

Welcome and Good-bye: Changing Times and Changing Faces in VG-ES

There has been a period of relative stability over the past few years for VG-ES. All Staff have been in post for more than seven years, and have developed as the organisation itself has grown and diversified to meet the needs of the voluntary sector in East Sutherland.

Core funding on a three-year basis from the Scottish Executive/Government contributed towards the work of the organisation and enabled further income generation through grants, projects and services.

However, just over two years ago, the Scottish Government announced that all voluntary sector intermediaries (such as ourselves) would have to work together in each local authority area as an Interface with just one pot of funding per L.A. The formation of the Interface and how it would be structured in Highland has been very complex. Highland local authority area covers one third of the Scottish land mass. There were 11 intermediaries who had to find ways of working together. Working Groups were set up to look at options for potential structures and distribution of funding formulas. The whole process took a long time and there was not an easy route to decision-making. In some local authority areas the exercise was much simpler with only one or two voluntary intermediaries directly affected. A structure was finally agreed by 9 of the intermediaries in Highland. They have formed a Highland Third Sector Partnership through which our funding will be channelled. For this year only funding remains as per status quo.

The Chief Officer of VG-ES, Ann Keatinge, has played a very active role in the formation of the Interface. Much of her work over the past two years has been focussed on this. She began work with VG-ES in May 1992 as a half-time organiser. She has seen her role and the work of VG-ES expand exponentially over the intervening period, especially after securing funding from the lottery to purchase the building in Main Street, Golspie as a resource centre for the sector in 1999. Earlier this year she announced her intention to retire at the end of June 2011. The VGES board sprang into action to recruit a new Chief Officer.



Following a recruitment process culminating in interviewing five prospective CO's, the post was offered to Christine Ross who has worked as the VG-ES

Development Officer for the past seven years. Christine will be known to many members through her work on processing disclosures, organising training events and providing Independent Examinations of Accounts for small unincorporated charities. Prior to working at VG-ES, she was employed by North Highland Forest Trust for four years as their co-ordinator; and she has worked as a support worker for Feis Chataibh. She has a wealth of knowledge of the voluntary sector locally through her role as DO for VG-ES and from all her voluntary work in the community. We wish her well when she takes up her new post on 1st July 2011.

The Development Officer post will be filled by Marion Rhind, who was until the end of May, the Outreach Development Officer with Ross-shire Voluntary Action. Her role was to extend and expand support for the needs of the voluntary sector in Ross-shire in those hard to reach parts of the county beyond their Dingwall base. Marion has also worked for Voluntary Action Highland on a project to set up a Highland-wide database of all community and voluntary groups operating in Highland which would then provide a conduit for community planning consultation with the sector as a whole. She has a background in nursing, but has also worked as a Sports Development Officer for the Council; and like Christine she has a wealth of experience of voluntary work but mainly in Ross-shire. She starts on 1st July too so we wish her well in her new appointment.



The change to form a Highland Third Sector Interface was imposed on us externally, but we believe that it will provide many opportunities to work with our partners across Highland in a more cohesive, collaborative and collective way. We will be able to share knowledge, experience and expertise, and will be able to speak with one voice to promote and champion the work of the third sector in Highland. We face challenging times to meet expectations for service delivery with less resourcing in real terms, but through a good complement of staff working in partnership we aim to deliver quality services to meet demand.

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WEA WOMEN @ WORK PROJECT

www.weawomenatwork.org.uk

W@W issues a warm invitation for you to join them in **Brora on Monday 20th June 2011** for the **Sutherland Network Meeting.**

Listen-up - Sharpen your Listening Skills
with Kate Williams MacKenzie

In this fun, practical and thought-provoking session you will gather information about what is involved in the apparently simple act of listening. Paying more attention to yourself and your environment are starting points for improving your ability to stay focussed on hearing what others are saying.

Exercises and games working individually, in pairs and with the whole group will stretch your listening "muscles" and help you get more out of inter-actions with friends, family and colleagues.

At the end of the session you will feel more confident about your listening skills and your ability to get the most out of your conversations and discussions.

Date: Monday 20th June 2011 from 12noon – 2pm.
Venue: Brora Learning Centre, Johnstone Place, Brora.

Cost: The event is free and lunch will be available for £3.00. Pre booking is requested.

To book, please contact WEA: tel. 01463 710577 or e-mail womenatwork-admin@weascotland.org.uk

Should you have a special needs requirement please let us know.

All women welcome – we look forward to seeing you.



W@W Sutherland Programme 2011

DATE	SPEAKER	TIME	VENUE
26 th July	Frances Powell It's in the News	12 – 2pm	Lairg Community Centre
22 nd August	Kate Williams-MacKenzie Voicing Tour Passion and Wisdom	12– 2pm	Bonar Bridge Community Centre
19 th September	Tbc - Sheree Sartain Social Networking Day	All Day	Brora Learning Centre
24 th October	Lynda Benham Roles and Messages	12 – 2pm	Fountain Road Church Hall tbc
21 st November	Kate Boyd Speed Reading	12 – 2pm	Bonar Bridge Community Centre

HISEZ Open Day

Monday 13 June, Inverness



Are you considering starting a Social Enterprise or if you just need the chance to talk to someone about your ideas then head to HISEZ!

