

Attendees: Kate Hobbs (chair, typing up minutes), Matt Braithwaite (minutes), Leilah Hammoudi

1. Introductions

- Discussion about Leilah's background in social work and having grown up in the local area, and about Matt's background in psychotherapy training, and how both identified "gaps" in their respective institutions that they felt could be addressed in community settings such as the Broomhall Centre (BHC).
- Both identified themselves as preferring to take a more personal and supportive approach with clients than might have been possible in either social work or psychotherapy; Leilah described wanting to work with people "on their level," rather than working "by the book" from a position of authority or impersonality.
- Also discussed were personal goals and motivations for volunteering.

2. Aims & objectives – Kate went through the aims for the CRG itself. These were to:

- **Help build the confidence of volunteers & participants**
 - Kate emphasised that this meant both building up the confidence of the volunteers involved with the CRG and building the confidence of centre users.
 - Leilah described the benefits of having volunteers around to boost clients' confidence, including a specific example of a client she's been supporting by being observant of positive changes and giving genuine compliments about these.
 - Matt and Kate agreed that this was brilliant, and that going forward they would also try to do more of this. Agreement that meeting to talk about this stuff boosts our confidence in a way that helps us find ways to help boost other people in turn.
 - Discussion of how working building rapport with people – even (especially!) grumpy people – can result in positive change that boosts everyone involved.
- **Work together to support, develop, and promote the Broomhall Centre**
 - Emphasis on working together to achieve a common goal
 - Discussion of how the side of things at the centre that we as a group focus on is the centre's regular open sessions that are organised by the centre for the community, rather than the side of things that is more about specific groups or communities organising their own events at the centre – "activities" Vs "bookings"
- **Encourage other users to become active participants, not passive recipients**
 - How do we encourage people who use the space to take ownership of it? Discussion of what this means and how it might be a way to build up the confidence and resilience of the people and communities who use the space.
 - Examples included the pool players on Wednesday starting to help put tables away and tidy up, as well as make teas for themselves/one another. [Note from Kate as I type this up: it occurred to me that another reason why this is so good is that it frees up more staff and volunteer time, therefore increasing our capacity.]
 - All agreed that a good way to start doing this would be to ask Welcome Space participants what they're interested in, and work with them to organise special sessions with activities they've picked, encouraging and supporting them to take on some leadership/responsibility in organising and making them happen.
- **Generate feedback from clients/volunteers/community to present to the board**
 - Discussion of how we could find out about who is using (or not using) the centre, why, and what their needs are – Leilah suggested surveying the local area, maybe focusing on older people. Kate highlighted mobility & literacy as potential barriers

for survey responders; Leilah suggested offering to pick them up from people, or doing the surveys with people verbally as possible solutions.

3. What does the centre mean to people, what does it have to offer people? (Brainstorming)

- Space – both physical and emotional
- Fun, entertainment
- Inclusion
- Education
- Information and advice
- Practical support
- Food
- Warmth
- Safety

4. Who isn't coming to the centre? Why might that be?

- Leilah and Matt both quickly identified men and older people as groups they feel may be underserved by the centre.
- Barriers – mobility, health issues.
- Gaps in provision – no specific provision for men or older people.
- People might not know about the centre or what our offer is.
- Kate asked about what Leilah and Matt thought about the centre and young people, as for example people in their 20s are one of the less represented groups here based on what monitoring we have. Both said that they do not see this as an issue, as there are lots of things in society catering specifically to young people, who also tend to have more extensive social networks than older people, and that they thought that younger people might not have much of a need or desire to use the centre.
- All agreed that by surveying and asking people, we'd be able to get more detailed and concrete ideas about who is/isn't using the space and who is/isn't having their needs met by us, but that in the meantime before we get survey results we could get started on looking at provision for men, as it seems like a logical step given that we have three women's groups already, and nothing for men, especially as a couple of male users have asked about this.

5. How can we get these people to come to the centre? What might they benefit from?

- **Men:**
 - Start a specific men's group. Leilah suggested watching sports, Kate gave a pool tournament as an example. Matt has been looking at organising tabletop gaming with some of the Welcome Space men. Plan to ask WS men what they might want.
 - Kate mentioned that the funding she applied for is intended to spread the benefits of the women's health projects across to all genders too while carrying on with the women's stuff, and that there is seed-funding available for two new groups, and that a regular men's group could be one of these.
 - Loose ideas about starting with an activity like pool, and then transitioning into getting men talking together, maybe offering health checks too.
 - Leilah mentioned specific issues that affect men, especially younger men, such as physical violence on the street. Kate mentioned she knows male centre users who have said they have PTSD from violence they've experienced out & about.
 - Agreed that we would need at least 3 (ideally male) volunteers for men's group, as we'd want at least 2 running each session, and would need to account for illness/holidays etc. Agreed that Kate would be present at the centre during the

sessions, helping/supporting from a distance, but not facilitating the sessions themselves. Matt volunteered for this, leaving 2 more to recruit. Leilah said she could help supervise/support that kind of session at a distance by serving tea/coffee at the kitchen hatch. Kate encouraged Matt to take the lead on this if he feels up to it/wants to, stressing that she'd be there to support throughout.

○ **Older people/pensioners:**

- Leilah suggested having tea or dances for older people
- Matt suggested having sessions with music (e.g. Elvis, the Beatles) that older people might like, all agreed that this was a good idea. Kate emphasized the need for the music to be stuff that the people coming like, citing a group she volunteered at that was very good for that, contrasting it with stuff she'd heard about places offering stuff to older people that was very stereotypical, e.g. all Vera Lynne etc!
- Leilah said she'd talk to her mum Sylvia who lives locally and knows a lot of other older people nearby, and has experience doing groups herself. She also suggested doing specific surveys/research focused on people living in the nearby bungalows.
- Kate suggested doing some one-off or short runs of things focusing on older people rather than starting up another regular group, at least for the time being, and that if we are able to bring people in for a specific thing, that presents an opportunity to let them know about our offer, and so hopefully they come back.

○ **Other non-users; people generally:**

- Agreed that we need to find out whether people know about us, what people know about us, and what they might want from us. Leilah and Matt keen on survey idea.
- Kate suggested encouraging participants to do "homework" of asking a friend or family member who doesn't use the centre about if they've heard of us, what they might want or benefit from, and what might entice them to visit, then reporting back to us, as a means of both spreading the word, and gathering information.
- Kate suggested that mixed groups like Welcome Space and Citizen's Advice can be part of a consistent "core" of activities that are supplemented by more specific or specialised sessions, and that each "type" can feed people into the other.

6. Conclusions:

- **Next CRG meeting will be in July, exact date TBC.**
- CRG volunteers/members to **work on actions between the official quarterly meetings**, which will be more strategic and evaluative.
- CRG to set some targets/plans for what we want to achieve by next meeting – it was agreed that for this quarter, we'd focus on **collecting information** about the interests/needs of the community and on **raising awareness** of our current offer.

7. Actions:

- We will chat to people at the **next Welcome Space (Weds 30th April)** to find out what they'd like to see/do, either at Welcome Space, at a new group/session
- We need to create a survey/questionnaire to gather the general info we want from the community. **We'll meet at BHC to write & plan the survey Thurs 1st May 11:00-12:00.**