



Charnwood CVS

Voluntary action for a just and inclusive Charnwood

Charnword

Newsletter of Charnwood CVS

January & February 2006



Feast of Faiths, held at John Storer House. See Page 6
Photo: Maggie Cherry

Moves Ahead

Neil Lambert, Chief Executive Staff and trustees of Syston Volunteer Centre, Shepshed Volunteer Centre, Loughborough Volunteer Centre and Charnwood CVS have been in discussions throughout 2005 on how best to improve delivery of support and services to volunteers, voluntary organisations and community groups across the borough.

A joint working party has looked into what we do now, separately, and how joining up agencies may provide a more effective arrangement. The rationale behind the proposal is to enhance inclusion and participation of

all people and communities across the whole borough; increase efficiency and effectiveness, reduce duplication; while retaining local identity at points of delivery, particularly in Syston and Shepshed.

If final agreement is reached, then we will hold an Extraordinary General Meeting to make the necessary legal changes to facilitate this merger. This will at least include a new composition for the Board of Trustees, and a change of name; the working title being suggested, is **Voluntary Action Charnwood**. It is important to get each step of the process right, and that

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all parties are in agreement at each stage, so time is less important, but if possible we will aim for a new borough-wide services plan to be implemented by next April 2006.

There will be more news on this in the next edition of Charnword.

Network Meeting Dates & Events

Charnwood CVS

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Business Sector £100

Copy deadlines

March & April 2006 issue:

6 February

Charnwood CVS welcomes articles, letters and news, but reserves the right to edit. Please send your articles to Cath Walker on **01509 631784** or cath.walker@charnwoodcvs.org.uk

Disclaimer The views expressed by contributors in Charnwood are not necessarily those of Charnwood CVS.

Format If you would like Charnwood in an alternative format, please contact Cath Walker at the CVS. See also CVS website, news section.

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It is advisable that you check these dates

January 2006

27 Holocaust Memorial Day Commemoration Ceremony
12.15pm. Queens Park, Loughborough.

30 Consultation on reconfiguration of Primary Care Trusts.
2.30pm John Storer House (JSH), Loughborough. Mick Wells, Chairman of C&NWL PCT, will chair the meeting. Contact Sallianne Thomas on 01509 631785.

31 Volunteers Induction Meeting
2pm-4pm. JSH
Contact Volunteer Centre on 01509 631770.

February

2 Loughborough Carers' Support Group
1.30pm-3.30pm. JSH. Contact Carers Project on 01509 631783.

21 Shepshed Carers' Support Group.
2pm-4pm. Charnwood Road Community Centre. Contact Carers Project on 01509 631783.

23 Sector Liaison Forum
2pm. JSH. Contact Neil Lambert or Cath

Walker on 01509 631750.

March

2 Loughborough Carers' Support Group
1.30pm-3.30pm. JSH
Contact Carers Project on 01509 631783.

21 Shepshed Carers' Support Group.
2pm-4pm.
Charnwood Road Community Centre. Contact Carers Project on 01509 631783.

Coping With Cancer

offers support to people whose lives are affected by cancer

A new drop-in service in Loughborough is available at

Shree Ram Krishna Community Centre,
Alfred Street,
Loughborough.

2pm-4pm

Thursday 26 January
Thursday 23 February
Thursday 30 March.

If you would like further information about the service, please contact Rekha Sapariya on 0116 223 0055 or 0116 223 0020.

Preserving the Things we Value and Changing with the Times

Neil Lambert

Many of you will have been visitors to John Storer House for many years. There are lots of opportunities and activities, which carry on year after year with certainty. Our 40th Anniversary is being planned for April.

But we all know that simply hoping things won't change isn't enough. Some of our minibuses are nearing the end of their safe working life and we need to get replacements. The Lottery grant we receive for Transport staffing ends in March, after six years, and we are in discussions to seek new funding. We hope the service continues, with the same helpful staff and safe reliable vehicles.

As part of my job, I have to look ahead and foresee what will happen if we do nothing. As with the buses and grants, we know they will come to an end, so we are taking action to try to continue the services which people value.

Last September, the John Storer House Foundation Trustees agreed to major surveys of the building, including plumbing and electrics on the inside, as well as the roof etc, outside. The results are expected soon and we will then be considering recommendations for how best to continue improving the House.

I hope this will assure some people that we are doing our best to keep the House in good order and want to continue to provide good facilities and services.

Other recent changes to reception were explained in the JSH Newsletter, however rumours circulated and caused concern to some people. We didn't move, nor close down, and want to keep going for many years to come.

Everyone involved with the House wants to **preserve the things we value**. We don't want to change things without good reason. We will make changing with the times as easy to cope with as possible.

If anyone wants to check the facts anytime please speak to Wendy, Gerry or myself.

