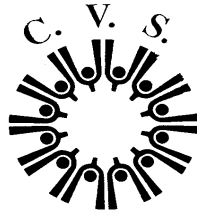


SOUTH SOMERSET

COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICES



WINTER 2006

NEWSLETTER

Issue 89

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HELLO FROM OUR NEW CHIEF OFFICER

Well it's been a fast learning curve for me since joining the CVS, although I have worked in the voluntary sector in South Somerset for the past 6 years I must confess I did not fully comprehend as to how much good work the CVS is involved in.

I come to the CVS from the Balsam Centre in Wincanton. In my career I have worked within the private, public and voluntary sector, so feel I have an good insight into how the three sectors work and how the voluntary sector fits into the work of the other two; I am particularly pleased to enclose a copy of the Somerset Compact, which is a commitment to just that.

I am glad to learn that the CVS is very well known and respected in the area of Yeovil, but some development work is needed in the more rural parts of our area, to enable us to deliver an equilibrium service to all our customers.

This newsletter is a resource to all the Voluntary and Community groups in South Somerset, it is meant to bring you news, resources and ideas to help you in your work and is currently sent to over 500 groups in the area. I have changed the format to what I think will be of use to you, however I am happy to change it again, until we get it right. Please let me know what you would find useful in a newsletter, i.e. advertising space for your organisation, information on training events etc..

The distribution will be on a quarterly basis, however if information comes to light in the meantime, I will endeavour to get this to you in a separate format.

Well I look forward to working with you and hope the CVS can be a useful tool for your organisation.

WHAT'S BEEN HAPPENING - EXPELLING THE RUMOUR MILL!

Following the annual audit it was brought to the Trustees attention that there was uncertainty as to whether the CVS was a "going concern"; Nick Lunt, an Accountant was engaged to go through our accounts with a fine tooth comb. His findings brought to light three main areas of concern, the ITRC, the Community Transport and the Head Office, with a forecast deficit of £165,000 by the end of March 2007.

On 17 November we approached SSDC for a grant to meet this deficit and to continue operating, I am happy to say we were successful in securing a grant for £100,000, however as expected we have had to make some drastic decisions to stop the deficit growing and strict monitoring procedures will be put in place.

We have dramatically reduced our ITRC; it must be stressed that our services and support are still available and are costed appropriately to meet our full cost recovery. (Please see page 15 for further details). We have re-structured our pricing system for our Community Transport scheme which was highly under priced and we are also in talks with District and County to re-negotiate our Service Level Agreement for our core services.

So as you can see it has been a challenging few months, but I can report the future is looking much rosier and I am very positive for the future of the South Somerset CVS.

**Merry Christmas to you all and a
prosperous New Year!**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIRMAN

The last 3 months have been some of the most challenging in the CVS's history, so I am enormously grateful to everybody for your patience, common sense and dedication to keeping our many services in operation throughout this difficult time.

Sam has, in particular, had a baptism of fire so I must pay a special tribute to her for her ability to take on board a vast amount of information in record time and then respond to the situation in a clear-sighted and determined way, without losing her sense of humour.

Nick, too, has been an essential element in enabling us to collate an accurate and up-to-date picture of the true state of our finances before we presented our case to South Somerset District Council recently.

Without their support, we would have been in dire straights, so their rapid response to our crisis demonstrates how much they are committed to joint working with us as well as to what we have to offer to the more vulnerable members of the local community.

2007 will be a year of real progress in which we consolidate our finances, address our governance issues and plan our future strategy. If all goes to plan, we will cease to be Yeovil CVS on 1st April and instead become the South Somerset Association for Voluntary & Community Action Ltd (SSVCA).

New name, same commitment!
Nigel Engert

MORE TRUSTEES NEEDED

In April 2007 we aim to change to Company Limited by Guarantee this will give our organisation more structure and our Trustees more security, in that they are protected from personal liability.

We are currently looking for new Trustees with expertise in the following areas:

Human Resources
Marketing
Finance
Publicity

If you would like to find out more about our organisation, then please contact our Chair on 01935 475914.

WE ARE MOVING!!

Please note our head office is moving out of Petters House. All correspondence for CVS should be re-directed to:

**Unit 5
Yeovil Small Business Centre
Houndstone Business Park
Memorial Road
Yeovil
Somerset
BA22 8YD**

Our telephone number remains the same:

01935 475914.

