

Insight

The One East Midlands Magazine

Autumn 2009 Issue 3

INSIDE:

Perspectives on Volunteering

A Marketing Challenge

Employer Supported Volunteering

Report back on the Economic Downturn



Welcome

Welcome to our third edition of Insight which flows neatly from our previous focus on the economy to the theme of volunteering.

The drop in the economy and resulting rise in unemployment has significantly increased the numbers of people stepping forward as volunteers. Volunteering offers lots of opportunity to remain engaged in productive activity, to learn and develop new skills and networks and to play a constructive role in society at a time when doom and gloom is the flavour of the day!

So how, as a sector, do we grasp the opportunities posed by this influx of volunteer workforce and balance it against the challenges of capacity to deliver, higher service demand and falling budgets.

In this edition we look at these and other issues in relation to volunteering and ask the question 'how can a regional perspective help and add value?'



Rachel Quinn,
Chief Executive

Let us promote your work

In autumn 2009 One EM's new membership scheme will celebrate its first birthday.

To help celebrate our anniversary we are putting together a brochure that gives a unique insight into the work of some of our members. The third sector makes a massive contribution to the economic and social life of individuals and communities throughout the region and we don't always do enough to get that message across.

We want to promote and celebrate the achievements of the third sector in the East Midlands:

Do you have a story to tell?
Would you like your organisation or project to feature in our anniversary brochure?

One EM is looking for stories that illustrate good practice and inspire others. Contact Lindsay Boyle, Information & Membership Officer if you would like to nominate your organisation's work.

Hannah Luck,
Communications Manager

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Artwork: Shout Design Associates



Volunteering in 2009: what does it mean and where are we going?

Simon Richards,

Head of Infrastructure Development, Volunteering England



As the quotes below suggest, the essence of volunteering is that it's undertaken out of free will and in free time. Volunteering can be formal or informal and, at its broadest, is considered by researchers at the Institute for Volunteering Research to constitute any activity carried out without an exchange of money – regardless of whether this is a one-off, or regular opportunity - for anyone other than a close relative. Practically, this could mean anything from a very small commitment, such as offering to pick up a loaf of bread from the shops for your neighbour when they're feeling a bit under the weather, to a more sustained involvement, such as training to become a Samaritan or Citizens Advice volunteer.

Legally, volunteers have their own special legal status to differentiate them and to ensure that the principles which motivate them to engage remain sacrosanct.

Research shows that around 22 million people in England volunteer each year according to the broadest definition of volunteering, so it's something that's extremely relevant to society as a whole – there are probably only a handful of leisure pursuits which are pursued by so many UK residents.

The benefits of volunteering

Volunteering is about much more than a simple exchange of time or skills without money. It develops people's independence and spirit of citizenship. Barack Obama recently wrote of his own volunteering experience: "I wasn't just helping other people. Through service, I found a community that embraced me; citizenship that was meaningful... how my own improbable story fits into the larger story of America."

Volunteering encompasses a vast and diverse range of activities and has the power to bring communities together and bridge the gap between generations. At a personal level, it broadens people's experiences: volunteers interact with people they may never have met otherwise, increasing understanding and tolerance of people's differences.

And more than that, it can improve a CV. At a time of recession, this is particularly relevant. Lots of us wouldn't be doing the jobs we do today if not for a volunteering



opportunity. We know from research studies that volunteering can develop the confidence and skills which helps people into paid employment.

Volunteering can also be good for health. A review of research findings, which Volunteering England commissioned from the University of Loughborough, showed that volunteering could have a positive impact on the health of volunteers – especially older volunteers - as well as on the health of patients.

But often the best thing about volunteering is that it can give you a sense of being valued and of having a place in the world.

volunteer n. & v. One who enters any service of his or her own free choice without obligation to do so or promise of remuneration. To give, supply or perform unasked.

volunteering n. & a. The practice of people working on behalf of others without being motivated by financial or material gain. Volunteering is generally considered an altruistic activity, intended to promote or improve human quality of life. (Chambers English Dictionary)

It's a marketing challenge

Kaye Wiggins looks at how volunteers' expectations are changing and how charities are trying to respond

Volunteering is changing. Gone are the days when charities could pick out the jobs that needed to be done and hand them to unpaid but willing recruits. In today's busy, choice-driven, technology-focused consumer society, volunteers have needs to be met and can choose the most convenient ways of fulfilling them. They are dictating the rules - and charities have to keep up.

