

Welcome to our 2010-2011 Review



elcome to the 2010-2011 Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum Review.

It has been a highly productive time for our charity, which exists to act as the voice of the voluntary sector in Cornwall. We now have a substantive team in place, funded through the Big Lottery, Cornwall Council and European Social Fund, amongst others.

Major achievements this year include:

VCS Commissioning Board

Through three voluntary summits and extensive negotiations with Cornwall Council, we established the new VCS Commissioning Board to give the voluntary sector a greater influence on the design of public services.

Take Part Cornwall Pathfinder

With partners, we successfully delivered Take Part Cornwall, a project devoted to the cause of active citizenship. By providing training, resources and events, the project helped people get involved in civic volunteering and have an increasing influence in their communities.

 Through our European Social Fund Convergence Matters project, we helped the voluntary and community sector understand the Convergence programmes, and access training and funding to improve their delivery.

You can find out more about these and other successes on the pages that follow!

Best wishes,

Mark Richardson, Chief Executive

Contents

Remembering Blair Thomson	3
VCS Commissioning Board	4
BIG Lottery Project	6
Cornwall Compact	8
Convergence Matters	9
Take Part Cornwall	12
Cornwall Voluntary Sector Events	14
Who Are We - the CVSF team	18
Our Trustees	19



Remembering Blair Thomson 1939 - 2011

"Blair was a larger than life character who brought his considerable charm, enthusiasm and energy to bear on anything he worked on. Blair saw to it that we became a charity in 2005, he applied for our first substantial grants as a charity from LloydsTSB Foundation, the Big Lottery and Europe, and he set out the four key elements of what we still do today for the local voluntary sector: advocacy, brokerage, communications and development. He did all this with a brilliant sense of humour. He made you want to work with him and he made that work fun. We owe him a huge debt." Mark Richardson



VCS COMMISSIONING BOARD

Origins

In the second half of 2010, Cornwall VSF worked with Cornwall Council to establish a new VCS Commissioning Board. Giving the voluntary sector an opportunity to regularly meet with key Cornwall Council directors and commissioners, this Board will enable the voluntary sector to advise on the design of services in Cornwall like never before.

The board emerged from a need to address two key issues arising in the current political and economic climate: -

- A decline in the amount of Cornwall Council money available to VCS organisations as grants
- Opportunities for VCS organisations to deliver more Cornwall Council services, under the Big Society agenda

Establishment

The VCS Commissioning Board took shape following extensive discussions between the voluntary and public sectors at three VCS summits in autumn 2010. See the Events section between page 14 and 17 for more details about these events.



Theme leads

The voluntary sector is represented on the Board by ten theme leads who are specialists in their designated area. The theme leads will suggest ways Cornwall Council can make services better and more cost-effective by involving the voluntary sector in delivery. They will also seek the views of and report back to voluntary sector organisations working in their respective fields.

The ten themes and theme leads are: -

- Advice to Individuals (John Ede, CAB)
- Children & Young People (Steve Clark, CN4C)
- Community Support (Peter Jefferson, CRCC)
- Economy & Social Enterprise (Jon Rolls, ReZolve)
- Environment (Ian Smith, Community Energy Plus)
- Equality & Diversity (Theo Blackmore, Disability Cornwall)
- Health & Social Care (Tracey Roose, Age Concern Cornwall)
- Public Health (Scott Bennett, Cornwall Brook)
- VCS Skills for Workforce Reform (Andrew Green, Learning Partnership for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly)
- Volunteering (lan Jones, Volunteer Cornwall)

To ensure complete transparency, the Board is purely advisory and actual procurement will occur entirely separately using the Council's normal procurement procedures. Nevertheless, this process gives the VCS a chance to influence the strategic direction of the Council's thinking.

Meetings so far

The first full meeting of the VCS Commissioning Board took place on 8th December, 2010, with further meetings in January, February and March 2011.

At these meetings, funding arrangements for 2011/2 were secured for LINk in Cornwall and VCS infrastructure services for volunteering, strategic engagement and community support. Discussions have also taken place giving the VCS influence on Cornwall Council policy about public health and health & social care hubs.

