

Give dormant funds to sector, says WCVA

WCVA is calling on the Welsh Assembly Government to agree funding from dormant bank and building society accounts should be used wholly to fund third sector activity.

In response to the Big Lottery Fund's public consultation, WCVA will say that primary distributor BIG should aim to maximise the benefits of the new source of money in ways that provide lasting benefits for Wales.

This could be achieved through:

- using all, or a significant part, of the funds to create endowment type investments for each of the Assembly Government's two priority areas of young people and climate change.
- the endowments providing, from the interest earned, an income stream for ever for small-scale community action for as long as such action is assessed as achieving practical outcomes for both priorities. The funds could be redirected or released for revenue purposes at a future date if required.
- given the nature of the proposed priorities, funds from dormant accounts building on and adding value to existing young people's and climate change initiatives. Where existing funding mechanisms are in place, there is scope to enter into partnership with these rather than create - and divert funding into - parallel funding administration mechanisms.

The consultation on implementing a dormant accounts scheme was announced recently by Welsh Assembly Government Minister for Heritage Alun Pfred Jones.

He said that legislation currently being considered by Parliament would allow money in accounts that customers had not accessed for at least 15 years to be reinvested in communities across the UK, while preserving people's rights to be repaid if they identified their assets.

The Assembly Government has identified two priorities for the Dormant Accounts Scheme in Wales; "re-engaging young people with the wider community" and "community action to achieve clean, healthy and sustainable local environments".

Funding from dormant accounts will provide an initial significant injection of funding in Wales, and a much more modest amount in subsequent years.

'Using the initial allocation for large scale projects is not likely to be the most sustainable way of spending this new funding,' said WCVA Chief Executive Graham Benfield, OBE.

'We therefore recommend that the Welsh Assembly Government's directions to BIG should ask it to maximise the benefits of funds from dormant accounts, whether or not invested as an endowment, by working with relevant existing initiatives as delivery partners.

'For example, both GwirVol (young people) and Environment Wales (environment and climate change) are existing strategic Assembly Government initiatives and could be appropriate delivery partners for dormant accounts funding'.

WCVA's response can be read in full by visiting: www.wcva.org.uk/policy.

Online charity register for greater transparency

Information on charities is now more accessible, following the launch of the Charity Commission's online register. This new service aims to make the third sector more transparent and make it easier for people to access information about charities.

The new register features colour graphics and details of activities, trustees, key financial information and whether charities file their accounts and returns on time. For charities with incomes over £500,000, new financial profiles show what they receive and how they spend their money.

Key features of online Register of Charities include:

- A detailed profile for charities with an income over £500,000, showing the charity's income and spending, how many volunteers and employees

they have and their track record for submitting accounts. A shorter financial profile is available for smaller charities.

- Enhanced search facilities to search for recently registered charities, charities that have not filed their accounts with the Commission on time, and charities working in a particular field or particular geographical area.

- Trustee cross-referencing and new print options that show if a particular trustee is also a trustee of other charities.

- A Feedback section on the Welcome Page which invites users to tell the Commission what they think of the new online register and how it can be further improved.

To find out more about the new register please visit www.charity-commission.gov.uk/showcharity/registerofcharities.



News and information for Wales from:

Wales Council for Voluntary Action

Baltic House, Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Bay,

CF10 5FH t 029 2043 1700 f 029 2043 1701

www.wcva.org.uk t 0800 2888 329

National training programme for voluntary groups in every corner of Wales

The new Courses for Communities Cymru national programme has been published offering training that will help organisations deal with such crucial issues such as finding funding and managing assets.

WCVA, the county voluntary councils and volunteer centres launched the first training programme in April and this second programme consists of 54 courses.

Some courses are one-day and others half-day - which will be delivered by CVC and WCVA members of staff, with other organisations brought in to provide training in some of the identified specialist areas. Courses cost just £20 per day or less - putting them within the reach of voluntary groups, large and small.

WCVA Training Manager Kate Thomas said: 'It's apparent that while there's a wealth of training being delivered to the sector, there's little

consistency in provision of core training to support voluntary groups in setting up and developing their organisation, supporting staff, volunteers and trustees, fundraising, managing their assets and delivering better services.

'Courses for Communities Cymru will provide a quality-assured, affordable programme of courses in local and regional areas across Wales.'

