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Does Bigger Mean Better?

Third Sector reported in August Help the Aged and Age Concern are making another merger attempt.

This would be the third attempt in 10 years to overcome their differences and merge into a single organisation for older people's welfare. A joint working party has met at least twice this year and the trustee boards of both charities are expected to make a final decision at their meetings in November.

Clearly such a decision could have a large impact on communities across Rother. While it has not yet been finally decided clearly there are questions as to why two well run charities feel the need to merge. Is it really a case of larger is better or will we lose services locally?

The merger of charities and community groups can clearly bring benefits. The best when two slightly different organisations combine in a 1 plus 1 equals three situation. A good local example of this is the creation of Rother Voluntary Action from 3 separate charities. However there are times where mergers may look good on paper (especially to bean counters) but

“Age Concern England and Help the Aged have given their strongest signal yet that they will merge...” Third Sector

as a result of the inevitable “streamlining” that follows local knowledge and services are gradually eroded as strong link to the community are broken.

There is plenty of evidence of the latter happening all too frequently. How many times do we hear that

services for Rother residents will now be run out of Hastings, Lewes or even further away? Partly propelled by the need to protect local services RVA is currently working with its district and borough colleagues to argue the case that national or regional organisations may look good on

paper but often do not meet the standards set by our local organisations for understanding the local community or come close to developing the knowledge and dedication of staff and volunteers.

RVA's message is simple - Keep it Local !

Profile : The Age Concern Rye & District Day Centre

serves the elderly residents of Rye and surrounding villages, it meets Tuesday and Wednesday of each week and provides the members with physical, mental and social stimulation in a variety of ways. Seated exercise sessions are held led by a qualified Extend tutor. Lunch is cooked on the premises and the ingredients sourced locally. After lunch anything from a speaker, one to one computer lessons, playing bingo or countdown, card making, art and craft work, holding a quiz or just chatting.

‘Picnic in the Park’ which was held for members of the Age Concern Rye & District Day Centre. Held at Iden Recreation Ground on July 14th the weather shone on all those who attended and a great time was had by all. 100 people attended the Picnic which included invited guests from Tenterden Age Concern, ARRC, and Hartley House Residential Care Home.



Emmeline showing how its done at 79!

Age Concern co-ordinator Kate Head said “We feel that these picnics are something that the elderly very often cannot do but others can. Line Dancing is again something outside their scope and something which they probably would never even dream of doing. I like to think this is our ethos – to give members a bit of fun and a reason to get up for in the morning. To be able to do things which others do but which the members feel is out of their reach”.



Carers Aiming to Raise Funds



The Association of Carers has started a pilot project in Rye and Rural Rother offering Carers within the area a limited respite service.

A full and award winning service has been provided to those living within Hastings, St Leonards, Battle and Bexhill for 21 years now and the AoC feel that now is the perfect time for expansion of the service into Rye. A Charity Clay Shoot which raised £575 was held in Broad Oak in July to help raise money. The project is in its early stages and will be running until February 2009. They are particularly looking

for volunteers at present to offer 3- 4 hours each week but if there are any Carers who would like take part with the project and receive a limited respite break through out, then they would be happy to hear from you. If volunteering appeals to you or maybe you are a carer who would benefit from the service please call them 01424 722309 or email info@associationofcarers.org.uk

HFS makes plans for a Bexhill Centre

HFS is a local registered charity that reuses unwanted furniture and electrical goods to benefit low-income households. HFS has a large store in central Hastings and is looking to establish a second store in Bexhill, at the site of the former Russell's garage on London Road



For 20 years the charity's volunteers have been collecting reusable goods free of charge from households throughout Hastings and Rother District and running a store for people with low incomes to purchase items at affordable rates. Two vans run from the Hastings store, collecting and delivering furniture throughout Rother. Over 180 tonnes of furniture and appliances were reused last year. HFS also provides a full House Clearance service which reuses as many items as possible and makes a charge based on the cost of responsible disposal of other items. The Russell's site is very large and HFS hopes to involve other organisations to develop a social enterprise and training centre on the site, providing vocational training for people who are out of work and opportunities to buy good quality reused goods. For any further information please call HFS on 01424 44 11 12. Map and further contact details: www.hfs.org.uk

Tourism in Bexhill and the Bexhill Community Network Join Forces.



It was agreed by the network that an information board to help visitors and the community would be extremely useful in a high profile location within the town

As part of its last amount of lottery funding Bexhill Community Partnership (now Rother Voluntary Action) asked the Bexhill Community Network to come up with some ideas that would help the town move forward. The BVIP was agreed

A Grand Opening took place in May in the Colonnade Coffee shop, in conjunction with the Bexhill Community Network. The BVIP offers a much needed service to Visitors, Residents and Community Groups following the closure of the Bexhill's Tourist Information Centre almost three years ago and is run entirely by voluntary help. The BVIP opens Friday, Weekends and Bank holidays from 10.00am to 4.00pm. Volunteers are able to promote their group activities and events with posters and first hand local knowledge. The BVIP is seeking further volunteers to help out call 0780 192 1105 for more info.

