

IN THIS ISSUE: Volunteering England National Convention, The Mental Capacity Act, Full cost recovery guide, CTN Trustee Network, Survey Prize Draw Winner, 10 ingredients for Good Governance, Social Enterprise Conference.

inter-ACTION

THE BI-MONTHLY NEWSLETTER OF RCVDA

RCVDA
Leading
the Way



BIG event
March 3rd 2008,
Coatham Memorial Hall



RCVDA, Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council Community Development Team and TVRCC are co-hosting a BIG event at Coatham Memorial Hall on March 3rd 2008 .

The day will consist of two sessions. The morning session will run from 10.30am – 12.45pm and is for organisations and groups who wish to apply to the Awards for All funding programme. The afternoon session will run from 2.00pm – 4.15pm and is for groups who are considering applying to the BIG lotteries Programmes.

As well as receiving information from the BIG lottery regional team there will also be running a series of workshops on how to improve funding applications. There will also be an opportunity to meet your local support team from RCVDA, R & C Borough Council and TVRCC.

Each session is designed to be stand alone therefore you can attend only one session or if you wish you can attend both.

To book a place please contact Karen McGarrity or Jill Harris at RCVDA on 01642 440571 or email Karen on karenmc@rcvda.org.uk.



RCVDA trustees at the recent AGM

The AGM offered an opportunity for a group photograph of RCVDA Board of Trustees.

Left to right are Sue Anderson, Peter Spencer, Julia Bracknell, Jim Wingham, Tess Wombwell, Jackie Goult and Joan Guy.

RCVDA AGM

RCVDA held its AGM on Friday 14th December 2007 at Redcar Adult Education Centre. Key note speaker was Debbie Sheldon, from Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council who gave an address on the changes taking place across the borough with regard to service delivery within Adult services.

Sue Anderson and Mal Fitzgerald updated the audience on the activities undertaken by the organisation over the past year and Steve Cossins from Chipchase Manners presented the annual accounts.

The following trustees were re-elected to the board: Sue Anderson, Julia Bracknell, Jackie Goult, Ian Jeffrey, Peter Spencer, Jim Wingham, Tess Wombwell. The organisation is also pleased to welcome Joan Guy who was elected to the Board of Trustees and Cllr Olwyn Peters who is our local authority appointed representative.

At the first meeting of the Board of Trustees Sue Anderson was re-elected as Chairperson. If you would like to read more about our trustees visit our website www.rcvda.org.uk where you will find photographs and pen portraits under contact us.

Volunteering England National Convention 2008 *Transforming Passion into Power: Volunteering at the heart of social change*

Date: 23-25 April 2008
Venue: Newcastle upon Tyne



Volunteering England is holding its national convention in Newcastle this year.

Activities will include a variety of third sector leaders in inspiring plenary sessions including Question time: a volunteering special involving a panel of politicians including Phil Hope MP, Minister for the Third Sector, who will answer questions, along with MP's with responsibility for volunteering from the two other major political parties. Delegates will pick from 71 tailored workshops over the three-day event.

Highlights of the Convention will include:

- **A debate on Volunteering and 2012:** a lasting legacy or a publicity stunt?
- **Patrons, Presidents and Personalities** - many charities are unsure how to approach high profile volunteers, including celebrities.
- **Volunteers and the Law: next steps.** What needs to be changed in terms of the law?
- **Keeping track: what do you need from a volunteer database?**

For the registration form and latest announcements about the Volunteering England National Convention, go to www.volunteering.org.uk/convention. For further enquiries, e-mail events@volunteeringengland.org or telephone 020 7520 8928.

Bad news for charities as overall giving levels fall

There are fewer people giving to charities, and the total amount of money being donated has fallen, according to this year's *UK Giving Survey*.

The study found that the proportion of the UK population that gave to charity in 2006/07 had dropped to 54%, down from 57% in 2005/06. The total amount given had slightly risen to £9.5bn, but in real terms, when accounting for inflation, this also represents a decrease of 3%.

