



# Action!



Newsletter

December 2008

## Voluntary and Community Action

### 10<sup>th</sup> Birthday Celebrations



We held our Annual General Meeting on Wednesday 5 November 2008 at our base in Bossard House, Leighton Buzzard. Following the

meeting we celebrated Voluntary and Community Action's 10th birthday with a cake after a short speech made by Liz Bagshaw, one of our trustees. The following is an edited extract.

"It is now ten years since the Dunstable and Leighton-Linslade Council of Voluntary Organisations were united as one organisation to cover South Bedfordshire and ten years ago there were two part-time members of staff – a development worker and a Volunteer Bureau manager. As trustees, we spent hours or even weeks writing funding bids to try to build enough capacity to train and support our local

voluntary groups, so that they could achieve their ambitions for their clients (the people of South Bedfordshire) and eventually it began to take shape.

The capacity of the organisation has grown hugely - our initial push enabled us to appoint John Gelder as Director and he has taken the organisation forward in leaps and bounds. The timing was right as both central and local government have come to recognise and support the growth of infrastructure organisations such as ours as the means of promoting the growth of the voluntary and community sector.



Thank you, to you the staff, and trustees, and members for all you have put into the organisation and the community - here's to the next ten years!"



### Local Survey Reminder



Everyone should now have received a copy of the Local Survey, sent out during November.

**Please take a few moments to complete the survey**, either the paper copy sent to your organisation or the online version at <http://digbig.com/4xqpx> by **Friday 12<sup>th</sup> December 2008**.

***Don't forget, every completed survey returned will be entered into a free prize draw for a brand new Toshiba Laptop.***

 **Christmas Opening Hours** 



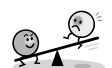







Seasons greetings from all the staff at Voluntary and Community Action.

Our offices are closed to the public from  
12.00pm Friday 19 December 2008 to 9.30am Monday 5 January 2009.

# Training



## Training and Events Programme January to March 2009

	<b>ASDAN - Certificate in Community Volunteering -</b> Priority is given to people who live in Tithe Farm, Downside and Parkside (14 weeks course)	Thursday 15 January	10am to 12.30pm
	<b>Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults</b>	Thursday 5 February	10am to 4pm
	<b>Assertiveness and Confidence Building (new)</b>	Tuesday 17 February	10am to 4pm
	<b>Marketing your Organisation , Products and Services - 2 part course</b>	Tuesday 17 and 24 February	7pm to 9.30pm
	<b>Finding the Right Funder</b>	Tuesday 3 March	9.30am to 12.30pm
	<b>Health and Safety at Work (new)</b>	Tuesday 10 March	10am to 4pm
	<b>The SOUL Record - How to measure soft outcomes</b>	Thursday 12 March	10am to 4pm
	<b>Moving from Grants to Contracts (new)</b>	Tuesday 17 March	10am to 4pm
	<b>BIG Lottery Funders Briefing</b>	Thursday 19 March	10am to 1pm
	<b>Basic First Aid (Certified) - 2 part course</b>	Thursday 19 and 26 March	7pm to 9pm
<b>For more information on the above please see the enclosed Training Calendar.</b>			
<b>Employing Paid Staff Workshop Coming Soon during February/March</b>			

### Guidance for those who deliver Adult and Community Learning, Offender Learning, and who deliver learning in the Third Sector

The Further Education Workforce Reforms include the introduction of a new professional status and associated qualifications for teachers, tutors and trainers, and apply to organisations delivering learning

programmes funded by the Learning and Skills Council (LSC).

To download your electronic copy of the guidance, please visit their website [www.lluk.org/3272.htm](http://www.lluk.org/3272.htm) or by calling 020 7936 5798.

### FREEDOM

*“Two hours a week that could change your life”*

**FREEDOM – A programme for women who are experiencing, have experienced or want to learn more about Domestic Abuse.**

**All programmes are free and a free crèche is provided**

**The Freedom Programme is currently being run by Christian Family Care at several community venues near you.**

**Freephone 24 hour Bedfordshire Domestic Abuse Information Line 0808 202 1796 for more details**

## Just say *Thank You* - in whatever way you can



As busy as we all are in the run-up to Christmas, it's a good time to formally thank your volunteers.

