



## **Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly**

### **Forums of Interest**

#### **Community Based Transport Consortium**

The Shropshire Community Based Transport Consortium was formed in November 2004 as a medium for Community Transport Operators to share information, discuss pertinent issues affecting them and their service users and to allow them to collectively promote Community Transport in Shropshire.

In 2008 the Consortium agreed to become a Forum on Interest of the Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly (VCOSA). The Consortium meets approximately every 2 months and is attended by a wide range of Community Transport Operators, Voluntary Organisations and other interested parties from across Shropshire.

The Consortium discusses and takes action on many different issues such as community transport funding, regulation issues, joint working initiatives and the promotion of Community Transport services.

The Consortium has enjoyed many successes over the years – it was instrumental in setting up the A to B website and recently successfully negotiated significant changes to the Community Transport funding formula with Shropshire Council.

The Consortium aims to be inclusive and welcomes anyone with an interest or involvement in Community Transport of any sort. Anyone interested in joining or attending a meeting should contact the Chairperson, Linda Cox on 07891094901 or email [linda@communitybasedtransport.co.uk](mailto:linda@communitybasedtransport.co.uk).

#### **Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership**

The Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership (SIP) is a partnership of voluntary and community sector infrastructure organisations operating in Shropshire. It currently comprises:

- Community Council of Shropshire
- Marches Community Enterprise
- Oswestry Community Action
- Shropshire Youth Association
- Shropshire sub-committee of the Pre-school Learning Alliance
- South Shropshire Furniture Scheme
- Mid West Rural Enterprise
- The Roy Fletcher Centre

Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership aims to facilitate effective joint working amongst voluntary and community infrastructure organisations in Shropshire in order to:

- Provide consistent, high quality infrastructure services to voluntary and community organisations across the county
- Raise the profile and strengthen the voice of the voluntary and community sector locally and regionally
- Ensure coherence of infrastructure activity making best use of the resources available.

To date (with funding from BASIS and Capacity Builders) SIP has achieved:

- the provision of a countywide volunteer outreach service for Shropshire
- the provision of a funding advice service to voluntary and community groups and social enterprises in Shropshire
- the provision of training (including half and full day and breakfast briefings) and networking opportunities
- the provision of a partnership website, providing on-line resources information and advice, promoting partner's infrastructure training and events and achievements of the sector in Shropshire
- the establishment of a regular e-newsletter
- the coordination and delivery of a county-wide funding fair in addition to further locality-based workshops and briefings
- Strategic engagement in the Big Society and Localism agenda and the coordination of local opportunities to understand what this means for Shropshire and the VCS
- Regional engagement with funding bodies and other Infrastructure Support Organisations to strengthen our knowledge and embed best practice
- the up-skilling of partner organisations' officers to continue to effectively support the sector in responding to the Big Society agenda and reshaping of public services.

This includes:

- Eight officers trained as Outcomes Champions by the Charities Evaluation Service
- Fourteen officers trained in Social Impact Measurement
- Eight officers trained by ACEVO to understand models for collaborative bidding for public sector contracts
- Sixteen officers trained by NCVO in legal structures for VCOs and enterprises
- Other officers developed to support community asset transfer and the setting up of cooperatives.

With increased opportunities for delivery of (public) services by the voluntary and community sector, the Localism Bill and expected White Paper on Public Service Reform the role of the partnership should be developed to include:

- Building further the capacity of the sector to tender and deliver increased public service delivery, particularly those organisations that are not currently market-ready.
- Supporting the sector to demonstrate the social impact of its work and a social return on investment.
- Supporting the sector in the implementation of appropriate quality standards
- Supporting the boards of voluntary organisations to ensure they are sufficiently skilled, prepared and strategically engaged to respond to the changing environment for the sector.