On Monday 13 June HISEZ will be holding an open day where you can drop in for surgery sessions from 9am-3pm or book into workshops available on the day

Social Enterprise Virtual Coffee Morning

Tuesday 21 June, Online



Sometimes it's good just to get together over a cup of tea or coffee, have a bit of cake and talk about what is on your mind. Sometimes though, it's not possible to get together with the people you want to talk to. With so many people involved in Social Enterprise scattered around the Highlands and Islands it is now possible to get together online, talking and sharing ideas more

Opportunities for Communities – HISEZ networking lunch

12 - 3pm, Thursday 23 June
Lairg Community Centre



With discussions led by Lindsay Dunbar of Highlands and Islands Social Enterprise Zone (HISEZ), speakers will include:

- * Mhairi Owens from Big Lottery talking about new funding opportunities
- * Karen Anderson from Acquiring Business 4 Good discussing startups, joint working, mergers, acquisition, contracting and franchising.
- * Paul Davies from Strathnairn community explaining how one community made the most of it's local assets.

The event will provide an opportunity for an open, informal discussion about funding opportunities as well as how to generate income through acquisition or other sources.

Sign up online <http://hisezopenday.eventbrite.com/> or for more details phone 01463 715533 or email lindsay.dunbar@hisez.co.uk



EUROPEAN YEAR OF VOLUNTEERING

The Scottish Government has provided funding to Voluntary Action Fund (VAF) to run a grants scheme to mark the European Year of Volunteering 2011. Under the scheme, small grants (up to a maximum of £1k but more likely to be around £500) are available for community and voluntary groups for activities which contribute to:-

- Increasing the number of people engaged in volunteering
- Increasing the diversity of volunteers especially those from disadvantaged groups
- Making volunteers feeling valued and supported

Applications from groups with an income of less than £100k will be prioritised. The final deadline date for applications is **15th September 2011**. More information available at:

<http://www.voluntaryactionfund.org.uk/5/grants/>



COMMUNITY SPACES

The Big Lottery Fund (BIG) will be launching its new Community Spaces programme on 14th June. The programme aims to bring communities together around a space or place that matters to them e.g. - a park or community garden, an outdoor play area, an allotment or a community centre.

Projects must be able to demonstrate how they meet **all** of the following outcomes:

- Communities coming together to make better use of local spaces and places
- Communities coming together to improve their environment
- Communities coming together to become healthier and more active

The programme will be geographically targeted so that funding is channelled to the areas with the highest need. This will be based on the Index of Multiple Deprivation and a population model to specifically address urban and rural areas. It is anticipated that approximately 28% of the Scottish population will live in an eligible area. When the programme is launched, potential applicants will be able to check their eligibility on the BIG website by entering the postcode of their project base.

Grants of between £10k and £250k will be available for both capital and revenue projects (it is anticipated that the average grant will be around £100k). Applicants will need to contribute a minimum of 5% match funding but this can be "in-kind".

Projects which demonstrate a partnership approach will be particularly welcome and eligible applicants include voluntary and community groups, community councils and schools. Local authorities are not able to lead bids or to apply directly but can be part of a wider partnership.

There will be a two stage application process with set deadline dates for applications. There will also be a fast-track route for applications that either do not need planning permission or have it already. More information will be available on the website in due course: - <http://www.biglotteryfund.org.uk/scotland>



DON'T FORGET OUR NEW SERVICE: THERE'S STILL TIME TO TAP INTO THE VG-ES "TREASURER SERVICE" SCHEME

Do you need help with the financial management of your voluntary organisation's finances? Do you need help with financial record keeping? Would you like help to adopt a good practice regime for keeping payments and receipts accounts? Are you considering developing and implementing policies on: financial management, budgeting, redundancy management (if appropriate), reserves and costing projects? If you are a registered Charity, do you need help with the format of the annual report and financial statements required for OCSR? If you answered "yes" to any of these questions please read on.

NEW

For a "moderate" and affordable fee VGES is now able to offer a "Treasurer Service" Scheme which will run initially for a year.

THE VG-ES SERVICE WILL PROVIDE YOUR GROUP WITH THE FOLLOWING:

- Recording your organisation's income and expenditure on a dedicated spread-sheet; processing cheques for any expenditure - on the production of invoices.
- Retain and securely store all the organisation's financial documentation on the premises of VG-ES. This will include: bank statements, cheque books, receipted invoices, annual statement of accounts, expense vouchers, income and expenditure spread-sheets. (this list is not exhaustive).
- Maintain confidentiality. All members of VGES staff are bound by a confidentiality clause, and will not divulge any information pertaining to the finances of your organisation to any unauthorised person. VGES will expect to be told the names of all personnel from the organisation who are on the board of directors/management committee and entitled to receive and impart financial information in order to conduct the proper business of that organisation.
- Provide quarterly updates on the financial transactions and current balance of the organisation's accounts and ensure a quarterly bank reconciliation at this time too.

VGES will **not** be a signatory on the bank account of your organisation.

VGES will **not** be held responsible for the financial solvency of your organisation. That is the responsibility of the board/management committee of the organisation itself. However, it will alert your organisation of concerns if they arise.

If this service is of interest to your voluntary organisation and you would like to find out more, please contact either Ann or Christine at VGES on 01408 633001 or ann@vges.org.uk or christine@vges.org.uk

SOME FINANCIAL SUPPORT WAS RECEIVED FROM EAST SUTHERLAND WARD DISCRETIONARY BUDGET FOR THE SCHEME

Office Services for VG-ES Members

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.
- **Events Calendar** – advertise your forthcoming event on the VG-ES website. E-Mail info to christine@vges.org.uk

For further details phone us on 01408 633001 or call in at the VG-ES Office, Alba, Main Street, Golspie.

The next issue of this Newsletter will be **September 2011**.
Please send information to be included by the end of August 2011 to:

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

Tel: 01408 633001 Fax: 05601 146813

Or email your information to: ann@vges.org.uk - liz@vges.org.uk - christine@vges.org.uk