



# Action!



Newsletter

October 2008

## Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire

### Local Survey - Win a Laptop Computer!

The national survey (detailed below) is only being sent to registered charities so we have decided to carry out our own local survey – with considerably fewer questions – amongst voluntary and community organisations in Bedfordshire. This will be sent out separately in the next week or so and your responses will provide us with vital evidence in helping to ensure future local government policy meets your needs.

The survey will be administered by CVS and Voluntary and Community Action, using Survey Monkey. The answers you give will be treated in the strictest confidence, used for research purposes only, and will not be published in a way which identifies you or your organisation.

Organisations will be able to complete the survey by either going on-line OR

completing a short questionnaire and returning it in the free post envelope to be provided.

As an incentive, **all respondents who submit responses and include their name and contact details will be entered into a prize draw for a brand new laptop computer.**



To enable us to plan future support and activity with local statutory bodies it is very important that we get a high return for this LOCAL survey. The Government Office for the East of England has described our approach as *innovative* and one *designed to test the robustness* of the Government's own survey. The results of the Local and National Surveys will be published in early 2009.

Further information about the local survey can be found at [www.voluntaryworks.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryworks.org.uk)

### National Survey to Measure Support

The quality of support given to voluntary, community and other 'third sector' organisations in every area in England is to be measured by a new survey of the sector. The Office of the Third Sector in the Cabinet Office is to ask third sector organisations to share their experiences to help give local government the information it needs to ensure an environment for a thriving third sector.

Over 104,000 charities, voluntary organisations and social enterprises will have received the survey questionnaires in late September/early

October. This will be the biggest ever survey of the sector and will ask about local and national funding relationships, advice and support services and the state of relations with local statutory bodies.

Further information about the national survey can be found at [www.NSTSO.com](http://www.NSTSO.com) or [www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/thirdsector)



# Training



## Stop Press!! - Don't miss these FREE Autumn Courses

### Progressing into Partnership

9th October 2008,  
9.30-12.30pm



More and more voluntary sector organisations are finding that by joining forces they are able to successfully compete for public service and government agency contracts. This morning workshop is for staff or committee members who want to explore the how and why of collaborative working.

It will help you:

- increase your understanding and awareness of the benefits of collaborative working
- look at the obstacles and ways to overcome them.

You will be given guidance and tips on how to start building partnerships.

**Trainer: Ian Curtis, Collaborative Working Officer for CVS Mid and North Beds. Venue: Bossard House, Leighton Buzzard. Contact Kim on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk) to book your place.**

### How to Write a Business Plan

27th November 2008, 9.30am-12.30pm

A good business plan can help you demonstrate sound planning within your organisation and to potential funders. This introductory workshop will explain what a business plan should include and how it can help with developing and sustaining the work of your organisation.

Content will include:

- purpose, structure and content of a business plan
- how to carry out a SWOT analysis
- how to set SMART objectives
- how to carry forward the planning process.

There will be practical exercises, handouts and a practical planning toolkit to take away.

Participants will have the option for follow-up organisational support in producing their business plan.

**Trainer: Jenny Allthorpe. Venue: Bossard House, Leighton Buzzard. Contact Kim on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk) to book your place.**

### Empowering the Voluntary Sector to Influence Public Bodies

14th October 2008, 10am-4.00pm

This very popular workshop, run by Terry Perkins, Public Law Officer at NAVCA is aimed at all voluntary organisations that negotiate for funding or service delivery with public bodies. It will help you to:

- develop an understanding of the principles of public law
- challenge unjust funding and consultation decisions
- identify when a public body has not acted lawfully
- develop the skills to negotiate with public bodies on issues such as funding cuts, failure to consult on policy changes, and local authority decisions concerning the provision of services.

**Venue: Bossard House, Leighton Buzzard.**

Places are limited to 15 participants, so please book as soon as possible.

The cost per person is £35 or £25 to members. Contact Kim on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk) to book your place.