- Encouraging and facilitating partnership working across the sector and with the private and public sectors.
- Encouraging and supporting social enterprise and increased income generation within the sector.
- Encouraging and facilitating employee related volunteering.
- Working with Shropshire Council and other statutory organisations to develop appropriate commissioning frameworks for the sector.
- Researching and developing consortia working structures that support the sector in bidding for public service contracts.

The full Partnership meets on a quarterly basis and more often based on need. Further operational meetings and working groups are coordinated based around the delivery of joint programmes of work (e.g. Capacitybuilders Volunteer Management Programme)

You can find out more about the Shropshire Infrastructure Partnership on its website: [www.ShropshireVCS.org.uk](http://www.ShropshireVCS.org.uk) or from the Partnership Services and Information Officer on 01743 342169 or email: [info@ShropshireVCS.org.uk](mailto:info@ShropshireVCS.org.uk)

### **Shropshire Voluntary & Community Sector Training Provider's Consortium**

The Consortium's purpose is to provide a mutually beneficial structure for all voluntary and community sector training providers in Shropshire in order to support and enable all full member organisations to access funding, develop their capacity and achieve high standards of quality and performance in learning and training. In addition the consortium is investigating demand and looking to develop model that will meet new commissioning requirements.

Consortium membership is open to all Shropshire based voluntary and community organisations, however large or small, interested in training and learning, including:

- those training their own volunteers, but feel they could benefit from funding aimed at hard to reach people
- those working in a small geographical area
- those working with specific service users

The Consortium was established in late 2007 and has 25 members from a wide range of voluntary and community organisations across Shropshire. The Consortium meets quarterly, usually at a central venue in Shrewsbury.

Some key achievements are:

- Being a single gateway for external agencies seeking partnership, joint bidding or sub-contracting arrangements, with the voluntary sector and community sector in the county in training and learning.
- Offering support to members to assist them with meeting quality standards and accessing training and learning.
- Sharing information and best practice with the Consortium and to the wider Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Providing strategic representation of the sector in relation to training and learning.
- Accessing capacity ESF technical assistance funding to develop consortium capacity through a series of workshops in view of the impending tendering round and to support participation by voluntary and community sector organisations.

- Big Lottery partnership bid to be submitted this coming year involving 6 partner organisations.
- Matrix of training and gaps analysis to be completed 2010/11
- Involvement in infrastructure development work in Shropshire

The Consortium is co-ordinated by Gill Pitt, Shropshire VCS Training Providers Consortium Coordinator Telephone: 01584 877751 email: gill@furniturescheme.co.uk

## **Shropshire Children & Young People's Summit**

Shropshire Children's Trust Voluntary and Community Sector Summit (sometimes referred to as the Children's Summit) was initially established to improve opportunities for voluntary and community organisations to participate in the working of Shropshire Children's Trust and wider children's services. The voluntary community sector representative on the Children's Trust is Hilary McGlynn from Autism West Midlands and the Summit is currently supported by Elaine Griffiths VCS Champion for Shropshire Children's Trust.

Shropshire Children's Trust is a partnership of agencies and representatives of young people and parents. Its vision is:

*In Shropshire, all children and young people matter. We will work together and in partnership with families and carers, to give every child and young person the best opportunities today and for the future.*

The Shropshire Children's Trust Voluntary and Community Sector Summit was established for membership from not-for-profit organisations (including charities, voluntary and community organisations) that provide services for children, young people and their families. The Forum meets at 4 - 6 times a year and there is regular email communication to keep members up to date.

Summit meetings can include:

- Information from VCS representatives on Shropshire Children's Trust (SCT) activities and news from SCT of new or developing initiatives and tendering opportunities.
- Presentation from a partner of Shropshire Children's Trust with a question and answer session.
- Information Exchange from Summit members and discussion on issues arising out of presentation.
- Networking opportunity and information exchange for VCS.

