

Walsall for All Partnership Board Meeting

Date: 2nd June 2021

Time: 16:30 - 18:30

Venue: Microsoft Teams

Welcome & Introduction

David Primrose welcomed board members to the online meeting.

Fay Shanahan (whg) and Angharad Thain (MHCLG) were introduced to the meeting as guests.

Fay was standing in for Theresa Huburn (Director of People and Communities at whg). Fay is Corporate Director of Operations at whg and their involvement in the agenda is localised, working to create cohesion within communities. There is a lot going on the ground that they contribute to locally.

Angharad works in the Integration Team at MHCLG and recently started working for the Civil Service. Her background is in Community Engagement. She is passionate about effective community policy that it fits within the communities they are serving. She will speak later on in the meeting about the future of Walsall for All.

There were apologies from Matthew Green (Publicus), Geraint Griffiths (Clinical Commissioning Group), Maureen Lewis (Walsall Black Sisters Collective), Deb Rajania (Walsall College) and Claire Wills (Impact Programme – Walsall Council).

Three substantial matters were discussed: **COVID-19 Community Champions update, Walsall for All programme update** and the **future of Walsall for All**.

Matters Arising

There are no matters arising.

COVID-19 Community Champions

Refer to appendix 1 in the board papers.

Haroon Ravat and Irena Hergottova presented the COVID-19 Community Champions programme update. The work of the COVID-19 Community Champions fits within the Walsall for All model. Irena explained why the work of Community Champions is needed moving forward:

- To build trust and use existing partnerships.
- To understand how information was communicated. Before the community champions, there were already links with individuals in the community.
- Prior to Christmas, Walsall was invited to put in an application, along with 60 other local authorities who are also part of the national scheme.

- There is some existing practice nationally, such as using multilingual doctors and GP links with faith groups; training front line workers, outreach, volunteers and healthcare staff; and understanding data on equalities.
- Relationships need to be developed for this work to happen.
- Walsall will also contribute to evaluation.
- The Walsall model will build on the existing engagement model of Walsall for All, but with a refined focus and an evidence based approach. There will be partnership work with the Clinical Commissioning Group, the board, the Council, Public Health, the Healthcare Trust and Walsall Together.

Haroon led on the second part of the presentation:

- One of the key commitments is to reach seldom-heard communities.
- Approximately 20 groups have been awarded funding (some are working with another organisation):
 - **WALSALL NORTH**
 - Bloxwich Community Partnership*
 - Oak Tree Trust
 - Ryecroft Community Hub
 - The MindKind Projects CIC
 - **WALSALL WEST**
 - Darlaston All Active*
 - Multi Kulti CIC
 - Guru Nanak Gurdwara Willenhall
 - **WALSALL SOUTH**
 - Aaina Community Hub (with Walsall Black Sisters Collective and Iqra Supplementary School)
 - Afghan Association (with Somali Association – SOORA)
 - Aisha Mosque and Islamic Centre
 - Nash Dom CIC*
 - New Testament Church of God
 - Union of Muslim Organisations
 - **SPECIALIST / WALSALL WIDE**
 - Midland Mencap
 - The Motivation Hub
 - Refugee and Migrant Centre
 - Zebra Access

*A * means this organisation is doing targeted work in selected areas/communities of Walsall.*

There are some gaps, but there may be a second round of funding to ensure other groups/Protected Characteristics are included (such as Gypsy, Roma and Traveller, LGBT+ and other minority groups).

Haroon highlighted the work that took place in Darlaston, with over 2000 addresses visited and over 100 patients signed up for vaccinations. The aim was to increase vaccination uptake and understand concerns.

The work in Birchills was also noted, where a successful vaccination clinic took place at Birchills Mosque, with the support of The MindKind Projects CIC.

