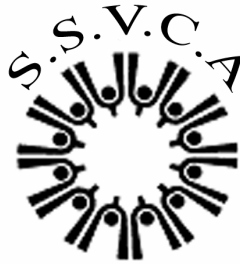


South Somerset Voluntary & Community Action



January 2009

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HELLO FROM THE CHIEF OFFICER

A Happy New Year to you all! However with the release of the news that we are formally in a recession I do worry how the many voluntary and community organisations in South Somerset will be able to tighten their already tightened belts!!

The SW Forum have just released its paper "Community Crunch in the South West" which makes proposals to the Government to support the sector during these worrying times; I shall keep you updated of any news I receive.

We have been fortunate in receiving a small amount of money from District Council Area South to provide funding advice to groups in this area; the take up as you would imagine has been great and funding applications have been submitted to local, regional and national funding bodies, hopefully resulting in more funds coming into South Somerset. I am hoping we will be able to roll this service out to the other areas of South Somerset in the near future.

There is lots of work going on behind the scenes in improving our services to the voluntary sector, which hopefully will have an impact on the many voluntary & community groups operating in South Somerset.

Best wishes to all of you and do not hesitate to contact us if you need any advice, support or resources to help your group.

Sam Healy

HELLO FROM THE CHAIRMAN

SSVCA has made remarkable progress since our darkest hour in October 2006 and the trustees now feel confident that we can face the challenges that lie ahead as long as we continue to maintain strict control over our finances. We would like to thank all our staff for their commitment and especially our project managers for the way in which they have coped with the demands that we have made on them. Sam's leadership has been absolutely essential in this process, as has the expertise our Financial Consultant Nick Lunt. We are very pleased that Peter Bagg has taken on the additional role of SSVCA Support & Development Officer.

We now need to build up a reserve fund, but this should not prevent us from expanding our operations if appropriate opportunities arise that complement our existing services.

We are also continuing to explore ways of working in closer partnership with the Somerset Alliance of CVS's (SACVS) to ensure that a consistently high level of service is delivered across the county to voluntary organisations as well as to the general public. Our statutory funders are keen to assist. We also want to develop the support we ourselves offer as the local infrastructure organisation (LIO) to voluntary organisations within South Somerset. Sam is playing a major part in both these initiatives.

Finally, I should like to welcome Katherine Nolan and Chris Watson as new trustees. Both come with relevant skills and experience as well as significantly reducing the average age of the Board.

Nigel Engert

SECTOR NEWS

BIG CHANCE TO HAVE A SAY ON LOTTO LOOT!

Voluntary Sector groups are urged to get their thinking caps on and offer their views on what priorities should be set for future lottery funding. The Big Lottery Fund has launched a public consultation on how it will distribute more than £2 billion over the coming six years. "*Big Thinking*" is asking for community groups, charities, social enterprises and individuals to get in touch and provide their opinions on how funding should be allocated between 2009 and 2015.

The consultation comes at an uncertain time, with the current economic downturn – combined with the decision to siphon off more than £600 million of lottery cash to support the 2012 Olympics – putting added pressure on limited resources.

It asks for views on ten UK-wide general questions, as well as asking for specific responses on issues concerning England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

For more information and to access the consultation survey, go to:

<http://www.big-thinking.org.uk/>

COMMISSION PUBLISHES FIRST PUBLIC BENEFIT EXAMPLES

The Charity Commission has published its first examples of how charities might show in their annual reports how they provide public benefit. Under the terms of the Charities Act 2006, all charities will have to report on their public benefit from next year.

[The example reports](#) cover one fictional charity above the £500,000 audit threshold – a drugs advisory centre – and one, a youth club, below it.

Each principle in [the commission's](#) public benefit guidance is also linked to the example of how it is met in the example reports.

Andrew Hind, chief executive of the commission, said: "These examples show how straightforward reporting on your charity's public benefit can be in reality. We don't expect charities just to treat them as templates, but hope they find them a useful tool in building and developing their own reporting style."

More examples will be added to the commission's finalised supplementary public benefit guidance documents when they are published at the end of the year

SECTOR RESPONSES TO GOVERNMENT'S ACTION PLAN

Umbrella body NCVO has published its response to the Office of the Third Sector proposals for an Action Plan to support the voluntary and community sector during the economic downturn, in web or pdf format via <http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/policy/index.asp?id=12266>. Volunteering England's response, in pdf, 60KB, at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/9l62y9>.

SECTOR NEWS

LITE VERSION OF GIFT AID MANAGEMENT SYSTEM

GiftEase Lite, a Gift Aid recording and claiming database, is to become available at no charge from 1st December. Charities can register their interest at <http://www.gift-ease.net/GEM/Default.aspx?tabid=79>.

HELPING THE SECTOR DELIVER PUBLIC SERVICES

The government has published a series of documents relating to its commitment to working in partnership with charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises in delivering public services. News item at http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news/news_stories/081211_psap.aspx, direct links as follows:

-- 'Working in a consortium: A guide for third sector organisations involved in public service delivery', pdf, 335KB, <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/107235/consortium%20guide%20final.pdf>.

