



# BrAVA News

A newsletter for the voluntary and community sector in Brent

March 2009

## Council Needs VCS, says Gareth

Gareth Daniel, Chief Executive Brent Council has told delegates from Brent's voluntary and community sectors attending last month's voluntary sector conference that the council needs them because they are the eyes and ears of the community.

"The Council needs you because you are the eyes and the ears of the community" said Gareth Daniel. He expressed his hopes for a stronger and more fruitful collaborative working relationship between the voluntary sector and statutory authorities, framing this within the urgency of our unfolding times in emphasising that "we have a serious challenge to address the recession ... We need to work together to build partnerships to protect the most vulnerable members of the community."

Held on February 12th at the Town Hall, the conference, jointly organised by BrAVA and Brent Council drew over hundred representatives of the borough's diverse voluntary organisations, along with members of Brent's statutory services. It had as its theme partnership work across sectors.

Gareth Daniel praised the just and honourable work of voluntary groups and stressed how critically important are the services that the sector provides to the local communities. He said that "the Council needs you because you are the people who are out there every day of the week working with, and on behalf of, our local community addressing a whole range of difficult social, environmental and other problems."

He noted that important advances had been made, crediting the involvement of the voluntary and community sector in the Local Strategic Partnership as an "important symbolic statement in terms of the governance of the borough." He pointed out that within every area of Council activity there is a need for voluntary and community sector support, and that a "strong and trusting relationship must therefore be cultivated."



From right - Gareth Daniel, CEO Brent Council, Sakthi Suriyarakasa, Head of Collaboration NCVO, and Ann O'Neil, CEO Brent Mencap. The need for further collaboration was stressed by all.

He acknowledged past tensions, conflicts and failings without dwelling on them, recounting that "It has not always been an entirely harmonious relationship but partnerships have been built over the past five years with the establishment of BrAVA as an umbrella organisation." But in moving forward, he added that this conference should draw a line under what may have happened in the past and open a new chapter of more effective collaboration between the voluntary sector and Brent Council. Particularly in light of the challenges of our times, it is now imperative that we work together. "Both sides are now working hard to build a genuine partnership," stressed the Chief Executive.

With emotion, he added that because of the unique challenges we now face in

"Both sides are now working hard to build a genuine partnership. We cannot afford not to be working together."

Gareth Daniel, CEO Brent Council

Brent as a result of the deepening recession, it is considered a necessity for everyone to work more closely together. "We cannot afford not to be working together. We need to build on the strong relationship we have built up," he said.

Lending weight to his words, Gareth Daniel stated that both he and the Council are "fully committed" to the development of a new Voluntary Sector Resource Centre, the investment for which is already in place.

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### Brent Open Forum to discuss Impact of the recession

The next meeting of the Brent Open Forum will take place on **Thursday 26 March** from **6.00pm to 8.30pm** at the Willesden Library Centre (Space 2). The Open Forum will be an opportunity for voluntary and community organisations in Brent to come together to discuss how the sector is coping in these uncertain times of economic recession and how best we can work together to find appropriate help and support. For further information, please contact Carola Addington at BrAVA on **020 8438 1520**.

**BrAVA NEWS**

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BrAVA's Mission is to enable local  
people to make a contribution to a just  
and participatory society by playing a  
part in their community, by promoting  
and sustaining local voluntary action,  
and building partnerships with statutory  
bodies and other sectors.

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# Message in a Bottle

As usual we hope you will find BrAVA News, March Edition, an interesting and informative reading. We provide a round up of what is happening locally and discuss some of the dominant topical issues.

In this edition we bring you feedback from a landmark Voluntary Sector Conference collaboratively organised between BrAVA and Brent Council. The key message from the conference was that although relationships across the council and the voluntary sector may have been difficult in the past, it is now time to draw a line in the sand and embrace a new working relationship of trust and mutual cooperation. Behind the scenes, however, the most dominant issue was the impact of the recession and how our public sector partners will be responding in their budgeting processes.

As we spiral headlong into the as yet unknown depths of the recession, building on my message in the last edition, here at BrAVA we are now taking things forward a step further. We are in the process of commissioning an in-depth review of the current and potential impacts of the recession on voluntary and community sector organisations across the borough. We are hoping to present the evidence to our public sector partners, ask them to reaffirm their commitment to the vital services that the sector provides and develop an action plan with a checklist of how we should all be responding.

Without a doubt these are challenging times. The first step in addressing a challenge is to size it up and weigh up the options available under the circumstances. Even though we now face considerable pressure, with increasing demand for the services that we provide whilst the resources at our disposal are diminishing, it is important that both trustees and staff step back for a moment and take a closer look at our organisations.

We need to understand and build a true picture of the challenges that our organisations face and the possible sources of help given the circumstances. We need to understand what those challenges are in the first place, how they are impacting on our organisations and be prepared to take radical actions as a way of preparing our organisations for even greater challenges ahead. The buzz words, emerging at the moment, are "delivering more with less resource". And if staff or anybody can not change their ways of working and take on more with less, the old adage goes "if you can not stand the smoke then please get out of the kitchen". That is the message in a bottle.

Keefa Kiwanuka, Chief Executive, BrAVA ●



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He also announced his desire to hold a community conference with active voluntary sector participation to address the impact of the recession and explore solutions to the challenges we all face.

Other speakers included Ann O'Neil, Executive Director, Brent Mencap and previously Chair, BrAVA, Annette Furley from the Audit Commission, Elizabeth Spring from Elders Voice, Sakthi Suriyarakasa from NCVO, Charlotte Curran from Cricklewood Homeless



Concern and Simon Corkill of Brent Police. The conference also featured workshops on a range of areas of interest.