For further information, contact Elaine Griffiths on 01743 252275 or at Elaine.Griffiths@shropshire.gov.uk or Hilary McGlynn on 01939 236181 McGlynn.H@shropshirelg.net

## **Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum of Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin**

The Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Voluntary Sector Mental Health Forum exists to provide opportunities for people from community, voluntary, and 'not for profit' independent organisations, groups together with statutory service colleagues whose work involves mental health to meet each other and to develop effective working relationships with public and private providers of services associated with mental health, as well as users of those

services and their carers.

As a result of these meetings, Forum members should also be able to:

- Appoint/elect 'representatives' to serve on relevant teams, committees, boards, steering groups e.g.
  - Voluntary sector assembly of Shropshire
  - Sub groups of above
  - Shropshire Mental Health Provider Forum
  - Telford Mental Health Provider Forum
  - Brief representatives and receive feedback from above represented groups/committees.
- Formulate collective Forum responses to events, actions and initiatives as well as to lobby for change
- Circulate information on behalf of organisations as required
- Learn about any newly provided services in mental health and invite them to join the forum.
- E mail updates between meetings as necessary

In the past year the members of the forum have focused on changes at national level have impacted at local level. Forum members have raised a number of issues with senior management within the PCT, Shropshire Healthcare Trust and MH Trust. The forum also promotes publicity to change attitudes to improve public perception of mental illness and the stigma that it carries within the community and particularly the workplace.

In the next twelve months the forum will continue to work together to meet the challenges that will arise with changes to health service and the modernisation of mental health services in Shropshire.

The Forum is open to all organisations and groups interested in or associated with mental health. There are a minimum of 4 meetings per year with the dates set in advance annually. The minutes of meetings are circulated to over 60 organisations or individuals involved in providing mental health care. The Forum is supported by the Mental Health Service (Shropshire) of South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust. To find out more phone 077941702795 or email [lillianowens@hotmail.com](mailto:lillianowens@hotmail.com) or [Michele.haynes@sssft.nhs.uk](mailto:Michele.haynes@sssft.nhs.uk)

## **Voluntary Sector Health & Social Care Forum**

The Voluntary Sector Health & Social Care Forum has been established since 1993. Since that time the remit and focus of the Forum has adapted and changed to reflect the changes in structure in the health services and the Local Authority Social Services. The Forum currently aims to:

- Offer voluntary sector groups whose work involves health and social care the opportunity to come together to discuss the planning, provision and management of health and social care services in Shropshire.
- Develop close links between the voluntary sector and statutory partners involved in Health and Social Care to ensure that the voluntary sector groups are well informed about local, regional and national policy and how these will affect people in Shropshire.

- Support and develop mechanisms to ensure information exchange between the voluntary and statutory sectors and to enable voluntary sector groups to have an effective voice at appropriate decision-making opportunities.

Membership of the Forum is open to representatives from voluntary sector organisations, whose work involves health and social care and there is no formal membership procedure or subscription. Relevant organisations may send a representative to meetings but if organisations are not able to attend they may also ask to be put on the mailing list to receive agendas, minutes and training opportunities, as well as information about consultations and other initiatives underway in the health or social care sector.

The Forum meets at least six times a year for two hour meetings and networking. There is a standing invitation for senior representatives of Shropshire Council and the Primary Care Trust to attend and other guest speakers are invited.

A member of the Forum is elected to serve as a member of the Voluntary Sector Assembly Board. Members of the Forum are also invited to represent the sector and the forum on outside bodies, each request being considered on its own merits. Representation includes attending Forum meetings on a regular basis to report back to the Forum, to raise issues and to seek the views of Forum members. Other work undertaken by the Forum has been a long-standing interest in the development of a Compact for Shropshire (the Forum developed the original Compact some 8 years ago).

Secretariat is provided by the Community Council of Shropshire. Anyone interested in finding out more, or joining the Forum should contact the Community Council on 01743 360641 or email: [enquiries@shropshire-rcc.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@shropshire-rcc.org.uk).