Charlotte Gough provided some additional updates:

- Induction and training sessions took place throughout May for all project leads and community champions. This included a communications and engagement training session (with Public Health and the CCG), where a toolkit was presented to approximately 25 attendees.
- A landing page on the Walsall for All website with information on the programme was created: <https://www.walsallforall.co.uk/community-champions>

Irena outlined the next steps of the programme:

- Working closely with stakeholders and funded groups to refine local strategy.
- Potentially, there may be further micro-commissions.
- There will be fortnightly meetings with organisations, Walsall for All, Public Health and CCG to provide the latest information and share best practice.
- Collecting monthly data from all providers and providing feedback to MHCLG.
- Ongoing support across all agencies involved.

Feedback:

- Paul Gordon mentioned that our approach is making a difference. The work to support communications on vaccinations at Forrester Street Surgery, where there were excess vaccines made an impact, with 600 people turning up for vaccinations. These vaccines would have been previously wasted.
- The work at Birchills Mosque also received positive feedback. GPs are seeing a fundamental improvement in the service. This is granular work on the ground.
- Nash Dom have also been involved to do some work on hesitancy within the Eastern European communities.
- Fay commends the work that has happened. The feedback from the team shows that it has been a success. She congratulates everyone involved.
 - Fay also mentioned linking together with the Walsall Together stream, as one of the priorities is Resilient Communities. The Community Champions work is an example of this. Fay recommended that this link is there to strengthen partnership.
- Dee Lytton asked how long will the programme last and how much underspend there will be? Dee recognises that many many groups are involved in this work, which is positive. She also asked about the younger

population and whether specific organisations will be targeted to support this work.

- Irena responded that the initial programme was for six months of funding up until September, however there has been a delay as they wanted providers to be 'warmed up' and understanding on what they could contribute.
- There is some funding left, but the team are currently waiting to hear from some organisations who originally put in an application but are being considered to do alternative work. Irena cannot give figures now but can provide information later in that regard. There is a desire to extend the programme until the end of the year to ensure any underspends are re-profiled.
- Haroon added that there were initial expressions of interest from youth organisations but applications were not strong enough. It is all down to need. However, Bloxwich Community Partnership's work includes young people and their geographical coverage covers 'cold-spots' (like the Blakenall area).
- Angharad thanks Irena and Haroon for the presentation. She mentioned that she was on the Community Champions team for a month before moving to her current role. She asked what did not work in Darlaston and how learning could translate in the next project.
 - Haroon responded that the work was completed in the last week of Ramadan. Haroon was not aware of the scale of hesitancy within communities and this was fed back to the mosque about the importance of the vaccine. In addition, the time of day to go door knocking had an impact. Darlaston All Active revisited the areas on the day of Eid and managed to speak to residents they were not able to speak to first time.
 - A'isha Khan said in the chat that Iqra Supplementary School is part of the programme and will be working with the younger people. A'isha added that at the women's centre, the number of women having the vaccine increased two to three days before Eid. When the women were asked about it, they responded that they wanted the vaccination 'for a different reason'.
- Paul responded with some final words around learning:
 - Appointment cards so they know who has gone for the vaccination, and also encouraged attendance.
 - Out of hours – being there when our residents were available.
 - Meeting on a regular basis to liaise with GPs on the latest situation.
 - In relation to the young people, the focus was on demand at the time but the best way to get to parents is through the children. If there are any upcoming schemes, these would be supported.

Walsall for All Programme Update

Refer to appendix 2 in the board papers.

Irena provided an update on the wider Walsall for All programme (in table form produced by Jane Murray). The update is divided into completed, ongoing and on hold.

