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The Third Sector Conference (see below) held on 23 January can be counted a success: well attended, with delegates participating enthusiastically and full exchanges of information and views. Initial feedback suggests those who were there found it very worthwhile.

For those of you who couldn't make it, a full report on the proceeding will soon be available, as well as information on the next steps to be taken. A questionnaire (*extremely short!*) on the participation of voluntary groups in Community Planning Partnerships was sent out to members a few days ago – we hope you will take the time to complete and return this.

Comments and suggestions for the [website](#) and e-Bulletin are welcome.

Emails to: lee.stevenson@cvs-stirling.org.uk or donald.saunders@cvs-stirling.org.uk

Deadline for contributions is the previous Monday. If you have any queries, please call 01786 469916 and ask for Lee or Donald.

FORTHCOMING EVENTS

Artlink Central 11th Annual Exhibition

The Smith Art Gallery and Museum,
Dumbarton Road, Stirling
23rd January to 26th April, 2.30 - 4.00 pm



Artlink Central, in partnership with NHS Forth Valley, present their Annual Exhibition, featuring a diverse range of work by Artlink Central artists and patients from 23 of the wards and day hospitals throughout Forth Valley. Stirling Provost Fergus Wood presided at the official opening on 27th January.

The projects involved older people (some with Dementia), adults with learning disabilities and those with enduring mental health issues.

Artlink claim that, thanks to continued funding from NHS Forth Valley Trusts, these groups and professional artists have proven that access to quality arts activities achieves quality results. Why not go along and see for yourself? The exhibition runs until 26th April, and it's free.

For further information contact Sarah Pearson, Artlink Central Tel: 01786 450971.



"March Forward" – *Voluntary & Community Sector Conference 2009*

Salutation Hotel, Perth

Friday 6th March, 9 am – 4 pm

Community & Voluntary groups - £30 per delegate

Statutory agencies - £45 per delegate

Perth & Kinross CVS and Volunteer Centre have announced their eighth Voluntary and Community Sector Conference. The one-day event will offer learning and networking opportunities for staff and volunteers from local charities and community groups. On offer is a programme of topical information, education and some entertainment all designed to meet the requirements of voluntary and community sector organisations and the needs of their volunteers.

To attend as an exhibitor or delegate, download the Conference Booking Form from www.pkavs.org.uk/sections/latestnews/Conf09BookingForm.doc and send it to Anna Fraser or Elaine Rimmer at The Gateway, North Methven Street, Perth, PH1 5PP **by 20 February**. (The booking form also contains full details of the programme, venue, workshops topic, etc.)

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VOLUNTEERING & EMPLOYMENT

Vacancies: Learning Link Scotland

The following posts are part funded by the Big Lottery Fund.



1. Information and Communication Officer

24.5 hours per week, fixed term until December 2013

£21,861 - £24,201 per annum (pro rata) starting at lower end of scale dependent on experience.

Experienced in research/analysis, web-based database systems, quality assurance, reporting, monitoring and evaluation - good communication, including IT, organisational and team-working skills essential.

2. Administrative Assistant

21 hours per week, fixed term until December 2013

£14,241 - £15,828 per annum (pro rata) starting at lower end of scale dependent on experience.

Administrative and secretarial functions, financial record keeping and supporting

staff team - good communication, including IT, organisational and team-working skills essential.

For an application pack for either post above, call 0131 553 7992, or email info@learninglinkscotland.org.uk.

Closing date for both posts: 5 pm, Friday 13th February.

Volunteers Wanted for Consumer Network

An appeal has been issued for volunteers to join a Scotland-wide panel to ensure that the voice of consumers in Scotland is heard.

Consumer Focus Scotland's Consumer Network gathers the views of volunteers from across the country on a diverse range of issues – from education to the environment, health to housing, local government to food and diet, and now they also include energy and post. The information is collected regularly and it is used to inform policy and research for Scotland's foremost consumer organisation.

Consumer Network Coordinator Gill MacGregor wants to encourage more people to get involved:

"Volunteers ... are providing a hugely valuable service by ensuring we get as complete a picture as possible of the problems and issues that people in Scotland's diverse communities are facing every day."

"This is a home-based opportunity - there are no qualifications or preconditions for being a member and although the time commitment is relatively small, the benefits for Consumer Focus Scotland of knowing that we are in touch with the real experiences of Scottish people, are huge."

