

voice

THE VOICE OF THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN WOLVERHAMPTON

Wolverhampton's Volunteer Service takes off

An expanded service for volunteers is now available as a result of additional funding.

After the Volunteer Centre closed, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) stepped in to offer a limited service to volunteers and groups.

This was well received and, with increased funds, a full Volunteer Service is now up and running. The service has been able to expand with the appointment of a Training Advisor and a full time Receptionist both due to start work this month.

The Volunteer Service will be a one-stop-shop for volunteers in Wolverhampton offering a holistic service through links to other volunteer centres and local training providers. The new service also enables organisations to access training for their volunteers through the Training Advisor.

Another element of the service will be the establishment of a volunteer organisations network. This is in

response to requests from groups who are already using volunteers and regular meetings will help them to share good practice and help support their volunteers. It is hoped that the network will be set up by Easter 2010.

"What we really want," says Wendy Walker, Volunteer Project Co-ordinator, "is for groups to tell us what they would like to see the service offering them and what they need from us."

Wendy also stresses that this is a brand new service. Groups who

were signed up to the Volunteer Centre in Cleveland Street, will need to register again using the contact details below.

Too small or too busy to use volunteers?

There will shortly be a new service offering groups a visit from an advisor who can help you develop ways to use volunteers. This will include a health & safety check and any other support you need.

So whether you need volunteers, want to register, are interested in considering the possibilities or would like to input ideas for the new service, please contact Wendy Walker at WVSC, 16 Temple Street, WV2 4AN, 01902 328980 or wwalker@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk



Volunteer Project Co-ordinator, Wendy Walker, at Wolverhampton Volunteer Service office.

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We hope you enjoy reading our joint magazine. We are always interested to hear from our readers so please let us know your thoughts and ideas for Wolverhampton Voice.

Do you receive more than one copy of this magazine? Wolverhampton Voice is distributed via networks, groups and organisations who have links with Wolverhampton Network Consortium or Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council. Magazines are also sent to partner organisations, local councillors, community centres and libraries. If you receive more than one copy, please pass it on. If you would like additional copies please don't hesitate to let us know.

If you would like a copy of this document in a form more suited to your needs, please contact WNC on 01902 572020 or WVSC on 01902 773761 or email wolverhamptonvoice@blueyonder.co.uk. It can also be found on WNC's website: www.w-n-c.org

To obtain more copies, to be added to our mailing list or to find out more about Wolverhampton Voice, please contact Davina De-Bear, Editor, by email: wolverhamptonvoice@blueyonder.co.uk

This magazine is produced quarterly. However, in addition, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council will continue to provide regular mailings to organisations on their database.

Comments and views expressed within this publication are not necessarily the views of Wolverhampton Network Consortium, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council, their Directors or employees.

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European Minister visits Wolverhampton

In November 2009, Chris Bryant, Minister for Europe, visited Wolverhampton and Birmingham to see how EU funding helps businesses and community projects and to promote a bolder Britain in Europe.

He arrived at All Saints' Action Network's (ASAN's) Workspace building to meet Wolverhampton Network Consortium (WNC) staff plus representatives and beneficiaries from Access 2 Business,

Centre, all redeveloped by ASAN using £85,000 of European funding.

Mr Bryant said: "I'm pleased to see all the benefits that EU funding has brought to the region, including jobs, education and development for our young people and regenerated local communities." Mr Bryant congratulated everyone who had worked so hard to make their projects a success, and was very happy to have seen European funding going to such worthy ventures, hailing the staff's entrepreneurial skills for what they had achieved.

WNC chief executive Betty Taylor added: "We were delighted to be asked to co-ordinate this visit from the minister. WNC is very proud of the European Action Plan's success and all the projects involved."



Minister for Europe Chris Bryant, second right, talks to John Mason, business development manager for ASAN Workspace, second left, with Subhash Patel, All Saints Children's Centre manager, left, WNC chief executive Betty Taylor, centre, and Mel Passmore, WNC chairman, right.