The B G Lottery Project

Involvement with Cornwall Strategic Partnership

Our Chief Executive Mark Richardson represented the voluntary sector on the Cornwall Strategic Partnership. Mark's involvement shaped Cornwall Council's Sustainable Communities Strategy, giving it a focus on alleviating poverty, and adding a Resilience priority to help prepare Cornish communities for change. Although the Cornwall Strategic Partnership has now ended, this work continues and has been extended through the VCS Commissioning Board (see page 4).

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum Film

Jason Edwards from University College Falmouth has produced a series of films for us, including portraits of St Tudy Pre- School, Tremayne Hall and Young Carers, and a message from the VCS to the public sector. You can view all of these videos on our You Tube Channel www.youtube.com/cornwallvsf

Cornwall Charity Club

Cornwall Charity Club ran from January to June 2010, and was a series of free events supporting small local charities and community groups. The events covered important topics for charities including communicating with the media, coping with the recession and making the most of the internet.

The Needs of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Cornwall

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum was a partner in research carried out across the VCS in Cornwall. The report features information about issues facing the sector, and how the larger infrastructure charities can work to help smaller organisations.

Key findings include:

- A majority (58%) of respondents identified "Not Enough Grant Funding" as the key challenge they faced
- Roughly a third of organisations had an annual turnover of less than £5,000
- Slightly more organisations received income through fund raising than grant funding

To view a version of the report please follow the link http://cornwallvsf.org/facts-and-figures/

Thriving Third Sector (NI7)

We acted as Outcome Leads for the Thriving Third Sector element of Cornwall's Local Area Agreement. This outcome acknowledges a thriving voluntary sector, working closely with the public sector, will help create empowered and inclusive communities in Cornwall.

Our work on this outcome to date includes:

- Developing new arrangements for the voluntary sector to work with the council on commissioning services
- Promoting civil society ideas within Cornwall Council
- Helping the sector address weaknesses in an environment where funding reductions are likely
- Providing resources to support the sector

Aspects of this work link with our Take Part Cornwall and Cornwall Compact projects.

Charity Builder

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum was part of the national pilot for Charity Builder UK. CBUK is an innovative new way of helping the VCS to comply with Employment and Health & Safety legislation, as well as providing users with tools to simplify other key administrative tasks. This will help users set up essential policies and procedures quickly, easily - and it's free of charge

Visit www.charitybuilderuk.com to sign up.

Representation

Cornwall VSF holds a contract with Cornwall Council to facilitate voluntary and community sector representation on strategic public sector partnerships.

We now have 62 representative positions on 25 key partnerships, including Environment Kernow and Community Safety, currently occupied by 36 individuals.

Each of these individuals works or volunteers for a voluntary and community sector organisation and, where necessary, acts as the voice of the sector in local strategic discussions.

Facilitating representation is an integral part of our support for the voluntary sector, giving our colleagues the chance to speak up and be heard by important public sector decision-makers.

With the recent change in government, VCS participation in local decision-making has never been higher on the political agenda. By facilitating representation, we have put the sector in a stronger position to have its say on the Big Society.

Four members of the VSF team are now trained in NAVCA's Skilling Up For Stronger Voices, and this training is passed on to our VCS representatives. This gives representatives the materials, skills and resources to effectively represent the sector and develop local partnership working.

Our representatives share reports from the partnership meetings they attend with the rest of the sector at http://cornwallvsf.org

Modernisation Fund

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum worked with Capacitybuilders in delivering the grant element of the Office of the Third Sector's Modernisation Fund. The grant was designed to help a range of VCS organisations increase their resilience by working more closely together - through collaboration and merger - to increase their impact.

The fund strengthens organisations providing services to those worst hit by economic downturn by supporting them to collaborate with others, merge, or develop in other ways to respond to difficult times.

News service

The website at http://cornwallvsf.org is updated daily with news stories about VCS events, policy and funding opportunities. Around 200 people subscribe to Cornwall VSF's daily email update, and the number of people visiting the website increased three fold over a 12 month period from March 2010 to March 2011.

