



Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens in bloom (home of one of last year's Volunteers' Week events)

RESPONDING TO THE CHALLENGE

by Dave Pinwell, Chief Executive Officer — SUSTAIN

It is election year and, by the time you read this, we will probably know which party has won. As I write, all of the parties are pitching for our votes. In the past six months I have been to meetings addressed by Nick Hurd for the Conservatives, Ian Austin for Labour and Jenny Willott for the Liberal Democrats. Each party has stressed the importance of the Third Sector to their plans, but each has made it clear that there are tough times ahead.

To continue making a difference in people's lives throughout the term of the new Government we are going to need to respond to the challenge. For larger charities this is likely to mean changing the way we think, working in partnership and responding to commissioning opportunities. For smaller voluntary organisations it may mean being more innovative with fundraising and selling ourselves more effectively.

SUSTAIN is committed to doing our part, helping our sector to respond to

the changing times and helping as many organisations as we can. Inside you will read about how last year's Solihull Together programme has helped some of our groups. And this year we hope we can do even more.

For instance, the Solihull Together Walk was a good example of a fresh approach and working together, which tackled head-on the need for an increased fundraising effort in today's tough economic climate. It was a big event that demanded a lot of logistics but the benefits were shared by a significant number of groups. Why not make this year's walk a fundraiser for your organisation? We do the planning, you raise the cash!

After all, there is only one way to deal with a challenge — to rise to it!

SOLIHULL TOGETHER



"The challenge is on: we have to help even more groups this year!"

SOCIAL NETWORKING



Social networks are just like the recommendations we share with friends

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT



"Finding someone to invest time and effort in our group is extremely refreshing"

CSR



Why helping the community is also good for business

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RESILIENCE AWARD LIFTS LOCAL GROUPS

Over £4000 of resilience funding has been distributed to Solihull groups most in need of a cash boost. Twelve successful organisations have received small grants of £100–£500 to help carry them over a difficult 12–18 months.

Judged by an independent panel, the Solihull Together grants directed much-needed funds towards voluntary and community organisations struggling to cope financially with the effects of the recession. All money was raised in the borough by local residents and businesses as part of the 2009 Solihull Together campaign.

The judging panel was made-up of Councillor Debbie Evans, Pat Cropper from

Solihull Sports Council, Ramada Solihull Operations Manager Anita Tarry and the Knowle Society's Peter Johnson, bringing together a mix of experiences from different areas of expertise and from across the borough.

Peter Johnson said: "It's great to see money raised and spent locally to help groups in need. I also think that for many groups it is encouraging to know that, as well as the real effort they are putting in themselves to fundraising, there are others out there willing to help."

One successful group was Young at Heart, a social club for the over 60s in and around Kingshurst that runs sequence dancing sessions and trips when funds

allow. Coordinator Ann Sheriff said: "the money will pay for a coach so we can go for a Christmas meal and dance and hopefully a day out in Weston-super-Mare in August too. Receiving a grant keeps activities affordable for our members, as most of them are pensioners and we can't ask them for any more than £10 per trip."

Ann continues: "Our members love to get away. Most live on their own and if it wasn't for the club they wouldn't go anywhere."

A big thank you to Solihull Community Foundation for helping us administer the Solihull Together funds.

I am a person who loves to see money go to good and worthwhile projects. The choices we made were not easy but the projects which needed the money most received it. I would love to be involved again.

Councillor Debbie Evans

I found the judging process really interesting. Ramada has made the decision to back local charities and this was a good opportunity for us to reach a bigger number through SUSTAiN. Hopefully the grants will enable the charities to continue and benefit Solihull in all aspects!.

Anita Tarry, Ramada Solihull

AWARDS GIVE IMPETUS TO CARING CLUB

by Jane Moss, Secretary — Moving On Club



Moving On Club member Peggy Jones makes a new friend on a visit to Slimbridge Bird Sanctuary

Solihull's Moving On Club is one of the small community groups to benefit with a grant from the Solihull Together Resilience Fund. The Club has been going for seven years: its original grant came in 2003 from the After Dementia Millennium Fund when it was set up to provide social interaction and companionship to people who had previously cared for someone with dementia. In recent years it has had funding from Awards for All, Comic Relief, Grassroots and local donors such as the Birmingham Airport Community Trust, but its major grants ceased in 2009.

The recession was not the only factor in drying up the funding, as much now goes to youth work and sports-related projects. But thankfully, the Resilience Fund grant

will now pay for the rent of a room at the Oliver Bird Hall where we hold our coffee mornings and plan our monthly outings. Our success was recognised by the receipt of a Queen's Award for Voluntary Service last year — the first in Solihull — presented by Her Majesty's representatives in the Council Chamber in the presence of the Mayor, Councillor Norman Davies. The crystal award, with its citation, is now on display in the foyer of the Civic Suite

The Moving On Club is open to new members living in Solihull who previously cared for people with dementia (now in residential care or who have passed away).

Find out more from the secretary on **01564 777461**

THE CHALLENGE IS ON

A Q&A WITH CLAIRE MILICAN, SECTOR DEVELOPMENT MANAGER AT SUSTAIN

Solihull Together was a real success in its first year, how are you planning to take it even further in 2010?

"Having had such a successful campaign last year, we really want to build on the brand that we've established as Solihull Together. We raised in the region of £10,000 through different activities last summer, including the sponsored walk and business team challenges. This year we want to do more, making these events bigger and even better."

So what are your plans for this year?

"There will be another Solihull Together Walk in September where voluntary and community groups can field walkers to raise money for their own organisations, as well as having

the option to walk for the Solihull Together fund. We will also be continuing to work with local businesses, encouraging them to organise their own fundraisers. But the big news this year is the addition of the Ramada Solihull Together Ball."

Tell us a bit about the ball

"The ball is being held at the Ramada Hotel in Solihull on Friday 16th July. Ramada has very kindly agreed to sponsor the event, as part of its continued support to Solihull's voluntary groups, having sponsored the walk last year. We're inviting everyone to the ball — businesses, individuals and the Third Sector. Once again, voluntary organisations can raise their own funds by having a table, or people can choose to fundraise for the Solihull Together fund."