Bushbury Triangle Neighbourhood Nursery and Bilston Redevelopment Project. These are just a few of the projects that received European funding between 2003 and 2006 from the programme managed by WNC. Mr Bryant was also treated to a tour of the Workspace building which houses conference and meeting room facilities, office space and All Saints' Children's

WNC is currently working to secure more EU funding for Wolverhampton and the wider Black Country, and Wolverhampton Voice will keep you up to date on their progress.

For more information about WNC, contact Betty Taylor on 01902 572020 or visit www.w-n-c.org



A New Year and new challenges

Welcome to 2010 to all our readers – a year that brings new challenges to the sector as the difficult economic situation continues across the country.

Unfortunately in this issue we have to mention the council's proposed budget cuts which will affect the sector (see page 10). However, there is also promising news as we highlight organisations who have secured funding from the National Lottery and through the Targeted Support Fund.

For this issue in particular, we have been inundated with information from organisations who have good news to report – some have had to be held over until our next issue due out at the end of March. So, even as seemingly bleak times are around us, the voluntary and community sector continues to perform and provide essential services for people throughout Wolverhampton.

If you have comments on any of the articles in this issue, or would like to contribute to the next issue, please do not hesitate to get in touch either using the contact details opposite or via email to wolverhamptonvoice@blueyonder.co.uk

The Editorial Team

FOCUS ON THE WORK OF THE MENTAL HEALTH EMPOWERMENT TEAM

The Mental Health Empowerment Team based at Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) aims to support mental health service users through involvement in decision-making processes and through the establishment of self-support groups.

Over these two pages, there is a taste of some of the work that the groups the team supports are involved in.

Currently, the team supports 18 groups and forums and is in the process of re-launching the Mental Health User Action Group. Elin Hay, Mental Health Empowerment



The Mental Health Empowerment Team (L-R) Amanda Williams, Di Drew and Elin Hay.

Co-ordinator, explains further, "This group is made up of service user representatives from organisations and support groups who offer mental health services. The aim is to make sure that the people who use mental health services in Wolverhampton are involved in the development of them. We are asking all voluntary and statutory groups involved in

mental health, in any capacity, to make contact as we would like to get a representative from every mental health support group and service area in the city to join the action group."

If organisations wish to take part, but do not yet have a service user participation group then the Mental Health Empowerment Team can support them in developing a group. Support and training will also be made available to the representatives.

If you would like more information about any aspect of the work that the Mental Health Empowerment Team is involved in, please call 01902 328978 or email mhinfo@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

WORLD MENTAL HEALTH DAY CELEBRATIONS 2009

World Mental Health Day was celebrated in Wolverhampton with an information market, celebratory lunch and a showing of 'It's a Wonderful Life.'

The event was funded by the Joint Commissioning Team at Wolverhampton City Council and the Primary Care Trust and organised by the Mental Health Empowerment Team. World Mental Health Day is an international campaign designed to challenge stigma and promote social inclusion for people who experience mental ill health.

Gurdip Chima, Joint Commissioning Officer for Mental Health Services in Wolverhampton, said, "We want to recognise and promote the work of the various groups and organisations in Wolverhampton who provide services and support

for mental health service users and their carers." Both service users and the general public were able to access a range of support and advice services at the event and could also experience various relaxation therapy tasters.



Stallholders setting up for the information market on World Mental Health Day.

Hear-Our-Voice reaches their 10th Birthday

On a dark October evening in 1999, six people met up to agree a constitution to form a mental health action group called Hear-Our-Voice.

Since then the group has gone from strength to strength and now has over 140 members.

Members have worked hard to promote positive mental health and well-being and reduce stigmatisation, both for the wider community and for their own members. This has included providing monthly forums, quarterly workshops and a quarterly magazine called the View Point.

As part of their 10th anniversary Hear-Our-Voice had a display at the Central Library and information stalls at both the Wolverhampton Show and the World Mental Health Day celebrations. They also held a presentation where the founding members received certificates to mark the occasion.



Hear-Our-Voice Chair & Vice-Chair, Graham Myerscough and Stephen-Maurice Castree representing the group at the Wolverhampton Show.