Everyone's budget is tight and a thank you doesn't have to be big or expensive; volunteers know that most organisations simply can't afford to pay out on presents.

But a small token gift costing just a couple of pounds with a personal note, thanking them for their efforts, perhaps highlighting something they've been particularly involved with, shows them that their help is truly appreciated. Even a Christmas card with a personalised thank you, and signed by as many personnel or committee member/group member as possible demonstrates that their contribution is valued. Encouraging a volunteer to gain an ASDAN Certificate in Community Volunteering is a perfect way for them to realise their skills.

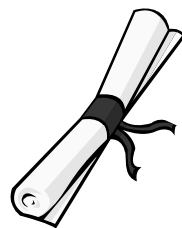
Don't forget to involve volunteers with your Christmas events, keep them informed about office closures, etc, and invite them to your staff Christmas party and other celebrations.

Not only will volunteers that are thanked feel happier, they are more likely to remain volunteering with your organisation. That means more highly motivated volunteers with more experience – meaning your organisation can be more effective in doing what it was set up to do.

## Help your volunteers get qualified - free of charge

A new course for the ASDAN Certificate in Community Volunteering (CCV) starts in January 2009.

The CCV is designed to develop and endorse the skills and knowledge needed by volunteers to work effectively, whatever their role – a benefit to any volunteer-involving organisation.



Created specifically for volunteers, the CCV is recognised as a Level 2 Qualification in the National Standards Framework.

Making CCV available to your volunteers shows you acknowledge their hard work and value their skills. As accredited training the Certificate is also an added incentive to potential and existing volunteers to choose your organisation and remain volunteering for that organisation.

The CCV is divided into five units, which can also be completed and accredited individually, making it ideal for volunteers who need flexibility. The units are:

- your role as a volunteer and promoting volunteering in your community,
- managing your time (keeping a work/life balance),
- dealing with meetings,
- health and safety,
- equal opportunities and diversity.

Volunteers don't even have to go through the possible nerve-racking agony of an exam to gain the CCV. The Certificate is based on putting together a portfolio (folder) of evidence that demonstrates their volunteer activities, which the course tutor helps with and advises on.

The CCV runs at Kingsland Campus, Houghton Regis, over 13 weeks on Thursdays, 10am-12.30pm. The first Thursday, 15th January 2009, is a no-obligation introductory session where more detail about the units and what the certificate involves will be given.

The CCV course is free to participants and there is no charge to the organisations they volunteer for. It is open to all but places are limited and priority will be given to applicants living in Tithe Farm, Parkside and Downside areas (due to funding criteria). Travel costs are also available to participants from these areas.

To find out more, book a place on the introductory session or on the CCV course, contact Jenny Allthorpe, Training and Development Officer at Voluntary and Community Action, tel. 01525 850559 or email [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk)



## Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation

### Grassroots Scheme



The aim of the scheme is to increase immediate grant funding and capacitybuilding support to small voluntary and community groups and organisations throughout the area, enabling them to continue or expand their work. Any small volunteer led community group that is connected to the needs of the local community can apply for a grant, provided that their annual turnover (averaged over the last three years) is less than £20,000 and that they have been running for a year or more. Groups must have a governing document which at the least shows the name, aim/purpose, objects of the group and which includes a dissolution clause and a list of executive members/trustees and their signatures. Grants range from £250 to £5,000.

### Small Grants Programme

The Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation is dedicated to improving the quality of community life of Bedfordshire people and, in particular, those in special need by reason of disability, age, financial or other disadvantage. Grants of up to £500 can be made for a wide range of purposes, including buying equipment, training staff and volunteers, printing and publicity, start up costs, social events and running costs.

### Help the Aged

Small grants of up to £500 for projects which benefit older people living in Bedfordshire and Luton. Each grant awarded is funded equally by Help The Aged and the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation.

### Sports Relief Fund

Support voluntary organisations or community groups that are using sport and exercise to strengthen communities and provide opportunities for people who are excluded or disadvantaged by fulfilling the following criteria:

- increasing access to sport and exercise for people who face social exclusion and isolation

- helping people who are experiencing difficulties in their lives to regain their confidence and self esteem.