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Results of the CVS & JSH User Satisfaction Survey

Neil Lambert

In the last edition of Charnword we enclosed a questionnaire to ask how satisfied you are with our services; already over 60 people have responded.

Half had been in touch with us, and 99% were very satisfied with the response, none dissatisfied.

All the 25% who had used the web site said it was useful and user friendly.

Almost half are seeking funds at present, but only eight had sought funding advice from CVS. The six who had used Funderfinder had all been successful, receiving from £1000 (from Loughborough Welfare Trust); £5000 worth of products from B+Q; £7000 (from Awards for All); to a total package of £37,500 from various trusts.

A third of groups use and are satisfied with rooms in JSH, and similarly the Tea Bar.

One respondent asks for all the building to be non-smoking, which it has been since September 2005!

Many appreciations are expressed, either in general, or to specific staff or volunteers. We are also addressing issues raised by a few groups to improve the service.

The CVS Forward Plan

Neil Lambert

Trustees are currently discussing the DRAFT new Forward Plan for 2006 – 2009 with staff and volunteers. Major changes are proposed:

- on the front page of this edition, the merger with volunteer centres is explained
- this will create a new borough-wide volunteering service and
- three voluntary action centres in Loughborough, Syston and Shepshed
- service developments are already underway.

(Continued on top of page 3)

We are also planning to improve the quality of everything we do, recording what has been achieved. We shall be collecting evidence of what our outputs are, what the outcomes are from those outputs, and the overall impact in local communities.

Outside CVS we shall be working in the wider sector on:

- Local Area Agreements – Social Capital Research
- setting up a new Sector Liaison Forum, (see article below) and arranging training for representatives
- promotion of collaborative working in Charnwood, especially between voluntary and community organisations, VCOs.

The Sector Liaison Forum

Neil Lambert

The new Sector Liaison Forum, to be launched in February, will bring together representatives from the various forums and networks across the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Charnwood. It is designed to work at strategic level and provide an overview of the liaison happening between the VCS and other sectors. It will:

- enable information sharing and co-ordination around the VCS so that we all know what is going on
- receive reports from representatives which are recorded and circulated to interested people using e-alerts and the web site
- provide support to representatives to equip them to be effective
- provide learning opportunities, linked to new county-wide arrangements using a package called “Stronger Voice”, which will enhance skills such as advocacy and persuasion
- inform active citizens about getting involved and influencing the planning and delivery of local public services.

It is hoped that this forum will enable authorities to understand more about local communities of place and interest, so that

they value what advocates have to say.

The inaugural meeting will be held on Thursday 23 February, 2pm and will be addressed by Martin Gage, Chief Executive of North West Leicestershire CVS, who will speak about the work of a similar forum in North West Leicestershire. For further information, please contact Neil Lambert or Cath Walker on 01509 631750.

A Forum update

Loughborough Urban Forum and Loughborough Forum of Older People will no longer be convened on a regular basis, but instead only meet when a relevant issue needs discussion.

Health And Social Care Involvement Worker

Sallianne Thomas

There is now a project located at Charnwood CVS that aims to widen and improve the involvement of voluntary organisations and community groups in healthcare planning and delivery. The important contribution these organisations can make to improving health, reducing health inequalities and helping to build quality services, is now better recognised and the role of this project is to assist the voluntary and community sector in sharing this knowledge with both health and social care providers.

The project covers Charnwood and North West Leicestershire with the project worker, Sallianne Thomas, being based at John Storer House, with the CVS.

Sallianne is keen to meet groups in the Charnwood and North West Leicestershire area to find out initially what the groups do, who they support etc to help in building an overall picture.

In the future there will be opportunity for representatives of groups, if appropriate, to get more involved with healthcare planning, such as consultations and health forums.

If you would like to find out more about the project, or would like to have Sallianne contact you, then please ring 01509 631785 or email sallianne.thomas@charnwoodcvs.org.uk

Local Area Agreements (LAA) and How it will Affect us Locally

Neil Lambert

During 2006 Charnwood CVS will be working on a new initiative called a **Local Area Agreement** (LAA). LAAs are part of a 10 year strategic plan to encourage discussion between local and national government in order to improve the quality of life and the co-ordination of public services within each local community.

20 pilot schemes across the country were announced in October 2004 and Leicestershire has been asked to prepare an LAA for 2006/07. The programme will be led by Leicestershire County Council, with input from Charnwood Borough Council, other public service providers and local voluntary and community groups.

The LAA is divided into seven themes, one of which is Stronger Communities. In this theme, Charnwood CVS is undertaking a survey, which will concentrate on three small areas within the borough of Charnwood (technically defined as Super Output Areas or SOAs). These are parts of the electoral wards Loughborough Hastings, Syston West and the Wolds.

