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inter-ACTION

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF RCVDA

RCVDA
Leading
the Way

RCVDA HAVE MOVED



After six years in Craighton House we have now moved to a new home within the Redcar Adult Education Centre, opposite the new Redcar & Cleveland College, on Corporation Road. Our new offices are fully accessible with free car parking. We are on the extreme right of the building and you will spot the RCVDA sign next to a set of double doors, on the ground floor. We also have our own meeting/training room and a separate resource area where members of the community are welcome to come in to browse through our books or to carry out funding searches. Our telephone and fax numbers remain the same as do our email addresses.

Grassroots Grants

Are you a local volunteer-led group with an income less than £20,000 per year and looking for a grant of up to £5,000?

If so – don't delay – the Grassroots Programme still has funds available for groups up to the end of March. Money not spent this year has to go back - so ring now to find out if your group is eligible.

Contact Tees Valley Community Foundation on 01642 556642 to find out more.

Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough Volunteer Coordinators Forum



The first Redcar & Cleveland and Middlesbrough Volunteer Coordinators Forum was held on 5th November. The event was a great success and feedback has been very positive. The agenda for the first meeting was to discuss the forum's aims and objectives and suggestions for future discussions/ speakers. The majority said they would like to meet quarterly and top of the list for discussion was retention of volunteers.

The next meeting will be held on Wednesday 4th February 2009 at Ladgate Lane Police Headquarters Middlesbrough, our thanks to Caroline Kerr for her kind offer of this venue. I will be writing to all volunteer involving organisations with further details in the New Year and if you would like to be included on the mailing list please do not hesitate to contact Trish Waters on 01642 440571 or email: trish@rcvda.org.uk

RCVDA Roadshow Normanby

RCVDA held the first of its funding roadshows at the end of October. The event was held at Normanby Methodist Church and attracted a really good attendance. The Methodist Church proved to be a popular venue and we thank them for their hospitality on the day.

The guest funder for the day was Tees Valley Community Foundation who launched the new Grassroots Funding Programme. The Foundation also provided details of other funding streams they currently manage including Teesside Power Fund and Easy Access Fund.

The event provided an opportunity for groups to meet the RCVDA staff team and find out more about what services we offer to groups and the different ways they can access advice and guidance on a wide range of subjects.

RCVDA will be holding further Funder's Roadshows across the borough, each one featuring a different funder. These will be held in Saltburn, Brotton and Guisborough during January, February and March. Further details will be circulated early in the New Year.

If your group has a venue and would like to host a Roadshow we would love to hear from you. If you would like any further information please contact either Ann or Karen on 01642 440571.

Free Help with employment issues

BERR (Department for Business Enterprise and Regulatory Reform) is providing information and support with employment issues through the Business Link website. The website is funded through central government – so all the information promises to be up to date and current and most importantly – FREE. The site will provide a range of tools across employment issues such as:

- Working time regulations
- Flexible working
- Managing redundancy
- Pay and pensions

Buying in advice on employment issues can be very expensive for many organisations, so if you are just starting to think about employing staff or revising their policies this may be the first resource you should look at.

This site also has a very useful 'Written Statement' template that can enable you to meet some of your legal requirements as an employer by creating fully compliant terms and conditions.

Simply go to
www.businesslink.gov.uk/employingpeople

If you want to have a look at the written statement template – go to

www.businesslink.gov.uk/writtenstatementtool

DSC November 2008 Quick Survey Analysis: Respondents say

In The Directory of Social Change November quick survey they asked: **Is the recession increasing demand for your services?**

These are the results from 415 responses

54% - Yes

46% - No

Several themes emerged in the written comments that people left.

A large number of comments related to increasing need for advice services for people who were struggling with debt, loss of housing, and unemployment:

"Substantial increase in debt and housing problems in the last few weeks as well as people being made redundant." RCJ Advice Bureau

"Debt cases have increased by 266%"

"Increase in number of people seeking CAB appointments or wanting to know where to go for help with debt/bailiffs/evictions"

"More people are made redundant or afraid to be made and they are seeking employment help from us."