## The Importance of Working in Partnership

In all the speeches of the day the need for stronger collaboration was emphasised. Ann O'Neil of Brent Mencap highlighted that partnership working is about building commonalities, where there is mutual benefit between organisations participating. "It's all about the people," she implored, and this is the one commonality that all voluntary organisations, statutory bodies and local authorities can build on. In line with this she explained that this is why the functioning of the LSP is an important measure of partnership to Brent Council.

Annette Furley, the Comprehensive Area Agreement Lead, added that even though partnerships focus on formal support structures and frameworks, if they effectively reflect local circumstance then they are just as important as informal collaborative relationships. She pointed out that clear allocation of funding and resources is essential within partnerships, as well as flexibility and adaptation to changing

circumstances.

Elizabeth Spring, Director of Elders' Voice, stressed that partnership was all about complimenting each others' services. In terms of partnership with the Council, she argued that this is both viable and should be done, for the central reason that third sector organisations should effectively represent the interests and issues of the grass-roots, as well as catering to them.

Sakthi Suriyarakasa, head of collaboration for NCVO, focused on the broader perspective, explaining that campaigns too should be delivered in collaboration, recommending NCVO's Guidance to Consortium Building document as a good starting point, as well as the Finance Act of 2006 that allows for collaborative fundraising.

In summary, everyone recognises that partnership is crucial and in these times there is real momentum building around collaborative working.

## Voluntary Sector Conference Master class 'What it's like to be an LSP Representative'

More than a hundred and twenty people attended Brent's Voluntary Sector Conference. Master class sessions were held on a range of topics including 'What it's like to be a Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Representative' facilitated by two of Brent's elected voluntary and community sector LSP Representatives. Other LSP Representatives were also on hand to answer questions and note issues and questions that could be taken forward to the Partners for Brent. Questions included; How can young people's views be represented within the LSP structure? How is the LSP Partnership evaluated for any gaps in representation? How

can communication about the LSP and its work be improved so that people are informed? A Report of the Conference is being compiled and will be available in the coming weeks. If you would like more information on the LSP, visit the BRAIN website at [www.brentbrain.org.uk](http://www.brentbrain.org.uk) or contact Carola Addington.



"We conquer our fear of the future through our faith in the future. And it is this faith in the future that means we must commit to protecting the planet for generations that will come long after us," implored Gordon Brown in an address to the US Congress.



"It is only by investing in environmental technology that we can end the dictatorship of oil, and it is only by tackling climate change that we create the millions of new green jobs we need," he continued. "For the lesson of this crisis is that we cannot just wait for tomorrow today. We cannot just think of tomorrow today. We cannot merely plan for tomorrow today. Our task must be to build tomorrow today."

### Acevo offers recession help online

Chief executives body Acevo has launched a new website to help third sector organisations weather the recession. The site, [www.recessionsupport.org.uk](http://www.recessionsupport.org.uk), contains various guides and tips written by experts on finance, management and career development. It includes news on the recession, as well as links to relevant organisations, events and opportunities.

### Welsh 'plain language' constitution may move to England

The Charity Commission is considering bringing to England a simple model constitution for small unincorporated organisations that is currently available only in Wales. The 'plain language constitution' is aimed at unincorporated charities that want to establish themselves formally but fall below the annual income threshold of £5,000.

### No social investment bank yet

Cabinet Office minister Liam Byrne has rejected a call to provide more funding by the immediate establishment of a social investment bank using unclaimed assets in bank accounts.

## Consultation on new charges for day care extended

Brent Council recently put forward a proposal to increase charges and introduce new charges for day care, re-enablement care and extra care sheltered care.

Originally the deadline for giving feedback was 19th January but this has now been extended to **19th March 2009** following a request to the Council

for an extension at a well attended meeting organised by Age Concern Brent, together with Elders Voice, Brent Pensioners Forum, Stonebridge Older People's Forum and WISE.

The details of what is proposed are set out in a booklet: "Proposed changes to charges for day care, re-enablement care and extra care sheltered care" and

copies are available from public libraries and One Stop Shops.

The booklet is available in Albanian, Arabic, Gujarati, Punjabi, Somali, Urdu and large print by phoning **020 8937 4189**. For further information please contact Age Concern Brent on **020 8965 7711**.

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## BrAVA Advice Surgery for Voluntary & Community Groups

BrAVA will be holding a drop in advice surgery on **26th March**. The session will run from **10:30am -12:30pm** and will take place at the Brent Refugee Forum; Moran House, Suite 3 449-451 High Road Willesden, NW10 2JJ. Tea, coffee and biscuits will be available.

The surgery is an opportunity for you

to get feedback, advice and support from BrAVA staff on any plans you may have in relation to your organisations work.

This will run as a drop in session, but you can book your place in advance if you would prefer. Remember - if you are unable to make this session, we can

arrange a more convenient time to come out and see you.

For further information on this and future advice surgeries, or to explore the range of development advice we are able to offer, please contact Lorraine Osewele on **020 8438 1522** or email her at [lorraine.osewele@brava.org.uk](mailto:lorraine.osewele@brava.org.uk).

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## International Women's Day Conference in Brent

To mark International Women's Day, Brent Council will be hosting a half day 'Women in Leadership' conference on Tuesday 10 March 2009 at the Town Hall. This event is open to all Brent residents and will include guest

speakers and a workshop looking at Women in Leadership.

Cllr Gavin Sneddon, Executive Member for Human Resources and Diversity and Local Democracy and Consultation, said "This should be a

great event celebrating women in leadership. Brent has always sought to improve the career prospects of women and help them break through the glass ceiling. 56 per cent of all management posts at the council are held by women."

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## Mayor opens new resource centre for older people

A new centre for older people in Brent was officially opened in February by Councillor Ralph Fox, Mayor of Brent.

