



Action!



Newsletter

June 2008

Voluntary and Community Action South Bedfordshire

Volunteers' Week 2008



Volunteers' Week is an ideal opportunity to recognise the contribution of volunteers and to make sure they know they're appreciated. This doesn't have to be extravagant or complicated. One of the best, and easiest, means of thanking volunteers is just remembering to say "Thank you for your help". The volunteer who is thanked will feel appreciated and is more likely to keep on helping your organisation.

The Volunteer Centre will be emailing certificates to Volunteer Managers/Co-ordinators at organisations registered with the

Centre in time for Volunteers' Week. These are an ideal way to let your volunteers know that you appreciate them. As well as saying thank you, other ways of recognising the contribution of volunteers include:

- including volunteers in social events
- giving certificates saying thank you, or to recognise a special effort
- offer training such as NVQs
- consulting volunteers on issues/processes that affect them
- include volunteers in staff meetings
- invite volunteers on to working groups.

Local Grant Programme Targets Nature Conservation



GrantScape, the environmental grant-making charity based in Bedfordshire, has announced the launch of the "GrantScape Local Nature Conservation Challenge" to support nature conservation projects in Bedfordshire and Luton.

Grants will be available to not-for-profit groups and charities with community projects designed to benefit a selection of the County's most important habitats for conservation. These cover ponds, orchards and veteran trees, ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows, churchyards and semi-natural roadside verges, plus all the wildlife that they support.

GrantScape has £100,000 to give out in grants of between £5,000 and £25,000. Monies can be spread over two years and no match funding is required!

Closing date is 12 noon on 8 September 2008,
<http://www.grantscape.org.uk>

TV Dragon Wants You to Pitch Your Project

James Caan, entrepreneur and 'dragon' on BBC 2's *Dragons' Den* is backing a competition for local community groups in Bedfordshire and Luton. *Pitch Your Project*, is looking for organisations that benefit the health, wellbeing and fitness of their community with the support of volunteers. Whether it's running a sports club, befriending scheme, or patient support group *Pitch your Project* gives you the chance to be filmed 'Dragons' Den' style putting forward your ideas. Five shortlisted projects will be given £250 to develop a pitch as well as receiving face to face advice from a panel of experts in communications, design, health and volunteering. The project that comes up with the best pitch will win a prize of £2000.

Deadline for applications is 30 June 2008,
<http://www.journeystohealth.org/>





Decline of Local Authority Grants

A new Finance Hub report *The Decline of Local Authority Grants for the Third Sector: Fact of Fiction* shows that local authority grant funding for 2006/07 declined to 87% of what it was three years before, a trend that is set to continue. It suggests that these changes have been underpinned by a shift towards a 'contract culture' and commissioning, greater competition for a dwindling pool of relevant funds, and the growing influence of Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements and Government policy.

Voluntary and Community Action have put together a series of workshops to help organisations become 'contract ready' to increase your chances of winning a tender and look at other diverse and sustainable income streams.

Social Enterprise Awareness Event Thursday 12 June, 9.30am - 12.30pm

This event endeavours to clear confusions around the term social enterprise and get you thinking about how your group or charity activities fit with the social enterprise agenda. It will make you aware of the range of organisations and businesses that call themselves social enterprises and help you consider practical issues involved in adopting social enterprise methods and the benefits. This event is free and will be facilitated by Rizwana Zaman (Funding Adviser) and Jenny Allthorpe (Development Officer).

Trading Activities for the Voluntary and Community Sector

Wednesday 25 June, 10am to 4pm

For many organisations, the prospect of trading is appealing. An income from the sale of products or services can mean the end of having to rely solely on funding for money. But how do you develop a product? Will it conflict with your charitable aims? And even if we manage to come up with an idea, how will we market it? This workshop will start you on the right path. You will learn how to generate ideas for a product or service, how to find an outlet for it and how to attract clients. It will mean a lot of

hard work when delegates return to their organisations but the rewards will make it worthwhile. Facilitated by Helen Marini*.

