

## Happy partnerships start with a pre-nup

*Thinking of getting together? New guidance recommends written commitment*

Most people in the voluntary and community sector agree that partnerships are a good thing – although they don't always turn out as you planned.

To avoid partnership pitfalls and get the most out of your arrangement, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) recently recommended that organisations draw up 'pre-nuptial agreements' to keep things sweet.

According to our recent survey of members, the majority of groups in the South Hams are involved in some kind of collaboration or partnership. Those who responded were very positive about working in this way, citing benefits such as "sharing skills, resources, contacts, information and tools", and "raising the profile of our charity and generating referrals".

The Charity Commission goes further, stating that considering collaborative working is not simply advantageous, but a duty in cases where working together would be good for beneficiaries.

However, for small groups which have worked hard to establish a presence and are rightly proud of their unique characters, the idea of teaming up with another body can seem daunting.

There are many reasons why organisations decide to collaborate, from pooling knowledge and resources, to impressing funders who want to see evidence of partnership. However, the main consideration should always be the impact on beneficiaries. In other words, will collaborating help you to make a bigger difference?

Once you have decided that there could be benefits to joint working, you need to identify criteria for ideal partners. Having dreamt up your 'would like to meet' list, you can find and approach organisations which fit the bill. According to NCVO, anecdotal evidence suggests that your most suitable partner is likely to be an organisation working locally, with which you are already familiar through informal networks.

It is here, once both organisations have agreed that

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# Comprehensive Spending Review

Under the leadership of the new Minister for the Third Sector, Ed Miliband MP, the new Office of the Third Sector has commissioned HM Treasury to conduct a major review of the sector. The review will feed into the Chancellor's Comprehensive Spending Review on which the Budget is based.

It is important that as many organisations as possible respond, and that the voice of groups in Devon is heard.

Treasury Officials will be in Exeter on 21 September to meet representatives of local organisations. They are keen to include smaller voluntary and community groups, particularly neighbourhood and rural groups, disability organisations and BME communities.

The event will take place 12noon - 4pm at St James' Football Club in the city. Lunch will be provided.

For more information about how to take part, contact Exeter CVS on 01392 202055 or email [cvs@exetercvs.org.uk](mailto:cvs@exetercvs.org.uk)

Alternatively, you can respond online by visiting [www.hm-treasury.gov.uk](http://www.hm-treasury.gov.uk) and following links to 'public spending and services' and then 'Charity & Third Sector Finance Unit'.

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a collaborative project is a good idea, that smaller organisations may start to get cold feet. How do both partners ensure that the arrangement is equally beneficial? Who has the final say in decision-making? And how do you protect your interests if it all goes sour?

This is where NCVO's new guidance comes in. It recommends that organisations planning to work together create pre-nuptial agreements – otherwise known as partnership or joint working agreements. These can help identify potential problems before they arise and ensure that both parties are clear about their common goals.

Kate Aldous, from the Collaborative Working Unit at NCVO, said:

“We recommend being open with your potential partner, and setting out a written agreement before committing. The finished product can give clarity and focus to your work, help you to review your partnership, and of course is useful if you decide to go your separate ways. It certainly contributes to a happy and successful relationship!”

Detailed guidance on who to involve in drafting your agreement, what to consider and what it should contain is available from the Collaborative Working Unit's website at:

**[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborativeworkingunit](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/collaborativeworkingunit)**

Once you are armed with a well-thought out agreement, you can get on with the exciting business of achieving bigger and better things together. Congratulations!

## Devon Rural Carers' Project

As carers' groups know, people who care for others often miss out on opportunities for work, leisure and socialising. This situation can be made worse by isolation in rural areas. In Devon it has been recognised that there are gaps in the support available to carers in these isolated areas.

To address this need, Jo Pickering has recently joined Teignbridge CVS team to carry out a 2 year action research project. The project, which is funded by Defra, aims to involve more rural carers in support services and to improve these services in rural areas of Devon.

During her first year, Jo will be undertaking research which will be used to develop action projects in the second year. Successful projects will be recommended for incorporation into existing services where appropriate.

For further details contact Jo Pickering on 01626 203050 or email [ruralcarers@teigncvs.org.uk](mailto:ruralcarers@teigncvs.org.uk).

## **Someone is searching for you if....**

### **...you work with young volunteers**

Exeter's Ivy Project has been funded by Devon County Council to develop a youth volunteering strategy for Devon. To do this, they want to contact organisations in the county already working with young volunteers to find out what is working well and what isn't. Contact Laura Sperring, Project Development Worker, on 01392 686688.

### **...you are involved in healthcare**

Dilys Slater and Janine Hanchett, Patient & Public Involvement representatives at South Hams & West Devon Primary Care Trust, want to know what you think. They want to contact any local groups involved in health to find out your ideas for improving healthcare services, and discuss whether your group could get involved in the delivery of services in your community. They are also keen to answer any questions you might have about the PCT.