Who will be able to apply to the Solihull Together fund this year?

"This year we are opening out the fund so that any local group supporting the community in Solihull will be able to apply for a small grant. We hope this way we will be able to offer much-needed support to even more groups."

And how much are you expecting to raise?

"I want to raise at least double last year's total!"

To keep up to date with Solihull Together 2010, visit solihull-sustain.org.uk/solihull-together, find Solihull Together on Facebook or call Claire Milican on **0121 711 3148**.

WALK ESTABLISHED AS MAJOR FUNDRAISER

The Solihull Together Walk was a big part of SUSTAIN's fundraising effort in 2009, contributing to the resilience fund as well as giving groups an opportunity to raise their own funds.

Set-up in 1968 by a group of parents with disabled children, Solihull Children's Special Needs Association meets a gap in the provision of pre-school age childcare for a broad scope of disabilities, including Downs Syndrome, cerebral palsy, autism and other learning disabilities.

Three mornings a week, we run a playgroup that includes a cooked meal every day, for the very modest fee of £5 per session. The playgroup gives the children an opportunity for interaction with others their age, as well as providing some essential respite for the mums.

We were lucky enough to raise enough money for our own purpose-built premises some years ago, so that we now only have to cover running costs. However, this still amounts to around £25,000 per year, for which we rely on regular fundraising events and relationships with local firms.



Steve Rowe with fellow walker Sarah Williams from the Crowne Plaza

One such fruitful relationship has been with Crowne Plaza. Having met Natalie Zapater at a conference I was running at the hotel and, after explaining what our charity does, she put us forward to the hotel's employee council which votes to support two charities each year. Natalie was instrumental in encouraging her colleagues to take part in the Solihull Together sponsored walk, which raised over £1100 for us.

The walk was absolutely glorious along the canal. I had never done that before even though I've lived in the borough for 20 years! Everyone enjoyed the walk and I'm really looking forward to taking part again this year.

Steve Rowe, Chairman — Solihull Children's Special Needs Association, Tel: 07903121916

THE SOCIAL BUTTERFLY EFFECT

HOW SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE JUST LIKE THE RECOMMENDATIONS WE SHARE WITH FRIENDS.

by Jayne Scarman, SUSTAIN's PR & Marketing Manager

I met a close friend of mine when I was learning ballroom dancing a few years ago. We struck a chord and then one day she said: "why don't you give salsa dancing a try, I think you'd like it". So after a bit of persuasion, along I went to a lesson with her and quickly got hooked. Sometime later, another friend who knew I danced salsa said: "you know, I'd love to give that a try". Dutifully, I introduced her to a class and soon she couldn't get enough either.

You may be wondering what this has to do with social networks, but the anecdote I've described is exactly how websites such as Facebook or Twitter work.

Most social networks are made up of pages belonging to an individual where they can express information about themselves. This could be activities they are involved in, subjects they are interested in or simply how they are feeling at the

moment. Individuals can connect their pages to those of their friends, as well as to pages belonging to organisations or causes they relate to. This creates a virtual network that, on the whole, mirrors someone's connections in the outside world.

The benefit this has is that those you are connected with can see the information you relay (there are privacy controls if you need them). Then if this is something that tickles their fancy, they can join in too.

For voluntary organisations this has enormous potential. Setting-up a profile for your group or charity is quick and easy. Next, you encourage your existing members, volunteers etc. to join your page. Then, as long as you are active with your page, sharing new information, or photos and videos, it automatically shows up to the people they know, encouraging more people to take a look at what you do and



Facebook is the second most visited site in the UK (behind Google) and accounts for 50% of all visits to social networks.
Experian Hitwise

perhaps join themselves.

It takes some investment in time, but using this method can really help awareness of your group to snowball. For instance, we plan to help spread the word about Solihull Together this year using Facebook.

Just think about all the people you know who you have introduced to something new. It works doesn't it?

Jayne Scarman can advise on any aspect of promotion and marketing, completely free of charge. Tel: **0121 711 3148**
Mobile: **07799 415095** Email: **jaynes@solihull-sustain.org.uk**

NO LONGER SKATING ON THIN ICE

Jean Iveson from Mohawks Ice Racing Club explains how receiving some specialist marketing advice has helped the club push forward.

The Mohawks Ice Racing Club has benefited greatly from SUSTAIN over recent years. We were worried last year about the falling membership and increasing costs to keep the club skating. At one of the seminars run by SUSTAIN we attended, we were introduced to Jayne who offered her assistance to help us move forward with marketing and promotion.

Jayne joined us at one of the training sessions at Solihull Ice Rink and discussed what efforts we had made so far. She made suggestions regarding leaflets, displays, websites, media publicity and much more. This was followed up by phone calls and a written report. Since the meeting we have received ongoing support and encouragement.

The difference made by accepting



specialist help has resulted in a new website and some very good suggestions for promotion which we have designated members leading on. The club successfully applied for small grant funding through SUSTAIN to cover promotional costs. Without the personal help received from Jayne, the future of the club would not be

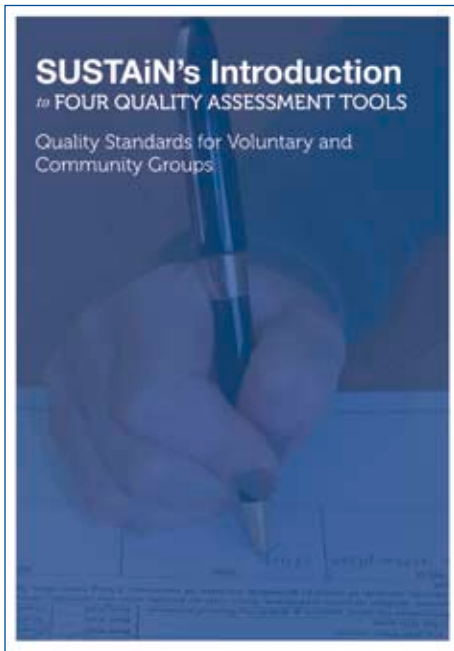
so positive. We look forward to welcoming new skaters wishing to try this friendly and rewarding sporting activity.