An Introduction to Public Sector Procurement Thursday 3 July, 10am to 4pm

Increasingly, voluntary and community groups who have been providing services through SLAs are finding that they will now have to enter into a competitive tendering process in order to continue providing these services. This workshop will show you exactly what's involved in this process and also give you some tips on using your existing skills and knowledge to gain an advantage over your competitors, many of whom may come from the private sector. Facilitated by Helen Marini*.



* For the last four years Helen Marini has been a Social Enterprise Adviser in the East of England, helping charities, voluntary organisations and community groups to earn income through selling their goods and services. Booking fees of £20 (members) and £30 (non-members) will be refunded upon attendance.

All these events will be held at Bossard House, West Street, Leighton Buzzard. For more information visit our website or ring 01525 850559.

The Decline of Local Authority Grants for the Third Sector: Fact of Fiction can be downloaded at www.financehub.org.uk/local_authority_grants.aspx

Free Information and Communications Technology (ICT) Conference

The ICT Hub are hosting a free event with Microsoft UK to show what your organisation can achieve using technology. This event will reveal how you can develop your ICT and you will have the chance to share experiences and see how other organisations are benefiting from ICT.

10 June 2008, London. For more visit <http://digbig.com/4wyhh>



Funding Resources

Community Enterprise Toolkit

A Community Enterprise Toolkit has been published on Cheshire County Council's web site, bringing together existing advice and information on setting up community enterprises



in a user-friendly way.

<http://www.cheshire.gov.uk/wellbeing/toolkit/intro.htm>

Donations Website for Small Charities

A new website (www.help.co.uk) enabling small charities to accept credit card donations aims to raise £10m for UK charities in its first year. It takes credit and debit card donations for any charity without charging set-up, registration or monthly fees. All eligible donations will

automatically generate a Gift Aid claim, which is processed on the site. The donation will then be forwarded to the charity, minus a processing fee to cover administration costs.

Funding for ICT

When seeking funding for your ICT project, you need to be able to articulate how the technology is going to benefit your service users. Focusing on the outcomes rather than the technology itself will help you to write your funding application. The ICT Hub (www.ictHub.org.uk) have a new report *The How to Cost and Fund ICT* which contains exercises and worksheets to help you and your colleagues develop a funding application. They also have an up to date list of funders who have funded ICT projects.

Feedback on Surveys - A Big Thank You!

Once again, Voluntary and Community Action would like to thank those that took part in two recent online surveys:

- Social Enterprises in Bedfordshire
- Bedfordshire and Luton Third Sector ICT Survey.

In March 2008 we published a report *Social What? Mapping Social Enterprise in Bedfordshire*. The results showed that from 331 organisations surveyed there are:

- 50 operating social enterprises
- 35 emerging social enterprises
- 82 potential social enterprises
- 82 not social enterprises
- 93 insufficient data.

A list of operating social enterprises is available at the back of the report.

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

The ICT Survey was filled in by 157 organisations with participants entered into a prize draw for some computer goodies. The winner was Bedfordshire Historic Records Society who won a Hewlett Packard all in one

printer, scanner and copier. Four other winners picked up either a 1 Gig flash drive or web camera.

A full report will be published shortly but here are some general findings:

- 55% need help in identifying sources of funding to improve their computers (see above article on ICT Funding)
- 47% could do with more computer training
- 47% need a computer support service that is more aware and in tune with the needs of the voluntary and community sector.
- 42% are interested in joining an ICT purchasing group.



The results from both surveys help us to plan delivery of future workshops and support services. See the training available on Trading and Public Sector Procurement on page 2 and keep an eye out for future ICT training and support opportunities.



Streetcred

Streetcred is the Bedfordshire fund that combines money from central government under the Youth Opportunities and Capital Fund. Groups of young people aged 13 to 19 in Bedfordshire are being invited to apply for funds through Bedfordshire County Council.

The aim of the Youth Opportunity Fund is to involve young people, especially hard to reach young people, in identifying positive activities and things to do; and to support their role as decision makers, grant givers and project leaders. The second fund, the Youth Capital Fund, is very similar to the Opportunity Fund, but is to be used on things like doing up buildings, buying mobile resources, youth shelters, skate parks etc.

