

Bellshill Local Area Partnership Third Sector Update Report

From: Colin MacFarlane (Third Sector Representative)
To: Bellshill Local Area Partnership Members
Date: Activity to March 2016 included in report

1.0. THIRD SECTOR WITHIN COMMUNITY PLANNING ACTIVITY UPDATES

1.1. Bellshill Area Voluntary Sector Locality Network Update ↻

At the time of reporting, final preparations were being made by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire (on behalf of North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Partnership Group) for delivery of a Bellshill Area Voluntary Sector Locality Network Event on Wednesday 30 March 2016 at Salvation Army Hall, Bellshill. It was anticipated that the Event would be well attended by members of the local third sector and incorporate a range of short information sessions from third sector organisations and partner agencies delivering services in the Bellshill area.

Feedback from the previous Bellshill Area Voluntary Sector Locality Network Event of Thursday 10 September 2015 indicated that the Network continues to provide a valuable information sharing and networking opportunity for the local third sector, with positive feedback received from the third sector organisations and volunteers in attendance. A full report of the Network Event of Wednesday 30 March 2016 will be produced and made available in the coming weeks.

1.2. Third Sector Community Planning Improvement Programme Update ↻

Implementation of North Lanarkshire Partnership's Third Sector Community Planning Improvement Plan 2015-18 continues to progress positively. Important areas of activity currently being advanced include supporting the third sector's contribution to Health and Social Care Integration, development of a Volunteering Pledge for North Lanarkshire Partnership, assessing the third sector's approach to developing a database of services and asset register, and strengthening the portfolio of Third Sector Thematic Networks in North Lanarkshire.

North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Partnership Group intends to monitor Improvement Plan progress through establishment of a new Improvement Sub-Group. Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire records its thanks to members of Bellshill Local Area Partnership for their ongoing support in relation to Improvement Plan implementation, with further updates available to members by contacting Craig Russell at Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire on 01236 748011 or via e-mail at craig.russell@vanl.co.uk.

1.3. North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Conference 2016 ↻

North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Partnership Group will host its annual North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Conference on Friday 3 June 2016 at the new Newmains Community Trust Centre near Wishaw. The modern, multi-purpose Centre, which opened in 2015 following significant third sector leadership and development, provides an excellent showcase of what can be achieved by the third sector in locality areas with the relevant endeavour and support.

The Conference intends to offer a valuable opportunity for members of the third sector in six locality areas of North Lanarkshire, including Bellshill, to come together to discuss key issues, celebrate success and explore the future in relation to the local third sector. Invitations and further information about the Conference will be circulated in the coming weeks, with details on agenda items and bookings obtainable by contacting Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire on 01236 748011 or e-mailing info@vanl.co.uk. A comprehensive Evaluation Report will be made available to Local Area Partnership members following the Conference.

1.4. Bellshill and District Area Third Sector Locality Profile and Asset Overview ↻

A compact 2016 Third Sector Locality Profile and Asset Overview for the Bellshill and District area is currently being prepared by Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, and will contain key information relating to the composition of the local third sector in terms of organisations, physical assets, human assets, resource assets and strategic direction.

It is anticipated that this summary document will be completed in Spring 2016 and circulated with the Third Sector Update Report to the August 2016 Bellshill Local Area Partnership meeting.

2.0. LOCAL THIRD SECTOR ACTIVITY UPDATE

2.1. Bellshill Organisations Encouraged to Nominate for Queen's Award ↻

Third sector organisations from the Bellshill area are being encouraged to submit nominations for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, the highest UK award available to volunteer groups.

The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service is the equivalent of the MBE for organisations and is awarded to several UK groups each year who provide a social, economic or environmental service to the local community. The prestigious Award was introduced in 2002 to mark the 50th anniversary of the Queen's coronation, and winners are announced annually by Buckingham Palace on 2 June.

Lord Lieutenant of Lanarkshire Mushtaq Ahmad OBE is currently seeking nominations from Bellshill based organisations for consideration for the 2016 roll of honour. Any group of two or more people undertaking volunteering and that has been active for at least three years can be nominated for the Award. The majority of the group must be volunteers, and to be nominated groups should provide a service that meets the needs of people living in the local community, be supported and recognised by the community and the people who benefit from it, and be run locally.

