



VANL NEWS

Voluntary action north Lincolnshire
41 Frances Street, Scunthorpe, North Lincolnshire DN15 6NS
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Fresh Start for Older People in North Lincolnshire

Fresh Start is a new initiative that has just started in our area. It is a partnership scheme being operated jointly by VANL, North Lincolnshire Council and North Lincolnshire Primary Care Trust, together with many other organisations including community groups and volunteers.

The aims of Fresh Start are:-

- Promote healthy ageing
- Encourage local communities to support older people
- Develop a continuum of flexible preventive support
- Promote improved well being, emotional and mental health
- Broaden the range of choices available to older people and improve their access to those choices

Improve quality of life for the older people of North Lincolnshire.

Fresh Start aims to provide information on, and act as a gateway to, the vast array of services available to older people. We are not here to duplicate, but to sign post and work alongside what already exists. With such a mass of different provision, many people don't know where to go for a service they require, or may not even know what is out there. In addition to this, Fresh Start will also be asking older people what they would like, and endeavour to find ways of filling the gaps in existing provision.

Fresh Start will be run from 4 centres. The first one in Brigg will be followed on a roll-out programme by Scunthorpe, Isle of Axholme and Barton, over a two year period.

If you would like more information, or feel that either your organisation or you as an individual would be able to help Fresh Start in some way, or if you would like to be put on our mailing list for a newsletter, please do not hesitate to contact us:-

Fresh Start Alvingham Road Day Centre Alvingham Road Scunthorpe DN16 2DP
e-mail: rachael.blake@northlincs.gov.uk

Open Letter to Readers of Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire Newsletter

"Of all the items included in the editions over the years, there have, I believe been very few letters from any of the recipients of a course run by VANL.

As not only a director of VANL but also a recipient of training courses run by VANL. I decided that it was not just enough to simply fill in the usual after course assessment form, which if we are honest is something we do almost automatically then probably forget what we have written almost as soon as we are out of the door! Well for once, I decided to try and redress the situation, not because "I am a director" but simply because I realised that it was about time someone openly thanked them for running the course.

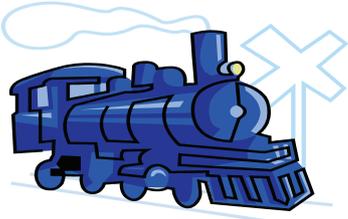
I am hoping that by my writing, you the readers will sit back and think reflect on what a unique organisation we in North Lincolnshire have in VANL. The way in which the staff, from the Chief Executive Carole Phillips down to all of the development workers including of course, all of the office based staff are so well matched and in touch, in tune with all of the organisations they help. With a hands on approach getting involved in courses where necessary. It only goes to show how well the whole organisation works together for/on behalf of the voluntary sector within North Lincolnshire. To say thank you for something done by VANL does not take much effort, so why not put pen to paper a little more often as not only does it say thank you, but more importantly it will help to promote VANL locally but also regionally. For in a time of greater competition for the finance streams upon which VANL operates. To openly express the value of the organisation can only serve to enhance the chances of increasing the amount of revenue coming into the organisation.

So once more, I say why not become a regular contributor to the newsletter? It does not have to be pages and pages only, it does not take many words to write to say thank you. Keep not only reading VANL News but writing to Lizzie as well who I am sure would welcome items for future editions."

A satisfied recipient of a VANL Course - Graham Robinson

Friends of the Barton Line

Last year (2005) we received £750 from the Rural Lincs Support Fund to hold a conference on setting up a Community Rail Partnership. More recently, £450 from the Rural Lincs Support Fund to Barton Cleethorpes Community Rail Partnership for computer equipment, and £778 from Awards for All to the Friends of the Barton Line for display panels and associated pamphlet racks and lamps. - Congratulations to both groups.



Independent Living

I am the newly appointed Seniors Engagement Worker with Independent Living North Lincs. My remit is to encourage and offer support to existing and newly formed Seniors Forums across the North Lincs Region. Seniors Forums give older people a voice and influence in the decision making processes that effect them from Local Authority to Primary Care. In short, to have a direct input into the policies that are designed to meet their needs. Although such Forums and Alliances currently exist eg Scunthorpe and District, Brigg, and Barton upon Humber, there is a need for more, to offer representation to the often unlistened to! I would be very interested to hear from any community groups who might be interested in exploring the possibility of forming such Forums/ The new North Lincs initiative "Fresh Start" has made a point of stressing their reference to Seniors Forums and so you could perhaps make a real difference!

