



News Update

March 2006

I am sure that I am not the only person that finds it difficult to believe that we are almost a quarter of the way through another year already and Easter is not very far away!

My main focus, currently, is the organisation of some important forthcoming Partnership events. The first, which is to take place on May 19th, a Partnership Healthcheck is an opportunity for us to reflect upon both where we are now, and where we want to be this time next year. The ODPM consultation document 'Local Strategic Partnerships – shaping their future' indicates a direction of travel for partnerships, and we need to consider how well prepared we are for the journey. At this event attendance will be restricted to members of the Partnership Board and two representative members of each of the themed working groups. The outcomes from the event will be briefly outlined in the June news update and a fuller version will appear on our website.

The Test Valley Partnership response to the ODPM consultation is available on our website and can be found at www.yourtestvalley.com Key messages from the consultation were a) for the need for clarity and some further guidance for two tier area arrangements b) the difficulty involved in the transition from partnerships moving from an advisory and influencing role to an executive/commissioning one; particularly in relation to the collective responsibility of the partnership c) we would welcome an appropriate legislative foundation. To illustrate the last point we look to the successful working of the Community Safety Partnership, which already enjoys legislative status.

The second event is our Partnership Annual General Meeting. This will be on Wednesday 15th June in the early evening; venue information will follow. This will be a time to look back on our achievements of the last year and celebrate our successes. It is also a very pleasant opportunity to meet and speak with some new and also some not so new faces and to hear from you how you think we are doing. You will be receiving an invitation to this event in a few weeks time. If you would like to join us you can be assured of a warm welcome - so do make a note of the date now.

We have some items from our partners in the Voluntary Sector which you may find of interest:

Helping Your Community Group to Reach More People

Pre-Schools, Mums and Toddlers, Carers Clubs, Older People's Social Groups, Youth Clubs & Community Projects

We estimate there to be at least 800 voluntary, community groups and clubs in Test Valley. Whether these groups operate in towns or rural villages they all provide important activities to people of all ages and abilities. Your group may be a pre-school, older people's social group a carers support service or a Youth Club.

Did you know that there is help, information and support available to your group? You may have a great idea to extend or expand the important work you do but are not sure how to go about it. Maybe you will need additional funds, specialist skills or even transport to make your idea a reality.



Test Valley Community Services (TVCS) maybe able to help you with the information and support you need. Our new project will not only help you to develop your existing activities but could also give you the advice and information you need to start a new group.

If its money you need then our project has a proven track record of finding grants and other resources. We have helped Community groups and projects in Test Valley to receive over £600,000 in grants during the last three years.

Our services are free. Our aim is to help voluntary groups in Test Valley to become stronger and able to support more people in the community.

For more information on how TVCS could help you or to discuss any ideas you may have please call Greg Alexander on 01264 362600 or email: greg.alexander@tvcs.org.uk website: www.tvcs.org.uk

The Andover Food Bank

The launch of a new initiative in the voluntary sector is due to take place on 18th April. St John the Baptist Roman Catholic Church has taken a practical lead in assisting those in need. Donations of non-perishable foods have been collected and are given out using a voucher system to members of the community that find themselves in an emergency situation with no funds available to buy food. The church has received donations of more than a ton of food in 7 weeks. It is now planned that the church will work together with other partners using a multi-agency approach to extend and broaden the project and an initial meeting to promote this was held recently. The meeting was well attended and there was interest from a broad range of agencies both in promoting and supporting the scheme. Similar schemes are already in place in Winchester and Salisbury and these will provide a model for the Andover Food Bank.

The Andover Food Bank will be based at St John's Church in Alexandra Road, Andover, where a collection and delivery point is located. It is planned that food will be available on a daily basis from 9.30 - 11 am. Non- perishable food will come from a variety of sources and it is likely that if you shop in Andover supermarkets in the near future you will encounter a volunteer with a shopping list and a request that you purchase one item of food, with your own, to donate to this excellent cause.

There are currently 80 volunteers who are involved with the project on a part-time basis but more are needed. If you can spare a couple of hours of your time or feel that you can help to support Andover Food Bank in any way then please contact Christopher Howard on 01264 362111 who will be delighted to hear from you.

A Fruit and Vegetable Market is now running at Longmeadow!

The main strategic aim for the **Health and Well-Being Group** is to introduce initiatives to improve access to good quality, affordable food to improve the diet of the local community and to improve health and well-being for all.

The project entitled '**Eat to Live**' is intended to develop a mechanism to address these aims with the provision of fresh fruit and vegetables, at minimum cost to families, in areas of deprivation within the Test Valley

Andover Family Learning has also been working closely with the Mid Hampshire Coronary Heart Disease, Cancer and Diabetes Prevention Task Group to support the co-ordination and development of local action to ensure that local strategies for Nutrition, Physical Activity and

Smoking Prevention are implemented at local level to prevent these potentially serious diseases.

The new Fruit and Vegetable Market at Longmeadow is being run in partnership with Test Valley Borough Council, The Health Service Health and Waitrose . A local joiner-Ray Clarke - from Clarke's Joinery has made an authentic wooden barrow to display the produce.

This exciting new venture is operating at the same time as **The Coffee Pot** on Tuesday mornings where parents of young children meet socially and have the opportunity to take part in a number of activities. These parents are able to order a selection of healthy fruit and vegetables in advance. Healthy Living Workshops are to be run alongside the market which includes tasting new food and Cook and Eat sessions.

Volunteers are being trained to support the market so that it can be taken out to local schools and other community venues.

It has been well received by the parents/carers and young children, who are trying out new, healthy food with support from professionals. One parent bought leeks and potatoes to make soup and then tried other recipes and brought the results in for parents to try!

The Market is being officially launched on Tuesday March 28th at 09:45 am at the Longmeadow Centre.

Finally some news from another partner Test Valley Borough Council:

Rural Mentoring Programme

The Council was successful in its bid last year to become a member of the IDeA's Rural Mentoring Programme and is now in the process of finalising the funding agreement for 25 days of mentoring. The bid reflects the authority's desire to learn from best practice elsewhere and, particularly in linking the national rural agenda into the local context and embedding rural priorities through the Test Valley Partnership. Members of the Rural Excellence Team will work alongside the Council's officers and Councillors on the areas the Council has identified as priorities. An action plan has been drawn up around three key themes: improving community development, encouraging and promoting interest in preparation of Parish Plans and improving service delivery in rural areas.

The mentoring programme will seek to identify key interventions and actions within these key themes.

Upcoming meeting dates

The Education and Learning Group is due to meet on 26th April from 12-2 pm at the Grosvenor Hotel, Stockbridge