



community matters

Welcome to our December 2011 newsletter

Issue no. 111

A NEW AND EXCITING PROJECT

CAMEO (Come and Meet Each Other)

CAMEO is a pilot project for people who have found themselves single & isolated due to the death or separation of a partner.



The programme will consist of a series of workshops designed to equip participants with the practical skills their partner did in their relationship, which they now need to live independently. CAMEO will make a difference to isolated individuals by increasing their confidence and self-esteem, improving their quality of life and enabling each individual to feel they can make a positive contribution to their community through volunteering and access to further training.

Our first group started in November 2011 and has proved a huge success and we have two new groups starting in January 2012—If you would like to refer someone that CAMEO would benefit or if you would like more information



Please Contact: Sally Simms, sally.simms@vawk.org.uk 01892 530330 ext. 511

Social Media

VAWK is now speaking through Social Media! Follow us on Twitter https://twitter.com/v_a_w_k to find out all we're doing. Give us a like on Facebook <http://www.facebook.com/VAWKUK> to keep in touch, or follow us on LinkedIn <http://www.linkedin.com/company/voluntary-action-within-kent-vawk-> to share with your connections what we do.

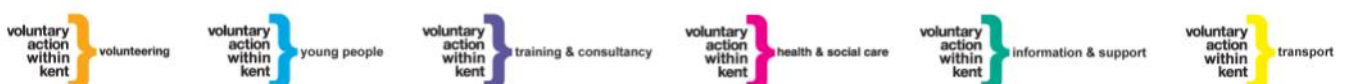


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We are continually seeking to improve the services that we provide and would be pleased to hear your comments on our newsletter. Is it clear and easy to read? Is the information useful to you and your organisation? Are there any areas that you feel we are currently omitting and that you would like to see included?

We would welcome positive feedback as well as suggestions for improvement and would appreciate you taking the time to contact us. You can email us on info@vawk.org.uk or call 01892 530330. Any comments will be treated in the strictest confidence.



Localism Act 2011

The Localism Bill was finally given Royal Assent this month.

The Localism Act 2011 will now be implemented across the UK. Communities and Local Government have published a [plain english guide](#) which is worth having a nosey at.

The five key areas of the act are as follows:

- Community Rights
- Neighbourhood Planning
- Housing
- Empowering cities and other local areas
- General power of competence

Community "work"

The Government have announced that people on Job Seeker's Allowance "who haven't found a job once they have been through a work programme will do a 26 week placement in the community."

Four key areas will be tested through Jobcentre Plus before the scheme is rolled out across the nation in 2013. The four pilot areas are Derbyshire, Lincolnshire, Nottinghamshire and Rutland, East Anglia and Leicestershire and Northamptonshire

These proposals form part of the Government White Paper, [The Universal Credit, welfare that works](#) published on 11 November 2011.

For more information check out the [BBC debate on community work](#) and also the [Guardian article on welfare reform](#)

Graduates "Springboard to Success" with first project of its Kind in Kent

Voluntary Action Within Kent in partnership with Sevenoaks District Council is offering Graduate Internship opportunities in the Sevenoaks District area. We work with a wide variety of different industries that can offer important experience and training for graduates to boost their CV. Opportunities are voluntary but out of pocket expenses will be paid. Whether you are the business interested in taking on a graduate or a graduate looking for an opportunity we can help!

For more information visit <http://www.vawk.org.uk/Volunteering/Graduate-Internship-Programme> or contact Liz James on 01892 530330 liz.james@vawk.org.uk

One million more people giving, but total donations flat

More than a million extra people donated to charity in the last financial year, but even so the total value of donations made by the British public remained flat at £11bn.

HMRC consults on applying new definitions of 'charity' to tax relief

HMRC has published a consultation on applying a single definition of "charity", "charitable company" and "charitable trust" to all UK charity tax reliefs and exemptions.

Time to talk to your LEP...

Many of us in the voluntary and community sector have struggled to find an issue on which we can engage with our Local Enterprise Partnership, and this has been partly due to a lack of external funding for LEP activity or a reliable source of income which has made it difficult for LEPs to "do" an awful lot.