If you would like Janine or Dilys to come to your group for an informal chat, you can call them on 01803 861829 / 861967.

### **...you run a community transport service**

South Hams & West Devon PCT also wants to hear from local groups which provide community transport services, for inclusion in a new leaflet. Contact Janine Hanchett on 01803 861967 or email [janine.hanchett@shandwd-pct.nhs.uk](mailto:janine.hanchett@shandwd-pct.nhs.uk)

### **...you're part of a disabled people's group**

People with a disability or long-term health problem are being sought to become members of Equality 2025 – the UK Advisory Network on Disability Equality. This body will advise the government to help them design better services and policies. Being a member will take up between 20 and 25 days every year, over a two to three year period and members will be paid for this. Travelling costs and expenses will also be covered. Telephone 0870 609 4218, textphone 0870 609 4219, or email [equality2025@capita.co.uk](mailto:equality2025@capita.co.uk). Web: [www.equality2025.co.uk](http://www.equality2025.co.uk). Quote reference B 8518.

### **...your clients need home improvements**

Elizabeth Finn Care is seeking beneficiaries for home improvement grants in Devon. They support people who have lost their livelihoods and who have links to certain professions. Contact Angela Bailey, regional co-ordinator, on 01225 478 402 or email [angela.bailey@elizabethfinn.org.uk](mailto:angela.bailey@elizabethfinn.org.uk).

## **SHCVS training programme**

In this edition of Voluntary Vine you will find the new programme of training from South Hams CVS, in partnership with Teignbridge CVS.

There is an exciting range of courses available, covering everything from newsletters to funding and the law. Each bite-size course has been designed to meet the needs of local voluntary groups - so come along and learn in an friendly and supportive environment.

If you need another copy of the brochure, contact Lyndsey on 01803 862266 or email [cvs@southhamscvs.org.uk](mailto:cvs@southhamscvs.org.uk).

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## **Make a Difference Day 2006**

CSV's Make a Difference Day 2006 is on 28 October. This is a great way to get some publicity and recruit some volunteers by focussing on a single day of activity. There is lots of support for organisations as well as new projects. Go to [www.csv.org.uk](http://www.csv.org.uk) for a guide to the resources available to VCOs which want to take part, or call 0800 284533.

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**For relevant, up-to-date news throughout the month, don't forget to sign up for our FREE email bulletin services.**

**To join, contact [kate@southhamscvs.org.uk](mailto:kate@southhamscvs.org.uk)**

# Services from South Hams CVS

We have recently put together a new leaflet explaining the direct services on offer to voluntary and community groups based in the South Hams. It covers:

**Funding advice** - we can help you to look at all the options for funding your project, from putting on a fundraising event, to applying for grants and earning income. We will help you decide how much money you need and where to look for it, and go through the process of making funding applications with you.

**Development service** - we can help you plan for the future and avoid the pitfalls of running a voluntary group. Whether you run an existing group or have an idea for a new project, we are able to give you guidance on a host of topics. We run an outreach service so that if you cannot make it to our offices, you can benefit from development advice anywhere in the South Hams.

**Information service** - we ensure that local groups have access to the information they need to be successful. We provide this in a range of formats, from information sheets to e-bulletins. We can also help you look at your own information and make improvements to your promotional materials.

To order copies of the leaflet or to find out more about how to benefit from these services, contact Lyndsey on 01803 862266 or email [cvs@southhamscvs.org.uk](mailto:cvs@southhamscvs.org.uk).

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Local groups are encouraged to become members of South Hams CVS. This supports our work and offers a range of benefits. Contact us to find out more about joining.

A large print copy of Voluntary Vine is available on request.

**Please send your articles for inclusion in Nov/Dec issue.**

**Deadline: 10 October**

We reserve the right to edit submissions.

**Disclaimer** South Hams CVS cannot accept responsibility for any errors or omissions. Whilst every effort has been made to ensure details are correct, we cannot endorse events or items mentioned in this newsletter.

South Hams CVS is a member of the National Association for Voluntary & Community Action (NAVCA), the National Council of Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and Volunteering England.  
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## South Hams

### Voluntary Sector Forum

**The voice of voluntary groups in the South Hams**

The next meeting will be:

**Monday 25 September 2006**

**Follaton Village Hall**

**Totnes**

**9.30-1.00**

Come along to our friendly meetings to share your experience, meet others and catch up on the latest issues. This month we welcome Moses Warburton, Lead Commissioner for Patient Transport Services, to talk about the review of patient transport services in the SW Peninsula, and Julia Taylor, Regional Accessibility Champion, who will be talking about and demonstrating accessible IT equipment.