Anyone interested in joining the Consumer Network is asked to contact Gill on 0141 227 6462 or email gill.macgregor@consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk . Alternatively, you can visit the website, www.consumerfocus-scotland.org.uk

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SOCIAL ENTERPRISE



Free Funding Guide

The Scottish Social Enterprise Coalition has released a new FREE guide: **Funding for Social Enterprise**, which explores the types of finance available to social enterprises in Scotland. A copy (PDF) can be downloaded from

www.rcvsweb.co.uk/uploaded/documents/public/Funding-for-Social-Enterprises.pdf

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FUNDING

Changes to Awards for All

Some important changes to **Awards for All in Scotland** will soon be coming into effect:



- From April, Awards for All will continue as a joint scheme of **sportscotland** and the Big Lottery Fund.
- Heritage Lottery Fund will no longer play a role in Awards for All - instead it will use its current grant schemes (Your Heritage and Young Roots) for small community grants within the heritage sector.
- The Scottish Arts Council is in the process of transition to a new organisation, Creative Scotland, and will confirm its position in the New Year. **However, it has recently given assurance that it will continue to be a partner in the Awards for All programme and its support for voluntary arts.**
- Awards for All will still give grants of £500 to £10,000 and will continue to prioritise smaller voluntary and community sector organisations.

The changes mean that the current application materials will no longer be valid after 31st March. New application and guidance materials are being prepared, which will be made available in advance of this date. **All applications using the current form and guidance must be received before 31st March 2009.**

More information about the changes and FAQs can be found at www.awardsforall.org.uk/docs/scot_change_q&a.doc or you can contact the Information Team, email scotland@awardsforall.org.uk, phone 0870 240 2391.

Community Grants Scheme

Stirling Council's Community Grants Scheme supports voluntary and community organisations working for the benefit of people in the Stirling Council area. It offers grants of up to £1,000.

To apply, an organisation must be working in Stirling Council area and must:

- ✓ be constituted
- ✓ be well run and properly managed
- ✓ have the capability to effectively deliver the project/activity
- ✓ have sound financial procedures
- ✓ I meet the following visions and values which contribute to the wider visions and values of Stirling Council: inclusion, health and care, learning and culture

The Community Grants Scheme will fund projects that can demonstrate they **meet community needs or concerns**. The fund will pay for a wide range of projects, including start up costs (including first year running costs), one-off capital or equipment costs,

community events, activities or performances, provision of training courses and advertising.

It is recommended that you submit your application at least 8 weeks prior to the start date of the project for which you are seeking funding. However, deadline dates have been introduced for this year's Community Grants programme:

<i>Deadline for submitting applications</i>	<i>Decision made</i>
20 March 09	15 April 09
24 April 09	20 May 09
5 June 09	1 July 09
17 July 09	12 August 09
28 August 09	23 September 09
9 October 09	4 November 09
20 November 09	16 December 09
8 January 10	3 February 10
19 February 10	17 March 10

Applications can only be considered when they are fully complete, with all the relevant supporting information supplied.

Groups wishing to apply should first contact Jean Cowie, Funding Officer, on 01786 432268, email cowiej@stirling.gov.uk for guidance and to receive an application form.

Foyle Foundation

The Foyle Foundation supports charities registered in the UK whose main purpose is to benefit the **Arts, Learning or Health**. Within its 'Arts' scheme, the Foundation seeks applications that make a strong artistic case for support in either the performing or visual arts. Priorities for support include:

- To help make the arts more accessible by developing new audiences, supporting tours, festivals and arts educational projects; and
- To encourage new work and support young and emerging artists

Also considered will be building and infrastructure projects to construct new arts facilities, improve or re-equip existing arts venues. However, community arts activity will not generally be supported.

Within the Foundation's 'Learning' scheme, they support projects which facilitate the acquisition of knowledge and which have a long-term strategic impact.

Their main priorities for support are **libraries, museums and archives** and **special educational needs and learning difficulties**.

Most grants will be between £10,000 and £50,000. Applications for less than £10,000 per annum will generally not be accepted. The maximum amount of a large grant will not normally exceed £500,000 and may be payable over several years. Applications are accepted all year round. To read the full guidelines and find out how to apply visit www.foylefoundation.org.uk or phone 0207 430 9119.

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GROUP NEWS

Bereaved by Suicide Support Group

Stirling & District Association for Mental Health, 19 Dean Crescent, Riverside, Stirling
Wednesdays, 7-8.30 pm, 18th February for 6 weeks.

Anyone who has been affected by the loss of a loved one due to suicide, whether it's a family member, partner or friend, will be subject to overwhelming and exhausting grief, and maybe too other emotions, such as anger, guilt or blame.

Every grief is different, but sharing thoughts and feelings with others who have suffered similar experiences may help.

For 6 weeks, starting 18th February, **Stirling & District Association for Mental Health** will be running a Bereaved by Suicide Support Group. This will be in the form of an informal self-help group of up to 12 members, supported by two counsellors. If you'd like information about the Group, or to discuss a referral, please contact Helen or Christine at SDAMH **before Friday, 6th February** on 01786 451203, email info@stirlingmentalhealth.org.uk .

