



# Action!



Newsletter

February 2009

## Voluntary and Community Action

### Local Survey

At the end of December The Voluntaryworks Consortium sent out a Local Survey to all known voluntary and community groups within Bedfordshire. The number of responses returned for collation and entry into the Laptop Prize Draw was excellent at just under 450 and we would like to say a big **thank you** to everyone who took the time to complete and return their survey.

Because most organisations took the opportunity to provide explanatory text alongside their answers, thorough analysis and validation of the data is taking longer than expected. As soon as the data is available we will publish the resulting conclusions and work with local statutory agencies to develop an action plan to ensure the local environment for Third Sector organisations to 'thrive' is present.



The Laptop Prize Draw was conducted within the last day and we are pleased to announce the winner was **Family Groups Bedford**. A presentation will take place next week, details will appear in due course on our website.

### A Guide to our Support and Services

*This is the first article of a series of six to inform you of our support and services that we can offer your group or organisation. This series of articles will run over the next 12 months and we hope you find it informative and helpful.*

#### Training

Voluntary and Community Action runs a variety of regular training workshops providing a programme of popular training events to meet the learning and skills development needs of employees, volunteers and trustees of voluntary organisations and community groups.

Our Bespoke programme enables us to design and deliver training that meets the specific needs of your organisation and at a time and venue to suit you.

We also hold networking events on particular issues, where you can learn and share best practice.

Our training and development team assess what organisations' needs are when annual

update forms are completed and aim to fulfil those needs.

Kim Mead, our Training and Information Co-ordinator, and Jenny Allthorpe, our Training and Development Officer, can help you with any queries you may have. Kim deals with booking forms, letters, promoting and publicising the events via flyers, e-mails, etc., and Jenny runs the majority of our Bespoke programme.



Kim also produces our Training E-bulletin, informing organisations of trainings and development events that could be of interest.

To find out any more information, contact Kim or Jenny on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk)



**Coming Soon - Book Now to Ensure a Place!**

## Measuring Soft Outcomes The SOUL Record



12th March 10am—4pm

Soft outcomes are difficult to measure directly as they can include achievements such as raised confidence, motivation or personal skills.

The SOUL Record (Soft Outcomes Universal Learning) offers ways of measuring soft outcomes and evidencing the progress of informal learning for both adults and children. This workshop will help you to:

- understand soft outcomes
- use and analyse questionnaires, worksheets and observations to evidence progression
- summarise your results for funders.

Venue: Leighton Buzzard.

Cost: Members £45, non-members £55.  
This price includes a resource CD.

## A few places are still available on:

Assertiveness and Confidence Building  
- 17th February

Health and Safety at Work  
- 24th March (New Date)

## NEW Free Course

### Employing Paid Staff

23rd March 2009 10am - 4pm



**Want to review and update your employment contracts and policies?**

**Employing for the first time?**

Whether you employ one or 50 people you have responsibility to keep up to date with changes in the law and to know your employees' rights. This course will look at key areas of employment legislation including:

- Contracts of employment,
- Statutory rights and entitlements,
- Employment law best practice,
- HR policies and procedures.

The morning session will be run by Peninsula Business Services, the UK's largest employment law consultancy. In addition to information giving, there will be ample chance to put your questions and concerns to an employment law expert.

Venue: Disability Resource Centre, Dunstable.

To book your place on any of our workshops, contact  
Kim on 01525 850559 or  
[training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk)

## Getting Tender Ready (Moving from Grants to Contracts)

Across the UK we are entering a new era of public funding for the voluntary and community sector. We have seen a shift from grants to contracts happening and we will see further moves to increased open and competitive tendering, often for services we have traditionally delivered through grant support.

Voluntary and Community Action is working closely with Voluntary Action Luton and CVS in Bedford to support the sector in Bedfordshire to get ready to tender for public services. If you want to find out more about funding and preparing for contracts, contact our funding and development advisers on 01525 850559. **Getting Tender Ready** workshops are being held shortly across Bedfordshire to help prepare trustees and staff for these major changes.