## **Visual Arts Network**

The Visual Arts Network is a membership organisation with charitable status, founded in 1999. The Visual Arts Network's aims are:

- To provide an umbrella network for visual artists, designers and makers, arts promoters and educators, groups and galleries and people who are interested in participating in and developing visual arts related activities and opportunities in Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin through subscription membership.
- To raise the profile of the visual arts in Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and beyond and promote the value of visual art in the community as a whole.
- To, promote, support and enhance involvement and participation in the visual arts including visual arts education by developing public access, interest and understanding of visual arts in the county of Shropshire and its environs.
- To continue to be a lobbying platform for visual arts working with other arts groups, organisations.

VAN is a non-selective network, its membership made up of artists and non-artists supportive of its aims. VAN's voluntary committee is formally constituted to manage day to day running of the network. VAN's strength is in its membership and relies on its members coming forward with projects and ideas. It is important that members show an active interest and involvement in VAN projects to keep it alive and well.

VAN has been a driving force for cultural development and is directly and indirectly responsible for the inception of many different arts related projects in the region and has

significantly kick started the growth of the arts in Shrewsbury and initiated the Open Studios in Shropshire.

VAN's achievements have included the launch of a permanent gallery and studio base, which is available for hire at the Market Hall Shrewsbury as part of the Galleries Live initiative. The gallery aims to show work by artists, designers and makers from Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and beyond, providing a forum in which the community may see and participate in the visual arts in a setting not normally associated with the arts.

The community based network encourages inclusion of the whole county in visual art activity and access across Shropshire and is actively making links with other networking groups in the region.

To find out more about VAN visit the website at: [www.vanetwork.co.uk](http://www.vanetwork.co.uk)

To join the Visual Art Network contact VAN, email [admin@vanetwork.co.uk](mailto:admin@vanetwork.co.uk) or complete subscription online via the website or Carola Fielden [Chair] email [carolasw@talktalk.net](mailto:carolasw@talktalk.net). Non artists welcome.

## **Green Shropshire Xchange - GSX**

Green Shropshire Xchange (GSX ) was officially set up in August 2012 as an 'umbrella' organisation representing and supporting "the community of the environment". This 'community' includes all those organisations, groups, businesses and individuals working towards the creation of a sustainable Shropshire. GSX is concerned not only with 'environmental' sustainability but also with economic and social sustainability for all are interconnected and have to be worked on holistically.

The Organisation's objects are for the benefit of Shropshire.

To encourage, support, coordinate and work to promote:

- Community action to protect and enhance the environment
- Sustainable development by our members, other organisations, businesses and individuals
- Positive environmental activities

The benefits of GSX membership are:

- Sharing information, ideas and best practice across the county and across all sectors
- Accessing opportunities to participate in important projects
- Developing relationships with other individuals, organisations and businesses whilst working towards a sustainable future
- Finding out about networking and funding opportunities
- Accessing helpful reports and information
- Influencing GSX activities and decisions
- Having your voice heard within a wide community of like minded people

GSX provides a county wide forum to discuss and move forward sustainability concerns, ideas and issues. We:

- help to set up and run forums of interest that can develop County-wide initiatives.

- provide information and support to new and existing groups, organisations, businesses and individuals through our network of members who, together, have a wealth of expertise and experience.
- publicise and promote sustainable initiatives and the work of GSX through meetings, training courses, events and the media.
- work with other forums of interest to widen the understanding and practice of sustainable living and to encourage every sector to adopt sustainable practices as part of their core philosophy.

GSX is run by a steering group recruited from within its membership which meets every 6 weeks during this formation period. The group has had substantial help during its first 18 months from Shropshire Council's Sustainability Team and now needs to stand on its own feet regards funding and other resources. We are currently seeking a start-up grant from Awards for All and looking for longer term sponsorship.