A number of comments also indicated that services for the most vulnerable people or for basic needs are being affected:

"We help support those in food poverty which, due to the recession and higher food prices, is affecting a wider proportion of the public, particularly families and elderly groups."

"We have seen a 100% increase in our Advice and Information Service for Young People, many homeless young people and young people with additional needs requiring financial support."

"Impacts of any basic needs costs are felt quicker and harder at the lowest income/benefit dependant level. More requests for emergency food and heating support every week."

Another theme in the comments was the impact on services for people and families experiencing mental or psychological stress because of deteriorating economic conditions:

"We are involved in debt counselling & family support & we are currently seeing clients whose marriages are under pressure, families losing their homes, children & young people caught in these family crises and expect the situation to worsen"

"As people get more concerned this adds to their fears and they need more counselling help"

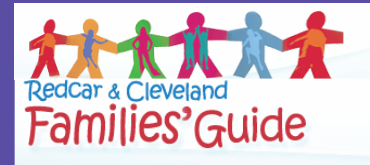
"As we work with people who suffer from depression and other mental illness we are very much in demand but finding revenue very difficult"

Some people noted what could be seen, perhaps very optimistically, as a bit of a silver lining – increased demand for volunteering opportunities as a result of people losing work:

"This recession has provided more volunteers with the skills to pass on their knowledge to this client group whilst keeping active and the projects where we carry out work are supporting the communities and its infrastructure. We should use this as an opportunity to address local community needs."



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Looking for activities to do with your family over Christmas and in the New Year? Don't forget to look on Redcar & Cleveland Families' Guide which is an on-line directory of services and activities/events for children and young people in Redcar & Cleveland Events listed range from cheerleading to story makers.

The site is broken in to areas: Me, Home & Family, Work & Money, Learning & Training, Leisure, Health, Events & Activities and Frequently Asked Questions – well worth a visit.

www.redcarclevelandcyptrust.org.uk

What is a Community Organisation?

Those organisations active on a local or community level, usually small, modestly funded and largely dependent on voluntary, rather than paid, effort.

and a Voluntary Organisation?

The larger, professionally staffed agencies non-profit distributing, non-statutory, autonomous, may be charitable.

Hence the phrase **voluntary and community sector (VCS)** to encompass the full range.

Source: NCVO

Charitable Incorporated Organisation: we are almost there

It has been on the horizon for years, but now; finally we seem to be heading in the direction where the new Charitable Incorporated Organisation structure will be upon us soon (well by soon, I mean sometime in 2009). So what does the new structure mean for the sector and will it really make life easier for the people who have the job of running charities on a day to day basis?

The sweeping revision of the 400 year old charity law and the creation of a new charity structure was a positive recognition by the government of the importance of charities in today's society. The changes in legislation were made to improve accountability, promote transparency, reduce bureaucracy and increase trust and confidence – across trustees, our partners and the public. In a poll conducted in February this year, it was found that around 70% of charitable companies were planning to convert to the new structure.

However, in a recent governance survey carried out by Baker Tilly, 69% of the charities surveyed said they were not going to convert to the new CIO structure, which is a surprisingly high figure. Could this be the result of many leading charity lawyers advising against early adoption until all the details had been ironed out or it could be that following the initial excitement of a new incorporated legal structure for charities, many people have become bored or frustrated with the length of time it has taken to get to this point.

What's new?

The draft regulations were published for consultation in September this year by the Charity Commission. The regulations contain three draft statutory instruments:

1. **Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations**
2. **Charitable Incorporated Organisations (Insolvency & Dissolution) Regulations**
3. **The Charity Tribunals (amended) Order.**

As well as the draft statutory instruments, the commission have published two forms of model constitution.

Foundation CIOs – this will be charities whose only members will be the trustees and

Association CIOs – which have members other than trustees

One major difference with the new structure is that groups can register as a CIO even if their income is below the threshold at which other charities are required to register – so this is useful if an organisation or group feels it would benefit from registered charity status but does not have that much income.