A local assessment panel considers all nominations made and decides which ones to send to the National Awards Committee. This Committee then makes its recommendations to the Cabinet Office, which sends a final list of Award winners to the Queen for approval. Award winners receive a certificate signed by the Queen and a domed crystal glass. Representatives from Award achieving organisations may also be invited to attend a royal garden party. Further information about the Award and details of the nomination process can be obtained by visiting <https://qavs.direct.gov.uk>.

2.2. Volunteering Legacy of Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games: Two Years On ↻

In April 2014, the third sector in North Lanarkshire was actively preparing for facilitation of what proved to be a hugely successful volunteering contribution to the Glasgow 2014 Commonwealth Games. Notably, this contribution involved a strong proportion of volunteers from the Bellshill area delivering important roles as North Lanarkshire Council volunteers and official Glasgow 2014 'Clydesider' volunteers.

Indeed, it was the enthusiasm and spirit of the volunteers that helped define the friendly image of the Games and the success of events such as the Queen's Baton Relay (the route of which passed through the streets of Bellshill), the Triathlon at Strathclyde Country Park and the Cycling Time Trial which raced through villages in the Northern Corridor. Local volunteers undertook vital tasks in areas such as stewarding and spectator support, location and volunteer coordination, family activity support, first aid and transportation.

Two years on, North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Partnership Group has been keen to explore if the Games has left a real volunteering legacy in the local area or if the passion for volunteering was as short-lived as the Games themselves.

A number of factors have suggested that the Games have resulted in a positive and lasting impact on local volunteering. Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire, for example, supported a record high number of individuals registering to volunteer during 2014-15 (2540), which represented a 19% increase from the number of new volunteers supported during 2013-14. The timing of many of these new volunteer registrations was interesting too, with a particularly high number of volunteering enquiries in the six months following the Games.

Furthermore, the interest in one-off and sports volunteering opportunities in the local area has been higher than ever since the Games. As a result, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire has been able to establish an informal 'bank' of event volunteers who can be called on to assist with short-term volunteering activities in the Bellshill area such as gala days, sporting competitions, charity fundraising events, tasks to assist the community and third sector organisations, sponsored walks and runs, environmental activities and much more.

With volunteers also scheduled to be involved in supporting the British Transplant Games in North Lanarkshire in 2017 and the European Sports Championships in Glasgow in 2018, the potential remains strong for high-profile sporting events to impact positively on local volunteering over the coming years.

2.3. Workplace Pension Legislation and the Local Third Sector ⇨

North Lanarkshire Voluntary Sector Partnership Group is currently monitoring the implication of new Workplace Pension legislation on third sector organisations in the local area. The legislation, which mandates employers to enrol all staff onto a pension scheme, was introduced by the UK Government in 2012 but is only starting to affect smaller organisations with auto-enrolment staging dates for employers with 30 or less staff members commencing in 2016 and concluding in 2018.

The legislation could potentially cause financial difficulties for third sector organisations operating to tight and decreasing budgets. Further updates on the local third sector's capacity to meet the legislation will be provided as the auto-enrolment period progresses. In the meantime, Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire intends to offer relevant support and advice to any organisations experiencing difficulties.

2.4. Bellshill Charity Providing Expert Support to Those Experiencing Traumatic Loss ⇨

A new charity providing peer support and assistance to those in North Lanarkshire and beyond affected by the loss of a loved one as a result of murder or suicide has reported a major impact from first year of operation.

Bellshill-based Families Friends Against Murder Suicide (known as FFAMS) was launched in October 2014 and in just a short space of time has already provided a lifeline to several families experiencing devastating periods of traumatic grief. FFAMS is entirely led by trained volunteers and operates a national grass roots Befrienders Service delivering free peer support and confidential advice to those left behind by murder or suicide. All FFAMS volunteers have themselves experienced the heartbreaking loss of someone close through murder or suicide. Further information can be obtained by visiting www.ffams.org.uk.

2.5. Local Third Sector to Benefit from New Third Sector Interface Website ⇨

Volunteers and third sector organisations from the Bellshill area will have the opportunity to benefit from increased and improved information sharing as Voluntary Action North Lanarkshire gives its Third Sector Interface website a complete makeover.

A new and interactive website is to be launched at www.voluntaryactionnorthlanarkshire.org in Spring 2016, containing refreshed and user-friendly features and information sections designed to assist the local third sector. This will include an area specifically devoted to the third sector's connectivity to Community Planning.