

## Voluntary Sector Forum

3 December 2024, 10:00 – 12:00

York House, Twickenham

### Notes of the meeting

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#### 1. Welcome & Introduction

Jon Evans, Assistant Chief Executive, Richmond Council

##### Highlight initiatives:

- **Council Tax Reduction Scheme:** Richmond Council are asking residents' views about the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme which may be implemented from 1 April 2025. [The consultation](#) is open until **Friday 13 December** so please encourage service users to respond.
  - **VCS Hub:** As part of Richmond Council's commitment to partnering and supporting local Voluntary and Community Sector organisations, 1,300 square feet of ground floor space in the Civic Centre, Twickenham has been identified to operate as a proposed VCS Resource Hub. The space will allow VCS organisations to connect, collaborate and network. We would like to hear your views on how it will be most useful to VCS partners and invite you to participate in our online survey by Friday 13 December 2024.
  - **Twining Reaffirmation** – There is still time to apply to the Civic Pride Fund for funding towards events to celebrate the reaffirmation of Richmond's twinning with Konstanz in Germany and Fontainebleau in France. Celebrations will be taking place from 6 to 8 June 2025, across the borough with a range of events to celebrate the twinning.
2. **Community Spaces:** These have now launched for this winter. Details are available on [the Council's directory](#), which publicises all the in-person and virtual spaces and services available to our residents across all sectors, including community spaces, food support, health and wellbeing and advice.
3. **Winter fuel support scheme:** [This scheme](#) will provide an additional £100 for low-income households claiming Council Tax Reduction but not eligible for Pension Credit or the Government's Winter Fuel Payment. We are also running a targeted campaign to help eligible people sign up for Pension Credit (including being eligible for a Winter Fuel Payment if applying before 21st Dec), Attendance Allowance and Thames Water social tariffs.
- **VisitRichmond's Advent Calendar giveaway** – VisitRichmond's annual festive giveaway is back with a range of exciting prizes to be won every day until Christmas. This year's prizes include an overnight stay at the Selwyn Hotel, a meal for two at Sticks n Sushi and pantomime tickets - enter now on the [VisitRichmond website](#) for your chance to win.

#### **4. Multicultural Richmond's work with the Hong Kong community and Richmond Council's Borough of Sanctuary Fund**

Ravi Arora, Director, Multicultural Richmond and Harriet Baker, Refugee Services Programme Manager, Richmond Council Introduction of the Community Safety

- Ravi introduced [Multicultural Richmond](#)'s vision, activities and their work with the Hong Kong community
- Harriet introduced the [Borough of Sanctuary Grant Scheme](#) and details of the fund's priorities and how to apply. See website for details. Deadline for application 19 January 2025, outcome in February.

*See slides for details*

#### **5. Hampton Fund: new grant making approach and priority areas**

Richard Barron, Chief Executive and Adele Kimber, Chair, Hampton Fund

- Adele introduced Hampton Fund and the background of the Fund's recent strategic review and the aims
- Richard summarised Hampton Fund's grant giving in recent years and the current situation, the model of change for those facing hardship which informs the new strategy, clarifying Hampton Fund's role in helping those in hardship
- Richard covered the commitments of Hampton Fund including being more impact focussed, and the changes to the priorities of the grant programmes
- The full [Hampton Fund 2024-27 Strategy](#) is available online

*See slides for details*

#### **6. Superhighways: support and training available to help the voluntary sector use technology to its optimum**

Paul Firby, Tech Development Advisor, Superhighways

- Paul introduced Superhighways and the support they give to small charities and community groups to gain digital and data skills
- Paul shared a list of upcoming online training available, one-to-one advice sessions, free website platform for community groups and charities, bring your tech days, data essentials sessions including choosing and implementing databases; all open to community groups and small charities
- Most services are free
- Please get in touch with Paul on [paulfirby@superhighways.org.uk](mailto:paulfirby@superhighways.org.uk) or [info@superhighways.org.uk](mailto:info@superhighways.org.uk) if you would like to find out more about [Superhighways'](#) offering