BMX Track Youth Committee Member Comes Second in the Nationals!

Congratulations go to Pete Lavender, one of the youth committee members of the Sidley BMX Track who was involved in writing the successful YOF bid for the Renovations to Sidley BMX Track. Pete was one of ten young people from Bexhill who competed.



RGS Goes Live



Chair of Rother Voluntary Action Jo Kirkham signs a partnership agreement with William Miller Regeneration Director of AmicusHorizon Housing ready to launch Rother Garden Services. John Willis the RGS Head Gardener looks on. More news next issue.

Join the HUB

The East Sussex Health User Bank has been developed by Hastings & Rother and East Sussex Down and Weald PCTs to provide a ready-made bank of local people who are interested in playing a more active role in their local health service.

This could simply mean that they would like to receive a regular newsletter to keep them informed, or they may want to be more involved on a practical level.

Being part of the HUB means that you could be playing an active part in influencing how the NHS budget is spent in the area, helping to evaluate services and to prioritise how they develop health services in the future. You can tell them what is best for you and what you are interested in. They want people of all ages, from all communities and walks of life and can make information available in languages other than English and provide interpreting services to help you take part. If you are interested please complete the attached form and send it to Isla Dowds. For further information or an application form to become a member please contact Isla Dowds on 01424 735683

Speak Up!



A new countywide project the SpeakUp forum has been developed to help put some of the community involvement and representation issues into context and to publicise what activity is occurring where. Through the forum you will be able to identify which community representatives sit where and how to contact them if you have issues you would like to share.

The Community Support Portal - CaSPer site will be launched shortly to act as a countywide doorway into where the support or information is available. If you have any questions about the SpeakUp Forum phone 01273 483832

Local Action Planning

During the recent Youth Development Service consultation it was cheering to hear Alison Jeffrey, Children Trust Manager for East Sussex, referring to the Local Action Plans as giving evidence that the primary concern for communities in Rother was to achieve "somewhere to go and something to do" for our young people across the whole District.

There is increasing evidence that community plans are being closely looked at by agencies now changing their services. Watch this space for more feedback

View from the forums

Rye Network

Chris Fairman from The Rye & Winchelsea Rotary Club, which is 60 years old this year, explained to Rye Network how over those years they have helped the community. Half a million pounds have been raised during that time and supported some 150 local organisations, causes and individuals. They have contributed directly to projects in India and Africa and to the Rotary National and International causes.

Also celebrating a birthday this year is Playden Women's Institute. 90 years they have been meeting up and they are still going from strength to strength. The Village Hall is a hub of activity providing activities such as Bingo, Arts & Crafts, Yoga, Pre-school group. The hall has just recently been refurbished and now offers full disabled access, good parking facilities and fully well equipped kitchen.

Bexhill Community Network

Greg Barker MP very kindly came along to our last Bexhill Community Network meeting and was very supportive of the work we carry out. He has an office in Amherst Road Bexhill where you will find him when he is able. He can be contacted via Dr Louise Sargent, his Constituency Manager, who also attended the meeting, who is based in the Office in Amherst Road.

Little Common Library has now been fully refurbished and all that visit say how wonderful it is now. Greg Barker was one of those who helped raise the funds for this refurbishment to take place. John Willis made a small presentation about the new Rother Garden Services project aimed at providing gardening services especially for those struggling with large gardens

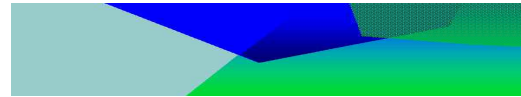
Muddy Boots

Caryl from the Navigator Service very kindly came along to the Muddy Boots meeting in August and gave a very interesting talk on what this FREE service provides. Its aim is to help older people, who have a moderate need, to live independently in their own home. This can include: Home safety checks, smoke detector fitting, security advice, aids to help you move around your home, schemes to help keep warm, community alarms like lifeline, activities to improve your fitness, money advice services, social and learning activities, support for carers

Can also provide small amounts of funding for things such as computer course, massage, extend classes, complimentary medicine, etc., etc. Anything that will help the client carry on with life as they used to – opening up their world again.

Tel: 01323 442618 for information.

Groups



Winchelsea Archaeological Society



WAS was founded in 1999 by residents at the suggestion of the East Sussex County Archaeologist to help rectify the lack of physical archaeological evidence about the layout and character of the medieval town and port of Winchelsea.



