

# Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly

## Newsletter March 2009



In this issue of the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCSA) Newsletter you can find out about the latest projects and issues being handled by the VCSA Board. Read about the last Board meeting that took place on the 3 March 2009 and hear items of interest raised by Board members. Also learn about the work being undertaken by the Shropshire Partnership Team and the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly Coordinator.

If you have any information you would like to share with members of the Assembly or particular Forums of Interest, either through the newsletter or website please don't hesitate to contact us using the contact details on the following page.

### News in Brief

The Assembly Board has been busy working on a number of issues over the last few meetings:

- A short survey is currently taking place with each Forum of Interest in order to identify the costs and resources involved with running a forum. This work will not only help to evidence current work taking place but will also support the development of new Forums of Interest in the future.
- Work has been taking place to confirm VCS Assembly representation on partnership board meetings including the Leadership Board and four LAA Boards.
- The VCS Assembly Board has been able to coordinate VCS comments concerning the Integrated Workforce Strategy for Adult Health and Social Care in Shropshire.
- The Board received updates from meetings attended by members including news from the Funding Task and Finish Group and the Worklessness Group.

Members of the VCS Assembly Board were able to offer their thanks to David Bell, who has been providing support to the Assembly over the past 6 months. David is starting a new role as Partnership Officer for the Central Area Partnership. We wish him all the best!

For more details from the last meeting of the Assembly Board visit the web site (see contact details over the page).

### Developing the Compact

Louise Stokes spoke to the VCSA Board about the work she has been doing to facilitate the development of the new Compact.

Louise spoke about the series of focus groups that have been held around the county and the period of consultation now in place. The consultation is designed to ensure a wide range of stakeholders are able to contribute to the development of the Compact.

The Board discussed the role the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly may play in supporting the implementation of the Compact. Key issues for future consideration included:

- Overview and scrutiny.
- Monitoring and review.
- Disputes and resolution.
- Consultation code and involvement of community groups.
- The role of Compact Champions.

To find out more about the developing Compact contact Louise Stokes. Louise is based part-time at Shirehall in her role as Compact Officer. Telephone 01743 252555 or email [louise.stokes@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:louise.stokes@shropshire.gov.uk).

### VCS Annual Assembly: Book your place today!

The VCS Annual Assembly is due to take place on the 28th April. You should already have received an invitation. The meeting is due to be held at Shrewsbury Town Football Club from 9:30am to 1:30pm followed by a networking lunch. Topics of discussion will include procurement and contracting, commissioning, the Compact and energy saving.

To find out more contact Sarah Dodds on 01743 252295 or Ruth Turner on 01743 25269.

**Shropshire VCS  
Assembly Board**

Next meeting:  
**2 June 2009**



## Working with smaller VCS bodies

The VCSA Board has considered how it could best work with its Forums of Interest to respond to the needs of smaller voluntary and community sector groups. Communication tools were discussed including the use of the VCSA website, leaflets and email updates. The development of an engagement action plan was also proposed and the Board will look at this issue in more detail at the next meeting.

If you have any suggestions for improving opportunities for involvement among smaller VCS groups and organisations don't hesitate to get in touch!

## How has the recession affected you?

Shropshire's Voluntary and Community Sector groups and organisations will soon be asked to consider how the recession has affected them.

At the VCSA Board meeting in March members received a report prepared by Celia Bahrami, Director of Shropshire Partnership, named 'Responding to Recession'. The report detailed the work being undertaken by the Shropshire Partnership Leadership Board to explore the local impact of the current economic recession. The Leadership Board aims to:

- Improve signposting to advice and support for businesses, communities and local people.
- Agree common standards for payment of local suppliers and the pooling of apprenticeships/work experience.
- Provide support where there is increased workload among support organisations.

A Standing Recession Committee is being organised through the Leadership Board in order to take forward key issues and agreed actions.

After hearing of this work, the VCSA Board agreed that a short questionnaire should be sent to Assembly members. The survey will enable the Board to better understand the impact the recession is having on the sector and whether there are any common issues in need of further attention. Keep a look out for your questionnaire due to arrive soon!

## Support from Müller Community Trust

Not only do Müller make great yogurts they also support local voluntary and charitable organisations through the Müller Community Trust. Over £150,000 has been donated to local organisations to date.

The main aim of the scheme is to support work to improve the quality of life for people in Market Drayton and throughout the North Shropshire area (based on the District Council boundary).

Eligible groups are those which:

- Benefit people living in the North Shropshire area.
- Are based in the North Shropshire area.
- Deliver activities designed to assist groups of individuals (rather than projects involving individuals alone).

Donations range from £50 to £1,250. To find out more write to: The Secretary, Muller Community Trust, Shrewsbury Road, Market Drayton, Shropshire. TF9 3SQ.

## South Shropshire Interfaith Forum

Reverend Peter Cope delivered a short presentation to members of the VCSA Board on the work of the South Shropshire Interfaith Forum. He described how representatives from different communities, cultures and faiths were working together to promote mutual understanding, learning, trust and respect.

Music and the arts have provided methods of bringing people together. The forum attracts as many as 35 to 40 people per meeting but also holds regular events such as the forthcoming music and arts event planned in Bishop's Castle on 16th May.

Over the coming months work will take place as the Interfaith Forum considers how it may work with the VCS Assembly and whether may become a formal Assembly Forum of Interest.

## 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

Telephone: 01743 252295 Fax: 01743 252265