SECTOR NEWS

The Somerset Compact Vision

In Somerset, the voluntary and community sector and public bodies will act as equal partners. They will recognise each other's strengths and work together for the benefit of the people of Somerset.



Part of the work we have undertaken is to work in partnership with the Somerset County Council, South Somerset District Council and the Voluntary and Community Sector of Somerset.

The aim of the Compact is to improve the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and public bodies. To move away from a grant giving and grant taking culture towards one of mutual understanding and respect.

The next stage of the Compact is the production of the Implementation Plan, which will put the principles of the Compact into practice as together we tackle the priority tasks.

Although the consultation and development of the Compact was before my time, I will be involved in its progression as the CVS has made a commitment with the other partners to review the Compact every April. Please find enclosed a copy of the compact with this newsletter.

For more information, please contact Emily Gilbert, Community Development Officer, Somerset County Council egilbert@somerset.gov.uk 01823 355401

CONFUSED??

LSP's, LAA's, Compacts, Policy Commission, what does it all mean?

As the infrastructure organisation for all the voluntary and community groups in South Somerset, we are here to help guide you through all this.

Would you be interested in attending an information day to explain how the above forums/policies may affect your organisation, set out in layman's terms?

Please call Donna on 01935 475914 to express your interest and we will plan an information day in the spring.

EMPLOYMENT LAW

MATERNITY PAY

Where the expected week of childbirth (EWC) begins on or after 1 April 2007:

- Ordinary maternity leave (OML) remains 26 weeks. A woman on OML continues to have the right to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions as if she had not been absent, unless a redundancy situation has arisen.
- Additional maternity leave (AML) remains 26 weeks. A woman on AML continues to have the right to return to the same job on the same terms and conditions, unless a redundancy situation has arisen. If there is a reason other than redundancy why the employer cannot offer the same job, she is entitled to be offered suitable alternative work.
- In a redundancy situation, employers with five or fewer employees are no longer exempt from the requirement to offer a suitable vacancy, if it exists, to an employee on maternity leave.
- Statutory maternity pay (SMP) is payable for 39 weeks (nine months). The qualifying period remains 26 weeks employment with the employer by the 15th week before the EWC. SMP remains 90% of the woman's weekly earnings for the first six weeks, then a flat weekly rate (currently £108.85) or 90% of previous earnings, if this is less, for the remainder of the SMP period. Employers will continue to be able to recover most or in some cases all of the SMP they pay. The government's intention is to increase SMP to 52 weeks by the end of 2009.
- SMP will be able to start on any day of the week, so can coincide with the start of OML.
- At present SMP starts on the Sunday after the beginning of OML.
- According to a Department for Trade and Industry press release, the administration of maternity payments will be simplified (I'll believe it when it happens).
- The notice the woman must give the employer if she wants to return to work early is increased from 28 days to eight weeks, calculated backwards from the date of the proposed new return date. If she wants to return to work later than the original date, she must give eight weeks notice of the new date, calculated backwards from the original date.
- "Keeping in touch" (KIT) days will be introduced, where the woman can go in to work for up to 10 days to undertake training or work or keep in touch with major developments, without bringing maternity leave to an end or losing her right to SMP. The employer will not have to offer KIT days, and if offered the woman will not have to accept them. It will be unlawful for the employer to subject the woman to a detriment if she takes part in, or refuses to take part, in a KIT day, and any dismissal on this basis is automatically unfair. A KIT day cannot be taken during the two weeks after the birth. KIT days do not extend the maternity leave period.
- Employers will have the right to make reasonable contact with their employees during maternity leave. The DTI is consulting on what is "reasonable".
- The DTI's guidance on maternity leave and pay is at www.dti.gov.uk/employment/

PATERNITY PAY

Entitlement to paternity leave and pay will not change from **1 April 2007**. However, it is expected that when statutory maternity and adoption leave are extended from 39 weeks to 52 weeks, new paternity rights will be introduced. No date has been set for these changes.

The information on these pages was taken from the web site of Sandy Adirondack. It is for general information only. It is not a complete statement of the law and is in no way intended as a substitute for proper legal information and advice. No liability can be taken for actions taken, or not taken, on the basis of information in this newsletter.

