

LinkUp

Supporting the voluntary sector in South Northamptonshire



An inspiration to play areas in the district

Three... Two... One... cut the Ribbon!... heralded the launch of the new Harpole Play Area on 12th December and the culmination of eighteen months hard work by the Playground Project team.

Two years ago, when some of the popular children's play equipment had to be removed from the play area, Harpole mums Heidi Street-Ward and Tracy Smethers started a drive to find new play equipment and to expand the project to involve a wider section of the community.

"Our vision was to create a play area that would appeal to as many residents as possible - of all ages!" says Tracy. "We wanted a play area that had something for everyone!"

To plan such a project it was clear that Tracy and Heidi needed help. They consulted widely and met representatives from snvb, who gave guidance on engaging with as many local residents as possible. This approach was key to securing major funding from the Department for Children, Schools & Families and Northamptonshire County Council Playbuilders Scheme.

The success of this approach is clearly visible in the concept and design of the play area, with new, exciting and stimulating play equipment for 1 to 12 year olds, and specialist equipment for disabled and less agile children. For teenagers there is more challenging play equipment. Adults are also catered for with easy and safe access points for families with buggies, benches to relax on and attractive landscaped borders with a variety of shrubs and trees for shade.

"This is a dream come true for Harpole!" says Nick King, Outreach Worker at snvb. "The vision and work of Tracy and Heidi, the committees and the wider community, are an inspiration to play areas and villages in the district. It is a wonderful play area, and I can see Harpole becoming quite a tourist attraction!"

Jenny's Jottings - It's All Change

I will be leaving snvb at Easter and Bob Williams will be retiring as Projects Development Manager. I have been with the organisation for seventeen years and have seen it grow from a small office in the Community Centre in Towcester, with a part-time Volunteering Co-ordinator, to an organisation with two centres and ten staff. Bob joined us to oversee the expansion to the Volunteer Centre in Moat Lane in 1998 and stayed on to see the new Volunteer Centre open in Brackley and the increase in the services we provide.

It has been a privilege to work with people and groups who are all very committed to seeing the voluntary and community sector in South Northamptonshire develop and provide the services that make the area such an excellent place to live.

It is with some sadness that I say goodbye but I am sure that snvb will be around providing services to support volunteers and the Third Sector for some time to come.

Jenny

The Big Lottery comes to Towcester

On March 1st snvb is organising a day at Towcester Volunteer Centre for representatives from local charities to meet Louise Ashby, from the Big Lottery Fund to find out how a grant from the Big Lottery could help them.

The Big Lottery has a range of funds on offer. Awards For All offers grants of between £300 and £10,000 for projects that improve communities and the lives of people within them. This fund is open to applications from community or not-for-profit groups, schools, health bodies and Parish or Town councils. The Reaching Communities Funding Programme offers grants of between £10,000 and £500,000 to help people and communities, who are most in need. This programme is for registered charities, not for profit organisations, statutory bodies and social enterprises, and can fund projects for up to 5 years.

“Big Lottery funding can make a power of difference to voluntary groups”, says Nick King of snvb. “It’s good news that the Lottery has accepted our invitation to come to Towcester. We know that applying for funding can be challenging and competitive, so we have designed the day to provide invaluable advice and help on how best to progress applications.”

To find out more and to register an interest contact Nick King on nick@snvb.org.uk or telephone 01280 841250. Places are limited so please book early!

Forthcoming Events

LinkUp (The Community Networking Forum)

Thursday 4th March 13.00-14.00
Towcester Volunteer Centre

Safe n Sound Community Connections

Wednesday 24th February 9.30-11.30
Aynho Village Hall

Tuesday 23rd March 14.00-16.00
Brackley W.I. Hall

Wednesday 14th April 9.30-11.30
Culworth Village Hall

West Northamptonshire Development Corporation (WNDC) Stronger Communities Fund

If you are a not-for-profit, voluntary or community group that is based in or around Towcester, you could be eligible for a WNDC Stronger Communities grant. WNDC can provide capital funding for new or existing projects which deliver sporting or cultural benefits. If you are considering the renovation of a community kitchen, a new disabled toilet, play area equipment, fencing to secure a community area or notice boards, it might be worth applying. A WNDC grant will fund up to £10,000 but in exceptional circumstances higher amounts will be considered.