Cornwall Compact



he Cornwall Compact is the local version of the national agreement between Government and the voluntary sector setting out how the two partners should work together for the greater good of society. It works by setting out key, shared principles for collaboration between the two sectors and includes openness, responsiveness, honesty, integrity, objectivity, leadership, consistency and equality.

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum has employed Keltie Seaber as Compact Development Officer to:

- Promote and embed Compact compliant ways of working
- Coordinate the mediation procedure if disputes about Compact issues arise

Our Compact work to date includes: -

- Coordinating the refresh of the Cornwall Compact in line with the National Compact refresh in December 2009. New organisations can sign up to the council on our website - http://cornwallvsf.org/cornwall-compact
- Successfully facilitating the mediation process to resolve a dispute for a small charitable organisation in the West of the county
- Promoting the Compact at events, giving presentations and producing the Busy Person's and Compact Implementation guides, available on our website, to make the Compact more accessible

Convergence Matters



he 'Third Sector Programme Support and Participation' project, known publically as Convergence Matters, is run by the Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum (CVSF) in conjunction with 6 delivery partners. The key partner organisations involved in delivery of the project, under the leadership of CVSF, are:

- 1. Cornwall Rural Community Council (CRCC),
- 2. Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change (CN4C),
- 3. East Cornwall Council for Voluntary Services (ECCVS),
- 4. Penwith Community Development Trust (PCDT),
- 5. Volunteer Cornwall.
- 6. Cornwall in Europe and EU Cultural Liaison (CERES).

This technical assistance project is supporting the strategy set out in the European Social Fund's (ESF) regional framework by bringing together and providing support for voluntary sector organisations whose role is to reach people who are at disadvantage in, or excluded from, the labour market. The project is encouraging the participation of the wider third sector of Cornwall in the programme activities that promote social inclusion, gender equality, and equal opportunities.

Aims of the project include:

- Maximised participation of the voluntary and community sector in the Convergence programme.
- A well-informed voluntary and community sector that is kept up to date through active participation in Convergence conferences and dissemination activities, to ensure the impact of these funds are known to as wide an audience as possible.
- ESF assistance is better targeted on the most disadvantaged groups towards.
- A strengthened VCS capacity for impact analysis and evaluation.
- Development of effective partnerships within the voluntary and community sector of Cornwall.

Major achievements of Convergence Matters to date include:

Blair Thomson (Chair, CVSF) and Tarn Lamb (CEO, CN4C) sat on the Joint Convergence Programme Monitoring Committee (PMC). These meetings provided a communication channel between the VCS, Joint PMC and large delivery partners such as Cornwall Council and Learning Partnership.





Mark Richardson (CEO) provided input into the refresh of the ESF Framework

5

Regular production and distribution of comprehensive information about the wider Convergence programme via CVSF main website, Interlink magazine, Signpost Magazine, e-newsletters, Facebook and Twitter. 4

Regular events and workshops aimed at the voluntary and community sector explained the programme and boosted its profile. CVSF also supported events run by other organisations by giving presentations, facilitating workshops and distributing information.

6

CRCC's Social Inclusion team provided outreach to disengaged groups, such as those who are rurally socially excluded, those suffering poverty, migrant workers, gypsies and travellers and those from BME communities, linking them with Convergence opportunities.



Social enterprise officers at CRCC provided Convergence-related advice and technical support to more than 80 social enterprise organisations.

Community Development team at CN4C engaged with community groups in disadvantaged communities and helped them take advantage of Convergence opportunities.

Two significant pieces of research were undertaken by CN4C (Cornwall Neighbourhoods What's Changed) and CERES (Integration of Children and Young People in Cornwall's Disadvantaged Neighbourhoods). These reports analysed the impact of Convergence opportunities in disadvantaged neighbourhoods. The reports aimed to create awareness that the VCS is well placed to overcome barriers to participation.

10

Inter-Link Locality meetings have taken place throughout Cornwall. At every meeting Convergence information is provided to community groups and VCOs.

CERES undertook activities that assisted the VCS to identify and develop established trans-national and inter-regional relationships to promote the wider impact of the Convergence programme. These included a Cornish art exhibition 'Delynyans Kernow' in the London offices of the European Commission.