-- The results of a project examining 'social clauses' in contracts as a way of promoting the social impact of public service delivery. In pdf, 115KB, <http://preview.tinyurl.com/4mt2gm>.

-- A progress update on the Public Services Action Plan published in 2006 includes "the Government's key achievements" such as "Transforming the commissioning landscape by supporting and encouraging public sector commissioners to work more closely with the sector" and establishing the Innovation Exchange. 'Partnership in Public Services: the public services action plan Two years on' pdf, 136KB, http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/media/107232/psap_two_years_on.pdf.

-- And Public Administration Select Committee (PASC) publishes the government's response to its report 'Public Services and the Third Sector: Rhetoric and Reality', via <http://preview.tinyurl.com/67gume>.

SOMERSET LINK

LINKs are being set-up across the country to enable ordinary people to influence the delivery of health care services in their localities. Somerset's LINK is being hosted by Help and Care, a Bournemouth based organisation, with a good track record in community engagement. It is hosting LINKs right across the south of England.

To find out more about LINKs in Somerset and to have a say in how LINK is set up in Somerset log onto: www.makesachange.org.uk or telephone: 0300 111 0102.

LEGAL NEWS

CODE OF PRACTICE TO REPLACE THE STATUTORY DISCIPLINARY, GRIEVANCE AND DISMISSAL PROCEDURES

The Employment Act 2008 will completely repeal the statutory disciplinary, dismissal and grievance procedures (DDP) from 6 April 2009. In the meantime the DDP remain in place and must be followed, including for virtually all dismissals even if they are for a reason other than disciplinary.

Information and guidance about DDP, including sample letters, are on the Department for Business, Enterprise and Regulatory Reform website at www.berr.gov.uk/employment/Resolving_disputes/index.html.

From 6 April 2009, instead of statutory procedures there will be an ACAS code of practice on discipline and grievance, setting out the basic principles of good practice. It will not have force of law and failure to comply with it will not in itself be unlawful. However an employer's unreasonable failure to comply with the code will be able to be taken into account by the employment tribunal and can lead to an increase of up to 25% in any award made by the tribunal, and an employee's failure to comply can lead to a reduction of up to 25% in any award.

ACAS will issue guidance on implementing the code. The intention is that disciplinary and grievance issues should, if possible, be dealt with through informal discussion. If this is unsuccessful, the key elements in a fair and transparent procedure are defined as dealing with issues promptly, acting consistently, carrying out an investigation to establish the facts, informing the employee of the issue, ensuring the employee can put their case at a disciplinary or grievance meeting before any decisions are made, ensuring the employee has the right to be accompanied, and ensuring the employee's right to appeal against any formal decision. The final version of the code, which has been submitted for parliamentary approval, was issued on 7 November 2008 and is available via www.acas.org.uk/index.aspx?articleid=2114.

CHANGES TO MINIMUM WAGE

From 1 October 2008 minimum wage is £5.73 per hour for over-21s, £4.77 for 18-21 year olds, and £3.53 for 16 and 17 year olds who are above school leaving age and are not apprentices.

EMPLOYMENT LAW SUMMARY FOR 2009 (AND 2008)

Personnel professionals' body CIPD has updated its factsheet on current employment law developments to summarise the main changes in 2008 and a look ahead at those expected in 2009.
<http://www.cipd.co.uk/subjects/emplaw/general/legaldevs.htm>.

LEGAL NEWS

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, at <http://www.sandy-a.co.uk/employment.htm#annualleave>, or go to Business Link guidance, with templates for notifying workers of the change and how to calculate entitlement for part-time and other typical workers, <http://preview.tinyurl.com/9v7p7y>.

PUBLIC LAW PROJECT

The advice line run by the Public Law Project provides free detailed legal advice to voluntary organisations on disputes involving public bodies' decisions and failures. PLP's lawyers will also take on particular cases to resolve disputes through complaints procedures, the Ombudsman schemes or court proceedings.

The advice line is available NOW on 020 7697 2198 at the following times:

Monday to Friday 10.00 to 16.00 or email: evs@publiclawproject.org.uk

ACAS OFFERS POTENTIAL LIFE-LINE DURING ECONOMIC BLUES

If you're struggling to keep your business afloat, Acas can offer you free confidential advice around some of the critical issues you face in these difficult times. This includes the implications of varying contracts, lay offs, short time working and redundancy. Our training courses offer:

- Dealing with redundancies
- Your obligations on consulting employees; and
- How to have difficult conversations with staff.

If you'd like some unique insight and advice on facilitating discussions with your trade union or employee representatives, to help you reach agreement on important issues then contact us. You Acas regional office will also be able to give you more information about competitive, tailor made services to suit your business needs. To arrange training call our national booking line on 08457383736.

