

## Sutherland Summit - A Unique Event for the County



**Preparing the 200 Delegates Packs!**

(L-R Frances Gunn, CVS North; Christine Ross, VG-ES; Ronnie Lansley, CVS North & Ann Keatinge, VG-ES)

The Sutherland Summit took place in Lairg on Monday 14<sup>th</sup> September and was amazingly well attended. 200 delegates were packed into Lairg Community Centre to participate and engage in the debate on Sutherland's future. The response to the event was overwhelming to the extent that several would-be delegates had to be placed on a reserves list because there literally was no more room to fit in another body.

Ministers, MSPs, Councillors and public service agency reps rubbed shoulders with the young and old of Sutherland. The MP, John Thurso hosted the morning session which provided an opportunity for him and the constituency MSP, Jamie Stone, to say a few words on Sutherland, its people, culture and heritage. This was followed by a mind-mapping session led by the Minister for Enterprise, Jim Mather, who encouraged all delegates to contribute to a lively debate on opportunities for Sutherland in the future.

Topics as diverse as more activities for young people, to energy and climate change were tackled. Issues surrounding communications were raised with a plea for faster broadband, better video conferencing facilities accessible by all, dualling of single track roads, improvements to public transport and the return of the post bus were requested. Crofting issues were aired and again requests for crofts for young people were heard. The natural heritage of the area was noted as outstanding and the need to raise awareness of internationally important species and habitats was voiced. Many health and social care issues were raised too along with the need to grow business opportunities and create jobs. Jim Johnston, the head teacher at Farr High School, informed us that at the start of the twentieth century the population of Sutherland was two and a half times greater than now.

Encouraging inward migration and the return of young people once they had received their tertiary education was deemed of prime importance for the sustainable development of the county.

After lunch, the afternoon session began with an address from Roseanna Cunningham, Minister for the Environment. She highlighted the value of aquaculture to Sutherland. This was followed by workshops. Delegates had a choice of 5: Land & Sea, Enterprise, Heritage, Wellbeing or Youth. The final session of the day was Question Time hosted by the broadcaster Lesley Riddoch, and a panel comprised of Jane Farmer, UHI; Alison Magee, Big Lottery; Andrew Thin, SNH; Jim Johnstone, Community Activist. Ms Riddoch's style was both provocative and entertaining, and a lively exchange ensued.

"Building Sutherland's Future Together" was the strap-line for the event. There was certainly a very positive and united feeling about the day. Brian Macleod, NW Sutherland Community Care Forum, quoted an aphorism on his calendar "If you want to travel fast, travel alone, but if you want to travel far, travel together".

Now that the event is over there is still much work to do. A team of consultants, Rural Analysis Associates, will be holding six workshops throughout Sutherland to provide more opportunities for local people to have their say on Sutherland's future before an Action and Development Plan is drawn up. The Summit Working Group will continue to meet to drive this forward. The Working Group consists of reps from VGES, CVS North, the Highland Council, SNH, NHS Highland, Sutherland Partnership, Northern Constabulary and HIE.

For more information: go to the Sutherland Summit page on the VG-ES website [www.vges.org.uk](http://www.vges.org.uk)

### Preparing For the Event!



### Who's Who? Name Badges!



**Are you interested in helping others?**

**Have you got some spare time?**

**Would you like to do volunteer work with Adults with Learning Disabilities?**

**To find out about volunteering at KEY, Golspie, contact Kathleen or Jeanne on 01408633866**



### **The Highland Hospice Conference – The Space Between 2**

28 & 29 October 2009

at the Drumossie Hotel, Inverness.

A unique line up of national and international speakers will present at this year's two day conference, covering the underlying theme of the maintenance and enablement of dignity both of those facing life limiting illness and of their carers.

Register now for only £99\* per day (\*earlybird price ends September 30th 2009 - Including conference dinner, full lunch, refreshments and all conference materials.)