For further information and an application form please contact: **Clare Hanley, Youth Opportunity and Youth Capital Funds, Bedfordshire Youth Service, 5th Floor, County Hall, Cauldwell Street, Bedford, MK42 9AP** or email: clare.hanley@bedscc.gov.uk

'myplace'



The Big Lottery Fund is delivering 'myplace' on behalf of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF). This is not Lottery funding.

This scheme opened for applications on 6 May 2008. Grants available are between £1 million and £5 million.

Do you have the vision and drive to work with young people to deliver a world class place for them to go? If so, 'myplace' may be able to help you turn your ideas into reality.

For more information, 0845 4 102030,
<http://diqbig.com/4wwqf>

Village Hall Grant Scheme

The Village Hall Grant Scheme provides financial assistance to Village Halls in the South Bedfordshire District. Village Hall Management Committees (with charitable status) within rural South Bedfordshire can apply. The following types of projects may be eligible to apply for up to £5,000 for:

- improving access for people with disabilities
- critical repairs to the building
- essential new equipment
- technical and specialist services (e.g. surveyors, architects and feasibility studies)
- new buildings.

For further information please contact Joan Allen, Community and Leisure Administration Officer, South Bedfordshire District Council, High Street North, Dunstable LU6 1LF. Telephone 08458496362, Email joan.allen@southbeds.gov.uk

Big Issue Invest

Big Issue Invest will assist community transport organisations in their bid to scale-up their operations, become more sustainable and play a greater role in community regeneration and inclusion.

Whether enterprising organisations have issues concerning vehicle purchase, loans or potential leasing of office space, they should get in touch to discuss the kind of support that might be suitable for them. If your community transport organisation would like to purchase new vehicles, they would love to hear from you.

For further information please contact **Ian Curd at Big Issue Invest, 020 7173 6020** or visit their website <http://www.biginvest.co.uk>

It's Your Community O₂

It's Your Community has four areas in which funding of between £100 to £1000 is available. However they are open to new, ground-breaking suggestions outside these four areas:

Community Places – Improving the places communities share and revitalising community spaces.

Community People – Helping to create a community where people are valued, respected and there is a real sense of unity and belonging.

Community Pride – Tackling issues head on and restoring a sense of pride.

Community Landscape – Improving the natural environments where we live.

For more information visit their website <http://www.itsyourcommunity.co.uk>

Funding



GM Community Grants

Grants of £1000 (nominated bi-monthly) are available for groups prioritising their work for the benefit of local youth (11 to 20). Special consideration will also be given to applications by groups which provide services to those aged 11 and under.

To nominate a group for a Griffin Grant, all you have to do is send an application on a single side of A4 paper. Give details of the group's work, membership, what the money would be used for, project costs and number of people who will benefit, and anything else you think the judges need to know. Please be as specific as you can about project costs, and the number of people who will benefit.

Judges are looking to support or fund specific projects, rather than contribute to general running costs.

Send your nomination to GM Community Grants, News/Gazette, 39 Upper George Street, Luton, LU1 2RD or email to: vauxhall@thetrustpartnership.com

B&Q One Planet Living

B&Q helps community groups get projects up and running by providing materials e.g. pond liners, plants, peat-free compost or low/minimal VOC paint for redecoration.

Grants do not cover maintenance and projects must be within 20 mile

radius of a store. You can choose goods between the ranges of £50 to £500; the annual budget is made available in February.

Contact your local store for more information or visit their website: <http://digbig.com/4wwqh>



Earn Money and Save the Environment

You can help your beneficiaries save money and reduce their environmental impact by ensuring they receive a free pack of energy saving light bulbs. For every pack distributed on your behalf, Grass Roots will give you money back (while stocks last).

For more visit <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/lightbulbs>

Esmée Fairbairn Foundation

The Foundation have recently announced a new funding strand for food.

The aim of the Food strand is to promote an understanding of the role of food in enhancing quality of life. It will prioritise the enjoyment and experience of food rather than its production and they seek to enable as many people in the UK as possible to access, prepare and eat nutritious, sustainable food.



For more information visit their website.

<http://www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk/funding/food.html>

Sportsmatch Scheme

Sport England has announced that Sportsmatch has been re-launched with updated criteria and a new online application facility.