NEWS FOR TRUSTEES

EASING TENSIONS BETWEEN TRUSTEES

Charity Trustee Networks has developed a practical resource to help trustees work well together, and to introduce, develop and use codes of conduct appropriate for their organisations. "Codes of conduct really can prevent issues becoming personal and should not be seen as another piece of unnecessary bureaucracy." according to CTN chair Rodney Buse. News item at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/56x3dg> or download 'Codes of Conduct for Trustees' from <http://www.trusteenet.org.uk/resources/codes-conduct-trustees-ctn-booklet>.

STRATEGIC STUFF

Local area agreement - What's it got to do with me?

If you are one of the thousands of paid or unpaid people who spend part of their time working in any sort of voluntary or community organisation, then new opportunities are heading your way.

Everyone has a right to be heard when it comes to making decisions about local services. No one should be ignored just because they belong to a small minority group.

Government recognises that local people and local groups have a huge store of knowledge and experience about what helps their communities work together and what increases divisions. Local groups may also have a better understanding of the local environment, and can help find the right balance between, say, the need for a better road system and the need for green spaces. Local people and local organisations are often in contact with the smallest communities and the most vulnerable people whom bigger organisations like local councils find it hard to reach.

If local groups can share this sort of knowledge, then they can help councils to be much more effective and efficient about the way they plan and deliver or commission public services.

Because there are over 160,000 local voluntary and community groups, it would be impossible for local councils to talk to each one individually, so every area has a local infrastructure organisation – South Somerset Voluntary & Community Action is the organisation that represents groups in South Somerset. We are in contact with local groups via this newsletter, our forums and one to one work and provide a wide range of services such as help with accounting, writing constitutions and payroll. We support groups to voice their interests and concerns to the local council and other agencies such as emergency services, health trusts and businesses, which will help them to influence the planning and delivery of services to local people.

Voluntary and community groups form a major part of what the Government calls 'the third sector'. Government wants to see more partnerships between local councils and third sector groups. Creating an 'environment for a thriving third sector' is one of the priorities that local authorities have been encouraged to adopt in new three year agreements with the Government about how they provide services to the people who live and work in their districts.

These local area agreements have four main themes:

- Children and young people
- Safer and stronger communities
- Healthier communities and older people
- Economic development and the environment

The knowledge and experience of voluntary or community groups can make a really positive contribution to planning and delivering services around these themes. That's what the Government is hoping will happen as a result of the new agreements.

Local councils are being given much more flexibility around commissioning services from voluntary and community groups and around moving money from one budget to another.

We are currently negotiating a seat on the theme groups to ensure the work of the voluntary sector in South Somerset is heard and services which are being delivered by the sector are recognised as meeting the targets of the Local Area Agreements. I shall keep you updated on our progress!

SOUTH SOMERSET SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The South Somerset Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted by South Somerset District Council in October 2008, and will be published Spring 2009. Work is currently underway to develop Delivery Plans with a range of public, private and voluntary sector organisations to identify what is currently happening to avoid duplication and work together on agreed actions. South Somerset Together (the local strategic partnership) has endorsed seven pump-priming projects to get the strategy underway which includes a Green Business programme of support to local businesses, research into good practice sustainable models of Community Transport and a sustainability event which will help organisations and people of all ages to look at simple ways of reducing CO₂ emissions and waste to land fill and live healthy, sustainable lives. For more information look at the LSP's website: www.southsomersettogether.org.uk

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

VISTA

We have some very exciting things happening in 2009 and will have a number of funded programmes available for the voluntary sector, that will help to capacity build your organisation.

Think Smart

Think Smart is an exciting ESF project (in partnership with Learning South West) aimed at small and medium sized organisations in the Voluntary Sector in Somerset. The aim of the project is to provide employers with practical assistance and resources to improve the benefits to their organisation from an investment in learning. Research has shown that attainment rates of accredited courses dramatically increase if there is support in the work place. Therefore Think Smart will provide employers with in-house training to develop a nominated member of staff to train as a work place coach. Employers will then be able to access funding to meet the costs of training fees for their employees accessing eligible accredited learning.

We are delighted to be able to offer this programme as it is one of the most significant investments that we have been able to make available. Please call us for more information: 08453 580372. Eligible courses will be listed in our Spring Training Programme which will be available soon.

Certificate for Skilled Advisors

This is a three day course aimed at those working with the public or in front line roles who give information, advice or guidance to clients. (for example drop-ins, help-lines, reception desks, 1:1 client work etc). More information can be found on our website:

www.vistaproject.org.uk

Costs: The full cost of the course is £145, however it may be possible to access this course on a funded place through Think Smart. Please ring us for information: 08453 580372.

Dates: 18th and 25th March and 8th April 2009.

ILM Certificate in Management (Level 3)

This course is for practising or aspiring first line managers. The Institute of Leadership and Management (ILM) is Europe's largest leadership and management awarding body. The ILM Level 3 Certificate has been specially designed to give candidates a solid foundation in their formal development as a manager. This course has also been contextualised to meet the specific needs of VCS staff. More information can be found on our website:

www.vistaproject.org.uk.

