

This bulletin is produced by the Voice for the VCS Project which is a project of Derbyshire's Voluntary Sector Infrastructure Consortium, 3D, and is supported by Big Lottery Funding.

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Editor's note

Hello everyone, and welcome to the 9th issue of the LAA bulletin!

Voice for the VCS tries to keep voluntary and community groups and organisations up to date with what's happening that might affect you, whether that's at county level or across the whole UK. This issue looks at both. But Voice is not just here to give you information, Voice wants to hear what you have to say about it. Voice is your way of communicating how things affect you, your group or your 'service users'. If you have a comment about The Big Society or the public spending cuts Voice would like to hear it. That way, we can ensure the right people hear it.

Voice also publishes a round up of cuts and opportunities heading your way, if you would like it to be emailed to you, please contact me.

Claire Thornber, Voice for the VCS Project Officer.

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Funding Forum

As part of the plan to 'create an environment for a thriving third sector' in Derbyshire, a Funding Forum has come together to look at issues arising across the sectors around funding. Funders and advice workers got together for their first meeting on July 6th in Ripley, which was well attended. Each of the funders present gave a quick update of funds they have available before opening discussions about issues that funders and advisors have. Issues raised from both sides included,

- Many groups are struggling to produce easy to read accounts when applying for funding. Please contact your local CVS if you have had problems like this.
- A lot of applications are turned down because they don't match the criteria for the money. Always contact the funder to check before taking the time to write an application.
- More and more applications can be done online but it is still worth contacting a funding advisor before doing this as the quality of applications has gone down as a result of them being completed at home without help.
- Funders don't always appreciate there are costs attached to volunteers and volunteering
- With less public funding available, now is the time to start talking to funding advisors about how your group could raise its own money to keep going.

A new section on the 3D website will advertise training sessions all around the county so that you can easier access any useful sessions that may take place outside your district. You can read the minutes of this first, and future meetings at

http://3dsupport.org.uk/Derbyshire_Funding_Forum

The next meeting will be held on the 5th October and will look particularly at how to improve groups' chances of survival in these difficult times, and whether The Big Society will offer us any opportunities.

The Big Society - so what's the big idea?



On the 19th July, David Cameron launched the Big Society in Liverpool announcing four 'vanguard communities' that will pilot their plans. These are Liverpool, Eden Valley in Cumbria, Windsor & Maidenhead and Sutton (a London Borough). So what is 'The Big Society' and how will it affect those of us working or volunteering in communities?

The government hopes to 'fix our broken society' by getting people to work together locally, supporting them to get more involved in decisions that affect them and running their own local services. It will encourage charities, community groups and social enterprises to take over from the public sector. Cameron has called it 'The biggest, most dramatic re-distribution of power' while skeptics claim it's merely a cover to mask public spending cuts and the beginning of the removal of state support and intervention.

So, what's being planned?

- Giving more power to communities to take over facilities and run services
- Using funds paid back to the FutureBuilders Loan Fund, 5000 community organisers will be trained to identify local leaders, bring communities together and identify ways of tackling problems locally. This will be supported by a small grant fund for community groups in the poorest areas, called 'Communities First'
- A National Citizens Service for 16 year olds will be piloted next summer offering 10,000 7-8 week placements for the post exam period
- Launching a Big Society Bank in April 2011 using funding from dormant bank accounts. This will be administered by the Cooperative Bank which estimates that

funds could reach £400 million.

- An annual Big Society Day to celebrate the work of neighbourhood groups and encourage people to take part in social action projects
- The Big Society Network. The website www.thebigsociety.org.uk aims to bring individuals together with the public, private and voluntary sectors to 'get things done' and will provide a 'toolbox of advice, case histories, links to people and resources'.
- Reforms to the planning system to give neighbourhoods more ability to shape the area they live in
- Introduce a 'Right to Data' which will enable the public to access government data sets and the Police will publish monthly local crime statistics to make them more accountable to the communities they serve
- Suggest that Local Authorities publish details of any spend over £500
- Giving Local Authorities 'General Power of Competence' which means they will be able to deliver a wider range of services than just their statutory duties.

