

ECSITE-UK COMMITTEE MEETING

10.00-14.30 on 9 February 2005, At-Bristol

MINUTES

Present: Gail Bromley, Linda Conlon, John Durant, Roland Jackson, Sally Montgomery, Gillian Pearson, Melanie Quin, Peter Trevitt.

1 Apologies and Thanks

Apologies received from Tristram Besterman, Sally Hall, Paul Jennings, Heather Mayfield, and Stuart Monro.

Thanks to John for hosting us and for the magnificent Patrons' Dinner on 8th. John being unavailable till lunchtime; Gillian Chaired the meeting except for agenda item (7).

2 Minutes of meeting held on 19 October 2004

The Minutes were approved.

3 Matters arising not covered below, or already superseded

Action point 5iv had not been completed:

5iv Visitor data; issues of benchmarking

The report on research conducted for ECSITE-UK by Tim Caulton is encouraging in content, but is frustrating in the patchiness of its data set. The problem is simple: different SDCs collect data in different ways for different purposes. The Ctee concluded that data the required and collected (for business planning, for PI measures, and for ECSITE research) must be standardised, and SDCs informed of the categories in advance of the research period. September would be best time for research.

Actions:

MQ to circulate draft data categories to the Ctee for refinement and approval (to include users, visitors, outreach; cost per visitor; visitors per staff member; exhibition space; percentage government support, with reference to Research Report and Annex).

JD/MQ to seek funding from, eg, Gatsby, Nuffield, to support the next Visitor Research exercise, combined with a PEST analysis, to inform how and when data is collected, analysed, interpreted, shared and used.

Life after ReDiscover:

John/MQ reported their meeting with Stephen Dunmore, CEO of the Big Lottery Fund; the meeting was followed by a formal response to the Fund's public consultation.

Gillian offered to arrange a meeting with Clive Booth, Chair of the Fund, as and when this should be useful.

4 Composition of the ecsite-uk Committee

Following discussion, the Committee members present in Bristol recommend that Linda be presented as the Committee's chosen candidate for Chair at the AGM in September, and be 'Acting Chair' from the date of John's departure to the USA end June. Given the number of absences from this Committee Meeting, all absent Committee members to comment on this proposal, for confirmation when we meet in May.

Stuart is the Committee's chosen new Treasurer. Should he be unable to accept the role, Peter is willing to take it on.

Actions:

All Committee members to comment/approve Linda as Chair elect

MQ to circulate list of all Committee members, with their status clearly indicated: who is due to stand down in September? How many positions for election? How many for co-option?

MQ to convey to Stuart the Committee's invitation that he take over as Treasurer

MQ to ensure the overdue amendments to the constitution are circulated to the membership in advance of the AGM (ref Minutes 27May2002).

5 Treasurer's report

End-December accounts were reviewed in the Treasurer's absence.

Actions:

MQ with John Gagg (the BA) to

- add a column showing total income/expenditure for all project cost centres to 'sheet 1';
- add projected cash flow to end 2005 to cash flow sheet
- rename 'other' income (sheet 1) as 'project grants and other' income

MQ to investigate and budget for statutory commitments with respect to redundancy payments

Gillian to circulate to all an article on the ending of short-term contracts.

6 Sustainability of ECSITE-UK

Prudent financial management of OST core support and on-going project funding will ensure ecsite-uk's operation to May 2006, at the current level of activity. Peter expressed concern about the amount of project work ecsite-uk has taken on, and the way it is all delivered through ecsite-uk/BA staff contracts.

Actions:

MQ/John to address balance between time spent on project management and time devoted to advocacy

MQ to list all SDCs that have been involved in an ecsite-uk project: what is the balance between big/small, new/established, UK regions?

MQ/Chair to place emphasis on relationship with OST, and renewal of OST core funding which currently runs to March 2006. With reference to the previous grant-renewal process, a first-draft document should be produced by October 2005

Gail/Peter/Roland to investigate costs and implications of ecsite-uk gaining charitable and limited-company status.

7 Advocacy

In March 2004, Government announced a joint DfES/OST package of £2 million for five English centres over the three-year period 2003-2006. Looking to 2006, the centres' situation is by no means secure. A letter to Ruth Kelly (new Secretary of State for Education) has been passed to Kim Howells, Minister for lifelong learning.

In Scotland, £500k from SEDA to support educational activities has been announced. This is additional to the current 'interim' funding. The centres' situation is stable; as is that of Techniquest in Wales.

W5 has completed a 2005-10 strategic plan, looking for public support equivalent to approx 30% of annual revenue. Discussion meetings are now to take place.

Actions:

MQ/John to seek early meeting with Kim Howells, DfES

MQ/John to mail 3pp briefing document to all relevant MPs and stakeholders; and to all SDCs for their use in local lobbying

MQ/Roland/Heather to progress the National framework for public dialogue, through successive drafts and meetings with RCUK: this represents a significant strategic opportunity for the sector – its target is OST, as distinct from lobbying at DfES for support for educational activities.

8 Gift Aid

The operational implications of introducing the proposed new Gift Aid bill are significant; so too is the loss of income if those operational issues are not successfully addressed. For SDCs that do not currently claim Gift Aid, the difficulties may outweigh the potential income gain.

Action:

Linda and Sally M both to investigate the VAT implications of the Gift Aid draft bill.

9 Date and location of next meetings

May 17, London (Dana Centre), 11.00-15.30

September 8, Dublin (BA Festival), AGM 10.00 thru lunch; Ctee Mtg 14.30-17.00