Charnwood CVS will be convening a Local Development Group for each area in January. The brief is to include voluntary and community groups either based in or serving the area, school Governing Bodies, Parish Councils and Borough and County Councillors. A Local Development Group, under the auspices of a Local Area Agreement, could well have a powerful voice which all authorities should listen to. If you would like to discuss anything about the above plans, or find out more about the organisations and initiatives mentioned, please browse the websites below or contact neil.lambert@charnwoodcvs.org.uk

- The **Local Area Agreement** is being developed, and will be implemented, by Leicestershire Together, the county wide “partnership of partnerships”. The Mission is that “Together we will do things differently to deliver improved

public services so that, with the public, we will make Leicestershire the best possible place to live and work for everyone.”

www.leicestershiretogether.org

- **Stronger Communities** is one of seven themes in the Local Area Agreement. Indicators of what a Strong Community is can be found at:
www.neighbourhood.gov.uk
- **Social Capital** is about neighbourliness, and a sense of community spirit. It can be measured in various ways, including the levels of volunteering, number of voluntary groups, and respect for other people.
www.statistics.gov.uk/socialcapital/
- **Charnwood Borough Council**
www.charnwood.gov.uk
- **Charnwood Together the Local Strategic Partnership**
www.charnwoodonline.net
- **Leicestershire County Council**
www.leics.gov.uk

Volunteer Centre News

Maggie Cherry

The Volunteer Centre hosted a very enjoyable evening, before Christmas, for the volunteers who work for Charnwood CVS and John Storer House. The event was attended by the Mayor and Mayoress, and about 35 volunteers were presented with certificates marking 2005 as the Year of the Volunteer.

The Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum held a very interesting workshop on disability, in December, led by Dee Martin from the Leicestershire Centre for Integrated Living. The session raised our awareness of issues and attitudes around disability.

One of the functions of the Volunteer Centre is to encourage good practice when working with volunteers.

If you have any ideas for future sessions relating to managing volunteers within your organisation, please contact the Volunteer Centre on 01509 631770 or volunteer@charnwoodcvs.org.uk

The Gardening Project

Bobby Smith

In recognition of all the hard work put into making the Project a success and helping local residents to continue to enjoy their gardens, volunteers were presented with certificates celebrating the Year of the Volunteer at a reception held in December.

We were just able to finish re-siting our stock beds on the Project's allotment off Forest Road, before the weather turned too cold and frosty to move the plants. Unfortunately, we were unable to get out to the last few gardens on our waiting list but they will be first on the list in the spring when we start going out again.

On January 11th, Bobby attended an evening reception at the House of Lords, hosted by the Baroness Pitkeathly. This invitation was received through Thrive, and the purpose of the evening was to present the latest research about the benefits of gardening for people with a disability, and

how Thrive intends to engage with decision-makers and health professionals to influence policy in this area. Readers may recall that the Project was involved with the three-year research project carried out by Loughborough University and Thrive.

All this gallivanting about is all very well and we are very keen to raise the profile of therapeutic horticulture, but the fact remains that two loads of muck has just been delivered on the allotment and it has to be moved! So, for now its back to the more mundane tasks that will carry us into the New Year and a new growing season.

Everyone on the Gardening Project would like to wish all of our supporters a prosperous and productive New Year.

For more information about any aspect of the Project, please contact Bobby Smith in the Volunteer Centre on 01509 631774.

Joining up Community Transport

June Helmore

Loughborough Community Care Dial a Ride and Loughborough Community Care Car Scheme have moved to Charnwood CVS to join the Charnwood Community Transport Project.

We hope that working closely together will lead to greater co-ordination between us, the providers, which will in turn lead to a more effective use of resources to meet your transport needs.

Loughborough Community Care Dial A Ride is a voluntary car scheme, whose main function is to provide social transport, for those who cannot use public transport. The scheme currently has fifteen volunteer drivers, all of whom use their own vehicles. Chris Johnson is available to take bookings between 9am–12 noon every day on 01509 267147.

Loughborough Community Care Car

Scheme provides transport for Social Services' clients and also, where possible, for other organisations such as the Blind Club. Healthcare journeys are organised on behalf of patients by the GP surgery. The scheme has three paid drivers and nine volunteer drivers, all of whom use their own cars. Michelle Smith works 9am–1.30pm every day and can be contacted via your GP.

Charnwood Community Transport Project

runs six minibuses, three being accessible, with four paid drivers and volunteers. The Project provides transport for lunch clubs, stroke clubs, day centres, shopping trips, after-school club, etc, as well as for groups who wish to use the minibus for their own activities eg scouts, brownies, youth groups, etc. MiDAS training is available for all volunteer drivers. For bookings or training please call June Helmore on 01509 631761.