Contact Jean or Paul Iveson.
Tel: **0121 706 4851**
Email: **mohawksirc@blueyonder.co.uk**
Web: **www.mohawksirc.org.uk**

WHAT IS QUALITY ASSURANCE?

INCREASINGLY EXPECTED BY FUNDERS AND NOT AS COMPLICATED AS IT SOUNDS

by Sarah Lawrence, Project Coordinator at SUSTAIN



- 01 Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO)
- 02 Quality First (Birmingham Voluntary Services Council System)
- 03 Solihull's Voluntary Improvement Programme (VIP) and
- 04 SUSTAIN's Introduction to Quality Assurance (SIQA).

SUSTAIN can assist you in implementing any one of these into your organisation. With a training session comes a free half day of mentoring so please express your interest early to avoid disappointment.

Quality is a very important part of what we do and we all want to do the very best we can. In order to demonstrate this, we need to put some ground work in via one of the above methods. It needn't be onerous and you can progress things at your own pace.

Once you have started the process and see the impact it makes you will be keen to keep going I assure you.

Please contact Sarah Lawrence for further details on which QA system is right for you. Tel: **0121 770 8222** Mobile: **07920 525067** Email: **sarahl@solihull-sustain.org.uk**

Enable-Solihull have used PQASSO for a while, but I was not familiar with it myself and found it confusing, so I was keen to attend the training course provided by SUSTAIN and the Family Care Trust. Trainer Richard Parry, gave clear and concise guidance on the PQASSO system and explained how to set goals, get support from your colleagues and integrate it into your organisational planning. The training made it much clearer to me and showed that implementing PQASSO doesn't have to be a burden.

Kay Donaghy, Personalisation Project Manager — Enable Solihull

Quality Assurance (QA) is not the most exciting topic but nevertheless plays a very important part in the efficiency and effectiveness of your organisation.

QA in complex terms is the process of verifying or determining whether products or services meet or exceed customer expectations; a systematic way of checking whether the service developed is meeting specified requirements. In plain English it is a means of monitoring what you already do and making it even better. After all, we should all be striving to maintain best practice.

There are many benefits of operating a QA system and it is important to remember that these can be achieved by making even the slightest of changes. For example:

- + Better communication internally and externally
- + Problems are highlighted and resolved effectively and efficiently
- + Increase in confidence because errors are reduced
- + Boost in staff/volunteer morale
- + Enhanced reputation

There is a choice of four QA systems, that differ in their complexity:

TOTALLY SMART

Totally Smart is a self-support group for people suffering from addiction. As one member explains: "people who come to our sessions are able to meet with others who have the same problems, which is comforting. Members are able to give feedback on how to deal with things and share what did and didn't work for them, which helps others cope with similar issues." It runs two successful groups at Aquarius in Solihull, thanks to support from manager Carla Lyndon.

The relationship with Aquarius has been a fruitful one, with the proximity to the alcohol charity's counsellors leading to them often referring clients into the groups. However, Totally Smart has proved so successful that there was a call for a third group to be established. In particular, there was a need for one in Chelmsley Wood, as many members were having to travel to attend meetings.

SUSTAIN's Manjit Johal stepped in to help Totally Smart find a new venue in North Solihull and find sources of funding to cover the cost of room hire. Thankfully though, Ashram offered a space at Bosworth Community Centre free of charge.

"Manjit was really willing to help us, investing a lot of effort and time, which is extremely refreshing," said one of the group's coordinators.

Totally Smart meets every Monday, 2–3pm at Ashram and on Tuesdays from 2pm–3pm and 7pm–8.30pm at Aquarius Solihull. Contact 0121 711 3732

KEEPING A NATIONAL CHAIN LOCAL

ON WHY HELPING THE COMMUNITY IS ALSO GOOD FOR BUSINESS.

by Andrew Cole, General Manager at Ramada Solihull

It would be easy to think of the Ramada hotel in Solihull as a corporate entity with little or no involvement in the local community, being as it is a large operation and part of a national chain of over forty hotels. But I am keen for the hotel to take a proactive role in the local community, developing a corporate and social responsibility (CSR) agenda to match this ethos.

The use of a good CSR policy is a positive benefit for the hotel and the community. Many forget that staff in a hotel may not live directly in the area or may be migrants from foreign countries, so to promote local interaction helps to cement their involvement in the area whilst also building understanding from the local community. This can be as simple, for example, as the homemade cake sale we hold on the last Friday of every month where staff, customers and the public can pop in and buy cakes made by our staff. You haven't experienced life until you've tried Annette's Jamaican rum cake or Rita's Hungarian cherry cakes and it would be remiss of me not to mention my wife's cookies!

It can be tricky to decide where to focus



your efforts when deciding who to support, especially when most businesses are bombarded on a daily basis with requests for help from both national and local good causes. But SUSTAIN have been instrumental in helping us to channel our efforts. After consulting staff and setting up a charity committee it was very much felt that we wanted to ensure our fundraising efforts went towards local voluntary

organisations and not the large semi-commercial charities.

This has been demonstrated in some of the activities we have organised and taken part in. For instance, we have supported the Solihull Round Table fireworks and every Wednesday we run a quiz night with proceeds going into our charity collection boxes. We also make sure we get involved in community events such as the Solihull Together Walk and charity bowling night (see the team photo above!)

We also plan the occasional 'big gesture' and for 2010 we are giving an entire event to Solihull Together. The hotel is donating the food, staff and venue for the Solihull Together Ball and 130 people can enjoy a fantastic evening with magical entertainment from Ben Hanlin with an intention to raise at least £5,000 for the Solihull Together fund. Looking at this pragmatically some would say why not just give £5,000 to the charity but that would be missing the point. A good CSR policy should lay hand in hand with the needs of the business and doing it this way gives exposure to the business and makes us all feel good whilst everyone has fun — everybody wins. Which brings me to my final point, have you bought your ticket yet?

GETTING THE NUMBERS RIGHT

BY REV'D JEREMY FATHERS OF ST. ANDREWS CHURCH

It's been so good, since filling in the questionnaire that went round all Third Sector organisations a few months ago, to know that we are firmly on SUSTAIN's radar.