- Most projects have now completed – the majority of these were Innovation Grant projects (smaller projects up to £10,000).
- One of these included the ‘In Their Shoes’ theatre performance, delivered to schools and adults.
- The Faith and Belief Forum’s Community Recognition Awards went online, with various stories from award nominees.
- Any money that has not been used due to projects being on hold or finishing early have been put into underspend.
- Other Walsall for All activities have included lunch clubs, buddy schemes and attending ESOL classes.
- Some youth projects involving social action have been inherited. The project officer, Mike Collyer, is now working with Children’s Services and sharing the learning.
- Groups like Mindful Gifts were involved in providing food and emergency supplies during the first lockdown.
- The rest of the projects are ongoing and on track to be completed by September.
- Projects like Deaf Support came along to support those who were Deaf, Hard of Hearing or Deafblind and provide Deaf awareness to professionals.
- There is still some work to do on the Welcome Pack and Buddying Scheme.
- Manor Farm Community Association hired a Development Worker for their project, bringing diversity to the organisation.
- DWP’s projects are ongoing, yet successful. The numbers are impressive.
- The Diversity and Inclusion Conference is coming up this summer.
- The team have managed to hold support for Gypsy, Roma and Traveller work.
- The Pledge is ongoing. This is something to be carried over into the sustainability and legacy plans.
- Places of Welcome had to move to online activity due to restrictions on not being able to meet face to face.
- There are two projects on hold:
 - Cultures of Walsall (Caldmore Village Festival) - this requires a lot of social mixing.
 - Community Researchers - this presented many challenges due to project participants’ circumstances.
- There is an error on the document (appendix 2) related to school linking. This activity is only suspended for the current academic year only.

Feedback:

- Gerry Lyng fed back on the DWP activity – 339 women have completed the Empowering Women programme, in which 59 have started work, 3 have started apprenticeships and 3 are in self-employment. 138 women are in training or work experience. Empowering Women Workshops will continue until September, however Gerry is looking into the possibility of mainstreaming this vital work.
- David thanks Gerry and the team for the work to support women and stresses the importance of helping people and getting people to stay in employment. Aaina Hub and Walsall Black Sisters Collective were also thanked for their involvement in this project.
- Angharad said this is excellent work. She asked Gerry and Irena about looking at second wave of integration programme and to consider if there was anything that they would do again or differently.
- Gerry responded that the project was aimed at communities in the north and south of the borough. If the project was expanded too much, quality would have been an issue. Diversifying the workforce is important and Gerry looks forward to the findings from the diversity and inclusion project.
- Dee saw the figures interesting. She asked if there were stats available for all the other projects.
 - Irena responded that we are already halfway through the evaluation report. The completed projects will have stats as well as ones that are due to finish in September. This would be available at the next meeting.
- Irena reflected on what could have been done differently – she mentioned that that putting together the strategy while launching was a big ask. She felt that this required a longer scoping time with partners on logic models.
- David mentioned the way Publicus used an ‘online canvas’ as a way of presenting the model of Walsall for All going forward. The report highlights the relevance of local participation. If members have not looked at the review yet, this can be accessed by going to: <https://bit.ly/WfAReviewReportCanvas>.

The future of Walsall for All

Refer to appendix 3 in the board papers.

At the last meeting in March 2021, the board agreed together the way forward, which was to **establish WFA as an independent arms-length equality, cohesion and integration body** in the form of a **charitable incorporated organisation**.

Since then, a large amount of energy was diverted towards the COVID-19 Community Champions, but the legacy work took place in background.

Angharad set the scene for the board:

- She opened the discussion that this meeting is a good insight into the LIP board and partnership working.
- Within the next 2-3 months, MHCLG will be collating all the great learning from all five areas. This includes successes and where there needs to be further work. There will also be opportunities to explore themes for the next phase of the integration programme. Angharad may approach Paul and Irena with these findings.
- Angharad also highlighted that there has been a change in ethos and how government partners up with local areas, changing the way councils operate. Walsall is an example of this.
- Walsall is set to be one of the integration areas to partner up with other areas for the second phase of the integration programme. Walsall would buddy up with two new local areas.

Paul led on the substantive element of this agenda item. He highlighted that we've done some fantastic things in Walsall. We need to share that good work with others and the lessons learnt.

- Paul summarised in three sentences:
 1. Walsall for All is great and has done some fantastic things.
 2. Everyone he has spoken to supports a legacy for Walsall for All.
 3. We are going to find some cash.
- The long version of the above is that Publicus have done some excellent work (the review) that we can build on and start thinking about. Paul credits the work Publicus have done.
- Paul also thanks MHCLG and adds that it is an honour to work with them in a different way. He also thanks them for allowing to use underspends to fund the legacy. This is half of what is needed to go for a further twelve months.
- Everyone he has spoken to has said they are committed and supportive.
- If we had not have invested in Walsall for All, we would not have had the same level of participation and involvement.
- The timeline presented in the paper (appendix 3) shows there is a quick turnaround.