Kate Shanley, of the British Heart Foundation says: "It isn't about having jobs that we need volunteers to do any more; now it's about having volunteers whose skills and interests we have to satisfy."

The figures confirm it: volunteers do give less time than they used to. According to *Helping Out: a national survey of volunteering and giving*, a Cabinet Office report from 2007, volunteers spent an average of 4.05 hours per week in their role in 1997, but only 2.75 hours a decade later.

But Kath Abrahams, from the NSPCC, insists this shift can have benefits for charities. So why the change? It's partly because there are fresh faces entering the volunteering world.

"Younger volunteers won't accept being placed in predetermined positions - they want a say in what they do. We have to give power and authority to volunteers" says Justin Davis Smith, chief executive of Volunteering England.

The internet is another big factor. Websites such as www.do-it.org.uk, have transformed the way people look at volunteering. Potential volunteers have options now and charities have to work hard to get noticed.

Demanding more

But it's not just the young ones who are changing the face of volunteering. "The baby boomers are a significant force," says Angela Ellis Paine, director of the Institute for Volunteering Research. "After they retire, many take up voluntary work. But as a generation, they have high expectations and aspirations. They know what they want from volunteering and they're likely to ask for it."

A lot of charities have changed the way they work in response to these developments. *Helping Out* notes that, in

1997, 71 per cent of volunteers said their work could be better organised, but only 31 per cent said the same in 2007.

This is part of a bigger trend towards professionalisation. "In practice, this means interviewing volunteers, getting references and carrying out Criminal Records Bureau checks" says John Ramsay, of Age Concern and Help the Aged.

And as charities themselves become increasingly professional in their work, it can be difficult for volunteers to understand how they fit in.

"Many charities have paid staff carrying out administrative and planning roles that used to be filled by volunteers," says Ellis Paine. "While volunteers are involved in service provision, they are less likely to be fundamental to the running of the organisation in the way they used to be."

Holding on

All of this means the task of attracting volunteers has now become a marketing challenge. "Charities need to be creative in the way they describe opportunities - they have to make them stand out in a competitive marketplace," says Rena Sodhi, Head of Policy and Programmes at youth volunteering charity V.

"Whoever our volunteers are, we'll do everything we can to keep hold of them," says Abrahams. "They're gold dust to us."



This article first appeared in Third Sector, 7 July, the website and weekly magazine for and about charities and the voluntary sector.

ThirdSector
thirdsector.co.uk

Volunteers in Sport

Julian Pagliaro,
East Midlands NGB Forum
Development Officer

All sports rely on volunteers to run the various organisations that make up their membership. Whilst a sport's structure may revolve around clubs, many also include county and regional associations. All these bodies need chairs, secretaries, treasurers as well as other roles like coaches, officials, team managers, captains, competition organisers and people to co-ordinate courses, etc. Sadly organisations can struggle to fill all their voluntary positions. However, they do also offer a volunteering environment that has identity, purpose and one that gives satisfaction to those who get involved.

Active People results for volunteering

Sport England's 'Active People' survey is used to measure progress against targets to get people playing and enjoying more sport. The results show sports participation levels in the 12-month period from April 2008 – April 2009.

Key results show that:

- 6,822,000 people (16 and over) are now playing sport 3 times a week at moderate intensity.
- Regular sports participation has held firm since the last report in December 2008.
- Satisfaction with local sports provision has increased.
- 192,115 people volunteer in sport, offering a minimum of 1 hour of their time per week. This shows a slight decrease (0.5%) on the previous year's survey.



April 2009 was the start of a four year funding cycle for the 46 national governing bodies of sport in which the Government is investing. Funding will go to these sports to deliver against outcomes of growing and sustaining participation and providing development pathways for those with talent. However, it is still the case that the development of volunteers to deliver programmes is crucial to the success of all plans.