At that time, despite widespread recognition of the town as a heritage site of international importance, there had been only five small geophysical surveys in the town and few excavations. No work had been done in the old port area at all. The principal aim of the Society is to geophysically survey all the remaining open areas within the town. It was able to purchase its own resistance meter in 2002 using a grant from Awards for All.

In 2006, it started to raise funds to commission ground-penetrating radar (GPR) surveys to supplement its resistivity surveys. Within areas designated as Scheduled Ancient Monuments, WAS operates under licence from the Department of Culture, Media and Sport, and with the permission of English Heritage. The Society works in co-operation with the County Archaeologist and has a close working relationship with the National Trust, which is a major local landowner. WAS is currently working with the National Trust to sort and date a mass of historic pottery found in a cellar in the town. This had been dumped during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries, and provides a unique glimpse of the social and economic status of households during this period. A core of volunteers from WAS have been trained by a ceramics expert and are currently training other volunteers (everyone is welcome to join the project).

Further information on the WAS is available on www.winchelsea.net/was and can be contacted on was@winchelsea.net or via 01797-25333 (Winchelsea Community Answerphone).



Rye Children's Centre

opened its doors on 15th September at its new premises on Rye's new primary school site.

It offers various groups and parenting courses for children under 5 and their families. It includes a Community Parents home visiting service, Breastfeeding Peer Supporters, a mobile toy library and fun van which visits all the local toddler groups in the rural Rother area, a new music, story and a movement group, Bumps to Babies group, a Pop in and Play session, and a Dads group every 1st Saturday .

For more information on any of the Children's Centres in Rother call 01797 224878.

New Centre for Older Residents

A New Centre is being planned for Fairlight, Pett, Guestling, Three Oaks and Winchelsea Beach.

This coastal strip has an unusually high proportion of older residents, many of whom live alone, and who find difficulty in accessing services and have limited transport options. The Local Action Planning Group for Fairlight had identified this as a priority need.

From October, a new Centre will be opening at Fairlight Village Hall where they will be able to benefit from a nutritious lunch, transport, armchair or Extend exercise, Benefits and health information and advice together with visits from Podiatry and other health services backed up by a programme of presentations and entertainments. The local farm shop will also be visiting to offer the purchase of their seasonal fresh fruit and vegetables. If anyone would like more information about how to contact the organisers or who would like to volunteer to help can get in touch with Nan Hacking, AiRS Rother Volunteer Support/Village Care Team on 01424 882026 email: Hackingnan@aol.com or Sylvia Gutsell on 01424 812544.

RVA Annual General Meeting

**This years Annual General meeting will be held on October 29th at 2pm (venue to be determined)
Contact the RVA office for details**



To date NAVCA have trained around 600 VCS workers in the principles of Public Law. In the first year of the project, the Public Law Project have supported over 70 local organisations, their advice and support prevented over £250,000 being lost to the sector in cuts from public bodies.

The next opportunity to take part in this training (held in conjunction with South Downs CVS) will be at Uckfield Civic Centre, Uckfield on 11 November, 9am – 4.30pm. The group will be limited to 15 participants, so early booking is advisable. The cost per person is £35; this includes VAT and a light lunch. To book your places go to www.navca.org.uk/evs and follow the link to training programme page

Rother Community Safety Fund

Rother District Council has set aside a sum to fund small projects related to reducing crime and the fear of crime for the financial year 2008/09. Their priorities are

- Encourage community involvement in making Rother a safer place to live, work and visit
- Support groups with appropriate projects aimed at addressing anti-social behaviour problems
- Fund community safety projects and activities that improve the quality of life for a large group of residents

The project should relate to the objectives of reducing anti-social behaviour, crime or the fear of crime in Rother and grants will normally be limited to small amounts (no more than £500) contact the Council on 787878 for more information

Governance Charity Law Information Session

The Charities Act 2006 is now largely in force and covers a wide range of issues. This session will cover what is new, what is optional and what trustees should do in practice to implement the Act. Tuesday 7th October 2008 Time 5.30pm (light refreshment) 6pm (start) – 8pm
Venue: St Johns Church Hall, Church Lane Polegate, East Sussex, BN26 5BX
Email: sue@eavs.org.uk or info@southdownscvs.org.uk

Latest On the Web

www.rothervoluntaryaction.org.uk

- RVA has published a brief analysis of the Indices of Multiple Deprivation for Rother 2007.



Available to download from the RVA website

- Application Forms can be downloaded from the RVA website for Grassroots Grants, a three-year scheme to March 2011, aimed at very small local community groups. Applications can be made for between £250 and £5,000. Groups can apply more than once until they have received a maximum of £5,000 in total.

- LawWorks is the operating name of the Solicitors Pro Bono Group. The Solicitors Pro Bono Group (SPBG) is an independent charity which aims to increase the delivery of free legal advice to individuals and communities in need. Details on the RVA website

Adult Activities

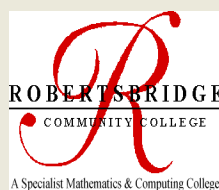
ENROLLING NOW!