EMPLOYMENT LAW

FIRE SAFETY

From **1 October 2006** the law on fire safety in non-domestic premises is significantly changed, with more emphasis on fire prevention. Fire certificates are abolished, and the responsibility for complying with the fire safety rules rests with the "responsible person", who is the employer plus any person who has control over any part of the premises. In non-domestic premises that are not workplaces, the person or people in control of the premises are responsible. Where there is more than one responsible person, they must all take reasonable steps to work with each other. There is a general duty to ensure, so far as is reasonably practicable, the safety of employees; a general duty, in relation to non-employees, to take fire precautions that are reasonable in the circumstances to ensure that premises are safe; and a duty to carry out a risk assessment, with the matters to be considered in carrying out the risk assessment set out in schedule 1 of the order. The risk assessment should give particular attention to those at special risk, such as people with disabilities, and must include consideration of any dangerous substance likely to be on the premises. The significant findings of the risk assessment must be in writing if there are more than four employees. Fire certificates are abolished and the local fire and rescue service authority are responsible for enforcing the new rules. They will carry out regular inspections with highest priority given to premises that pose most risk to the community. The order is at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2005/20051541.htm. Information about the new regulations is at www.dclq.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1162101, with an entry level guide at www.dclq.gov.uk/staging/index.asp?id=1500383.

AGE DISCRIMINATION ACT

The regulations, covering age discrimination in employment and vocational training, are in force from 1 October 2006.

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006 are at www.opsi.gov.uk/si/si2006/20061031.htm.

The accompanying notes are at www.dti.gov.uk/files/file27136.pdf.

All employers should by now have reviewed their employment procedures, training programmes, service-linked benefits, employment handbooks and retirement provisions, to ensure they comply with the regulations.

Redundancy provisions should also be reviewed, and criteria based on length of service or "last in first out" should be used only if they can be objectively justified.

CORE SERVICES

South Somerset CVS is a voluntary organisation that was set up to support, promote, and develop local community and voluntary action. We support our members by providing them with a range of services (see below and project pages of this newsletter) and by acting as a voice for the local community and voluntary sector.

As part of the umbrella organisation NACVS (National Association for Council of Voluntary Services) now known as NACVA (National Association of Community, Voluntary Action) (Just to confuse you!) the South Somerset CVS is just one of many CVS's in the country. Each CVS is different in character, size and delivers services in conjunction with the need of it's local community.

We are widely known in South Somerset for our transport service and our Furnicare Project, but perhaps not as well known for the other services you can find in this newsletter. We are represented and indeed represent the VCS as a whole on various strategic partnerships within the district and county. I feel it is my role as the Chief Officer to inform you of any consultations between the statutory services and the VCS and to report back to you decisions which are made which may affect you and your organisation.

If you would like to know more about the strategic partnerships within Somerset, or if you have a view that needs to be expressed at this level, then please call Sam Healy on 01935 474914 or email samhealy@ydcvs.org.uk

PAYROLL SERVICES

Why have all the worry of NI contributions, PAYE and sick pay, when we can do this for you. For a small fee we can offer voluntary groups a payroll service tailored to your needs. We are happy to deliver the whole service for you, or we can just complete the workings out for you. For more information and charges please call Linda on 01935 475914.

OFFICE SERVICES

No access to a photo copier, fax machine, laminator or the Internet. Then call into our offices at Houndstone Business Park, Yeovil. Our service is open to small voluntary/community groups in South Somerset who need support in these areas. To find out charges please call Donna on 01935 475914.

MEETING ROOMS AVAILABLE

We currently have a community space available for hire in our units at 32 Goldcroft, Yeovil.

Unit 2 is ideal for Meetings/Rehearsal space/Keep fit classes/Yoga/Band Practice etc.

There is a kitchen area and toilet on site.

Rates

2 Hour Session	£9.00
3 – 4 Hour Session	£11.00
All Day	£25.00

Unit 2 is wheelchair accessible and we have a limited number of parking spaces available. For more information or to make a booking please call Donna on 01935 475914.



Volunteering at Christmas

If you would like to spend some of the Christmas season volunteering **Yeovil Night Shelter** would love to hear from you. They are looking for volunteers all year round but could use some extra help from Christmas Eve through to 27th December. For more information please call Captain Peter Love on 01935 862522.

If you are an organisation who needs some extra voluntary help over Christmas please call the Volunteer Centre and we will be happy to pass your details on to potential volunteers.

Volunteering Opportunities

We currently have 256 opportunities across South Somerset and we aim to feature just a few in each newsletter. For more information on these or any of our opportunities please call the **Volunteer Centre on 01935 475914/414023**.