Through the scheme, Sportsmatch can match eligible commercial business sponsorship, or funding from trusts/private donors for a sporting project that aims to increase participation and/or improve performance at grassroots level. Projects may be a revenue scheme or, in limited cases, a capital project. Sponsorship may be in cash or in-kind.

For more information visit their website

<http://digbig.com/4wxkb> or telephone Sport England on 08458 508 508.

Developing Social Enterprise in Health and Social Care

A second round of the Department of Health's Social Enterprise Investment Fund has been announced. It has £11 million capital and £6 million revenue funding available to support the development of social enterprises in health and social care such as women's refuges, migraine clinics and exercise programmes for the elderly. Submissions are required by 31 July 2008.

More information at: <http://digbig.com/4wybg>



An Environment for a Thriving Third Sector – Please Comment

A vibrant, diverse and independent third sector is a vital component of a fair and enterprising society. It also assists communities to be more inclusive and cohesive, and individuals to have more say about issues that affect them.

This has been recognised by the Bedfordshire Countywide Partnership which has included an **Environment for a Thriving Third Sector** as a local indicator in the Local Area Agreement for 2008/09. This will then be developed into two separate LAAs from April 2009 to reflect the different geographical boundaries of the new unitary councils.

An Environment for a Thriving Third Sector is one of 198 National Indicators set by central government to measure the performance of local statutory bodies. The Bedfordshire Local Area Agreement will include a target to provide the environment for a thriving third sector, which could be defined by the extent to which:

1. third sector organisations have had access to advice and support to develop their organisation
2. third sector organisations are satisfied with local statutory funding and/or bidding arrangements
3. third sector organisations are able to influence local decision-making on matters that affect their organisation or the local area
4. local statutory bodies respect and value the work of third sector organisations
5. local statutory bodies act in partnership with third sector organisations
6. local statutory bodies involve third sector organisations in the development of strategies relevant to their work
7. local statutory bodies act upon third sector organisations' opinions and/or responses to consultation
8. local statutory bodies influence the overall success of third sector organisations
9. there are opportunities for third sector organisations to work in partnership with one another

10. local statutory bodies and third sector organisations successfully implement the Compact.

We welcome your views on what a thriving third sector should look like. So if you agree/disagree with any of the above, please send your thoughts and opinions to partnerships@action-southbeds.org.uk

Local Government Re-organisation Update

Following parliamentary approval of the arrangements for Local Government Reorganisation the first Central Bedfordshire Shadow Council and Shadow Executive meetings were held on the 10 April 2008. The Implementation Strategy was approved, a copy of which, and the dates for future council meetings, can be downloaded from the new Central Bedfordshire website <http://www.centralbeds.gov.uk/>.

A key part of the implementation strategy is the establishment of the Central Bedfordshire Implementation Team, which includes the chief executives of the local authorities, other public sector agencies and representatives from the third sector; including John Gelder, Director of Voluntary and Community Action.

Officers from the three local authorities have now formed Officer Service Groups to look at the service design issues for the six directorates to be set up within the new Council:

- Customers and Community Engagement
- Corporate Resources
- Children, Families and Learning
- Social Care, Health and Housing
- Stronger and Safer Communities
- Sustainable Development.

The senior management structure of the new authority is currently under consideration and we have had the opportunity to comment on the proposals, which can also be found on the new Central Bedfordshire website. These will be agreed at the next Shadow Executive Committee on the 10 June 2008.

Spreading the Volunteering Word

The Volunteer Centre will be spreading the word about volunteering and promoting volunteering opportunities available throughout South Bedfordshire at several forthcoming events. If you'd like us to include leaflets from your organisation at our events, to give away to the public, please contact the Volunteer Centre on 01525 850559 or email volunteer@action-southbeds.org

Library display

A display on volunteering is running in Leighton Buzzard library from 28 May to 9 June.

Volunteer Centre at the Market

The Volunteer Centre will have a stall on Dunstable Market on Wednesday 11 June and one at Leighton Buzzard Market on Tuesday 17 June. These markets provide excellent opportunities to reach more people and encourage them to think about volunteering. If you're in Dunstable or Leighton Buzzard on those days, please pop along and say hello.

