

# FROM LOCKDOWN TO OPEN DOORS

a reflection on the pandemic and some thoughts about the future



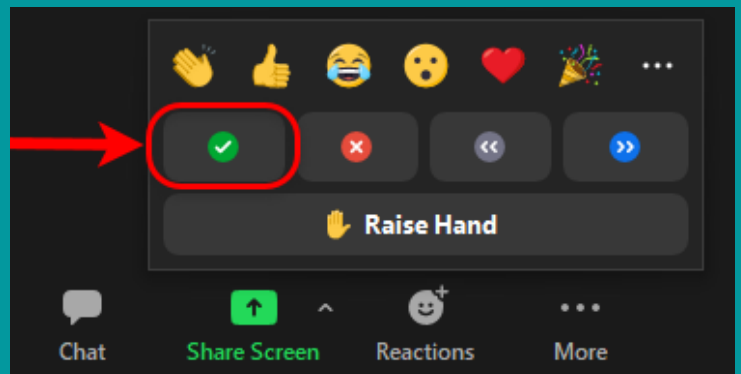
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To say that the last eighteen months have been strange is an understatement and third sector organisations and their trustees have been facing significant challenges. Some organisations stopped activities and services, some kept going in new ways and others faced huge increases in demand. And it is not over yet!



As we move slowly back to a new normal, some aspects of life and work may never go back to the way they were. Online meetings via Zoom and Teams, online festivals, web-based talks, online yoga, and telephone-based befriending services have enabled people to access, engage and be included without difficult and expensive travel.

Organisations have found new, creative, and ingenious ways to reach out to existing and new service users, clients, customers, audiences, and members.



Hybrid approaches will be the norm in the future, so we will have to think about digital and in-person activities and services to make sure that we continue to include and reach all our potential beneficiaries.

As many organisations start to re-open and re-engage, trustees will play an important leadership role in moving organisations from lockdown to open doors. Here are ten things to consider as you reboard your board into the new normal, and also some links to activities and services VAO can provide to trustees. VAO are here to help trustees, their third sector organisations and their volunteers so get in touch for information, advice, support and training.

## Virtual meetings

1. Does your constitution allow you to hold virtual or hybrid virtual and in person meetings? Do you need to amend your constitution to make sure that your governance structure allows for this?
2. Do all your Trustees have access to the internet and the skills to take part in online meetings? If not, does the organisation need to invest in some equipment or training for its Trustees?
3. If your organisation finds it difficult to attract Trustees, would online meetings widen the net and help look further afield than before?

## Delivering services

4. Do you need a conversation with your service users about the best way for them to access services in the future?
5. If you have staff, do you need to have a conversation with them about how and where they work in the future?
6. Can you make your venue covid secure so that staff, volunteers, and service users feel confident and comfortable to come back in? \*

## Funding

7. Have you had to eat into organisation reserves to keep going with reduced income? If so – or if your costs have gone up due to Covid-related demand – have you applied for emergency funding to help you get back on track? \*\*
8. Do you need to have a conversation with your funding partners about any changes you have had to make due to Covid?

## Wellbeing

9. Are you okay? Are your fellow Trustees alright? Do you need to just take a moment and check how everyone is doing?

## And finally...

10. Give yourself and your fellow Trustees a huge pat on the back. You have been amazing during the pandemic. You have got stuck in, kept going, done things differently, learned new skills, and found new reserves of energy and commitment.

Thank you!

\*If you run a community hall or community venue, and you need advice and support to get back open again and re-start activities, get in touch with Clare Gee about taking part in our new project to support community halls to move from lockdown to recovery. Contact [clare.gee@vaorkney.org.uk](mailto:clare.gee@vaorkney.org.uk) or phone 872897.

\*\*VAO is managing an emergency fund for third sector organisations on behalf of Orkney Islands Council. If you have had a clear financial impact from Covid and haven't applied yet, speak to Davie Campbell about whether your organisation is eligible and for further information on the application process. Contact [david.campbell@vaorkney.org.uk](mailto:david.campbell@vaorkney.org.uk) or phone 872897.