The main vehicles for achieving our aims are our website: [www.greenshropshireexchange.org.uk](http://www.greenshropshireexchange.org.uk) and attending and hosting events. The website contains a discussion Forum, a BLOG and sections where members can post Case Studies and Project information. We held a launch event in March 2013 and plan a further event for members in September 2013. We have attended two Fairs at Shirehall this year and will continue to promote GSX at other events.

Current members:

Grow, Cook, Share  
 Ludlow 21  
 Shrewsbury Friends of the Earth  
 Shropshire Community Recycling Limited  
 Stretton Climate Care  
 Shropshire Council  
 Shropshire Hills AONB  
 Sustainable Bridgnorth  
 Titterstone Cleve Heritage Trust

Contacts: Rosemary Collie on mobile telephone number 07792 687903 or email: [rosemary@furniturescheme.co.uk](mailto:rosemary@furniturescheme.co.uk)

David Currant 01584 875501 [davidcurrant@phonecoop.coop](mailto:davidcurrant@phonecoop.coop)

**Shropshire Heritage Forum**

The Shropshire Heritage Forum is a place for learning about and advocating heritage in Shropshire. It is based on the belief that collective representation generates shared strength through a pooling of energy, ideas and resources.

It has been supported by Shropshire Council and (as was) the Department of Culture, Media and Sport through the Renaissance programme for the West Midlands since 2003.

The membership has grown to around 40. This ranges from small independent volunteer run museums such as Northgate Museum in Bridgnorth, Council run such as Acton Scott Historic Working Farm, Shropshire Archives to National bodies including the National Trust and RAF Museum, Cosford.

The Forum meets about 4 times a year for either information sharing or training purposes. These meetings are a vital source of information and provide an ideal opportunity for similar organisations to discuss/compare their projects and help each other with potential existing concerns. Forum members often open their doors to use as venues for these events and the Forum is always looking for new locations.

The Museum Development Officer currently acts as the admin support for the forum and can signpost people to the right information and opportunities. To join the forum or to request more information please contact Judith Karena. Phone 07852424331 or email: [judith.karena@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:judith.karena@shropshire.gov.uk)

## **Shropshire Housing Support Forum**

Shropshire Supporting People Providers' Forum was formed in 2003 as a result of the new "Supporting People" programme – a Government programme which dramatically changed the way supported housing was funded, evaluated, and delivered. In 2012 the Forum has been re-launched to reflect the new shape of housing support services in Shropshire, and is now known as the Shropshire Housing Support Forum.

The Forum is an arena whereby all can debate issues regarding housing related support services. The Forum shares areas of concern, good working practices and where appropriate, training resources. The Forum plays an important role in helping to shape service delivery in Shropshire.

The four main aims of the Forum are:

- To protect and promote our service users interests, rights, and involvement.
- To promote collaborative and partnership working between Providers by having clear and consistent service standards across all services.
- To promote best practice in staff/employer conduct in the delivery of the service.
- To promote high standards and encourage all providers to contribute to a continuous improvement to Shropshire housing support services

These were formalised into a Forum Code of Practice in 2005.

The forum meets three times a year with meetings being held in the three areas of Shropshire (North, Central and South) in rotation. Membership is open to all providers of housing related support, partner agencies and representatives from service user groups. This includes small charities up to big national housing support providers. There are usually between 20-25 representatives at any one meeting.

The providers support vulnerable people in Shropshire who need extra help to achieve, or remain, independent within their community, and to achieve a better quality of life. The range of people supported by Forum members include:

- Older people in sheltered housing or within their own homes
- Young people at risk of homelessness, and in need of employment, lifeskills and training
- People with physical and mental health problems
- Victims of domestic abuse
- Gypsies and Travelers
- Adults with learning disabilities
- People who are homeless or in danger of becoming homeless due to multiple problems ( e.g. substance misuse, alcohol, offending behaviour)

- People who are in financial difficulties

The Forum also includes representatives from Shropshire Supported Housing Group (previously the service user panel).