TEN YEARS OF PROGRESS FOR SEXUAL ABUSE FORUM

Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum recently celebrated its 10th anniversary with an event examining what the forum had achieved in the past and what it hopes to achieve in the future.

The forum enables service users and staff from statutory and voluntary organisations to work together to raise knowledge and awareness of issues relating to sexual abuse, share good practice and explore new ways of delivering services.

Founder members, Jane Viner of Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) and Jackie Sharratt from the PCT, gave a presentation on the history of the forum. This was followed by other speakers who illustrated the practical ways that survivors of sexual abuse could be supported. Survivors also contributed their own experiences and perspective.

One of the major achievements celebrated on the day was the Sensitive Practice Guide developed by the Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum. This guide not only gives adult survivors practical advice for when they engage with health services but also gives good practice guidelines for professionals.

If you would like a copy of the guide or want to know more about the activities of the forum, please contact Di Drew at the WVSC Mental Health Empowerment Team on 01902 328978 or Jackie Sharratt at the PCT on 01902 445690.



Jackie Sharratt and Jane Viner giving a presentation on the history of the Wolverhampton Sexual Abuse Forum.

Workshops put the focus on health

A series of health focused workshops run by Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) is giving representatives from the voluntary and community sector the opportunity to find out more about statutory health services.

With two events having already taken place, there is still time to register for the final event covering Health Inequalities and their effect on local people.



Participants discussing some of the issues raised at WVSC's health workshops.

The previous events have examined the role of the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and training to help voluntary groups understand the Mental Capacity Act and how it affects their work. With representatives from statutory organisations and a wide variety of voluntary and community groups in attendance, some lively discussions took place. Delegates were able to share experiences and increase their understanding of issues that affect the healthcare of local people. Having participated in the workshops, organisations are better equipped to assist their users and to represent them more effectively at a citywide level.

The Health Inequalities workshop will take place on 5th February 2010.

Places can be booked by contacting Geeta Patel, Senior Health and Well Being Officer at WVSC on 01902 328974 or emailing gpatel@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

Farewell to Sue

Shortly before Christmas, staff at Wolverhampton Network Consortium (WNC) had to wave goodbye to one of their long-standing colleagues when Sue Priest decided to move to pastures new.

Sue began working for WNC in 2004, as Community Participation, Learning and Development Officer for the Community Empowerment Network. Over the years working at WNC, Sue has supported hundreds of groups and networks in the community ensuring that marginalised groups have received guidance and funding to meet the needs of their community.

Sue says, "I have enjoyed working as part of a team to meet the needs of the diverse communities in Wolverhampton at a strategic and neighbourhood level. My life has been particularly enriched by the community groups that I have met and worked with. I will continue to support community groups in my new role with the Learning Partnership, focusing on my main interest which is community education."

Sue will be missed by all her colleagues at WNC but is wished all the very best in her new role ... and as Sue herself said, she isn't saying goodbye to the sector. She will in fact be working closely with some of WNC's Engagement Officers and neighbourhood partnerships to map the learning needs of specific geographic communities.



As seen on the Funding Portal

As soon as details of the European Social Fund's Community Grants for the Black Country were released, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) sent out a funding alert to encourage applications from Wolverhampton-based organisations.

Grants of up to £12,000 are available to provide community level support to help people progress towards employment. Voluntary and community groups with a turnover of less than £100,000 are eligible to apply, with priority being given to schemes working with those who are disadvantaged in the labour market (including ex-offenders, black and minority ethnic, disability, homeless, refugees, lone parents and over 50s). The closing date for this round of grants is 17 February 2010.

To find out more, contact Helen Jones at WVSC in the first instance who can direct you to the relevant information on the funding portal and offer assistance to complete the application form.

New features on the Funding portal

In addition to the standard search features on WVSC's funding portal, some new features offer even more flexibility and tools to help users find suitable funding sources. These features include:

- Saved searches – save funding searches and individual funds to your own personal profile for quick future access.
- Enhanced browsing – improved tools which allow more precise searches to help identify suitable funds and filter the results.
- Personalised reports – create professional reports using Microsoft Word to show funding search results, giving you a handy document for future reference.
- Improved trust funding data – more

comprehensive, accurate and up to date information on the charitable trust funds available for local groups

Do you receive WVSC funding alerts?

Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council (WVSC) funding alerts are sent out by email where the notice given is too short to let you know by any other means.

They are also used to highlight any new local funds and to publicise key information on the Funding Portal on the WVSC website.

As an experiment, in October, and with only a week's notice, WVSC acquired a tender opportunity on the site. A WVSC funding alert was sent out to the 350 organisations whose

email addresses were on their database, to draw attention to the opportunity to tender. As a result, those taking a decision on the tender reported that many more applications from the voluntary and community sector were received than would normally be expected. Following this experiment, the Funding Portal and funding alerts have been set up as mechanisms to improve access to opportunities. Organisations that are interested in responding to tenders for public services are urged to check their email contact details with WVSC especially if they have not received any funding alerts.

New on the WVSC Funding Portal: commissioning

The Funding Portal has been updated on the WVSC website to add a section on commissioning (look for the 'Local Community News' heading).

This section lists tender information relevant to organisations in Wolverhampton, and expands the range of funding options available. Over the past year,

WVSC has added additional pages to the website to enable organisations to access useful information about commissioning in the city. Details of Wolverhampton's commissioning framework and the timetable for its implementation can be found in the 'policy' section.

For both the Funding Portal and commissioning information, visit www.wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

Policy and Development Officer, Helen Jones, is the person to contact if you have further queries about commissioning or if you would like to add your organisation's email address to the WVSC database and receive funding alerts. Email hjones@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk or telephone 01902 328979.

LAST CHANCE TO COMMENT...

If you or your organisation has not yet commented on Wolverhampton Partnership's draft strategy for Developing the Environment for a Thriving Third Sector in Wolverhampton, there are a few days remaining before the consultation period ends.

The draft strategy has been developed after consultation with voluntary and community groups, examining best practice elsewhere and other discussions and policy reviews. The aim of the draft strategy is to develop an environment within the city which will encourage the third sector to thrive but will also shape the investment decisions made by the Wolverhampton Partnership Board.

Copies of the draft strategy can be obtained online at www.wton-partnership.org.uk (look for a link at the bottom of the home page) or email sam@wton-partnership.org.uk

Comments need to reach Sam Axtell no later than 25th January 2010. Submissions can be made by individuals, groups or organisations and can be sent by email (to the address above) or by post to Ms S Axtell, Consultation and Community Involvement Officer, Wolverhampton Partnership, Red Lion Street, Wolverhampton, WV1 1UY.

PARKS FOR PEOPLE

Parks for People is a Heritage Lottery Fund programme which offers grants from £250,000 to £5m for projects involving existing urban or rural green spaces designed for informal recreation and enjoyment.

Capital work and projects may be funded but the park must be valued by the community as part of their heritage. In addition, there are five outcomes which all projects

must meet including improving the heritage value, increasing the range of volunteers and offering learning and training.

The first step in applying is to submit a pre-application enquiry form which can be done at any time. Applications should then be submitted by 1st March for a decision in June 2010 or by 31st August for a decision in December 2010.

Visit www.hlf.org.uk and look for the quick link entitled 'Our grant programmes' or call 020 7591 6000.

FUNDERFINDER NOW AVAILABLE AT WNC

Wolverhampton Network Consortium (WNC) are pleased to announce that they can now help local groups access Funderfinder. This computer programme helps local groups search for funding information from a wide range of sources and for all sorts of projects. Dina Parmar-Patel will provide an hour's supported session to help groups access the service after which they are able to book to use the programme at any time.

Please contact her on 01902 572020 or email dparmar@w-n-c.org to make an appointment.

Crème of Nature Community Action Award 2010

Crème of Nature offer an annual award of £10,000 in a competition open to individuals, organisations and groups with a turnover of around £50,000. Funding is focused on the African Caribbean society, with preference given to faith and community groups, whose primary objective is to support women.

There are few limitations on how the money can be spent – providing it makes a real difference to the community. Applications must be submitted by 28th February 2010 and there are smaller awards for four runners up also available.

