

ARVAC NEWSLETTER October 2013

As the autumn settles in we thought that as a team we would get in touch to update you about new events and leadership changes within the ARVAC Trustee team. We hope that you are finding our research community of interest and we have been delighted to see an increase in online members in the last few months.

The sector is going through another period of change and disruption. On the one hand there are some agencies which are experiencing growth and are being funded because they have skills that are needed or are able to work with those vulnerable groups which are now part of the Coalition's new welfare priorities and on the other hand organisations (from small to large) are closing down as grants are cut or withdrawn. The Sector will, I think, be very different five years from now and radically altered a decade from now.

What does that mean for ARVAC and for those working in and with the sector? There are three broad issues we need to think about and at our AGM in November they will be part of our discussion in the workshop as well as forming part of our Work Plan for 2013 – 14.

Issue One: Maintaining a Voice –

Our immediate priority must be to ensure the long term sustainability and future of the work of ARVAC and for me I think that means focussing on the values and principles which informed the development of ARVAC in the first place. There still remains a need for small organisations with little or no funding or

paid staff to be supported by the University sector and there still remains a need for the University sector to recognise their responsibilities in supporting the VCS. This support is one of those necessary but not sufficient conditions to ensure the Sector has a voice. Supporting and protecting that voice is also about ensuring independence and critical thinking within the Sector.

Issue Two: Establishing Alliances and Networks –

The changed and changing context has put at risk that independent voice and the right to disagree or to put an alternative perspective. As part of our shared and mutual protection I think we need to develop strategic alliances with those who share our values and who are concerned about the drift and direction of public policy and the place and future of the Sector. I think that organisations like National Coalition for Independent Action (personal note I both support this and am participating in it) represent the kind of initiatives we would to be associated with. Alliances are not about mergers they are about positioning ourselves so we can maximise our voice and those who work with ARVAC.

Issue Three: Critical Reflection and Planning Ahead –

We value critical thinking and it informs our Community Based Research Work as we see it as an important part of having an informed voice and one which can speak with authority. We need to be able to maintain that approach in our work over the next year and be thinking about where we would like ARVAC to be in five years' time. The rapidly changing political and economic system means that we need to be agile and strategic in our thinking and that requires us to be more assertive as an organisation – both in

communicating internally as well as externally.

At the AGM we will need to discuss and adopt a Work Plan for the year ahead. Do feel free to contribute to that discussion. - John Diamond (Writing in a personal capacity.)

We would like to invite you to our Annual Conference and AGM ;

“Learning from the Austerity Challenge: Why We Need an Independent and Vocal Voluntary and Community Sector” 21 November 2013 - Conference starts at 13.00. Lunch/ Registration from 12.00
AGM from 15.15 to 16.00

Venue: Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations
St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

Places are free but limited to 50, so to help us plan, please book your place on this booking site:
<http://arvaagmconf2013.eventbrite.co.uk>

ARVAC Leadership;

We will also be voting in some changes to the ARVAC Trustee Group at our AGM. As some of you may know, Jurgen Grotz has had to step down from being involved in ARVAC following a family bereavement. We hope you will join us in sending him and his family our good wishes and thoughts in this very difficult time for him. Jurgen has played such a vital role in ARVAC over the years and in the traditions of the voluntary sector has committed himself to make sure that ARVAC has a distinctive voice and community presence. We hope that Jurgen will be able to make a contribution in the future to ARVAC's activities. At our AGM event in Manchester in November we will be electing the new Trustee group. In the interim, the current Trustees have agreed that John Diamond should take on the Chair's role and that Kevin Nunan should take on the ARVAC Secretary's role.

Notice Of Annual General Meeting

Notice is given that the Annual General Meeting of the Charitable Company will be held on; 21st November 2013 at 15.15pm

At Greater Manchester Council for Voluntary Organisations,

St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester M12 6FZ

For the following purposes:

1. To receive the Minutes of the 2012 Annual General Meeting
2. To receive an update on membership of ARVAC
3. To receive the Chair's Report
4. To receive the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2013
5. To elect and/or re-elect Trustees
6. To appoint an auditor/independent examiner for the Charitable Company and to authorise the Trustees to set any remuneration.
7. A workplan for ARVAC in 2013-14
8. AOB

A member entitled to attend and vote at the meeting is entitled to appoint a proxy to attend and vote in his place. A proxy need not be a member of the Company.

18th October 2013 - By order of the Trustees

K Nunan, Secretary

Conclusion

We hope that you find our research community useful and always welcome ideas and suggestions as to how we can develop. If you would like to join the ARVAC Trustee or volunteer team do contact us via the website.

Best Wishes
The ARVAC Team.