St John Library Service is seeking volunteers to provide a trolley based library service to all wards of Yeovil District Hospital. If you can help please call 01935 414023

Age Concern Somerset has a number of interesting opportunities and has produced a booklet with further details of each. If you would like a copy, please call the Volunteer Centre of Age Concern's Volunteer Co-ordinator, Paul Green, direct on 01823 423497.

Mind are looking for a gardener to volunteer with them at least one day a week to organise a team of volunteers in getting the most from their allotment in Yeovil. If you are interested please call the Volunteer Centre of Mind's Volunteer Co-ordinator, Marsha Miles on 01935 474875.

Yeovil Stroke Club is currently looking for a Club Organiser to look after the administration of the club which includes arranging insurance, payment of invoices and monitoring bank accounts. It also needs a Treasurer to be responsible for the financial aspects of the club. For further information on either of these opportunities please call the Volunteer Centre.

Somerset Association for the Blind is in desperate need of volunteers to visit/befriend visually impaired people. This can involve listening, reading and writing cards. For further information please call the Volunteer Centre.

Speed Matching

The Volunteer Centre—South Somerset is planning an awareness raising event in early 2007 along the lines of Speed Matching. This has proved to be a successful way for organisations to meet with members of the public and let them know more about the work of their volunteers in a fun and informal way. It is hoped that some of the attendees will then go on to make more formal arrangements with the organisations in order that they can get to know each other better and form a lasting volunteering relationship. If you would like more information on the event please telephone the Volunteer Centre.



Running Sport

We have received a copy of the Running Sports brochure which gives information on the work they do with volunteers working in Sports. If you would like more information or a copy of the brochure please telephone the office and we will be happy to arrange a copy for you.

Training

'Keeping Children and Young People Safe – Next Steps from Child Protection to Safeguarding', is a conference with workshops to be held on Thursday 18th January at Longleat Forest Centre Parcs. Cost per delegate is £20. For further information please call 01225 355554.

Adult Learning and Leisure are holding two free courses for volunteers next year. **Volunteer Support and Training in Schools** is to be held on Friday mornings at Stanchester commencing January and on Wednesday mornings in Yeovil commencing February/March.

For further information please call Karen Hopkins on 01935 410555.

If you are volunteering in the community and would like to take part in a free Volunteer Support and Training course, also known as Community Champions, please contact the Volunteer Centre and we may be able to arrange something in conjunction with Adult Learning and Leisure.

Millennium Volunteers Scale the Heights of Art

Four volunteers from South Somerset Millennium Volunteers gave up their free time in the autumn half-term to help paint a giant mural on a climbing wall which is being built as part of a new drop-in centre at the Abbey Manor Trading Estate. The volunteers who took part were Emma Davey, Judy Baker, Amy Stoodley and Hayley Jones, along with Jake Burt from the Park School. The centre is the brainchild of a community charity called Time out Together, set up six years ago by a group of local parents and the mural was designed by local artist Helen Layfield. For more information on Millennium Volunteers please call Cymmone Imms on 01935 381814 and for Time Out Together, Dana King on 07837 200925.

Age Discrimination

Volunteering England and VITA are running a joint campaign to tackle Age Discrimination in Volunteering. The Volunteer Centre has already added its pledge to this campaign and you can do the same by completing a short on-line form at www.volunteering.org.uk/campaignsandpolicies/agediscrimination



Right to Reasonable Expenses Lunch Campaign – An Update

The Department for Work and Pensions has announced that they will once again allow volunteer claimants to be reimbursed for their meal expenses without it affecting benefits from October 9. As with all such expenses, they should be genuinely incurred as a result of volunteering, and must be a direct reimbursement of the actual cost of the meal. Guidance on treating meal expenses has been sent to benefit staff. For more information on expenses and benefits rules on volunteering contact the Volunteer Centre or visit the Good Practice Bank at www.volunteeringengland.org.uk.

Merry Christmas from Volunteer Centre – South Somerset

I know many organisations will be using Christmas as an opportunity to say thank you to their volunteers and we know from the feedback that we receive that just a few kind words or a Christmas card goes a long way to make volunteers feel valued. My biggest thank you this Christmas has to go to my colleague, Leonie Girling. Leonie joined the Volunteer Centre back in April and is the person who replies to Do-It enquiries, keeps our opportunities up to date, makes contact with volunteers to see how they are getting on and so much more. Most importantly she has a great empathy with people and a wonderful sense of humour and I really value her dedication and support. I am sure she would like to join me in wishing you all a very merry Christmas and happy 2007.

Julie Bailey

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