Visit www.communityactionaward.com for more information.

WNC LAUNCH HMS ENTERPRISE

WORKSHOPS COMING SOON

Wolverhampton Network Consortium's (WNC's) Enterprising Communities project will be offering the following workshops in conjunction with key partners in the sector. The workshops are designed to help ensure sustainability and organisations can sign up for any or all of the sessions. Those who wish to attend Workshop 1 (Part B) will get the most from this session if they have attended Part A.

WORKSHOP 1 (Part A) PORT IN A STORM

Saturday 30th January

Introducing to sustainability and its importance for your organisation.

WORKSHOP 1 (Part B) IN A SAFE HARBOUR

Saturday 27th February

Exploring funding sources and offering tips for writing good funding bids.

WORKSHOP 3 STEERING YOUR SHIP

Saturday 27th March

A guide to key governance issues to help ensure that your organisation is well run.

WORKSHOP 4 THE MASTER SHIPWRIGHT

Sunday 24th April

Choosing the best legal structure for your organisation.

WORKSHOP 5 THE BEST CREW ABOARD

Saturday 29th May

Building and maintaining your most valuable resource volunteers.

WORKSHOP 6 CHARTS AND COURSE

Saturday 26th June

Developing your business plan.

WORKSHOP 7 LISTING YOUR BOOTY

Saturday 31st July

Managing your finances.

Open to all Captains and First Mates!
Please contact WNC on **01902 572020**
or visit www.w-n-c.org
for more details.

capacity
builders

All workshops are 9.30am - 12.30pm followed by lunch.

10 things you should know about the Third Sector Partnership

- 1 It is made up of voluntary and community groups, organisations and networks.
- 2 It is part of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP). The LSP is a key part of the decision making structure within our city.
- 3 It is committed to achieving an environment in which the third sector can thrive.
- 4 It is increasingly recognised as a key route for consulting and sharing information with the third sector.
- 5 It raises issues on behalf of the third sector.
- 6 It has representation on all the important forums in the city.
- 7 It is supported by statutory bodies, who are invited to attend.
- 8 It is committed to supporting equality and diversity.
- 9 It meets 6 times a year but does lots of things between meetings.
- 10 It is open to anyone from the third sector.

To find out more please contact Ian Darch at Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council on 01902 328970, email idarch@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk or Betty Taylor at Wolverhampton Network Consortium on 01902 572020, email btaylor@w-n-c.org

The impact of council budget cuts

At a December meeting with senior council staff and councillors, 45 third sector organisations continued to challenge the wisdom and fairness of the cuts to the third sector budget proposed by the council as part of its savings programme.

Representatives from the sector argued that the proposed cuts of £950,000:

- were disproportionate (a reduction of 26% as opposed to an 11% cut for the programme as a whole),
- failed to take account of the financial value of the sector (or every £1 from the local authority, we raise an extra £4 to deliver our services),
- will have a damaging impact for customers if organisations' funding is withdrawn.

It is important that we carry on raising these issues across the city but for me there is an even more fundamental point. Wolverhampton, in common with other parts of the country, faces a very difficult future. Cuts in public spending seem inevitable and there will be less money with which to deliver services in the city. The third

sector offers excellent value for money, works at the heart of communities, is flexible and innovative, is 'mission driven' and works to make a real and positive difference to people's lives. These things are particularly important at a time of recession, when people need even greater support.

Our sector is seen as part of the solution and we will be needed even more if Wolverhampton is to maintain services that meet people's needs. We are going to need a strong sector, working to maximum capacity, if we are to ride the stormy years ahead. Disproportionate cuts without fully understanding the impact of them will limit our ability to respond to the future landscape and this will be to the detriment of the most vulnerable people living in our city.

To find out more contact me, Ian Darch, on 01902 328970 or email idarch@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

Ian Darch
Chief Executive
Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council

STOP PRESS

Since the time of writing, the city council has confirmed that the proposed cut to the third sector has been reduced to £750,000 rather than £950,000. The remaining £200,000 will be taken from elsewhere.

