

# South East Northumberland Voluntary Sector Network

## Notes of meeting

Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> September 10.30am – 12.00noon Bedlington Community Centre

30 attendees

### Introductions

Attendees introduced themselves.

### Presentation

Marc Johnson, Funding Officer at Northumberland CVA gave a presentation on 'An Introduction to better Bid Writing' which was well received and created some discussion. Presentation enclosed.

### Update on Northumberland VCS Assembly and Support Services activities

Ann Atkinson, Development Officer –VCS Assembly provided an update on activities

**Trustee Network** - The website is up and running and only accessible to members <http://www.northumberlandtrustees.org.uk/>. There is a large resource library on the website, 200+ factsheets, workbooks, reports on a range of topics. Membership of the network costs £50 per annum for organisations with an annual turnover of £10,000 and above and for smaller organisations with a turnover below £10,000, membership is free. As a special introductory offer, you can try the network for free until 30th September 2016.

**VCS Cabinet Advisory Meeting** - Community Chest under review, want consistency, widening knowledge and awareness. NCC promoting volunteering opportunities on staff website and on council site and looking at how they can support volunteering amongst staff.

**Morpeth Volunteer Recruitment Fair** Wednesday 14th September 2016, 10:30am - 1:00pm Morpeth Town Hall, Market Place, Morpeth, NE61 1LZ

**Better Bid Writing course** - Thursday 22nd September 9:30am to 3pm. Northumberland CVA, Free to organisations working in Northumberland

**Time To Talk Environmental Special Roadshow** East Hartford Community Centre, Northumberland Tuesday 18th October: 1.00pm – 2.30pm. The Community Foundation and Northumberland Community Voluntary Action are inviting you to a Time To Talk Special – a round table discussion which is focusing on grant making for environmental projects. The session is open to anyone working in the area of environmental grant making, policy making or project delivery and is an opportunity to come together to share thoughts, ideas, good practice and the potential for partnership work. Please reserve a place by emailing [marc.johnson@northumberlandcva.org.uk](mailto:marc.johnson@northumberlandcva.org.uk)

**European Funding** – Building Better Opportunities has been sanctioned to provide support to people furthest from the labour market involving £3.4 million from European Social Fund and the Big Lottery. It is led by NCC but involves VCS organisations in delivery including NCVA, Escape Family Support, Voices, CAB, Cygnus Support and BRIC. Staff are currently being recruited. Community Led Local Development bid submitted last week, confirmation expected Nov. £2.1 million over 3 years. Expect to go live early 2017 if successful.

**Northumberland CVA AGM** Corn Exchange, Morpeth Town Hall. Tuesday 18th October: 5.30pm – 8.00pm.

The new NCC site for accessing tendering opportunities was raised, the Due North portal. It was stated that there was a need to take care when identifying preferences and areas of interest when registering as once set up it is difficult to change. AA indicated that details about the new portal would be put in the next e-bulletin.

AA asked members to inform her of topics that they would like to have covered in the network meetings and any changes/improvements they would like to see made.

Fiona Wardlaw, CUSEN stressed the importance of these meetings for gaining knowledge and information. Her organisation had benefitted from hearing about the support planners and linking up with them and helping to keep people free from debt..

A request was made for the provision of a Directory of Community Groups in hard copy which had been provided in the past. It was stated that resources to do this were very limited.

### **Information Sharing**

Tom Roll, Golden Age Forum asked for a speaker for their next meeting as someone had dropped out. Jim Wyness, Blyth Stroke Support Group offered to assist.

Brian Oliver, Bedlington Forum stated that the Council's Area Meetings were a useful forum for raising issues but now there were fewer meetings so less opportunity to influence. Bedlington Forum can assist with planning applications and is focusing on contraventions of conservation area status e.g. shutters on pubs and Tesco redevelopment.

Ceri McGhee, Big Lottery Fund stated that there would be changes in Lottery funding over the next 12 months and suggested that attendees look at the Strategic Framework on the Big Lottery website. Whilst still funding frontline services focus would be on early action and prevention and letting beneficiaries have a voice, local people showing their strengths and assets. Attendees could sign up to Big Lottery newsletters. Ceri expressed the importance of ensuring there was no duplication in lottery applications.

In relation to the Building Better Opportunities project, Cath Hale, Cygnus Support suggested that it would be a good idea to get the new manager to talk about the project at a future meeting.

Georgie Evans explained the services provided by NDAS which was a self referring organisation and how they worked in partnership with Grace Rape Crisis and Cygnus Support. Details about the services can be seen on their website <http://www.nda.services/>

Stephen Ward, Mind Active introduced attendees to Twiddlemuffs used by people with Dementia to keep them calm and how they were encouraging knitters to make these for clients.

Maxine Gardner, Business in the Community Connector explained that she was three months into a 12 month secondment and her role in providing business support to voluntary and community groups. She asked that groups let her know if have particular needs from businesses, whether professional or practical support.

Fiona Wardlaw CUSEN explained about the Jam Jar service that assists with money management, budgeting assistance, debt advice and support in form filling and ensuring that money is safe. She explained that there had been an increase in membership of the Credit Union now that Universal Credit was in place and money could no longer be paid into the Post Office .