The annual survey is jointly compiled by the Charities Aid Foundation and NCVO (National Council for Voluntary Organisations). CAF's chief executive, Dr John Low, said that charities were reliant on the increasing generosity of a diminishing number of donors. "But with the overall amount that people tell us they give to charity this year going down slightly, it's more vital than ever that we all try to give what we can."

NCVO's chief executive Stuart Etherington said: "We don't know yet if this is just a blip, rather than a trend of people becoming less generous to charity. Individual donations play a huge role in funding the work that charities carry out in our communities, so we hope that worries such as increasing debt and rising house prices won't put people off giving to the causes that need them."

To view the report, visit either www.cafonline.org.uk or www.ncvo-vol.org.uk

Source Charity Times December 2007

The Mental Capacity Act 2005

Do you currently find it difficult to make decisions sometimes or all the time?

Do you want to plan ahead in case you are unable to make decisions in the future?

Do you support someone who may now or in the future, have difficulty making decisions?

If so, you need to know about the new law, **The Mental Capacity Act 2005**.

Every day we make decisions about lots of things in our lives. If you have mental capacity, you are able to make these decisions for yourself.

Some people however have difficulties making some decisions either all or some of the time, perhaps because they have dementia, confusion, concussion after a head injury, a significant learning disability or a mental health problem. The Mental Capacity Act is a new law which provides protection for people who cannot make their own decisions, in some or all aspects of their life, including managing money. It also strengthens the right of people to make their own decisions if they are able to, ensures they are involved in decisions that affect them and ensures they receive support to make decisions, if they need it.

The Act affects people who are 16 years or over (and in some cases people under 16) and came fully into force on 1st October 2007. The Act sets out in what circumstances others can make decisions on another person's behalf and applies to everyone including family, friends and unpaid carers, people who work in health and social care and advice workers.

The Mental Capacity Act has five key principles:-

- Every adult has the right to make their own decisions and has the capacity to do so, unless proved otherwise
- People have the right to be supported to make their own decisions and must be given appropriate support before anyone decides that they cannot make their own decisions
- People have the right to make what might seem to others as, an unwise decision
- Anything done on behalf of anyone without capacity must be in their best interest
- Anything done for or on behalf of someone without capacity should be the least restrictive of their basic rights and freedoms

The Act also enables people to plan ahead for a time when they are unable to make decisions for themselves. This could include appointing someone to deal with their finances or property, or to make decisions relating to their health and day to day care. The Act formalises Living Wills and Advance Decisions to refuse medical treatment.

Want to know more?

The Ministry of Justice has produced a number of information booklets and these can be obtained via their website <http://www.justice.gov.uk/guidance/mca-code-of-practice.htm>, by telephoning the Public Guardianship Office Customer Service on 0845 330 2900, e mailing general.queries@justice.gsi.gov.uk or via the links on the Redcar and Cleveland Borough website www.redcar-cleveland.gov.uk.



inter- ACTION

Full cost recovery guide now available as a free download

The guide to Full Cost Recovery, jointly published by Acevo and New Philanthropy Capital is now available as a free download.

The toolkit was developed four years ago, and has since been Acevo's best selling publication.

Orli Gorenski, head of Acevo's full cost recovery programme said " I am delighted that we are now in a position to offer this toolkit for free. As our best selling publication, it is clear just how valuable this information has been for the sector".

To download the full toolkit visit www.fullcostrecovery.org.uk

Source Charity Times December 2007

Website for family charities expanded

This website now includes a new 'in your area' section, which will outline the work of development managers in the nine Government Office regions, as well as details of training and events in each region. www.vcsengage.org.uk

Source: Third Sector

Community Skills

Courses starting in March 2008 include:

- Involving People in Community Groups
- Diversity & Inclusion for VCS organisations
- Project Management

Contact 01642 490409 for details.

