

E-Bulletin – Issue 1, Spring 2011

Welcome to the Collaborative Communities E-Bulletin

The Collaborative Communities project supports the development of a robust and sustainable Third Sector by working with Third Sector organisations to address the multi-faceted issues of sustainability; organisational robustness, reduction in grant dependence and income generation. The project aims to prove and develop the unrealised potential of social enterprises as a particular type of service provider in our region by creating 6 to 10 exemplar social enterprises which fill market gaps in service delivery provision. It consists of 8 Partners: the County Voluntary Councils and County Councils in Carmarthenshire, Neath Port Talbot, Pembrokeshire and Swansea. 15 Officers work to support a robust and sustainable Third Sector. 4 Flagship Officers work to develop exemplar social enterprises with the potential to deliver significant social and economic benefits. The project provides expertise around:

- ⇒ Governance structures
- ⇒ Business planning
- ⇒ Financial management
- ⇒ Human resource development, including volunteers
- ⇒ Funding advice and support for all Third Sector organisations

Flagship Update

Collaborative Communities are working with Social Services Departments in the Local Authorities to develop feasibility studies and business plans on externalising services to Third Sector organisations. Care and Health Solutions were invited to speak at an event organised by Collaborative Communities to share their experiences of setting up and running a Local Authority Trading Company called 'Essex Cares'. For further information please contact Collaborative Communities (details below).

Example of an organisation assisted

Collaborative Communities officers have been working with a new organisation 'I Love Sketty Park' which has been established to support community cohesion in Sketty Park, Swansea. The group have become constituted, opened a bank account and received Community Cohesion money (WAG) and are hoping to run a series of community events to encourage and involve local volunteers.

Events and Workshops

- ⇒ 'Reducing Costs ... An Introduction to Collaboration'
 19th April, Llanelli Gate House. Voluntary organisations from the region were invited to this event where the benefits of collaboration and the advantages of increased buying power were introduced. A Collaborative Communities officer presented on the pros and cons of sharing and merging with other organisations. Presentations were then given by The Charities Buying Group, Utility Aid and Third Sector Telecom. www.charitiesbuyinggroup.com
- ⇒ 'Funding Strategy, Survival and Resilience Workshop'
 This two-part workshop has been successfully run in each county and will now be offered on a needs basis.

- ⇒ 'Carmarthenshire Trustees Network – Spring Training Day'
Monday 16th May, Carmarthen. Morning session 'An Introduction to VAT for the Voluntary Sector' presented by HMRC officers. Afternoon session 'Community Fundraising' presented by Collaborative Communities officers.

For further details on events and workshops please contact your local Development Officer or call 01269 590247, email contact@collaborativecommunities.org.uk.

Project Achievements

The project has to date assisted 132 organisations with over 7 hours of officer support. 9 jobs and 1 social enterprise have been created. Officers have supported organisations to draw down over £500,000 of funding. 3 organisations have been awarded finance from the Collaborative Communities Targeted Finance Package. 5 organisations have been assisted in improving their environmental management systems and their equality strategies and monitoring systems.

Targeted Finance Package

The Targeted Finance Package invests in the creation of new social enterprises, the expansion of social enterprise activities of existing organisations, and projects which increase financial sustainability in Third Sector organisations. For more details on the Targeted Finance Package please contact your local Development Officer.

- ⇒ Myddfai Community Project – awarded £25,924
The project is a rural and community regeneration project centred on a new development, Myddfai Community Centre and Visitors Centre. The activities of the centre and the future economic regeneration is underpinned by the commercial activities of the Myddfai Trading Company, these include business to business and direct retail of lifestyle products, inspired by the 'Physicians of Myddfai'. The finance has been awarded to fund a Business Development Manager and to cover the costs of graphic design, making the warehouse fit for purpose, computer hardware/software and acquisition of the lease. www.myddfai.com
- ⇒ FRAME – awarded £32,120
FRAME is a community re-use organisation, providing a much needed service to the County of Pembrokeshire. FRAME encourages and promotes the use of sound environmental practices by extending the useful life of furniture, bedding and curtains, clothing, bric-a-brac and other household items. They then offer low cost, pre-used items to individuals or families in need and also help to reduce the use of landfill refuse sites. FRAME provides a real work environment to individuals with or recovering from mental ill health, with a learning difficulty or suffering from social exclusion. The TFP award will enable FRAME to relocate to better sized and better located premises in Haverfordwest. The new premises will enable them to increase their offer of training and supported employment by increasing trading. www.pembrokeshire-frame.org.uk
- ⇒ Dyslecsia Cymru – awarded £25,286
Dyslecsia Cymru was set up as a charity in June 2001, to meet the needs of dyslexic individuals, their parents and carers in the Welsh language. In 2010 after reviewing the business plan and undertaking a comprehensive funding search it became evident that if Dyslecsia Cymru were to survive they needed to significantly develop their trading activity. The TFP award will enable them to employ a Business Development Manager. The position will allow the organisation to develop the business plan in terms of re-branding, website development, Welsh screening test and the specific marketing of a programme of courses tailored to meet the needs of the service users. www.welshdyslexia.info

Find out how Collaborative Communities can support your organisation:
www.collaborativecommunities.org.uk

Email: contact@collaborativecommunities.org.uk **Telephone:** 01269 590247