If you or your group are at all interested, please call me, Kevin Delaney Independent Living North Lincolnshire 01652 636208 or email forums-ilnl@btconnect.com

Sad News I'm Afraid!

The Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire Minibus



has finally given up the ghost!

It just needed too much money spending on it for it to pass it's MOT this year, so as the road tax was due at the end of May, a quick executive decision had to be made, and it was decided not to throw any more money at it.

However, all is not lost!

Transport Solutions, operating out of Barton on Humber is to the rescue. It is a Community Vehicle Brokerage Service, covering the whole of North Lincolnshire. There is a £10 joining fee (Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire will pay for our current members to join) and the vehicles will be provided with a volunteer driver.

If our member groups would like to use their own driver, then Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire is prepared to pay for refresher Midas training for our existing registered drivers.

I hope this will not cause too much inconvenience, but realistically, it was going to happen sooner rather than later.

For more information on Transport Solutions, or to book transport with them, ring Margaret Credland on 01652 662026

Audit or Independent Examination **Do you Know the what, who and when?**

A lot of the people contacting VANL's Community Accounting Service begin the conversation with the words "I have been told that we should have our accounts examined or audited but I'm not sure what that means..."

Most people involved with charitable, voluntary and community sector groups appreciate the need to ensure that they are properly fulfilling their obligations in respect of providing accounts. Many know that there are statutory regulations covering when accounts must be examined or audited. But there are far fewer people who really understand what the difference is between an independent examination and an audit or when each applies

A lot of the checks and questions that auditors and examiners make may be the same or covering similar aspects of the accounts. But the assurance that they provide to the reader is different.

What? An independent examiner tells the reader of the accounts:

- Either that nothing has come to their attention which throws doubt on whether proper records were kept and whether the accounts properly reflect those records. Or what the matters were that the reader should know or needs in order to properly understand the accounts.

So, an unqualified independent examination is a sort of negative assurance - ie that nothing material was found to indicate a particular problem.
An auditor on the other hand tells the reader of the accounts:

That the accounts give a "true and fair view" and are properly prepared
And anything that the reader should know if there are inconsistencies or if they do not feel it gives "a true and fair view".

So an unqualified audit report is a far more positive assurance that potentially requires more time, skill and experience to arrive at.

Who? It should not surprise you then that whilst an independent examiner can be:
An independent person who is reasonably believed by the charity trustees to have the requisite ability and practical experience.

But the qualifications for an auditor are more rigorous:

The person or firm providing the audit must be a "Registered Auditor" - which means a qualified accountant who is also a registered auditor.

When? An unincorporated group must have an independent examination if:

Your constitution says so - ie uses the words "independent examination"

Your annual income is between £10,000 and £250,000

One of your funders requires it as a condition of grant

Below annual income of £10,000 an unincorporated group is not obliged to have an independent examination of its accounts unless one of the above reasons applies.

Please note that an independent examination is for an unincorporated organisation not a Company Limited by Guarantee. However, an unincorporated organisation can opt to have an audit instead of an independent examination if it wishes.

Accountancy Service Survey Results - Are you surprised?

A BIG THANK YOU TO EVERYONE WHO PARTICIPATED

133 organisations participated across the Humberside area, 33 from the North Lincolnshire Area. 15 organisations had an income of less than £10,000, 13 had an income between £10,000 and £100,000 and 5 with an income between £100,000 and £250,000

The overall top five priorities for North Lincolnshire groups were:

- Funding advice
- Good practice guidelines on popular accounting topics
- Annual accounts preparation
- Restricted funds, independent examination, organisation development

Manual/computerised system, risk management, volunteer/staff development and full cost recovery.

There were differences in priorities depending on the size of group.

Small organisations

- Funding advice
 - Manual/computerised accounting system
- Good practice guidelines on popular accounting topics, organisation development, restricted funds.

Medium organisation

- Funding advice, annual accounts preparation, and independent examination.
 - Good practice guidelines, employment advice for employers, personnel issues, organisation development
- Risk management, full cost recovery, volunteer/staff development

Large organisation

- Good practise guidelines
- Risk management, full cost recovery, treasurer's network, budgets, management accounts,

health checks

Funding advice, annual accounts preparation, restricted funds, independent examination, volunteer/staff development, employment advice for employers, personnel issues, e-mail/telephone support.

