

## **Support to Organisations from Third Sector Partnership members.**

Each of the infrastructure core members of the Third Sector Partnership offer support to organisations, communities and where appropriate volunteers through its own services and offices which reflect the needs and demands from the distinct areas within which they operate. The support each partners offers is briefly outlined below.

### **1. Bute Community Links**

#### **Funding Support**

Our members have traditionally approached us in person (and over the phone) to provide funding and other support connected with setting up and running Voluntary Organisations. We, ourselves, have used electronic systems to support this (Funder Finder but in more recent times have referred to Grantfinder (one of our members uses this and highly recommends this).

We are also well served on Bute with local funding organisations/trusts etc which we have had great success accessing on behalf of/in support of our members. These funds are typically for the sole use of the Bute-based organisations. We also are well supported by individuals and local business on the Island who support us well with fund-raising.

As we have been established for over 25 years on Bute we are well-known, and easily accessible for people to “pop in” or phone and these are the most common forms of contact/access to us and that which we find works best for our Community here on Bute. Also, due to our geography (a large expanse of water surrounding us!) it is fairly easy to engage with most people and groups in the community (both urban and rural) and almost everybody on the Island is aware of our existence or knows someone who will point them in our direction!

With regard to TSP being first point of contact, I don't believe we are at that stage yet in our development as we have just started working together ourselves. We are setting out our strategy and operational arrangements and whilst this will progress over the summer, I think it's too soon to be in a position to “devolve” that as far as Bute is concerned. However, we do agree that from an access point of view, we need to make better use of the website.

#### **Access to Grantnet/Grantfinder**

See above

#### **Any other info.**

Bute Community Links, as per our latest quarterly return to SCVO was actively involved in supporting around 25% of our membership. This is slightly above the average over the last 12 month period. In terms of current activity, we are currently refreshing our database; I am busy getting out and about and meeting our existing members and re-establishing contact with those we have not have much to do with over recent time. We are also planning an “Awareness-Raising” event - embarking on a Voluntary/3<sup>rd</sup> Sector campaign on Bute running right through the summer culminating in some activity over the September Weekend to

involve as diverse a range of Voluntary and Social Enterprise organisation in Bute as possible. We are also working with Timebank-Bute to try and organise some training events in the near future (meeting beginning of June in terms of TNA).

## **2. Argyll Voluntary Action (Volunteer Centre and CVS)**

### **Office based**

- Through AVA offices at Oban, Lochgilphead, Campbeltown, Dunoon and Helensburgh and soon to be shared office with Bute Community Links for its Volunteer Centre activities in Rothesay.
- People can contact any office by email, telephone or in person. Some, such as our Helensburgh office also have Saturday opening hours each month to accommodate those who work during the week.
- Each office can either offer a response or redirect an enquiry to another office to cater for a wide range of topics and needs.
- Each office has FunderFinder, can assist with accessing Grantnet via ABC website and Oban office also accesses Grantsonline.
- In addition we have a range of printed material and information to help organisations in writing their proposals. There are also reference books available to look up further information.
- In the last 12 months 2,650 people visited our offices in person.

### **Person to person**

- AVA offers funding advice workshops and can offer training either to mixed groups or bespoke support and training in funding to organisations. As an organisation we do not believe that voluntary and community groups are best served by our staff writing funding proposals for them but prefer to equip others with the tools and skills they require to write their own proposals.
- Due to the current economic – and therefore funding – landscape we are aware that many groups are experiencing real problems and are currently developing an additional facility specifically designed to support groups through a time of crisis. This is intended to be available from August of this year.
- Bespoke support is available where circumstances make this the most appropriate and where sustainability of an organisation may be at risk. This is arranged to be mutually convenient and often includes advice around planning and strategic issues to empower a board of Trustees in future thinking.
- A further range of materials can be given to organisations accessing this level of support. In the last 12 months 139 resources were produced to support the sector.

### **Internet**

- The website portal for Argyll and Bute is the newly revamped (and still evolving) [argyllcommunities.org](http://argyllcommunities.org) which carries a much improved and expanded wealth of information, advice and current topics within its pages.
- In the last 12 months the website has had over 247,000 hits.
- Each of the TSP partners have their own website within the pages which they are able to update as they wish.
- A new development which is funded until October 2010 through FAB partnership is the Community Toolkit a vast resource for all voluntary and community groups which

is free to access and holds almost everything you could need. Information on the Toolkit is updated regularly and additional advice and information can be sought from our offices.

- Our database holds details for over 1200 community and voluntary groups and email alerts are sent out regularly and these include funding plus other news relevant to the third sector.

In addition to training and support related to funding – which is a small part of our activities, we also offer support and training across a range of subjects including:

- Range of topics from start up to governance, monitoring and evaluation, equality and diversity, range of HR topics, skills development eg communication, committee skills, confidence building and personal development, time management, OSCR training, payroll and tailored courses.
- We are sole Investing in Volunteers accredited provider, Learndirect centres and have ILA status, also CRBS training partner and Trusted Partner. Community engagement training, Representation and all volunteer modules available stand alone or as part of accredited training.
- In the last 12 months 325 new volunteers have been recruited, supported and are now contributing in a range of ways to their communities.

Annually we dealt with over 11,000 enquiries and received over 540 referrals from other agencies.

AVA also held 26 voluntary sector fora (now third sector fora), enabling third sector views to be taken into account strategically, and with ABSEN and input from the fora has developed representation mechanisms which should inform the work of the Third Sector Partnership.

AVA takes a proactive approach regularly seeking views to inform not only analysis of training needs but other support needs and emerging issues.

