



Voluntary Action
Vale Royal

News

May 2009

Vale Royal Voluntary Sector Forum

AGE CONCERN CHESHIRE'S NEW “ACTIVITIES CENTRE FOR OLDER PEOPLE”

Age Concern Cheshire is streets ahead in recognising the benefits that older people can gain by joining in activities in later life, such as modern languages, family history, digital photography, arts and crafts, Tai chi, Pilates, yoga, and other physical exercises.

We are pleased to announce that our new Activities Centre for Older People will be based at the Castle & Winnington Old Friends Club building in Barbers Lane, Castle, Northwich.

However, before we can move into the building we have to undertake some major works, including internal alterations, new car parking, etc., and this is currently estimated at £350,000. We have all the planning permissions in place and we are already half way to meeting our target.

We are now embarking on a major capital appeal campaign, targeting local businesses, organisations and residents, to raise the balance and I am writing to you to seek your support.

There are various ways in which you can support our exciting project:

- Make a donation
- Buy a brick
- Collecting/savings tin
- Fundraise through challenges or events such as coffee morning, carboot sale, etc.

For further information please contact **Alex Major: 01606 305014**

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Awards for All

Following a review of the Awards for All England programme, changes are to be made to the small grants scheme's existing format when it comes to an end in March 2009.

Currently, Awards for All England is a joint Lottery grants programme supported by Arts Council England, Big Lottery Fund, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England.

From 1st April, each of the lottery distributors supporting the scheme will have their own small grants programmes up and running.

Applications can still be made under the current arrangements until 31st March.

The change will mean that each distributor can better address the needs of their applicants and the themes they support. Overall, across all the distributors, it is anticipated that new money available for small grants in 2009-10 will be comparable to money that was available to community groups through Awards for All in 2008-2009.

To ensure this change will be as seamless as possible, the distributors will each run their own small grants programme as follows:

Big Lottery Fund	will launch a new small grants programme on 1st April 2009 awarding grants of £300 to £10,000 to local communities in 2009-2010.
Sport England	will provide small grants for sports ranging from £300 to £10,000 from 1st April 2009.
Arts Council England	will provide small grants through their existing 'Grants for the Arts' programme, supporting awards between £1,000 and £100,000.
Heritage Lottery Fund	small grants will be provided through the existing 'Your Heritage' (£3,000 to £50,000) and 'Young Roots' (£3,000 to £25,000) schemes.

Currently, Awards for All provides grants of between £300 and £10,000 in a simple and straightforward way. It can fund projects for people to take part in art, sport, heritage and community activities, as well as projects that promote education, the environment and health in the local community.

News from Vision Support

Vision Support, the regional charity providing local support and services to people of North Wales and Cheshire with a visual impairment, will be holding their annual event day, "Together with Vision Support", at the Welsh College of Horticulture, Northop on Saturday 13th June.

The event promotes the support and services Vision Support and other organisations (both commercial and non-commercial) offer to assist those with sight loss. There will be a variety of activities for everybody to enjoy.

Over 50 exhibitors from both commercial and non-commercial organisations will be attending and there will be a wide range of interesting activities, including workshops in art and craft, music and gentle exercise. For the more adventurous there will be the opportunity to try your hand at golf, bowls, take a leisurely walk around the college grounds or visit the Garden Centre. The College's Equestrian Centre, Garden Centre will be available to visit and rides on a miniature steam railway can be taken.

Refreshments will be available all day and there will be a lunchtime barbeque. If your organisation is interested in exhibiting on the day please contact Nicky Stevens at the Chester Resource Centre on 01244 381515.

Transport is being provided from designated pick up points through the region to make the event as accessible as possible. For further details of the pick up points, times and how to book your transport, contact the Vision Support Resource Centre either at Chester on 01244 381515 or Rhyl on 01745 338914 or visit their website www.visionsupport.org.uk For those coming by car there will be a large free car park.

Government pledges £42.5 million to help volunteers, charities and social enterprises during the global economic downturn

The action plan for the charitable sector, published by Minister for the Cabinet Office Liam Byrne, sets out a targeted package of support that includes measures to help voluntary organisations, charities, and social enterprises to step up advice, support and volunteering.

Stuart Etherington, CEO, NCVO said:

"We cautiously welcome the Government's announcement of £42.5M. We see this help as a start as we are just at the beginning of the recession. The two key things we asked for in the modernisation fund and resilience funds are in the package of support. Charities will also have access to the BERR scheme in addition to this. It is important that the Government and the sector continue to monitor the situation and that we target additional resources as and when is necessary."



A Positive Place to Be

Working For A Charity exists to promote the voluntary sector as a positive career option for those seeking paid employment in the sector - we also seek to promote the

opportunities and benefits of becoming a volunteer to people who wish to do unpaid work.



Training

Training courses are our core activity - we encourage people from many different backgrounds to seek out information.



Information

Essential information on how to find paid work or volunteer in the voluntary sector.



Online learning

We are now offering a course delivered over the Internet, enabling you to learn about the voluntary sector in your own time.

