

network news

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Welcome to the second edition of the Regeneration South West Network's bulletin.

Since its launch in May 2003 Regeneration South West Network has become recognised as a core and fundamental part of creating:excellence, enabling people from all parts of the region with an interest in regeneration and renewal to connect and communicate with each other. It is early days but the very positive response to the Network's first three events (on partnership and learning, equalities and health and regeneration) is clear evidence of a high level of interest.

These networking events are now seen as a crucial means of getting people to think and act outside their normal departmental and organisational strait jackets. We are also continuing to develop new information resources including briefings, this newsletter and www.regenerationsouthwest.net.

Plans are now being worked up for an expanded networking programme from February 2004 including a wider range of regional and sub regional events, facilitating exchanges and visits and expansion of the website and other communication resources.

As always, if you have any news, information or practical experiences that you would like to share with others through network news, please contact the editor, Deborah Harrison via info@regenerationsouthwest.net or the Network Administrator Jessica Perkin on 01392 254244.

Update 1

creating:excellence

The second major phase in the establishment of the South West Regeneration Centre, now known as creating:excellence, is close to completion. The first creating:excellence business plan, informed by a substantial consultation exercise, will soon be formally approved and then available via the website. (www.creatingexcellence.info).

From April 2004 creating:excellence will be operational and open to anyone in the region who is looking for information or advice in connection with a regeneration idea or project in their area. The intention is to cater for all comers, whether they are 'experts' or completely new to this field and also to take a very broad view of what counts as 'regeneration'. All you will need to do is call a freephone number (0800 328 3234) or log on to the website.

Creating:excellence will also be working with learning providers to put them directly in touch with people who are actively looking for training and learning opportunities. And the Regeneration South West Network will provide the mechanism for people actually doing regeneration to stay in touch and connect with others. The formal launch of creating:excellence is planned for the second half of April 2004 – and everyone will be welcome! Recruitment of the first core posts will get under way soon.

FMI: Dominic Murphy, Development Manager, creating:excellence, 0117 9330241, dominic.murphy@southwestrda.org.uk
www.creatingexcellence.info

Update 2

Centre of Excellence
for Regional Funding

Last autumn's consultation process clearly identified funding as one of the core themes fundamental to the activities of creating:excellence. The goal is to establish a platform where funders and funding advice workers involved in regeneration across the region can meet to share good practice and to learn from each other. An essential element, identified through the consultation events, is the need to develop an accessible funding information resource.

The conference for regional funders held in the Spring launched the development of a Regional Funders' Forum. This group has been making good progress planning new research into regional funding and sub-regional infrastructure. Steps are being taken to ensure that all this knowledge and expertise becomes an essential part of strong foundations for creating:excellence. This is reflected in the creating:excellence business plan which will be available shortly.

FMI: Jan Crawley, South West Foundation,
0117 9680111



An Invitation to attend the next Networking Event at the Eden Project

The next Regeneration South West Network event is provisionally planned for Saturday 31st January 2004 at the Eden Project in Cornwall.

The focus will be on regeneration, creative enterprise and the cultural industries. We are planning an exciting and stimulating programme which will appeal to a wide range of people and inspire some new thinking about the role of culture, the arts and creativity in the regeneration of our rural and urban communities.

We hope that by holding the conference on a Saturday we will attract people not normally able to participate in weekday events but not exclude those who can.

FMI. Jessica Perkin, 01392 254244, info@regenerationsouthwest.net or visit www.regenerationsouthwest.net

State of the South West with the Observatory

The South West Observatory, established with the backing of a number of key regional agencies, promotes a common and better understanding of the region by facilitating and increasing the use of quality evidence, research findings, data and intelligence.

The Observatory is currently working on the State of the South West report, designed as a highly accessible reference volume, and its online counterpart SouthWest ID which will provide a broad spectrum of up-to-date information ranging in scale and focus from inter-regional comparisons to local neighbourhoods. It will also offer an on-line library of research reports and useful documents. Both these projects will be launched at the Observatory conference to be held in Bristol in March 2004.

To strengthen research capacity the Observatory has appointed Noreen Orr as the new Cultural Sector Researcher from January 2004, to increase its ability to understand the role and impact of the cultural sector in the region. This post reflects a partnership with Culture South West.

