



**South Northamptonshire VCS Forum
29th January 2009 in the Committee Room,
the Council Offices, Springfields Towcester**

Twenty seven people attended the meeting. See appendix 1.

Welcome and Introductions

Phil Drage (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the forum and explained the dual purpose of the meeting:

- i) to help groups at 'grassroots' level by putting them in touch with one another, to exchange ideas and share ideas/good practice
- ii) as a consultation body with statutory agencies.

Developing Youth Provision - Northamptonshire Association of Youth Clubs (NAYC)

Mike Palmer explained that NAYC, a registered charity, has been developing youth provision in the county for 46 years. There are 130 affiliated youth clubs, which form the mainstay of NAYC's activities. NAYC also work with schools and charities.

- ❖ NAYC's base is Benham Sports Arena, a leisure centre with add-on's e.g. climbing wall, Olympic standard trampoline centre, tennis (at Kings Park centre) together with a 43 bed residential site. Affiliated members can use these facilities at a discounted rate. There is a proposal to create a music and arts centre within Kings Park centre. NAYC also visit 3 'action' centres based in Wales (the Ranch Snowdon), Shropshire (Pioneer Centre) and in the Outer Hebrides.
- ❖ School activities include after school/holiday clubs, one-on-one and group activities.
- ❖ Free youth training is offered to the voluntary sector eg providing a training course to a local community who want to run a youth group. Courses are delivered locally and includes all relevant elements e.g. goal setting, child protection, health & safety, insurance, drafting policies and CRB forms etc. Information leaflets are available.
- ❖ IGNITE a range of 23 free specialist courses, which are only open to affiliated groups e.g. dealing with bereavement and self esteem. Information leaflets are available.
- ❖ Emerging Leaders is aimed at 14-16 years old who help at youth groups. Aim of weekend course is to encourage and recognise emerging youth leaders.
- ❖ CRB checks - NAYC offer volunteer CRB checks at £2 per person and £38 for paid youth workers.
- ❖ Insurance – NAYC able to signpost youth groups to a specialist insurance provider.
- ❖ Minibus available for hire

- ❖ Area Youth Club Development Workers – aim is for a development worker in each borough/district. One worker already appointed in Corby. Purpose of role is to help, support and develop youth work in different parts of county.
- ❖ NAYC are currently working with Team Brackley to establish a youth centre in Brackley, with the aim of a development worker being based there.

Question / Answer Session re NAYC presentation

Q. Phil Drage asked how NAYC would help his local community, which had identified a need for a youth facility?

A. Mark stated that important to facilitate a consultation process with the local community, preferably, where possible, through the local school.

Q. Dorothy Dunkley, Syresham asked if Mark would be willing to come across to Syresham youth group and offer some fresh ideas on activities.

A. Mark confirmed he would be happy to come across to discuss new ideas.

Q. Jenny Evans Roade youth group asked if any further information on courses available.

A. Mark advised that leaflets and course details were available at the meeting.

Northamptonshire FORUM Development Worker – Paul Battye

Paul explained that his remit was to establish a countywide forum into which the seven borough/district forums would feed. This is a five year project with two strands ie a local and strategic level

Local level - the aim of the local infrastructure organisations (e.g. SNVB) includes working with frontline organisations and supporting a forum which can facilitate representation of the VCS on local bodies (e.g. Local Strategic Partnership). Paul's role is to support that activity.

Strategic level – to create and facilitate an information network where the local VCS forums can feed into the decision/policy makers at county, regional and national level...

Questions/Answers

John Nash, Syresham Parish Council asked how Paul proposed tackling the project.

Paul explained that his aim was to focus on the project goal, which is improving a community by all parties seeing relevance of working together and realising that they cannot work independently that it has to be a partnership and not people seeing each other as competitors eg voluntary sector group, local authority officer and elected member who all see a community matter from a different perspective. His aim is to achieve this goal within two to three years and remainder of project time to be embedding this ethos and ensuring its sustainability.

Information Exchange and discussions

Weston

Phil Drage, Weston project wanted to share how his group tackled the project of an active community centre. Basically, Phil suggested that fundamentally it is important to engage with people who have undertaken a similar project and find the answers to questions eg how to write a business plan, potential funders etc.

YMCA

YMCA also has a minibus for hire.

YMCA has a handbook on how to set up a youth club. Handbook includes tips on funding applications and a section on signposting to other organisations e.g. SNVB.