The full cost of this course is £780 plus registration fees. ViSTA is working in partnership with The Learning Curve and Learning South West to subsidise the course to £98 for eligible Somerset VCS organisations. There are some eligibility criteria, please call us to discuss these: 087453 580372.

The start dates have not yet been confirmed but please call us to register your interest.

If your organisation has specific training needs or require guidance or support with your planning, please call ViSTA: 08453 580372.

TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES

Financial Management Demystified - Tuesday 3rd March (Taunton) & 14th May (Bournemouth)

Understanding Yourself & Other People - Tuesday 10th March (Taunton)

Full Cost Recovery: from theory to practice - Tuesday 17th March (Taunton) & 23rd July (Exeter)

Effective Recruitment & Retention of Staff - Tuesday 24th March (Taunton)

Working Towards Financial Sustainability - Tuesday 31st March (Taunton)

The Psychology of Leadership - Tuesday 7th April (Taunton)

Strategic Planning for Trustees & Senior Management - Tuesday 21st April (Taunton) & 21st May (Exeter)

Getting Your Message Across – Media Management for Smaller Organisations – Tuesday 28th April (Taunton)

Performance Management - Tuesday 5th May (Taunton)

Addressing Data Protection – Step 1 - Tuesday 12th May (Taunton)

Managing Conflict in the Workplace - Tuesday 19th May (Taunton)

Dealing Positively with Complaints - Tuesday 26th May (Taunton)

Dealing with Poor Performers - Tuesday 2nd June (Taunton)

Managing in the Real World - Tuesday 9th June (Taunton)

Networking & Negotiating Skills - Thursday 11th June (Exeter)

Recognising & Dealing with Suspected Abuse - Tuesday 16th June (Taunton)

Successfully Applying for Small Grants (What's Happened to Awards For All?) – Tuesday 7th July (Taunton)

Building & Leading a Team - Tuesday 14th July (Taunton)

'High Impact' Communication Skills - Tuesday 21st July (Taunton)

All courses run from 9.30am – 4pm at **fully accessible venues**. the **cost** of each course is £99 per person (including lunch). The cost of booking one person on three Cascade courses at the same time, or three people on one course, is **discounted** to £270.

Certificates confirming course completion will be provided.

All of Cascade's **trainers** are knowledgeable professionals and highly regarded in their fields of expertise.

Cascade is the Third Sector Support Service run by Lindy Booth, formerly Development Manager at Mind in Taunton & West Somerset. An experienced Third Sector manager, she now works freelance.

For more information please go to: www.cascadetrainingplus.co.uk

NEWS FROM OTHER GROUPS

DEVON & SOMERSET FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT.

The Yeovil Group of Devon and Somerset Fire and Rescue Service are very keen to meet and discuss with the Voluntary & Community Sector in South Somerset the possibilities of partnership working, to help them access those hard to reach persons who might be more vulnerable to the outbreak of fire. If your client group would benefit from a home safety visit, please call Martin Carnell on 01935 382003 or 07802 297407 or email at mcarnell@dsfire.gov.uk

South Street Centre

The newly named South Street Centre (formerly Yeovil Day Centre) has undergone some radical changes in the first half of the New Year. As well as a new name it also has a new committee and several new members of staff. Following the closure of the SCC Meals on Wheels service the centre faced a significant financial shortfall. In order to combat this loss the new committee is adopting a more diverse business plan whilst still adhering to its constitution of welcoming older people and those with disability for meals and social interaction.

The first floor offices have now become home to the Somerset Polish Community, Camelot Credit Union as well as continuing to house South Somerset Disability Forum. The large first floor room is regularly used by Skills Quest for computer classes, U3A, Yeovil Over 50s Forum and Expertpatients who run lifestyle courses for people with long term illness. It is hoped to increase these lettings as they have little impact on the ground floor which continues to provide a warm comfortable room for our members, offering a widening range of activities, morning coffee, freshly cooked lunches and the occasional bacon butty for passing SSVCA drivers!! We also have a cake making service and can also offer catering for lunchtime functions.

Our Christmas Market weekend was well attended, our mistletoe sales being particularly lucrative due to the practice of offering free testing in Middle Street! February will see...guess what?? the start of a new good quality hot meal delivery service.

On March 5th we are holding a Pre Cheltenham Festival event with Daniel Skelton.

Should any organisation be interested in using space at the centre we would be delighted to have your support and can offer rooms with or without catering at a very affordable rate.

Please phone Penny on 01935 422243.

CORE SERVICES

SOMERSET ALLIANCE OF CVS (SACVS)

The SACVS Improving Reach work plan has been accepted by Capacity Builders and the first funding should be received in the second half of November.

As the title implies, the Improving Reach funding programme aims to improve the reach of infrastructure organisations like SSVCA, so that they are able to support more front-line voluntary groups. The SACVS bid was to develop support services across all the districts of Somerset.