**Choose from the dates and venues below and enrol now to ensure a place.**

Leighton Buzzard, Tuesday 17<sup>th</sup> March, 10am - 4pm, contact: 01525 850559.

Luton, Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> February, 10am - 4pm, contact 01582 733418.

Bedford, Tuesday 3<sup>rd</sup> March, 10am - 4pm, contact 01234 354366.



## Keep us informed - don't miss out on volunteers

People enquiring about volunteering want information that is up to date and as comprehensive as possible.

At the Volunteer Centre we rely on what each organisation provides. But sometimes when things change, organisations don't tell us so we can't pass on the latest details.

The information we give to potential volunteers helps them decide which organisation they want to volunteer for and in what role, so if we don't have the right facts, it could mean your group is missing out. For example, if the training schedule we hold for you is out of date, a potential volunteer may choose a similar role in a different organisation.



We try and update organisation and volunteering opportunities regularly, but often we are unable to confirm details.

We know that volunteer co-ordinators and managers are very busy people, often covering more than one role, and checking that the particulars we hold are correct may not seem a priority. But what information is passed about your organisation and volunteering opportunities could make all the difference to people wanting to volunteer.

Please make time to ensure we have the correct and most up to date information for your organisation and your volunteering vacancies. We can go through the details we hold on the phone, or can email information for you to check. It should only take a couple of minutes for each opportunity and it could make all the difference as to whether enquirers choose to volunteer for your organisation or another.



## What's your story?

Good publicity can be a real bonus in attracting new volunteers. But finding the time, resources and contacts needed to get coverage for your

organisation may seem impossible on top of an already hectic work schedule.

This is where the Volunteer Centre can help. We write articles for the local press regularly, highlighting the benefits of volunteering and informing readers about the wide range of activities they can get involved with. While coverage is not guaranteed, several local papers frequently include our contributions.

So, if you have a story or idea that you think would interest the press but don't have the time or resources to do anything about it, contact the Volunteer Centre.

We can give advice as to how you are most likely to receive coverage, arrange to meet with your group, interview your volunteers, and get a real feel for why people should choose your organisation.

So, if you're looking to recruit new volunteers to your project, club or group why not give us a call?



Contact Lucy, Rebecca or Janet on telephone 01525 850559 or email to find out more.  
[volunteer@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:volunteer@action-southbeds.org.uk)

## Developing a Supported Volunteering Toolkit

A Supported Volunteering Toolkit Project. This is an embryonic attempt to develop a useful Toolkit while fostering a self-supporting community of people with experience and/or interest in furthering supported volunteering in the UK. Their working definition of Supported Volunteering is "an organised effort to overcome the barriers to volunteering faced by a group of individuals with common support needs".

<http://digbig.com/4yeaw>

## Voluntary and community service recognised

A high proportion of the New Years Honours List went to individuals for service to voluntary and community services. A quick overview on Charity Finance news alert at

<http://digbig.com/4yeay>.



## Neighbourhood Grant Fund

The objective of the scheme is to support activities and projects that contribute towards the actions and objectives identified in, or set out for inclusion in, the Neighbourhood Improvement Plans in Tithe Farm, Houghton Regis.

They can give grants from £100 to £1,000, (there is only £2,000 left) if you are active in Tithe Farm.

**The deadline for receiving applications is before the end of March. Contact Donna Wilkinson on 0845 849 6291 or email: [donna.wilkinson@southbeds.gov.uk](mailto:donna.wilkinson@southbeds.gov.uk)**

## Ecominds

The Big Lottery Fund has awarded Mind £8.8million from its Changing Spaces programme to start up an exciting new grants scheme. 'Ecominds' will fund projects across England that will help transform local environments and build the confidence and self-esteem of people with mental health problems.

Schools, community groups and voluntary organisations will be encouraged to apply for funding. They must develop plans that show how they intend to rejuvenate their local environment but most importantly, show how they will involve local people with mental health problems on their eco-project.

**For more information tel: 0845 766 0163, email: [contact@mind.org.uk](mailto:contact@mind.org.uk), website: <http://digbig.com/4ydgj>**



## Greensand Ridge Local Action Group

A group representing local rural business and community interests is looking to invest £2.4 million in community enterprises, farms, forestry and other small rural businesses in the Greensand Ridge area of Bedfordshire and Cambridgeshire over the next 5 years.