*"Excellent day's training. The workbook is the best resource from a course I have ever come across. Having attended this workshop I know enough about public law to feel confident to incorporate it in my negotiations with public bodies"*

# Training



## Give it Some SOUL!

20th November 2008, 10am-4pm

SOUL stands for Soft Outcomes Universal Learning. Soft outcomes are difficult to measure directly as they could be achievements such as raised confidence or personal skills.

The SOUL Record offers several ways of measuring soft outcomes and evidencing the progress of informal learning for both adults and children. It will for example, allow groups working with children to map a child's progress against the five outcomes of Every Child Matters. 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: Bossard House, Leighton Buzzard. Cost: Members £45, non-members £55. This includes a resource CD. Contact Kim on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk) to book your place.**

## Basic First Aid

4th & 11th November 2008 7pm-9pm

This workshop will provide you with a British Red Cross certificate in Basic First Aid, valid for three years, as a nominated person to take charge in an emergency. It is suitable for organisations who require a member of staff or volunteer to have basic lifesaving skills. The workshop will help you to:

- carry out basic lifesaving skills
- identify priorities of First Aid
- manage an incident
- react confidently in an emergency situation.



Content includes: treatment of the unconscious; recovery position; choking; control of severe bleeding and shock; burns and scalds.

**Trainer: Valerie Murray. Venue: Bossard House. Cost: Members £50, non-members £75. This is a two part workshop. You will need to attend both sessions to receive your certificate. Contact Kim on 01525 850559 or [training@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:training@action-southbeds.org.uk) to book your place.**

## FREE Certificate in Community Volunteering

- \* *Are you involved in voluntary work in your community?*
- \* *Do you live in in the Parkside, Tithe Farm or Downside areas?*
- \* *Want to gain a recognised qualification?*

This very popular certificate is for anyone who may or may not have gained a qualification before. It is run over a number of weeks starting January 2009 and will:

- credit you for the voluntary work you do
- provide a stepping stone to vocational qualifications or employment
- give you lots of support and help you promote volunteering in your neighbourhood.

To reserve a place or for more information contact Jenny at Voluntary and Community Action on 01525 850559.

## Bedfordshire Advice Forum Autumn Training Programme

Bedfordshire Advice Forum promotes and supports advice and information services in Bedfordshire. This Autumn they are running a range of full or half day courses aimed at advisors and support workers:

Introduction to Money Advice - 25th September

Local Housing Allowance - 16th October

Employment and Support Allowance - 4th November

Benefits for Older People - 12th December.

All courses will be held at Bunyan Meeting Free Church, Bedford. Fees range from £40 for members and £80 for non-members for a full day and £30 for members, £60 non-members for half-day course. Contact BAF Secretary on 01234 360607 for details.



## BIG Community Spaces



The Community Spaces programme aims to: Create better local environments; Increase people's access to quality local spaces for interaction, play and recreation; Increase the number of people actively involved in developing and running a practical environmental project that is visible in their community – making more interesting places for children to play, safer places for people of all ages to sit, greener spaces where people and nature can grow and flourish; Improve partnerships between communities, support organisations and local authorities.

There are 2 grant schemes

- Small & Medium Grants - grants of between £10,000 - £49,999.
- Large & Flagship Grants - grants of between £50,000 - £450,000.

Tel: 0121 236 8565,

Email: [info@community-spaces.org.uk](mailto:info@community-spaces.org.uk),

Website: <http://www.community-spaces.org.uk/>

## 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 for Downside, Parkside and Tithe Farm.

They can give grants from £100 to £1,000, if you are active in Downside, Parkside or Tithe Farm.

The deadline for receiving applications is Tuesday, November 11<sup>th</sup> 2008. Contact Rizwana Zaman, 01525 850559 Email: [rizwana@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:rizwana@action-southbeds.org.uk)

## The Batty Charitable Trust (BCT)

The BCT will generally support smaller charities, especially those working at grass roots and local community level. Large national charities will normally not be considered. Multi-year funding will not be considered. The BCT will normally award one year grants of between

£1,000 and £10,000 to charities which can demonstrate that such a grant will make a significant difference to their work.

There are no deadlines for submission. Applications will be received at all times but please note that it may take up to four months to obtain a decision from Trustees.