The new [Growing Places Fund](#) announced by CLG gives voluntary and community organisations a valuable chance to talk to LEPs as each of the LEPs in the south east has been allocated several million pounds to spend on unlocking infrastructure projects which will deliver jobs and growth. The objective is for the fund to be invested by each LEP for a return so that the money can eventually be recycled. It is up to each LEP to decide how to use the fund, although there is a typical reluctance on the part of central government to implement its localism agenda completely....each LEP is having to complete a PQQ type activity before its funds are released!

The aim is for the funds to be released in January 2012, and 20th December is the PQQ deadline, so act quickly if you want to try and influence the decisions made by your local LEP on its spending priorities. Find out what your LEP is considering for this spend, and ensure that the impact on voluntary and community sector employers, employees, jobs and spend is taken into account in the final decision by the LEP. There is a real role for voluntary and community organisations particularly working across LEP boundaries to encourage some joined up thinking on how to maximise the impact of this fund.

This is a great opportunity for you to start a conversation with your LEP (or LEPs) – do it before Christmas. Contacts for LEPs can be found [here](#).

Pensions minister delays auto-enrolment for small charities till next parliament

Charities with less than 50 employees will be given an extra year to prepare for the implementation of automatic pension enrolment for workers, minister for pensions Steve Webb announced yesterday.

Government 'must involve the sector in the Youth Contract'

Umbrella bodies have welcomed the creation of the £1bn government fund to tackle youth unemployment but stress that the voluntary sector must be involved in its delivery.

Big Society won't happen overnight

Speaking last week about the Big Society at a DSC event, Charities minister [Nick Hurd MP said](#), "We are talking about massive, seismic cultural change here, it's not going to happen overnight. This is a ten to 20-year project, as far as I can see, and there is of course going to be a massive disconnect at this time. It's deeply frustrating to hear ministerial statements about what we want to happen and trying to match that with your experience on the ground."

Big Society independent audit

An [independent audit](#) of the Government's Big Society is being carried out by Civil Exchange in collaboration with independent research organisation, Democratic Audit, and social policy communications agency, DHA. They claim this will be the first comprehensive assessment of how far community empowerment, social action and the opening up of public services is being achieved. The Audit's first report is expected to be published early next year.

PKF warns of possible dilution of VAT exemption in HMRC note

Accountancy firm PKF (UK) has warned that a comment from the government yesterday in a guidance note regarding the cost-sharing VAT exemption may leave room for the Treasury to water down the proposals in the original consultation document.

Civil society leaders feel vindicated by MPs' criticisms of the Big Society

Charity sector leaders have welcomed MPs' recognition of the problems with the Big Society agenda, stating they are largely concerns that they have raised themselves.

Give the sector back its irrecoverable VAT, says select committee

If the government is serious about getting charities to help create the Big Society, it should give the sector back its irrecoverable VAT, an influential committee of MPs has recommended today.

Charities Act 2011 gets Royal Assent

The new law that consolidates all charity legislation for England and Wales received Royal Assent yesterday .

Commission launches mobile website

The Charity Commission has today launched a mobile version of its website to provide information to the public and charities.

Charities fear for their future, finds NCVO

NCVO's final Charity Forecast Survey for 2011 suggests charity leaders face a bleak 2012, with nearly two-thirds expecting their financial situation to worsen over the next twelve months.

People's Health Trust to consult on future grants

The charity which decides how the Health Lottery money is spent is to launch a consultation about future grants programmes after funding ten strategic partners across the country in its first round.

Community First

A reminder about the [Community First](#) funding which is being administered by Community Development Foundation.

Community First is an £80m government-funded initiative that will run for four years, until March 2015. The programme will help communities come together to identify their strengths and local priorities in order to plan for their future and become more resilient. It will fund both new and existing community groups.

£16.8m support fund for free advice services

Nick Hurd, Minister for Civil Society, has announced a new [£16.8 million central government fund](#) to help not-for-profit free advice services in England will be delivered by the Big Fund.

Garfield Weston

The [Garfield Weston Foundation](#) supports a wide range of organisations with grants of varying sizes. Recent funding has supported projects in the following categories: Arts, Community, Education, Welfare, Medical, Religion, Youth and Environment.