- **Timeframe**

Agreement of the LIP board to continue the development of WfA as an independent arms-length equality, cohesion and integration body.	2 nd June 2021
Creation of Walsall for All as a legal entity.	30 th June 2021
Further development of the model including agreement of staffing, governance and financial support.	30 th August 2021
Further stakeholder engagement	30 th August 2021
Launch of the legacy WfA organisation	1 st October 2021

- Paul thanks the Ministry and local partners etc. He is convinced that this will be possible. It is important that we hold to the principles of WFA and work we do in the community and way we do it.
- A body of partners and trustees need to be involved.

Feedback:

- Jamie Hobday referred to PCC support. As it is a new person in office, he is not sure as to what the policy is. However, he will certainly be encouraging a direct approach.
- Fay asked about governance and where it would feed into, as there is a danger of creating a ‘new governance’, or is there a need for oversight of the work that is ongoing.
 - Paul responded that we can develop the governance model. The council will be an accountable body. As partners will be coming in, there is a need for a funders’ board and different types of membership.
 - David added that this will be different to other boards, as we will have people who are investing in organisation and have CIO status, but will also have a dynamic leadership group to set the strategy. The suggestion is for funders to be the “members” of the charity, with an independent board of trustees/directors.
- Dee queried on creating Walsall for All as a legal entity and who will do this work and be responsible for it.
 - Paul responded that if the board are happy, he will take on the work. His team will do the work and go through the stakeholder engagement. He will speak to funders and David regularly to ensure whatever happens is appropriate.
 - David added that it is difficult to think outside an organisation’s box and mirrors what is already there. With Walsall for All, we are building something. David refers to One Walsall’s quote and ensures there is a need for shared responsibility.

- *One Walsall passionately supports the continued growth and development of WfA and have been involved in this programme since the formation of the Board. One Walsall has led on and supported the recruitment of independent consultants to review the development of the work of WfA, which resulted in an innovative and creative proposal for the future of the programme. The true testament for the work of WfA will be in its legacy; the proposed creation of WfA becoming an independent CIO will ensure that the work around community cohesion continues to grow and develop across Walsall's diverse population.*
- Dee commented further on the operational point of view. She asked if it is the council, does this become a council led initiative to make Walsall for All independent.
- Paul responded that when Walsall for All started, there was a danger it would become a council organisation and it has not. This has been upheld since then.

Manjit Dehal reiterates everything said and mentioned that independence works well. Knowing what works in Walsall should not be lost. There is accountability from both a funders and board perspective. There must be an equal voice and equal drive to ensure Walsall for All continues to be a success.

We need to reimagine ourselves with fresh energy and fresh contacts.

- Paul mentioned that the portfolio holder made it clear from day one that no politicians will be on this board. This has not changed since then, enabling independence.
- Dee realises the potential nervousness and inequity of funders being funders, but notes the success has been down to officers of Walsall for All and the board.
- The experience of Walsall for All has strengthened participation from the community sector. The next phase is to stand on that and go higher. Leadership would have to draw heavily on this and the participation is sector rich.
- Dee further responded that funding is always going to be a critical issue, particularly with having money to continue the work.
- She referred to the mentoring, where one integration area will buddy up with two areas – is this what MHCLG wants? Walsall is held up as one of the success areas.
 - Angharad responded that MHCLG are currently looking at evaluation and data, exploring the possibility of expressions of interest (EOIs) on a set of themes and criteria. Ten local authorities will come out of that and the buddying scheme will be based on the EOIs. All five integration areas have amazing stories to tell.

- The buddying doesn't have to be fully matched. Ethos is more important. MHCLG will look at how to partner up other areas, however this is all a work in progress. By August, there will be something more concrete.
- Paul responded that MHCLG have encouraged us all to share best practice. There are some strong stuff activities like ESOL, which was hailed a great success. Irena and her team are often in contact with partner organisations. Charlotte is involved in regular podcasts and tells the story of the brand. In addition, partners find that politicians not being on the board is the most interesting aspect.