Take Part Cornwall

ornwall VSF was the accountable body for Take Part Cornwall, a collaborative project run with six local partner organisations, designed to help people get more involved in their community. Funded by the Department of Communities and Local Government and managed by the Community Development Foundation, the pathfinder project was part of a Government strategy to promote active learning for active citizenship (ALAC).

The project recognised that it is not always obvious to people how they can influence decisions affecting their community. Using the ALAC approach, Take Part Cornwall provided courses, events and learning materials to help individuals gain the skills, knowledge and confidence to become empowered and gain the ability to influence decisions affecting their communities.

After 18 months of delivery, the project closed in March 2011. It was hailed as a success by the funders as well as other pathfinders across the country.

Activities have included: -

- Age and Ambition' led by Age Concern Cornwall
- 'Your Voice' with Parliamentary Outreach and the Speaker of the House of Commons - led by CVSF and ECCVS
- Working with Community Networks led by PCDT
- Democracy Power and Governance HE course led by CN4C
- Production of information leaflets led by CRCC
- Promotion of various civic volunteering roles Volunteer Cornwall
- Take Part Cornwall was one of two Take Part pathfinders in the South West. We worked closely with colleagues at Take Part Exeter to develop courses and learning materials to be used across the wider region.

Achievements

The Take Part Cornwall launch event at Bodmin Shire House saw representatives attend from across the voluntary sector. The successful event kick-started the project with wider sector buy-in for the ALAC approach. Twelve students studying for an Open College Network qualification in Community Development were pivotal to organising the event, which showed the potential of the approach to a number of different organisations.



The Take Part Cornwall website (takepart.cornwallvsf.org) made How To guides, case studies and resources accessible to a wide audience. Twitter and Facebook helped with wider dissemination of useful information.

Take Part Cornwall provided the seed funding for Age Concern Cornwall's two hugely successful Age & Ambition events, which attracted over 800 people.

In collaboration with Parliamentary Outreach, Take Part Cornwall hosted the widely attended 'Your Voice' event. The Speaker of the House of Commons, John Bercow MP was the star attraction, giving his thoughts on how to engage with the parliamentary system.

How to campaign using the internet

The internet has given people new opportunities to campaign on issues, important to them

take part

Cornwall

Accredited as well as unaccredited training courses and sessions were delivered on a range of subjects from Committee Skills to Community development.

Two groups of learners undertook 'Democracy, Power and Governance 'HE course a part of which involved a visit to Westminster.

Ten remote rural parishes were provided information and support on community cohesion and active involvement.
 Nine attractive How To guides gave introductory information to civic voluntary roles (e.g. Magistrate) and ways to influence decisions (e.g. How To Campaign on the Internet). In

collaboration with Exeter CVS, these How To guides were modified for use by voluntary sector organisations across the

South West.

Hands-on activities such as Active Citizen Bingo, Write a Postcard to your MP and the Know Your Parliament Board Game gave people new perspectives on how to engage with decisions-makers.

Volunteer Cornwall used funding through Take Part Cornwall to develop new expertise around civic volunteering roles.

A series of events explored how people can influence the design of health care services, a timely programme during a period of proposed changes in the NHS.

Experienced tutor Kath Maguire has designed How Your Area Works, a course and accompanying learning pack to be delivered in Cornwall and across the South West.



Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum Events



6th July 2009 Launch of Take Part Cornwall Bodmin Shire House

Take Part Pathfinder project in Cornwall was launched at this widely attended event. A wide variety of activities concerning the ethos of Take Part led to interesting discussions and expression of many ideas. Part organised by a group of Community Development learners; the event provided several young people with the opportunity to speak on a public platform and engage with voluntary sector organisations for the first time.

24th September 2009

Cornwall Community Fair - Falmouth Maritime Museum

There were presentations from the following organisations on how to help strengthen VCS organisations.

