

NWFED Board Meeting

Wednesday 14 October, People's History Museum, Manchester

Present: Katy Ashton, Chrissy Partheni, Heather Dowler

Attending: Alex Bird, Kaye Hardyman, Sam Long (all MDNW)

Apologies: Michael McGregor, Joanne Chamberlain, Steve Garland

NOTES

The Board Agenda followed the different themes of the 2015/16 Action Plan. These are the notes and agreed actions for each of the themes:

Theme 1 – Representing and connecting with members

Notes

Agreed to separate activity out into:

- Volunteer consultation to feed into development of SOS programme for MDNW
- NWFED member consultation to feed into NWFED development

The volunteer consultation takes priority and the following areas were discussed:

- The focus should be on capturing information from volunteers that will shape the SOS programme in 2016/17 and 2017/18
- The consultation should establish information about the volunteer's background, current role and skills – and identify what they would be looking for from a development programme
- The consultation should include an online survey (that can be shared with a wider group of contacts), questions that can be used for telephone / face to face conversations, and a framework for focus groups

The SOS programme itself was also discussed and the following notes made:

- The programme might well evolve over time to respond to need from volunteers
- It was discussed that the workshops could be modelled on Emerging Leaders Programme (details attached) where a cohort of volunteers is selected from an application process to sign up to a development programme of sessions over 6-9 month period (there may be work to be completed by delegates in-between). Line managers will also have to approve commitment of volunteers to take part.
- A cohort (or two cohorts) might be invited to apply to take part in a programme with 1 day workshop a month over a period of 6 months
- A range of volunteers would be encouraged to apply for the programme – identifying key volunteers in the region – who could then form a group of volunteer champions who can work with other volunteers
- MDNW are happy with an approach that focuses on a quality experience for a smaller number of volunteers rather than a programme that prioritises quantity of participants
- We will need to develop the model for the programme including who will deliver the sessions, where the sessions will take place (with possible rotating venues) and how long the programme will last
- A mix of people will be used to deliver sessions including museum professionals (from within NWFED board and membership and across North West) and external consultants (probably outside the sector).
- Some of the funding could be earmarked for: covering travel expenses of volunteers; to set up a self-sustaining network at the end of the programme; developing legacy documents which can be used by wider sector
- It was mentioned that the programme could be finalised between February and July 2016 but there may be an introductory session at the beginning of the new financial year.

Actions

- Heather to speak to Emma Sumner about her availability for this piece of work – reducing the number of days to reflect the period when Emma will be away in India
- Alex to share details of the Emerging Leaders programme for information

- Heather to create a first draft of a set of questions for the consultation to share with other Trustees and MDNW for discussion and comment

Milestones

- New deadline of **end of November** has been set to develop a framework for consultation including survey and telephone interview questions. Alex will send contacts for volunteer co-ordinator at MM who may be able to help look over questions. MDNW will also provide feedback on questions - Alex has spoken to Kate Glynn and she has agreed to look over the questions prior to the consultation.
- By the **end of December**, dates for focus group consultation will have been finalised tapping into existing volunteer group meetings (these meetings can be conducted in Quarter 4 of this financial year and **finished by February**)

Theme 2 – Delivering an effective programme of events

Notes about current programme for 2015/16

- Practical skills session – Chrissy to speak to colleagues at NML to see if they can run something at their stores – and see if something can be delivered before Christmas
- Networking session – NWFED to work with one or more universities to run another networking session for students to meet people working in the sector – to be planned for early 2016
- Policy and strategy session – NWFED to continue conversations with Curious Minds about another potential joint event on the Curriculum
- Show and tell session – Katy to talk to colleagues at PHM about ideas for a session on innovative interpretation / interpretation on a shoestring event – to be planned for Spring 2016

Notes about programme for 2016/17 onwards:

- MDNW are interested in discussing a future bi-annual conference run in partnership with NWFED in the future – to be discussed and followed up
- NWFED could establish a niche in sector support through delivery of training packages now not offered regionally by any other organisations. This includes:

- **A series of practical 'how to...' days** in basic skills always needed for refresher and new starter training (covering collections care; environmental monitoring and control; handling, packing and object assessment; storage and display techniques; working with specific types of collections and materials etc)

- **Away Days:** Themed away days to museums to include tour and guest speaker.

- **Emergency Network co-ordination-** As part of membership fee, NWFED could keep area emergency network lists up-to-date through annual review and deliver refresher salvage training for network volunteers (could be outsourced to Emma Dadson at Harwell or done in-house?)

Theme 3 – Promoting and communicating the work of NWFED

- Changes are being made to the website following Chrissy's discussion with a web developer who can update the NWFED website
- The newsletter continues to be sent out monthly with Emma Sumner's support – all Trustees to continue to provide content and stories
- A Communications Plan still needs to be developed – and ideally a new Trustee with a background in communications and marketing will be recruited (see theme 4)

Theme 4 – Strengthening the NWFED

- It was agreed that a priority for strengthening the Board was to recruit some new Trustees as the Board is already quite small and needs to think about succession planning when current Trustee terms come to an end

- Write an advert for new Trustees for NWFED Board to share with all current Trustees, MDNW and other places who might share / advertise - Katy
- Contact Business in the Arts about Trustee recruitment - Katy
- Contact Manchester Partnership about representation on NWFED Board – Katy to speak to Nick Merriman

AOB

Actions

- NWFED to circulate / share information about the ACE retail resilience programme – Chrissy
- NWFED to circulate / share information about security warning from Arts Council – All
- Contact Lynsey about updates on network / forum meetings that NWFED might attend – Katy
- See if Michael can attend next Cumbria Forum meeting – Katy
- Chrissy to set up a Doodlepoll for meetings for 2016 and circulate to all Trustees