The Kingsbury Resource Centre for Older People in Stag Lane, Kingsbury NW9 is a redeveloped building which replaces the old Dollis Hill Day Centre.

The centre is a welcoming place offering a range of multi-cultural activities to help older people keep active, learn

new skills, meet new friends, seek advice, have fun and celebrate festive and faith events.

There will also be organised outings, parties and range of cultural and faith events throughout the year, with BBQs in the summer. To attend, older people need to be assessed by a care manager as needing care and support to lead an active life and remain independent at home.

The centre also has a computer room with fast internet access giving visitors the chance to learn new skills or keep in touch with friends and relatives via e-mail.

There is also a separate community area which can be hired for community events and activities. For more information or to make a referral to the centre please contact the Manager, Bharti Pattni on **020 8937 3496**.

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## Age Concern England and Help the Aged form a new Charity

Age Concern England and Help the Aged have joined to form a new Charity called AGE UK. There will be benefits and opportunities arising from the merger as it will end the confusion over Age Concern and Help the Aged and it will create a united and more effective charity to help older people.

Age Concern Brent, however, will continue to operate locally and the merger with Help the Aged will not affect its work; it will remain an independent charity serving the needs of older people in Brent.

Age Concern Brent is working with a number of partners to develop local

forums to allow for active participation of older people to be involved in developing strategies, future planning of services and with consultations on proposed changes.

To find out more or to get involved please contact Wendy at Age Concern Brent on **020 8965 7711**.

## The Big Squeeze Campaign

The London Voluntary Service Council (LVSC) and its partners are seeking evidence from voluntary and community organisations across London about the impact of the recession on the communities they serve, the demand on services they provide to them and how they are dealing with this.

Since mid January the Big Squeeze has received over 60 detailed submissions from voluntary and community sector groups across London and of these: 94% believe the recession is already affecting the communities they work with; 69% say their workload has already increased as a result and 82% are not confident they will be able to meet the demand for their services in the future. 76% however, are already taking positive steps to help their organisations cope and continue to deliver vital services.

LVSC's Interim Chief Executive Peter Lewis said, "We are already hearing that our members across London are seeing

an increase in demand for their services, particularly in critical areas like dealing with debt, housing, mental health and employment. We want to gather as much evidence as possible in the coming months. The danger is that if short-sighted decisions are made now, the longer term impact of the recession could have much graver consequences for London's most vulnerable communities in the years to come."

Once LVSC has gathered the evidence it will present the findings to policy makers, decision makers and funding partners across London, and ask them to reaffirm their support for the vital services the sector provides. The LVSC would like community and voluntary groups to fill out their online survey to let them know how your organisation is coping with the current recession. The link to the LVSC website page with details of the Big Squeeze campaign is [www.lvsc.org.uk/bigsqueeze](http://www.lvsc.org.uk/bigsqueeze).

## An-Nisa Prevent Strategy Response

The An-Nisa Society has put forward its response to the government's Prevent Strategy to counteract violent extremism in Muslim communities. It analyses the strategy, its implications and flaws and offers constructive recommendations as to what the government should be doing to address violent extremism.

The Prevent strategy targets the whole Muslim community as a potential terrorist threat and intends to entrench counter-terrorism strategies targeting Muslims across the core services of local councils. It fuses community cohesion strategies with the gathering of intelligence and counter-terrorism. The strategy stigmatizes all Muslims, the vast majority of whom are decent law abiding citizens as 'potential terrorists.' We believe this unprecedented strategy infringes civil liberties and human rights.

An-Nisa are calling on central

government to rethink its strategy towards the Muslim community, which is one of the most socially excluded groups in the country.

The society, long established in Brent, was funded by Pathfinder (a precursor to Prevent) for their highly successful personal development and leadership programme for Muslim youth. However, as more information has emerged concerning the Prevent strategy and the way it has been implemented, An-Nisa has become convinced that it is not only counter-productive in the fight against terrorism, but it is also damaging to community cohesion.

'Preventing Violent Extremism (PVE) - A Muslim Response' and other information can be downloaded from their website. For further information or to comment on PVE or their report, please contact An-Nisa on [info@an-nisa.org](mailto:info@an-nisa.org) or visit [www.an-nisa.org](http://www.an-nisa.org).



### London groups fear they cannot meet demand

More than 80 per cent of voluntary and community groups in London are concerned they will not be able to meet demand for their services during the recession, a report has shown.

### CSV to study barriers to volunteering

The Commission for the Compact is looking into the costs and benefits of engaging people from groups that are under-represented in volunteering. The study will examine the economic and practical challenges of involving, for example, more asylum seekers and disabled people.

### Volunteering charities still in the dark about government scheme

Volunteering organisations are waiting to hear from the Department for Work and Pensions how it plans to establish a volunteer brokerage scheme for jobseekers. The scheme, which was announced in the Government's third sector action plan, will give 40,000 unemployed people access to volunteering opportunities.

### Profile boost for volunteering

Volunteering England is working with the Local Government Association and company directors' body the Institute of Directors to raise the profile of volunteering in local authorities and businesses. The organisation will work with the LGA to identify successful local authority volunteering schemes and attempt to secure support for their replication.

### Sharp rise in volunteering applications

A volunteering charity recorded a 115 per cent increase in applications to volunteer last year, it revealed yesterday. YouthNet attributed the sharp increase in applications – from 26,185 in 2007 to 60,621 in 2008 – to the economic downturn and new attitudes to volunteering.

## In this month's Volunteering News...

At Brent Volunteer Centre, we're beginning to get ready for this year's Volunteers' Week, which takes place in the first week of June. We're also telling you more about our plans for the rest of the year, including training in April and May.