A new Big Society Committee is being chaired by Francis Maude, Minister for the Cabinet Office and will bring together ministers from all departments who will have responsibility for ensuring the Big Society agenda is implemented across government. This will include ensuring that Compact is observed across Whitehall.

Back in Liverpool, on the day that the Prime Minister made his announcements, Nick Hurd (Minister for Civil Society) visited Liverpool CVS and appeared very supportive of their aims to support frontline voluntary organisations and encourage volunteering. However, the Big Society won't bring 'big money' - the vanguard areas will be supported to cut red tape and achieve their goals by one community organiser and a 'bureaucracy buster'. Voice hopes that they work in partnership with the organisations that already exist to support charities, community groups and volunteers in local areas.

Ringling the changes!



Three months into Britain's first coalition government in 60 years and there have already been plenty of changes. In this article, Voice will try to capture those that are likely to affect VCS organisations and your service users.

22 Bills were announced in the Queen's speech which laid out the government's priorities for the coming year. Initially they will concentrate on reducing the budget deficit, reforming public services and encouraging individual social responsibility (the Big Society).

We should all be aware by now that central government's departments are being asked to budget for between 25% and 40% cuts, with the exception of International Aid and Health which are protected for the time being. The government is undertaking a Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) to look at where savings can be made and we won't know the details of this until October. In the meantime the Department of Communities and Local Government has already begun to make savings by making cuts to some of the grants they pass to Local Authorities. These include LEGI, some WNF programmes, Supporting People Admin and LAA Reward Grants. Some of these fund voluntary and community activity in Derbyshire.

The Conservatives have never been keen on regionalism and are making moves to scrap the 'regional tier'. emda (which aimed to improve the region's economy) and GOEM (which liaises

on behalf of central government in the region) are both preparing to be scrapped, on or before the end of March next year. The plan is to replace some of emda's functions with new Local Economic Partnerships with each one deciding which area it will cover. Voice understands that Derbyshire are planning to join with Derby city, Nottingham city and Nottinghamshire. Unlike the old DDEP, there will be no statutory requirement to invite the VCS to join.

Likewise Regional Spatial Strategies are due to be scrapped. These inform the long term strategy for planners in the region and help to ensure that Local Development Plans fit with each other. Abolishing regional targets could affect the number of new houses being built but will pass the power to make planning decisions back to local councils.

The new government has pledged to scrap a number of quangos (non-governmental organisations funded with public money, which are usually set up to advise government). Amongst others, the Audit Commission may be on its way out as the Comprehensive Area Assessment is to be scrapped. This has assessed how the Derbyshire Partnership Forum has worked together to address issues in the county and also signals the end of the LAA. The Place Survey which measures some of the National Indicators in the LAA is also on hold.

Health Secretary Andrew Lansley's white paper laid out plans to scrap PCTs and Strategic Health Authorities by 2013 passing most of the responsibility for commissioning to consortiums of GPs instead. A small portion will pass to Local Authorities.

In further attempts to cut the deficit, the welfare budget will be cut by £11 billion, the Building Schools for the Future programme has been scrapped and VAT will be raised to 20%. Local Authorities that manage to freeze council tax will be rewarded. So for council tax payers, there is a little bit of good news!

Funding Cuts Survey

As Big Society becomes big news for the voluntary and community sector, against a backdrop of public spending cuts, a national campaign has been launched to ask the government and statutory agencies to 'Listen, Value and Invest' in the voluntary and community sector. In order to take forward this campaign locally, Community Action Derby are carrying out a survey to find out the impact of the cuts on voluntary and community groups and they would like groups from all over the county to respond. The survey only takes 2-3 minutes to complete and your responses will be used to produce a report to local authorities and funding bodies. The survey ends on the 3rd September so please respond before then.