Our previous treasurer was brilliant – too good in fact because he found that the private sector demands on his time had become so great that he was unable to offer as much time as he'd wanted to our organisation. To make matters worse, our Finance Administrator of 18 years announced her intention to retire.

Despite all this, I was able to get in touch with Martin Clarke at SUSTAIN and let him know that we'd soon be without a Finance Administrator and Treasurer. Sure enough, within a few short weeks, Martin had buttonholed another potential Treasurer who will be helping us to manage our accounts. From being on my own, I now have a full finance team: a finance assistant to do the day-to-day work, an accountancy service to transfer the required information onto SAGE to facilitate end of year and examination procedures and a Treasurer to help us identify our priorities and then work out ways of funding them. SUSTAIN, once again – many thanks!

SUPPORTING SANDS WITH FITTING MEMORIAL

MEMORIAL GARDEN TO BECOME A FOCAL POINT FOR BEREAVED FAMILIES

by Ralph Brown of Solihull Sands



It is a sad fact that 17 babies each day in this country are stillborn or die shortly after their birth, often with devastating and long-lasting effects on the parents, families and the friends of those bereaved. Solihull Sands, the local group of the national Sands (stillbirth and neonatal death charity) network has responded to a request to provide a local focal point in the form of a memorial garden in the north of Solihull where bereaved families can visit to remember their babies.

Working with Solihull Cemeteries Department and SUSTAiN, the garden is now after many months reaching its final stages. Work on the project at Woodlands Cemetery started mid-2009 after the site that has been used for several years for the purpose of scattering babies' ashes was allocated. When completed, the garden will be a quiet area for remembrance and reflection. Open to all, the garden will benefit families of anyone who has suffered the loss of their baby, whether recently or in past years.

The garden has been designed by Matt Nichol of Broadview Garden Design, who provided the consultancy free of charge in the early stages of the project. The level of support has been exceptional and the final

stage now in progress has been afforded by SUSTAiN's Martin Clarke having identified a group of willing volunteers from a local arm of MWH (an international company), who are ready to give up their lunch breaks for several weeks to help out.

Finance for the project has been by generous donations from Birmingham International Airport Community Trust Fund, Balsall Common Lions, Sutton Coldfield Benevolent Bowling Association and a variety of private fundraising activities. These have ranged from a talk by Mick Brown (Angling author and TV personality) which was attended by over 100 people keen to hear of his exploits, to runners in the Great North Run, raffles and private donations.

Within the newly landscaped area there will be sympathetic planting and benches. An inscribed Memorial Stone has been commissioned from Bannocks Monumental Masons, using polished Antigua granite. It is hoped that all visitors to the cemetery will take advantage of the garden's tranquillity. Once completed, a dedication ceremony is planned for later in the year.

This project is an excellent example of the local community working together to

achieve a long lasting and worthwhile outcome that will provide ongoing comfort to local families.

Sands Charity is a national organisation dedicated to supporting anyone affected by the death of a baby and promoting research to reduce the loss of babies' lives. See uk-sands.org for full details.

Martin Clarke matches local businesses with voluntary organisations in need of support. Tel: **0121 711 3148** Mobile: **07798935212** Email: csr@solihull-sustain.org.uk

The £3,000 granted to the Sands project represents a small proportion of the £1 million the Birmingham International Airport Community Trust Fund has awarded since it began operating in 1998. The fund's trustees were delighted to be able to make an award to such a worthwhile project. This is just the sort of initiative that the Trust Fund was established to support — small scale and community led — where a relatively modest sum can make a real difference in the local area.

Andy Holding,
Birmingham International Airport

Why is community work important to us? We feel strongly that as a business we have a responsibility to put back into the community. We choose to do this by giving time and applying our landscape design skills to a specific landscape project an organisation may need advice with. Despite being in a recession, we clearly see the benefit of doing this type of work. The key to a successful relationship is the concept of win/win and we feel that the increased profile and its long term benefits make our contribution worthwhile.

Matt Nichol, Broadview Garden Design

SUSTAiN's Community Development Officers, Manjit Johal and Sara Hands, are available to support all voluntary and community groups with any aspect of their operations or development. Manjit and Sara offer advice, information and guidance, completely free of charge, and can help organisations of any size, in all parts of the borough, and at any stage of their development.

BRINGING SOLIHULL STROKE CLUB INTO 2010



Solihull Stroke Club members Leighton Willis and Simon Trickleback enjoy their Christmas party

this role requires some commitment, finding the right person has been difficult, but Manjit is still on the case.

Current coordinator, Liz Milne says of Manjit's assistance:

"I'm thrilled, because I've never had any real support before. Manjit has really put herself about to help us. She's encouraged me to write a job description and for us to look at policies and some of our operations such as CRB checks.

Although we were probably up against this at first because it was a lot of work, she's really helped us to see sense and made me look at things differently, and I'm pleased about that. I think she's helped to bring the Stroke Club into 2010."

Solihull Stroke Club meets every Wednesday from 10am to 2pm at Hobs Moat United Reformed Church Hall.

Contact Liz Milne on **0121 706 6439**

For the past few months, Manjit has been offering her support to Solihull Stroke Club, helping with policy templates and advice on new ways of running the organisation. An ongoing challenge has been to find a new coordinator willing to organise the club's weekly activities. As

SPOTLIGHT ON MANJIT

"I volunteer for two small groups of my own so I know from my own experience the amount of work there is in running a small community group. I understand that there are lots of different things that need to be done in order to function. So, in my role as Community Development Officer, I hope I can bring in that perspective and give groups a helping hand along the way.

What I enjoy most about my job is meeting people and learning about different groups. There is so much good work that goes on in the community. The contribution of voluntary groups really is huge and people put in so much time and effort. I love seeing people's energy and how excited they get about their project; and if I can help then that's great.



Manjit Johal, Community Development Officer, SUSTAiN
T: 0121 711 3148 M: 07795 561943 E: manjitj@solihull-sustain.org.uk

AT WORK IN THE COMMUNITY

Below are just some of the groups Manjit and Sara have supported over the last six months.