If you have a suggestion of something you'd like to see in next month's Volunteering News, please contact us; we'd love to hear from you. Please write to us on [volunteering@brava.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@brava.org.uk) or call us on 020 8438 1520. Don't forget that you can find more information on our section of the website, [www.brava.org.uk](http://www.brava.org.uk).

### Recognising the work of your volunteers

Voluntary organisations have said they would like more help to recognise and reward the work of their volunteers. We are looking at 2 main activities to help you to do this:

- [A scheme for Volunteers' Week 2009 to help you say thank you to your volunteers](#)
- [An event to celebrate local volunteers and volunteering, later this year](#)

We hope to be able to find the resources to make both of these possible, and we will keep you updated. In the meantime, please remember that the easiest way to ensure that your volunteers feel appreciated is to take some simple action yourself! Here are our 10 top tips...

1. Thank your volunteers in person at the end of each of their volunteering sessions, or by phone or email.
2. Give regular feedback about how their volunteering has made a difference to your organisation and client group.
3. Create your own certificates to thank all your volunteers during Volunteers' Week 2009.
4. Consider giving small or home-made gifts, such as badges, cards or group photos. Remember that gifts should not be perks (received in exchange for volunteering).
5. Make sure your volunteers are invited to events that you hold, such as your AGM.
6. Organise a meal, trip or social event for your volunteers during Volunteers' Week 2009.
7. Find out when your volunteers' birthdays are, and remember to send them a card.
8. Tell the local paper or local radio station about your volunteers' work. But remember to ask for their permission in advance!
9. For 16-25 year olds, contact Brent Volunteer Centre about our awards for younger volunteers.
10. Don't forget that your trustees are also volunteers!

## Interview with a Volunteer!

**Name:** Kimberley-Olivia Blanc, 17 years old, volunteering with Strength in Numbers

**Q?** What have you gained in experiences or skills through volunteering?

**Kimberley:** I learnt how to organise events and much more. We are now working on a project called "Bridging the Generation Gap" which will allow us to go and visit some care homes and help older people, by mainly building relationships with them by playing games and by making them discover our generation. So in that specific project I will learn how to approach older people. I also learnt how to organise things in general, such as my ideas, my plans, and how to make them clear and simple so that I can make them realistic and convincing. It has also made me think in advance, think of all the different situations possible so that we don't get in tricky situations and so that we know how to deal with them. I've also learnt how to communicate in a group, which means sometimes keeping quiet on certain things and sometimes insisting on certain things. We are also going to do an Introduction to Youth Work course soon.

**Q?** What have you done with those skills?

**Kimberley:** I have been able to develop my own ideas and make them become a reality or at least have hope of putting them into action. It has also taught me how to express myself in a more professional and restricted way.

**Q?** Has volunteering helped you gain work or get back into education or training?

**Kimberley:** I was already in education and I quit my job recently, but I am sure that my volunteer experience will help me get a job in the future. My v50



Elizabeth Nash, centre, with Kimberley Blanc, left

award (for 50 hours of volunteering) is on my CV and I have spoken about my volunteering and committee in my personal statement for university.

**Q?** Why do you personally volunteer?

**Kimberley:** I personally volunteer because unlike what most people think, volunteering isn't boring, it is not painting walls, and it can be informal. The committee meetings for me are more like a get-together where we get to express ourselves and put our ideas into action. You can gain a lot of self-satisfaction by seeing your own project being built up. We have help from youth workers and are constantly encouraged by them and volunteering allows you to build up your confidence by being shown that you can achieve your projects. It also gives you a lot of opportunities that I wouldn't have thought I could get through being a volunteer, like going to Parliament!

## Volunteers' Week 2009

Volunteers' Week is 1st to 7th June 2009, and is a time to recognise, reward and recruit volunteers.

Volunteering also has a higher profile in the regional and national press this week, so it's a good time to put out press releases about volunteering at your organisation. You may also find you have more enquiries from potential volunteers during the week.

This year is the 25th annual Volunteers' Week in the UK and Brent Volunteer Centre is already working on a number of plans. We'll keep you posted as our ideas develop, but here is a glimpse of what is to come...

We're running a training course in April, to discuss how to recruit skilled and experienced volunteers for your organisation. At the course we'll be doing action planning, and

agreeing how we can work together in Volunteers' Week to bring more of these volunteers into our organisations. You'll need to attend the training course to be involved, so see the "look ahead" section for details.

The Brent Volunteer Centre team will be doing a day of volunteering ourselves, in the lead up to Volunteers' Week, to generate some local publicity. We're talking now about what we could do; if you have anything you'd like help with at your organisation, let us know. If we can't do it, we can probably find you another group of volunteers who can!

We're working on a scheme to help you say thank you to your volunteers during Volunteers' Week. We'll be asking local businesses to offer discounts and offers to people during Volunteers' Week, but only if

they already volunteer with a local organisation. We'll be contacting businesses soon, and will let you know if the idea receives enough support to go ahead. If you know of any local businesses who might want to be involved, please do pass on their details to us!

And last, but not least, we're planning an event for Volunteers' Week itself, on the [2nd June \(1-4pm\)](#), that will bring together local organisations and people who would like to volunteer. It will also be a celebration of Brent Volunteer Centre's 3rd birthday. We'll be finalising the format soon, and will be in touch to let you know more, and to tell you how you can book to attend the event.

See next month's BrAVA News for an update on all of these plans.

## Give & Gain Day

Following the success of the 2008 London Better Together Day, Business in the Community has launched next year's Day, now Give & Gain Day, which will be taking place on [5th June 2009](#). The day aims to engage over 3,000 business volunteers across London on one day in order to maximise impact and support the development and growth of the capital's talent.

Volunteers will have the opportunity to take part in activities relating to

Unlocking Talent. This will include the creation of a reading space in a school or community group, running enterprise/employability workshops, painting a mural or colourful line games, or any other projects that will help create a stimulating environment for those living and working in disadvantaged areas.