Marks and Spencer

[M&S store charity budgets](#) can provide small donations (up to £50 - and no doubt not just any £50...) to local charities including schools and hospitals. For more information phone Marks and Spencer 020 7935 4422

[BIG opens £10m fund for sustainable communities](#)

The Big Lottery Fund has launched a £10m fund for community partnerships that work towards financial, environmental and health sustainability in England.

Barchester Healthcare Foundation

The [Barchester Healthcare Foundation](#) is a registered charity that helps older people and other adults with a disability. Their focus this year is helping older people (65+) in our community, to improve mobility, independence and quality of life. These applicants receive their highest priority in 2011.

UK Children's Commissioners join forces to express concern over spending cuts

The four UK Children's Commissioners have called for an urgent reassessment of the impact of the Coalition Government's Spending Review on the needs of vulnerable children. In a [joint report](#) the Commissioners outline serious concerns at the high levels of persistent poverty across the UK.

They highlight the need for children to be given priority in national and local budgets so that vital children's services are protected.

IARS Research & Youth Policy Digest

Independent Academic research studies are inviting people to sign up to their new free [Research and Policy Digest](#). They say you will get 'information on changes in youth policy, new research, invitations to take part in consultation responses coordinated by IARS, offers to take part in research and other useful tidbits.'

Are you involved in Family Learning or work with families and children?

The [National Family Learning Network \(NFLN\) website](#) is a one stop shop for practical resources and support for anyone involved in family learning. Supported by the Big Lottery, it has free downloadable resources, news updates, job vacancies, events and the latest funding opportunities. Registration is free and takes less than a minute.

Kent Safeguarding Children Board

The voluntary sector has representation on the Kent Safeguarding Children Board. Stephen Bell from Kent Children's Fund Network and Stephen Debrowski from Action for Children will share the role.

FREE minibus transport

Available for all Dial 2 Drive members
(January to March 2012)

Routes to local supermarkets

Mon Weald -Riverhill - Sevenoaks

Tues Shoreham - Otford

Wed Westerham -Brasted -Sundridge -Riverhead

Thurs Kemsing -Seal -Sevenoaks

Fri Halstead -Knockholt -Dunton Green -Riverhead

Timings

9.30-10.30am

Passengers collected from home address

10.30-12pm

Shop and use the café

12 -1pm

Passengers delivered home



01732 469000

Please phone early to book your seat as spaces are limited



Kindly sponsored by Sevenoaks Lions Club

The Future of Social Care Ltd

The Department of Health has now concluded its initial engagement exercise in relation to [Caring for our future: Shared ambitions for care and support](#). To read the response RAISE has prepared, following contributions from their Members, please [click here](#). The RAISE response is being included within the response being submitted by [Regional Voices](#).

Patient and public engagement in the new commissioning system

Achieving effective patient and public engagement (PPE) has been a cornerstone of NHS policy for many years.

[This paper](#) draws on a round-table discussion held by the NHS Confederation in August 2011 to consider the critical issues which clinical commissioning groups will need to address in developing approaches to meaningful and effective PPE.

Operating Principles for Health and Wellbeing Boards

At an event held in July 2011, a number of national organisations developed a set of [operating principles](#) to support the effective establishment of health and wellbeing boards.

These operating principles are designed to be a realistic and practical response to supporting health and wellbeing boards. They are intended to help board members consider how to create really effective partnerships across local government and the NHS.

NHS Commissioning Board

[The NHS Commissioning Board](#) officially launched as a Special Health Authority on 31 October 2011. The role of the organisation is to make all the necessary preparations for when it takes over its full range of responsibilities in April 2013. In the meantime, all current NHS planning and delivery responsibilities remain with the Department of Health, strategic health authorities and primary care trusts.

Neighbourhood Planning

Following on from the Localism Act, the Government have launched a consultation on the technical details for [neighbourhood planning](#).

Reports from Joseph Rowntree

Joseph Rowntree have recently published two reports which are worth a look at.

[White working class views](#) on neighbourhood cohesion and change.

[Monitoring poverty and social exclusion](#) is the annual report on the state of poverty and social exclusion in the UK, from the Joseph Rowntree Foundation and the New Policy Institute..

Promoting independence the future of housing

In a recent report, LGiU (Local Government Information Unit) looks at what the reduction of the [Supporting People grant and the removal of the ring fence means for the future of housing related support](#).