Topics of work that the Forum have influenced and progressed over the years include:

- Common Code of Practice for providers
- Supporting People strategy
- Development of service user involvement and lobbying for a service user co-ordinator post
- Development of outcomes based support work
- Development of an Older Persons Strategy
- Community Alarms common assessment and strategy

The Providers Forum registered with the Voluntary Sector Assembly in 2012 as Forum Of Interest. To find out more about the Housing Support Forum and about becoming a member please use the contact details below:

Contact: Surjit Balu Chair of Housing Support Forum

Email: sbalu@mercian.org.uk

Hilary Paddock Vice Chair Older People and Representative on the VCS Assembly Board

Hilary.paddock@ss-ha.org.uk

Shirley Castree Representative on the CSG

Shirley.Castree@SevensideHousing.co.uk

Keith Turner Vice Chair Other Services

Keith.turner@homegroup.org.uk

## **Shropshire Pan Disability Forum**

The Pan Disability Forum covers a diverse and wide spectrum of disabilities and represents organisations which support people with all types of disabilities including learning, physical, mental and sensory across Shropshire. Its purpose is to improve the standards, eliminate discrimination, and facilitate inclusion, participation and independence for people with all types of disabilities.

Forum membership is made up of representatives of disability led organisations and the chairs of the Shropshire Disability Network, Visual Impairment Forum and the Hearing Impairment Forum. The Forum is somewhat unique amongst those associated with the Assembly, in that it combines a number of Forums under one global heading and some of those Forums are self help and support groups. This leads to a diverse but very useful dialogue in Forum meetings and brings the Forum much closer to the issues which affect those with disability.

Shropshire Pan Disability Forum promotes the working relationship between the voluntary and community sector and any statutory partners they may engage with across Shropshire. It seeks to provide a channel of communication to inform and help to improve decision making by organisations involved in providing services specific to the interests of all those with disabilities. In addition to this it also provides an excellent forum for networking and sharing information amongst the members of the forum, leading to the potential for more co-operative working and improved outcomes for those with disabilities. Some of its members are already working closely with PCT's and NHS Trusts, and the

learning gained from those well developed relationships is going to prove invaluable in the next couple of years as the new CCG's and Personalisation come to the fore.

The Forum is represented through its members on the Learning Disability Partnership Board, Physical and Sensory Disability partnership Board, Parent and Carers Council for Shropshire and Shropshire Partners in Care.

This year members and partner forums are likely to be actively involved in:

- Informing the Personalisation agenda within the local authority
- Exploring Access issues resulting from the government intention to move all benefits claims to a web-based only services
- Influencing the health sector's approach to Single Equalities Bill as it relates to treatment of patients with disability

Forum members have just elected a new independent Chair - Val Lewis, and will, over the next few months review achievements to date and develop a strategy for the next two years.

The Shropshire Disability Forum is open to representatives of all local voluntary and community sector organisations that wish to participate and see the Disability Forum as relevant to the work of their organisations. The Disability Forum aims to meet bi-monthly.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Shropshire Disability Forum please contact: Chair of PDF, Val Lewis 01948 840726 email: [val.lewis@leaton.eclipse.co.uk](mailto:val.lewis@leaton.eclipse.co.uk)

### **Partners for Social Enterprise Shropshire**

The Social Enterprise Forum is a new Forum within the VCS Assembly and was formally accepted at the VCS Assembly Board meeting on the 27 January 2011.

The purpose of the Partnership is to provide a voice for social enterprise for the VCSA, and work with the Marches LEP and other social enterprise partnerships and networks in the county to develop a stronger base, raise the profile and support the growth of sustainable social enterprises.

This will be a mechanism for Shropshire social enterprises to make their voice count on the assembly and information from the assembly will be disseminated to them. It will also raise awareness of the growing number of social enterprises within the County. The forum of interest will include groups from Marches Community Enterprise and Partners in Social Enterprise and others who aren't members of either network.