New registrations

Unsurprisingly, the registration process will not be that much different to the current process of registration. A formal application to the charity Commission along with constitution and trustee declaration is pretty much it. If accepted, the commission will add the new CIO to the register and at that point – you are legal!

Sector targeted in skills training drive

By Patricio Chile, Third Sector Online, 12 December 2008

The Government's Train to Gain scheme is to become more accessible to third sector organisations from January.

Third sector organisations will have more access to skills training as funding for the voluntary sector is extended under a government-backed programme for employee development.

The Train to Gain initiative will ease funding restrictions on third sector organisations from January to meet high demand for training in the sector. Take-up from the voluntary sector had been limited because organisations had found it difficult to access suitable courses.

The overall budget for Train to Gain will also rise to £1bn for 2010/11.

Third sector organisations will have access to additional support, including standalone accredited courses and other qualifications that can count towards larger accreditations such as degrees.

Interested organisations can contact their local skills counsellors, who can be found at www.traintogain.gov.uk.



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Converting an existing charitable companies

Conversion has always been sold on the basis that the process should be a relatively 'painless' process – and the act seems to bear this out. In this case the process will be that trustees will submit the proposed constitution and two resolutions: one to approve the conversion of the charity to CIO and the other to adopt the CIO constitution. Once the application has been approved the new CIO will be entered onto the register, but the conversion will only be legal once Companies House has registered the conversion and removed the company from their register.

So what about **unincorporated charities**? Well, the act does not make any provision for the conversion of unincorporated charities (charities who are not registered companies), but the charity commission has published guidance on what you would need to do in this case. The commission basically states that unincorporated charities would need to register the new CIO and then transfer the assets and liabilities of the charity to the CIO. You will be able to keep the same name but will have a new registration number so that incorporation can be logged on to the commission register of mergers.

So far everything seems to be fairly straight forward, but there are some points to bear in mind. The Charity Commission strongly advises that you stick 'as near as circumstances admit' to their model constitutions. Adaption and the inclusion of additional terms 'may' delay the registration process.

So what will be the real advantage of registration or conversion to the new structure. Removing the need for dual regulation has got to be a real benefit for existing charitable companies – two sets of annual returns is not a whole lot of fun is it. CIOs also have the power to do anything which is calculated to 'further its purposes' or 'is conducive or incidental in doing so' – this brings quite a lot of flexibility to trustees.

Although some of the detail has still yet to be 'ironed out' – CIO's are almost here and there is no doubt that locally, some organisations will take the path to conversion. For the larger charities who have well established internal structures to cope with dual regulation, conversion to the new structure probably won't be worth either the hassle or the paperwork.

So my advice to anyone thinking of becoming a CIO is – GET ADVICE! Any change in legal structure has to bring real benefit to your organisation and has to be carefully planned and managed to ensure things go as smoothly as possible. All good things come to those who wait.....

Mal Fitzgerald
email: mal@rcvda.org.uk

Ship Ahoy!

Whale Hill Community Association, in partnership with RCBC Routes to Employment, has recently facilitated an employment programme aimed at young people classed as being in the NEET category (neither in education, employment or training).

A significant part of the programme involved the young people taking part in a sailing project which was funded by the Cirdan Sailing Trust. The 12 young people were referred to the programme by a number of agencies within the borough and identified by their need for support and direction. Some were homeless, some had fallen into the justice system and most had issues which were preventing them from 'moving on'.

The project involved the young people sailing a traditional vessel over a distance of approx. 374 miles from Portsmouth to Ipswich. During this time they visited places they had never been to before, cooked and cleaned, hoisted sails, scrubbed decks, navigated over a 36 hour sail and much more. They learned how to live and work together, how to communicate effectively, follow instruction and be considerate of others. The experience has helped to build their self confidence and self esteem, given them a sense of responsibility and achievement and supported them overall in their personal development. Since returning some of the group have secured employment, some are engaged in work based training and one has enrolled for a full time Further Education course.