Exploiting the opportunities in social impact

This new Third Sector Research Centre report ([free to download](#)) explains how measurement can make organisations more entrepreneurial.

The voluntary sector workforce - all the facts and figures

NCVO's new workforce almanac produced with Skills - Third Sector and TSRC looks at overall size and characteristics of the workforce alongside a focus on recruitment, training and apprenticeships within the sector.

[Download](#) your free copy (PDF 495KB) or [contact NCVO](#) for a hard copy.

Access the [tables](#) (Excel 5.7MB) behind the Workforce Almanac.

[Download the presentation](#) (PPT 2.71 MB) [or view it on slideshare](#).

My Community Starter

Zurich has launched a [free online resource](#) for people who want to get involved in organising small, straightforward community activities. At this weeks conference, Zurich's Paul Emery, who is also Chair of Community First for Portsmouth, explained how it it can support members work. It provides guidance on some legal, health and safety, insurance and planning issues, there is also a useful tool that creates a free Community Toolkit Pack.

Your views on TUPE?

The Department for Business, Innovation and Skills (BIS) has issued a call for evidence in relation to TUPE, with a view to considering whether it is overly bureaucratic and needs changing. NCVO has launched its own survey to ensure the perspective of voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations on TUPE is heard by BIS and is collecting views through a Survey Monkey questionnaire.

The deadline for responses to NCVO is 20th January, after which ACEVO will be organising a roundtable discussion with Government, based on the findings. If you would like to feed in your views on TUPE please [click here](#).

Trustees guide on commissioning breaks records

[At Your Bidding](#), the free guide to commissioning for Trustees produced by NAVCA's Local Commissioning Unit and the LGA, has proved to be our most popular publication this year.

The guide is still available to download. Have you told trustees in your area about this publication yet?

CES Jargonbusters

www.jargonbusters.org.uk is a brand new website from CES and the Jargonbuster group. It is dedicated to providing clear and simple definitions of the key terms usually used to describe what organisations are doing and the difference their work is making.

It is a great, free, go-to resource for third sector organisations, funders and government and regulatory bodies alike. Not only is it a really useful tool in making sure that everyone is speaking the same language, but it will also give organisations consistent information to help them to understand, plan, review and develop their projects in a systematic way and become more effective at what they do.

Visit the [Jargonbuster website](#) for detailed definitions, practical examples and information about the language used when talking about what your goals, your activities and your achievements.

Welcome to our Spring 2012 Training Programme

We are pleased to announce the latest training opportunities from January 2012 – April 2012

Voluntary Action Within Kent; Training and Consultancy aims to provide high quality training that meets the needs of the voluntary and community sector in an ever changing climate. We offer a training programme, bespoke training and facilitation.

Our courses are aimed at voluntary and community organisations; however they are open to statutory organisations and others.

Our Spring training programme includes the some of the following training courses **Introduction to an Outcomes Focus—of key importance as increasing organisations are being asked to monitor against not only their outputs but also their outcomes, Tendering skills, Supervision and Appraisal skills** and **Diversifying your income**, full information regarding all of our courses can be found on our NEW website please do have a look. [Click here](#)

For more information, contact Angela Holland angela.holland@vawk.org.uk or Diane Brenham diane.brenham@vawk.org.uk alternatively call 01892 530330

Voluntary Action Within Kent is a provider of courses accredited by the Open College Network South East Region. For Open College Network accredited courses; pre and post course work will form part of the course and will need to be completed for accreditation.

**** Organisations can choose whether to go for the Open College Network (OCN) accredited course (£50) or for the non-accredited course (£40).**

The difference being the former will enable participants to receive a certificate accredited by the Open College Network South East region, participants choosing the latter will receive a certificate of attendance from VAWK.

Course	Date and Time	Venue	Cost
Introduction to Tendering Skills	1.2.12 – 9.30am-1.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	£35 per person
CIEH Level 2 Health Award in Health and Safety	7.2.12 - 9.30am-4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	£60 per person
Diversifying Your Income-	9.2.12 -10am-1pm	The Angel Centre, Angel Lane, Tonbridge, Kent TN9 1SF	This workshop is provided for free through the Funding Buddies Project, operated by Action with Communities in Rural Kent through the BASIS 2 Big Lottery stream of funding.