IAVM Dare to Care Free Volunteer Management Toolkits

The Dare to Care: make time to help end child poverty campaign, headed by CSV and the Campaign to End Child Poverty, encourages individuals and charities to give their time through volunteering to improve the quality of life of children, young people and families experiencing poverty or deprivation. If you would like to receive a free volunteer management toolkit – a “how-to” guide to more effectively involving volunteers in the work of your organisation – please e-mail daretocare@csv.org.uk or call 0800 284533. Hard copies have flown off the shelves but a PDF version is still available.

February is Dare to Care's Time for Money Month – grab your £80 grant now!

The Dare to Care initiative aims to help the 1 in 3 children living in poverty in England through volunteering. CSV is awarding small grants to organisations that register their activities and will also send free Action Packs containing balloons, certificates, hats and t-shirts. The qualifying criteria for grants has been relaxed so don't miss out! – register your voluntary activities if they benefit children and qualify for your £80 grant for further details visit www.daretocare.org.uk.



CTN's vision is of positive, effective trustees governing voluntary and community sector organisations. It works to achieve this by:

- Increasing trustees' access to information, guidance and support through networks, a website, signposting and services;
- Developing understanding and awareness of trusteeship and governance

CTN was founded in 1998 by a group of trustees who found that meeting together enhanced their motivation and effectiveness within their charitable organisations. There are now many networks around the country (including our own Trustees Together) which provide networking and support opportunities to over 500 trustees a year. CTN also listens to the concerns of trustees and makes sure that these are heard at a national level, through partnerships, consultations and submissions.

CTN organises events to support trustees and hear their views; these range from a confidential lunch with seven people to seminars and lectures for 300. Where possible, we work with partners to achieve positive outcomes for trustees.

CTN offers:

- Opportunities for face to face trustee networking around the country, including links to specialised networks, such as chairs, treasurers, and for trustees of particular types of charities.
- The chance to have your views heard at a national level - CTN consults with its members and feeds back to government initiatives and consultations on the issues that affect trustees.
- www.trusteenet.org.uk - a free to access website offering a discussion forum, news and information and resources
- trusteeplus, a benefits scheme - subscription to *governance* magazine, individual Trustee Indemnity Insurance, a helpline to answer questions and help trustees address potential liability issues before they become serious, and free/discounted entry to events.

Prize Draw Winner

As part of our commitment to ensure that the services we provide meet the needs of community and voluntary groups, RCVDA recently carried out a survey of the voluntary and community sector and its statutory partners. This enabled us to look at our support services and evaluate what we are doing right, where we may be getting it wrong and most importantly, how we can improve the services we provide to the voluntary and community sector of Redcar & Cleveland.

We would like to thank everyone who responded. The results are currently being evaluated and we will provide more information about the results in future newsletters. As an added incentive to return survey forms quickly, we offered a prize draw for a Samsung digital camera. Eligibility for entry into the prize draw was restricted to those voluntary and community groups who returned their forms back by the deadline.

The winner of the camera was Charltons Community Centre. Kath Nolan collected the camera on behalf of the Community Centre and told us the Centre did not have its own camera and couldn't wait to use it. We look forward to seeing the results.



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Ten Essential Ingredients for Good Governance

Governance Works have compiled a document setting out what they see as the ten essential ingredients for good governance.

Here are the ten in brief – you can download the full document at www.governanceworks.org.uk (click on the resources tab).

1. Dig out the constitution, memorandum and articles, trust deed or other such governing document and read it! Take a fresh look. Do the current systems and processes of your organisation meet the requirements of the document and does the governing document meet the requirements of the organisation and its current or future plans?
2. Make sure that all members of the Board and staff have read and understand the organisation's business or other plans. The Board's role is to ensure that staff and volunteers are implementing the plan.
3. Ensure you have the right mix of people, skills and abilities to support and develop your organisation and its plan. Great care and attention should be given to recruiting both staff and Board members.
4. Develop a written set of policies and procedures to guide the organisation and ensure everyone is working in a coherent way, including a code of conduct for the Board.
5. Take meetings seriously. The structure, meeting skills and behaviours need to be focussed on the task in hand and the Board's task is to focus on the bigger picture - so stay away from discussions of toilet rolls!
6. Make sure your Board members are well informed - prepared reports should be distributed in advance of meetings.
7. Ensure that financial reporting is given due importance and the Board is included in this process appropriately.
8. Spend time on building good relationships. The starting point for developing this has to be clarity in boundaries, particularly those between the Board and the chief executive, director or senior worker.
9. Ensure the Board understands that it is their role to manage the manager.
10. Organisations need direction and leadership. That's up to the Board - they should not be confined to the role of 'figurehead' but truly share in determining the direction and leading the organisation.

