

# Voluntary and Community Sector News

Issue 08 April 2011

## Suzy's column

"It is March already and we have lighter nights and spring on the horizon!! We have now emerged the other side of the Comprehensive Spending Review and know the budget settlements for Local Authorities in Worcestershire. Although we are in challenging times it is also one of opportunity with the Big Society agenda placing significant emphasis on the role of the voluntary and community sector (VCS). This is endorsed by the Modernising Commissioning Green Paper expressing an aspiration for 25% of government contracts to be awarded to small and medium size organisations including the voluntary sector.

"Recently senior officers from the public and voluntary sectors took part in a Partnership Improvement Programme which focussed on commissioning and how to improve the process for VCS organisations in Worcestershire. This was a very positive programme and has resulted in positive steps being taken to further this work.

"This edition has some interesting articles about successes, new initiatives such as the Finditinworcestershire funding portal and updates on current and new developments. We are always looking for articles to celebrate or share information about the work of the voluntary sector and indeed how we as an organisation are working with you, so if you have something good to shout about please let Kerry know!

"It is an interesting and challenging time for us all with the future holding potential opportunities for the VCS to engage in delivery of public services."

**Suzy James**  
VCS Unit Coordinator

## VCS Grants

### Round Seven

**Open NOW!**

**Deadline 4pm, Friday, April 1, 2011**

We are giving grants to support the Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) organisations in Worcestershire, whose activities contribute towards identified outcomes for the community.

In round 7 we are offering the following grant:

### Celebrating Diversity

A total of £10,000 is available for grants to help VCS organisations celebrate diversity through raising knowledge and understanding and encouraging interaction, e.g. a celebration day in the community. The maximum to be applied for under this grant is £1,000.

### Where can I find out more?

For more detailed information about this grant, please visit the VCS Unit web pages at [www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary](http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/voluntary) and follow the 'VCS Grants' link, where you can find:

- Details of how to apply and supporting guidance
- Eligibility criteria
- Further support for your organisation.

Alternatively you can request a copy of our application form and guidance from [gwillis@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:gwillis@worcestershire.gov.uk) or call 01905 766864.



## Worcester Citizens Advice Bureau & WHABAC first in Worcester to be awarded an 'A'

The Housing Support Service which helps with housing and homelessness for homeless people and those facing homelessness, was reviewed by the Supporting People Team. Prior to their visit the organisation completed a self assessment on the service which was required to meet the Quality Assessment Framework. This covered: Needs and Risk Assessment, Support Planning, Health and Safety and Security, Protection from Abuse, Fair Access and Diversity and Complaints.

The team was required to provide evidence to match 158 objectives and this was very much a team effort. Stakeholders completed questionnaires from the Supporting People Team which also assisted in providing necessary information and evidence. Staff completed questionnaires about the service provided and met as a group with the Supporting People Team on the review day but were also given the opportunity to meet the team individually.

The Supporting People Team also sent questionnaires to some of its service users and several service users met with the team on the review day. Again there was an opportunity to meet the team individually. Finally, (after what was reported to be a really long and nerve wracking day!) the team was informed that it had achieved a level 'A' for its service pending a very short action plan.

The action plan was required to further evidence how outcomes of Individual Needs and Risk Assessments are used to inform service and strategic development. This was successfully completed and the certificate was received at a presentation at the Provider Forum. The organisation is proud of this achievement which recognises staff dedication and hard work.



## Social enterprise explained at county conference

Social enterprise in Worcestershire was the hot topic at a special conference that was a great success in January.

The Unlocking Enterprise conference took place at St Peter's Baptist Church, Worcester, on Friday, January 28 and was organised by Worcestershire County Council with Midwest Rural Enterprise.

An increase in social enterprise is an important part of the government's 'big society' agenda. Unlocking Enterprise responded to the demand for more information about what social enterprise is, how individuals can get involved and how existing enterprises can step up to the next level.

Attendees heard from expert speakers, took part in workshops, networked and made new contacts. The keynote speaker was Peter Holbrook, CEO of the Social Enterprise Coalition. Topics considered included bidding for commercial contracts, procurement, marketing, using new media and addressing HR, legal and investment issues.

“The Unlocking Enterprise conference helped to demystify social enterprise and explained how it can work for communities and individuals,”

said Councillor Simon Geraghty, Worcestershire County Council's Cabinet Member for Planning, Economy & Performance.

**Special Feature!**

# Seven great ways to bring Generations Together!

Twelve projects across England, including a successful bid from Worcestershire, have been awarded grants as part of the £5.5 million Generations Together initiative, a cross-Government scheme to promote intergenerational volunteering and encourage meaningful interaction between young and old generations.

Across Worcestershire, £386,800 was made available for the 'Transferable Skills' project. The aim of the project is to provide community project volunteers, both young and old, with additional skills to encourage greater understanding between older and younger age groups, challenge negative stereotypes and increase confidence in interacting with people from other groups and the wider community.

