

GLAM Network – Spring Update

Corporate Performance & Resources

Scrutiny Committee 17th February 2022

Tom Narbrough

Background

GLAM is the Vale of Glamorgan Council's network for LGBTQ+ staff and their allies, launched on 23 January 2019 at the Annual General Meeting (AGM). GLAM was structured to ensure it was high impact, whilst requiring limited time of members with the key themes of Workplace Impact, Visibility & Awareness and Social & Support. Each of these themes has a lead and focuses on a specific area. These workstream meetings took place for most of the last year up until late October but by then we were down by two Lead positions and decided to revisit the structure in the New Year.

GLAM has been fortunate to have been chaired throughout by Matthew Curtis since and has evolved considerably such as supporting the development of other networks and providing an ongoing policy scrutiny function. We have also facilitated the WEI Stonewall submissions over the last few years and we have seen significant improvement. Although COVID delayed submissions for the last couple of years we are back on track and awaiting the feedback which is being finalised over the course of February. During this year's collation process we noticed a few areas to develop further which we will be heavily targeting for next year's submission but were also pleased to document some new progress and look forward to seeing the results.

Unfortunately, we lost Matthew to a new role with the Welsh Government last year and although it was a wonderful opportunity for him to pursue it has been a heavily felt loss given his role in founding and driving the network forward. The committee agreed to appoint myself Tom Narbrough as the interim chairperson until the next Annual General Meeting where further submissions and elections for steering group and lead positions will be held.

Introduction from the new Chair

I have worked for the Vale since January 2019 in a role that hopes to improve integration between Health and Social Care services. I have been a project and later programme manager in the public sector for six years and have experience working in helping vulnerable residents find housing and work, in writing and implementing partnership policy and later managing improvement and commissioning projects for social care in Cardiff Council prior to joining the Vale.

I started work at 14 years old part time and full time during the school holidays in a local tourist attraction where I grew up and caught the working bug early on. This led to a decade in hospitality managing hotels and restaurants so I've done some time at the coalface! Alongside this I took a degree in politics at Cardiff University which brought me to Wales and to where I found my true home.

In my spare time I'm keen on the outdoors and joining the Vale has given me the chance to find out about some wonderful new areas to explore and to resume my love of wild swimming. I also enjoy science fiction, rugby, stand-up comedy and am always working my way through a book or two.

I was an active member in Cardiff's LGBT network and have been very warmly received in the GLAM, most of all honoured to be nominated to step in as chair. I strongly appreciate the enthusiasm that the senior management and elected members show for the networks here and look forward to working with you all in the future. I really think the Vale Council is a nurturing and caring working environment and am grateful to help contribute towards keeping it that way.

Membership

Membership has gradually grown to the point where we are now at about 40 members and allies with the unfortunate loss of two members last year including Matthew, but a new member has joined early in 2022 and we hope that trend continues as there have been many new appointees joining the Vale recently.

There have been some issues brought to light around updating the membership which will be addressed at the next AGM, particularly around keeping memberships active and lists updated, but there are several initiatives taking place at a corporate level that could make this easier in future. It is also my intention to make managing memberships a part of one of the lead roles within the steering group.

It has been noted that is has been harder to engage with the wider network during the pandemic while people are working from home. This is particularly the case where people are often subject to changing roles and priorities and this will form part of our discussions around how to stimulate membership moving forward.

We are also pursuing other engagement platforms with assistance from our Business Improvement colleagues. It is our sincere hope that as the immediate threat from the pandemic recedes we can get a lively level of commitment back again and we all look forward to getting a social calendar back on the agenda, especially given the network's integral role in Barry and Cardiff Pride in the past!

2022 Relaunch

As interim chair I have elected to alter the timetable for the Annual General Meeting in order to facilitate a soft relaunch of the network's governance structure, including:

- Holding the AGM later in the year so that annual corporate milestones can be addressed prior to inviting participation from so wide a forum
- Refreshing the workstreams prior to holding elections for Leads
- Inviting new interest in subject-specific champions (such as Bi Visibility) through a refined definition of the roles
- Inviting interest in service area-specific champions to represent the GLAM network amongst our teams and provide a conduit for harder to reach areas and frontline staff

The intention is to hold an AGM in May for existing and potential members as well as any allies and relevant officers and members to discuss the future structure of the network, to introduce the existing roles and functions and to agree to conduct elections for the steering group. In addition, the meeting will discuss various areas that have been highlighted for improvement and development in future which include:

- Maintaining membership database and improving access to resources and comms
- Representing the network in service areas
- Continuing to work closely with HR and other corporate policy functions as a consultancy body
- Demonstrating the importance of the WEI submission and relating the efforts of individual staff and areas to any improved feedback
- Working closer with local business to promote the Vale as a safe and enjoyable space for LGBTQ+ persons

Celebrating Our Success

Finally, it is worth noting that we are honoured to continue to work with our HR division and sister network Diverse on ensuring that the Vale Council and the wider Vale of Glamorgan area are positive and nurturing environments for persons of any minority. The work that Matthew undertook in helping the Diverse network come about was a particularly proud moment for GLAM as a network and we are extremely grateful to see the warm and enthusiastic response from our corporate senior management to the work of both networks.

I am also proud to promote the fact that we have supported new management training sessions on Diversity & Inclusion as well as supporting wider colleagues and network members to access the specialised tools promoted through Stonewall and other similar organisations.

In particular I would like to thank my colleagues Nicola Hinton, Hannah Rapa and the wider comms team in making sure we have access to the right information and promoting it across the organisation. The initiatives I would particularly like to draw to your attention are the use of pronouns in email signatures and the relaunch of the GLAM logo to maximise our inclusivity, neither of which would have happened without their diligence and enthusiasm.



Many thanks for inviting this presentation and we look forward to providing updates as the year progresses.

Tom Narbrough

Interim Chair