The Group aim to use this fund to support the local rural economy to become more competitive and sustainable. A Greensand Ridge rural development strategy and

investment prospectus has been produced by the Group to help guide its grant funding investment activity and that of others.

**For further information on this exciting funding opportunity, please contact Joel Carré on 01767 626458; or visit: [www.greensand.org.uk](http://www.greensand.org.uk)**

## Tesco Charity Trust

Community Awards benefit local organisations whose core work supports children's education and welfare, children and adults with disabilities, and elderly people. Awards are one-off donations and range between £1,000 and £5,000.

**For more information: tel: 01992 646768, Applications can be made via their website: <http://digbig.com/4ydgk>**

## Church and Community Fund

The Church and Community Fund is available to the Church of England to support its activities at all levels and in all areas. The Fund is open to diocesan, deanery and parish projects; and those particularly welcomed will aim to bridge the gap between the church and the local community. Applications for grants of up to £15,000, are considered four times a year. 2008 deadlines are: 8 February; 6 May; 13 August; 5 November.

**The Church and Community Fund and The Central Board of Finance, Church House, Great Smith Street, London SW1P 3NZ, tel: 020 7898 1767, email: [ccf@c-of-e.org.uk](mailto:ccf@c-of-e.org.uk), website: <http://digbig.com/4ydgq>**

## Parks for People

Heritage Lottery Fund and the Big Lottery Fund (BIG) are relaunching the Parks for People programme.



Parks for People offers grants of between £250,000 and £5 million for projects involving urban or rural green spaces designed for informal recreation and enjoyment. There will be two closing dates for both first-round and second-round applications: 28 February 2009 for a decision in June 2009; and 31 August

# Funding



2009 for a decision in December 2009.

Contact tel: 020 7591 6000, fax: 020 7591 6001,  
email: [enquire@hlf.org.uk](mailto:enquire@hlf.org.uk) Additional Guidance Notes  
can be downloaded from their website:  
<http://digbig.com/4ydgg>

## Grantscape - Working With Nature



GrantScape invites applications for projects aimed at creating, conserving or enhancing the biodiversity of England and Wales.

Projects must demonstrate that they support priority habitats and/or species listed within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan, and be within 10 miles of any licensed landfill site.

Applications in the required format can be submitted at any time before the closing deadline of noon on Monday 6 April 2009.

You can apply online on their website:  
<http://digbig.com/4ydgq>

## Grants for War Memorials

The Grants for War Memorials scheme provides grants for the repair and conservation of free-standing war memorials in England to help organisations and individuals responsible for their upkeep. They are designed to support the care and preservation of war memorials to a high standard, and to prevent their decay. Eligible War Memorials will be free-standing structures. The next application deadline is 30 April 2009.

For general grant enquiries please contact Email: [grants@english-heritage.org.uk](mailto:grants@english-heritage.org.uk) The Conservation Officer, War Memorials Trust, 4 Lower Belgrave Street, London SW1W 0LA, tel: 020 7881 0862, email: [info@warmemorials.org.uk](mailto:info@warmemorials.org.uk) website: <http://www.warmemorials.org.uk>

## Low Carbon Buildings Programme

Organisations can apply for 50% of the cost for installing approved microgeneration technologies. Grants are available for the



purchase and installation of: solar thermal hot water, solar photovoltaics, wind turbines, ground source heat pumps, automated wood pellet stoves and wood fuelled boiler systems.

Grants for the installation of microgeneration technologies are available to public sector buildings (including schools, hospitals, housing associations and local authorities) and charitable bodies.

For more information visit their website:  
<http://digbig.com/4ydgq>

## Home Office Community Fund

Youth violence is a major concern that continues to devastate families, communities and neighbourhoods.

The Home Office is working across government to provide help and support for young people, parents and victims. Voluntary and community organisations are key to this process and can make a real difference by transforming the lives of vulnerable young people who are either at risk or who have been involved in gangs or carried or used an offensive weapon.