We plan to share what is best in each district rather than try to re-invent the wheel. For instance: We are developing a database for storing member's information and contact details, which we will be able to share with the other CVS' therefore ensuring all voluntary and community groups have access to our services. Engage West Somerset have recently launched their new website, that we hope to use the same information on our own website including setting up groups, policies and procedures, training and funding opportunities. One of the conditions of the funding was that we should put in place a quality assurance system. We have decided on PQASSO (Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations), which will enable us to scrutinise and improve the services and resources we currently provide to the sector.

With the build up of capacity we are now able to offer groups support in the following:

- Start up governance advice
- Advocacy and representation for the sector
- Policy and procedure development
- Project and organisation development
- Back office services, including payroll
- Networking & information forums
- And via this newsletter

To find out more please call Sam on 01935 475914.

OFFICE SERVICES

No access to a PC, photocopier, fax machine, projector, lap top, laminator, digital camera 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.

PAYROLL SERVICES

Why have all the worry of NI contributions, PAYE and sick pay, when we can do this for you. For £11 per person per month 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 calculations for you. For more information please call Liz or Donna on 01935 475914.

CORE SERVICES

SOUTH SOMERSET VOLUNTARY SECTOR FORUM

At our last forum meeting in November the main topic of discussion was transport and how it affects groups and organisations in South Somerset. The two problems identified were lack of provision and high costs.

Workshops held found that some groups find it difficult to access transport provision due to:

Lack of Services at specific times of the day.

Unable to fund their transport.

Lack of access to Public Buses for people with mobility problems.

Limited knowledge of transport within Somerset.

Lack of volunteer drivers.

Rural areas are difficult to access.

Availability of community transport.

Passengers can only benefit from 50% off when using community transport, unlike free transport on public transport, when using their bus pass.

Registration and VAT costs of community transport schemes to cover their overheads.

Volunteer Mileage cost.

Insurance costs.

Overall cost to customers e.g. on low income.

Recommendations on easing this problem

Groups to share ownership of vehicles to cut down on overheads and share costs of insurance, maintenance etc.

Groups to share volunteers, especially when volunteers are ill or on holiday, perhaps the volunteer centre could hold a database of volunteer drivers in South Somerset?

Avoid peak times e.g. between 7 & 9am and 3 & 6pm when booking community transport as this will increase availability and may reduce cost.

SSVCA have produced a handout of all the CT operators in South Somerset to enable groups to compare prices.

SSDC have public transport bus timetables available.

Consider using volunteer drivers as this will cut down on driver costs.

SSVCA are in talks with SSDC to encourage them to release their staff to volunteer, which will hopefully increase volunteering capacity.

If you would like any information on the above please call Sam on 01935 475914.

DATA BASE

We are currently in the process of updating our data base of groups and organisations in South Somerset, this will enable us to communicate more effectively and to pass on relevant information. Peter Bagg our Support & Development Worker will be calling all of you in the next month to ensure the details we have are correct and to ensure you are happy to have your details stored.

SURVEY OF YOUR NEEDS

Once the database is complete, we will be contacting groups again to establish what are the needs of your group/organisation to ensure the services we deliver to the sector are relevant and constructive. I apologise for taking time out of your day job, but we really are unable to support the sector if we do not ask you what's needed, so I hope you can bear with us.



Response from The Prime Minister's Office in relation to "Raise The Mileage Allowance Payment" Petition

Following our signature of the above petition, the following response was received:
You recently signed a petition asking the Prime Minister to help volunteer drivers by increasing the tax-free mileage allowance in the approved mileage allowance payment (AMAP) scheme.

Let me assure you that the Government is very much aware of the valuable contribution made by all volunteer drivers in the community. We are firmly committed to helping charities and the voluntary sector, and recognise the important role they play in creating a better society. In fact, over 20 million people across England and Wales volunteer formally or informally at least once a month, representing half the adult population. We greatly appreciate the contribution that volunteers make to improving the welfare of others.

However, where volunteers use their own car for charitable work, the decision how much to pay them for expenses is a matter for the voluntary group concerned rather than Government, and the amount is not limited by regulations.

People doing unpaid charitable work do not usually have a contract of employment, so any reimbursement of their out-of-pocket expenses is not taxable. Income tax and national insurance contributions are payable only on sums that exceed reimbursement of expenses. But, as an alternative to recording actual costs, volunteer drivers can use the AMAP rates of 40p a mile for the first 10,000 miles and 25p a mile thereafter. This will ensure that no tax charge arises.

The AMAP scheme (which is set up specifically for employees) aims to produce a fair result, whilst saving volunteer drivers the work of keeping detailed records and making claims for their actual expenses. Whilst HM Revenue & Customs allows volunteers to use the AMAP rates for convenience, they are not mandatory and drivers can reclaim their full motoring costs by completing a tax return should they wish to.

We are, of course, aware that many motoring expenses have increased since the rates were introduced. Against this, however, depreciation cost have fallen and fuel efficiency has increased.