Support from County Sports Partnerships

County Sports Partnerships (CSP) are important organisations that support the

development of sport at grassroots level. Partly funded by Sport England, CSPs offer an invaluable service. In the East Midlands all the CSPs support the development of volunteers and have an interest in helping clubs and associations fill their vacant posts. Most CSPs have an officer who either supports the development of volunteers or the development of clubs (sometimes both). Some CSPs have volunteering forums to help the delivery of this work. For further information on the development of volunteers in each CSP, please contact the following:

Derbyshire	Andrea Stone	andrea.stone@derbyshire.gov.uk	01773 571222
Leicestershire	Ian Knott	i.knott@lboro.ac.uk	01509 226760
Lincolnshire	Dave Carter	DCarter@lincolnsport.co.uk	01522 585580
Northamptonshire	Tristan Hale	THale@northamptonshire.gov.uk	01604 236215
Nottinghamshire	Denise Richards	denise.richards@nottscc.gov.uk	01159 772311

Employer Supported Volunteering



A perspective from Fabia Bates,
Director of Red Foundation



The past twelve months have seen an unprecedented rise in the number of Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) programmes being created. This gives the voluntary sector a unique opportunity to influence the way ESV will look in the future, and to take a more proactive role in ensuring that it meets the needs of all those involved.

The previous decade had seen steady growth and a developing interest in a more strategic approach to such programmes. Companies were starting to link their volunteering more closely with their HR and other core business processes, evaluation of programmes was on the increase, and longer term, skills based opportunities were taking their place alongside the more traditional forms of ESV such as the practical gardening or DIY Challenge Events. Pressure from employees, consumers and the public sector had all contributed to these developments.

The financial downturn has moved this trend into a higher gear. Companies that are shedding staff, such as Toyota in the West Midlands, have used Challenge Events to bring their staff together and to try and show local people that they are still committed to the local community. Many other companies who have had to cut their corporate donations are keen to show their continued commitment to Corporate Community Investment and have transferred their focus to volunteering.

In addition, the public sector is facing increased pressure from Central Government to develop its own ESV programmes. Local Authorities that have signed up to National Indicator Six, with its commitment to increasing levels of

volunteering have been particularly prominent.

The combination of the underlying trend and the more recent developments have resulted in a dramatic increase in the number of employers approaching infrastructure organisations and volunteer involving organisations requesting placements for their staff. This provides a dilemma for many in the sector.

While it might seem foolhardy to reject such offers; it is essential that the voluntary sector think carefully before accepting. At a time when demand for volunteering roles is sky rocketing, and capacity in many organisations is decreasing, the resources required to support Employer Supported Volunteers may simply not be available.

Identifying need in the voluntary sector must be the first step. What is it that we would like to be doing, or need to be doing, that we currently are not? This might be longer term strategic priorities such as launching a website or creating a channel for earned income, or it may be something more pressing like an audit of expenditure or even updating HR policies in the case of having to make staff redundant. Many of these are things that corporate volunteers can help with and they also fit into the existing trend towards longer term skills based volunteering. If companies do want team building opportunities, it is often possible to mould these to include a number of staff, and a shorter time frame.

Finding Volunteers

Once the need has been identified it is time to find a company that can both fulfil that need and who would derive benefit from doing so. Existing brokers such as The Media Trust, IT4Communities and Business in the Community may all help with this, or it may be a case of researching local companies yourself. Before starting the project, clarify what the best outcome would be for all parties, identify how you will monitor and evaluate it, and agree who will be responsible for it. The more evidence you can get that the programme has worked, the more likely you are to receive further support in the future – and if there are difficulties, at least you will be able to rectify them before too late.

So, let's seize this opportunity to increase the levels of Employer Supported Volunteering, but let's make sure we're growing the quality, as well as the quantity, of projects. Let's be proactive rather than reactive and let's set the stage for a stepchange in the value of ESV.

For more information about Red Foundation visit www.redfoundation.org.

Perspectives on Volunteering

Gedling Community and Voluntary Services

By **David Potter**,
Volunteer Development Manager,
Gedling CVS

Gedling CVS is the infrastructure body for Gedling, a borough of Nottinghamshire just north of Nottingham. Gedling CVS includes the Volunteer Centre which exists to promote and encourage voluntary action. There has been an increased focus on volunteering in regards to how it can assist people who have been made unemployed by the recent recession.