For more information on the fund please visit Tribal's website at: <http://digbig.com/4ydgq> or Grants Programme Administrator, 2nd Floor, 154 Gt. Charles Street, Queensway, Birmingham, B3 3HN, tel: 01223 372564

## Trusthouse Charitable Foundation

The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation was formed out of a trust operated by the Council of Forte plc which inherited investments in the Granada Group.

The Foundation offers grants under two separate programmes. The small grant programme for grants are for one-off purposes, or one-off capital items, such as equipment or small capital works. The large grant programme offers grants of normally between £10,000 and £30,000 for capital projects only (i.e. equipment, building or capital works).

Miss Judith Leigh, Grants Manager, The Trusthouse Charitable Foundation, 6th Floor, 65 Leadenhall Street, London EC3A 2AD tel: 020 7264 4990 website: <http://digbig.com/4ydgq>



## Central Bedfordshire Council Formally Signs the Compact

Central Bedfordshire has formally signed the Bedfordshire and Luton Compact, a working document that encourages more effective equal working partnership between local, voluntary and community organisations (held on 14 January at Priory House).

The Compact was agreed in 2002 and sets out a series of principles which support 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.

Colin Poulter, Coordinator for Mid Beds Link a Ride said: "Compact had a direct impact for Link a Ride as it enabled us to enter into a lease agreement for our fleet of vehicles. This provided brand new minibuses and removed the need for capital to repair and renew them. It also gave job security for the drivers and enabled investment in staff training."

Richard Ellis, Director of Business Transformation for Central Bedfordshire said: "Central Bedfordshire and its voluntary and

community organisations enjoy good working relationships and share many aspirations; dedication to public life, support for the development of strong and healthy communities, and the pursuit of inclusiveness. The community and voluntary sector in Bedfordshire deliver high quality services across all sectors of our communities, and in doing so help us deliver our strategic objectives.

"The Compact builds on these good relationships and will continue with the development of genuine working partnerships that deliver our joint priorities in Central Bedfordshire."

John Gelder, Director of Voluntary and Community Action summed up: "The Compact will provide an excellent framework for consultation and partnership working and we welcome the opportunity this presents to engage with Central Bedfordshire in the development of services to improve the quality of life for local residents and those who use the services provided by the sector."

Martin Trinder, Chief Officer for Community and Voluntary Service added: "In adopting the Compact, Central Bedfordshire has made a clear statement that it values the local voluntary and community sector, which has a unique role as an advocate for local people, particularly those marginalised in society, and as a service provider."

**For more information about the Compact visit [www.bedsandlutoncompact.org.uk/downloads.htm](http://www.bedsandlutoncompact.org.uk/downloads.htm)**

## Increasing Readability and Effectiveness

The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) recently carried out a survey and amongst a number of statistics being looked at, 84 per cent of respondents to the survey felt the Compact should be updated to reflect changes in policy and the operating environment, and that it should be clearer and written in a more accessible way.

These views are reflective of those of the Bedfordshire and Luton Compact Development Group who completed a review and update of the Code of Practice on Funding and Procurement last year. Arrangements to review the Code of Practice on Consultation and Partnerships and also the Code of Practice on Equality and Diversity are now in place and the first meetings of the two review groups have been scheduled.

Another clear message from two-thirds of respondents to the NAVCA survey stated that their relationships with government had improved since the Compact was introduced.

# Public Policy and Partnerships



## Consultation on School Admission Arrangements - 2010

You will be aware that from 1 April 2009 the functions of the County Council will transfer to the new unitary authority of Central Bedfordshire for Mid and South Bedfordshire.

The new authority will be responsible for agreeing the admission arrangements to schools for September 2010. As the consultation on those arrangements must be completed by 1 March 2009, it has been agreed that Bedfordshire County Council will carry out the consultation on behalf of the new authority. The consultation will take place between 2 January and 28 February 2009. For more information: <http://digbig.com/4ydqc>

## Consultation on Draft Planning Obligations

The Sustainable Communities service within South Bedfordshire District Council is working towards producing a Planning Obligations Supplementary Planning Document. The draft document has been produced and is now open to public consultation and explains what planning obligations are.

