

Voluntary Times

The Newsletter for the voluntary sector
in the London Borough of Hounslow

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London Borough
of Hounslow



Message from Councillor Peter Thompson, Leader of the Council

Welcome to the January edition of Voluntary Times.

Towards the end of last year, I attended the Conservative Party conference in Manchester, where I witnessed some inspiring speeches and encountered some lively debates. The third sector featured strongly throughout the event, highlighting its vital role in supporting the next Conservative government's approach to fighting poverty, as well as in tackling social problems, worklessness and family breakdown.

This work reiterates the Conservative party's commitment to supporting the community and voluntary sector; bringing to life the party's pledges outlined in last year's green paper and reaffirming our vow to create a more supportive environment for philanthropy and volunteering. I know that the other political parties are having similar discussions and debates. The challenge will be, in a time of reduced public sector spending, to make these fine words and aspirations into policies which make a difference on the ground. I would urge everyone involved in the third sector to make their voices heard in these months before the general election as our national politicians fine tune their policies.

Hounslow's commitment to the 'Duty to Involve' is going from strength to strength. The most recent illustration of our dedication to the duty comes from a review of the consultation and engagement processes currently carried out by ourselves. It is our aim to ensure that all consultation is implemented in a transparent and joined up manner; that engagement events and activities aren't duplicated between departments; that feedback is routinely provided to all those who have been involved in consultation activities and that the whole community is aware of the changes that have been made as a result of community engagement activities. The vision of the Council is to build a community where individuals are empowered to make a difference both to their own lives and to the area in which they live. By realising these aims, we are well on our way to achieving this.

The CCICU's programme of Beacon events got off to a successful start with the Multi Faith Conference 'Recession; we're all in it together' taking place on the 22nd October. The event enabled the role of faith in the recession to be explored and recognised the important role that faith representatives play in supporting their communities during such times. The popularity of the event was a discernible reminder to me of how essential it is for knowledge and ideas to be shared between the faith communities in Hounslow; enabling an affiliated approach to the achievement of a strong, vibrant and united borough community.

I would like to finish by taking this opportunity to wish you all a very Happy New Year. I hope that, though 2009 may have been a difficult year, through innovation and new thinking, that the many valuable community and voluntary projects across the Borough have flourished and that new partnerships have been secured. May I wish you all a sustainable and successful 2010.

News update

Take Part directory launched

The Take Part directory is a single source of information allowing users to find information on the resources and guidance available to deliver learning opportunities, community leadership development, information about the availability of opportunities and access to accreditation.

It's part of a national support package for the Take Part programme, which encourages communities and individuals to get involved in active citizenship activities. It feeds into the wider community empowerment and engagement agendas including the duty to involve and the duty to promote democracy and will be important to anyone with an interest in empowering communities to take a greater part in civic and civil society.

www.takepart.info

Community Cohesion; The perspective from traditional/white communities

A new iCoCo research programme, supported by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation has been developed, which focuses on the needs and aspirations of 'traditional', predominantly white communities. Thus far, relatively little is known about their perspective, as community cohesion practice and policy has tended to revolve around minority communities. The project will develop the concept of community cohesion by considering the views of white working class communities from the perspective of three neighbourhoods in Aston (Birmingham), Somertown (London) and Canley (Coventry) and aims to;

- Identify how white working class communities perceive community cohesion
- Assess how challenges, issues and opportunities overlap between people living in the different areas
- Assess the policy implications of community views on community cohesion
- Evaluate the role of community based institutions to promote community cohesion and consider the merit of developing new organisations
- Promote a greater understanding of how these communities may positively contribute to the community cohesion debate.

www.cohesioninstitute.org.uk/PolicyResearch/Research/TraditionalCommunities

Cameron Pledges that charities will run state services under Tories

Third sector organisations with a track record of success would be funded by the state to expand successful social programmes under a conservative government. The Conservative Party's vision of a smaller state, to be replaced by a 'big society', would identify and work with 'social entrepreneurs' who have the capacity to run successful social programmes in communities with the greatest needs. 'We will identify proven social programmes, franchise them to social entrepreneurs with a track record of success and fund them directly from existing state budgets to deliver public services,' said David Cameron 'If we find the right people. A relatively small number can make a huge difference.'

Cameron also outlined that Whitehall needed to become more sector-friendly, with people capable of engaging with social entrepreneurs and civic institutions who could agitate and encourage social action; helping people to build sustainable organisations.

www.conservatives.com/News/Speeches/2009/11/David_Cameron_The_Big_Society.aspx

Charity Commission publishes constitution for small charities

The Charity Commission has published a simplified model for charities below the registration threshold, after the scheme was piloted in Wales by the Welsh Umbrella body WCVA.

The 700 word constitution explains issues such as membership criteria, trustees powers and regulations governing trustee and members' meetings and is aimed at charities that don't own any property or employ staff; and expect their annual income to remain below the £5,000 threshold for registering with the commission.

www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/smallcharity.asp

Volunteering levels almost unchanged in England

The Government's recent citizenship survey has found that the percentage of adults participating in volunteering is similar to last year in England. 43% of adults questioned between April and June – the first quarter of the 2009/10 survey – said they had volunteered formally at least once in the previous 12 months, compared with 41% in 2008/09.