The next four months of activity will require following the timetable set out and scrutiny.

Angharad seconds all of this. Beyond underspend, funding cannot be allocated but time can be. She can work with Paul and Irena on sharing expertise.

Dee refers to the report and that the equalities department of council comes under Walsall for All – is this still a possibility?

Paul responded that those conversations in detail are yet to take place. Some staff may be seconded into the new organisation.

Reflection of meeting

In this meeting, the board have had an overview on the journey we have travelled on throughout the programme and where we are going next, in which there will be four months of intense activity.

The board were asked to reflect on what it feels like looking at the sustainability and transition of Walsall for All over the next four months.

Reflections from board members:

- Walsall for All has been a huge success because of the makeup of board and expertise of council officers. There is a lot of partnership working. Going forward, we need a vehicle that is independent but still enables partnership e.g. funding, getting right staff and impartiality. It is about making it happen. We have to start somewhere.
- We have that shared view that integration and cohesion is business. This is one of the values that got all the team working so hard, as there is a vested interest. Those concerns we still get about community engagement will continue. We will need Walsall for All as an agency that people can turn to for help.
- Paul pays credit to A'isha. His most influential conversation was with her, and she highlighted the positives and negatives of political involvement. He is inspired with her story and sets confidence in delivering work.
- Paul added that Charlotte is great example of what we have delivered in terms of 'added value' to individuals. When she first came to council

compared to now, he is proud of what the team have delivered. Paul also thanked MHCLG for their support and also David Primrose.

- Charlotte: There are so many opportunities to grow and develop Walsall for All – excited with the independent vehicle. As long as we have the support and the right partners on board, it will be successful.
- Jamie: Pleased with the work Walsall for All has done. The plan for extending it makes a lot of sense. Can see the concerns others have but we can make it work. Will do whatever we can to support it.
- Irena: Two wishes – a lot of work needs to be done with the Pledge. She imagines everyone in Walsall working towards the ethos of pledge and developing an understanding of communities and diversity, as well as using this positively in creating neighbourhoods. Systems like immigration have changed and integration going to be an important area of work and will need to be moving forward.
- Angharad: Community work is never 9 to 5. We are always working outside these hours when it comes to community engagement. Some things need ironing out and require thought, but it is more than possible.
- Fay: This is absolutely brilliant work and is very supportive. The key drivers are poverty and deprivation and therefore there needs to be employment and opportunities for communities. This links into the work of Walsall for All. We should be integrating and not duplicating.
- Gerry: reports from experts show that as we come out of COVID, sectors like hospitality need a lot of support.
- Manjit notes that we can nurture and harness the good will through partners. If this happens, Walsall for All will have a bright future to be independent. We need to hold onto the equality of opportunity.
- Dee is excited about the innovation of working and moving forward. There is a need for critical friend. Everyone on the board has obligation to Walsall for All and to continue to ask difficult questions, query and support.

David ended that these four months are essential. We need to ensure that the people who matter to us know that this transition is taking place. In a few days' time, Charlotte will distribute a short paragraph to all board members for them to use in inviting others to be part of wider conversations.

Dates of the next board meeting

All meeting will be online, taking place on a Wednesday from 4.30pm to 6.30pm.

- September 1st 2021

In attendance were:

A'isha Khan (Aaina Community Hub)

Angharad Thain (MHCLG)

Charlotte Gough (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)

Fay Shanahan (whg)

Gerry Lyng (DWP)

David Primrose (Board Chair)

Dee Lytton (One Walsall)

Haroon Ravat (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)

Jamie Hobday (Walsall Police Partnerships)

Irena Hergottova (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)

Manjit Dehal (One Walsall)

Paul Gordon (Director, Resilient Communities - Walsall Council)

Apologies:

Claire Wills (Black Country Impact - Walsall Council)

Deb Rajania (Walsall College)

Geraint Griffiths (NHS Black Country and West Birmingham CCG)

Jane Murray (Community, Equality and Cohesion - Walsall Council)

Matthew Green (Publicus)

Maureen Lewis (Walsall Black Sisters Collective)