



Developing Communities



South Downs
Council for Voluntary Service

Project News

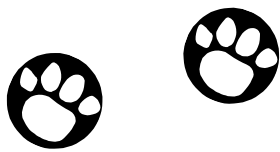
Autumn 2007

This is the newsletter for the Developing Communities Project, which aims to support individuals to have a voice by providing training, support and a platform to empower community involvement

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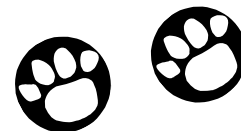
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What drives YOU wild?



'What drives you wild?' is the new initiative for the Developing Communities Project and is a great opportunity for individuals to have their say regarding issues affecting their lives. We will publish a selection of views in a section of each project newsletter (see page 3 for this issue). If you would like to tell us what drives you wild, particularly in terms of access, disability, disadvantage, discrimination or unfairness in today's society (or if organisations and local groups would like to consult their members), please tell us your views by email, telephone, letter or in person if you would prefer. We will be organising events in Lewes District around people's views in a Question-Time format and invite those who are involved in implementing change in society to be on the panel. We will be announcing our first event shortly, so watch out for details coming your way soon!

In the meantime, please tell us.....What drives YOU wild?



issue
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Large print version available on request.
For an electronic version, please ask to join our e-mail list.

We welcome you to
contact us

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Developing Communities Project Update

**By Pam Mitchell,
Developing Communities Manager**

Every time I write an article for the newsletter, I say that the Developing Communities Project is going from strength to strength. As you will see from this newsletter, I don't lie!!!

Since I last wrote, we have run an empowerment training course with brain injury survivors (see photograph). This was an intensive 2-day training course in consultation with Headway Hurstwood Park, funded by Disability Means Business and facilitated by Sarah Playforth. Service users were really enthusiastic about the training. As one participant put it: "*We are people with a brain and we can talk too.*" Participants from this course are now looking to start a Service User Forum.



Photograph: Empowerment training course participants

We are hoping to offer similar training to other "client groups". If you, or the people you work with, might have an interest in this, please call us. We are particularly interested in

running training for groups or individuals who would like to develop the skills to contribute to or lead changes in their local communities or have issues around areas such as ethnicity or disability where they would like to see change.

The launch of the "What Drives You Wild?" campaign and identity will give us a really good way to focus on what changes people would like to see. We are asking people to email or write to tell us about where they would like to see things changing in today's society – or where unpopular changes are on the horizon (for example, the Princess Royal Hospital in Haywards Heath). We will be launching postcards to make this easier.

We will publish a selection of comments and stories in each issue of the newsletter. We are also aiming to use your suggestions to run one or more 'Question Time' events, giving people the chance to put questions in person to a panel of people who will be able to advise on how we can make things change.

The Developing Communities Project is also interested in any ideas you have of helping people to improve local communities in Lewes District. If you have anything you would like us to help with, please get in touch.

If you don't have a specific idea, we can organise a "coffee and cake" consultation morning in your local area to give people the chance to get together for a discussion and to explore common interests – or to discuss your local community and perhaps start to change "What Drives You Wild?".



What drives YOU wild?

This section is our new initiative that provides an opportunity for individuals to have their say about issues affecting their lives

Have a voice...

What issues are affecting your life that you wish could change to make your life better?

We are particularly concerned with issues in terms of access, disability, disadvantage, discrimination and unfairness in today's society. So please tell us...

...What drives YOU wild?

Through our events, project newsletter and website (a working progress at the moment!) we would like to increase awareness of these issues, help to build partnerships in communities and society and work towards creating change to improve people's lives. Most importantly, it is the individuals voices that we want to be heard and the Developing Communities Project can support people to do this.

Our first contributor for this section of the newsletter is Annette from Peacehaven discussing accessibility issues.

Events

Watch out for details of our upcoming **Question-time** events which will be based around issues that people tell us about.

"What drives ME wild, as a disabled person, is that I live 7 miles from Brighton...only 7 miles. I adore Brighton and what it does and has—love the vibe—but couldn't live there as it doesn't have the sort of housing I need (a bungalow). I moved to Peacehaven as I thought it would be easy to get in to Brighton from here.