Course	Date and Time	Venue	Cost	
**An Introduction to Supervision and Appraisal Skills	15.2.12 9.30am-4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	OCN Accredited	Non OCN accredited
			£50 per person	£40 per person
**An Introduction to Minute Taking Skills	29.2.12 9.30am-4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	OCN Accredited	Non OCN accredited
			£50 per person	£40 per person
** Introduction to Management Skills	7.3.12 9.30am – 4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	OCN Accredited	Non OCN accredited
			£50 per person	£40 per person
Fire Marshall/ Warden Training	15.3.12 – 9.30am-1.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	£40 per person	
Appointed Person First Aid in the Workplace	16.3.12 9.30am – 4pm	Broadmead Church Hall Broadmead Tunbridge Wells Kent	£60 per person	
An Introduction to Volunteer Management	21.3.12 – 9.30am-4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	£40 per person	
**An Introduction to Outcomes and Impact	28.3.12 9.30am-4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	OCN Accredited	Non OCN accredited
			£50 per person	£40 per person

Course	Date and Time	Venue	Cost	
**Presentation and Public Speaking Skills	3.4.12 9.30am- 4.30pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	OCN Accredited	Non OCN accredited
			£50 per person	£40 per person
Safeguarding Children – Child Protection basic awareness	5.4.12 – 9.30am-1pm	Voluntary Action Within Kent - 17-19 Monson Road Tunbridge Wells Kent	£20 per person KSCB certificated	

How to book

Booking is very easy. You can now download a booking form on-line at www.vawk.org.uk or email Diane Brenham at diane.brenham@vawk.org.uk for a booking form.

Also you are now able to book online via our website and pay by credit or debit card.

Please note payment in advance secures places as per our booking form.

Alternatively call Angela Holland or Diane Brenham on 01892 530330.

We can tailor training to meet your needs and can deliver to just your organisation, or you can share the course with another organisation to split the cost and improve working relationships. Costs are based on your requirements, length of session. Topics include funding and fundraising, monitoring and outcomes, roles and responsibilities of management committees, development planning and collaboration.

We can also facilitate sessions for your organisation and potential partner organisations looking at collaboration, change management, troubleshooting, strategic planning and ideas generation.

If you are interested please contact Angela Holland on 01892 530330 or email angela.holland@vawk.org.uk. The cost for this specialised service is on application.

Merry Christmas and best wishes for the New Year from the Training Team.

Thinking of volunteering?

To find out about some of the opportunities currently on offer in your area, the first port of call can be to look on our website www.vawk.org.uk; go to the volunteering tab, then you can search by postcode and distance of travel. This can be from home, work or another venue you wish to use as your starting point. It is then possible to select your interests and the site will produce some suggestions for you. If you like the look of one or two you can apply online. Someone from the Volunteer Centre will then contact you and the organisation to 'match you up'. If you don't have access to the internet or would prefer a face to face interview please contact your local Volunteer Centre to arrange for an interview date.

There are many ways to volunteer – regularly e.g. once a week, flexibly – as and when needed, or as a one-off – for an event. You can choose the amount of time you would like to give, after work, weekends, holidays or during the day. Volunteering is a great way to meet new people, learn new skills, build up confidence to return to work or share the skills you have developed whilst working and 'give something back' to the community. There is a vast range of opportunities on offer from sports to admin, IT to reading, being a trustee to playing music.

If you have been referred to the organisation from the Volunteer Centre and either cease volunteering, are still happy in your role or have changed role, please let us know, so we can keep the database correct.

For more details please contact:

Volunteer Centre Sevenoaks
01732 454785 volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Tunbridge Wells
01892 530330 volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Support Tunbridge Wells Charity Shops!

Volunteers are needed in charity shops across Tunbridge Wells. If you enjoy meeting people, then a customer-facing role might be just what you're looking for; you will help the public select goods or work on the till. Or if you prefer to stay behind the scenes, then there are opportunities to sort, price and label items for sale. You may have an eye for design and want to be involved in display and merchandising. You will be helping charities raise valuable funds to support their work.