Kingshurst

Residents Association

Sara provided information to Councillor Debbie Evans on how to go about setting-up a residents association in the Kingshurst area. She also helped with putting together a draft constitution.

Family Care Trust

The Family Care Trust were looking for potential funding streams and volunteers for a possible new project. Sara supported the Trust by doing a funding search and signposting to SUSTAiN's volunteer database.

Women's Mental Health Group

Manjit helped with setting-up this new group at Ashram, including giving advice on governance, running a committee and formalising a constitution.

ReCOM

ReCOM were looking for translation sources in order to provide training material for an Arabic-speaking client, which Manjit signposted to.

Groovy Grans

Sara has been liaising with local venues to help Groovy Grans find a new place to meet, as well as looking for new sources of funding.

HELP WITH FINDING AN ACCESSIBLE SPACE

by Joan Wilson, Vice Chair — Visually Impaired People's Support Group



Members of the Visually Impaired People's Support Group enjoy a meal out at the Black Boy in Knowle

The Visually Impaired People's Support Group has been meeting for more years than I care to remember. We're a self-help group, giving people with visual impairments the opportunity to talk about any problems they are facing. We have an exciting programme of events; recent speakers have included the police, Ring & Ride and RNIB and we

organise trips to help combat the isolation some of our members feel. We try to go to local places, such as Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens where we have afternoon tea and a walk around the grounds.

The group got in touch with Manjit from SUSTAiN when we lost the use of a free room in Chelmsley Wood library. Unfortunately, the newly-built library is

not as accessible for visually impaired people as the previous one — something we are trying to work with Solihull MBC to improve. Manjit came along and listened to us and it was good to be able to raise awareness of some of the issues our members face.

Manjit found a couple of possible venues for us, and our members voted for the Fordbridge Centre as our new meeting place. The centre has a big advantage in that it is entirely flat and Ring & Ride can drop our members at the door. We also hope to be able to use the garden for activities in the summer. We're excited about this new home as it will mean our members will now be able to join us much more easily.

The Visually Impaired People's Support Group meets on the last Thursday of the month, 1.30–3.30pm at Fordbridge Centre. For more information contact Joan Wilson on **0121 779 4598**.

SPOTLIGHT ON SARA

Sara Hands has been supporting the community in north Solihull for a number of years and has built up some strong links with groups in the area.

"I enjoy the feeling of having helped someone," says Sara. "When I meet with groups, I tend to say: 'if I had a magic wand, what do you want?'; which helps them to focus on what they need and where I can help them. The most frequent request is for funding and an office base, but it really depends on the group as to where I can help them. I'm happy to go out to visit any group in the north who would like a bit of free support."



Sara Hands, Community Development Officer, SUSTAiN
T: 0121 770 8222 E: sarah@solihull-sustain.org.uk

SARA AND MANJIT CAN HELP WITH:

- + Finding volunteers & trustees
- + Policy templates
- + Running effective meetings
- + Volunteer management
- + Finding sources of funding
- + Constitutions
- + Evaluation & monitoring
- + Volunteer schemes

SEEDS OF HOPE

Through my position at Seeds of Hope, I first met Sara from Colebridge Trust some seven years ago. Over the years our paths have crossed on numerous occasions. With her new role at SUSTAiN we have seen and spoken on a more regular basis. Sara has offered help with information on grants, funding, contacts and applications, not only to Seeds of Hope but as an umbrella organisation she has also given help and advice to many of the groups under Seeds of Hope. Whatever you ask Sara she is always there with a positive answer. What a ray of sunshine is Sara, always pleasant, helpful, supportive and a credit to SUSTAiN.

Jean Johnson, Project Worker
Seeds of Hope

Solihull's Third Sector Network continues to provide a vehicle for local voluntary organisations to come together to explore topics of relevance to their line of work. Above and beyond the formal workshop element of the network, the opportunity to learn from peers often helps to provide valuable new insights.

ENSURING SAFEGUARDING IS A PRIORITY FOR ALL

HOW NETWORKS ARE COVERING ISSUES AT THE HEART OF VOLUNTARY ACTIVITY

by Claire Millican, Sector Development Manager, SUSTAIN

It had become obvious to me from discussions at meetings with the LSCB (Local Safeguarding Children Board), Sports Council and SCVYS (Solihull Council for Voluntary Youth Services) that there was a need to support voluntary organisations by providing them with information and best practice on child safeguarding. So it was great when Rob Wyatt from SCVYS agreed to support with some partnership network events around this subject.

The events brought together a mix of voluntary groups who all wanted to know more about safeguarding best practices and ensure they are on the right track with their own policies. The highly interactive sessions, provided an opportunity to talk, share ideas and learn some best practices both from each other and through a range of practical exercises. They also introduced the Safe Network — a national on-line network specifically set up by Children England and the NSPCC to support the third sector to do everything it can to make sure the



children and young people it works with are kept safe.

After the success of these events we are planning to do more. As with all networks they provide an opportunity for groups to learn new skills and share ideas and concerns, and those who have attended have realised the need to take advantage of free safeguarding training run by the LSCB.

The event was excellent. It was great and really interactive.

Louise Edgell, PHAB

It was very informative and I learned a great deal."

Heather Clarke, PHAB

FUNDING FOR A SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

November's Third Sector Network events concentrated on funding for a sustainable future. Commissioning officers from Solihull MBC and Solihull Care Trust presented their perspectives on how the Third Sector can get involved in both delivering public services and in shaping their design. This provided a useful opportunity to meet and get to know local commissioners, as well as offering a glimpse into their way of working.

Alongside this, a presentation on diversifying income streams covered some of the key tasks involved in making sure you

have the best possible chance of securing the funds you apply for. It also shared some helpful tips on maximising the time available for the often lengthy process of searching for funding and completing application forms.

Elsewhere, SUSTAIN's PR & Marketing Manager, Jayne Scarman, delivered a highly practical workshop on the basics of marketing in order to "help your organisation become the provider of choice". Encouraged to focus on the fundamentals of their organisation, participants learnt to apply marketing theory to help make them

invaluable to their client base as well as clear, confident and professional when it came to promoting what they do.