*See slides for details*

## **7. Leisure Strategy and Richmond Moves campaign: How the voluntary sector can help residents become more active**

Rowan Griffin, Transformation Project Manager, Richmond Council and Jo Ann Taylor-Villaneuva, Senior Public Health Lead, Health Improvement (Prevention, Obesity and Healthy Weight), Richmond Council

- Rowan and JoAnn introduced [Richmond Moves](#), which aims to encourage those who are already active to remain active, and to encourage those who are not active to become active
- Community Sports and Partnership Network, a new network, will meet in January
- Rowan shared the poster for 'Richmond Moves' which outlines the aims and summary of the campaign under the headings 'Active People', 'Active Communities' and 'Active Environments'
- JoAnn shared the 'Move at Home' pack which is available in hard copy and digital download; videos instructions for all abilities to encourage people to move more especially in the Winter months are also available
- Please join the Richmond Moves Facebook page, and let us know about the activities you are providing for the community.
- Delegates discussed and shared services which encourage residents to move more
- Please let Rowan and JoAnn know if you would like to join the Community Sports and Partnership Network or have any questions

*See slides for the Richmond Moves poster*

## **8. How to distribute sector news via Council channels**

Katherine Foreman, Communications Manager, Richmond Council

- Katherine introduced the channels for Council communications including submitting news and events through the Community News pages
- Events are automatically directed to Visit Richmond website, but you can also upload directly onto Visit Richmond website
- Social Media – there are 14 local area Facebook Groups; join the relevant groups and once approved, you will be able to post directly to the groups
- Community Noticeboards are managed by libraries
- Please do sign up to the Community newsletters
- All images supplied should be in high resolution, landscape in orientation, and please ensure permission has been obtained
- Community Heroes – nomination will open in the New Year.

*See slides for details*

## **9. Open Forum and Q&A**

- Nisa Azeem, Working Together 2023 Implementation Coordinator, Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children
  - Kingston and Richmond Safeguarding Children Partnership (KRSCP) is hosting an ['Introduction to Safeguarding for the Voluntary Sector'](#) on 22 January 2025, 9.30-12.30 at [KingsGate Church](#) in Kingston. The event aims to enhance engagement with the voluntary sector and encompass a "Talk, Share, and Learn" space.

- The Early Help strategy is being refreshed – if you would like to get involved please get in touch
- Kathryn Williamson, Director, RCVS
  - Civil Society Covenant - the Government is developing a new covenant with the Voluntary Sector; RCVS invites local groups to join a discussion on the principles and wider aspects of the new Civil Society Covenant on Thursday 5 December 10am. Please sign up here to the [‘have your say’ session](#).
  - Please sign up to [RCVS bulletin](#)
  - Upcoming training and events: Online [Trustee network session Thursday 9 Dec](#), Online food partnership network 11 Dec online;
- Impact of National Insurance Employers’ Contribution increase
  - RCVS and the Council are keen to hear from groups; please email [action@rcvs.org.uk](mailto:action@rcvs.org.uk) with your comments on how the increase will affect your organisations. Motion being put forward.
  - Cllr Wilson will be putting forward the following Motion at the Council Meeting on 3 December:  
*“Council views with concern the potential impact on charities, the voluntary sector and the care sector of the proposed increase in employer NI Contributions announced in the recent budget.  
Council recognises the immense contribution made to this borough by charities, the voluntary sector and care givers; and the support they offer to residents across the borough, including the most vulnerable in society.  
Council joins those voices from across the country calling for the Chancellor to offer mitigations, similar to those being discussed for local authorities, to charities, the voluntary sector and to the care sector.”*
- [Richmond Voluntary Fund](#) is open for expression of interest closing 8 January. Visit website for more information on how to apply.

**Date of the next meeting tbc**