The First Loughborough Feast of Faiths

Stephen Cherry

The ground floor of John Storer House was full of the happy sound of conversation and laughter among people of different faiths on Wednesday November 9th. About 80 were present, representing a tremendous response to the invitation to the Feast of Faiths issued by the Mayor of Charnwood on behalf of the Loughborough Council of Faiths.

After being greeted by the Mayor and Mayoress participants were given an 'inter-faith quiz' and encouraged to find their answers by seeking out a member of the relevant faith and asking them. This led to a very social atmosphere with everyone mingling and talking and learning. "It was a great, and very fast refresher course", someone said later.

After that we sat down and listened to nine brief presentations from people of different faiths talking about a recent or relevant festival. This was also very informative and

the atmosphere of respect – each presentation was followed by a brief period of silence – was very moving.

Then it was time for food. We had vegetarian and halal dishes as well as sandwiches and sweets. Our thanks go to Anila Sisodia, Amina Wadud and the staff at John Storer House for providing such a delicious feast.

When we had eaten, and some did indeed enjoy seconds, there was more chance for informal conversations with people being encouraged to move to new tables and make new friends.

At the end of the evening the Mayor said that while he was a staunch Christian he was also a champion of inter-faith activity.

Afterwards, everyone agreed that it was a great success and the second Loughborough Feast of Faiths has been put in the diary for September 2006.

From my point of view this was a wonderful event to be involved in and I am very grateful to the CVS and the Mayoralty for helping the Council of Faiths to make it such a memorable occasion.

Mencap Leicestershire Black & Minority Ethnic Carers Outreach Project

Bindya Mistry

Are you, or is someone you know from a Black or Minority Ethnic (BME) community group caring for a person with a learning disability? We want to work in partnership with community groups to raise awareness of learning disabilities amongst Leicestershire's BME communities.

The aim of our project is raise awareness of learning disabilities and to identify carers amongst BME community groups in Leicestershire. We also want to learn from the varied experiences of carers from BME communities and highlight any gaps or barriers in services provision and inform statutory agencies.

The project can offer:

- a home visit
- confidential and free advice service
- help you plan and find the right services
- put you in touch with other carers
- a chance to have your voice heard
- an opportunity to talk about your own needs and concerns in your own language.

We are happy to come and talk to your group members and leave further information. If you are interested, then please contact: Bindya Mistry, Community Outreach Worker, on 0116 242 2744.

Free HR advice

Asma Mirza

Free HR advice, information and support is available to local voluntary and community groups via a partnership involving Voluntary Action Leicester (VAL) and CVS across Leicestershire. The project, available until June 2006, means local groups employing paid staff can now access telephone or face-to-face support about all aspects of employment matters.

The kind of issues local groups might use the service for include:

- model policies and procedures
- ensuring existing procedures comply with new employment legislation
- conflict between paid staff and management committees
- grievances and disciplinary matters
- recruiting staff
- redundancies
- TUPE (two organisations merging together)
- staffing restructure
- producing employment contracts
- equality matters (e.g. how to ensure your group is complying with The Sex Discrimination Act).

The project may also be able to provide tailor-made training for your group – though, in certain circumstances, we may need to charge.

To access this free service, please contact Vicci Barrett, Capacity Builder at Charnwood CVS on 01509 631787.

Idlewild Trust

Grants are normally in the range of £750 to £3,500, and are available to registered charities for projects concerned with the encouragement of the performing and fine arts, and the preservation of buildings and objects of beauty and items of historic interest or national importance.

The next closing dates for applications are 17 March and 22 September.

Tel 020 8772 3155

www.idlewildtrust.org.uk

Community Champions Fund

Community Champions Fund was set up to help people who can inspire others to get more involved in renewing their neighbourhoods through participation in community groups. Grants of up to £2,000 are available to support individuals to become, or to continue to be, leaders in their communities.

Contact the Fund's administrators in Leicestershire: Nicola Dalby or Grace Dall'omo, Leicestershire, Leicester & Rutland Community Foundation.

Tel 0116 229 3088

nicola@llrcommunityfoundation.org.uk

www.dfes.gov.uk/communitychampions/aboutus.cfm

Big Lottery's Reaching Communities Programme

Grants of £10,001 - £500,000 are available to registered charities, voluntary and community groups, statutory bodies, including schools, charitable or not-for-profit companies, social enterprises - business with social objectives for projects that improve local communities and the lives of people most in need, especially people or groups who are hard to reach. Projects can be funded up to five years.

Tel 0845 410 2030

www.biglotteryfund.org.uk

Rayne Foundation

Grants of between £5,000 and £20,000 are available to registered charities whose work helps society's most vulnerable or disadvantaged individuals, especially children, young people and the elderly. The Foundation makes grants in the following areas: arts; education; health/medicine; social welfare.

Tel 020 7487 9650/9637

info@raynefoundaton.org.uk

www.raynefoundation.org.uk