The recession has brought an increase in number of volunteers to Gedling CVS and this is also reflected by partners throughout the county and city. This has yet to impact on our ability to provide the service. However, we are developing a range of plans to support increases in demand including changing the way we support and interview potential volunteers. We are also working with Job Centre Plus to improve the knowledge of their advisors concerning volunteering, including awareness on individuals' rights in regards to volunteering and how to refer clients to volunteer centres.

New streams of funding for volunteering which have been announced at national level have yet to feed down to local level infrastructure organisations. This may have implications regarding what levels of support can be delivered in the future.

Volunteering can support individuals to build skills, confidence and give a reference, all of which can help people in their search for employment. However, the motives for volunteering and the motives of agencies that encourage people to volunteer are very important. The language used is also important, for instance, a work placement is not the same as volunteering. Volunteers are very important to many aspects of life in Britain and their time needs to be willingly given on a voluntary basis. It is vital that volunteers are not used to replace previously paid jobs.

Whilst the recession is providing many challenges to the sector it also presents many opportunities, it is in some ways an exciting time for those involved in supporting and promoting volunteering. Many of those who 'use' volunteering now during this difficult time will get the bug and go on to volunteer throughout their lifetime with all the benefits that will bring to them and their community.

Volunteering England

The last 12 months has been a period of significant development and achievement for volunteering and also for Volunteering England.

Volunteering is seen as ever more central to public policy, with a plethora of reviews, consultations and policy statements emanating from the government and all main political parties.

Volunteering England have continued to lead the way in developing a strong evidence base on volunteering-related issues through our Institute for Volunteering Research; have developed further our work in Employer Supported Volunteering and in the fields of sport and health and social care, and have strengthened our Investing in Volunteers quality standard. Despite our many successes, we remain disappointed at the failure to secure sustainable funding for a modernised local volunteering infrastructure as we see this as being absolutely essential to maintaining a thriving volunteering environment.

Our plans for the future are ambitious. We are seeking to build on the success of previous years, move forward those areas of work where progress has been slower, and to break new ground. We are confident that much of our activity will help strengthen the capacity of volunteering to play its part in the national recovery following the recession. However, we are also intent

on remaining focused on the longer term and pursuing a course which will ensure that volunteering, and the organisations which support it, are stronger, fit for purpose and ready to progress once the recovery begins to take hold. In particular we see the London 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games and the 2011 European Year of Volunteering as a once in a lifetime opportunity to change the image of volunteering and to build a lasting legacy of community engagement.

We continue to invest in the England Volunteering Development Council as a forum for debate at national and regional level and to try to secure longer-term sustainability for the forum. We also believe passionately that we will only be successful and deliver on our ambitious goals if we can harness the experience and expertise of our membership, and we will seek to build on our new membership scheme to grow our membership base and to develop a more collaborative and co-productive approach to our policy formulation and campaigning.

If you would like to find out more about Volunteering England and its work, including becoming a member, please visit www.volunteering.org.uk

England Volunteering Development Council

By Michelle Skinner,
Chair, EVDC East Midlands

The regional Volunteering Development Council captures the intelligence of a broad range of organisations in the region, all of whom share an interest in the future of volunteering and whose combined voices can act as a powerful, coordinated lobby to steer government policy and community action. They aim to identify key volunteering issues and interventions and formulate a regional response to these. By doing this they will inform and strengthen volunteering policy development and good practice across the country.

Two of the current issues affecting volunteering are the recession and worklessness agenda. They both offer opportunities and challenges for volunteering. The government's focus has increased the national interest in volunteering. This has led to an increase in the resources fed into volunteering but has also led to increased competition and duplication of work. In the future, the 2012 Olympic and Paralympic Games will offer a fantastic opportunity to engage and catch the interest of lots of people who may not already volunteer. Other issues are the coordination of NI6 – increasing levels

of volunteering, ensuring volunteering is represented at a regional level, and influencing national volunteering policy.

The upcoming regional event on volunteering will: promote regional volunteering infrastructure (EVDC), engage with new and existing members, identify priorities for EVDC and develop an evidence base for future regional volunteering work. The event will hopefully engage a task group to set out EVDC's priorities and create an action plan to take work forward.