These were a successful set of network events, with many smaller groups attending for the first time.



Coming up in the summer:

Network sessions on marketing and equality & diversity. Keep an eye on our website and alerts

NETWORK EVENTS A ROUTE IN FOR PÉTANQUE

by Barry Cox, Chairman of Solihull Pétanque Club

Unknown to many people in the borough, the French sport of Pétanque (also known as Boules) has been played here for more than 25 years. The Solihull club plays at the Blossomfield Club in Widney Manor and has an active membership of around 25.

We first approached SUSTAIN to try to seek possible grant funding to enable us to install permanent lighting at our terrain to enable us to play in the evening all year around. We were also interested in promoting our sport to a wider audience to try to increase our numbers. Although nothing new came out on the funding front, Jayne Scarman was keen to help to raise our profile and include us in future prints of the third sector services directory. Jayne also suggested we promote



Solihull Pétanque Club enjoy this game of concentration and skill, whatever the weather

ourselves on Facebook and invested time in showing how that could happen. We hope to work on new initiatives as the spring proceeds.

We do see that the way forward is to increase our membership, increasing our competitiveness and making the Club more sustainable. Who knows, we may even then attract some more funding.

Solihull Pétanque Club currently plays on Tuesday afternoon (Tuesday evening from 20th April), Thursday afternoon, and Sunday morning.

Contact Barry Cox, Chairman on **01564 730 151** or **barryjcox@blueyonder.co.uk**. The club is affiliated to the English Pétanque Association. **www.englishpetanque.org.uk**

SOLIHULL NETWORKS ROUND-UP

CHILDREN'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR NETWORK

For organisations providing services to children and young people .

Meets: Every 2 months
 Contact: Charles Rapson
 Tel: 0121 770 8222
 Email: charlesr@colebridge.org

ENABLE-SOLIHULL

For organisations concerned with any type of disability.

Meets: Monthly
 Contact: Martin Wright
 Tel: 0121 788 1544
 Email: info@enable-solihull.org.uk

LINK (LOCAL INVOLVEMENT NETWORK)

For anyone who wants to have a say in local health and social care.

Contact: Solihull LINK
 Tel: 01225 701120

NOT FOR PROFIT GROUP

For organisations involved in health and social care.

Meets: Monthly
 Contact: Karen Powell
 Tel: 0121 770 8222

SCVYS

For voluntary youth organisations.

Meets: Quarterly
 Contact: Rob Wyatt
 Tel: 0121 704 6059
 Email: info@scvys.org.uk

SOLIHULL VOLUNTEER MANAGEMENT FORUM

For anyone involved in managing volunteers

Meets: Quarterly
 Contact: Manjit Johal
 Tel: 0121 711 3148
 Email: manjitj@solihull-sustain.org.uk

SOLIHULL THIRD SECTOR NETWORK

For any third sector organisation serving the people of Solihull.

Meets: 3-4 times a year
 Contact: Claire Milican
 Tel: 0121 711 3148
 Email: clairem@solihull-sustain.org.uk

SPORTS COUNCIL NETWORK

For voluntary sports organisations.

Meets: Via email every 2 months
 Contact: Claire Milican
 Tel: 0121 711 3148
 Email: clairem@solihull-sustain.org.uk

TRUSTEE NETWORK

For trustees of charities serving Solihull communities.

Meets: Via email every 2 months
 Contact: Claire Milican
 Tel: 0121 711 3148
 Email: clairem@solihull-sustain.org.uk

A TASTE OF AN INCLUSIVE COMMUNITY

EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY WILL BE KEY THEMES FOR SUSTAIN'S NEXT SET OF NETWORK EVENTS.

by Gulbag Singh, Community Cohesion Manager, SUSTAIN



As part of the Solihull Third Sector Network I will be running advice, information and guidance sessions on equality and diversity best practice. These will include useful pointers on where to find contacts within the community who can help your organisation raise its profile amongst marginalised groups. The sessions will also offer an insight into the kind of practices that need to be put in place to meet equality standards within your

organisation's field of work as well as how combating inequalities will benefit your organisation on a long-term basis.

In addition to these taster sessions, I am looking to work with more groups around action planning — as this is the way forward to incorporate equality and diversity into day-to-day work without having to take time out to deal with it as a separate issue. I am able to offer entirely free support with:

- + the planning process — to understand how your organisation can take tangible steps to making sure it reflects the community it serves through recruitment and reaches out to community groups that are not currently accessing services;
- + producing a working document — that will outline key targets for an organisation to raise its profile amongst marginalised groups.

Through better engagement with marginalised groups, voluntary organisations have an opportunity to break down barriers and dispel misconceptions that they are 'not for me' when it comes to particular sections of the community.

Gulbag Singh provides free advice, information and guidance on all issues relating to community cohesion.
Tel: **0121 711 3148** Mobile: **07500 081 217** Email: **gulbags@solihull-sustain.org.uk**

CREATING A DIVERSE MEMBERSHIP

BY JOANNE PRESTON, WARWICKSHIRE WILDLIFE TRUST

To date, Gul has been delivering diversity training to staff at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. This is taking place over a number of sessions as we want all staff to attend (some 70 employees, both part and full time). We decided to undertake diversity training because, as a membership organisation, the current profile of our membership does not reflect the demographic of the areas in which we work. Our community team works with diverse audiences and we felt that this needed to be addressed across the business as a whole.

In addition to the training and awareness sessions to staff which Gul is delivering, he has also recently agreed to come in and meet with me. I am currently looking at putting together our communication strategy and feel his input would be beneficial in helping to make sure that any barriers to access, whether they are perceived or real, have solutions identified.

With this support from Gul, our organisation will be able to fully serve the local community as opposed to just sections of it and it will help us take our message to a wider client base.

Warwickshire Wildlife Trust cares for over 55 nature reserves — woods, meadows and wetlands — protecting our local natural heritage and encouraging people to get involved. See www.warwickshirewildlifetrust.org.uk

A workshop focusing on Religion and BME Communities was delivered by Gulbag to provide us with a better understanding of religions and culture. It also enabled people to ask questions that they may not have had a chance to ask before.