If you are interested contact David Thomas or Nick King on 01280 841250 or email nick@snvb.org.uk

The WNDC Stronger Communities Fund is administered by the Northamptonshire Community Foundation and more details can be found on www.ncf.uk.com

Volunteering your Christmas Spirit

Have you ever wondered what it would be like to skip the usual Christmas ritual and spend the day volunteering? Every year many people volunteer on Christmas Day and last December volunteer Terry Sutton decided it was time for him to take the plunge!

Terry, from Greatworth, contacted us in early December to say that he was ready and willing to help on the big day in whatever way he could. We put him in touch with the organisers of the annual festive dinner, held at the Chantry House in Towcester, where he joined a band of volunteers helping guests to celebrate in style.

He said: “This was my first time in formal volunteering and I really enjoyed it! I thought I would just be slogging in the kitchen, but I was made to feel part of the group and everyone was very friendly. The time went by very quickly and I would have been happy to do more; it was lovely. I would definitely recommend volunteering to other people at Christmas or any other time.”

If you would like to find out more about volunteering at Christmas, or at any other time, contact Nicola on 01327 358264 or email: nicola@snvb.org.uk. Please also get in touch if you would like to tell us about your volunteering stories. We would love to hear them!



Safe n Sound Community Connections heads to the south of the district

The Safe n Sound project aims to improve residents’ lives by ensuring they are warm and that their homes are energy efficient and as safe as possible from the dangers of fire, crime and the cold.

It is designed to help all residents in the district and for them to benefit from a variety of services, such as the installation of smoke alarms, door security furniture and energy saving measures.

Some of these services are offered free of charge, while grants and other financial benefits are often available for further measures. Ongoing advice and support is available from professional organisations if needed e.g. Northamptonshire Fire Service, Northamptonshire Police and NHS Northamptonshire.

The Safe n Sound Roadshow will visit Aynho (24 Feb), Brackley (23 March) and Culworth (14 April). (See “Forthcoming Events” on the left, for further details). Do pop along for some expert help and advice.

Recipe Roade

Aged 50 to 150 years?

*Free one of the following mornings?
March 22nd, 23rd, 29th or 30th 2010!*

Then, you are invited to a recipe exchange, cooking and tasting session and it won't cost you a penny.

Submit your favourite recipe, we will buy the ingredients for you to create and cook it with the pupils at Roade School, then share in the pleasure of eating the food over tea/coffee and a chat.

A great way to pass on your family's best dinner, ensure it will never be forgotten and it can be eaten and enjoyed by many people for generations to come.

Places are limited so please express your interest as soon as possible. Transport can be provided.

This opportunity is part of our new School of Life project, operated in partnership with NCC. The project seeks to promote skills exchanges between under 25s and over 50s. Older people may teach young people to achieve things which they may not be taught in school, such as how to put up a shelf, how to budget, how to grow vegetables and how to tinker with a car. In return, young people may teach older people how to use a mobile phone, use eBay, keep fit using a Nintendo Wii and how to use a digital camera. Both age groups can share their hobbies, fishing, sport, music, drama, dancing and crafts for example.

There are many other activities and opportunities in an important and exciting project affecting us all. Whether you have regular time to volunteer, just a one off contribution or simply want more information, please contact Amanda Harris at snvb on 01280 841250 or email her at theschooloflife@snvb.org.uk



New model constitution for small charities

The Charity Commission has published a simplified model constitution aimed specifically at small charities with an annual income below the registration threshold of £5,000.

Find out more at www.charity-commission.gov.uk/registration/smallcharity.asp

How can Compact Advocacy help your small organisation?

Compact Advocacy is a partner in Empowering the Voluntary Sector, a project aimed at supporting all voluntary and community organisations to challenge decisions made by local and national government that are not consistent with the compact or do not meet public law principles.

For further information check out www.compactvoice.org.uk

For immediate assistance, contact the EVS advice line on 020 7520 3161 or email evsadvice@ncvo-vol.org.uk

Training and other support services for community groups

Free Safeguarding Information event

Children's Links, a national charity, is representing Safe Network in the East Midlands and is offering free Safeguarding and Vetting and Barring information events.