For more information about the Social Enterprise Forum contact Sue Fry, by telephone on 07779539487 or email [safry@live.com](mailto:safry@live.com)

### **Shropshire Information Advice, Advocacy and Guidance Forum**

The Shropshire Information, Advice, Advocacy and Guidance Forum joined the VCS Assembly in July 2011. The Forum has grown from CLASP (Community Legal Advice Services Partnership) set up in 2009 following a grant awarded by The Big Lottery Advice

Plus programme. CLASP is a partnership of Advice providers (Citizens Advice Shropshire, A4U, Shropshire Housing Alliance & Shrewsbury Homes for All) and 6 supporting partners (Headway, Age Concern, Independent Living Fund, PCAS, OSCAR & SHARP). Plans are in place to open up membership of the forum and work as part of the VCS Assembly offering all agencies that have an interest in or provide information, advice, guidance & advocacy the opportunity to work together.

The purpose of this Forum of Interest is to create an effective link between agencies who share the common partnership aims:

- To deliver independent, information, advice & guidance in Social Welfare Law including Welfare Benefits, Debt, Housing, Employment, Community Care, Consumer, Education and Immigration across the County of Shropshire.
- To provide Advocacy support for Clients
- To Increase access to free advice for the most vulnerable people
- To achieve consistent high quality advice standards across the participating advice agencies
- Promote partnership working

With the increased opportunities brought about by the Public Sector reforms, the role of the Forum will be developed to include:

- Promoting and engaging in good working relationships with statutory organisations across the County in order help members to tender for and deliver any increases in public sector delivery.
- Supporting members in demonstrating the social impact of their work and the social return on an investment in the voluntary sector.
- We are looking to support and develop an information exchange between the voluntary and statutory sectors and to enable members of our Forum to have an effective voice at appropriate decision-making opportunities.

To find out more contact: Jackie Jeffrey, Chief Executive, Citizens Advice Shropshire, Telephone: 01743 284178 Email: [dpm@shropshirecab.cabnet.org.uk](mailto:dpm@shropshirecab.cabnet.org.uk)

### **Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly (SOPA)**

The Shropshire Older Peoples Assembly was established in October 2011 to confront and change the perception of Older People in the county of Shropshire that their interests are being marginalised. Through the joining together of like-minded organisations and individuals SOPA provides a Forum of Interest for older people to play a key role in the VCS Assembly and provides representation on partnership bodies. Social and health care, Supporting People, preventative care programmes and rural transport are among the key issues identified.

SOPA holds 4 public meetings each year with a 'Question Time' format. There is a standing invitation for senior representatives from Shropshire Council to attend and other guest speakers are invited. Public Meetings for 2012 included a focus on budget and Adult Social Care, housing, health and transport. There is a steering group committee and the Chair, Vice chair and designated members identify key issues. This group aims to keep issues at the forefront of attention by Shropshire Council, the VCS Assembly and other relevant organisations.

The membership list has been increasing since SOPA began in October 2011. Members

include Age UK Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, Shropshire Association of Senior Citizens Forums, Shropshire RCC, Severnside Housing, Consortium of Shropshire Tenants, Through the Doorway to Healthy Living, Mayfair Community Centre and Shropshire Link.

SOPA has highlighted key issues concerning the welfare of older people and brought them to the attention of those responsible for planning and delivering services, whether Shropshire Council or other bodies. With increasing awareness of SOPA and increasing membership SOPA will continue to tackle the marginalisation of older people and vigorously campaign on their behalf.

SOPA welcomes new members and anyone who has an interest in the welfare of older people or whose work involves the concerns of older people is eligible. Organisations or individuals are invited to send a representative to public meetings and to join a mailing list to receive information about consultations, meetings and events held by SOPA and other organisations which may be of interest.