Downside Neighbourhood Centre Opening Day

The Volunteer Centre is planning regular open sessions at the Downside, Parkside and Tithe Farm Neighbourhood Centres in Dunstable and Houghton Regis.

These sessions are arranged to provide opportunities for local people to just drop in and easily find out about volunteering in their local area. Staff from the Volunteer Centre will be introducing themselves to visitors at the Downside Neighbourhood Centre Opening Day on Saturday 14 June, 1.30pm-4.30pm. If your organisation needs volunteers in areas around the Neighbourhood Centres, please let the Volunteer Centre know as soon as possible.

Picnic in the Park

This year's Picnic in the Park Leighton Buzzard is set for Wednesday 18 June (if wet, 25 June) and expected to be as popular as

ever. The Volunteer Centre will be there, talking to people and encouraging them to think about volunteering.

Involving Volunteers on a Budget

"Volunteering on a shoestring" is a guide for smaller organisations on how to involve volunteers on a budget. Although written for and by LGBT (lesbian, gay, bi-sexual and transgender) organisations it has a wider use. <http://www.lgbtconsortium.org.uk/shoestring>

Measuring the Impact of Volunteers in Sport

Volunteering England and the Institute of Volunteering Research have created a specific set of web-based tools for sport organisations to assess their own volunteering impacts. <http://www.volunteering.org.uk/sport>



A report about the methods and findings behind these new tools has been published. *A Winning Team? The impacts of volunteers in sport* can be downloaded (pdf, 307KB) from <http://ma.qnolia.com/shuyiqini>

Recognising Individual Action

Nominations for the 2008 Beacon Prize are now open. There are five categories plus regional awards recognising people who have made a significant charitable contribution in giving time, money or skills to a specific cause. The deadline is 1 July 2008, more info at <http://www.beaconfellowship.org.uk/>

Accreditation for Volunteer Youth Workers Proposed

The development of a volunteer youth workers accreditation scheme has been proposed by National Council for Voluntary Youth Services as an integral component of the government's youth workforce reform plans. More information on the Workforce Hub website <http://digbig.com/4wyeb>

Resources



From Hubs to National Support Services

All nine of the 'National Support Services', which are replacing the six hubs of expertise in providing a lead in ChangeUp sector support across England started running from 1st April:

- Collaboration, run by Bassac
- Equalities and diversity, run by the Women's Resource Centre
- Income generation, run by Acevo
- Marketing and communications, run by the Media Trust
- Modernising volunteering, run by Volunteering England
- Performance management, run by Charities Evaluation Services
- Campaigning and advocacy, leadership and governance, and responding to social change, all run by the NCVO

The nine programmes have one common web site at <http://www.improvingsupport.org.uk>

Asset Development

Five factsheets on asset development have been published by High Peak CVS:

- Developing and Maximising the Use of a Community Building
- The Pros and Cons of Leasing and Ownership
- Risk Reduction in Managing a Community Building
- Making the Figures Add Up
- Selling the Case for an Asset Transfer.

Download the pack (pdf, 2MB) from <http://digbig.com/4wycg>

Health and Safety

- HSE's frequently asked questions (FAQs) on Display Screen Equipment has been updated. It covers issues such as How can I protect my eyes? and How do the regulations apply to work with laptops? <http://digbig.com/4wyck>

- Example risk assessment for village halls, also suitable for small community centres <http://digbig.com/4wycj>
- Reducing the risk assessment bureaucracy for school and youth group trips <http://digbig.com/4wyck>

Action Learning Explained

New introductory guidance from personnel professionals' body CIPD on introducing and running action learning sets is a useful factsheet on a popular 'training' concept which is rarely well explained.

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

Free Local Media Review

Voluntary and Community Action reviews the local newspapers each week and circulates articles internally that feature local groups or stories of relevance to the local voluntary and community sector.

Added to the weekly review are any events or news items posted by local organisations on our Community Notice Board. Have a look online to see what's been posted recently <http://digbig.com/4wybx>

If you would like to receive the free weekly Media Review (by email) or post something on the notice board, send an email to info@action-southbeds.org.uk. The notice board is a great way to get some extra publicity for your organisation!

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.

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