

VSSN Meeting 09 September 2025 Minutes
Community House, South Street, Bromley, BR1 1RH

Present: Amanda Ross, – Clarion Futures; Janet Tibbalds – CLB; Christopher Evans – CLB; Debra Weekes – Mytime Active; Derek Holl – Transform Bromley Borough; Sue Potter – BTSE; Steve Smith – CLB; Jenni Mogridge – Soroptimist International (Bromley)

Apologies: Clare Dundrow, SEL Mind; Ray Dickens – Bromley Borough Foodbank; Brenda Parsons – Rotary Club/Bromley Dementia Friendly Community; Charlotte Bradford – Healthwatch Bromley; Tamasin Rhymes – Greener & Cleaner

1. Introductions and welcome

The meeting began with a welcome from Janet Tibbalds, the Chair of Community Links Bromley. The notes from the previous meeting were received without any comments.

2. Soroptimist International: Jenni Mogridge

Jenni Mogridge presented a vital new resource by Soroptimist International (Soroptimist) to help victims of domestic abuse in the Bromley area.

The project, inspired by a successful initiative in Dorset called "Fresh Thoughts," addresses the critical lack of accessible and coherent information for women experiencing domestic violence. The Soroptimists adapted this concept to create a version for Bromley, featuring local and national contacts, and secured funding for printing from local organisations like Rotary and the Lions Club.

The core innovation is the use of a QR code printed on small business cards and fliers. Scanning this code takes the user directly to the digital booklet on the [Bromley Women's Aid website](#). This digital approach is crucial for safety and confidentiality, allowing a woman to access information discreetly without carrying a potentially dangerous physical booklet. It also ensures the resource can be updated instantly online, preventing out-of-date contact numbers.

The resource launched in November to a positive reception from the Council's safeguarding portfolio holder and local MPs. Initial feedback underscored the severe need; Liam Conlon advised that half of his surgery bookings were related to domestic abuse issues.

The promotion of the resources will be paused for two months to avoid overwhelming the already stretched Bromley & Corydon Women's Aid service; the Soroptimists plan to distribute the small QR code cards in February to local police as well as schools, GPs, food banks, and other community networks to ensure the discreet information reaches those who need it most. The involvement of Social Prescribers would also be considered.

The Chair thanked Jennifer for her presentation.

4. Co-Production Update

Heather Sinclair-Constance/Head of Service, Adult Services Transformation and Improvement /Strategic Transformation Lead, sent apologies.

Christopher provided an update on the Co-production Charter, an initiative intended to establish a golden thread of collaborative decision-making between service providers and users across the local health and social care partnership, One Bromley.

While the effort originated in Adult Social Care and involved extensive engagement with service users, its progress was stalled by resistance from the health sector, which argued that its externally mandated responsibilities limit its capacity for full co-production, allowing only for consultation and engagement in certain areas. This led to the Charter being broadened to include wider engagement principles. Despite these roadblocks, the document is progressing through governance channels and is expected to be presented to the One Bromley Partnership in January.

A parallel and crucial piece of work is establishing a policy for recognising and remunerating the involvement of service users, acknowledging that participation costs, such as care and travel, often leave contributors out of pocket. This created a significant and unfair barrier to participation, particularly for the very people the co-production principles were designed to empower (those receiving or providing social care).

Christopher will share both drafts once they have been approved.

5. Providers Updates

Community Links Bromley

Christopher outlined the findings of a GLA-funded Community Resilience project focused on strengthening local capacity for emergency response and recovery, primarily targeting areas like Penge and Anerley where community engagement was perceived as weaker.

The project conducted a survey revealing that residents' top emergency concerns included water supply disruption, winter weather, and the highly relevant but often understated risk of cybercrime and power disruption (citing hacks affecting local services like the NHS). The survey also emphasised that the human impact of emergencies included severe issues with food disruption, loneliness, and mental health decline.

The most critical finding was the complete absence of equality considerations in the current Borough Resilience Plan. The study stressed that emergencies disproportionately affect marginalised groups, with disabled people facing severe barriers to evacuation and communication.

The report includes key recommendations and action points for the Borough Resilience Forum (where the report will be submitted in January).



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There was positive feedback from members to the report:

- The role of community organisations and faith groups (churches, mosques, etc.) as trusted messengers was highlighted. During a crisis, people rely on these local voices, suggesting this is a key strength the borough should utilise.

- Schools are crucial community assets; schools represent huge networks (parents, grandparents, friends) and are independent communicators that should be heavily involved in sharing information during an emergency.
- The importance of faith organisations was recognised; they engage with a massive range of diverse communities and often have physical spaces available to use, which are becoming fewer in the borough. Suggested adding more narrative around the value of faith organisations in the final report.
- Some other boroughs had better resilience plans. It was suggested to use those plans to benchmark and improve Bromley's plan.
- An example was brought up to illustrate the role of the business sector as an important asset to explore further (the Poundland fire in Penge, where a business, McDonald's, spontaneously supplied food to the local area).

Citizens UK

Christopher also gave an update on behalf of Citizens UK A Bromley Citizens Sponsorship Committee has been established with timelines to establish a new organization in the Borough. A mobilization meeting will be held in December. At that meeting, community manifesto for the forthcoming local elections will be discussed.

Innovation Fund

The Innovation Fund is set to be relaunched on January 5th with £150,000 available for rapid distribution by the end of March, necessitating immediate publicity and the organisation of New Year workshops to guide applicants through the process and improve bid quality.

In other funding news, a new National Lottery Officer has been appointed, who has noted a positive trend of increasing applications from Bromley; plans are underway to hold a funding forum early next year to connect funders with local groups and address the mismatch where some funders feel they aren't receiving enough applications from the area.

Grassroots Development

The new Grassroots Officer, Mark Gilyead, is using a diagnostic tool to better understand the needs of smaller organisations and is convening local network meetings (starting in Penge in January) to engage with the large number of voluntary groups currently unknown to the borough's main support bodies.

Mytime Active:

The Well-being Hub in The Glades is undergoing a forced relocation due to a lease issue, prompting an unplanned closure over the Christmas period before it reopens in a new Health and Well-being Centre next to the Civic Centre. While this move integrates the hub with the Dynastar Doctors' Surgery in a new building featuring three sound-proofed consultation rooms, there is concern that the loss of the passing footfall of the retail environment may negatively impact its function as an accessible, spontaneous social hub for regulars.

Concurrently, the Pavilion Leisure Centre in Orpington, which was closed for redevelopment, is anticipated to reopen in Spring (March) as a much-improved, more fit-for-purpose facility.

Clarion Futures:

The Jobs Plus Hub is supporting a new pilot program in Penge called the "Proper Blokes Club," a simple, low-barrier walking and talking group aimed at men in the area, addressing a significant gap in local male mental health support.

Transform Bromley Borough:

A comprehensive survey of 107 churches in the borough has yielded rich data illustrating the enormous scope of community services provided by the faith sector, including the finding that approximately 50% of all under-5s in Bromley attend a church-based toddler group. The project's next major action is to present this data publicly in the Spring (ideally March) to both the statutory and voluntary sectors, with the aim of fostering internal collaboration among churches to eliminate service overlap and, externally, to create better partnerships that leverage the churches' trusted assets and spaces.

The need for quality control and safeguarding was acknowledged, particularly around low-level mental health support, leading to the consensus that making existing training resources readily available to church leaders and volunteers is crucial for ensuring best practices.

6. Date of next meeting

Dates for 2026: Tuesdays, 10am – 12pm

- 10 March
- 9 June
- 8 September
- 8 December