AVA is both a Volunteer Centre and a CVS and fulfils both functions, albeit with different geographic boundaries applying to each. A founder member of Third Sector Partnership, with ABSEN, AVA asserts its commitment to the voluntary and community sector and is active across a range of partnerships and cross-cutting themes appropriate to the sustainability of the sector.

### **3. Islay and Jura CVS**

#### **Funding and other Support**

Support is given to organisations from Islay and Jura CVS using a range of methods appropriate to its remote island location and geography. . IJCVS enquiries can be made by email or telephone and callers are able to make enquiries from locations which are local and accessible. The main office is located within the MacTaggart Centre which increases visibility and the Cybercafe hosts the CVS as an outreach service to enable access to Port Ellen communities and the surrounding area..

Additionally, Jura Development Trust is now providing support to CVS services through a funding arrangement from IJCVS and communities from Jura can access from the service point on Jura or again, by email or telephone.

IJCVS works with a range of partners to deliver training and funding support and where appropriate partners with the Volunteer Centre (AVA) and ABSEN as well as the Social Enterprise Academy to ensure that demands and requests are met in the most appropriate and effective method for each organisation.

IJCVS assisted collaboratively with the delivery of the TSP training project over the winter of 2009/10 and continues to provide island based training.

IJCVS is able to give funding advice and to access both Funderfinder and Grantnet; it also maintains its web presence. However, as an island CVS it is well known locally as are its staff and board members who are available to give advice.

Currently IJCVS are in the process of recruiting a Business Manager which will help strengthen services to local communities. It is anticipated this post will shortly be filled and this will enable this CVS to move forward with a range of projects and services. The village halls project for example, is nearing completion and this is an area critical to the support of island community life.

Other recent work has included employing a youth development worker supporting young island people and successfully introducing a range of activities through a programme during school holidays; liaison with the High School continues and the CVS is actively engaged in seeking further funding for part time youth work as an area needing support and therefore a priority for island communities.

IJCVS is a member of the Third Sector Partnership and currently supporting the MAKI Forward Together event where it is hoped the needs and voices of the islands will be heard.

#### **4. ABSEN. Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network**

##### **Funding Support**

Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network (ABSEN) offers a funding referral service to its members as well as to individuals, organisations and groups seeking to develop social enterprises. ABSEN will direct such enquires to appropriate and general grant-making funders such as Big Lottery and grant making trusts as well as to specific social enterprise funders such as First Port and Social Investment Scotland (SIS). However, it should be noted that the social enterprise sector is increasingly being urged to look at loan finance as part of their funding strategy and thus SIS offers a mixture of grant and loan whilst other funders such as 'Big Issue Invest' for example will only offer loans to social enterprise. Funding support in this sector is not therefore solely concerned with grants.

ABSEN does not operate a single point of contact system and enquires are therefore received from a variety of sources eg, direct from our own members, others who are referred to us by members, from TSP, Council colleagues, word of mouth etc.

Access to grantnet/grantfunder and other funding sources are advertised via the ABSEN newsletter and at our regular quarterly area-wide meetings. We refer people to the Argyll Communities website for regular generic funding information.

##### **Additional Support From ABSEN**

Social enterprises run businesses for social or environmental benefit and are independent of local and national government control. ABSEN is a membership organisation which

- Acts a peer support organisation;
- Offers business development support, capacity building and training opportunities.
- Represents and lobbies, locally and nationally, on behalf of its membership and the social enterprise sector in general.
- Works with local and national partners to services and support to social enterprises

To promote peer support ABSEN organises four quarterly meetings per year, issues a fortnightly newsletter. In conjunction with a variety of training providers partners ABSEN also promotes and runs training courses and training workshops for its membership. Also, with partner organisations eg, HIE, Argyll and Bute Council and Third Sector Division of the Scottish Government ABSEN promotes, organises and run conferences/Dragons' Den/seminars for its members and others.

Nationally ABSEN keeps abreast of national developments and seeks to influence national policy through its active membership of both the Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition and SENSCOT. As a social enterprise in its own right (with a 'Company Limited by Guarantee' legal status) ABSEN also tries to lead by example in generating its own additional income. Specifically it:

- Acts a consultancy (in a sub-contracting capacity) on behalf of HISEZ who are contracted by HIE to offer advice and support to social enterprises in the throughout the Highlands and Islands.
- Is commissioned by the Argyll and Bute Social Economy Partnership to deliver social enterprises outcomes against specific targets
- Is commissioned by the Scottish Government to deliver a targeted number of bespoke 'Business Health Checks' (BHCs) to local social enterprises (some seven ABSEN members are trained to deliver these BHCs thanks to local FAB funding)
- It charges an event management fee to others to organise events on their behalf
- Is currently funded by LEADER to increase the number and effectiveness of specific parts of its operations

ABSEN has its own Board of Directors elected from within its Membership. This Board sets ABSEN's strategic and operational objectives and its Chair acts as line manager to ABSEN's part time member of staff (works an annual average of 3 days per week) and ABSEN will shortly be appointing up to six part members of staff who will work approximately 4 hours per month to ensure greater contact and better responsiveness to Members at a local area level.

Locally, ABSEN is an active and founder member of the Third Sector Partnership, its part-time member of staff sits on the Council's Demonstration Board, worked in partnership with the Council to deliver a Public Social Partnership Pilot on behalf of the Scottish Government, represents the TSP on the Cowal and Bute LACPG, sits on the CPP Economic Thematic Sub Group and its Chair is a member of the HIE social enterprise advisory group.

## **Comment**

Between them the infrastructure organisations serve the entirety of Argyll and Bute, geographically and demographically. By working to preserve and further attract external funding we believe our services to be best value, responsive and critical to the third sector in Argyll and Bute.

Over coming months we will continue our partnership work, and monitor the effectiveness of the interface as it grows and responds to the changing landscape.