The courses will be held all over Wales and cover such topics as formalising organisations, organising a committee, monitoring and evaluating the organisation's work, getting the best out of IT and working with others.

A copy of the Courses for Communities Cymru programme is available from the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or email help@wcva.org.uk, your local county voluntary council, www.wcva.org.uk and www.coursesforcommunities.org.uk.

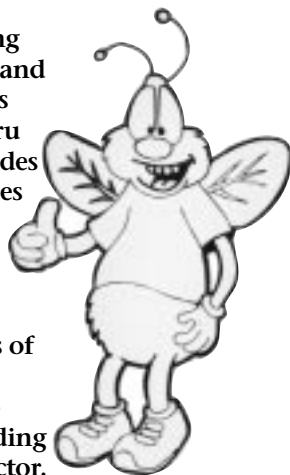
Shape your financial future and sign up today!

Learn more about the planning and funding options open to you and your organisation. WCVA's Sustainable Funding Cymru training programme provides practical tools and resources in an interactive way to help you build a financially sustainable future.

The programme consists of eight training days which introduce organisations to various planning and funding options available to the sector. Each training course is designed to maximise learning by providing a mix of presentations, group exercises, open discussion and networking. All participants receive a comprehensive handbook of tools and resources to take away and put into action back in their workplace.

Places are available now on the 2009 programme:

- Business and strategic planning
 - 20 January 2009 - Caernarfon (through the medium of Welsh)
 - 22 January 2009 - Carmarthen
- Preparing a sustainable fundraising strategy
 - 10 February 2009 - Aberystwyth



- 24 February 2009 - Aberavon
- 25 February 2009 - Aberavon
- Grants - fit for funding
 - 10 March 2009 - Rhyl
 - 24 March 2009 - Neath
 - 25 March 2009 - Neath

Help your organisation understand the importance and benefits of long-term planning and how to achieve a sustainable funding mix. Book your place now!

To find out more visit www.sustainablefundingcymru.org.uk or contact the WCVA Helpdesk on 0800 2888 329 or help@wcva.org.uk.

This training is also being delivered across Wales by the local county voluntary councils (CVCs), for further details please visit www.coursesforcommunities.org.uk.

As Sustainable Funding Cymru is being supported by the Big Lottery Fund, this training is only available to voluntary and community organisations operating in Wales and is offered at a subsidised rate of no more than £20 per person.



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Recruiting Wales' third sector

Since its launch in September 2006, the Goodmoves initiative has transformed recruitment in Wales' third sector.

Goodmoves - a joint venture between WCVA and the Big Issue Cymru - is a multimedia advertising service set up to provide voluntary organisations with a more targeted and less costly approach to recruiting new staff and trustees.

Vacancies placed within Goodmoves appear within five different media: The Big Issue Cymru and Big Issue South West - the weekly editions reach over 85,000 people; Network Jobs - a weekly recruitment supplement which reaches over 1,600 voluntary organisations in WCVA's membership; www.goodmoves.org.uk - the heart of the Goodmoves service which allows visitors to search for the right job in the right area; and www.wcva.org.uk - WCVA's homepage which receives over 50,000 hits per month.

Since its launch, WCVA has exclusively used Goodmoves for all its vacancies. WCVA Communications Manager Lynne Reynolds commented: 'Goodmoves has been providing voluntary organisations in Wales with an extremely valuable service during the last year.'

'The service is very targeted and has excellent reach within the third sector. As a result, organisations are receiving a more suitable pool of candidates.'

Earlier this year Goodmoves carried its highest salaried position to date after Merthyr Valleys Homes advertised its £90,000 Chief Executive position amongst four pages of jobs within the Welsh third sector.

Lynne Reynolds added: 'The vast majority of Goodmoves users have used the service again after their first time, which is testament to the positive experiences they have had with the service.'

The Goodmoves service is easy to use, charging a single fee with no hidden costs. The price organisations are quoted includes copy taking and all design work. The Goodmoves website also offers additional benefits at no extra costs, such as: your organisation profile, downloadable application packs and immediate online publication if required.

If your organisation would like to consider placing its vacancies within Goodmoves, please contact Matt Bates at the Big Issue Cymru on 029 2025 5672 or email matt@bigissuecymru.co.uk.

To receive a weekly copy of Network Jobs via email, please email networkjobs@wcva.org.uk.

