

Spokesperson for The 3rd Sector

INTRODUCTION

This new Spokespersons position reaffirms the commitment of Argyll & Bute Council towards working with community and voluntary organisations and social enterprises. As Spokesperson for the 3rd Sector I will:-

- Work within The Council and Community Planning Partnership to promote the benefits of partnership working with The 3rd Sector
- promote successful examples of community & voluntary organisations who are improving the quality of life for the people of Argyll & Bute,
- work closely with social enterprises to improve quality and increase the range of services offered locally,
- encourage the development of new sustainable social enterprise,
- encourage third sector organisations and community planning partners to engage more effectively with each other to improve confidence and trust between the two sectors.

ACTIVITY

Since my appointment at the Special Council Meeting on the 22nd May I have been involved in the Following activities.

26/05/09 3rd Sector spokesperson briefing with key officers covering the main current issues in relation to The 3rd Sector, they were identified as –

- Development of a means of representation for voluntary organisations and social enterprises in Community Planning Partnership, and The Council's corporate structure. (3rd Sector Interface)
- The reorganisation and funding of support agencies for The 3rd Sector; Argyll Volunteer Centre, Argyll CVS, Islay & Jura CVS, Bute Community Links, and Argyll & Bute Social Enterprise Network. (Intermediary Organisations)
- Consultation on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership into new ways of working for Community Planning Partners and The 3rd Sector (The Demonstration Project)

02/06/09 3rd Sector Steering Group, a meeting with representatives of current Intermediary Bodies, key officers and Scottish Government, chaired by Supt Raymond Park (CPP Management Committee Chair) discussing the development shape and operation in The 3rd Sector Interface. The main issues occurring to me from this meeting are;

- There was differing opinion between intermediary organisations on to shape of future services to and on behalf of the 3rd Sector.
- The Community Planning Partnership and Scottish Government require the development and agreement of an interface in order to ensure effective engagement with the 3rd Sector
- The Scottish Government is reviewing funding of intermediary organisations across Scotland in order to optimise support and representation of The 3rd Sector. Future funding for support and development of the 3rd Sector will be

distributed via the new interface. The Council and CPP Partners will want to use the same process as the Government to ensure most efficient use of public funds directed to support development of the 3rd sector

- Failure to establish an interface arrangement which did not meet the needs of the Scottish Government and Community Planning Partnership could risk the funding for intermediary organisations in future.
- The Government and CPP view is that the interface should have broad membership from the 3rd Sector – so future delivery of support services to 3rd Sector organisations are delivered by the best provider. There is an expectation that the need to collaborate and an element of competition will help to improve the quality of services delivered
- The Council, on behalf of all the organisations present, agreed to commission and manage research funded by the Fairer Scotland Fund to help progress development of the interface. A report is due to be produced by the end of October

03/06/09 Campbeltown Dog Handling awards This group is supported by the Local Dog Warden and Streetscene Manager, it promotes responsible dog ownership and is a good example of how a community group can also make a big difference to the quality of life for the wider community as well as dog owners and their pets. I assisted in presenting a number of awards and promoted the councils continued support for The 3rd Sector.

05/06/09 Valuing Volunteering Awards this annual celebration of volunteering is Organised By Argyll Volunteer Centre and hosted by Argyll & Bute Council, I attended this with my Deputy Spokesperson Alex McNaughton and Culture and Heritage Spokesperson Douglas Philand. This event is a important opportunity to promote the value of volunteering.

18/06/09 Executive – Big Lottery fund Criteria for Grants There has been ongoing discussions with the Big Lottery Fund over the letter reported to This meeting from South Lanark Council which expressed concerns about new criteria introduced by the BLF which in essence meant that they may not give grants for capital works to organisations who did not own there own premises. We are awaiting the outcome of a meeting between BLF and COSLA on the issue.