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OTHER NEWS

Young Scot Awards 2009 - *open for nominations*

Young Scot, the national youth information agency for Scotland, is looking for inspirational young people to enter into the Sunday Mail & Lloyds TSB Young Scot Awards. Now in its fourth year, the Awards recognise and celebrate the outstanding achievements of Scotland's young people.

Young Scot is looking for young people that have made a positive difference: unsung heroes who are worthy of recognition; young people who have improved their community and/or Scotland; or young Scots who have been an inspiration to Scotland and its people.

The categories are: Sport, The Arts, Democracy / Citizenship, Health, Entertainment, Environment, Volunteering, Community, Heritage, Unsung Hero, Enterprise and Cultural Diversity. To nominate someone you know, go to www.youngscotawards.co.uk **Deadline is 20th February.**

BIG Question Over Commitment to Sector

Several years ago, the **Big Lottery Fund (BIG)** made a commitment that 60% to 70% of its total funding would go to the voluntary and community sector each year. BIG is now consulting about its future funding programmes and about its commitment to the Sector. The consultation runs until the end of February 2009.

One part of the consultation document in particular has set off alarm bells. Question 4 of the consultation, in the 'UK Questions' section, asks:

“After 2012, when our 60-70 per cent undertaking ends, should we continue to guarantee a percentage of our funding goes to the voluntary and community sector?”

And the questionnaire allows the respondent to select one of three answers:

1. Funding should go to the organisation in the best position to deliver the project outcomes, *whichever sector they are from* (our italics)
2. BIG should extend its undertaking to the voluntary and community sector beyond 2012
3. No opinion



Kevin Curley, Chief Executive of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action, says:

“My personal view is that BIG is hoping that most respondents will select answer number 1. This will then give BIG's Board a mandate to drop the 60-70% undertaking and to increase the percentage of funding which goes to schools, hospitals, statutory projects, parish councils and the like. Indeed, for most people who have little knowledge of sector funding and the pressures we face, answer number 1 looks logical and in tune with the current emphasis on 'outcomes'.”

“We need a big majority of respondents to select answer number 2 ('BIG should extend its undertaking to the voluntary and community sector beyond 2012'). “

Whatever your views, the consultation is really important and will have a major influence on the future of not just the sector but the country as a whole.

To respond to the consultation go to www.big-thinking.org.uk and select '**consultation survey**'. It should take no more than 15 minutes to register and to answer the 10 questions.



Stirling, Friday, 23rd January 2009

The weeks running up to the Third Sector Conference saw a considerable build-up of interest, and the event itself did not disappoint. Nearly 70 delegates from voluntary and community organisations and local government turned up for a day of information and exchange of views in the appropriately up-to-date surroundings of Raploch Community Campus.

Following welcome and introduction, the Conference got under way with two presentations: the first, by John Pont (*Policy and Planning, Stirling Council*) gave the background to Single Outcome Agreements, in the context of the Scottish Government's policy objectives and the local government Concordat. Leslie Gallagher (*Stirling Community Planning Partnership*) took the issue forward with a presentation focusing on the current SCPP SOA and its implications for the Third Sector.



A lively question-and-answer session followed, with delegates raising a variety of concerns from the floor. These included the future for small groups in the new funding landscape, procurement/ tendering of services, funding mechanisms, and accessing information and guidance.



Facilitator John Gribbin (Manager, Volunteer Centre Stirling) and delegates at one of afternoon's workshop sessions.

After lunch, delegates split into groups for two workshop sessions: The Role of the Third Sector in Community Planning Partnerships, and The Third Sector's Contribution to the Single Outcome Agreement 2009-12. Again, discussion was lively and constructive. Several key points emerged, in particular a clear consensus regarding the need for the voluntary groups to be effectively represented and to contribute fully in consultations.

Addressing the Conference at the end of the day, Marina McGuire (*Manager, CVS Stirling*) stressed that this was only a beginning of a process of discussion and engagement. She concluded on a note of optimism: the very diversity of the voluntary sector was one of its main strengths, and one that would support it through the challenges and opportunities to come.

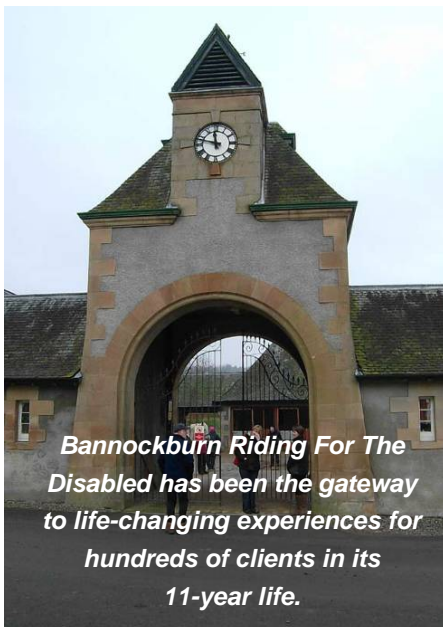
A full report on the Conference, including details of the Q&A sessions and Workshops, will soon be available via the CVS Stirling [website](#).