- Charity Builder Free interactive HR support for the voluntary sector
- Foundations project Support for front line organisations with funding equalities advice.
- Commissioning & Procurement Improve understanding of commissioning and procurement and what it means.
- Edward Jones How you can invest your charity's money wisely
- Michelmore Solicitors Latest update on charity law
- Tennyson Insurance What Insurance is out there to suit your charity's needs.
- Convergence Programme Find out about the Convergence programme and how staff, volunteers and users could benefit.



12th November 2009

Next Steps for Better Community Engagement - Kingsley Village

The Cornwall Strategic Partnership (CSP) identified that Cornwall Council and other agencies which made up the CSP needed to improve the way they worked together to engage with local communities in Cornwall. The event looked at the next steps towards more joined up way of working.

20th January 2010

Cornwall Charity Club

"Making the Most of the Media" - Truro College

The first Cornwall Charity Club event looked at making the most of the media for charities. At this inaugural meeting, two of the region's leading editors, Daphne Skinnard (BBC Radio Cornwall's Assistant Editor) and Andy Cooper (Editor in Chief for Cornwall and Devon Media Ltd) provided guidance on how the media works and how to gain important media coverage.



11th February 2010

Your Voice - Kingsley Village

The Rt Hon John Bercow MP was the keynote speaker at 'Your Voice', an innovative free conference designed to help you get your voice heard at all political levels. 'Your Voice' explored how citizens can get more involved in

informing and influencing decision makers.

This was the first major event for Parliamentary Outreach in the South West as it pioneers better public engagement with what goes on at Westminster. It provided information about how to influence decisions which matter to you or may affect your community, and explained how to get your voice heard, and listened to, at all levels from your local council right up to the European Parliament.

17th February 2010

Beyond Copenhagen - Truro College Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum worked in partnership with Cornwall Energy Plus and Cornwall Development Company to organise an event aimed at the voluntary sector to reduce carbon by at least 10% over 2010.



23rd March 2010

Cornwall Charity Club

"How do you lead a not-for-profit organisation successfully in a time of recession?" - Truro College
At the event delegates heard from Tom Henderson (Shelterbox) and Ellen Winser (Truro College) about the lessons they had learnt through their organisation's journeys to success.

19th May 2010

Cornwall Charity Club

"Discover How to Promote Your Group on the Internet" – Truro College

At this event we explored how to raise awareness of the work of charities on the internet. Two of the region's leading experts, Julie Harris and Graham Tysall, provided the inside track on how the internet is evolving.

25th June 2010

Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum AGM Wadebridge Pavilions

We reviewed the year of Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum, had discussions on the Compact and looked at the state of partnerships in Cornwall.

8th September 2010

Police Authority Training St John's Hall Penzance

Through Take Part Cornwall training was given on the roles of Independent Custody Visitors and Independent Members of the Police Authority.



30th September 2010

VCS Summit - Eden ProjectThe autumn was a crucial time for

Cornwall's voluntary sector, with the Big Society and the comprehensive spending review on the agenda. This event had 50 key public and voluntary sector representatives looking at the large scale public

sector cuts and the new policy environment around the Big Society. This group provided a clear mandate for exploring the concept of joint public sector / voluntary sector commissioning arrangements as a priority.

28th October 2010

VCS Summit 2 - Chacewater Village Hall
The second summit for VCS representatives
finalised ten key themes for the VCS
Commissioning Board.



Convergence for You: Making sense of European funding for Voluntary Organisations - Eden Project

The event explored how smaller voluntary organisation can get involved with ESF Convergence. On the panel were Mark Williams (Skills Funding Agency), Steve Matthews (Job Centre Plus), Angela Coleman (Government Office South West) and Mark Richardson (Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum).

25th November 2010

VCS Summit 3 - Eden Project

At the third summit, we welcomed representatives of smaller VCS organisations to decide who will lead on the key themes, and public sector colleagues to ratify the practical aspects of how the commissioning board will work. Paul Masters, Assistant Chief Executive at Cornwall Council gave a presentation on Cornwall Council's commitment to the commissioning board.

28th February & 2nd March 2011

NHS Skills for Involvement -St Mary's Parish, Bodmin & The Astro Centre, Penzance

Take Part Cornwall hosted two sessions for people interested in getting more involved with the NHS. The sessions helped participants develop skills to influence the design of services locally, using evidence to support their case.