The day will be featured in a high profile and positive media campaign aiming to recruit increasing numbers of London businesses to support

education and community projects within the capital - both on the day and on-going.

If you are a community organisation and would like to nominate one or more projects for Give & Gain Day, please register your interest, or ask for more information now by contacting Anna Springbett at Business in the Community by email on [anna.springbett@bitc.org.uk](mailto:anna.springbett@bitc.org.uk) or by calling [020 7566 8652](tel:02075668652).

## Volunteer Coordinators' Forum

The Forum, intended as an open space for discussion between Brent's volunteer coordinators, is being held on [Thursday 23rd April](#) from [9.30am-12.30pm](#), at BrAVA, 144-150 High Road, Willesden, NW10 2PT. The agenda outlines time for introductions and updates, an open space for discussing issues relating to volunteering, a local volunteer-involving organisation case study, a discussion on volunteering and the recession and ideas for future meetings. To book your place for the Forum, please contact Killian on [020 8438 1520](tel:02084381520) or at [volunteering@brava.org.uk](mailto:volunteering@brava.org.uk). Lunch is included and a maximum of 25 places are available.

### A look ahead

<a href="#">23rd April</a>	Volunteer Coordinators' Forum and training on recruiting skilled and experienced volunteers
<a href="#">12th May</a>	Training on event and one-off volunteering
<a href="#">1st-7th June</a>	Volunteers' Week 2009 – see article

# Building Resilience

The reality is that we are now sailing uncharted economic waters. However, in the midst of all the turmoil, some trends are emerging. This week the Charity Commission released the results of its research into the relationship between charities and their beneficiaries, identifying that demand for charities' services is increasing. What's more, the survey of more than 2,000 organisations found that demand from beneficiaries exceeds supply for 35 per cent of all charities and 60 per cent of large charities.

However, whilst the outlook may look bleak, it is believed by many that the third sector will emerge from this recession stronger than when we went into it. Last week Baker Tilly, the country's largest charity auditor, released the findings of its Voluntary Sector Governance Survey 2008. The survey indicates that "governance within the voluntary sector has undoubtedly improved since this

research was first carried out in 2000". That said, it also highlights continuing failings, stating that 'while trustees do not necessarily have to be technical accounting experts, having a basic grounding in finance is now even more important than ever. Yet 78 per cent [of the 550 organisations that responded to the survey] do not include specific training in financial management in their induction procedures'.

The demand for strong financial management has never been stronger in the sector than it is today. This is the first of ten fundamental priorities set down in a guide written by CFDG, the Institute of Fundraising and PriceWaterhouseCoopers – Managing in a Downturn. Instructing trustees to "take a closer look", we are urged to "understand the true picture not what you'd like to believe. Get to the bottom of what's driving the charity; what you do best and why. Understand how the charity is being impacted by the downturn".

The second fundamental priority challenges us to "act decisively" with a clear call for strong leadership, emphasizing that 'with increased uncertainty and volatility it is important to take tough decisions early. Don't sit back and wait; the winners will be those who position themselves to take advantage of the upturn'.

As we head headlong into recession the old Chinese curse, "may you live in interesting times", comes to mind. The origins of this 'curse' lie in an ancient Chinese proverb, which is more accurately translated as "the times produce their heroes". This proverb leads us back to a final fundamental principle of managing in a downturn: 'identify key talent and develop appropriate incentives for them – retaining and motivating the best people is critical to your future'. That's how these times will produce our sector's heroes.

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## Consensus on the Way Ahead

The future of the Compact has taken a step forward with broad consensus on many of the key issues following the recent Compact Debate. This three month long dialogue with the government and the voluntary and community sectors was initiated in July 2008 by the then Minister for the Third Sector, Phil Hope MP.

At the end of November, the findings of the debate were released by Sir Bert Massie CBE, the Commissioner for the Compact, along with his recommendations to Kevin Brennan MP, Minister for the Third Sector. This was accompanied by the findings from a consultation conducted by Compact Voice, the independent body which represents the voluntary and community sector on taking forward the Compact. Sir Bert said: "I'm delighted

that the Compact Debate has generated responses from the statutory, public and voluntary and community sectors, together representing and advocating the views of over 60,000 regional and local third sector groups from across the country.

"The Compact has the potential to improve the way in which governmental and voluntary and community organisations work with each other, ultimately benefiting everyone. The conclusions drawn from the Compact Debate show that there is near unanimous support for the rewriting of the Compact and Codes (98 per cent), and for the consolidation of the Compact into a single document (85 per cent). "In addition, there is majority support for measures to establish a permanent and independent Commission for the Compact, and to give it a mandate and

the appropriate powers to secure better implementation of the Compact (98 per cent)."

In its report entitled Problems, Issues, Solutions: the Future of the Compact, Compact Voice found that 82 per cent of respondents to their consultation were in favour of a core set of key commitments. The commitments would set minimum standards for Local Compacts and would also make the agreement easy to communicate and memorable for all parties since low awareness was cited as a major barrier to better Compact working.

To download a copy of Sir Bert's recommendations, please visit [www.thecomcompact.org.uk](http://www.thecomcompact.org.uk), or to view Compact

# Mom'sy's the Word

## Awakening to the power of natural foods

When I first met Gwen Mcleish, known endearingly to all as "Mom'sy" (originally short for 'mind over matter'), she left an impression of indiscriminate warmth and kindness, stopping by the BrAVA office bearing gifts of good health in the run up to Christmas.

These gifts came in the form of bottled natural tonics of Mom'sy's own concoction, tonics based on her knowledge of plants, fruits and herbs passed on to her through her family and cultural heritage. And that day, the potential of their beneficial effects on the body and mind was made clear through the mirth instilled in those who drank Mom'sy's festive brew; a natural mirth that she points out is usually common in the Caribbean, South America and Africa.