The top five priorities in the Humberside area were: funding advice, volunteer/staff development, treasurer's network, organisation development and joint fifth place business planning training and employment advice for employers.

We are going to use this information to help us plan our future financial services.

If you require further information then please contact Helen McGill, Humberside Community Accountancy Project Development Worker on 01482 382527 or e-mail hmcgill@hull-cvs.co.uk

COMMUNITY POT RETURNS

North Lincolnshire Community Pot returns to help small voluntary and community organisations that need project funding. So, if your group needs money and fits the criteria below contact us at Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire, details below.

To qualify your group will need:

To be a voluntary or community organisation operating in North Lincolnshire

To have a constitution or governing document

To have a bank account with two signatories

To have independently examined accounts

Have an income of less than £20,000.00 per year

Less than one full time worker (or equivalent)

You will also need to have an equal opportunities policy or be willing to work towards one, and similarly have or be working towards a child protection policy if applicable to your group.

Application packs will be available from mid June and it is hoped that the first panel meeting will be at the end of June 2006.

For further details please contact:

The Community Pot Team Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire 41 Frances Street

Scunthorpe North Lincolnshire DN16 6NS

Tel. 01724 845155 Fax. 01724 281599

e-mail localgrants@vanl.org.uk

Results of our Survey of Members 2006

This year a total of 84 forms were returned—an increase of 13.5% on last year. We are really pleased that more and more members are taking the trouble to tell us what they think. This is the only way we can provide the services you want from us.

All but a couple of the respondents were happy with their access to our services—the rest would like longer opening hours or more information about what services are available. (We try to make this information available, but if you would like to know more, please contact any of our offices)

We asked respondents to rate the service they received from our staff, and on a scale of 1 to 5, where 1 was very poor and 5 was very good, the average score was 4.57. There were some definite issues raised around the loan of equipment. VANL has been forced to cease the loan of electrical equipment because of problems with insurance, but other issues, such as the condition of the notice boards, will be looked at during the year.

You said we perform well on information provision (4.36 on a scale of 1-5), our staff are always willing to help, and the information provided is generally good. However, sometimes information arrives too late for you to act on it, and some groups receive a lot of things that do not concern them. We do find it difficult to 'weed out' the groups who only require a few subjects, but we will look at ways in which we could improve. We will also do our best to get information to you in good time. However, sometimes 'better late than never' applies—at least some groups may be able to use it if we send it, rather than none at all if we don't. Could you look at how you handle the information we send so that you can act more quickly if necessary?

You gave us 4.19 on a scale of 1-5 for provision of information on changes in legislation. One reason given was that the respondent did not remember seeing any of this. There are two issues here—are we sending the information you need, and does your group handle the information we send effectively?

People agreeing to be the mailing contact for their group should ensure that they pass on information received to those who may need to use it. If you find we have not informed you about something you needed to know about, do let us know so that we can look at our systems for information provision.

VANL encourages groups to have a say in decisions that affect you and your members. You gave us a score of 3.95 on average, on the same scale as before. All 8 respondents who did not reply to this question said that this was not relevant to their organisation or that they did not use it, which comes to the same thing! VANL needs to look at how we communicate with both the member groups and the statutory sector. In a healthy society, voluntary organisations should take part in decision making processes on matters which concern them.

On the subject of publicising the work of voluntary groups, we scored 3.99. You said you like our networking sessions such as the Community Interest Group, and some said VANL could only work with the information we have. So yes, please, send in your stories so that we can publicise them for you. A couple of respondents said they had not seen any stories about their groups and others said that this question was not relevant to them. Surely even single-issue groups, such as a church fellowship group, should be concerned about publicity. How otherwise do they attract new members? And if they do not attract new members, how do they keep providing the services they do as older members leave the group? Having said that, it is difficult for us to publicise what groups are doing if they don't tell us! More than half of the respondents (59.7%) had attended a VANL meeting, forum or conference, and they gave a score of 4.43 on the scale used before.