Clients and staff were all enthusiastic and participated in some thought provoking discussions about the impact of different religions and cultures. We thought about how this affects people in real life as individuals and as support workers. This is part of an ongoing programme being delivered in conjunction with SUSTAIN that will include visits to local places of worship. Staff and clients agreed that the training was interesting and provided a good understanding that can be built upon in the future."

Paul Richards,
Service Manager — Stonham

A SKILLS POOL FOR VOLUNTEER MANAGERS

HELPING MEMBERS TO CONTINUOUSLY IMPROVE HOW THEY DEAL WITH VOLUNTEERS.

by Amanda Henshaw, Solihull Volunteer Management Forum

Solihull Volunteer Management Forum (SVMF) was set up several years ago to provide a platform for people who look after volunteers, either as part of their paid roles or in a voluntary capacity, to come together and share experiences and ideas. It's a place to meet other people doing similar roles, to bounce ideas off each other and find out what other people are doing so we don't have to re-invent the wheel every time there is something new to contend with.

Recently at the forum, we've started planning activities to celebrate Volunteers' Week in Solihull, discussed the new Independent Safeguarding Authority regulations and how they will affect our volunteers, and had a look at the new Equality Bill.

We meet quarterly and have a guest speaker or forum member to present and open discussions about 'hot' topics for people managing volunteers. In April we looked at funding, always a hot topic for

i In February, 75 people registered an interest in volunteering and 53 were referred on to a voluntary position.

any voluntary or community group, and then in June we hope to have somebody from WAYC (Warwickshire Association of Youth Clubs) to help us to look at recruiting young people into volunteering.

Personally I find it a good way to meet new people, build new relationships with other organisations and have the

Sharing ideas means we don't have to reinvent the wheel every time there is something new to contend with.

opportunity to say "I'm planning on doing this at Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, what do you think?" Being able to throw questions or queries out to a wider audience and get reassurance that people are thinking along the same lines is really useful. There are a lot of skilled people within the forum who have valuable experiences and resources and the forum aims to give us the opportunity to share those things and help reduce each other's workloads.

For more information, go to solihull-sustain.org.uk/networks

SMALL THINGS MATTER

Celebrating the small things' is the theme for this year's National Volunteers' Week and is firmly at the heart of plans for activities in Solihull.

"The Solihull Volunteer Management Forum, which organises what happens in the borough for Volunteers' Week is keen to celebrate and recognise all the little things people do for each other, which they may not even realise is 'volunteering,'" says forum member Terrie Knibb.

To capture this, a blog called 'small things matter' has been created where individuals can record acts of kindness and generosity. So far, people have written about big-hearted friends and neighbours who accept parcels, help with taking the kids to school or are just always there for a chat.

In the run-up to Volunteers' Week, the forum will be using local newspapers and magazines to publicise these small things, to help raise awareness of volunteering and spread the message that it doesn't

have to be a formal arrangement.

Then on 1st June, they will be hosting a celebration event for local volunteers at Ramada Solihull, with entertainment and pampering sessions, all to say 'thank you' to those who give up their time for their community. The forum are also hoping to use Touchwood to promote the work of different voluntary organisations and a number of groups will be holding 'taster sessions' for members of the public to have a go at a particular voluntary activity.

As Terrie sums up: *"we hope the activities we have planned will show people that everyone can be a volunteer, and that in fact lots of us already are, through the small things we do for each other."*

Volunteers' Week runs from 1st-7th June. For more information contact Manjit Johal at SUSTAIN. Tel: **0121 711 3148** Mobile: **07795 561943** Email: manjitj@solihull-sustain.org.uk. For the *small things matter* blog see: volunteeringinsolihull.blogspot.com



2009 Volunteers' Week celebrations at Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens

VETTING & BARRING

NEW REGULATIONS MEAN GREATER RESPONSIBILITIES FOR VOLUNTARY GROUPS

Does your work involve contact with children and/or vulnerable adults? Then you need to be aware of how a new system of checks will affect you. SUSTAiN is supporting colleagues in the Solihull Partnership to raise awareness of the new Independent Safeguarding Authority (ISA) and its requirements for those who work with children (where children are defined as anyone under 18) and vulnerable adults to be registered with it.

From July 2010 all persons taking up new staff or volunteering positions which involve regular contact with children or

vulnerable adults will be able to apply for registration with the ISA and organisations employing the staff or volunteers will be able to check their ISA status. From November 2010, both registration and checking become compulsory for new appointments and no-one can take up such a position as an employee or volunteer without being registered and without the organisation checking.

Then, from April 2011 to July 2015 there will be a phased implementation of mandatory registration for those already employed or volunteering in roles involving

regular contact with children and vulnerable adults.

These provisions are not intended to replace CRB checking but to complement it. CRB checks will still form part of the process of registration for new employees or volunteers.

Further guidance will be provided by SUSTAiN through our email and postal alert systems as the deadlines come nearer.

To be added to our mailing lists to ensure you receive this vital information, please call Tina at SUSTAiN on **0121 711 3148**.

CHILDREN'S VOLUNTARY SECTOR FORUM

BY JANET DOWN, CEO OF SOLO & THIRD SECTOR REPRESENTATIVE

The Children's Voluntary Sector Forum is an extremely useful forum for me in my role as Third Sector representative on the Children & Young People's Trust Board — the place where decisions are made. For me it's important to be able to let other organisations know what is being discussed and to get other people's thoughts so I can better represent the sector view to the board.

Over the past couple of meetings we have looked at things such as the new Children's Plan, Workforce Development and the new Vetting & Barring scheme. All of these are vital issues for anyone providing services to children. Having a forum where they can be discussed and information shared is really valuable.

I would strongly recommend organisations working with children and young people to get involved and come along to these meetings.

For more information, go to solihull-sustain.org.uk/networks/

SHARE STREET

Share Street is a new online community for the children and young people's workforce created by the CWDC (Children's Workforce Development Council). It makes it easier for everyone who works and volunteers with children, young people and their families to connect, be inspired, discuss ideas and share resources.