FMI: Dr. Pip Tucker, SW Observatory,
01823 447390, enquiries@swo.org.uk
visit: www.swo.org.uk

Culture South West is Joining the Dots

Culture South West aims to provide strong strategic leadership for the region's cultural development and to generate increased cultural opportunities and investment. In response to the region's cultural strategy 'In Search of Chunky Dunsters' Culture South West is facilitating and championing a mosaic of partnership initiatives to plug the gaps between organisations operating in the sector.

Dr Karen Yair has been appointed as the new Creative Industries Development Manager. Her arrival completes the team who are now busy co-ordinating research to map activity in the region, managing the Culture Works conference series, promoting culture as part of community planning, developing a leadership programme for managers and advocacy to put culture firmly on the political agenda.

Culture South West commissioned Professor Colin Mercer to audit and analyse the state of the cultural sector in the region. The final report 'Joining the Dots' reveals that the cultural sector has contributed substantially to economic growth in the south west. Currently the creative industries in the region are worth about £6.8bn, or 16% of household spending, and now represent around 5% of regional employment.

Further research has been commissioned from Burns Owens Partnership and Dr Calvin Taylor to map the creative industries in the region and to assess their economic worth.

FMI: Sue Kay or Karen Yair,
Culture South West, 01392 229395
culturesw@southwestrda.org.uk
visit: www.culturesouthwest.org.uk

Kick Starting a Community Development Network

A recent South West Forum workshop has revealed strong support for improved networking amongst community development workers and practitioners in the region. Participants identified real benefits for themselves and for the promotion of community development in the south west.

It was felt that the network and networking activities should concentrate on facilitating and developing training for practitioners, championing community development with the public sector and providing mechanisms for sharing information and experience at regional and sub-regional level. Participants saw there was real value in linking in with Regeneration South West Network and creating excellence but felt it was crucial to ensure any regional 'voice' on community development was genuinely independent and practitioner based.

FMI: Paul Edwards, South West Forum,
01392 254244, paul@southwestforum.org.uk
visit: www.southwestforum.org.uk

Disability Rights

Earlier this month the South West co-ordinated the TUC Disability Rights Committee Conference, a key event for people who are involved in campaigning, policy, advocacy, representation or development. The focus for the day was about improving the position of disabled workers and helping to open up new employment opportunities. Feedback on the results of the day are available.

FMI: South West TUC, southwest@tuc.org.uk
0117 947 0523.

Equalities and Regeneration highlights

The Network's equalities and regeneration workshop held in Bristol on 15th October attracted around 50 participants from all parts of the region for a varied and stimulating programme of 'big picture' and case study presentations and discussion sessions. Reports of each workshop session are available separately on request (contact Jessica Perkin info@regenerationsouthwest.net) but here are some brief quotes from each to give you a taste of what they covered.

A Strategic Approach to Equalities and Diversity

'... to successfully develop and deliver services that meet local needs the real 'diversity' of people within our communities also has to be addressed to ensure fair access and opportunities for everyone.... Greater understanding of cultural differences, lifestyles, beliefs, values and behaviours is needed to inform the provision of public services, renewal and regeneration initiatives.'

(This presentation was given by Balraj Sandhu, Active Community Unit, Home Office who is unable at present to respond to direct inquiries or requests.)

A Community Foundation Delivering Fair Share

'Whitworth ward in Swindon has been selected by Swindon Strategic Partnership for investment to build local capacity and skills, and to improve the environment. A panel of local people will decide priorities for action, but some ideas have already been developed including a community orchard, adventure playground and triumphal arch. The Foundation's approach ensures real local control, channels funding to meet local needs and promotes learning and growing together.'

FMI: Jenny Wildblood, Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation, 01380 729284
jenny.wildblood@wscf.org.uk

Equality South West

(This session, led by Nigel Costley and Stephen Woollett, formed part of a region-wide consultation exercise to gather opinion and ideas on the establishment of a new region-wide equalities organisation, Equality South West.)

'Much of the focus of the discussion was on the importance of Equality South West's role in influencing, advocating, changing attitudes etc ... There was much emphasis on the importance of recognising differences across the region – in terms of variations in existing equalities organisations and activities and the nature of the issues. This is not simply a rural-urban difference. It was recognised that a sophisticated understanding of these differences is required – don't rely on simple crude "headline" numbers. Mainstreaming was a common theme throughout the discussion. Local authorities were seen as a particularly important "sector" to work with and influence.'