To take part in the survey please click the link below:

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/VPZRRRX>

Countywide VCS web directory and database

Issue 7 of this bulletin informed you that discussions were underway to develop a database of voluntary organisations operating in Derbyshire. The database will link to a website which will help the public to find and access support and services provided by the voluntary sector. If you are a member of a CVS or another type of support agency like NDVA or Southern Derbyshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum, then they will already have your details on their database so they can contact you and send you useful news and information.

Some of these agencies have agreed that joining their databases makes a lot of sense. It will

- Mean they can share the costs of maintaining a database and continue to send you the news and info relevant to you despite possible funding cuts
- Enable groups to advertise what they do, especially important to those groups currently facing the challenge of the personalisation agenda
- Be able to provide county level statistics about the sector, what we do, where we do it and our contribution to society

'Frontline' groups will notice very little difference. This is a tool which will help support and development agencies do what they do better. If you are a member of one or more CVS, you will continue to be so and will still receive all the usual info and support from them. However, if anything changes, you will only need to update your details with one organisation rather than ringing around them all! They will contact you shortly to ask make sure your details are up to date and ask whether you would like your group's details to be included in the public facing web directory.

Funding for the project has been found from a combination of partner contributions and a successful application to the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership. The database is being built from scratch so that we can be sure that it does exactly what we want it to. We hope that the database will be ready to use by Christmas and that the website will be up and running by March next year.

Organisations involved in the project (in no particular order) are Amber Valley CVS, Community Action Derby, Bolsover Community Voluntary Partners, Derbyshire Coalition for Integrated Living (DCIL), Derbyshire Dales CVS, Erewash Voluntary Action CVS, High Peak CVS, Rural Action Derbyshire, South Derbyshire CVS, Southern Derbyshire Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum, Volunteer Centre Buxton & District, Volunteer Centre Chesterfield & NE Derbyshire, Volunteer Centre Derbyshire Dales, Volunteer Centre Glossop & District.

The LAA Headlines

Health and Wellbeing Partnership Last met on the 19th July. Much of the meeting discussed Andrew Lansley (the new Health Secretary)'s White Paper, 'Equity and excellence: Liberating the NHS' which proposes to scrap PCTs. David Timcke expressed concern about GPs poor track record of funding and supporting VCS activity and whether consortiums of GPs will be able to ensure that good health doesn't turn into a 'postcode lottery' without a Strategic Health Authority. While there was no real response to his earlier question about how much funding will be made available to support VCS organisations to play a part in the personalisation agenda, there was a commitment to continue to provide workshops, conferences and training for VCS organisations working in the arena of health and social care. Next meeting is on the 20th September.

Culture Board Met on the 21st July. Lorna Wallace gave feedback on progress against the NI 7 action plan, to create a thriving third sector. She confirmed that the Funding Forum had their first meeting (see article in this issue) which was well attended by statutory funding partners. To improve mutual understanding amongst the sectors, especially in the new 'Big Society' climate, Voice will be producing a briefing pack aimed at councillors, middle management and legal teams within the public sector. It will raise awareness of the sector's contribution, highlight examples of good working practice and provide facts and figures of the size and scope of the sector in Derbyshire. Lorna also advised the board that the NI 7 Steering Group is planning an event on the 2nd November to feedback on progress made against NI 7 and so that frontline groups can input on the next steps we need to take. The National Survey of Third sector organisations will still take place in the Autumn. The next Culture Board meeting is on the 29th September.