LOOKING FOR FUNDING TO INFLUENCE NATIONAL POLICIES?

The Polden-Puckham Charitable Foundation offers grant funding to relatively small charitable organisations who are working to influence national beliefs or policies.

The main focuses for the foundation's funding are peace and sustainable security (to develop ways of resolving violent conflicts peacefully) and environmental sustainability (to promote sustainable living in the UK or address global environmental issues). Human rights work may also be supported especially if the proposed project is related to peace or environmental sustainability.

Organisations with incomes between £10,000 and £300,000 are eligible to apply for funding with grants of between £5,000 and £15,000 per year for up to three years.

The first deadline for 2010 is 12 March with another opportunity to apply due in the Autumn. The application process is electronic with projects receiving acknowledgement of their application within two weeks.

More information can be obtained from www.polden-puckham.org.uk



UPDATES FROM TARGETED S

Helping local people into jobs

The Bilston Development Project received Targeted Support Funding of £37,335 following the success of a 3-month Job Clinic pilot funded by Bilston East Neighbourhood Partnership.

The Job Clinics offer unemployed people a local venue where they can access support and advice, training provision, job search assistance, volunteering opportunities and signposting to partner organisations that can offer bespoke support.

Cheryl Welsh, Project Manager, said "The Job Clinics are realistic in their approach and recognise that a long-term support programme needs to be put in place for residents who have often been made redundant from long-term employment. We offer a friendly and informal setting to receive support that aims to move people into

training and employment at a pace they are comfortable with."

One local person who has benefitted from the job clinic is Glynn. He joined in June 2009 after being out of work for nearly a year. With support, Glynn enrolled on a programme of training leading to 5 qualifications. This led to him securing a full-time job with an upholstery firm. Glynn said "it was fantastic. I'm really grateful for the support. Without the clinic I would not have had the confidence to do any training. I did not have any computer skills or a computer at home so being able to go to the job clinic or library anytime I wanted to job search was a massive help."

The Job Clinic operates from Bilston Library every Monday 12.30pm-2.30pm and to date the Clinic sessions have supported over 80 clients. To find out more contact Cheryl Welsh on 01902 571165 or email Cheryl.Welsh@heantun.co.uk

Career development from the Bingley Centre

The Bingley Centre, located in the Graiseley area of the city, has offered a range of job search, training and career development advice for several years.

Early in 2009 staff identified that there were increasing numbers of residents approaching the centre for help writing and updating their CV's and asking for advice to upskill or retrain in order to find employment. Initially, the centre did not have funding to provide the appropriate support. Since being awarded £30,000 through the Targeted Support Fund, these services are now available.

The additional funding has enabled the centre to increase the hours of a staff member providing a dedicated support service for job seekers. A drop-in service now allows people to visit the centre at any time, get help to create or update their CV and complete application forms. Centre Manager, Kath Carrier, explained more, "The services we provide are all about getting people ready for employment. Residents are aware of the amount of competition for jobs and therefore want to ensure that they are qualified and experienced to the best of their ability. The information, advice and guidance we provide ensures that residents are made aware of the opportunities available to them."

Thus far the centre has assisted

SUPPORT FUND PROJECTS

WOLVERHAMPTON
NETWORK
CONSORTIUM
WORKING TOGETHER IN THE COMMUNITY

Development Bingley Centre



A client receiving support to update their CV at The Bingley Centre.

over 100 residents and some have already found employment. Many more have enrolled on accredited courses resulting in recognised qualifications and further opportunities to gain relevant experience have been offered through volunteer placements. The centre has also discovered there is a need for literacy and numeracy classes that residents can easily access and is hoping to develop services to meet that need in the coming months.

More information about the services at the Bingley Centre is available by calling 01902 311135, email bingleycentre@yahoo.co.uk or drop into the centre in Norfolk Road, Penn Fields, Wolverhampton.



Appropriate advice from BME United



An advisor helping a client at BME United.

Financial support of £33,350 from the Targeted Support Fund enabled BME United Ltd to meet increased demand for their advice services.