26/06/09 Carnegie UK Trust meeting in Oban provided an excellent overview of Atlantis Leisure, which is a Social Enterprise running a range of leisure and recreational activities in and around the Oban Swimming pool. This meeting was part of the Carnegie Trust's Rural Programme in which Argyll & Bute Council is an active partner. Later in the year we will be working closely with Carnegie UK Trust to implement the findings of the Demonstration Project as one of six host sites across the UK and Ireland.

03/07/09 Renewable meeting Following from a meeting of the Kintyre Initiative Working Group at which a brainstorming session on renewable energy took place, an identified action of which was to coordinate and network renewable energy developments in Kintyre. Alienergy agreed to look at setting an Argyll & Bute wide Renewable Alliance which would fulfil this role. Given the number of 3rd sector

interests in renewable energy I am keen to be involved. A steering group chaired by Robert Pollock has been established to make progress.

22/08/09 Carnegie Reception at Scottish Parliament I attended this reception and presentations as part of “The Festival of Politics” at the invite of The Carnegie UK Trust. The event highlighted the plight of civic society in light of the banking crisis and the lack of alternative models for finance. There was also much discussion on how the 3rd sector could impact on improving the economy through the Mutual and Credit Union movements. I was able to highlight how Argyll & Bute Council was Working with the 3rd Sector to deliver services quoting the example of Ardlui House.

Carnegie UK Trust event at the Eden Centre This was an excellent introduction to working with the Carnegie UK Trust and identified that there may well be a benefit in working more closely with Cornwall council as part of our activities in harnessing the Potential of the 3rd Sector, particularly in winning hearts and minds within council staff. The event widened my perspective of “place” and “assets” to mean more than we may have defined them within the council but I feel that the wider meanings fit better with the direction of travel of Area Community Planning and consultation

ON THE HORIZON

Meeting with Atlantis Leisure & the Carnegie UK Trust prior to the output of the Demonstration Project and as an introduction to our work with the Carnegie UK Trust a session with representatives from Atlantis leisure, a recognised exemplar organisation providing public services for Argyll & Bute Council; Kate Braithwaite from Carnegie UK Trust and some senior officers will take place.

Report from Demonstration Project It is expected that the results of the Demonstration Project will go before the Community Planning Partnership before the end of the year. The recommended changes in policy, procurement practice and expected to improve the relationship between The 3rd Sector and CPP Partners. The involvement of the Big Lottery, Carnegie Trust and CPP partners in the Demonstration Project will be important for the process of sharing the findings with other Councils in Scotland and across the UK and Ireland – raising the profile of Argyll and Bute as an area where the 3rd Sector has an important role to play in the delivery of key services for local communities.

3rd Sector Interface arrangements finalised It is essential that the current intermediary organisations overcome historic differences and draw in other key organisations supporting the 3rd Sector to ensure that we have these arrangements in place by April 2010. This will ensure a smooth transition to the Government’s new funding process in April 2011 and allow time for those supporting the 3rd Sector to agree an action plan to deliver quality support services for all communities in Argyll and Bute and ensure long term security of support to the 3rd Sector across Argyll & Bute. Failure to reach agreement will leave the CPP Partners no choice but to impose a framework so that the Scottish Government and CPP partners can have confidence that their investment in support for the 3rd sector will be managed efficiently and effectively – especially at a time where there is increasing competition for more limited public money.

Development of 3rd Sector Spokespersons Remit the Demonstration Project and future development of the Councils relationship with the 3rd Sector will provide much of the remit for this position which will be reported on along with the Demonstration Project.

OTHER ACTIVITIES

12/06/09 Funding Officers meeting

17/06/09 Community Planning Partnership Meeting

21/06/09 Campbeltown Community Garden

26/06/09 Argyll CVS Oban

03/07/09 Youth Project Lochgilphead

18/08/09 Spokespersons briefing

On various dates, Demonstration Project Consultation Meetings with 3rd Sector organisations in Bowmore, Oban, Rothesay, Kilmory, Lochgilphead, Helensburgh, Campbeltown

Councillor John Semple

Spokesperon for the Third Sector

28 September 2009