



**South Northamptonshire VCS Forum  
30<sup>th</sup> June 2009 at Deanshanger Community Centre**

Twenty one people attended the meeting. See appendix 1.

**Welcome and Introductions**

Phil Drage (Chairman) welcomed everyone to the forum. He reminded those present of the dual purpose of the meeting:

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

and introduced Nicola Capewell SNC Head of Community Engagement and David Allen Lead Officer Transport Policy.

**South Northamptonshire Council Community Engagement Strategy**

Nicola had been invited to the meeting following her attendance at the March meeting to give an update on the developing 'Community Engagement' strategy and to talk about SNC's Customer Service Framework and the Customer Access Strategy.

The Community Engagement strategy is seen by SNC as a significant document, and she was keen to know how those present would like to be involved in the consultation when the paper had been approved for circulation.

After discussion it was agreed that an email copy would be circulated by snvb and that it should be an agenda item at the next forum meeting 1<sup>st</sup> October and Nicola be invited to that meeting.

Nicola moved onto the other two strategies she wished to highlight to the forum. She said that she had received some comments that the 'call centre' terminology used was difficult to understand but would welcome any additional feedback. It was agreed that these documents would be circulated by snvb\*\* with the minutes of the meeting and that comments could be sent to Nicola at SNC [ncapewell@southnorthants.gov.uk](mailto:ncapewell@southnorthants.gov.uk)

Phil Drage, chair, commented that he welcomed the ongoing relationship between SNC and the forum. Additionally, he commended the two strategies to those present and added that it was an opportunity for forum to have a voice.

**Community Transport: David Allen, Lead Officer Transport Policy SNC**

David gave an overview of his role at SNC. There was then discussion about transport provision in the area including youth provision, local authority mini-bus brokerage, concessionary fares, public transport provision in villages, access to out of area health provision and cycle routes.

David made a commitment to get a response to all questions and then he and Nicola left the meeting.

A general discussion followed with several positive comments regarding both presentations:-

- ❖ 'Very useful' and 'keep an open mind to SNC as there are people there who care'
- ❖ 'If more dialogue with SNC then a better chance of achieving mutually beneficial outcomes'
- ❖ 'Appears to be a new broom at SNC' and 'within village has noticed small changes happening following contact with Nicola Capewell at SNC'

Keith McClelland added that a staff member from the Planning Department at SNC had been instrumental in assisting Aynho P.C. in removing an 11 metre telegraph pole, which had been erected in the village, by BT without consultation.

Another commentator added that whilst there were positive moves at SNC this was not across the board, as sometimes no joined up thinking.

Phil Drage closed the discussion saying that SNC clearly value the forum and we need to grow the relationship between the forum and SNC.

### **“Community Voice” - Information Exchange and discussions**

Jenny Carter, snvb advised group that there were leaflets available regarding two of the local voluntary community car schemes in the district ie Towcester Area Door to Door (TADD), Brackley Area Voluntary Car Scheme (BAVCS). She circulated information on the 'Improving your Patch Awards'.

All other attendees then gave a brief overview of either the group and or organisation that they represented and information was exchanged.

### **Paul Battye: Northamptonshire Countywide Forum**

Paul Battye explained that the Northamptonshire Countywide Forum is in the process of being set up and that once it is established the district forums will be able to feed in any issues. Currently Paul is seeking volunteers to help form a shadow countywide forum steering group and an advert looking to recruit volunteers will be circulated by mid July. Paul was hoping for a good response.

Paul also said that he would like, at the next SN VCS Forum in October to establish 'what are the key issues' affecting groups and 'what makes groups want to attend the forum'.

Some ideas were put forward and Phil Drage added that what the forum needed to continue doing was providing speakers on a range of topics which were, relevant to local communities.

Nick King, snvb, encouraged those present to publicise the forum in their local communities.

Paul Battye responded to a question from John Nash, Syresham village hall, by stating that the forum needed to enhance its relationship with SNC and that there should be direct representation from the forum on the LSP (Local Strategic Partnership) to talk about strategic issues in South Northamptonshire and that an independent forum strengthened the voice of the VCS.

## **A.O.B.**

Phil Drage, Chair, concluded the meeting by advising those present that there was an electronic forum which he encouraged all to view [www.snvb.org.uk/forum](http://www.snvb.org.uk/forum) and that any member who could offer some time to support the development group would be warmly welcome.

There being no other business the meeting closed at 16.15 pm.

## **Dates of future meetings**

Thursday 1<sup>st</sup> October 2.00 pm (venue to be confirmed)

\*\*The two consultation documents can be found on the snvb website:-  
[www.snvb.org.uk/vcs\\_forum.html](http://www.snvb.org.uk/vcs_forum.html) then click on papers.