Here's my reality.

I cannot use public transport. There are no community buses going to Brighton from here. Taxis cost in the region of £18 one way....result? I am just up the road from my dream but pretty much unable to access it!

Where I used to live, in Croydon, there was a taxi scheme whereby a disabled user paid a flat rate for up to 10 miles, and then the 'going' rate from there on, if the journey was more than that in distance. I would be deliriously happy to have such a scheme here, which would allow me the freedom I came here for.

I never in my wildest dreams thought that a paltry 7 miles could cause such a seemingly unbridgeable chasm.

Thank you for letting me get that off my chest."

Annette, Peacehaven.



Your Voices

This section features personal accounts of individuals tackling issues through overcoming barriers, finding a voice and engaging with others in their community to create change

Ears of a Caveman

**Hearing loss- A life changing experience
By one of the staff members at
East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre**

“Ten years ago I started to get strange noises in my ears. I went to the doctor and he diagnosed me with Tinnitus. Tinnitus comes from the Latin word “tinnire”, which means “to ring”. This was at times a really unpleasant companion and one I was unable to get rid of.

This was the start of my hearing loss. What had gone wrong for this to happen to me? Well- looking back it is not hard to understand. Over 30 years in the print industry- exposed for hours on end to the noisy bedlam of a press hall had damaged my inner ears. When I started work Health & Safety was not a big issue, fortunately today it is. If I'd had the power to look into the future and see the damage I was doing, I would have taken a great deal more care.

The years rolled on by and things gradually, very gradually got worse. I would sometimes be asked a question and answer with something out of context or pretend I had heard the question and try to decipher what I thought I had heard. We all enjoy a laugh. My workmates did and sometimes I would laugh with them. But as often happens, a joke can become too personal and it starts to hurt. A little at first, then a lot. On a social level, I found I was finding it harder to interact with large groups of people, this made me try to avoid them. I found myself becoming more withdrawn, not wanting to meet new people

or engage in conversation. Things had to change!

A year ago I got my hearing aids. Sounds I hadn't heard in years were there. I felt I had reconnected with the real world. They say that if you took a caveman and placed him in the middle of a large town or city, the noise would drive him insane- he would not be able to cope. When I got my hearing aids it took time to adapt.

We often these days talk about discrimination, whether it be racial, sexism or disability. In my own experience, discrimination against people who are deaf or have hearing loss is commonplace. We must try to change people's attitude.

I am now working for East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre, which is working hard to help people's understanding of deafness.”

For more information on East Sussex Hearing Resource Centre and hearing loss issues, please contact Teresa Davis on 01323 722505 (voice, text, fax) or via email teresa@eshrc.org.uk

4 million people in the UK it is thought could benefit from a hearing aid

230,000 adults in the UK suffer from tinnitus to a degree that has a severe effect on their ability to lead a normal life

www.rnid.org.uk

On behalf of Jo Fisher, Founder of the Fibromyalgia Support Group for Surrey and Sussex

“Jo founded the group in 2003. I joined in 2004. Jo, diagnosed with FMS in 2001 formed the Group to help fellow sufferers in Surrey and Sussex. Membership is now over 500 and regular meetings are held in Crawley and Worthing in West Sussex, in Eastbourne and Bexhill in East Sussex, and less frequently in Surrey.

Jo found no help for dealing with her condition within the NHS. She joined the FibromyalgiaUK organisation and trained as a helpline volunteer. Seeing the need for more support for local people she started her own helpline and called the first meeting in Crawley. Since then the Group and its activities have grown exponentially. Jo has learnt all she can about fibromyalgia which is a painful condition affecting the nervous system and soft tissues with side affects like sleeplessness, fatigue, often overlapping with other conditions. Most information available hailed from the USA where considerable research has been undertaken.