We carried out a review of the AMAP rates in 2007, but we decided at the 2008 Budget not to change them. The rates have to cater for a wide variety of drivers. They were never intended to reflect the actual costs of motoring for every car, but are still sufficiently high to cover the business motoring expenses of most drivers. We believe the rates strike a balance between giving tax relief for amounts that represent fair recompense for car use, whilst reflecting our wider environmental aims by discouraging the unnecessary use of cars for business and promoting the use of more efficient, lower-emission cars. We keep the rates under constant review.



Mentoring and Befriending

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation has a range of training programmes available at locations across the country including Exeter. For more information please see their website on www.mandbf.org.uk.

Transport Co-ordinator Volunteer

We have a volunteer who is looking for a role as a Transport Co-Ordinator. He can be flexible in hours and location. Please contact the Volunteer Centre for more information.

Volunteer Awards 2009

The Volunteer Centre will be launching its first annual Volunteer Awards in 2009. An awards ceremony will take place during National Volunteers Week 1st – 7th June 2009 and nomination forms will be sent out in January with the closing date being the end of March 2009.

Recruiting Volunteers Session

We are hoping to run a session on Recruiting Volunteers during February 2009. This will be a 4 hour session in a small group setting. If you are interested in attending or would like more information please email julie@ssvol.org.uk.

Volunteer Centre Website

We have just launched our new website www.volunteercentre.net/southsomerset We are still getting used to it ourselves but hope to post useful information including forum dates, agendas and newsletters. Unfortunately, this website was arranged by Volunteering England and they have now informed us that it will only be available until September 2009. For this reason, we are hoping to use it as a "practice" site to give us an idea of what would be useful if and when we are lucky enough to obtain something more permanent. If you have any comments please do let us know.

Clear advice on volunteering while on benefits

Jobcentre Plus has published renewed guidance on volunteering whilst on benefits, following a government commitment to the Commission on the Future of Volunteering earlier this year. "http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/news

Measuring volunteering around the world

Guidelines for measuring volunteering around the world have been developed by the International Labour Organisation with the assistance of the Johns Hopkins Center for Civil Society Studies. The recent International Conference of Labour Statisticians has agreed to issue the resulting 'Manual on the Measurement of Volunteer Work'. This is available (as exposure draft) in pdf, 207KB, at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/8c8g4o>, or see background and press release at Centre for Civil Society Studies <http://www.jhu.edu/ccss/volunteering/index.html>.

FUNDING NEWS

LOTTERY RAIDS 'WILL NOT HAPPEN AGAIN'

Peter Wanless, the chief executive of the Big Lottery Fund, has said he does not anticipate any more lottery money being diverted to the London Olympics.

Wanless told the Third Sector Magazine, "Assurances have been made by the Secretary of State for Culture, Media and Sport in the House of Commons,". "There was an almighty fuss the last time it happened. I'm relying on these things to make sure it doesn't happen again."

A total of £2.175bn of lottery cash has been transferred to the Olympics on two occasions, the first of which was described as a "straightforward raid" by the Culture, Media and Sport select committee in 2004.

However, when the Government pushed through the second transfer this year, James Purnell, then the culture secretary, promised there would be no third raid.

NEW GUIDANCE - GOVERNMENT DEPARTMENTS TO MAKE THREE YEAR FUNDING THE NORM FOR THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

"Charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises all stand to benefit from new guidance published by the Government, ensuring every Whitehall department offers three year funding to third sector organisations in all but exceptional cases.

"The guidance document, published jointly by the Office of the Third Sector (OTS) in the Cabinet Office and the Treasury, sends a clear message across Government that, where appropriate, funding for the third sector must be for a minimum of three years.

"Throughout the next three years, departments will have to report their progress to the Minister for the Third Sector by the end of October, who will in turn report that progress to the Treasury and to Parliament as part of the annual review of the Compact."

AWARDS FOR ALL ENGLAND TO CLOSE

Awards for All England, the lottery grants scheme for community groups, will close in its existing form in March. [The Big Lottery Fund](#) has announced that [Awards for All England](#) will close, but groups will still have access to equivalent levels of lottery funding through programmes run by the four providers that administer the current scheme. [Arts Council England](#), the [Heritage Lottery Fund](#), [Sport England](#) and the Big Lottery Fund will handle applications individually through existing or new programmes.

CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

SOUTH WEST FOUNDATION

SMALL GRANTS

The Foundation, in partnership with the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation would like to invest small grants up to £1,000 (most will be in the region of £200-£600) in small Community Organisations operating in rural areas, market and coastal towns with the aim of encouraging and enabling people to take part in their communities.

NETWORKING AND EMPOWERMENT FUND-WANTING TO HAVE ADVICE AND INFLUENCE

A partnership Fund between South West Foundation and creating excellence. Small grants up to £1,000 are available for a variety of networking activities, including give people a voice and influence decisions in their communities and to support funding advice worker networks.

