

COLEBRIDGE AND SUSTAIN

It is now a year since the 'merger' of Colebridge Trust and the Solihull SUSTAIN Consortium, which took place about half way through the financial year.

Whilst retaining the name Colebridge Trust Ltd, it is now a much broader organisation, formed out of the original Colebridge Trust (set up as a community development trust in 2002) and the SUSTAIN Consortium (set up as a ChangeUp Consortium in 2005). This 'merger' saw the formation of a new Board, comprising appointees from the original Trust Board and the SUSTAIN Consortium.

This new organisation combines the goals of the original two by running projects focused on community development, primarily in North Solihull, and by providing infrastructure support services to the Third Sector in the borough as the appointed umbrella organisation.

At this time, we continue to operate under the two brands because people are familiar with these and 'if it ain't broke, don't fix it'. The community in North Solihull is familiar with the Colebridge Trust name and it derives significant value from the level of trust associated with it in the area.

The Sector and our strategic partners in other sectors are familiar with the SUSTAIN brand. As the Newsletter which carries this Report is aimed primarily at stakeholders in the Sector and amongst our strategic partners it carries the SUSTAIN brand.

OUR WORK AND ITS FUNDING

Work is carried out under the Colebridge brand through the Colebridge Enterprises, i.e. Waterloo Woodwork, Waterloo Social Club, Colebridge Communications, and Skills for Jobs. The enterprises complement funding from commissioned contracts with Solihull Care Trust and the Learning



Access IT - digital inclusion programme



Solihull Together - raising the profile of Solihull's Third Sector

& Skills Council with income earned through trading activity.

Our infrastructure support and development work has been funded by Solihull Council, Capacity Builders, BIG Lottery and the Children's Workforce Development Council and includes information and advice services, volunteering and workforce development, provision of funding source information, accommodation and directory development, equality and diversity training and advice, CSR development, marketing and promotional support, network development and provision of leadership and representation for the Sector.

OUR KEY ACHIEVEMENTS

Our key achievements in the 2008-2009 financial year were:

- *Launching the Third Sector Network as an information giving/*

sharing channel for all organisations in Solihull's voluntary sector.

- *Growing the number of recipients of our regular news and events e-bulletin for Solihull's Third Sector Network to just over 700.*
- *Creating from scratch, re-forming or injecting new life into several theme based Forums as subsets of the Third Sector Network which meet regularly to discuss common issues and share good practice, including the IAG Network, Children's Voluntary Sector Forum and Volunteer Management Forum.*

- *Conceiving and launching the Solihull Together campaign to raise the profile of volunteering and the work of voluntary and community groups in the borough.*



*The most comprehensive
directory of voluntary
services to date*

*Third Sector Network - giving
voice & sharing information*

- Facilitating a best practice training program with the Volunteer Management Forum, run by WAYC as third party provider.
- Launching a program to raise quality standards in Solihull's Third Sector in partnership with Solihull Council and the Family Care Trust.
- Establishing a close partnership with the Children and Young People's Trust for joint work on workforce development and safeguarding.
- Contributing significantly to Digital Inclusion Programmes (part of the work which subsequently won Solihull Council a Beacon Award) through partnership working with ReCOM on Solihull Community Housing (SCH) and Learning & Skills Council (LSC) funded projects.
- Launching a survey of the Third Sector in Solihull which subsequently lead to the publication of the most comprehensive Directory ever for the Sector, comprising accurate details for over 400 organisations.
- Providing an online database of all meeting accommodation which is suitable for community group use.
- Establishing high levels of participation in the work of the Solihull Partnership and making a significant contribution to

its strategic development, especially the Stronger Communities portfolio.

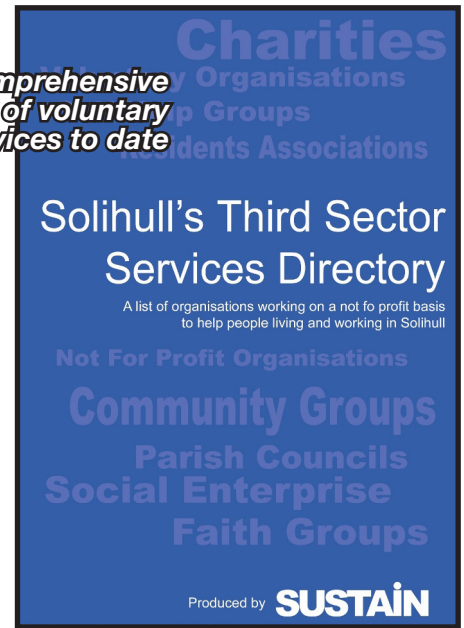
- Leading the partnership which won £5-million in funding through Stage One of the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) MyPlace programme, subject to approval of detailed plans, for a world class youth centre in North Solihull.

INTO THE FUTURE

Future sustainability is a critical issue for infrastructure support and community development organisations. A substantial decline in grant funding is widely anticipated and organisations such as ours need a diverse income strategy in order to thrive. Minister for the Third Sector, Angela Smith, recently made clear the need for infrastructure support organisations to become more enterprising when she said more volunteering centres should buy buildings, rent out rooms to other groups and place a greater emphasis on winning contracts.

Colebridge Trust Ltd. already recognises this need and we will continue to operate with income derived from a healthy mix of:

- Income through grant funding;
- Income from commissioned contracts;
- Income from social enterprise activity.



We are aware that our presence in the commissioned contract market causes nervousness in some quarters. However, we also recognise the importance of integrity in the marketplace and particularly of:

- Being open and transparent with the Sector in seeking commissioned contract work;
- Seeking to work in partnership with other organisations to mutual benefit rather than acting in competition with them;
- Not withholding information that should be shared.

Our goal is a strong and vibrant Third Sector in Solihull, populated with successful and growing organisations, including a thriving and high achieving SUSTAIN/Colebridge, all delivering sound outcomes for the citizens of our borough.

We believe that working together is a key component of succeeding with this goal, which is why 'partnership working' is a recurring theme in this report. Partnership working within the Sector and between the Sectors, as by bringing together complementary knowledge and skills we will achieve more.

The Colebridge Trust Ltd.

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