Grants of between £1,000 and £10,000 are available, although any applications for more than £2,500 will need to show exceptional benefit in view of the small overall budget available.

**Applications are accepted throughout the year. The grant panel meets every quarter.**

**For more information contact the Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation, The Smithy, The Village, Old Warden, Beds., SG18 9HQ. Tel: 01767 626459, Website: <http://www.blcf.org.uk/grants/>**

## Mustard Seed Fund

The Church Urban Fund (CUF) is seeking applications from churches and faithbased groups under its Mustard Seed Fund. The 'Mustard Seed' programme makes grants up to £5,000 to test and try out new ideas.

**The programme operates on a rolling basis and applications can be made at any time.**  
<http://www.cuf.org.uk/page18531718.aspx>

## Awards for All

The Awards for All programme is going to change its format; from April 2009 the Big Lottery Fund will run their own, new its version of Awards for All, awarding grants of £300 to £10,000 to local communities for 2009-10. The programme will retain its current broad eligibility and straightforward application process. It will focus on four outcomes, which will cover a very wide variety of projects: people have better chances in life, with better access to training and development to improve their life skills. Stronger communities, with more active citizens, working together to tackle their problem. Improved rural and urban environments, which communities are better able to enjoy. Healthier and more active people and communities.



**Heritage Lottery Fund, the Arts Council of England, Sport England and the Big Lottery Fund, Tel: 0845 600 2040, Website: <http://www.awardsforall.org.uk>**

# Funding



## UK Waterways Grants Programme 2008

UK Waterways general fundraising supports our grant-making activities. Our grants are distributed through the Small Grants Scheme (up to £1,000) for which organisations, community groups or schools can apply.

They will we fund waterway wildlife conservation with priority for projects which support the following species: barn owls; water voles; Daubenton's bats.

Applications should be received by 2nd February, 2009. Successful applicants will be notified by 15th March 2009. To apply: 1. Download the Small Grants Scheme application form on their Website <http://digbig.com/4xwpr> or Email your application to [jenny.rogers@thewaterwaystrust.org.uk](mailto:jenny.rogers@thewaterwaystrust.org.uk) or post your application to:- Mrs Jenny Rogers, The Waterways Trust, National Waterways Museum, South Pier Road, Ellesmere Port CH65 4FW

## BBC Children in Need



Children in Need give grants for projects delivered by organisations working with disadvantaged children and young people, who must be 18 years and under, living in the UK, the Isle of Man or the Channel Islands.

The application should focus on the children your project will work with and the differences that your project will make for them. You should clearly be able to demonstrate how your project will change the lives of the children involved for the better.

You can contact them by Email: [pudsey@bbc.co.uk](mailto:pudsey@bbc.co.uk) or Helpdesk Monday to Friday 9am - 5pm Tel: 020 8576 7788. The next closing date is 15 January 2009. Full guidance and application forms are available on Website: <http://digbig.com/4xwqc>

## Naturesave Trust

The Trust supports environmental and conservationist groups in the UK. Grants are available to fund projects that deal with specific environmental and/or conservationist problems. Small grants range between £100 to £10,000.

Examples of funded projects are on website below.  
Tel: (01803) 864390, Email: [mail@naturesave.co.uk](mailto:mail@naturesave.co.uk)  
Website: <http://digbig.com/4xwpr>

## Community Woodland Network



The Woodland Trust is offering grants for community tree planting initiatives for this winter. If your community group is holding a tree planting event we can offer funding to help carry out your project. To be eligible you have to register your event with us on this website. Each group can apply for one grant of up to £100 for a tree planting event. If you are organising more than one event please contact us directly to discuss your project.

Tel: (01476) 581155 (office hours),  
<http://www.treeforall.org.uk/AboutTreeForAll/>

## Alcohol Education and Research Council - Small Grants Programme

Organisations such as community groups, universities and charities, etc are able to apply to the Alcohol Education and Research Council under its Small Grants Programme. Funding of up to £5,000 is available for projects that increase the capacity of individuals and organisations to deal with alcohol issues. Funding is available both for research and action orientated projects.