Sept 08-July 09

Daytime or Evening Activities

For more information or to receive a brochure on an 'Activity': Art & Craft, Computers, Health & Fitness, Yoga, History of Sussex, Dance Classes & European Languages please contact: Tracey Ash. Tel: 01580 880360 Ext 121

tash@robertsbridge.org.uk



Funding

East Sussex County Council Community Partnership Finance **SEEDCORN FUND** Because of unallocated funds for this small grants scheme there is to be a further round. The closing date is Friday 14 November 2008.

Voluntary and community groups can apply for up to £5,000, although smaller applications will be encouraged.

You can download an application form and guidance notes through the Funding page at: www.hastingsvoluntaryaction.org/funding/seedcorn.html

The MSE (Money Saving Expert)

MSE Charity is a new organisation, which provides grants to groups or charities looking to develop projects. **Grants for groups and charities** Grants of up to £5,000 are available

The MSE Charity supports projects such as self help groups and projects that will help educate people about money/debt/ consumer issues. Applications can be made at any time. **Individuals** in the UK over the age of 18 can apply for a grant of up to £500 to help pay towards a recognised and approved course that will help improve their ability to budget and manage their own finances. The money can be used to pay for course fees or other necessary expenses. The maximum award for any one project is £500 towards the cost of attending or participating in the course. www.msecharity.com

[Rye Network](#) October 7th at 2pm Friary Day Centre behind Rye Hospital

[Muddy Boots](#) November 13th at 10am at The Watch Oak, Battle

[Bexhill Community Network](#)
December 10th at 2pm
Town Hall Bexhill

[Farmers Markets](#)

Battle 3rd Saturday each month - 9am - 1pm Abbey Green - Contact Colin Smith 01424 751575

Brede - Every Friday 10am - 12 noon - Village Hall - Contact Liz Stephens 01424 882836

Rye - Every Wednesday - 10 - 1pm - Strand Quay. Contact Rye TIC 01797 226696

Bexhill - 4th Thursday in the month 9am - 12 noon - Parkhurst Hall. Contact Stuart Wood 01424 222969

[Why Queen Elizabeth Slept Here](#)

Tuesday Oct 14th - Rye Museum 3 East Street, Rye. Jo Kirkham provides a fascinating insight into the wonder of Tudor Rye 01797 226728

[Medieval Seas](#)

The Rye Partnership presents its second Medieval Conference 18th & 19th October at Rye College. Tel: 01797 229600

[Exhibition & Sale of Creative Arts, Festive Gifts & Food](#) 14th, 15th and 16th November. The Respite Care Centre, Rye. All crafts by ARRCC. Tel: 01797 227939



[History of Bonfires in East Sussex](#)

Tuesday November 11th - Rye Museum 3 East Street, Rye. 01797 226728

[Bonfire Celebrations](#)

Battle Nov 1st
Rye Nov 8th
Robertsbridge Nov 15th

[Bexhill Christmas Shopping](#)

Town Centre Friday 5th December 4.30pm. Carol singing in Devonshire Square together with a host of fun seasonal activities for children

[Battle Gala Late Night Shopping](#)

Thursday 11th December

[Rye Christmas Festival Opening](#)

6th December - 4.30pm. The opening will provide a spectacular event with a procession, the arrival of Father Christmas, fireworks and street entertainment



View Point

from guest contributor

Glen Jopson

Manager,

Rother District Citizen Advice Bureau

The voluntary sector has suffered more than its fair share of change over the last decade with no sign of any let up in the immediate future. One of the major problems that is guaranteed to continue is the struggle to find sufficient funding for the myriad of worthy projects that enhance and enrich the community we serve.

When ever I talk to any of my colleagues throughout the sector they are either in the process of making a bid or waiting to hear the result and the tenacity shown within the sector is a credit to all involved.

“the reality remains that most of the time the cupboard is bare when it comes to continuation funding”

The problem we all face is knowing that a need exists then trying to identify a potential funding streams that fits the criteria, or conversely having a successful project in place that is due to end and not being able to source funds to retain the service or the skill base. This is the stark reality of short term funding and while the original ethos was sound in as much as it allowed organisations to demonstrate a need the reality remains that most of the time the cupboard is bare when it comes to continuation funding, no matter how successful or how needed your service is.

I feel it is about time that this was recognised and accepted at National level and some positive steps taken to address the situation. We are often told about the value of the charitable sector and volunteering to Society so lets see some positive action with regard to support from those at the top.



Rother Community Times

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Notices of publications, events and services do not necessarily carry an endorsement by RVA nor do they represent the views of RVA

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