rated county council. Fusion said they were a user led organisation in its day to day services. We are one of the user-led organisations in their eyes and we actually sit on their Board. GN explained that Fusion is funded by DCC and that the user led Fusion board includes Involved Devon, Westbank, Rejuvenation, SCfD and others. This was the first time she had attended and she was really impressed to see deaf people, people with mental handicaps and people in wheelchairs all being involved in consultations and making decisions – they are a united group in their own right and we are part of that. GN said that she would circulate this presentation to the groups. Fusion is the gateway to DCC for some voluntary groups.

TS – are we being taken over? GN – no, we were invited to be on their board. TS asked if the SCfD were moving in to their offices? GN explained that the SCfD don't have an office or anywhere to store equipment etc and that the board are looking at this at the moment and that we are also looking at other places.

IM - GN said that the SCfD are the only organisation Devon wide but what about LINK? KC had informed GN that all of the members of Fusion are members of LINK, however Fusion were very much user led so

therefore if you go to meetings there are a few officers and all of the rest are users and are voted into office as users, which is different to LINK.

5. GN gave an introductory speech to the meeting. (See Appendix B). TT - the branches need to take a huge responsibility for this as well as it is not only at board level that people need to be joining up with other branches. They had four branches communicating within the Seaton area as one of their main aims was to join up with other groups locally.

JS - SCfD had county wide coverage with approximately 2,000 members but not all were active, an estimate of about 200 members are active throughout the county. The organisation is utilising the experience of the people who have retired and is free of charge. He felt that it was important to try and promote this a great deal more, get out there to organisations and to hand out literature to people who are retiring. A system needed to be in situ to bring in people who have retired with experience to come into the SCfD.

RR said that he had heard the words consult on many occasions. Concerns that the SCfD were becoming a talking shop and would like to see more action. He said SCfD should actually be taking some action and be seen to be taking action, and not just talking on people's behalf. GN responded by saying that she had already taken that on board; we are acting and we have done some tremendous work but she thought we have not blown our own trumpets loud enough. TH - his job is publicity and development and he would help people to do this by helping them to work with the media, but that the SCfD should identify the need then do something about it. MC - awful lot of what we have been doing is in the Newsletter where there is a big list of all what the groups and the board are doing, as well as articles on members and their branches, and that all can read it every quarter. She felt that people are totally ignoring this form of communication.

6. Workshops:

- i) Communication: Update on the request for attendance at Board meetings. The Board had agreed that any member can ask to attend the meeting a week in advance and they must put any question in writing. They can then attend the meeting which may need to be in two parts as certain can't be discussed in an open meeting ie employment of staff. The Board meeting minutes should be a summary that goes out within one week to branches then, after vetting by MC so we don't put anything on the website we could get into trouble with, onto the website within 2 weeks. RR - idea of setting up a bulletin board so we can have questionnaires and surveys and then anyone with an email address can join forum on say care homes and then there could be a direct input from people out in the field. RR agreed to firm up on this idea and will put it to the Board.

Assembly members - the group felt that now we no longer have them there was a need for continuity from the groups so that they should not send a fresh person each time. Also some form of job description should be developed to explain what is expected of people attending Assembly meetings and this could take the form of internal or external training.

Important that the branches in general and the membership get a précis of what actually took place at this meeting and that it should be done by the administration staff so there was no danger of members putting their own slant on it.

Branch link directors - role needs to be established and to encourage groups on good practice. Link directors need to be knowledgeable on what is going on in their area.

We need to encourage area groups and for them to report their ideas and outcomes.

- ii) Intergenerational: How can we build on the success of the intergenerational conference? JC how many people at this meeting were at the conference and as he suspected, very few. The conference was a terrific success and there was a 50/50 mix between older and younger people. The younger people made a massive contribution to the sessions and everyone went away with the idea that we should do something again another year with the same arrangement with SCfD, Devon Youth Service and Young Devon. All these parties agreed that they would be prepared to take part in a similar event next year. The group then discussed what should be the future of intergenerational work at county level – would it be a good thing to hold a similar conference? There is a conference report being prepared and it will come out following our debriefing in January. The group felt it should be the responsibility of SCfD to develop a programme for probably the next three years, if not

certainly for next year, and ensure this time we have a steering group which consists of young people as well as the SCfD.

BJ - 2012 was Olympics year and perhaps the SCfD might consider that could be the focus for a county wide conference because there will be money coming forward from the Olympics committee for sporting activities for young and old.

Local branches to become more involved eg a partnership with a Family Centre that has put forward a project with young and old which involves the tuition side of developing a programme called "Getting Online", or learning to use a computer quickly via courses where young people in schools are inviting their parents or grandparents to learn. The group also wants to give a push to intergenerational work and for groups to decide locally what they can do.

iii) Profile: BB - SCfD has behaved with local groups is how they have got to the position they are and if members are not satisfied then changes need to be made. Publicity and media contact should take place from local groups and it is TH's role to make sure that this happens. Each group needs to have a public relations officer who has been suitably trained by TH. Local branches should be encouraged to get articles into Housing Association, and National Trust newsletters for example, as well as hard to reach groups newsletters so that everyone can read it and is talking about the SCfD.

iv) Health Care: This group looked at prevention and re-ablement breaking it down into social aspects, eg vaccinations, fitness and nutrition. Important for people to keep mentally occupied and this included social events. SCfD ought to hold a conference on this next year. Also:

1. Consolidate work in view of dementia, expand on memory cafes and re-engage with Alzheimer's groups.
2. Monitor the DCC council homes and continue talking with DCC
3. Monitor changes in health services eg quality of care, reports of the QCQ and to continue contacts with county officer.
4. Homes – keep an eye on occupancy levels. The costs per person of keeping in a DCC home is £800 per week, but in a private home is under 50% of that.

End of the morning session and GN thanked the meeting. (See Appendix C)

Afternoon session (see the full Meeting Report for complete dialogue)

Members to talk to the Directors who have special direction with their group. The questions the groups to consider were:

- i) let us know what you have been doing really important to SCfD over last 12 months
- ii) what you would like to achieve over the next 12 months with special help from your Directors and
- iii) what can the board assist you on.

Gillie Newcombe	Newton Abbot, Teignmouth and Totnes
John Stedman	Tiverton and Culm Valley
Derek Pedder	Honiton, Axminster and Seaton
Jean Daley	Dawlish, Exmouth and Crediton
Yvonne Wardrop	Exeter
Margaret Coles	Bideford, Torrington and Holsworthy
Cliff Bell	Barnstaple, Ilfracombe, Braunton and South Molton
Ken Crawford	Tavistock, Ivybridge and Kingsbridge
Margaret Woolacott	Okehampton and South Dartmoor

GN asked that all branches give the dates of their meetings to their Directors so that they can attend. She then gave her closing remarks. (See Appendix D)