Throughout March

How to be an active citizen and support your community

Take Part Cornwall hosted ten events to help people become active citizens and support their community. These events were aimed at members of the public and town and parish councillors who were interested in influencing decisions in their local areas. These events took place in Altarnun, Deviock, Kilkhampton, Maron, Manaccan, Polruan, St Goran, St Keverne, St Hilary and Zennor.

9th March 2011

Be Heard, Get Involved **Pool Innovation Centre**

As the Take Part Cornwall project came to an end, a celebration event was held to look at what the project achieved over the past two years.

16th & 17th March 2011

Changing Lives - Skills Exchange Events Mevagissey Activity Centre & Chacewater Village Hall

Take Part Cornwall hosted two networking sessions for voluntary and public sector staff working in health and social care to learn about Changing Lives

Who are we?

Cornwall VSF is a small organisation with a broad reach. It is a registered charity and has a Board of Trustees and a executive team comprised of:



Jasmine Sharma
Project Co-ordinator
With voluntary
sector experience
in India, Nepal and
UK and PRINCE2
project management
qualification; Jasmine
is well placed in her
role of co-ordinating
of multi-agency
partnership projects by

providing advice and support to the partner organisations, liaising with and reporting to funders, and working closely with stakeholders from VCS and statutory sector.



John Holmes
Information Officer
Having worked in
newspapers and arts
marketing in UK and
Canada, John has
the skills to produce
complex information
clearly and succinctly
in an attentioncatching format. As
Information Officer

at CVSF, John is responsible for regularly updating the website, using social media effectively and producing promotional material including magazine inserts, posters and guides for various projects.



Bridget Gibson
Operations Manager
Bridget has extensive
training in finance
and qualifications in
recruitment practice and
employment law. With a
wealth of experience in
specialist recruitment
consultancy and Human
Resources, Bridget is well
suited to her responsibility

of facilitating smooth running of the office.



Mark Richardson
Chief Executive
As a strategic thinker
with extensive senior
management experience
and background in
policy development &
implementation, Mark
brings to this post an
in-depth knowledge
& understanding of
Cornwall's specific

problems and issues, and their impact on the voluntary and community sector. Working closely with the wider VCS and public sector, Mark provides strategic direction and leadership to the Forum.



Lydia Billson
Partnership Manager
With extensive
experience of on the
ground community
engagement and her
work on embedding
the values of Compact
Agreement in VCS
and public sector
practice, Lydia is widely
recognised as a strong

advocate of partnership working. As a line manager, Lydia brings a fantastic handson approach to the team to ensure high performance and staff welfare.



Keltie Seaber
Compact Development
Officer
Keltie has varied
experience in education,
the voluntary sector,
public sector, and as
an elected official for
Padstow Town Council.
This makes her ideally

suited to the role of Compact Development petter partnership working and voluntary sectors and

Officer, promoting better partnership working between the public and voluntary sectors and championing the importance of the refreshed Cornwall Compact.



VSF Board from 29th March 2011

Name	Sponsoring Organisation	Position
Jonathan Adlington	Independent	Chair
June Hackett	Independent	Vice Chair
Tarn Lamb	Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change	Treasurer
Alison Mandeville	Cornwall Independent Poverty Forum	Trustee
Andrew Green	Learning Partnership for Cornwall & IoS	Trustee
Andrew Yates	Cornwall Faith Forum	Trustee
Anna Hoyle	East Cornwall CVS	Trustee
Cherry Martin	Pre School Learning Alliance	Trustee
lan Jones	Volunteer Cornwall	Trustee
James Shepherd	Groundwork	Trustee
John Ede	Citizens Advice Bureau Cornwall	Trustee
Jon Rolls	ReZolve Kernow	Trustee
Julie Griffin	East Cornwall CVS	Trustee
Peter Jefferson	Cornwall Rural Community Council	Trustee
Sam Pashley	Platform 51	Trustee
Steve Clark	Cornwall Youth Partnership	Trustee
Sue Guard	Penwith Community Development Trust	Trustee
Tracy Roose	Age Concern Cornwall and the IoS	Trustee



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