Interaction News stories

If you have a good news story about something happening within your organisation why not send it in to us and we will publish it. Send any articles (and digital pictures) to karenmc@rcvda.org.uk

Massive decline in cash giving 'a threat to smaller charities'

By John Plummer, Third Sector Online, 10 December 2008

Cash donations fell by almost 22% but total giving is up, says research by the Charities Aid Foundation. Cash donations fell by £367m last year, prompting fears that small charities will be left behind as giving becomes more sophisticated. UK Giving 2008, published by the Charities Aid Foundation and umbrella body the NCVO, showed donations fell from an estimated £1.7bn to £1.3bn. Total giving increased by 8 per cent to £10.6bn in the same period.... Cash remained the most popular method of giving, with 47 per cent of people using it compared with 30 per cent who used direct debit and 4 per cent who used payroll giving. But the rapid decline of cash giving has caused alarm. "We are concerned about the survey's finding, because it is often smaller local groups that rely on cash donations," said Neil Cleeveley, director of policy and communications at NAVCA, which represents local groups. "Smaller groups need to be supported to match the bigger charities, which have increasingly sophisticated ways of raising money."

John Low, chief executive of CAF, said £367m was a huge sum, equivalent to half the amount lost each year to unclaimed Gift Aid. He said the fall was particularly worrying because it occurred before the recession. "If it continues at this rate and accelerates because of the economic situation, this could be big," he added. This is something we need to be worried about. It reflects the way society is going.

Lottery system 'is too complex'

Source: Third Sector, 12 November 2008

A 'single front door' system to make it simpler for charities to apply for funds is among the subjects the Big Lottery Fund will ask about in a major new consultation. The Big Thinking consultation, which started on 17 November, will ask organisations around the UK how the BLF should distribute the money it receives until 2015.

Peter Wanless, chief executive of the BLF, said the consultation would assess how funding could be most efficiently funnelled to those in need and what the fund could provide better than anyone else. He said the BLF was hoping to make it as easy as possible to apply for funding, partly by scrapping "a programmatic structure that has been overcomplicated for applicants to get their heads around."

"We want to offer a single front door, a single application form and just three different funding streams. We're conscious that some of our application processes are very paper-heavy, and we want to change that."

He said that he also wanted to know whether the Big Lottery Fund should attempt to find new funding models. It was also vital that any good practice the BLF had developed was shared.

The consultation, which will run until the end of February, will be promoted through a number of regional events, a Facebook group and direct approaches to important stakeholders.

A dedicated website, www.big-thinking.org.uk, will feature an online consultation document, content generated by users, postcards, videos of funded projects, a discussion forum and a blog by Wanless.

Wanless has already revealed that, as part of the consultation, the BLF will be asking for views on whether it should start to offer loans to third sector organisations

Charity shops could face massive bill for playing music in stores

Source: Third Sector Online, 10 November 2008

The Government has launched a consultation through the Intellectual Property Office to remove all charities' exemptions from fees paid to Phonographic Performance Limited, which represents the interests of music producers and performers.

The association of Charity Shops has responded to the consultation, warning that both customers and volunteer numbers could be hit.

"Removing exemptions from paying licence fees to PPL could cost charity shops hundreds of thousands each year," ... "Some shops just won't be able to afford to play music, which could mean loss of custom, the loss of volunteer support and reduced funds raised for charity."

The collective bill for shops across the country could be as high as £900,000, based on the cost per shop.

The association said charity shops had already begun to pay fees to the Performing Rights Society, which collects royalties for writers, but was finding these fees "a burden".



Ask the expert

Q: One of my employees has put a request in to apply for flexible working to look after their young child but because I am a small organisation their request may have an effect on our organisation. I am confused as to who can apply for flexible working and I have yet to decide on an answer but can I deny their request?

A. By law you must take all flexible working requests seriously, writes Russell Smith, consultant at Peninsula. By law, an application can be made to help an employee care for either a child or adult who requires it. Those that can apply include mothers and fathers whether they are biological parents or legal guardians; so can those adopting a child and foster parents. The employee's child must be under the age of 6 years or under 18 where the child is disabled. Carers who care, or expect to be caring, for a spouse, partner, civil partner or relative or who live at the same address as the person being cared for, can also make applications. The parent or carer will have to be an employee and have worked for you continuously for 26 weeks at the date the application is made. Only one application every 12 months can be made by the employee. The application by the employee should be in writing, stipulating their desired working pattern and what effect, if any, the individual thinks it will have on the business and how any such effect might be dealt with.