BME United's Information, Advice, Guidance and Advocacy Services (IAGAAS) project was set up in April 2009 and it was soon apparent that there was a high level of demand for their services. The funding enabled them to expand and, in the three months since the grant was awarded, a total of 605 individuals have been assisted and supported.

The project specialises in providing free information and support to members of the BME community who are often not aware of the range of public services available to them. Many members of this community face both cultural and language

barriers when trying to access services or apply for welfare benefits. BME United are able to offer advice in a variety of languages including Punjabi, Hindi, Gujarati and Urdu.

BME United carries out evaluations and internal monitoring of the project which consistently shows that they are having a positive impact and are meeting the needs of the community. This is further re-enforced by the positive comments from clients such as, "The services which I receive from BME United have been excellent and I would like them to continue with the services that they provide to the community."

BME United are based at 40 Bromley Street, Blakenhall, Wolverhampton and can be contacted on 01902 772600 or email bmeunited@btconnect.com. They also have a website at www.bmeunitedltd.co.uk

Have you heard Wolverhampton's Community Radio station?



WCR FM's Training and Development Manager, Lee Bannister, takes to the airwaves.

Hopefully you have, by now, tuned in to 101.8 WCR FM and discovered Wolverhampton's Community Radio station.

That's right, community. And that means the whole of the city of Wolverhampton and every single person who lives in it. When we say it's by the city, for the city and from the city we mean it. All of WCR FM's presenters are volunteers, people like you and me and we can train anyone interested in radio how to do it – free of charge! WCR FM is licensed to broadcast to the city of Wolverhampton and we do that on 101.8 FM. We also reach out to ex-pat Wulfrunians the world over with our high quality internet broadcast at www.wcrfm.com. Finally it's a Wolverhampton owned, not-for-profit company based in the heart of Wolverhampton at The Newhampton Arts Centre.

What's more we're open to all. If you, your community group, your local organisation, drama group, line dancing troupe, whatever, have a message or information to get to the city's folks we can do it for you, though we'd rather you did it yourselves – remember we'll show you how – all you need to do is make contact. And that's as easy as calling 01902 572260, emailing: info@wcrfm.com or a walk to 101.8 WCR FM, Newhampton Centre, Newhampton Road East, Wolverhampton WV1 4AP.

See you and hear you soon!

Steve Morris
Station Manager, 101.8 WCR FM

Lottery put their trust in Moreland

Wolverhampton based Moreland Trust recently discovered that their application to the Lottery's Reaching Communities programme had been successful, with funding totalling £346,239 being awarded over a three year period.

Project co-ordinator, Sylvia Campbell, said, "This is an exciting time for the organisation we will now be able to develop our plans and offer more culturally appropriate services to African Caribbean elders across the city."

The trust's mission statement is to identify and support the needs of African Caribbean elders in order to provide a good standard of health and social care as well as to give them an improved quality of life. They do this by offering a range of services including help with advice, support, volunteering, befriending, advocacy services and support with welfare benefit advice and appeals. Sylvia added, "We will continue working in partnership with various churches, local organisations, day centres and community groups to provide these valued services."

With the new funding, Moreland Trust has been able to recruit an additional full-time outreach worker and they hope to expand their services to reach more vulnerable elders and work towards providing a domiciliary service.

If you would like to get involved with Moreland Trust, they are always ready to welcome new members or volunteers. Please contact Sylvia Campbell on 01902 421155, email morelandtrust1@btconnect.com or visit their website at www.themorelandtrust.org



Chairperson & founder member, Essie Lewis, and Sylvia Campbell at Moreland Trust's office.

Making accounting interesting

Against all the odds, Wolverhampton Voluntary Sector Council's (WVSC's) Community Accounting Service has managed to prepare and deliver some interesting, engaging and useful accountancy training.

The series of three well attended sessions - 'The Simplest Bookkeeping Course Ever', 'Bank Reconciliations And How To Do Them' and 'Financial Reporting' elicited such responses as:

'I learned to manage my accounting in a much easier and thorough way.'

'If someone had explained this years ago, it would have saved me a great deal of work'

'Thanks to John and Chloe, three excellent sessions'

Overall 54% of participants rated the courses as excellent

and a further 42% thought they were good.