For further information contact Bridget at SASCF. Telephone : 01743 244640 or email [office@shropseniors.org.uk](mailto:office@shropseniors.org.uk)

## **Criminal Justice Forum**

The Criminal Justice Forum was established in July 2012. With vast changes occurring in the world of criminal justice and related public services, it is important for voluntary organisations with interests in criminal justice to have a platform for discussion, consultation and information exchange. It is also vital for such organisations to have a collective voice of influence with strategic statutory decision makers.

The Criminal Justice Forum values the experience of all colleagues working within the criminal justice field and welcomes input, and mutual support provided at the Forum meetings, training events and beyond.

The aim of the Criminal Justice Forum (CJ FoI) is to provide support to each other, help decipher government policy, exchange information and ideas, enable strategic influence through the Voluntary Sector Assembly and other relevant decision making boards, and to provide a platform for potential future funding opportunities. The CJ FoI welcomes organisations from the Shropshire and Telford and Wrekin Council areas.

The purpose of the Criminal Justice Forum is to work with criminal justice voluntary organisations:

- To develop and provide an effective mechanism for information exchange and mutual support with regard to criminal justice matters;
- To develop and promote a broader understanding about the organisation, structures and complexity of the CJS, with the particular aim of assisting the voluntary sector's interaction with the CJS;
- To facilitate collective communication with statutory agencies about the shared concerns of voluntary sector CJ organisations;
- To seek to represent voluntary sector organisations' interests and views collectively on appropriate forums, locally and sub-regionally, to statutory agencies;
- To identify and discuss funding opportunities that may arise through the Police and Crime Commissioners, Probation and other statutory and non-statutory bodies.

The Forum communicates with members through quarterly meetings, emails, conference calls and social media and links with the VCSA Board via attendance at Board meetings, written quarterly Board reports, emails, telephone and face to face meetings.

Members include:

Autonomy self-help group  
West Mercia Police, Tactical Equality and Diversity Advisor  
Police Authority  
RAWM  
SIAS  
Citizen Engagement Company  
South Shropshire Furniture Scheme Victim Support  
Carers Federation  
Homestart – North  
Pre-School Learning Alliance  
Citizens Advice Bureau ,Shropshire  
West Mercia Women's Aid  
Magistrates' Association, Shropshire Branch  
Together for Mental Wellbeing  
Axis Counselling  
Autism West Midlands  
West Mercia Probation Services  
Image Match  
Diversity Officer, Shropshire Council  
YSS  
Safer Stronger Communities, Shropshire Council

For more information about the Forum contact Robin Durham, Chair, by email:  
[robindurham@talktalk.net](mailto:robindurham@talktalk.net)

## **County Sports Partnership**

Helping Sport to Help Itself- The County Sports Partnerships (CSPs) was set up in 2006 with an overall aim to enable everybody within Shropshire to benefit from everyday involvement in sport and physical activity. The CSP supports and facilitates a range of networks in order to build capacity and improve opportunities for people to be active. Our current networks include sports development forums, coaching networks and club networks and more recently community groups – these provide a mechanism for local stakeholders to network, share good practice, join up work strands and identify local needs to influence joint planning.

The CSP provides advocacy for the sector, demonstrating the benefits of sport and physical activity and the value of investing in it. It is also an independent charitable organisation which brokers partnerships and facilitates the delivery of national and local projects and programmes to achieve agreed outcomes whilst at the same time ensuring efficient and effective use of resources within Shropshire.

The CSP has a website with a linked electronic fortnightly newsletter that partners and associates can contribute to. The CSP holds an Annual Conference in March and an Annual Review event in July. In between these events we hold a number of meetings and

events as necessary and undertake an annual satisfaction survey with associates. The CSP also holds an annual Awards Evening (in Autumn each year) with categories ranging from Project and local Business of the Year and Volunteer, Coach and Young Leader of the Year. This event both rewards individuals and organisations who work to make sport happen and with support from local and regional media raises the profile of the value of sport and physical activity in a voluntary and community setting.

To find out more about the County Sports Partnership please visit [www.energizestw.org.uk](http://www.energizestw.org.uk)