Hopefully we can harness the energy and focus on volunteering from Central Government and through our regional event to develop a thriving regional network of volunteering organisations.

Partnerships for Volunteering 9 September, Derby

This event brings together stakeholders from across the region to debate the regional priorities for organisations that co-ordinate volunteering.

The event will identify the regional volunteering priorities for coordination at regional level; improve understanding between the third sector and statutory bodies of the roles, benefits and issues relating to volunteering in the region and inform the audience on current developments in relation to volunteering.

If you are not able to attend then you can find out all about the day's event and outcomes in the conference report which will be available on-line by the end of September at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

Community Planning Volunteer

Interview with Lana Taylor,
Accessibility Planning Officer, Lincolnshire County Council and
Volunteer for Planning Aid East Midlands



What's your main job?

Lana Taylor: I work for Lincolnshire County Council and I am an Accessibility Planning Officer. My day to day role includes undertaking transport assessments, looking at planning applications in terms of transport, what impacts it will have on the highway network. I'm also involved in public transport including making sure we build things in the right location. This is especially important for a rural council like Lincolnshire where there is a lack of provision.

How did you get involved in volunteering and what kind of volunteering do you do? And how long have you been doing that?

LT: I was aware of Planning Aid East Midlands (see sidebar) when I was studying regional planning but in my previous role we didn't have the time and flexibility to volunteer. When I started with my current post about 14 months ago I joined Planning Aid. I was really fortunate that one of the first things I did was go to a Planning

Aid session where the staff at Planning Aid taught us community engagement exercises, including getting local people and hard to reach groups engaged in the planning system. Most of the volunteering that I have been involved in has been in terms of engagement with the community on information about the planning system. For example my next project is facilitating an event with a colleague at a parish council meeting to teach parish councillors about the planning system in terms of climate control and also policy. There is also a much larger project going on with the regional strategy (see sidebar) and involving young people in it and I'm involved with the events that are planned.

You mentioned you volunteer with Planning Aid. What do you do and how much time do you give at the moment?

LT: Planning Aid wants to use your strengths. They send out a monthly email with all the events that are coming up and you can choose which events you would like to volunteer at. The time I give varies because sometimes it's just helping Planning Aid's community planner at an event, so it is a few hours in the evening or for the event with the parish council coming up, I will be more involved in the preparation so will have to give more time.

What benefits have you taken from volunteering you have done?

LT: I have had the opportunity to work with diverse groups and just work

outside of my normal transport bubble. I work with a group of people that I would not necessarily get the opportunity to work with in my day to day job. I normally work with big developers, district councils, local members, statutory planning bodies, highways agencies. With Planning Aid you get the opportunity to go and sit with a group of people and talk to them about planning and actually talk to them about their village or their town.

Does that give you a better insight when you are doing your day to day job?

LT: I think it makes you able to empathise with people a lot more. When you receive an objection to a planning application I am able to step back and actually see it from their point of view and approach how I explain it to them from a different angle. Sometimes when you work with colleagues you start using jargon and you often forget that a member of public has no idea what you are talking about. I am quite lucky with my employer; I have received the benefits from it that I can then bring back into the office, my employer values that.

Have you noticed any impact due to the recession?

LT: The recession has affected my day job. Big developers aren't building much at the moment. I think Planning Aid is actually busier as a result of it because more people are more worried about it now so they are taking more advice.



What is Planning Aid?

Planning Aid East Midlands provides free, independent and professional town planning advice and support to communities and individuals who cannot afford to pay planning consultant fees. It complements the work of local planning authorities, but is wholly independent of them. Planning Aid is about much more than giving advice. It engages communities positively in the planning process to help them manage changes to their neighbourhood areas.

For more information about East Midlands Planning Aid visit www.planningaid.rtpi.org.uk.

What is the Regional Plan?

The Regional Plan is the Regional Spatial Strategy for the East Midlands.

The Regional Plan sets out a broad development strategy for the East Midlands up until 2031. It sets out the scale and distribution of new housing and priorities such as the environment, transport, economic development, agriculture and energy.

The main role of the Regional Plan is to provide a strategy which local authorities will have to follow when planning any new development in your area.