Applications can be made at any time. Visit their Website: <http://www.aerc.org.uk/grants.htm>

*We offer a free funding advice service for voluntary organisations and community groups. This service seeks to build the skills capacity of groups to identify, apply for and manage funding for their activities and services.*

*Rizwana Zaman, our Funding Adviser, gives advice and guidance on appropriate funding sources and helps with the completion of grant application forms.*

Contact Rizwana on 01525 850559 or [rizwana@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:rizwana@action-southbeds.org.uk)



## Central Bedfordshire Council's Compact Commitment

Central Bedfordshire

Central Bedfordshire has agreed to adopt the Bedfordshire and Luton Compact.

The Compact was agreed in 2002 and sets out a series of principles which should underpin the relationship between all parties who are working towards a common goal. It also shows their commitment to: work in partnership for the improved quality of life in society, encourage and support voluntary and community activity, jointly influence planning and policy, where appropriate.

South and Mid Bedfordshire District Councils and Bedfordshire County Council originally signed up to the Compact in 2002 and have seen many positive outcomes achieved through the commitment.

One example is the change that Mid and South Bedfordshire District Councils made to key voluntary sector partner's funding - changing from annual funding to three-to-five year agreements provided them with long term security rather than annual uncertainty.

## Local Strategic Partnership Representation

At the first meeting of the new Central Bedfordshire Shadow LSP, John Gelder Director of Voluntary and Community Action elected vice-chair of the LSP, has many years of experience working within local government partnerships to represent the sector and his appointment will be invaluable to ensure a strong voluntary and community sector contribution.

During October expressions of interest were invited for frontline voluntary and community sector

For more information about the Compact visit <http://digbig.com/4xwrg>

### Help us to Get the Compact Right

The primary purpose of our local **Compact Development Group** is to encourage good practice and promote positive relationships between voluntary and community organisations and the statutory sector in Bedfordshire and Luton, within the spirit of the Compact framework.

The Compact and the Codes of Practice are living documents and following on from the update of the Funding and Procurement Code, a review and update of the **Equality and Diversity Code** and the **Consultation and Partnership Code** is to begin soon.

**Representatives from both the voluntary and community sector** and the statutory sector are needed to help refresh the two Codes. **Can you help?** If your organisation would like to become involved contact the **Bedfordshire and Luton Compact Secretariat** on 01234 354366 or at [jan@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk](mailto:jan@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk)

representation on the LSP. This important role, requiring the representative to be involved in strategic issues and developments affecting the sector, has been appointed to Julie Benson from Advocacy Alliance. Her role within Advocacy Alliance includes the delivery of 'frontline' services and she has holds valuable experience of voluntary sector representation and an understanding of the community involvement process.

## Voluntary Sector Funding Arrangements

In order to provide stability and security with the third sector, Central Bedfordshire has announced it will honour all existing contractual arrangements that are in place, across all three authorities, if they continue into next year, providing these services are delivered in the area of Central Bedfordshire.

Where a Third Sector contract is coming up for renewal before April 2009, subject to satisfactory performance, Central Bedfordshire has said it will roll forward existing arrangements until a fundamental review of all Third Sector funding is undertaken during 2009.

## Home Fire Safety Checks

Don't miss out the opportunity to earn your organisation much needed funds. See the enclosed flyer for more information.



## Central Bedfordshire and Thematic Partnerships

Following the establishment of the Central Bedfordshire Local Strategic Partnership work will continue with Central Bedfordshire to ensure appropriate representation within new Thematic Partnerships.

There will be five Thematic Partnerships:

- Safer Communities
- Stronger Communities
- Environment and Economy
- Children and Young People
- Health and Well-being

These Thematic Partnerships will bring together key service providers and service users for a particular theme. Their primary function will be to develop and implement action plans for their thematic priority area, which will align to the identified priorities in the Sustainable Community Strategies and key indicators and targets in the Local Area Agreement. Voluntary and Community Action recognise the need for third sector representation within these partnerships and is working to ensure this takes place.

If you are interested in being in these partnerships, please contact Helen Nottingham Tel: 01525 850559, Email [helen@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:helen@action-southbeds.org.uk)

## Voluntary Organisations Consortium (VOC)

*For children, young people and families*



The VOC is a network of Voluntary and Community agencies, groups and organisations.