Volunteering in a charity shop is also a great way to add to your CV!

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Upz and Downz C.I.C

Do you have experience or an interest in woodwork, cooking/catering or horticulture?

Upz and Downz C.I.C is an exciting new project based in Southborough. Learning Support Assistants are needed to assist young people with learning disabilities to learn new skills. You will work alongside them as they gain accredited qualifications and produce goods that will be sold on. The training is provided by paid tutors and your role will be to support students in all aspects of learning including practical work.

This is a great opportunity to share your enthusiasm and experience whilst supporting young people to gain skills that will prepare them for future work.

There is also a site near Pembury where land is being developed for use for horticultural training.

Volunteers are needed to help prepare the plot; this is heavy work and you will need to be reasonably fit.

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or Tunbridge Volunteer Centre on 01732 357978. Alternatively, email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Winter Shelter Volunteer Appeal

Could you offer warmth, compassion and care to homeless people? The Tunbridge Wells Churches' Winter Shelter needs volunteers. The 10-bed scheme will run on Friday, Saturday and Sunday nights for one month from 13th January 2012.

There are a variety of roles and shifts available, including setting up beds and tables, cooking, welcoming and talking to guests, ensuring the safe and smooth running of the shelter, as well packing up and leaving the venue clean and secure. Overnight shifts are also available (half sleeping/ half waking). Volunteers are at the heart of this project and you will make a real difference to people's lives. For more information, contact Joelle Laws, Project Manager on 07565 220 853.

Website master

Are you interested and experienced in web design? Would you like to put your creative talents to the test? If so, this is the opportunity for you!

Tunbridge Wells Mental Health Resource Centre urgently requires support with the development of their new website. As a website master, you will help introduce the use of social media such as Facebook and Twitter, as well as maintaining and updating the website with direction from centre staff. The position is as and when required but with a guideline response time of 48 hours. It is expected the updates will be weekly but the social media updating will be more frequent.

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Befrienders wanted!

Could you spare a few hours a week to make a positive impact on the life of a young person? Befrienders are required in Tonbridge, Tunbridge Wells, Sevenoaks, Seal/Kemsing, Snodland, Cranbrook, Newenden, Marden/ Paddock Wood, Matfield, Hildenborough and Fordcombe.

121 Befriending matches local volunteer befrienders with young people aged 9 - 16 years who may be on the Autistic Spectrum, vulnerable, socially isolated, or young carers. Volunteers meet regularly with their young person giving them individual attention, building their trust, listening without being judgemental and sharing in fun and everyday activities.

Volunteers give that extra bit of support to young people and their families who may be struggling to manage an illness or coping with extra demands on their family.

A successful befriending relationship depends on a good match between a young person and their befriender. Perhaps you share an enthusiasm for dance, music, art, swimming or shopping? Or you have an interest in animals, fishing, cooking, tractors or steam engines? Whatever your interests and skills, you may be the perfect befriender for a young person who is on the waiting list right now.

This is a flexible role but you will be fully committed to a minimum of 2 hours per week for 6 months and to be a consistent presence in the young person's life during this time.

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Enthusiastic Volunteers Available!

More and more people are looking to volunteer which is great news! We have a number of enthusiastic and motivated volunteers with additional needs who are keen to find placements. Perhaps your organisation could accommodate a volunteer who needs a little extra time to learn tasks or to work alongside someone else? Or maybe you have room for a volunteer who would attend with their support worker?

If your organisation can offer a valuable opportunity to someone with additional needs, then we would love to hear from you! The volunteering team can offer advice to develop appropriate roles and good practice.

Digital Switch Over Champions

Do you have an interest in technology and digital television? Action with Communities in Rural Kent are recruiting a team of volunteers to give community talks about The Digital Switch Over . The Switch is due to start in 2012 and it is estimated that only 60 to 85% of the population in Kent are ready to make the switch.

Volunteers will take the initiative to research local opportunities and set up talks in their locality. You will visit lunch clubs, pop-ins, social groups, day centres and other meeting points to give a 15 minute presentation and to answer any questions people have regarding the switch. Target groups are the elderly, learning disabled adults, mental health groups, ESOL groups and people with disabilities (e.g. arthritis).

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Volunteers needed in Crowborough!