For more information about the Regional Plan visit www.gos.gov.uk/goem/planning/regional-planning.

Recruiting Volunteers

The challenges faced

Despite the economic downturn and the noted increase in volunteers some organisations are still finding it difficult to recruit volunteers. One example in the East Midlands is the Jigsaw Befriending Scheme.

About Jigsaw

The Befriending Scheme offers friendship and support to isolated older people in areas of Nottinghamshire. The scheme matches volunteers to those in need to help reduce social isolation and loneliness and provide a friendship that will build over time.

They work with a range of agencies that refer isolated older people to the service, including social services, health visitors, etc.

Challenges

Within the first 6 months they have attracted a number of volunteers through their training programme. Unfortunately, they already have a waiting list of older people that still have not been paired with a volunteer.

Cate Bones, the coordinator, stated that some of the volunteers that come forward are not willing to commit to long term places. "There is the demand there for befriending to take place but we still don't have enough volunteers."

To find out more about Jigsaw visit www.jigsawmansfield.org.uk

SPOTLIGHT

Member: Michelle Skinner



England Volunteering
Development Council
(EVDC) East Midlands

1. Briefly describe your organisation.

The regional Volunteering Development Council works with a range of organisations in the region, all of whom share an interest in the future of volunteering and whose combined voices can act as a powerful, coordinated lobby to steer government policy and community action. We aim to identify key volunteering issues and formulate a regional response to these. By doing this they will inform and strengthen volunteering policy development and good practice across the country. We are currently reviewing EVDC in the East Midlands and hope to develop a strategic plan and new membership structure to reflect its priorities.

2. Who are your members?

Our members are elected individuals from local volunteering infrastructure, funders and statutory organisations with an interest or remit for volunteering in the region and volunteering involving organisations.

EVDC currently has 30 members. We are looking to develop membership as part of our refresh process.

3. How do you support your members / volunteers?

Members meet on a quarterly basis to discuss specific issues relating to volunteering in the region. The Volunteering Conference in September is also part of the work EVDC is doing to support their members.

4. What are the organisation's aims?

EVDC aims to:

- take a strategic overview of volunteering in the region;
- promote the Compact Volunteering Code of Good Practice;
- influence the social, economic and legislative agendas;
- engage in dialogue and advocating for the appropriate allocation of resources for volunteering;

- work with Government and public sector agencies to promote a dynamic, viable, integrated, sustainable and accountable volunteering infrastructure.

5. What work are you involved with at a regional level?

I attend the Regional Infrastructure Consortium to represent volunteering issues in this regional forum. I also work closely with One EM who are jointly organising the Volunteering Conference in September.

6. What benefits of membership to One EM do you see?

One EM can also support EVDC by helping with the distribution of information and best practice to the wider third sector, publicise the work of EVDC and support the exchange of information with other regional projects.

There is also a need for EVDC to link with policy forums and networks that impact volunteering to ensure that volunteering is fully reflected in the work of the policy groups.

7. What are the main issues you see facing volunteering at the moment?

The recession and worklessness agenda are having a great impact on volunteering. They offer both opportunities and challenges for the sector. It has increased national interest in volunteering by the government. It has increased the resources fed into the sector but has also increased competition and duplication of work.

2012 Olympics offers a fantastic opportunity to engage and catch the interest of lots of people who may not already volunteer.

Generally there is a lack of coordination of national, regional and local volunteering infrastructure.

SPOTLIGHT

Trustee: Will Wakefield

Chief Executive,
Nottingham YMCA



1. How did you get involved in One East Midlands?

I was involved in the early development of One East Midlands. I originally helped with the process of transforming Engage East Midlands into One East Midlands. I was also involved in the early stages of amalgamating Engage East Midlands with Voice East Midlands.

I did not join the first board of One East Midlands initially because of work commitments. I have recently rejoined the board in April 2009. I witnessed the increased momentum that the CEO Rachel Quinn and new board had generated and I wanted to support the continuation of this work.

2. What role do you have within the Board?

I sit on the Human Resources and Finance sub-committee. I provide specific expertise on HR and Finance issues through this sub-committee.