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

## The Sustainable Development Fund

This grant scheme, administered by the Chilterns Conservation Board, is available to support projects which bring environmental, social and economic benefits to the Chilterns AONB. Individuals, groups and organisations can apply, for work which must be completed by 29th February 2009.

For more information <http://digbig.com/4xmye>, Kath Daly, Countryside Officer at the Conservation Board, 01844 355524.

## Lloyds TSB Foundation



Grants are available to support underfunded charitable organisations in England and Wales that improve the lives of people in local communities, especially those who are disadvantaged. There are two grant programmes which are: The Community Open Programme and The Community Priority Programme.

Tel: 0870 411 1223, Email: <http://digbig.com/4xmyf>, Website: <http://www.lloydstsbfoundations.org.uk>

## Repair Grants for Places of Worship

The Repair Grants for Places of Worship scheme offers grants for urgent repairs to listed buildings which are in regular use as public places of worship. Grants are available for formally constituted religious organisations. The main focus of the scheme is on urgent repairs required within two years, to high level elements of buildings. Other urgent repairs to historic fabric at risk of loss can also be considered.

# Funding



Grants are offered in two stages. Stage-one 'development funding' enables projects to be planned and the repair costs established. Stage-two repair grants will only be offered once projects have been fully developed and the costs are known.

For further information go to their Website:  
<http://www.lpwscheme.org.uk>

## Abbey Charitable Trust

Support to local communities (particularly in those areas where Abbey has a significant presence) by helping disadvantaged people through: education and training, local regeneration projects which encourage cross-community partnerships and financial advice to help the target groups make informed choices about their finances. Donations are made to a maximum of £20,000, although most donations will be in the range of £500 to £4,000.

Tel: (0870) 608 0104, Email: <http://digbig.com/4xnbq>  
Website: <http://www.aboutabbey.com/home>

## Harvest Trust



Harvest Trust is a national UK charity which organises simple seaside holidays for disadvantaged children. The holidays take place between April and October each year and are specially for groups of 8 to 11 year olds who really need a week away.

Final closing date for holiday applications is 31 January 2009. Tel: 01559 371190,  
Email: [office@harvesttrust.com](mailto:office@harvesttrust.com),  
Website: <http://digbig.com/4xnbh>

## The Joanies Trust

The Joanies Trust will only consider applications from organisations working with young people aged 11 to 25. They want to support projects that offer intensive support as well as those that promote preventative work and diversionary activities, including the use of art forms for their therapeutic value, and specially those that are designed to lead to individual development through integration,

work opportunities or accreditation. Most grants awarded average £1,000.

**They will only fund registered charities, the next deadline for applications is 31 December 2008. Download the application form from their website and post it together with your annual accounts. The Administrator, The Joanies Trust, PO Box 42, Ledbury, Herefordshire HR8 1WH Tel: 01531 633345, <http://www.joaniestrust.org.uk>**

## Faiths in Action



Faiths in Action is a £4 million grants programme open to faith, inter faith, voluntary and community sector organisations.

The deadline for us receiving your completed application (in electronic or paper format) and all associated paperwork in our Cambridge office is 5pm on 1 November 2008.

Community Development Foundation, The Michael Young Centre, Purbeck Road, Cambridge CB2 8HN, Tel: 01223 400 343, Email: [fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk](mailto:fundingadmin@cdf.org.uk), Website: <http://digbig.com/4xnbe>

## Access To Nature

Access to Nature will fund projects in urban, rural and coastal communities with the aim of encouraging more people to enjoy the outdoors, particularly those who face social exclusion or those that currently have little or no contact with the natural environment. The priority will be to fund projects that make a lasting change in areas of high social economic and/or environmental deprivation. Grants range from £50,000 to £500,000.

Tel: 0845 600 3078, E-mail: <http://digbig.com/4xmyh>,  
Website: <http://digbig.com/4xnbf>

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

## Marketing your Volunteering Opportunities

Continuing the theme of good practice in volunteer recruitment and management from the last issue, this time we're looking at Marketing your Volunteering Opportunities. Don't forget, a range of information sheets are available via our website <http://digbig.com/4xnay> or by contacting us (see back page for contact details).