Would you like to make a difference to the happiness and well-being of older people?

High Broom Care Home in Crowborough needs volunteers to support the activities of their residents. Flower Arranging Activity Leader- Are you passionate about flower arranging? Could you inspire and support a small group of residents at High Broom care home to create flower arrangements twice a month? This is a great opportunity to enrich the lives of older people.

Poetry and Literature Activity Leader- Do you have an interest in poetry and literature? You will lead a small poetry and literature group once a month. This involves reading classical poetry and short stories to the group and taking part in discussions.

Sing-a-long Leader- Can you play an instrument? Do you like an old-fashioned sing-a-long? The residents at High Broom care home have songbooks and a piano but need someone to play and lead the group so that they can join in singing. A pianist is preferred but anyone who can play an instrument is welcome.

Activities Buddies- could you spare a few hours a week to support the residents to attend the in-house activities? Residents would like support to get from their rooms to the activity and perhaps some support to participate.

Or maybe you could sit and have a chat over a cup of tea and swap stories with someone on a one to one basis? The residents have a lot to share with you.

For details, contact the Tunbridge Wells Volunteer Centre on 01892 530330 or email volunteering@vawk.org.uk

Edenbridge Outreach

THE BRIDGES CENTRE
High Street
Edenbridge
Kent
TN8 5AJ

t 01732 454785
e volunteering@vawk.org.uk
w edenbridgevolunteers.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Sevenoaks

Knole Academy West
Bradbourne Vale Road
Sevenoaks
Kent
TN13 3LE

t 01732 454785
e volunteering@vawk.org.uk
w sevenoaksvolunteers.org.uk

Volunteer Centre Tunbridge Wells

Voluntary Action Within Kent
17-19 Monson Road
Tunbridge Wells
Kent
TN1 1LS

t 01892 530330
f 01892 532539
e volunteering@vawk.org.uk
w tunbridgewellsvolunteers.org.uk

noticeboard

Businesses in the Community

This year an increasing number of businesses across West Kent are showing an appetite to become more involved in their communities. A number of businesses are keen for teams of employees to be available to voluntary and community organisations to carry out tasks that may not otherwise be easily achieved.

Teams of volunteers from local businesses have previously carried out the following: redecoration of a community centre playroom and a charity shop, groundwork and land clearance, restoration of a community centres garden, running of a supported reading scheme for a local school, pond and ditch clearance, preparation work at a market garden, helping to reclaim a local cemetery and making wildlife friendly, holding events to raise awareness of local community groups, offering pro bono work/advice, contributing volunteers to a community transport scheme and the list goes on.

To help make the most of these offers of support from businesses, and to help further develop links between local organisations and their business community I would be grateful to hear from any VCO's in West Kent that could benefit from group volunteer support. So please put your thinking caps on, and consider what your organisation would do if it could, through a team action. No idea is too whacky or wonderful, and in some cases businesses may also contribute to materials like decorating materials etc. I would like to create a wish list for West Kent VCO's so that we are able to meet the demand from local businesses. Many on-going relationships have been forged from previous action days.

If you do have activities or would like to discuss further please do get in touch with me, Jon Weller, Business Manager, VAWK 01892 530330 or jon.weller@vawk.org.uk

National Trust Octavia Hill Awards

Do you know someone who's campaigned tirelessly to protect a patch of green space? Have you got a favourite teacher who's inspired you to do something for nature? Is there a famous person you admire who's challenging the system?

If so, they could be a candidate for our new Octavia Hill awards.

The [National Trust Octavia Hill Awards](#), are looking for candidates for the new Octavia Hill Award. The deadline for applications is 16 January.

Free Planning Advice

Planning Aid England are promoting a fantastic service provided – they can provide 15 minutes worth of free planning advice via their advice line: 0330 123 9244. Their qualified Planning Advisors will provide all callers to the Planning Aid advice line with up to 15 minutes of give free and independent advice. Some cases will qualify for further assistance and will be passed to a professionally qualified volunteer.

More information can be found online at <http://www.rtpi.org.uk/planningaid>

The views expressed in this publication should not necessarily be taken as VAWK policy. Whilst every care is taken to provide accurate information, VAWK undertakes no liability for any error or omission.

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