Marina winds up proceedings with a call for the work begun at the Conference to be carried forward.



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GROUPS IN FOCUS: *Bannockburn Riding for the Disabled*



The Riding for the Disabled Association was established 40 years ago to provide opportunities for therapy, achievement and enjoyment to people with disabilities. In 1994, the Bannockburn Group of RDA was formed, one of 500 member groups across the UK. From humble beginnings as a converted cattle shed in the Sauchie Estate, it has grown into a thriving equestrian centre.

If the name 'Riding for the Disabled' suggests a rather 'niche' focus of minority interest, you couldn't be more wrong. The Centre offers a wide range of activities and caters to a wide variety of people – as we found when we visited earlier this month.

We were greeted by Iain Cluggie, who has recently taken on the job of Volunteer Coordinator. As he showed us round the complex that chilly January

morning, we were struck by the sense of purpose that pervaded the place as staff and volunteers went about their business. In the indoor arena (handily overlooked by the café area) a trio of toddlers perched on relaxed-looking ponies was being led round the circuit by helpers. From the smiles and rapt expressions their enjoyment was evident.

“Some of the kids who come here are suffering from autism,” Iain explained. “In the short while I’ve been here, I’ve seen remarkable things – kids with severe problems of communication or expression have shown quite dramatic changes.” The benefits of contact with animals to children – and adults – with social, communication and confidence problems have been well documented, as the successes at the Sauchieburn Centre seem to confirm.

In fact the range of therapeutic benefits is huge, as Sara Smith, Bannockburn RDA Manager, explained. ‘Disabled’ is interpreted broadly, and can include not only physical, mental and emotional problems but issues of social exclusion and access. Children and vulnerable adults can be referred by schools, doctors or social services.



Sonny, Casper and Chloe with young riders and helpers in the indoor arena.

Sara is the driving force behind the growth of this thriving operation. In the ten years since she took over, the staff has grown from just one to eleven (full and part-time) with specialist experience and qualifications. And of course, the Centre couldn’t function without its volunteers. Currently there are over 66, and they’re on the lookout for more.

“We need volunteers for all sorts of things,” said Sara, “It’s not just looking after horses. Maintenance, fundraising, the café ... there’s all sorts of opportunities depending on a person’s skills and interests. People can give as much or as little of their time as they want.”

“Our volunteers find working here really rewarding. They benefit as well as the clients - some clients go on to become volunteers themselves.” No experience is necessary, and training in childcare, health and safety and first aid is provided. All volunteers are disclosure checked.



< Donna with ‘Whispa’ outside the RDA stables

...and Lynn and ‘Tasha’ >



Clients, volunteers ... but what about the key players in the operation: the four-legged ones? Currently, Bannockburn RDA has 21 horses, some owned, some on loan to the Centre. They are all types, from wee ponies to two ex-racehorses, one a yearling, and are matched to the range of the Centre’s equestrian activities: riding, equestrian vaulting, carriage driving (on the estate pathways or in the new arena) or hacking round the estate. It is important, too, to match the horse to the client, and expertise is required in selecting a horse of the right type and temperament.

So how is all this funded? About 50-60% comes from the client base. Sessions range from £10 to £16, depending on the level of help required (some clients might need three helpers, some none). Fundraising initiatives include events like annual ceilidhs (see *below*), donation appeals, sale of merchandise and a 'Sponsor a Pony' scheme. They manage to break even, says Sara.

The Centre has a new 40 x 80m outdoor arena for practising carriage driving skills



Before saying goodbye, we asked Sara how she saw the future for Bannockburn RDA. Classes were currently at capacity, she said, but she is keen to explore options for engaging young people who might find themselves directionless after leaving school without qualifications or career prospects. RDA could offer the benefits of confidence building and learning new skills, possibly leading to NVQ's.

With a combination of new vision and well-trying, ongoing programmes, the future of Bannockburn RDA looks assured.

To find out more about Bannockburn Riding for the Disabled, visit their informative website, www.bannockburnrda.org.uk

Bannockburn Riding for the Disabled invite you to a

CEILIDH

**Friday, 13th March, from 7.30 pm.
Albert Halls, Stirling**

featuring

The Fraser McKinnon Ceilidh band

**Tickets £9.50 from Bannockburn RDA, Tel 01786 813338
or (from 2nd February) from Albert Halls Box Office, 01786 473338**

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Council for Voluntary Services - Thriving and Connecting Communities in Stirling

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