Now under the title of Development Officer, Jo works with a team of volunteers who strive to affect a better quality of life for members, not only by the monthly meetings but with weekly yoga and water exercises in various centres offering therapeutic activities. There is a bi-monthly magazine and a website, both offering information and advice, a library of books, tapes and CDs available at meetings. Jo has attended conferences in America to broaden her own knowledge, equipping her to give even more help and support to sufferers in this area. She is now concentrating on new services for children and young people who are found to be afflicted too.

Jo has changed the lives of many sufferers from being pain ridden and depressed to being able to manage their pain and become optimistic about life. She gave them their life back!

Many success stories are recorded on the Group's website, together with loads of other information relevant to fibromyalgia.

<http://www.fibromyalgia-south.com>

For further information or help, please phone 01403 733335 between 10am and 4pm

Monday-Friday.”

Fibromyalgia is the second most common diagnosis in rheumatology clinics

According to a US website
www.mamashealth.com

If you would like to tell your story, the Developing Communities team would love to hear from you so please do get in touch

Accessibility of information

The Developing Communities Project team aim to make our work as accessible as possible so that the highest number of people can benefit from the opportunities available and greater awareness of issues can be achieved. To this end, we would welcome your comments, whether it is to express your liking of the newsletter or to suggest some improvements...all will be appreciated!

Disclaimer

Notices of publications, events and services do not carry any endorsement by this organization and the information contained in this document does not necessarily represent the views of the editor, the Developing Communities project or any member of South Downs CVS staff.

Community Involvement Network

Forum for local groups and individuals to share information and encourage involvement in communities

Justice for Carers

There are about 6 million carers in the UK today, succumbing to emotional blackmail by our present government into working 24 hours a day, seven days a week for the princely sum of £48.15 per week, making them the lowest paid people in Britain today, thus saving the government £54 billion a year.

What would happen if all carers went on strike? Would any government know how to deal with the situation?

After caring for a loved one for 20 or 30 years, if the job hasn't killed you, so many carers are thrust out into a hostile world with poor health, no money, obsolete skills, expected to find a job and take your place in the work force.

Justice for Carers sets out to gain recognition for these people and a better level of pensions and allowances to make the government acknowledge that most of these people after caring suffer an impoverished old age. Nearly 250,000 carers over 60 are missing out on pension credit and a further 60,000 carers throughout the UK are not claiming a top up pension credit known as Carers Addition. This could be an estimated £86 million of foregone income every year. This income is vital in maintaining a basic living for older carers.

If you are interested in finding out more about Justice for Carers, please get in touch with the Developing Communities Project team and we can pass your details on to locally based Liza Page, founder and trustee of Justice for Carers.

The UK Census in 2001 found that of the 5.2 million carers in England and Wales, over a million were providing more than 50 hours of care a week, and that...

Over 225,000 people who provide 50 or more hours of unpaid care per week state they are in 'not good health' themselves

Lewes Group in Support of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

This group arose from an open meeting held in January 2002 for anyone interested in the issues of migration, asylum and safe refuge, springing from concerns for human rights and civic responsibilities. Its aims are:

- To promote awareness of issues relating to refugees and asylum seekers
- To respond to local issues as they arise
- To campaign on national policies affecting refugees and asylum seekers.

Membership is open to all who share these aims, irrespective of personal affiliations and beliefs.

We hold regular meetings, send out a bi-monthly newsletter, support groups who are working directly with asylum seekers and refugees including local groups in Hastings and Brighton, the Gatwick Detainees Welfare Group and national organisations such as Refugee Action and the Medical Foundation.

We visit asylum seekers held in Lewes Prison who have found themselves convicted and serving prison sentences of up to 18 months for the offence of trying to enter or indeed leave the country with false passports.

Why don't they have valid passports?

Precisely because they have been persecuted by their governments and know that any approach to an official agency could lead to imprisonment or worse.

We do not give legal advice but offer human friendship, information and can direct prisoners to agencies who may be able to help them. Many of us have found that we do things outside of visits too such as writing supporting letters, making phone calls or enquiries on their behalf and sometimes corresponding with them after their transferral to another prison.

For further information, please write to the group at One World Centre, Westgate, 92a High Street, Lewes BN7 1XH.