If you would like to know more you can phone **020 7520 2512** or **020 7520 2493** during office hours and speak to **Catherine Mortier** or **Elaine Smethurst**.

Youth Opportunity Fund

April 1st was the beginning of the new financial year for the Youth Opportunity and the Youth Capital Funds and application forms are now available from Connexions Centres and HUBs.

The funds are available to improve things to do and places to go in line with what young people aged between 13 and 19 decide is needed in their neighbourhood.

Gill Potts, Youth Work Development Manager at Connexions says:

'These funding opportunities really give young people in Cheshire the chance to have a voice on what it is they would like to do in their leisure time and to gain skills in the decision making process. They have a real chance to make a difference and to achieve something

special for themselves and other young people across Cheshire.'

The Youth Opportunities Fund is specifically for new projects and is aimed to provide funding for activities which young people identify as most needed in their local areas.

The Youth Capital Fund is to provide a discrete capital budget and can be requested for projects that are ongoing. Decisions on funding bids are made every 6 weeks by a panel of young people who are trained by Connexions and applicants will be informed whether their bid has been successful within 10 working days of a decision.



Commission welcomes Government's commitment to disabled people's human rights

The Commission today welcomed the Government's plans to empower disabled UK citizens to exercise their rights under the UN Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities...

...which the Government has pledged to ratify by Spring 2009.

The Convention reaffirms that disabled people have - and should be able to enjoy - their human rights on an equal basis with non-disabled people and sets out the steps governments are expected to take to make these rights a reality.

Other human rights treaties, such as conventions on the rights of children and women, have had a major effect in addressing human rights violations around the world.

Impact of sector programmes 'can't be measured'

Two third sector programmes started in 2004 may not have been cost-effective, a report from the National Audit Office states.

ChangeUp and Futurebuilders cost around £446 million to implement but their impact cannot be gauged due to a lack of imposed targets, it argues.

National Audit Office head Tim Burr told Public Service: "ChangeUp has made good headway in improving support for these organisations while Futurebuilders loans have improved the potential of some to win public service contracts."



Donated goods from In Kind Direct

Surplus goods can be obtained by voluntary and community organisations from In Kind Direct.

The new stock is donated by companies to the charity for redistribution to not-for-profit groups. The goods can be used either to help run the charity or to give to beneficiaries.

Goods are ordered through an online catalogue. This is updated with new products weekly, and an e-mail alerts you to new items. Any queries are answered by In Kind's charity partnership team.

To benefit from the scheme, charity partners join In Kind's network and pay a handling charge for on each pack of goods ordered.

The range of goods available includes toilet paper, cleaning supplies, toys, toiletries, printer cartridges, office supplies, clothing and household appliances.

Sector groups joint approach to tax issues

A joint press release has been issued by NCVO, ACEVO, Institute of Fundraising, Charity Finance Directors' Group and Charities Aid Foundation after a meeting last week (12th February) with Treasury minister Stephen Timms to discuss proposals for further progress on gift aid reform and to address the issue of irrecoverable VAT. NCVO chief exec Stuart Etherington said on behalf of the group "We were pleased to see the Government in listening mode on these important issues.". See <http://www.cafonline.org/default.aspx?page=17070>.

National minimum wage - the basics and who is entitled to it

Who need not get the national minimum wage - volunteers and voluntary workers

'Volunteer'

Volunteers do not have any form of contract of employment or contract to perform work or provide services. They are not workers and therefore are not covered by the National Minimum Wage Act 1998. This

means they do not qualify for the national minimum wage (NMW).

If an individual described as a volunteer was in fact a worker they would qualify for the NMW unless a specific exemption applied.

Functional Skills pilot expands - Another first for VAVR

Following a very successful first year of the pilot of Functional Skills in English, Maths and ICT with 41 centres, QCA has allowed ASDAN to expand the number of centres involved and we are now working with an additional 82 centres.

The main focus for many of these centres is to explore ways of linking Functional Skills with other ASDAN qualifications, both at Entry Level (in the Foundation Learning Tier) and at Levels 1 and 2 through CoPE.

ASDAN are also looking to strengthen the relationship between CoPE and GCSE English and Maths, through linking with Functional Skills, and an increasing proportion of assessments are being developed for online delivery. This will be fully available from 2010. Voluntary Action Vale Royal (VAVR) in Northwich has registered with ASDAN as a pilot centre for the Functional Skills project.

VAVR's 'Return to Learn' Adult and Community Project has taken this unique opportunity to broaden and develop the adult learners' Functional Skills in programmes which they find motivating and relevant. VAVR participated in the first episode for the Functional Skills assessment process in January 2008.

Thanks to (L-R) Ashley Renshaw, Dorothy Finemore and Terry Broady for taking part in this important pilot project. Dorothy was the first ASDAN candidate to successfully pilot the Functional Skills ICT Entry 2 qualification. VAVR and all the learners received excellent feedback.
New Qualifications available



Voluntary Action Vale Royal are now also delivering the e-citizenship programme which is a level 1 I.T. qualification. And the NEW ECDL version 5 - vista/office 2007 should be ready to launch in September 2009.