You have a legal duty to consider all applications and establish whether the desired work pattern can be accommodated. You must arrange a meeting with the employee to discuss their request within 28 days. The employee can be accompanied should they wish. If their request cannot be accommodated, use the meeting to discuss alternative arrangements. There are eight possible reasons or combination of reasons which are acceptable for refusing the request, for example there is no work available at the time they wish to work. Within 14 days write to the individual informing them of your decision. If you feel you are unable to accept the request then write to the employee giving details on the impact it will have on your business. You should also include details on how to appeal. An employee then has 14 days to appeal in writing. An appeal meeting must be arranged within 14 days of receiving the letter and if desired the employee can be accompanied. After the meeting you have 14 days to inform the employee of your final decision.

For further information please contact Russell Smith on 07976 922314 or via e-mail, Russell.Smith@peninsula-uk.com.



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Mutual Action, Common Purpose: Empowering the Third Sector

November saw the publication of David Blunkett's report by the Fabian Society on the role and place of the third sector: *Mutual Action, Common Purpose*. The report is the result of Gordon Brown giving Blunkett the job of chairing a working group to outline future policy developments and build on the work the government has already undertaken with the sector. Blunkett has already stated that he hoped that government would implement some of the policies before the next general election.

Within the report Blunkett calls for a different relationship between government and the governed and between civil society and formal politics. Some of the main recommendations within the report are:

- The commission for the Compact should be given statutory powers
- Large scale contracting should be avoided in favour of a community-based version
- The merging of Futurebuilders and CapacityBuilders into a one stop shop of funding
- Training for public sector staff who work with the third sector
- Giving volunteers more opportunity to gain recognised qualifications through their time giving
- The establishment of a portable third sector pensions scheme

Blunkett also highlights the need for three year contracts and full cost recovery as well as better commissioning. To view the full report, go to:

http://fabians.org.uk/images/stories/mutual_action_common_purpose_freethinking.pdf

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3 Letter Words

EMU
FIR
ILK
NEE
PEW
PIE
TEE
WET

4 Letter Words

CARD
DARE
DOVE
FACE
HERE
HIVE
LIFT
LISP
RISE
ROUT
SANE
SLUR
STEW
TARO
TELL
WIRY

5 Letter words

AURAL
CURRY
CURVE
DAIRY
ENROL
ERROR
LURCH
SLICE

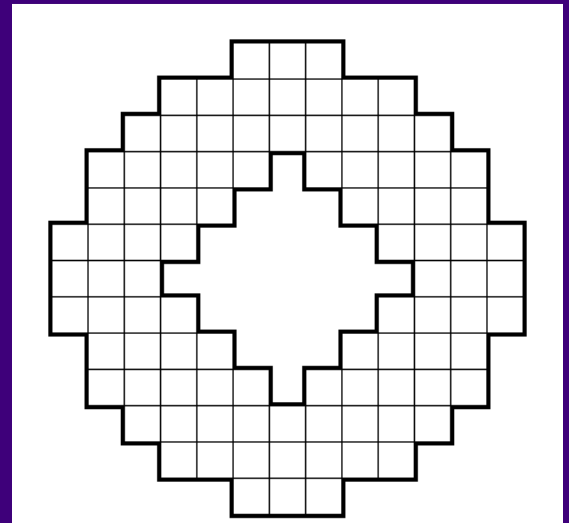
7 Letter Words

CHALICE
CHIMERA
HOSIERY
REFEREE

9 Letter Words

DOMINANCE
QUERULOUS
QUICKSAND
SCRIPTURE

Can you fit the words correctly into the grid?



The information in the Interaction is published in good faith but RCVDA accepts no responsibility for any inaccuracy in the items.

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