**Register online at:**

**[www.highlandhospice.org/spacebetween](http://www.highlandhospice.org/spacebetween)**

**For further information please call:**

**Mairi MacQueen on 01463 227912 or email: [mairi.macqueen@highlandhospice.org.uk](mailto:mairi.macqueen@highlandhospice.org.uk)**

## **VG-ES SAYS FAREWELL!!**



(L-R Shirley McHardy, Flower Thomson and Ann Keatinge)

**After 9 years in post as East Sutherland Community Care Forum Facilitator, Shirley McHardy, left to take up the post of Welfare Rights Officer with ESCAB. VG-ES staff and directors met to wish her well in her new career.**



The Highlands & Islands Equality Forum (HIEF) invite you to attend one of our Autumn 2009 Awareness-Raising Roadshows which are being held in the various UHI campuses across the Highlands & Islands (go to <http://www.hief.org.uk/id11.html> to view the full itinerary). Following feedback from our previous events, we have refreshed the HIEF Roadshow to include more discussion along with an outline of key equalities legislation. HIEF Roadshows are designed with busy people in mind and combine a short (2hr) information session with a light lunch to allow the opportunity to network and ask questions.

**Roadshows will take place at:**

**Thurso College on 27th October between 10.00 and 12.00 and will be followed by a free networking lunch.**

**Fairways House, Inverness on 16th November.**

**Inverness College on 26th November.**

**The Aim of the Roadshow is to**

- raise general awareness levels of Equality & Diversity issues
- grow understanding of what equality & diversity means, why it is important to us, and what rights and responsibilities we have under the law

**Who should attend?**

The Roadshows are directed primarily at those in employment – both employers and employees - but are also of relevance to volunteers and anyone with a particular interest in equality & diversity issues – in other words, *they are for everyone.*

**Delegates will each take away a comprehensive Equality Toolkit for future reference and HIEF is happy to offer follow-on free-of-charge training if/as required.**

To reserve a place, please complete a Roadshow Booking Form with your contact details and any specific requirements to allow you to attend. These can be obtained from: Morag E Redwood, Project Leader, Highlands & Islands Equality Forum, SCVO  
Tel 01463 251738; Fax 01463 716003; Textphone 0131 557 6483.  
Mob 07968 475 003.



### **“Successful Funding Applications”**

Chris Smith from VAF provided a 3-hour training session in Brora Community Centre on 16<sup>th</sup> September on how to make a good funding application. He had very clear advice to give. He defined and explained some of the jargon used in funding application forms such as “outputs” and “outcomes”. His top tips were: Only apply to appropriate funders; describe your group and its abilities; describe the need and what you want to do; have a clear budget; describe what you will achieve and what difference it will make; avoid jargon and keep it concise; and always read the guidance notes provided. VG-ES hope in the near future to put up Chris’s presentation on its website. Good luck to all looking for funding!



## HIGHLAND THIRD SECTOR FORUM ONLINE

### Register to participate in online discussions

The online Highland Third Sector Forum hosted by VAH is live and ready to be used. VAH has populated some forum topics to provide a platform for online discussion. These topics have been put up as a starting point and by no means must remain as the main topics. Once you are registered to site as a forum user, you will be able to suggest what topics and discussion threads you would like to see on the site. VAH will happily add these items and/or change existing items to suit your needs.

Although, VAH hosts and facilitates the forum, it belongs to the Third Sector and should be seen as a means of interacting with the wider Highland Third Sector to discuss current issues, find answers to your questions and keep in contact with other organisations of similar interest. It can be used as a means to connecting the voluntary sector to the public sector and having your voice heard. However, none of this is possible if you don't register and suggest how you would like the forum shaped. This should not be viewed as additional work, rather a resource to make the Highland Third Sector more inclusive.

VAH has also added the Community Toolkit to the website which is a valuable free resource to any voluntary organisation. Please take time when you can to have a look and explore the toolkit as it offers information and templates for everything from policies to Business Planning and has links to funding websites. We hope you will find the resource useful and continue to use it and promote it to any groups you might work with.

The website also hosts events, meetings with associated papers (such as past HTSF meetings) and news items. Some of the information discussed at today's meeting with regards to the NHS project and Highland & Islands Equality Forum can be found on the VAH website. We welcome news and events from other organisations that would like their information posted on the VAH website; we will also add links to other websites if you inform us of what they are.

You are also welcomed to register for the bi-monthly VAH e: news. This is an electronic newsletter which will highlight news from around the Highlands and inform of new projects, events and general good news stories. If you have information that you would like added, please send it to VAH and we will get it included. You must register for the e: news on the VAH website as it is a web-based programme we use. All details are confidential.