Overviews of the seven major projects are given below. For more information, please contact the projects directly.

## 1. Generations Together into Employment

Volunteers from the older age group will be trained to assist those aged 16-19 in looking for work by job coaching, assisting with basic qualifications and becoming mentors during the interview period and the first few weeks of work. At the same time they will also develop their own computer skills and work towards C&G Learning Power Certificates.

WCVYS  
Contact: Phil Street  
phil.wcvys@googlemail.com

## 2. Harvesting the Rural Past

This project focuses on the fact that 64% of Worcestershire is rural. Young and older volunteers from around the county will come together to interview and capture on film and CD-Rom the differences between farming in the past and the present day. The film, recordings, photographs and artefacts will be displayed in local community hubs/ history pods.

Worcestershire County Council  
Contact: Justin Hughes  
jhughes@worcestershire.gov.uk

## 3. Tales of the Credit Crunch

"Tales of the Credit Crunch" aims to provide a cinematic forum for Worcestershire's Older and Younger people to discuss the impact of economic downturn on their communities in urban and rural areas across Worcestershire. Through the making of this film it is hoped to encourage and increase the positive interaction between younger and older people in Worcestershire and to reinforce community cohesion.

In the course of capturing the historical and educational value of local residents' experiences and memories, the project aspires to increase individual's sense of well being and their ability to make a positive contribution to the community. This will be achieved by interviewing individuals and existing community groups about their experiences, leading to the formation of two intergenerational focus groups (representing urban and rural) which will discuss the effects of economic downturn upon Worcestershire.

Age Concern  
Contact: Charlotte Williams, cwilliams@achw.org.uk

#### 4. Bringing People Together

“Bringing People Together” aims to encourage younger and older people to take part in shared activities rather than separate ones, which is often seen as being the norm. These activities include sharing cooking skills, arts and crafts etc.

Worcestershire County Council  
Contact: Paul Finnemore  
pfinnemore@worcestershire.gov.uk



#### 5. Breaking Down Barriers Intergenerational Arts Project

Breaking Down Barriers is an arts project that brings together volunteers aged between 11 - 25 and over 50 together to share skills in art / crafts and produce artwork to be shown at Worcester Festival 2011 and other showcase opportunities across Worcestershire.

Volunteers choose a variety of art mediums i.e. poetry, painting, traditional crafts, graffiti etc... and work to make artwork together. They would support each other through this process, following the theme of “My Perfect Day”.

Volunteers consider what their “My Perfect Day” would be like: would it be with friends and family enjoying a meal together, would it be making something creative, would it be on holiday? Was their perfect day the day they got married or had their child? Is it in the past, present or future? The choice is theirs.

The aims are to promote intergenerational discussion, to find common ground and help break down negative social stereotypes that can otherwise cause animosity and fear between the age groups and to aid community cohesion through connecting older and younger people through shared ownership of their work / project.

Worcester Volunteer Centre  
Contact: Lisa Buckley  
lisa@wvc.org.uk

#### 6. Multi Media Inclusion Project

The skills of younger volunteers are utilised to provide shared computer learning and internet usage, particularly on web-cam training and accessing global information e.g. energy saving, healthy eating tips.

Rooftop Housing Group  
Contact: Kim Skipsey  
kim.skipsey@rooftopgroup.org



#### 7. See It My Way

Sight Concern Worcestershire is heading up a project to recruit young people aged 17-25 to help visually impaired people carry out many tasks that are so often taken for granted. Things such as choosing a Birthday card, reading post or using the internet are examples of tasks that may be undertaken. Also younger blind or partially sighted volunteers visit older people who are losing their sight in order to support and reassure them. The project, entitled ‘See It My Way’, also wants to encourage the younger generation to support some older visually impaired people to get more exercise whether it is going out for a walk or maybe just getting active with a Nintendo Wii.

Sight Concern  
Contact: Caroline Hughes  
caroline@sightconcern.co.uk

## New resource for Personal Budget service users launched

Worcestershire County Council's Adult Social Care team has launched a Personal Assistant (PA) Register, a new resource that will offer information and advice for people looking to employ their own personal assistants as well as enabling people looking for employment as a personal assistant to register their details.

A key part of the Choice and Control programme is to offer adult social care service users the opportunity to receive a personal budget (PB) – a sum of money which they have been assessed as being eligible for - to spend on their care as they see best.

Catherine Driscoll, the County Council's Head of Adult Social Care, said: "Offering personal budgets to service users is still a relatively new form of providing adult social care; currently around 21% of service users have

chosen this option, which we are aiming to increase to 30% by April."

To visit the PA register go to [www.whub.org.uk/carewise](http://www.whub.org.uk/carewise) and select Advice and Information.