Under the banner of Rainforest Cuisine, Gwen produces a range of almost a dozen different tonics, branded Jungle Things, each with their own curative properties and intended to alleviate various common ailments. I don't know why she gave me the 'Man Woman Bling Bling' tonic, but it made for an interesting evening that left me with no doubt of the truth inherent in the knowledge that she holds.

So, I invited her for an interview to get to know this fascinating individual who has dedicated her life to the betterment of the quality of life within her social surroundings. In her words, "I'm a person of light. That is my nature."

Brought up for a time in Jamaica before raising her own family in Wiltshire in the sixties, she has dedicated her life to helping people in the communities within which she lived for over thirty years, at first in Swindon and then around London with a particular focus in Brent. From helping to reintegrate ex-convicts into their communities to helping the poor and vulnerable as a youth counsellor and social housing professional to setting up the women's building trades (WEB), Gwen has throughout her working life sought to carry forward the culinary traditions and remedial knowledge of her heritage, passed on to her by her mother.

In the early 80s, after the riots, she was involved in the development of Ujima, Swahili for 'working together', a housing association founded to help young black and minority ethnic men and women. Ujima has strived throughout its history to find ways to regenerate communities by providing economic opportunities and support to groups identified as being in need. Later, she helped set up the Federation of Black Housing Organisations (FBHO), focusing on anti-discrimination lobbying and training services, with funds tripling during her time there due to the emergence of the PATH Training schemes from this.

All the while her passion for "better health through our diets and lifestyles" and her resultant commitment to healthy foods and natural remedies continued to grow, from the founding of the Health Inn in 1989 to her Grow Your Own initiative running now, with the potentials of this knowledge becoming ever more

apparent as her awareness of humanity's relation to nature deepened. Nowadays, these potentials are really blossoming, with Mom'sy currently pushing forward on several different projects. All are geared towards spreading awareness of healthy eating and natural foods, all with the aim of raising the physical and mental well-being of those who are uninformed. As she explains, "Food plants that grow in the sun are far better nutritionally and medically for our minds, bodies and spirits than the all junk diets filled with drugs and chemicals [that] we are being fed in the UK and Europe."

Her central initiative, the Cultural Health and Science Initiatives Trust (CHSIT) aims to provide information and advice on nutrition and health and acts as the focal point from which most of her grass-roots projects are spun. From her Rainforest Cuisine project aiming to teach youth how to cook healthily to the Roundwood Estate children's project on healthy eating and recycling, from organising natural therapy such as long barefoot country walks and bareback horse-riding to planning the Brent Youth Conference at Bridge Park on 7th March, within Brent's communities and further a field, Mom'sy's certainly the word.

For further information please contact Gwen Mcleish on [07737282815](tel:07737282815) or on [culturalhealth@hotmail.com](mailto:culturalhealth@hotmail.com).



## Words of Wisdom

"You can hold yourself back from the sufferings of the world, that is something you are free to do and it accords with your nature, but perhaps this very holding back is the one suffering you could avoid."

[Franz Kafka](#)

"An unexamined life is not worth living."

[Socrates](#)

"If I am not for myself, then who will be for me? And if I am only for myself, then what am I? And if not now, when?"

[Hillel the Elder](#)

"Out beyond ideas of wrong-doing and right-doing, there is a field. I will meet you there."

[Jalal ad-Din Rumi](#)

# Funding Opportunities

## Local community groups “use it or lose it” Brent’s £100k+ pot of Grassroots Grants must be applied for by the end of March

A funding injection for cash-strapped groups could make all the difference to Brent’s smaller community groups looking to meet capital and ongoing costs.

The cash injection is all thanks to a new government scheme - Grassroots Grants – which is being run in Brent by North West London Community Foundation (NWLCF).

Grants of up to **£5,000** are available and, thanks to a rollover of unallocated grants, there’s a grand total of £109,698, but it must be applied for by **31st March**.

It’s quick and easy to apply (simply fill in a form you can download from the website, or call NWLCF to be sent a copy of the application form). Successful groups will be notified within a month of the application deadline.

Local groups including charities, voluntary and community groups and neighbourhood initiatives, who have been in existence for at least a year, with an annual turnover of less than £30,000 can apply.

### Endowment Fund

In addition, further grants will also be available in the longer term for smaller groups under a local endowment fund which will be launched in Brent during the summer.

Under the scheme individuals, organisations such as religious groups or housing associations along with

The Grassroots Grants programme is unable to fund religious, statutory or political activities, but religious groups running community activities such as parent and toddler, or youth activities, can apply.

Patrick Vernon, Chief Executive of North West London Community Foundation commented “This is great news for local groups in Brent, who are often working on a shoestring. We are committed to making it as easy as possible for groups to apply and making decisions quickly so groups can put the money to good use straight away”.

For an application form and more information call **020 8424 1167**, visit [www.nwlcommunityfoundation.org.uk](http://www.nwlcommunityfoundation.org.uk) or email [kath.s@nwlondoncf.org.uk](mailto:kath.s@nwlondoncf.org.uk).

Priority will be given to initiatives which support the following;

- Strong and healthy communities
- A brighter future for young people
- Supporting the vulnerable
- Successful city suburbs
- Community Cohesion
- Quality services for the community

companies based in the borough, can donate funds. The Government has promised to match this by giving £1 for every £2 pledged up to a maximum of £267,345.60.

Red tape and legal requirements have been kept to a minimum to make it as easy as possible for you to support your small local community organisations who are making a real difference to people’s lives.