RCVDA events - Book Now!

Employment Law

RCVDA is holding a 'mustn't be missed' **Employment Law Workshop** on Wednesday 27th February 2008 at Eston City Learning Centre from 10 am until 12 noon.

See the enclosed flyer for more details about this **FREE** event and how you can receive a **FREE** employment 'health check for your organisation.

Public Law training event

RCVDA in conjunction with NAVCA are hosting a training workshop

"Empowering the Voluntary Sector"

on **Wednesday 12 March 2008**
at **Eston City Learning Centre**.

**Places are limited so hurry
and book your place now!**

For more information please see the enclosed flyer or ring Ann Dale or Jill Harris on 01642 440571

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN IS EVERYBODY'S RESPONSIBILITY

Does your group work with children or young people?

Do you have an up to date Child Protection policy? Do you know where to get advice on putting one together or how to monitor the effectiveness of your current one? If you have paid staff or volunteers do you understand the impact of Safe Recruitment guidance? Do you know how to access free, relevant training on safeguarding children? Do you have a good understanding of how to promote safe use of the internet amongst children and young people?

If the answer to any of the above questions is "no" then we can help. Protect in Partnership (PIP) is a task group of South Tees Local Safeguarding Children Board made up of representatives of many agencies. This group consults with local communities around safeguarding issues and has produced leaflets for parents and carers as well as for Licensees on keeping children safe.

Members of PIP can present a free, short information session tailored to the needs of your group on issues around safeguarding children. For more information please contact Marcia Ingram, Development Officer on 01642 771771, email: Marcia-ingram@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

New consultation aims to reduce reporting red tape

The Office of the Third Sector and the Charity Commission has jointly published a new consultation, examining a package of proposals to reduce the red tape involved in financial reporting.

The two bodies have claimed that the proposals would reduce the regulatory burden for up to 75% of registered main charities, allowing them to meet their accounting and reporting obligations in a simpler, less expensive, way.

The actual proposals include:

- only registered charities with an income above £25,000 would need to prepare a Trustees Annual Return, currently a requirement for all registered charities
- the income threshold of £10,000, above which charities must submit their annual accounts to the Charity Commission would increase to £25,000
- the income threshold of £10,000, above which charities must have their accounts externally examined, would increase to £25,000
- the threshold of £100,000, above which a charity must prepare accruals accounts (as opposed to simpler receipts and payments accounts), would be raised to £250,000

Dame Suzi Leather, chair of the Commission, said: "Nearly three quarters of registered charities would benefit from a reduced regulatory burden under these recommendations. This would make things easier for these small charities and their trustees without significantly reducing the accountability and transparency which is crucial to maintaining the public's trust and confidence in the charity sector as a whole."

The consultation closes on 31 March 2008. To take part, visit: [/www.charitycommission.gov.uk/news/threshold.asp](http://www.charitycommission.gov.uk/news/threshold.asp)

Source: Charity Times December 2007

Book now for Voice08 The Social Enterprise Conference for the UK

Voice 08 and YouthVoice 08 are Social Enterprise conferences which will be held on 26-27th February 2008 in Liverpool.

The organisers promise:

"our most stimulating and interactive event yet. We have exciting plenary and breakout sessions scheduled (details online), including debates and unprecedented levels of audience participation.

And unlike traditional conferences, delegates at Voice08 also have the power to create their own sessions by using our unique Make a Meeting service.