COMMUNITY GRANTS

Community Grants. This is a partnership programme between the Foundation, The Learning Curve, the Learning and Skills Council and the European Social Fund. The aim of the programme is to support Third Sector Organisations to undertake work with individuals who are furthest removed from the labour market and to give them the skills and confidence that they need to move forward. Grants up to £12,000 are available although most are expected to be between £6-8,000. £470,000 is available throughout the region (excluding Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly)

For more information please go to the website

www.southwestfoundation.org.uk

FUNDING TO SUPPORT AFFORDABLE HOUSING

The Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Tudor Trust have come together and contributed £1.75 million towards the establishment of a £2 million Community Land Trust Fund (CLT). The aim of the fund will be to help Community Land Trusts which are organisations that seek to address the lack of affordable housing by securing land and building houses that are partly owned, in perpetuity, by the local community.

The Fund will comprise of a Feasibility Fund - to provide community groups or fledgling CLTs with one day of expert consultancy support to scope out opportunities, recommend ways forward and develop a concept note; the Technical Assistance Fund which will provide CLTS or emergent CLTS groups with a grant to employ a consultant for up to five days in order to develop initial ideas into comprehensive business plans; Pre-Development Funding which is loan finance to enable promising CLT projects to secure planning permission, employ architects and other professionals and conducting site surveys; and Development Finance which will be providing CLTs with capital loans to top up commercially available building development finance.

It is expected that this initial contribution from the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation and the Tudor Trust will enable the establishment of around 30 operational CLTs, and the construction of around 150 affordable homes over the course of the next four years.

www.tudortrust.org.uk/thecltfund

CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

ALEXANDRA ROSE CHARITIES – COLLECTIONS IN 2009

Alexandra Rose Charities now helps local people-caring charities raise funds for their work on Rose Day in June and at other times in the year to suit volunteers' busy schedules and local authority timetables.

Our national Rose Day 2009 will be held on Saturday 20th June this year with our London Day on Wednesday 17th June. We welcome new registrations from any small local charity working with people in need in their community. We make arrangements for the collection and provide all the equipment. The charity recruits local collectors and keeps 90% of what is raised, returning just 10% of the collection to us a contribution towards our costs.

Last year more than 300 charities raised over £100,000 towards their work through taking part in Rose Day collections and the annual Joint Charities Raffle. Alexandra Rose Charities also made Special Appeal Fund grants totalling more than £35,000 to participating charities .

Groups can find out more about Alexandra Rose Charities by looking at our website: www.alexandrarosecharities.org.uk where registration forms can be completed and returned to us on line or by post if this is easier, or by telephoning the office on 01252 726 171

GRANTS AVAILABLE FOR WOMEN IN NEED

The Society for the Assistance of Ladies in Reduced Circumstances was founded in 1886 and provides support to women resident in the United Kingdom who are living alone in their own home (either owned or rented) in genuine need, irrespective of age or social status. It has announced that in 2009 it will make £50,000 available for grants to other organisations.

Although the society's' principal charitable activity remains the making of grants to individual women, applications will also be considered for funding towards projects which represent the complete work of a small organisation, or a particular undertaking by a larger one. In order to meet the requirements of the Society's governing document, the Trustees will only consider applications for support for projects which are for the exclusive benefit of women in financial need. The society will not consider projects which also benefit men; children; and women who are not in financial need. The Trustees intend short listing applications at their meeting in April 2009.

The closing date for applications is 15 March 2009. All applicants must complete the online application form. www.salrc.org/institutional_grants.htm

CURRENT FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

GRANTS FOR SOCIAL ENTERPRISES

The Triodos Opportunities Fund is a venture capital fund for social enterprises. Triodos is seeking to invest between £200,000 and £750,000 in social enterprises with proven business models that are looking to grow and scale up their operations. Triodos will work closely with the companies to help build on their success and focus on their long-term development rather than short-term profits. Triodos will provide more than just money and use its extensive network of social economy partners to open doors, make connections and help investees succeed. The value of the fund currently stands at £3 million.

Social enterprises that want to find out more about how the Triodos Opportunities Fund can support their growth should contact Whitney Thomas on 020 7138 3209 or e-mail whitni.thomas@triodos.co.uk. Investors interested in participating in the Fund, should contact Alex Connor on 020 7138 3219 or email alex.connor@triodos.co.uk. Applications can be submitted at any time. <http://www.triodos.co.uk/uk/>

GRANTS FOR IMPROVING LOCAL ENVIRONMENTS

O2 have committed £1 million to the "Its Your Community" initiative. Its Your Community, which is managed by the Conservation Foundation, provides grants of £100 to £1,000 to individuals and groups to improve their local environment.

The type of projects supported in the past included environmental projects such as turning derelict land into an amenity park or wildlife area, tree planting, creating a wildlife pond, renovating neglected river and canal footpaths, providing water butts and recycling facilities in village halls, etc. The commitment by O2 means that the initiative will now be able to support up to 60 projects per month.