At 30 June 2007, 1,435 asylum seekers were recorded as being in detention under immigration act powers
[Refugee Council Online](#)

WRVS Heritage Plus Sussex

WRVS aims to help support the independence and dignity of people, in their homes and communities, especially in later life.

WRVS Heritage Plus Sussex is funded by the Heritage Lottery Fund to deliver heritage activities over a three-year period in five areas across Sussex (Hastings, Eastbourne, Portslade, Crawley and Peacehaven/ Newhaven). Weekly activities will take place in each area's WRVS Centre or from local venues.

The project will develop and deliver a programme of participatory, people centred heritage activities offering a range of opportunities for users and volunteers to:

- Identify, engage with, celebrate and enjoy both their personal and community's heritage;

- Learn about, record and preserve their own and others' life histories;
- Share their heritage with others including with people from different cultures and generations.

The heritage material gathered will be used as the basis of the activity programme and will be widely disseminated to the community through annual exhibitions. Exhibitions will use multi-media approaches and are likely to include audio/film recordings, theatre productions, arts, dance, IT, music and memory stimulating food!

For further information on the project, please contact Justina Braddock on 01273 612539. or heritagepluspeacehaven@wrvs.org.uk

Disability Equality

The Disability Equality Duty came into force on 4 December 2006. There are four key elements to the Duty. Public authorities are required to have 'due regard' to the need to:

- Eliminate unlawful disability
- Discrimination and disability-related harassment
- Promote equality of opportunity for disabled people, taking steps to take account of disabled people's disabilities
- Promote positive attitudes, and
- Encourage disabled people to take part in public life.

We are keen to receive articles for this newsletter from individuals and organisations as to:

- **what people see as positive and negative aspects of this Duty;**
- **how positive attitudes can best be promoted;**
- **what they see as the barriers to taking part in public life.**

Please email, telephone or write in to the Developing Communities Project team with your views.

National Initiatives

This section focuses on what is happening in other regions of the UK that the Developing Communities Project could help to be developed in Lewes District; plus interesting research

Smoke free homes

On July 1 public places in England became totally smoke free but Salford went one step further and launched its Smoke Free Homes campaign in 2004 to stop smoking in the most sacred and private of places—the home.

Participants sign up to a gold promise (no smoking in the house, ever), silver promise (smoking in one ventilated room and never in front of the children) or a bronze promise (anywhere in the house but never in the presence of children or other non-smokers).

As a result of the pilot scheme ten smoke free homes advisors were being appointed to the Salford team by the Community Health Action Partnership.

For further information, check out www.salford.gov.uk/smokefreehomes

Adult Protection Good Practice Project

- Is there something your organisation is doing to safeguard adults that is working really well?
- Have you developed methods of practice that are improving the lives of vulnerable adults and others involved (i.e. practitioners/carers/relatives)?
- Are you trying out new things which are having positive outcomes?

Please contact Rosanna Thurlow if you have any examples of good practice around financial abuse or neglect. *Action on Elder Abuse* are setting up a database which will be accessible from our website and will store

these good practice examples and explain how to implement them. Please help me help you!

You can contact Rosanna on 0208 765 7016 or at rthurlow@elderabuse.org.uk

The National Children's Bureau research into children affected by HIV and related issues

The children and young people HIV network is currently undertaking research into the experiences of looked after children and young people who are living with or are closely affected by HIV.

This research will consist of a review of relevant policies and procedures, as well as aiming to convey the real experiences of children and young people and include their voices in our findings.

The findings will be published early next year, along with recommendations about the needs of these young people with regard to policy and practice. A professionals seminar will be held after the research has been completed to discuss the findings and recommendations.

If you have had experience of being involved working with children/young people who are looked after (in residential care, foster care, being detained, or in supported housing) and living with HIV, and would be willing to share your experiences, you can access a questionnaire via the website <http://www.ncb.org.uk/lac/>. Please complete and return by email to aely@ncb.org.uk or by post to Amanda Ely, Children and young peoples HIV network, The National Children's Bureau, 8 Wakley Street, London EC1V 7QE.