It is not an organisation or a legal entity in itself, rather a facilitator of member agencies. These agencies join together to promote greater involvement and understanding of local and national strategies which affect the children, young people and families that they work with.

The VOC came into existence after two existing Bedfordshire networks joined forces – the Family Network and the Voluntary Organisations Consultative Group.

### What does it do?

- Disseminates important and relevant information to member agencies.
- Advocates on behalf of and for the benefit of the sector at all meetings.
- “Represents” the Sector as and when necessary to ensure they are actively involved and influencing.
- Encourages positive working relationships between the statutory and Voluntary and Community sector.
- Supports agencies to deliver on the five

Every Child Matters (ECM) outcomes to the best of their ability.

- Offers a support network, enabling links to be made with other agencies within the same field.
- Enables agencies to share resources, ideas and support.

The VOC is currently a sub group of the Bedfordshire Children & Young Peoples Strategic Partnership. From April 2009 it will be part of the new Bedford and Central Bedfordshire partnership structures continuing to support any voluntary or community sector group or agency working with children young people and families across the whole of Bedfordshire.

***The next VOC meeting is on 24th February 2009 2.00-4.30pm at Sandland Court, Pilgrim Centre, Brickhill Drive, Bedford, MK41 7PZ.***

If you would like to attend future meeting or receive the VOC newsletters: VOC Update [Linda@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk](mailto:Linda@cvsmidandnorthbeds.org.uk)  
VCS Youth Agency Newsletter [janice.scott@connx.org.uk](mailto:janice.scott@connx.org.uk)

For more information visit [www.voluntaryworks.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryworks.org.uk) then click on Working with children and young people.

## Resources

### Checklist for computer workstations

The Health and Safety Executive has produced a VDU checklist for safety reps, which should be of use to anyone doing checks on computer screens and the rest of the 'human interface' An eight page pdf, 269KB, at <http://digbig.com/4xwrr>



### Assessing organisational health online

An online benchmarking tool for charities and social enterprises was launched on 16 October. It has been tested with social enterprises across Yorkshire, and can be used anonymously to measure the cost-effectiveness and strength of finance and governance functions. <http://digbig.com/4xwhe>

### Fair Play for Children!

Fair Play for Children exists to promote understanding and action on the Child's Right to Play. Let's make the world fit for all of our children to play in! <http://digbig.com/4xwhn>



### Clear advice on volunteering while on benefits

Jobcentre Plus has published renewed guidance on volunteering whilst on benefits, following a government commitment to the Commission on the Future of Volunteering earlier this year. Office of Third Sector news item at <http://digbig.com/4xwrs> or download 'Volunteering while receiving benefits' (pdf, 371KB) from <http://digbig.com/4xwrt>

### Reviewing the role of libraries in the modern world

A modernisation review of England's public library service has been launched by Culture Secretary Andy Burnham. Led by Culture Minister Barbara Follett over the next

six months, it will look at such things as innovations "to make them come alive for generations to come", before a report is published for wider consultation. <http://digbig.com/4xwhp>



### Consulting employees on health and safety

By law, employers must consult their employees on health and safety issues at work. The Health and Safety Executive has two new leaflets on this - one aimed mainly at employers in workplaces with fewer than 25 employees (pdf, 109KB) at <http://digbig.com/4xwhg> and a brief guide to the law (pdf, 136KB) at <http://digbig.com/4xwhh>



### Mentoring on Gift Aid

The Institute of Fundraising has set up an online Gift Aid Mentoring Forum for small organisations looking to maximise their Gift Aid income and share best practice, with experts available to answer questions. <http://www.giftaidhelp.org>

### Information e-mail Bulletins

Voluntary and Community Action produce a bi-monthly Funding Bulletin, a quarterly Training Bulletin, and also a weekly local media review. If you would like to subscribe or find out any more information on any of the above, please e-mail [info@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:info@action-southbeds.org.uk)



**Inclusion of information within this newsletter does not imply endorsement by Voluntary and Community Action.**

**Action!** is the newsletter of Voluntary and Community Action, Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DA.

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Copy deadline for the next issue is 17 February 2009.