People under 25 were most likely to volunteer informally, while 64-75 year olds were the most likely to volunteer formally. Levels of formal volunteering were highest in the South East.

Bill Garland, deputy Executive Director of CSV said that the challenge was to shape opportunities to match people's availability and the organisation would want to examine the possibility of citizens being given the right to participate in the delivery of local authority services such as parks, schools, libraries, children's centres and care homes.

Although this is the situation nationally, local levels of volunteering have increased considerably; as illustrated by the recent Resident's Survey Tracker report; levels have risen from 18% in late 2008, to 22% in late 2009.

www.communities.gov.uk

Charities may still not yet have felt the worst effects of recession

The worst effects of the recession are yet to come for charities commentators have called after the demise of a number of third sector organisations over the past few months. In October, face-to-face fundraising agency Dialogue Direct Fundraising UK collapsed and a September UK Giving Survey showed individual donations had fallen by 11% in 2008/09. The 11% decline in individual donations last year was much sharper than the 1.04% annual fall in retail sales, but Cathy Pharoah, co-director of the Centre for Charitable Giving and Philanthropy, said the decline in charitable giving over the course of the recession was likely to mirror the fall in GDP.

www.cass.city.ac.uk/philanthropy

Commissioning update

Procurement regulations released

NCVO and NAVCA have jointly published 'Pathways Through the Maze'; a guide for voluntary and community organisations outlining procurement regulations. The guide addresses the most common questions asked by VCS organisations about procurement processes and explains the legal requirements behind procurement practises.

The guide has been described as essential reading for both public sector commissioners wanting to improve their engagement with third sector organisations and all voluntary and community sector organisations interested or involved in delivering public services; as well as anyone in an infrastructure organisation who works with commissioning, procurement or public services.

www.navca.org.uk/maze

Compact update

New Compact Launched

The refreshed National Compact has finally been launched; much to the anticipation of third sector organisations across the country. The document, which has been radically slimmed down from the previous version, no longer features the 5 codes and has completely removed the BME code; much to the disapproval of a number of organisations such as Voice4Change England, who band the move as ignoring and marginalising Black and minority ethnic groups.

The 22 page document focuses on involvement in policy development, allocating resources and advancing equality. A summary document, introducing the Compact, accompanies the refresh.

www.thecompact.org.uk/information/100016/140470/refreshedcompactispublished

Civil servants to be quizzed on the Compact

The Commission for the Compact is carrying out its first major assessment of awareness in the public sector amongst civil servants in government departments and non-departmental public bodies in England. The survey asks officials how they liaise with the sector, what their knowledge of the Compact codes is and how they involve the sector in the work of their departments.

www.thecompact.org.uk

Online library of Compact resources launched

A Compact knowledge bank has been launched, including copies of local agreements, guidance, policy briefings, research, guidance and publications. The knowledge bank as it currently stands will contain up to 100 files, but in time, users will be able to submit their own documents, recommend and share links to other online documents and discuss the files in the knowledge bank with their fellow users.

www.thecompact.org.uk/information/100022/101610/knowledgebank

Local Compact refresh due out in spring

To reflect the refresh of the National Compact, Hounslow's local Compact is also to be reviewed.

We've recently had discussions with voluntary and community sector organisations in the borough on how best to take the document forward, who've indicated that there's a significant call for further council commitment to the document; both promoting and using it.

This information has been used to develop an action plan outlining how our Compact will be carried forward and identifying three key areas to explore:

- Building awareness
- Reviewing the Compact
- Taking it forward

Special champions will help us make the Compact a success by overseeing its implementation and promoting its benefits to others.

Contact us if you're interested in becoming a champion: community.development@hounslow.gov.uk.

As part of this review we are also inviting local voluntary and community sector groups and organisations to submit their thoughts on what they would like to see in a refreshed Compact via an online forum co-ordinated by CVS Hounslow.

We would like to hear your views on six different topics:

- Quality assurance systems
- Funding and procurement
- Voluntary and community sector organisations and groups
- Volunteering
- Partnership arrangements
- Consultation and community engagement.

The refreshed local Compact will be used to develop best practice for a thriving voluntary sector, ultimately building pride borough wide.

We look forward to your input!

www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/community_and_living/voluntary_sector/compact.htm

Training

The CCICU are delivering a number of training courses in the New Year, taking place at the Civic Centre;

Roles and responsibilities of trustees

22 February 2010, 9.30am - 4pm

This course will look at the purpose and role of trustees; how the law affects them in relation to finance, equal opportunities, employment and health and safety, as well as the benefits and pitfalls of partnership working and the challenge of an increasingly competitive environment.

Advanced Fundraising

29-30 March 2010, 9.30am - 4pm

Tebs Rashid is back to deliver a 2-day advanced fundraising course for more experienced fundraisers in the London Borough of Hounslow. Taking a strategic approach to fundraising, as well as addressing how best to diversify funding streams will form a key part to this course. Other important skills and techniques, such as approaching private sector funders and preparing a business case will also be addressed.

To book on either of these courses please follow;

www.hounslow.gov.uk/index/community_and_living/voluntary_sector/vs_events/voluntary_sector_training.htm