### What is the strategy trying to achieve?

- To help deliver sustainable communities
- To help ensure impacts of new development (including smaller development) are properly mitigated or compensated for
- To provide a more transparent, streamlined, consistent and practical approach to

negotiating obligations

- To accord with Circular 05/2005, development plan policy and best practice.



### How do I view the document and submit comments?

South Bedfordshire District Council plan to formally adopt the Supplementary Planning Document by the end of March 2009. The consultation began 8 January 2009 and ends 19 February 2009. If you have comments on the document they must be submitted no later than 5.15pm 19 February 2009.

For more information: <http://digbig.com/4ydrs>

## Central Bedfordshire Social Care, Health and Housing Conference

Central Bedfordshire's stakeholder conference on social care, health and housing provided a valuable opportunity for the new authority to introduce itself and meet voluntary and community organisations.

Presentations from the statutory sector were made by Simon White, Interim Director of Community Services, Andrew Morgan of NHS Bedfordshire and Julie Ogle the Central Bedfordshire Director of Social Care, Health and Housing. All spoke of the need to improve the delivery of services and the importance of partnership working.

The third sector (voluntary and community groups) were well represented at the event and presentations were provided by Charlotte Bonser from Voluntary Action Luton about her work on the Bedfordshire LINks, and Alan Humphreys from Grand Union Housing speaking about housing from the sector's perspective. The final third sector presentation was delivered by John Gelder, Director of Voluntary and Community Action who covered the wide topic of partnership working and engagement between the statutory agencies and the third sector. He emphasised the value and expertise that third sector organisations can bring to the statutory sector, backed up with facts and figures, and demonstrated how working in partnership will bring better outcomes.



# Resources



## Venues and Halls for Hire Directory

Voluntary and Community Action have now produced a directory of venues and halls for hire within South Bedfordshire.

<http://digbig.com/4ydrw>

## Library Resources

Voluntary and Community Action have an extensive library with more than 800 publications covering issues that affect the voluntary sector. The directory can be searched online, and the publication can be viewed at our offices.

<http://digbig.com/4ydrt>



## Community help from Wilkinsons

Wilkinsons strive to be Your Good Neighbour, and work with and support their local community. To do this, every year they give 1% of their profits back to the community, giving to causes and organisations that their customers are passionate about.

<http://digbig.com/4ydhb>

## R.A.V.E Bus

The R.A.V.E Bus is a mobile venue which can be hired for use as a youth or community meeting place, a focal point of contact or a mobile office. The bus can accommodate up to 15 people at any one time and is wheelchair accessible.

<http://digbig.com/4ydhb>



## Occupational standards for sector development workers

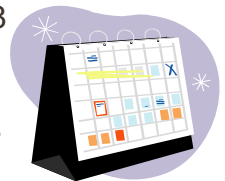
A new set of National Occupational Standards is being developed for development workers in infrastructure organisations (sector support bodies), who support other voluntary and community organisations.

Feedback on the draft is welcome to the end of February 2009, with a questionnaire due back

by 16th February - go to <http://digbig.com/4ydhd> for details. There is a consultation event in London on 12th February, contact UK Workforce Hub, email: [esther.gillespie@ukworkforcehub.org.uk](mailto:esther.gillespie@ukworkforcehub.org.uk)

## Changes in statutory annual leave

Statutory annual leave increases from 1st April, from 4.8 to 5.6 weeks (that's 24 to 28 days). This can include the eight bank holidays. See Sandy Adirondack's legal update on actions to take, <http://digbig.com/4ydhf>



## Guide to Discipline and Grievance draft Code of Practice

Employment advisory body ACAS has published a draft guide to go alongside their draft Discipline and Grievance Code of Practice, which is due to come into effect on 6th April 2009. <http://digbig.com/4ydhc>

## DVD for safeguarding standards in places of worship

The Churches' Child Protection Advisory Service has been given funding to produce a DVD in eight languages that will promote safeguarding standards in places of worship.

<http://www.ccpas.co.uk>



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

**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 18 March 2009.