YMCA has also invested in 'Grant Finder' which allows youth groups to see potential funders.

YMCA has a useful website portal on youth provision www.vysn.org.uk

Northamptonshire Conference for the Third Sector will be held at Kettering Conference Centre on Wednesday 25th February.

Mike stated that on 2nd March all NCC commissioned contracts regarding youth provision are to be discussed at Kings Park Conference. There will be a morning or afternoon session.

St Lawrence Church Towcester – Open House Youth Group

Oliver Low (also a governor at a local primary school) endorsed the government's 'Extended Schools' initiative as a positive one and foresees potentially fruitful opportunities.

He also said that whilst councils do have some good ideas with regard to community development, there are occasions when local people are already meeting a need. Oliver felt Paul Batty in his new role as Northamptonshire FORUM development worker, may like to use his position to highlight this with the relevant statutory bodies.

Team Brackley and Evenley Youth Club

Linda Scaysbrook commented that Evenley Church pastoral team recently sent letters to village residents asking them to indicate whether they would like to give or receive voluntary help from their local community. Notably all wanted to offer help.

Northamptonshire Sport

Tristan Hale advised that Northamptonshire Sport can promote volunteer opportunities if any local youth clubs have sporting/physical activities.

Northamptonshire Voluntary Youth Action (NVYA)

Sam Curtis stated that NVYA will be holding their 'Volunteer of the Year Awards' event in March. If anyone knows of any 13-25 year olds who might be eligible please let NVYA know. Sam also mentioned that if there are any young people helping in youth clubs then it was worthwhile signposting them to NVYA, as NVYA can record the number of hours the young person volunteers. This can lead to the young person receiving a nationally recognised award.

N.C.C. Adult Learning Services

Sarah Mason informed the meeting that she is seeking opportunities to work in partnership with other organisations/agencies. NCC Adult Learning Services provide courses for anyone over sixteen. Courses range from e.g. Arabian belly dancing to art and health. Currently, they do not provide any courses in South Northants and are looking to change this.

Kay Driver, SNVB commented that she had received a brochure promoting adult courses but the course she was interested in was not local to her but in Wellingborough. She wondered how much outreach work is undertaken.

Sarah replied that they are trying to promote informal learning in e.g. village halls. Sarah has approached local parish councils and taken a 'bottom up' approach to identify needs and wants. However, this has been somewhat frustrating as she has also undertaken surveys where there appeared to be a need for a foreign language course, but when set up, no one turned up.

LINK

Bridget Gibson from LiNK (Northampton Local Involvement Network) hosted by Northampton Volunteering Centre. The aim of LiNK is to give local people a voice to help them improve adult social care services and improve health. LiNK has replaced Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) forums, which were abolished on 31st March 2008. It is possible to join LiNK as an individual or organisation.

Linda Scaysbrook asked if young people can be consulted and feed into LiNK. Bridget Gibson commented that she does not know at this point in time. However, due to attend a Board meeting shortly and will raise question.

South Northants e-forum and Information Bulletin

E-forum

Barron Walton commented that as South Northants is such a large rural district, the most effective means of communicating could be the South Northants e-forum, accessed via SNVB website. If anyone has any issues raised today or at any time use this medium.

Information Bulletin

SNVB receives a lot of relevant information for the voluntary and community sector, which will be circulated via the fortnightly e-bulletin.

A.O.B.

SNC

Ashley Davey informed the meeting that the 'Leisure Team' works in partnership with ACRE who look at parish plans. SNC do offer grants, indeed, Pam Woods new grants officer started today. Current initiatives are Project 5, which provides outreach sport/physical activities in district. SNC has also secured £200k from Big Lottery Fund to provide play workers in district, and is just in process of short listing for four play rangers.

SNVB

Barron Walton drew attention to a free 'Trustee' training event on 24th February, which is open to all groups within the voluntary and community sector.

FORUM Development Group

Phil drew meeting to an end by explaining that SNVB provides secretariat service and facilitates the FORUM development group. Phil would like to see an increase in number of people on the development group, which meets bi-monthly. Phil drew people's attention to the green sheet which gave further details, including contact information about the development group.

Dates of future meetings:

26th March 2009 2.00pm Bugbrooke Community Centre

Accessing local government: South Northamptonshire Council

Forum Development Group

18th February 2.30pm Towcester Volunteer Centre