This has been the most recent in a range of training activities carried out by the Community Accountancy Service and more are planned on a regular basis. The three courses above will be repeated during 2010 along with other courses including 'Introduction To Quick Books' (a simple computer programme to help manage your finances), 'The Spirit of SORP' and 'Full Cost Recovery'.

You will see flyers and other publicity as each session approaches but, if you want to be kept directly



Community Accountant, John Higson, offering advice to an Asian ladies group at BME United.

informed, please contact John Higson or Chloe Parkins on 01902 328982 to receive early notification of the training as part of their email newsletter service.

Alternatively, email jhigson@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk or cparkins@wolverhamptonvsc.org.uk

Website launched for Wednesfield

An exciting new website has been launched to promote the Wednesfield area and all that goes on in it!

WV11.co.uk was created by Steph Jennings and James Clarke, two local residents, who were fed up with reading negative press about Wednesfield. The website covers local news and forthcoming events in the area. An online forum allows the public to post questions and get involved in discussions about issues that affect the local community. WV11 also opened a Facebook group to help publicise the website which generated 600 members within its first month!

When the local network 'Wednesfield Area Action Network' (WAAN) was approached about getting involved, Community Engagement Officer, Manjeet Singh, jumped at this great opportunity.

WAAN is now working closely with WV11, feeding stories, minutes from meetings and the latest news from the 32 WAAN members into the website. WAAN now has its own tab on the homepage, ensuring that you're just one click away from being kept up to date with information directly from the heart of the community. Look out for the WAAN logo (pictured here) on the site!

If you have any stories or information, including events,

that you would like to see promoted on the website please get in touch with Steph and James on 07855 409319 or email info@wv11.co.uk.

In addition, Manjeet Singh would also like to hear from you if you are a local voluntary or community group working in the Wednesfield area, and would like more information about WAAN. Contact Manjeet on 07852 340256 or email waan@hotmail.co.uk

In the meantime, happy surfing on www.wv11.co.uk



Getting to know....

Dina Parmar Patel



Staff at Wolverhampton Network Consortium (WNC) would like to wish a warm welcome back to Dina from her maternity leave.

Dina gave birth to her second boy, Prem, in February 2009 and he is now a happy and healthy 11 month old! Dina said "Getting into 'work mode' will take some time, so please be patient while I adjust to the changes!"

Dina will be supporting groups with external funding, using the Funderfinder software and other resources (see page 8). In addition to this work, Dina is undertaking outreach duties, offering support to groups who wish to apply for Grassroots Grants in the Tettenhall (WREN), Whitmore Reans (NOW) and Graiseley and Pennfields (GAPP) areas.

Dina is back on a part time basis, working Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday and can be contacted on 01902 572020 email dparmar@w-n-c.org

What is your idea of perfect health and happiness?

There is nothing that's 'perfect'. I think leading a healthy lifestyle, with good intentions in yourself and helping others around you, brings good health and happiness.

What is your favourite smell?

Babies – they smell so nice when they're small!

What is your favourite word?

Prem (meaning 'love'). This has a very deep meaning in the Hindu religion and can be interpreted in many ways. Love comes from within yourself and by doing good deeds to other people around you, you will always love others. (That's why we named our second child Prem).

What makes you depressed?

Work – only joking! Honestly though when my children fall ill I can't bear it at all.

How do you relax?

By being with my husband and spending time with him all to myself! (Whenever I manage to get this opportunity.)

What keeps you awake at night?

Both my children – one is teething very badly, he gets the other one up in the night.

Where would your ideal holiday destination be, and why?

It's always been Mauritius. I went there for my honeymoon - I'll never forget it. My wish was to go back there someday with my mum and dad because it's one place my dad used to say he would have liked to have gone – this never will happen now my dad is no longer around.

What single thing would improve the quality of your life?

To have my family nearer to me so that my children can be closer to them and see them more regularly.

When you were young, what did you want to be when you grew up?

A fashion designer – my dad used to be a tailor and I learnt everything from him. I really miss him being around!