We asked those who had not attended any event to say why, and what would help them to attend in the future. Suggestions included a crèche, sending out information earlier, being too busy with other commitments, being unable to attend at the set time, and one person had

not attended further events because of religious issues. We are unsure what the religious issues might be, so if anyone could enlighten us we will try to sort out the problem; we will certainly look at answering the other issues—would a course in time management or assertiveness help with the other commitments? One of VANL's aims is to act as a liaison between the voluntary sector in North Lincolnshire and the statutory sector. For this service you said we scored 3.89 on the 1-5 scale. Six respondents said they had no experience of this, or were not interested. Again, if you hear of something later which you think should have come from us, do let us know. We will be looking again at how we fulfil this aim.

VANL's services (funding advice, working with young people, constitutions etc) were given a score of 3.92, with a variety of specific comments which we will look at in greater depth. Several groups had not used any of the services, and others' comments ranged from 'excellent' through 'often too late' to some more specific complaints. We will, of course, look at all the comments in depth, and we hope that you will continue to use all VANL's services.

We asked about training courses, and what subjects you would like us to run in the future. The list was long and varied—too long to list but we will be looking into the provision of more training courses for the future. However, we should make it clear that VANL is about your organisation and the way it runs. If you require specific training in subjects such as Drug Awareness or Computerised Accountancy packages, you need to contact agencies who work in those areas. We provide training around subjects like constitutions, charity requirements, the roles of committee members, promotion of your organisation, etc. Clearly, we will not be able to provide courses on all your requested subjects in the near future, but if you contact us we should be able to find you suitable courses elsewhere to fulfil your needs.

We asked how useful you found our news-

letters. All three, the VANL Newsletter, the FACT newsletter and the Funding Advice News, scored around 4.2. Some people said they did not receive newsletters - although we send them to the same addresses as the questionnaire went to. We also asked what subjects you would like to see articles about and again the list of suggestions was very long. Popular subjects included funding, volunteers, training and news about other groups. (So send in those stories, please!) There are subjects that we could not cover and should be dealt with by specialist organisations, such as the Territorial Army, homelessness, or health-related subjects. Other suggestions included lists of information, and details of VANL services. The first would be difficult to include in a short newsletter, but we could look at ways to provide the information individually if you contact us. However, we will try to keep you up to date on the services VANL offers.

We asked what you thought of our website. Some thought it easy to navigate and said it contained the basic information. Others mentioned that it was out of date. That specific point has now been addressed. To be fair, the website is not aimed at you, the members, except as a place to find the phone numbers and addresses you need to contact us. It is really intended as a first point of contact, to find out basic information about our organisation. We do not have the resources for the kind of website where you can download lots of information, but we would like to provide the all-singing, all-dancing version as soon as we can find the funding!

Finally, we asked what the respondents thought about VANL in general - the role we play, the way we give support, and our adaptability. On the scale of 1-5, we scored 4.49. We would like to thank you for all your supportive comments. All VANL staff will be pleased that our membership give us such a good report. We note there are some negative points, and we will try to address those over the coming months, and we look forward to working with all our members in the future.

Notice Board

DARE4U Urgently need a good treasurer with accounting experience, if interested, ring Roni Wilson

First Floor Office to Let

We have a small office with its own kitchen and toilet facilities available of the first floor of a centrally located building in Crowle/ Voluntary organisations are particularly welcome.

The rent is open to negotiation but will be reasonable.

We also have some first floor meeting space available with the rent again being negotiable.

If you would like to know more, please contact Ann Hindley, 01724 710819 or ann@hindley.gn.apc.org

Partnership Approach to Parenting - A conference to develop a strategy for parenting support for North Lincolnshire is being held on 4th July 2006 9.30 am - 4.00 pm This advance notice has been circulated as demand will be high. Look out for more details and booking information that will be circulated. If you can't wait to find out about this exciting conference please contact Karen Boucher on 01724 297141.

Due to merging offices, Safer Neighbourhood, based in Sheldford Street has some surplus office furniture to give away on a first come first served basis, including desk, bookshelves, chairs, filing cabinet laminator etc. If you are interested, ring Margaret Davey on 01724 275367 for more information.

Voluntary Action will be holding a conference on Wednesday 29 November 2006 at Normanby Park - more details will be in the next newsletter

Have you paid your VANL Membership fees?

If not, why not? I'm sure it must be an oversight—They can be paid in at either the Barton or Scunthorpe Office

Take advantage of the enclosed Membership Renewal Form and do it today!

Date for your Diary!
Voluntary Action North Lincolnshire is holding its AGM on Thursday 5th October 2006 at the Kingsway Business Centre
Don't miss it!