You can view the website at [voluntaryactionhighland.org](http://voluntaryactionhighland.org) and send any information to [info@voluntaryactionhighland.org](mailto:info@voluntaryactionhighland.org)



**Voluntary Groups – East Sutherland Training Programme** is part funded by the Highland LEADER 2007-2013 Programme and the East Sutherland & Edderton Ward Discretionary Budget.

Following a training needs audit (TNA) of the voluntary and community sector in East Sutherland which was undertaken in March 2009, VGES has identified a number of short courses which could be delivered locally to build the capacity of the sector. The TNA was sent out to all members of VG-ES and the responses were collated to assess areas where there were gaps in knowledge, information and understanding. After the TNA was completed, a Community Halls survey was conducted in partnership with Community Energy Scotland, to identify current issues.

The capacity building training would enable local groups in East Sutherland to be more confident in the governance and management of their organisations, and to operate/deliver services within legal, safe and healthy structures as appropriate.

The proposed courses are:-

- Successful Funding Applications
- Village Halls event
- Grievance and Disciplinary Training
- Local Funding Opportunities
- Personal Safety
- Management Committee
- Treasurer; Insurance
- Basic First Aid
- Basic Food Safety - 2hr session
- Developing a Business Plan.

If you are interested in attending any of these courses please contact:-

Christine Ross ☎ 01408 633001 or email: [christine@vges.org.uk](mailto:christine@vges.org.uk)

### NATIONAL MINIMUM WAGE INCREASE from 1 October 2009

From 1 October 2009 the National Minimum Wage will increase as follows.

Workers aged 16-17	£3.57 per hour
Workers aged 18-21	£4.83 per hour
Workers aged 22 and over	£5.80 per hour

### Advice and information on:-

- Sources of Funding
- Grant-Aid
- Constitutions
- Charitable Status
- Training Courses



### Office Services at Reduced Rates for Members Include:

- Use of our MEETING ROOM with OHP, SLIDE PROJECTOR, POWERPOINT PROJECTOR, LAPTOP COMPUTER & SCREEN, TV/VIDEO FACILITIES. To book the room or to borrow equipment, please phone Liz for details at VG-ES ☎ 01408 633001.
- Use of our SMALL SOCIETIES LOTTERY LICENCE for 'printed ticket' raffles.
- STATIONERY FOR SALE at reduced rates: e.g. envelopes, copier paper and card (white and coloured), Plus an ordering service – stationery, sundries & office equipment.
- Use of PAPER SHREDDER – discreet disposal of unwanted documents.
- DIGITAL PHOTOCOPIER Copies in Black & Colour Improved quality reproduction, enlargement, reduction and overlay facilities. Double sided document feeder, and collating facility which sorts multi-page documents.
- TYPING and computer printing in a variety of styles plus graphics for posters, leaflets, letter heads, etc.
- RING-BINDING of booklets using either wire or plastic combs or slide binders.
- Use of FLIP CHART AND STAND.
- Use of FAX MACHINE – 05601 146813
- Loan of notice boards for temporary displays.
- Use of ADVERTISING space in the Northern Times for fund-raising activities and notify MFR What's On.
- Funderfinder - Software for Grant Seekers, helps voluntary groups to identify which

Charitable Trusts might fund their work - used in conjunction with the Directory of Grant Making Trusts on CD-ROM. Results can be e-mailed to you with funders' web links.

- A4 Colour Flat Bed Scanner. We can now scan documents into our computer of both text and graphics.
- Laminator - We can laminate documents for you such as, posters, identity cards or important papers you wish to protect.
- Cold Laminator for photographs, banners and delicate originals.
- Digital Camera.
- Laptop, digital projector and screen for hire. Please contact VGES for details of terms and conditions for use.
- DISCLOSURE SCOTLAND – VG-ES is registered with the Central Body in Scotland (CRBS) to sign Disclosure applications for potential staff and volunteers who will be working with children or vulnerable adults.
- INDEPENDENT EXAMINATIONS for Receipts and Payments Accounts for organisations with charitable status. The charity must be a trust or unincorporated association established/registered in Scotland and meets the eligibility criteria. There will be a small fee for this service and an engagement contract to sign. For further information contact Christine at VG-ES.



The next issue of this Newsletter will be  
**December 2009.**

Please send information to be included by the  
end of November 2009 to:

**VG-ES, Alba, Main Street, Golspie, KW10  
6TG.**

Tel: 01408 633001 Fax: 05601 146813

Or email your information to:

**contact@vges.org.uk**