New legislation means many more organisations and groups than previously will be under a legal obligation to carry out checks on employees and volunteers. Safe Network is particularly keen to reach groups who work with children and young people i.e. scouts, brownies, music groups, trustees of children's charities etc.

We are arranging a free session in the district on Monday 26th April at either 10.30 – 13.00 or 14.00 – 16.30. Please contact Lorraine at snvb on 01327 358264 by 25th February to register your interest and to advise whether you would prefer to attend a morning or afternoon session.

CVS training

CVS Northamptonshire, in partnership with Nene Valley Community Action, will be delivering Lottery funded ICT training events from January to April. Courses include designing Access databases, understanding Excel spreadsheets and producing newsletters, using Publisher, to name a few. For further information please refer to CVS's website www.cvsnorthamptonshire.org.uk

You are invited to the
2nd Annual Conference of
Northamptonshire's Third Sector
"Time For Change"

Wednesday 24th February 2010

Kettering Leisure Village
Conference Centre

10.00am to 4.00pm

For information contact:
01933 396382
info@nvca.org.uk



volunteering

‘I can do that’

Here is a selection of our latest volunteering opportunities. For details of these and lots more – contact the Volunteer Centre.

Communication Support Volunteer – The Stroke Association

Working to support the communication support service across Northamptonshire, volunteers will have the opportunity to work with people with communication difficulties as a result of a stroke. Opportunities exist in a variety of settings, providing one-to-one and/or group support.

A patient, calm and sympathetic personality is required. Good communication and listening skills with the ability to give a stroke survivor the time and encouragement to communicate through a variety of different means. Training will be provided and this opportunity will require an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check.

Trustee/Board Member – Various

Would you like an opportunity to contribute your knowledge and expertise to the development, management and improvement of local charities, while also developing new interests and skills and meeting new people? Then you might be interested in becoming a trustee. We have a number of trustee roles currently available with a variety of organisations so why not get in touch with snvb to find out more? Alternatively search the national volunteering database at www.doit.org.uk

Home Visitor – Home-Start

This volunteering role is an ideal opportunity to share your parenting skills as you help families with young children. Volunteers provide emotional and practical help to parents experiencing difficulties by visiting families in their own homes and offering friendship and support. All families have at least one child under five. This opportunity will require an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check.

Gardener – 1st Deanshanger Guides

Are you fit, healthy and enjoy being in the fresh air? Are you ready to take on a gardening challenge and spare a few hours each week to transform an overgrown, neglected plot into a safe haven for children? The Deanshanger Guides are looking for someone who can turn this wilderness into a more attractive sight (and site!).

No skills, experience or qualifications are necessary though a passion to get stuck in is essential.

This can be done in your own time although attendance on a meeting night might be advantageous and the guides could also get involved.

This opportunity will require an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check.

Helping people cope with crime – Victim Support

Victim Support is looking for volunteers, aged over 18, from all walks of life who are understanding, good listeners and who can get on with people of all ages, cultures and backgrounds. You will be providing emotional support over the phone or at the victim’s house. No qualifications necessary and full training is provided. No previous experience of this kind of work is necessary, but you should be prepared to give a minimum of three hours a week. This opportunity will require an enhanced Criminal Record Bureau (CRB) check.

Charity Crafts Volunteer – snvb

Would you like to join a small and friendly Charity Crafts circle? If you can sew, knit, crochet or make greeting cards please come along. The group’s aim is to make items from donated materials which are then given to local charities and community organisations.

Meetings are on the 2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month between 2.00 pm and 3.30 pm at Towcester Volunteer Centre.

Contact details

snvb

Volunteer Centre Volunteer Centre
Moat Lane Market House Courtyard
Towcester Brackley
NN12 6AD NN13 7AB
01327 358264 01280 841250

www.snvb.org.uk
info@snvb.org.uk

Advice sessions are held regularly at our volunteer centres:

- Community Law Service
- HomeStart
- Citizen’s Advice Bureau
- SNC Housing Advice
- Connexions
- Working Links
- S4YP

Call us for information and times.

Call us for details of our own projects:

- Brackley Area Volunteer Car Service
- Safe n Sound
- Charity Crafts
- School of Life