3. What skills do you bring to this role?

I bring strategic planning skills from my work in the voluntary sector. I also have the ability to identify and support the implementation of best practice within organisations. Finally, I have significant experience in the personnel arena especially by working to individual employees' strengths.

4. What do you see as the benefits of One East Midlands and how can it support the voluntary and community sector in the region?

Partnership working is key to the success of the voluntary sector, we can achieve more by working together. One East Midlands can support the coordination of the sector to ensure that joint-working takes place. It is essential that a regional organisation, such as One East Midlands, keeps a helicopter view of the sector in the region, acts as a communications vehicle and supports coordination of the sector.

5. How would you like to see One East Midlands grow or change in the future?

It's not so much growing, but increasing One EM's influence on regional policy making. It should become a body that's virtually indispensable to local and regional government strategic planning.

6. Is there anything else that you would like to add?

I believe that One East Midlands can become a 'beacon' regional organisation by supporting other infrastructure bodies to greatly increase their effectiveness and influence in the region.

Report ba

on the economic

Regional responses to the recession

The 'Weathering Storms' conference and the last edition of Insight focussed closely on the impact and responses to the recession on the third sector in the East Midlands. In this section we feedback on what has happened since and on actions that have been taken as a result of your comments:



The future of the regional strategy (3rd sector position statement)

Economic and spatial planning is a complex activity in a diverse region like the East Midlands. The current proposal is to draw together two planning approaches, the Regional Spatial Strategy and Regional Economic Strategy, into a single strategy. This provided the topic for debate in one of the workshops at the March conference.

One EM has coordinated the development of a Third Sector Position statement – identifying clearly the role that the third sector plays in regional development and advocating for ongoing involvement in the process of regional strategy development. The statement has been received well and we are now awaiting confirmation of the structure through which our future involvement will be drawn. We will inform members through our bulletin service as soon as these are announced. The Third Sector Position Statement can be viewed at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

The regional economic cabinet

Following our focus on the economic downturn, One EM are pleased to report that the Chief Executive of One EM, Rachel Quinn, has been invited by the Regional Minister, Phil Hope, to join the regional economic cabinet.

Created to provide impetus to addressing the impacts of the recession in the East Midlands and feeding information and actions into central government, this is an important and influential position for the third sector in the East Midlands.

In July, Rachel hosted a breakfast meeting of local and regional third sector organisations with the Minister, who listened carefully to their concerns, responses and future threats and opportunities posed by the recession. Rachel's report to the Regional Cabinet can be viewed at www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

ck

downturn

Real Help for Communities

In response to the recession, Government has now launched its programme of support for the third sector known as 'Real Help'. The programme comprises support for small groups, charities and social enterprises through a number of targeted interventions and funding streams. The programme includes grants for collaboration activity, a recently launched hardship fund and the nationally coordinated volunteer brokerage scheme. For more information see the website for the Office of the Third Sector: www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/third_sector/real_help_for_communities.aspx

Developing routes for engagement

The conference workshop focussing on Local Area Agreement engagement and achieving national indicator 7 clearly identified the need for some regional coordination to share best practice and improve engagement and performance between LAAs and the third sector across the region. In response, One EM is now working with Regeneration EM and the EM Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (who work to improve performance across local authorities) to identify resources and a mechanism to implement an LAA policy forum for the region. More details will be available on our website soon.

Scrutiny of emda

Lastly, following the recent round of scrutiny of the role of emda in the region, One EM has coordinated third sector input specifically over the 'worklessness' issue. Colleagues from the sector met at JET Derby to discuss what emda's role in 'worklessness' was and how the sector and emda could work together better in the future to achieve better outcomes for communities.

The event report has been fed back to emda through the scrutiny panel and is available on our website to view www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk



One East Midlands is a registered charity, working with the voluntary and community and wider third sector.

One East Midlands brings together organisations that support voluntary and community groups across the region to influence and shape policy, improve services and provide a single point of contact at a regional level for all stakeholders.

One East Midlands is accountable to its members: voluntary and community organisations, frontline groups, public and private sector agencies. Through its membership, the sector is able to influence One East Midlands' work and ensure that the organisation does what it sets out to do.

For more information on our membership scheme visit the website: www.oneeastmidlands.org.uk

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