## DWP Announces New European Social Fund Application Round

The Department for Works and Pensions(DWP)hasannouncedthatitwill launching a series of new opportunities for organisations to tender for activities to be funded through the European Social Fund. The European Social Fund (ESF) helps people improve skills and consequently their job prospects. DWP will be holding provider briefing events, during March 2009, to explain their requirements more fully and to answer questions from potential bidders.

[www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what\\_we\\_buy/european\\_social\\_fund.asp](http://www.dwp.gov.uk/supplyingdwp/what_we_buy/european_social_fund.asp)

## Deutsche Bank Small Grants Fund

Deutsche Bank has announced a new small grants fund for community groups, voluntary organisations, charities, community interest companies and social enterprises, needing funding for a project focusing on education or community development in London. The fund which is managed by the Capital Foundation offers grant of up to a maximum of **£5,000**. Groups applying must have an annual income of less than £150,000. The deadline for applications is the **29th May**.

[www.capitalcf.org.uk/grants/](http://www.capitalcf.org.uk/grants/)

## Grants to Support Small, New and Emerging Voluntary Organisations

The Trust for London is an independent charitable trust set up to support small, new and emerging voluntary organisations established to improve the lives of people and communities in London. The Trust for London are seeking to fund areas of work which have one or more of the following aims: challenge discrimination faced by disabled people; promote the inclusion and integration of recently established communities; strengthen supplementary schools to provide creative educational opportunities; address emerging needs. The maximum that organisations can apply for is **£15,000**. The next application deadlines is the **30th May**.

[www.trustforlondon.org.uk/grants/](http://www.trustforlondon.org.uk/grants/)

### The Home Office Community Fund

[www.governmentfunding.org.uk](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk)

### First Light Movies Grants

[www.firstlightmovies.com/funding](http://www.firstlightmovies.com/funding)

### Grants to Enhance the Teaching of Ecology

[www.britishecologicalsociety.org](http://www.britishecologicalsociety.org)

### The Small Organisation Tender Fund

[www.governmentfunding.org.uk/](http://www.governmentfunding.org.uk/)

## Real Help for Communities: Volunteers, Charities & Social Enterprises

The Government has pledged up to £42.5 million to help deliver extra real help to those that need it most during the economic downturn. The Office for the Third Sector (OTS) action plan sets out a targeted package of support that includes measures to help step up advice, support and volunteering in the areas that need it most.

### New Grant funding opportunities

A £15.5 million Community Resilience Fund will provide grant funding to small and medium providers in our most deprived communities. This is in addition to the Grassroots Grants programme meaning more small grants to more community groups. Grants will cover both immediate local needs and address longer term sustainability of funding issues. Grants will be available from April 2009.

A £16.5 million modernisation fund to help with the cost of mergers, partnerships and moves to more efficient sharing of back office functions for at least 3000 third sector organisations. The funding will be available to purchase specialist legal, financial and employment advice and guidance. Funding will be available from the Summer, with application support available from April 2009.

### New Funding information web service

In addition, the OTS has commissioned a new funding information web service, which is to be launched in late Spring 2009. This website will contain information on both grants and contracts from central gov. departments and agencies available for VCS organisations. It will act as a signpost to opportunities at a local and regional level.

### Other related opportunities

Up to £10 million investment in volunteer brokerages scheme for unemployed people with create over 40,000 opportunities for people to learn new skills and give back to communities through volunteering.

A £0.5 million investment in the School for Social Entrepreneurs to double the number of people it trains to become social entrepreneurs, particularly those working in deprived communities.

A national campaign to raise awareness of the Government's commitment to pay all invoices within 10 days, which will improve cash flow for small organisations.

The complete document can be found by following this link:

[www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third\\_sector/real\\_help\\_for\\_communities.aspx](http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/real_help_for_communities.aspx)

## Funding for Local Employment Initiatives

The Government has announced that it will be making £3 Million available to local authorities as part of a wider proposed package to enable Councils to respond to the economic downturn.

The £3 million being made available is the Governments response to a report setting out practical measures to support councils' efforts to boost employment in their areas. The report recommends that every council should conduct an assessment of local unemployment by the middle of this year, evaluating

claimant trends, and assessing the impact of the downturn on the most vulnerable groups in their local areas who may be disproportionately affected and need innovative forms of support.

In addition the report calls for a new Challenge Fund be established to boost local enterprise, provide extra support for employers and long-term benefits claimants to get real help in building up new skills for the future, and increase opportunities for temporary employment. The report also

recommends that the Government's £1 billion Working Neighbourhoods Fund should be allocated to councils on a five-year funding cycle - and remain unringfenced so councils can use it to tackle unemployment as they see best. The £3million that is being made available immediately is meant to give councils the support they need to start preparing for this process.

<http://nds.coi.gov.uk/Content/Detail.asp?ReleaseID=394114&NewsAreaID=2>

## Green Spaces for Communities

A partnership of five of the country's leading not-for-profit organisations have come together to provide support and funding to help young people improve green spaces in our communities. SITA Trust, v the youth volunteering charity, BTCV, The Wildlife Trusts and the BBC's Breathing Places campaign, have joined forces to develop a two-year programme called GreenPrints which will offer funding of up to £10,000, as well as support and practical expertise

from the partners, to enable 16-25 year olds to make a real difference to the communities in which they live.

The funding is open to not for profit organisations for projects designed and delivered by groups of volunteers aged 16 to 25. SITA Trust and v have each pledged £1 million to fund the programme, making it one of the largest single investments made by either organisation to any funding programme. The overall programme will

be managed using the expertise and experience of SITA Trust and BTCV. One of the most unusual elements of this programme is the individual, dedicated mentor-support that will be provided by the BTCV and The Wildlife Trusts to assist with the practical delivery of every single project that is supported. The next application deadline is the 9th April.