If you market your volunteering opportunities successfully, you should see an increase in the number of potential volunteers that contact your organisation - then it's up to you to convert this interest into active and loyal volunteers.

### Deciding on your message

Put yourself in a volunteer's shoes. Why should they help your organisation rather than any other out there? "Because we need volunteers" or "we provide essential services to people who really need them" is a good starting point. You have to let people know why volunteers are required, but on its own, it's not enough.



You also need to say exactly how people can help, i.e. what activities you want volunteers to do. Try to word this in such a way that people can imagine themselves carrying out these activities.

In addition you need to dispel any reservations potential volunteers may have, which could include their age, lack of experience, disability, etc. So, if experience isn't absolutely essential, say that, and if you provide full training (whether formal or informal), say so.

Also important to remember is to sell the volunteering opportunity. Look at the benefits a volunteer gets from choosing to help your organisation. As well as the satisfaction gained by helping a worthwhile cause, think about other positives, such as making friends, learning new skills, building self-confidence, invitations to social events, etc.

## Volunteers Co-ordinators' Networking event

The Volunteer Centre South Bedfordshire has arranged a Volunteers Co-ordinators' Networking Event with the theme of Supporting and Supervising Volunteers, to be held on Friday 5 December, 12noon to 2.30pm, in Leighton Buzzard.

When you know what you want to say, you then have to find the best places to get your message across.

One of the most successful (and cost effective) ways of attracting new volunteers is by word of mouth, through anyone associated with your organisation, including staff, existing volunteers, supporters and clients. Therefore, make sure everybody around the organisation knows which roles you're looking for volunteers to fill.

Use word of mouth in conjunction with one or more other method to reach as many potential volunteers as possible.

Posters can work well if you keep your message simple and avoid having too many words. You need enough information to interest people without overwhelming them, and to put in how they can find out more (website, tel. numbers, email, etc).

Where you put your message is as important as the message itself. Think about where your potential volunteers are most likely to be. Consider libraries, town halls, GPs and dental surgeries, schools and colleges, sports centres, community buildings, local events, places of worship, local shops, and job centres. Remember to also let the Volunteer Centre South Bedfordshire know what volunteers you're looking for.

Other ways to reach potential volunteers include media coverage (both editorial such as press releases and advertising), websites, networking events (this can include a local professional group, sports club or faith community) and volunteer brokering services from some professional bodies.

Also, what about holding an open day at your organisation?





## Creating Central Bedfordshire

Since our last update, there has been much activity around the appointment of personnel to the Director and Head of Service positions within the new Council. We will publish further details when the full picture is known.

The Shadow Executive has agreed a Strategic Plan for 2009 -11 setting out the vision, values and priorities of the new Council:

*“Our Vision is to improve the quality of life of all in Central Bedfordshire, and enhance the unique character of our communities and our environment.”*

It has also established five key priorities that will shape its policy, business planning, allocation of resources and budgeting. These are: supporting and caring for an ageing population, educating, protecting and providing opportunities for children and young people, managing growth effectively, creating safer communities, promoting healthier lifestyles.

The Strategic Plan is expected to be published on the 7 October 2008 and will be available on the Council’s website: [www.centralbeds.gov.uk](http://www.centralbeds.gov.uk)

## Service Level Agreements

Key decisions setting out the principles of future arrangements for the funding of third sector organisations and the renewal of Service Level Agreements are expected to be announced at a special lunch-time event to be held in Compact Week – 1-8 November 2008. Full details are currently being worked out and will be circulated shortly.

## Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Following consultation on the proposed partnership arrangements for Central Bedfordshire, Voluntary and Community Action has successfully argued for frontline voluntary and community sector organisations to be represented on the LSP, although this has yet to be ratified by the Shadow Executive. Arrangements are now being put in place to establish a Shadow LSP for Central Bedfordshire, with its first meeting scheduled

for the 11 November 2008.