FMI: Paul Dunn, SW TUC, 0117 947 0521
pdunn@tuc.org.uk

Linking Diverse Communities in Gloucestershire

"GymNation seeks to fill the gaps in mainstream services by: providing activities in local venues where customers feel comfortable; meeting the needs of parents and community leaders; offering affordable services; and managing services with people drawn from local BME communities; welcoming everyone. GymNation's services are informed by local cultural concerns including segregation, dress rules, language and cultural barriers, parental and community approval, types of music and so on. In contrast, mainstream organisations are seen as having very few staff from BME communities, to be slow at responding to specific local needs with limited knowledge and understanding of differing cultural concerns and values.

FMI: Linking Communities, Shirley Palmer 01452 308448; Gymnation, Imran Atcha 01452 308127

Equalities and Regeneration highlights (continued)

Disability Action in Cornwall

'The Cornwall Disability Forum team has been very busy responding to increased activity within the disability movement triggered by new legislation on equalities placing these issues high on the agenda. The Forum is providing information and advice on a daily basis to local government departments, public services and private businesses on all aspects of equalities and inclusion - indicating that perhaps society's attitudes are beginning to change. The Forum plans to build on this demand by developing consultation and training services to promote best practice on equalities and improved services for disabled people.'

FMI: Jane Sharps, Cornwall Disability Forum, 01736 360068, info@cdf-net.com, visit www.cdf-net.com

South West Foyers Working with Young People

'When a young person enters a Foyer, staff will work with him or her to develop a personal action plan to help them work towards education, training or employment. The action plan is regularly reviewed and staff offer young people a range of opportunities to unlock motivation and raise self-esteem. As a result 75% of young people are working or studying when they leave the Foyer compared to 32% on entry. Many residents go on to university and college, establish businesses, volunteer in the community and take up a wide range of jobs.'

FMI: Ally Corrie, SW Regional Development Manager, Foyer Federation, 01453 886503 mobile: 07768 351649

Rural Women Forging New Enterprise

'Women in Rural Enterprise (WiRE) helps rural women to succeed in business. It is becoming accepted that very often it is women who are the driving force behind diversification projects on farms and in rural areas. In the past these women have often received little specific business help or support. To meet the growing regional demand for business advice and support services tailored to meet the practical needs of rural women, WiRE has recently expanded its activities into the South West region.'

FMI: Roger Davies, SW Co-ordinator, WiRE, 01672 871800, mobile 07977 444134, roger@wireuk.org

Positive Action Training with CEED

'Positive Action Traineeships are offered to encourage young people from BME communities to develop skills and enter management, technical and supervisory positions where they are currently under-represented. The CEED Positive Action Programme can last for a period of up to 2 years or more depending on the funding available. To date the programme has achieved a high success rate with 80% of trainees achieving employment, over 10% are graduates. Since 1995 over 1500 trainees and 100 major employers have benefited from this programme.'

FMI: Anthony Hewitt, The CEED Charity, 0117 9429555 ext 225, tony@ceed.co.uk visit: www.ceed.co.uk

art+power

Art+power is a group of artists working for change. Members are engaged in 'Sharing our Journeys', a research project that explores ways of making the arts and culture more accessible to disabled people.

FMI: Dave Richmond 0117 9089859,
info@artandpower.com,
visit: www.artandpower.com

ArtsMatrix

ArtsMatrix is a new scheme that has been launched to offer artists and creative practitioners professional development advice, support and information.

FMI: visit www.artsmatrix.org.uk

Developing Activists into Entrepreneurs

Bristol City Council is commissioning research to develop support, coaching and training opportunities for key individuals within communities, rather than organisations, to help them increase their skills. The aim is to help community activists to become effective operators within the social economy sector.

FMI: Ted Fowler, Bristol City Council,
ted_fowler@Bristol-city.gov.uk

Business Support for Local Entrepreneurs

Bizfizz, the programme managed by the New Economics Foundation and the Civic Trust, are now looking for eight new communities where they can provide information, training and support for budding social entrepreneurs. Every community successfully joining the programme will receive £23,000 in funding towards the cost of developing local services and resources.

FMI: visit: www.bizfizz.org.uk



Regeneration South West Network, a core part of creating:excellence, is designed to make it easier for people working in the fields of regeneration, renewal and social inclusion to share experience, learn from each other and find out what is going on in the region.

www.regenerationsouthwest.net

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