<http://www.sitatrust.org.uk/greenprints>

## Brent's Local Strategic Partnership Board

**Chair** - Cllr Paul Lorber, Brent Council  
**Vice-Chair** - Gareth Daniel, Brent Council

### Voluntary Sector Representatives

Tom Chandler, PLIAS Resettlement  
 Fiona Hill, Brent User Group  
 Jan Knight, Brent Mind  
 Phil Sealy, Mental Health Consortium

### Other Members

Vijay Amin, The Employer Partnership  
 Sean Bennett, London Fire Brigade  
 John Christie, Director of Education, LBB  
 Vincent Cox, BrAVA Chair  
 Mark Easton, Brent NHS Primary Care Trust  
 Vicki Fagg, College of North West London  
 Jan Kelly, Job Centre Plus  
 Abs Mallik, Learning & Skills Council  
 Mark Toland, Metropolitan Police Service  
 John Vaughan, Mental Health NHS Trust  
 Fiona Wise, NW London Hospitals NHS Trust

## Additional Funds

### £1 Million Package for Third Sector Recession Support

Capacitybuilders has confirmed the details of a £1 million funding package to cope with the economic downturn.  
[www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/](http://www.capacitybuilders.org.uk/)

### Community Sustainable Energy Programme

£8 million will be available for the installation of microgeneration technologies and energy efficiency measures and £1 million for project development grants. The next deadline is 1st May.  
[www.communitysustainable.org.uk/](http://www.communitysustainable.org.uk/)

### Funding to Tackle Violence Against Women

Funding is available to support transnational projects that meet the objectives of the Daphne III programme. The deadline for submission is 22nd April.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/funding/](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/)

### Grants for Innovative Visual Arts Projects

The Elephant Trust offers grants of up to £2,000 to artists and institutions for new, innovative visual arts projects.  
[www.elephanttrust.org.uk/](http://www.elephanttrust.org.uk/)

### Community Radio Fund

The fund, open on 15th April, is to assist Community Radio Stations with their core running costs.  
[www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun\\_radio/](http://www.ofcom.org.uk/radio/ifi/rbl/commun_radio/)

### Funding to Reduce Offending by Women

The Ministry of Justice will provide £15.6m of new funding for services to prevent and reduce offending by women.  
[www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement030209a.htm](http://www.justice.gov.uk/news/announcement030209a.htm)

### Funding to Reduce Carbon Emissions

The Carbon Trust's Applied Research Programme aims to support the development and commercialisation of technology with the potential to reduce UK carbon dioxide emissions. The closing date is the 16th April.  
[www.carbontrust.co.uk/technology/appliedresearch/](http://www.carbontrust.co.uk/technology/appliedresearch/)

### Fundamental Rights and Citizenship

Grants are available for transnational projects to promote the development of a European society based on respect for Fundamental Rights, to strengthen civil society and to encourage an open, transparent and regular dialogue. The closing date is the 22nd April.  
[http://ec.europa.eu/justice\\_home/funding/](http://ec.europa.eu/justice_home/funding/)

### Red Nose Day Competition for Schools

Becta and Comic Relief are offering £5,000 worth of ICT equipment. This competition encourages schools to 'perform something funny' for the Red Nose Day schools showcase. The closing date is 31st March.  
[www.rednoseday.com/do\\_something/school/](http://www.rednoseday.com/do_something/school/)

### British Council Community Cohesion Programme

Schools that wish to work collaboratively with a school in another country have the opportunity to apply for grants of up to £5,000 from the British Council. The closing date for applications is the 1st May.  
[www.britishcouncil.org/schoolpartnerships-community-cohesion.htm](http://www.britishcouncil.org/schoolpartnerships-community-cohesion.htm)

### Gypsy and Traveller Sites Grant

The fund is open to Local Authorities, ALMOs and Social Landlords who wish to provide rented sites for Gypsies and Travellers. A total of £32 million is available and the closing date is 30th June 2009.  
[www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/32million\\_available\\_2009\\_10\\_Gypsy\\_Traveller\\_Sites](http://www.homesandcommunities.co.uk/32million_available_2009_10_Gypsy_Traveller_Sites)

# BrAVA Training Programme March - April

**19th March, 10:00-3:00 at BrAVA, "Premises Management Session" led by Francis Gomme, Community Matters.**

Addressing existing and emerging needs for third sector premises management in Brent. The management of community buildings. The principle objective is to increase the provision and standard of support to frontline organisations involved in buildings management and to discuss issues regarding contracting, insurance, etc.

**25th March, 10:00-12:30 at BrAVA, "Focus on the LSP - Partners for Brent" led by Carola Addington, BrAVA.**

To find out how to influence local decision-makers. This 2-and-a-half-hour session (followed by lunch) aims to raise awareness and understanding of the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in Brent, known as Partners for Brent. The session will give an overview of the LSP structure, what the Partnership does, who the members are and a host of other related issues. It would be ideal for newcomers working or volunteering in Brent's community and voluntary sector, as well as for those who would simply like to know more about the LSP.

**2nd April, 10:00-3:00 at BrAVA, "BBC Children in Need Funding Workshop" led by Sally-Ann Bell**

**17th April, 10:00-4:00 with venue to be confirmed, "Microsoft Excel Intermediate" led by Yvonne Robinson, CASH.**

**23rd April, 1:15-4:45 at BrAVA, "How to recruit skilled and experienced volunteers" led by Kate Goddard, Brent Volunteer Centre**

- to identify what kind of volunteers we ideally want
- to explore how this matches the pool of available volunteers locally
- to agree a realistic profile for the volunteers you want to recruit
- to explore possible methods for recruiting these volunteers
- to identify key action points for shared action during Volunteers' Week

[www.brava.org.uk](http://www.brava.org.uk)

