

Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly

Newsletter January 2009



Welcome to the January 2009 newsletter of Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly.

In this newsletter you will find news from the first VCS Assembly Board meeting of 2009 which took place on 13 January. Issues included in this edition of the newsletter include:

- Community Working in Shropshire
- Board induction and training
- Getting our voice heard: representation
- VCS priorities and action planning

If you have news you would like to share through the newsletter contact us using the details on page 2.

Don't forget about the new Compact Focus Group! A Compact Review Group will meet regularly over future weeks to take forward the development of the Compact.

The Shropshire Partnership Team can help you to find out more: use our contact details on the next page.

Community Working in Shropshire

The VSC Assembly Board received a presentation from Sam Hine, Head of Community Working, who spoke about the latest developments to establish community working under the new Shropshire Council. Sam explained that the Community Working service has been designed to listen to the community and to involve local people in services and policies. The service will be supported by three Area Team Leaders covering the areas of North, Central and South Shropshire. Each area will also have an Area Partnership Officer, a Support Assistant and 7 locality based Community Regeneration Officers. Only a few vacancies remain within the new structures.

The area partnerships will have close links to the Local Joint Committees (LJCs) in their areas and to other teams and services working to support community regeneration. The Board heard how the LJCs would be supported by senior managers, budget allocations and action plans in order to support the implementation of agreed priorities such as those contained within the Local Area Agreement and Sustainable Community Strategy.

For more information contact Sam Hine on 01743 252594 or email sam.hine@shropshire.gov.uk.

The January 2009 VSC Assembly Board Meeting was Chaired by Julia Baron from the Community Council of Shropshire, and supported by David Bell and Ruth Turner from the Shropshire Partnership.

Attendees included representatives from the:

- Disability Network and Disability Forum
- Mental Health Forum
- Children's Trust
- Community Based Transport
- Northern and Central Area Partnerships
- Training Providers Consortium
- Shropshire Council

Along with news of the key developments included in this newsletter, the Board was given the opportunity to send two VCS Assembly representatives to Learning to Deliver sessions. The sessions are run by Advantage West Midlands and held at Groundwork in Birmingham. Advantage West Midlands (AWM) supports Shropshire's actions to reduce worklessness and support vulnerable families. AWM recently announced funding opportunities through the Connections to Opportunities Programme. The programme presents Shropshire with the opportunity to attract £440,000 for the development of innovate projects.

**Shropshire VCS
Assembly Board**

**Next meeting:
1pm 3 March 2009**



Developing the VCSA Board

Board Membership

Julia Baron, Chair of the VCSA Board was able to update the meeting with progress on the Board's development. Julia explained that from 2009 the Board is made up of elected or agreed representatives from established Forums of Interest. It is also possible to co-opt two additional Board members so a representative for Older People was agreed.

Each Forum of Interest is required to provide one named substitute if the main representative is unable to attend the meeting. Current representation includes:

- Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership
- Shropshire VCS Training Providers Consortium
- VS Health & Social Care Forum
- Children and Young People's Summit
- Community Based Transport
- Disability Forum
- Mental Health Forum
- Visual Impairment Forum
- Area Partnerships (North & Central)

Future actions include filling gaps in representation, developing information about the Assembly, designing web pages for each Forum of Interest and producing a report form.

Induction and Training

The VCSA Assembly Board is currently working to ensure the training and induction needs of its members are met. With support from the NAVCA the Board hopes to focus on a number of areas including:

- Roles and responsibilities
- Key duties
- Communication and keeping up to date

Getting our voice heard!

VCS representation

David Bell led a discussion at the Board meeting to discuss the need for VCS representation on each of the 4 blocks which form the Shropshire Partnership. The four partnership blocks are reflected in the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and each block is responsible for delivering a number of LAA outcomes/delivery plans.

The Board agreed that members would contact Lead members of the LAA blocks to discuss representation. It was also agreed that further work is required to establish stronger links with the Primary Care Trust (PCT). It was suggested that this work would be led by the soon to be appointed VCS Assembly Coordinator.

VCS Priorities and Action Planning

The VCS Assembly Board has agreed that four issues should be highlighted under the Safer Stronger Communities Board's aim of 'developing an environment for a thriving third sector'. The four issues under which priorities will be developed are: funding, opportunities for volunteering, training and developing the VCS.

An evidence base is currently under development for the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Board has proposed that, in future, a VCS Evidence Base is developed to include infrastructure needs and the needs of client groups. This will assist in the writing of contracts and grants and presents an exciting future development.

An Annual Action Plan for the VCS Assembly will be developed. This will better enable the VCS to meet its priorities and support the creation of a third sector strategy.

STOP PRESS

Sarah Dodds has been appointed as the VCS Assembly Coordinator and will take up the reins in March 2009

Contact us

For more information about Shropshire VCS Assembly visit our web site at:

<http://shropnet.web.coop/VoluntaryCommunitySectorAssembly> or contact the Shropshire Partnership Team

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