Or you can wander into one of our many inspirational igloos and speak to business experts, educators, Social Enterprise Ambassadors and others.

We will also be putting on a large exhibition and trade fair which will run throughout the day, where corporate exhibitors have offered to give delegates one-on-one surgeries on key topics such as finance and legal issues".

More details can be found on:
www.socialenterprise.org.uk/voice08



Ask the expert

Q. An employee, who had worked for us for a number of years, resigned in July 2007 because of an injury sustained in a car crash which prevented him from carrying out his job (which was of a physically demanding nature). However, in October 2007 he successfully applied for a clerical job with us. Unfortunately, he has not really got to grips with this new role. As he now has only three months' service with us, I assume I can simply give him a week's notice of termination of employment?

A. Unfortunately not, writes Russell Smith, Consultant at Peninsula. Usually, where there is no contract in force across a whole Sunday to Saturday week, continuity of employment would be broken. Unfortunately, however, Section 212 of the Employment Rights Act 1996 effectively provides that if an employee resigns (or is dismissed) for a reason connected with his sickness or injury which prevented him from doing the kind of work that he had been doing under his contract and is then re-employed by the same employer (or an associated employer), his continuity of employment is normally preserved, provided the gap between leaving and being re-engaged does not exceed 26 weeks.

In this case the gap is only about 12 weeks. Consequently, this employee's statutory continuous service with you is probably longer than you think. The initial period of service, the gap of about 12 weeks and his current period of service would all count and be added together for the purpose of statutory employment rights that require a qualifying period of service. This would include rights to statutory minimum notice of termination, the right to claim unfair dismissal, etc. An employee's service during any period is presumed to be continuous unless the contrary is shown. Consequently, it would be advisable to treat him as if he had not actually resigned in July at all. This is likely to involve going through a proper capability process involving monitoring, support and warnings, etc. as you would for any other employee with over one year's service.

It is worth noting that there are a number of other circumstances where statutory continuity of employment is preserved, even where a contract of employment appears to have come to an end.

For further information please contact Russell Smith on 07976922314, or via email, russell.smith@peninsula-uk.com



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News from Redcar & Cleveland Procurement Team

Redcar & Cleveland Borough Council have recruited two new members of staff within the Procurement & Projects Team. The new staff took up their positions in January bringing the team up to six full time staff members.

One of the new starters is **Jane Hewitt**, Jane has replaced Allison Agius who left the authority back in September for a new position within North East Social Enterprise Partnership (NESEP). Jane has moved from Darlington Borough Council's Procurement team where she worked for over 2½ years.

Jane and the rest of the team aim to continue and expand on the good work Allison started, by providing information and support via RCVDA website and newsletter. If you or any other member of your organisation has any queries on procurement Jane would be happy to help and she can be reached on (01642) 771258 or via email on jane.hewitt@redcar-cleveland.gov.uk

In recent Interactions there have been updates and general information from the Procurement & Projects Team to assist organisations with bidding for Council business, e-tendering and providing top tips. If you have any ideas for future topics please contact Jane via the contact details above with some brief details and soon after you should see the answer in a future issue.

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Acronyms

Just a few of the acronyms you may hear from time to time.

CIC	Community Interest Company
CIO	Charitable Incorporated Organisation
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau
CVS	Council(s) for Voluntary Service
DCLG	Department for Communities and Local Government
DDA	Disability Discrimination Act
FCR	Full cost recovery
GONE	Government Office for the North East
JAR	Joint Area Review
LAA	Local Area Agreement
LEGI	Local Enterprise Growth Initiative
LINKs	Local Involvement Networks (for health and social care)
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership
NAVCA	National Association for Voluntary and Community Action
NEET	Not in Education, Employment or Training
PCT	Primary Care Trust
PQASSO	Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations
PQQ	Pre-qualification questionnaire
PSA	Public Service Agreement
SORP	Statement of Recommended Practice (charity accounts)
TSO	Third Sector Organisation
VFM	Value for money

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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