Children's Trust Last met on July 15th. Jo Smith attended and fed into a discussion around the emerging budget cuts. Those particularly affected to date are Building Schools for the Future, ICT for schools and any SureStart capital funding which hasn't been spent yet. The Trust acknowledged the need to keep the VCS informed, either via 3D (and this bulletin) or the GRID rep structure. If you'd like to know more about either of these ways to keep your ears to the ground contact Claire Thornber, telephone numbers and email address on page 1. There are going to be some changes to the structures and responsibilities of both Children's Trust and the Safeguarding Children Board. A new Children and Young People's Plan must be produced by April next year. You can find out more about the consultation that precedes this by attending any of the training sessions Voice is delivering in September. See details on page 6. Next meeting is on September 16th

Safer Communities Partnership Met on the 2nd June (reported in the last issue) and doesn't meet again until the 1st September. If you would like to find out more about how your group can access funding for activities that help to meet community safety targets you can contact your District Community Safety Partnership. For their details contact Claire Thornber.

Transformational Partnership Met on the 9th August and (amongst other projects) discussed the 3D application to support a countywide third sector database and website which was approved!

Sustainable Communities Board Meets again on the 26th September. The Derbyshire Economic Partnership (sub-group) met on the 16th July and discussed the government's plans to close Regional Development Agencies. This means that emda will close by March next year. emda has been responsible for driving economic development in the region and bringing inward investment into the area. The government wrote to all Local Authorities asking them to outline plans for bringing these responsibilities 'in house' and asked them to send proposals outlining how they will work with each other and the private sector to form Local Economic Partnerships (LEPs). Voice has heard that Derbyshire County has joined forces with Derby city, Nottingham city and Nottinghamshire because there are many economic similarities between the areas; they share the same Chamber of Commerce and can already demonstrate a track record of working well together. Voice will update as we get more info on how this will affect the current structures and systems.

If you would like to read the minutes and papers from any of these meetings contact Claire Thornber, details on Page 1, or download from www.3Dsupport.org.uk/Derbyshire_LAA

Whatever happened to NI 7?

While the future of the LAA is still unclear, the Derbyshire Partnership's Forum commitment to 'create an environment to a thriving third sector' continues. Voice has become part of the Steering Group which was established to put together and deliver the action plan. Almost two years ago Voice pulled together an event and invited groups from the voluntary and community sector to meet with members of the Culture Board to discuss what should be addressed by the plan. Voice has now been asked by the Steering group to co-ordinate another event to showcase the work that has been done so far. The event also invites you to comment on current issues - are they still the same now we have a changed economic climate and have a new coalition government?

The event will be held on **Tuesday 2nd November from 10.00am to 12pm** and everyone will be treated to a free lunch! It's always difficult to find a venue in Derbyshire that suits us all but the Voice Project is working on that and will announce it shortly. If you'd like to book a place at the event, contact Diane Scott by email at D.Scott@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk or by telephone on 07920 202595.

How do you fit in?

Do you understand how the work of your organisation contributes to the Derbyshire Children and Young People's Plan and the LAA?

Could a better knowledge help you to:

- * Understand the important role you play?
- * Communicate this to key stakeholders?
- * Prepare successful funding applications?

Attend one of these very practical Workshops to help you define and record how the activities carried out by your organisation (using both staff and volunteers) contribute to Derbyshire's key strategic documents.

13th September @ Parish Centre, Stonegravels, Chesterfield

15th September @ Medway Centre, Bakewell

16th September @ Amber Trust, Belper

Sessions start at 10a.m. and finish at 12 noon with lunch provided

To book a place contact Diane on 07920202595 or email d.scott@ruralactionderbyshire.org.uk

Meeting with Andy Burnham MP

Andy is the Shadow Minister for Health and is standing as a candidate for the Labour leadership.

He is visiting Derby, and wants to speak to voluntary and community groups. The main focus of the meeting will be a question and answer session focusing on what did and didn't work well with both the previous Labour and current Coalition governments.

The meeting will be held on the 19 August at YMCA Derby, 770 London Road, Wilmorton, Derby, DE24 8UT. It starts at 12.30 pm until 2.30 pm. Lunch will be provided.

If you would like to book a place please contact Abbi Steanson on 01332 227710 or abigail.steanson@communityactionderby.org.uk

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We're on the Web!

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