Applications can be made at any time and are judged on the 20th of every month. <http://www.itsyourcommunity.co.uk/>

FUNDING SPORT IN THE COMMUNITY

Sport England has published its new funding strategy, with four open-access funding streams to deliver sport in the community. These will be open from April 2009 to sports clubs, voluntary and community organisations, local authorities and education establishments. News item at <http://preview.tinyurl.com/a32n64> or download the strategy document 'Funding sport in the community' (pdf, 455KB) at http://www.sportengland.org/sport_england_funding_strategy_20090106.pdf.

SSVCA PROJECTS

FURNICARE

Furnicare is a Furniture Re-use project operating from Yeovil and Chard. The project enables people on low income and charitable groups to purchase good quality furniture, household items and electrical goods at affordable prices. Our service is open to anyone claiming benefit or who earns less than £15,000 per year. If you would like to find out more information or would like to donate unwanted furniture to the scheme please contact:

Yeovil on 01935 433416 Tuesday to Friday between 10.00am and 4.00pm or
Chard on 01460 Monday to Thursday between 10.00am and 4.00pm.



COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

We operate 3 transport schemes in South Somerset, Community Transport (minibus service), Community Cars and Links.

Community Transport provides transport to older, frail and disabled people who are unable to access mainstream services. All of our 11 minibuses are wheelchair accessible. We transport people and groups to a number of places including day care, social groups and hospital and GP appointments. To find out more information please call 01935 477399.

Community Cars recruits over 50 volunteers who using their own cars will transport people unable to access mainstream services but who can use a normal car. The client will pay the driver his/her mileage rate of 40p per mile plus a £2 booking fee to cover the administration cost. For further information please call 01935 411572.

Links is based in Langport and serves the towns of Somerton and Langport and the surrounding villages and hamlets. Links uses smaller vehicles than the minibus scheme due to the small rural lanes, however all the vehicles are wheelchair accessible. This scheme is open to anyone unable to access mainstream services or who does not have a mainstream service in their village or town. For further information please call 01458 250169.

TALKING COMPUTERS

Talking Computers is a Big Lottery funded project that provides training to people who are unable or find it difficult to access mainstream pcs because of a visual impairment, physical impairment or dyslexia.

One to one training is provided to all users in differing software packages identified to meet individual need. Training is carried out at our training suite at Houndstone, Yeovil or at Somerset Association for the Blind based in Taunton. For further information please call 01935 414034.

AFFORDABLE COMPUTERS FOR EVERYONE!!

Our IT re-cycling project can set you up with a re-used PC. With its hard drive wiped of any previous data we can offer you a pc with Windows 98, Windows 2000 or Windows XP (subject to eligibility) from £20. Monitor, keyboard and mouse bundle to go with your pc is £15. For more information call Jo on 01935 414034 Tuesday – Thursday.

SSVCA CONTACT DETAILS

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Community Cars

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South Somerset Links

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This newsletter is produced free of charge for the voluntary and community sector and statutory partners, within South Somerset and is circulated to over 500 organisations registered with us. It is written for everyone concerned with voluntary and community organisations - volunteers, committee members, trustees, staff and partners. All sections can be copied and passed around your organisations, so please don't keep it to yourself, there is something for everyone!

We hope you find the newsletter useful and easy to read, however if you would like to make suggestions on how we can improve this format or you would like to be registered on our mailing list please contact Donna on 01935 475914. The next issue will be out in May 2009. If you would like to include any articles or information please send copy to Sam Healy or email at samhealy@ydcvs.org.uk by the end of April 2009.

SSVCA DIRECTORS/TRUSTEES

Nigel Engert

Chair & Finance Committee

Mike Sandells

Deputy Chair, Finance Committee & Furnicare

Brian Maxwell

Legal Advice & Community Transport

Dave Gladding

Finance Committee

Chris Watson

Katherine Nolan

OBSERVERS

Voluntary Sector

Penny Mitchell - South Street Centre

County Council

Vicky Breeze

SSDC

Ric Pallister

Alan Smith

The main SSVCA office is situated at:

**Units 4/5, Yeovil Small Business Centre,
Houndstone Business Park, Yeovil,
Somerset, BA22 8WA.**

From the ASDA roundabout take the Lufton Way exit following signs for Houndstone Business Park, take the first right into Mead Avenue and follow the road past Screwfix (on your left hand side), turn right into Memorial Road and follow the road round. SSVCA is situated opposite St. John Ambulance.

Articles and information should not be considered full or definitive. The information contained is not a substitute for professional advice and whilst every care has been taken to produce this newsletter, SSVCA accepts no responsibility for any errors that may have occurred.

**DON'T FORGET TO COME ALONG
TO THE NEXT
VOLUNTARY SECTOR FORUM!**

Wednesday 18th March 2009

10.00AM TO 1.15PM

Somerton Community Hall,
8 Cary Court, Somerton Business Park,
Somerton, TA11 6SB.
01458 272236

Come along and network with other voluntary and community organisations, get updated on sector and legal news affecting you, find out what funding and training opportunities are available. Workshop on what are funders looking for in an application and how best to sell your organisation to potential funders.

For more information or to book a free space,
please call Donna on 01935 475914