This important role will require the representative to be involved in strategic issues and developments affecting the sector. Full details of the role and the selection process can be found on [www.voluntaryworks.org.uk](http://www.voluntaryworks.org.uk) Anyone with an interest in fulfilling this role should contact [partnerships@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:partnerships@action-southbeds.org.uk)

## NHS Bedfordshire Strategy Consultation



NHS Bedfordshire, formerly known Bedfordshire Primary Care Trust, is currently developing its plans for local health services over the next five years.

Entitled *A Healthier Bedfordshire*, the five year strategy will take forward and localise national and regional plans to make the NHS the best it can be. *Our NHS, Our Future* described the national programme to modernise the NHS. Here in the east of England, *Improving Lives, Saving Lives* set out 11 measurable pledges to improve health and health services, while *Towards the best, together* pulled everything together in a 10 year vision for the NHS across the region.

The strategy will set out plans in 11 broad areas for how the NHS in Bedfordshire can deliver a better experience for patients, these are listed on <http://digbig.com/4xnjc>.

NHS Bedfordshire will be consulting on the strategy in early 2009 to help identify the priorities within the different work areas. There will also be separate consultations on specific significant service changes as the strategy is put into action over the next five years. Any early views and comments are very welcome by email to [ahb@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:ahb@bedfordshire.nhs.uk) or in writing to AHB, NHS Bedfordshire, Freepost NAT 16245, Bedford MK40 2BR.

Staff emails are now [firstname.lastname@bedfordshire.nhs.uk](mailto:firstname.lastname@bedfordshire.nhs.uk) and their website is [www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk](http://www.bedfordshire.nhs.uk).

Read the full article on <http://digbig.com/4xnjc>.

# Resources



## Accounting basics

The Community Accountancy National Network web site has a new range of basic resources to help smaller organisations with their accounting. See under 'Guidance' on <http://digbig.com/4xmxk> for these pdf format documents.



## Energy tool for arts organisations

Arts Council England has developed a self-assessment toolkit for arts organisations to help them implement an effective energy management programme, which can reduce energy usage, carbon emissions, and costs on <http://www.artsenenergy.org.uk>.

## How To on youth participation

Participation Works, a collaboration of agencies committed to children and young people's participation, has a range of How To resources, for more information visit <http://digbig.com/4xmxq>

## Guide on Gift Aid

Charity Finance Directors Group and accountancy specialists Sayer Vincent have produced 'Gift Aid made simple', a downloadable leaflet aimed at charity finance professionals at <http://digbig.com/4xmxxp>

## Joining up for stronger voice for health and social care users

National Voices is a new umbrella organisation bringing together national voluntary organisations representing users of health and social care "to give them a stronger voice in policy-making". See the new website <http://www.nationalvoices.org.uk>.



## Online advice for older people and their carers

A service that provides a single source of information on care, housing and funding for older people has been created by a coalition of Help the Aged, Counsel and Care and the Elderly Accommodation Counsel. It is provided through the FirstStop web site at <http://www.firststopcareadvice.org.uk>.

## Cost effective ICT services through social enterprise

A report commissioned by the ICT Hub to look at social enterprise as a model for delivering ICT support within the voluntary and community sector is available (pdf, 336 KB) at <http://digbig.com/4xmxxr>.



## Governance in children's organisations

The National Council for Voluntary Child Care Organisations has published, with help from the Governance Hub, 'Governing for Children: A beginner's guide to governance in the children, young people and families voluntary sector'. There are focused real-life examples of particular relevance to any committee members of smaller organisations involved with children. Download in pdf, 1.59MB, from <http://preview.tinyurl.com/5np2ce>.

**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 South Bedfordshire, Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard LU7 1DA.

Registered Charity No. 1108879. Company limited by guarantee. Registered in England No. 5386570.

Tel 01525 850559, Fax 01525 376281,  
Email [mail@action-southbeds.org.uk](mailto:mail@action-southbeds.org.uk),  
Internet [www.action-southbeds.org.uk](http://www.action-southbeds.org.uk)

Copy deadline for the next issue is 24 November 2008.