For more information, please contact Deborah Redman, Self Directed Support Development Officer, on 01905 728565.



## Self Help Groups

Worcestershire County Council's Access Team is working in collaboration with the NHS, the Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care (WAVOCC) and Self Help Nottinghamshire to help people across the county, with various medical and other needs, to find and create self help groups.

Given that across the country, and particularly in Worcestershire, people are living longer, self help groups offer an important self care support option for people with long-term conditions. The groups provide practical and emotional advice by sharing their experiences and supporting each other to manage their condition.

Andrew Morley, Worcestershire County Council Access Manager, said: "This will ensure, wherever possible, people can retain their independence and achieve a high quality of life."

To support the projects aims, the charity WAVOCC will shortly be launching a self-help group support web area: [http://www.wavocc.org.uk/self\\_help\\_groups\\_area](http://www.wavocc.org.uk/self_help_groups_area)

This will include a self-help group starter pack and WAVOCC would also like to offer self-help groups the opportunity of six months free membership which would allow them access to a self-help group electronic forum. For further details self-help groups should contact Terra Newman at: [wavocadmin@btconnect.com](mailto:wavocadmin@btconnect.com), tel: 01905 612726

# “A powerful way for organisations to demonstrate their added value”

Suzu James, VCS Unit Coordinator, explains the importance of measuring Social Return on Investment and how the work has progressed....

On a daily basis our actions and activity create a value and cause change in the world in which we operate. The value of this change is difficult to capture in financial terms, however, financial value is normally the only type of value accounted for and measured. Items bought and sold take on a greater significance, however decisions taken on a monetary value can be based on incomplete information about the full impacts.

Social Return on Investment (SROI) measures change in ways that are relevant to the people or organisations that experience or contribute to it. It enables us to capture the full picture of how change is being created by measuring social, environmental and economic outcomes and uses monetary values to represent them. This is particularly powerful to include in funding applications and particularly at this time when funding is so competitive.

So, a year ago we began a joint learning research project to see if we could develop a simplified and user friendly way of capturing SROI, there are many toolkits available currently however, they tend to be very complicated. The aim is to develop something that all organisations – small and large – can use. We have engaged with colleagues from commissioning throughout the

pilot to ensure we are developing something that commissioners trust.

Phase 1 involved 3 organisations who had previously received grants from the County Council. Over a 6 month period they agreed to work with our Research Officer in the development of this toolkit. The phase was successful with each organisation identifying their SROI, we have now moved into Phase 2 of the project whereby we are inviting organisations to test the toolkit in a timed period of March 1st – April 15th 2011. Feedback will be obtained which will enable us to improve and modify the toolkit which will then become the final product.

It is an exciting development that has received considerable interest from colleagues elsewhere in the country; if successful it will be a powerful way for organisations to demonstrate their added value. If you would like to know more about this pilot project please contact me on [sjames2@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sjames2@worcestershire.gov.uk) or tel: 01905 728650.



# Opportunities ‘found in Worcestershire’!



[www.finditinworcestershire.com](http://www.finditinworcestershire.com)

Worcestershire County Council has launched an exciting new business networking website: [finditinworcestershire.com](http://finditinworcestershire.com).

It is designed to promote business to business trading, through showcasing local businesses and supply opportunities.

Finditinworcestershire is a “match-making” service, linking buyers and sellers. It aims to make business opportunities – big and small, from public and private sectors – more visible.

Need a supplier? You can post a specific opportunity or search the supplier list. So whether you need a photographer or a training consultant, or require 1000 jute bags or portable toilets for an event – post your opportunity and all relevant suppliers on the site

will be alerted.

Want to promote your business? – Register to showcase your business and highlight the products and services you supply.

Who is it for? – Any local business, social enterprise, community group or public body can register as a member of the site, and post or view opportunities.

The site is more than just a contract finder. Finditinworcestershire will host monthly breakfast networking events – where business owners can meet the buyers and collaborate to win contracts. The website also includes information on business support organisations, events and local business news.

Do register your business or organisation at [www.finditinworcestershire.com](http://www.finditinworcestershire.com) to discover what Worcestershire’s world-class local supply chain can do for you. Registration is free but don’t forget to complete your profile (known as your “dashboard”) to promote your organisation more fully.

Worcestershire County Council developed this initiative as one of the ways to support the local economy and help local businesses grow.

For more information contact Kathryn Wagstaff: [kwagstaff@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:kwagstaff@worcestershire.gov.uk) 01905 766 896.

Cecil Duckworth OBE helped to launch [finditinworcestershire.com](http://finditinworcestershire.com) at a high profile event in February.



If you would like to add anything to the next edition of the newsletter please get in touch. Contact us by calling 01905 822837 or emailing Kerry on [kyoung@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:kyoung@worcestershire.gov.uk)