Young people having their say

In August, Young People Now magazine reported a number of activities, groups and events taking place to promote young people in having their voice heard and their own participation in creating change.

For information and inspiration, here's a brief summary of what's been happening and future events nationally as well as in Sussex.

The Youth Empowerment Scheme (Yes) group is setting up a Muslim Youth Work Academy. Yes aim to help young Muslim's tap into areas where there is under-representation.

The Prime Minister chaired a youth cabinet meeting in July, prior to the launch of the government's 10 year youth strategy.

Young YMCA residents and former residents have organised four events in Darlington, Horsham, Sunderland and Tunbridge Wells to promote youth democracy as part of the Claim Your Voice project funded by the Electoral Commission. The variety of events taking place include that of question time style as well as more informal and networking events, all bringing together key decisions makers such as local MPs into an environment that is friendly and comfortable for young people.

The Horsham YMCA residents have been on a 3 day residential course with the aim of empowering the young people to take part in political decision-making, to gain confidence in public speaking and encourage young people to get involved in planning their own local hearings with MPs. Their event is being held in October .



Why should older people learn?

Because everyone benefits!

Lifelong Learning can be the tool to help older people evaluate, value, plan and engage in what they want on their terms. It can also help to promote employment by teaching new skills, maintaining old skills, and changing the culture so that employment is based on capacity not age.

The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education (NIACE) (in England and Wales), is a non-governmental organisation working for more and different adult learners. NIACE aims "to promote the study and general advancement of adult continuing education".

Older people should be given a voice and a role to organise programmes that reflect their diverse interests and concerns. There is a need to make an argument for more, better and different learning in later life for a broad range of different purposes. For too long, older people have been the beneficiaries of, rather than the instigators of, what they want.

Through NIACE's Older & Bolder programme you can receive 2 free newsletters a year, have access to a range of learning opportunities, join email discussion groups, view educational information on the website, and request a DVD of older learners explaining their learning journeys.

For more information, you can contact Lois Gladdish, Information Officer— Older Learners, NIACE, 21 De Montford Street, Leicester LE1 7GE or email lois.gladdish@niace.org.uk http://www.niace.org.uk/Research/older_bolder/Default.htm

Remember to watch out for the Developing Communities 'What drives you WILD?' Question Time events—details coming soon!



Training and Events

For individuals to develop their skills and increase access to community involvement

Courses, courses, courses!

The Developing Communities Project is able to fund individuals on a South Downs CVS training course from the current programme, subject to eligibility and availability.

Courses available are Project Management, Fundraising and the Internet, Using Excel to Manage Finances, Mastering Minute Taking, SORP, Young People in Communities, First Aid, and Lone Working.

To be eligible for this, individuals must be a resident of Lewes District and be able to show how the course is related to pursuing individual or small group community based work.

Please write or email the Developing Communities Project team with details of a project, campaign or issue you would like to pursue locally and how this course could help.

A training brochure with further details of the current training programme is available on the SDCVS website

www.southdownscvs.org.uk and on request.

Tel 01273 483832 or

Email developingcommunities@southdownscvs.org.uk

Lifting and Handling Awareness

Short course for volunteers and volunteer community activists. Run by the Working Together Project.

Thurs 4 October
1.30pm-4.30pm
Community Base, Brighton
Free

For further information:

Contact Louise Stone **Tel** 01273 234773

Email louise@workingtogetherproject.org.uk

Oska Bright

Film Festival

The third national festival of short films made by people with learning disabilities, presented by Carousel.

For further information:

Tel 01273 234734

Email enquiries@carousel.org.uk

Mon 15 & Tue
16 October
Upper Market St, Hove
Free but must book in advance

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Next issue copy deadline:

Wednesday 21 November 2007

If you have anything you would like to be included in the next issue of the newsletter, whether it is your own experience of being active in the community, increasing awareness of issues of disadvantaged groups, or to let us know of relevant training opportunities, we would love to hear from you. **Copy is preferred to be received in electronic format and to be sent to:**

developingcommunities@southdownscvs.org.uk

A maximum of 200 words per article is requested where possible, unless for Your Voices section.