Get involved in local decisions

Are public services located within easy reach of where you live? Is housing available in the community for your young people? Is there talk of the local football field being sold for supermarket development? Or are you determined to stop that tip being opened near your village? Each of these examples has something to do with land use planning.

If your organisation wants to influence planning decisions in your area, Planning Aid Wales (PAW) is here to help you. PAW is a registered charity which provides free, professional and independent advice and support on all aspects of land use planning in Wales. It does this by using a Wales-wide network of volunteers who are all qualified planners.

PAW provides a telephone Helpline service that gives advice on individual planning cases. This service is available to anybody, individuals and groups, who cannot afford a planning consultant.

PAW's main aim however is to enable community groups to participate effectively in the planning system. If you want to learn how to give your community a voice in decisions about your local area, PAW development workers can help organise talks and seminars for your group.

Here are some of the groups PAW has helped in the past:

- **Wrexham FC Supporters Trust:** The Trust feared that the club's owner might sell the Racecourse football ground for a housing or commercial development. PAW advised them to approach their council to see if the site could be identified as a football ground in the plan for the area, which is being prepared. If they are successful in having the site 'allocated' for sports use, it will make it very difficult to develop the land for another use.

- **Communities First Support Network:** PAW has recently run seminars for Communities First board members and co-ordinators across Wales. The seminars, called 'Making your Voice Heard', explained how Communities First groups can influence forward planning in their areas, as well as having a real influence on decisions about individual developments.

If you think you might need help or advice from Planning Aid Wales please call the Helpline on 029 2048 5765. Further information is also available on www.planningaidwales.org.uk



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Welfare Reform - the chance to pilot a Community Allowance?

WCVVA's response to the Government's proposals for welfare reform has cautioned against an approach based on compulsion, and urged the Government to pilot the idea of a Community Allowance.

The Government's plans, set out in *No one written off: reforming welfare to reward responsibility*, involve moving towards a system based on just two working age benefits; the Employment and Support Allowance for those who are for a period unable to work due to a medical condition, and Jobseeker's Allowance for everyone who can work. There will be more emphasis on providing personalised support to help claimants get into, and remain in, work. The proposals included requiring unemployed people to work in the community for their benefits if they remain long-term unemployed.

Phil Jarrold, WCVA's Deputy Chief Executive, told *Network Wales*: 'Third sector organisations have responded positively to proposals to increase help for people who want to work, and to remove unnecessary barriers; and many organisations are very well placed to play a part in helping to achieve this. But the proposals for requiring claimants to undertake community work placements are viewed with great caution.'

'WCVA does not accept the concept of compulsory volunteering as a solution to welfare reform, and the proposals carry a very real risk of confusing the distinction between volunteering and compulsory community activity, and undermining public interest in volunteering.'

'Equally, it is important that any community work placements are genuinely additional, and do not displace or undercut existing jobs. Community work placements must not be, or be perceived to be, a cheaper option that adversely affects existing jobs.'

WCVA's response argues that non-compulsory community involvement - on a voluntary or paid

basis - provides real benefits for individuals in terms of building confidence, acquiring skills and experience, as well as for their communities. 'We strongly support the Government's proposal in the Community Empowerment White Paper to pilot a Community Allowance,' Phil Jarrold continued. 'This would enable community organisations to pay people for work that strengthens their community without it affecting any of their benefits. The Community Allowance model could be piloted in Wales if DWP agreed, and there may be scope under European Structural Funds to do this.'

The response emphasised the need for support for individuals, including:

- safeguarding the interests of carers;
- the danger of undue pressure on people to seek work regardless of their health, and the need for proper and sensitive health screening;
- the need to take full account of childcare issues;
- the need for adequate provision for claimants with a disability or sensory impairment;
- the need for clear and accessible rights of appeal.

The response also welcomed the recognition third sector organisation could have a very valuable role in implementing new ways of working with and supporting claimants. It raised concerns, however, about the proposed payment by results regime, coupled with unnecessarily large contracts, which may exclude smaller organisations that are best placed with work with specific client groups. With more difficult clients to place, the payment regime will need to be realistic and achievable, and should take full account of the need for longer term and more intensive support for more vulnerable people.

WCVA's response can be downloaded from its website at www.wcva.org.uk/policy or contact policy@wcva.org.uk.

The next editions of this WCVA national supplement will be available at the end of January, March and May 2009.



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