Take a stroll down Share Street and visit the newsagent for the latest news. Be motivated by engaging films from the workforce in the cinema and find and share resources in the library. Pop into the café to network and join discussions with colleagues across the children and young people's workforce, and read and comment on inspiring case studies behind the rainbow.

Join Share Street, strengthen the sense of community across our workforce and help to improve outcomes for children and young people.

www.cwdcouncil.org.uk/sharestreet



MAKE TOUCHWOOD YOUR SPACE

Touchwood is giving local groups and organisations the chance to captivate thousands of members of the general public by handing over a portion of its retail space to Solihull locals during 2010. The centre, which sees 14 million guests pass through its doors each year, has created 'Your Space' — a dedicated area that can be used to showcase your particular cause or activity.

Throughout 2010 groups and individuals can sign up to occupy the space free of charge for periods ranging from one week to a month. The only condition is that the area should be used to promote or display something engaging and of genuine interest to the local community.

Lucy Burnett, marketing manager at Touchwood said:

"Touchwood prides itself on being at the heart of the Solihull community and we constantly strive to find ways to give back. 'Your Space' allows the region's residents to truly

make an area of Touchwood their very own. With high numbers of guests passing through our doors on a daily basis we hope the project will help to raise awareness of some of the very deserving and interesting organisations in the area.

We are inviting interested parties to submit an application letting us know how they would like to use Your Space. If you're a community group, club or school looking to raise awareness, please get in touch!"

For an application form contact Gemma Smith on **0121 713 3775** or email **gemma.smith@europe.mccann.com**



A FLOURISHING FESTIVAL

SUSTAIN is supporting an initiative to extend the reach and impact of the Solihull Festival. Although the annual programme of events held in September is always a success, there is room to achieve so much more in terms of involving more people in fun activities, raising funds for good causes and celebrating Solihull life.

We are assisting with the establishment of a new charity, called Solihull Festivals Trust, which will support the development

of the Festival over the next five years, helping organisers and promoting the events.

Its vision is that the Festival will reach every part of the borough and involve all ages and cultures in a varied and thriving programme of music, dance, sport, food and festivity. Such a programme would be good for Solihull and good for our people, encouraging community cohesion and hopefully getting more people involved in

healthy exercise whilst having fun.

Why not think about whether your organisation could run a Festival event?

If you would like to express an interest in running an event please contact Dave Pinwell on **0121 711 3148** or email **davep@solihull-sustain.org.uk**

NEW PARTNERSHIP MANAGER TO HELP BUILD RELATIONSHIPS

By the time you read this the Solihull Partnership should have appointed the new Stronger Communities Partnership Manager, who will be coordinating the delivery of the Partnership's priority targets for volunteering, cohesion and developing the third sector. A key part of this work will be developing the right relationships for between voluntary and community organisations and public sector partners.

VOLUNTEERING DEVELOPMENTS

The Solihull Partnership is also commissioning for a Third Sector provider to establish volunteer bureaux in Solihull Town Centre and Chelmsley Wood to improve the infrastructure to support voluntary and community groups, and others, in recruiting volunteers. The chosen provider should be launching this project in July.

FUTURE JOBS FUND BOON

Twelve new jobs are being created in Solihull's Third Sector via the Future Jobs Fund. Castle Bromwich Hall Gardens, ReCOM, DIAL, Kingshurst Parish Council, Solihull Shopmobility and Welcome are amongst those receiving up to £6000 in funding to create a new post for someone who is long-term unemployed.

The Future Jobs Fund scheme covers labour, material and support costs to employ someone for at least six months. All of the new roles involve work that will benefit the local community as well as support for the employee to help them back into the workplace. Significantly for the organisations that are benefitting, the fund is designed to enable new posts to be created that could not have been achieved without this investment.

The new jobs are currently being advertised via JobCentre Plus and we will bring you more news on how the candidates got on in the autumn.

I found the process very simple, I just expressed an interest and received a prompt response from Claire at SUSTAiN. Claire came out too and visited us on site which was helpful in demonstrating why the posts were needed. She also helped with the writing of the job descriptions. I am really looking forward to both new posts starting as they are going to be really valuable resources to the charity. I like the Future Jobs Fund as it sits nicely with our track record of taking individuals from the local community and helping them develop. We usually do this through our volunteer programme, and the Future Jobs Fund just adds another way of continuing that good work. We are to have a groundsperson / handyperson and an administrator / media assistant. Cannot wait!

Joanne Mackinnon,
Chief Officer — Welcome

"I will be getting a new admin role through the Future Jobs Fund to answer calls, enter data and do general admin tasks. This will free up my time to get back out to work hands on with victims of domestic violence and to carry out more visits to local women. It will also help MABL to better process enquiries and record evidence of the number of people we see, which we can use to demonstrate the need for our project to funders.

This new role will make a huge difference, as it has been me on my own and. SUSTAiN did everything for me — from making me aware of the Future Jobs Fund opportunity to helping me complete the application form. The support offered by SUSTAiN really helps to take the pressure off me — giving me the tools I need to be able to do my job better.

Margaret Lloyd, Coordinator — MABL

BEST OF THE WEB

Breakdown of the opportunities & resources available on the SUSTAiN website in March 2010



Over **750** people receiving our fortnightly email alerts.

Just under **100** people on our alerts by post circulation

As many of you may have noticed, back in December, the SUSTAiN website was treated to a makeover. One of the key features of the new-look site is that it brings together all of the nuggets of information we send out via SUSTAiN Alerts.

Direct from the homepage, you can now find listings of all the latest funding, training and commissioning opportunities, events and consultations, governance resources, jobs around the sector and even free stuff.

In March 2010, we had 51 funding opportunities registered on the website, as well as 25 training opportunities and information about 6 major consultations for the voluntary sector to have its say on. So it's definitely a good place to start if your

organisation or group is looking for some support or wants to know more about some of the things that might affect it.

The website is also a place where you can share your news. We would love to help you to promote your event or tell people about an exciting new development you have coming up so please let us know.

To start receiving SUSTAiN's email alerts, email adme@solihull-sustain.org.uk with your name and organisation name.

To receive alerts by post or promote something via our alerts or website, contact Jayne Scarman on **0121 711 3148** or jaynes@solihull-sustain.org.uk