



Valley Messenger

The Newsletter of Test Valley Community Services

December 2003 Edition

A Word From The Chief Officer

During the last three months we have had new staff join our team in both the Andover and Romsey offices.

In Andover we are very pleased to welcome Dawn Elson as our Partnership Officer, this post is funded by Mid Hants PCT and Social Services. Dawn will be the link between the statutory agencies and health and social care groups in the PCT area. Dawn is also running the Social Isolation Forum for Test Valley. In October we relaunched this forum. We have broadened the membership and as well as this being an information meeting we are also working on actually tackling some of the issues. If you would like more information please call Dawn in our Andover office.

In Romsey, Tina Waterman-Roberts has taken on the new role of Volunteer Development Officer. As well as finding and recruiting volunteers Tina will be working with groups to ensure that they have all the necessary policies in place and helping with the training of new volunteers.

We are pleased to welcome Viv Parsons to our team. Viv is working with Greg as the Administrator for our Community Fund project.

Welsome also to Debbie Forder who joins us this month as my Administrator in the Romsey Office.

We now have a full staff team and look forward continuing to work with all of our groups and partners over the next year to strengthen the voluntary activity in Test Valley.

Over the past three months Greg has continued to be very successful with helping groups to raise much needed funds from outside of Test Valley. Many of these groups have had their funding cut from statutory agencies and have been near to closing. We are pleased to be able to offer this essential service to groups throughout Test Valley.

Janet Blann – Chief Officer

**FROM ALL OF THE STAFF AND DIRECTORS AT TVCS WE WISH YOU
ALL A VERY HAPPY AND PEACEFUL CHRISTMAS AND A PROPEROUS
NEW YEAR.**



10 Years supporting community projects

After a decade of supporting community projects in Test Valley we celebrated our 10th anniversary at our AGM, held in King's Somborne Village Hall on 8th October. Janet Blann our Chief Officer spoke of the massive contribution made by volunteers in Test Valley, estimated to be in the region of £6m annually, based upon each volunteer being paid at the hourly national minimum wage.

The importance of partnership working is not only to deliver better local services but also to make local voluntary groups more effective was also discussed by representatives of many local groups who attended.

Speaker for the evening was Cllr. David Kirk from Hampshire County Council, reinforcing the message of partnerships and cooperation between voluntary groups and statutory agencies.

Test Valley Mayor, Councillor Pat West, and Consort Peter West, led the 10th anniversary celebrations with cheese and wine, and TVCS staff, trustees, volunteers and members discussed the challenges ahead.

“The diversity of voluntary activity in Test Valley is not only remarkable but also provides a valuable resource to complement the many services provided by statutory agencies like health and social care,” said Janet Blann. “I very much hope that with the continued support of our stakeholders and current funders our support of the voluntary sector will continue in the years to come.” Groups attending the AGM included those working on a voluntary basis with older people, children and families, disabilities and young people.

Relaunched Charity Christmas Market in Andover

On Saturday 8th November we held a new-look Charity Christmas Market in Andover Guildhall. 18 local charities attended offering Christmas cards, gifts, cakes and various crafts to the public. Well over 100 visitors attended the event supporting the work of local charities. All who attended were very happy with the day and are keen to support a similar event in 2004. Lyn Guyatt of TVCS who organised the event said, “Today has been very successful especially as so many people have supported the work of the many different charities who do so much throughout the year to help other people.”

Test Valley Community Services Annual Review 2002

The Annual Review and audited accounts for 2002 are now available. If you would like a copy of either please contact our Romsey Office.

Volunteering Information

A new appointment has been made to the Volunteer Centre! Following Bob Garlike's departure in the summer, Tina Waterman-Roberts has recently been appointed as Volunteer Development Officer. Tina said, "I am keen to expand the work of the Volunteer Centre and hope to be contacting groups about their needs over the coming months. Whilst this is a new role, I have learned a lot about the voluntary sector over the past year working with Greg Alexander at TVCS. I hope to build on the sound framework already established and bring skills gained from previous work I have undertaken in development and training and in supporting volunteers."

Tina has been forming links with other Volunteer Centres as part of her induction programme and liaising with national organisations that support volunteering. Tina added, "Test Valley has a vibrant volunteering culture and I am excited about this new role and working with local groups across the area."

At present, Tina is generally available in the Romsey office on Thursdays and in the Andover office on Tuesdays (by appointment). On Wednesdays and Fridays she plans to work flexibly across Test Valley.

Tina can be contacted on **01264 362600 and 01794 519998**

Funding Voluntary Projects

The Consortium on Opportunities for Volunteering (COV) supports the development of healthier communities by providing grants to local health and social care projects in England. COV is now taking applications for projects starting in April 2004.

Projects must involve volunteers in the delivery of their services and be run by voluntary organisations or community groups.

See www.covfunding.org.uk for more information.

A new Voluntary Group in Romsey

Southern Test Valley Toy Library



TOYS for children aged from 0 – 1- years

A new Community facility for children and parents has been set up and is run from the Upper Community School Lounge at rear of Romsey Community School.



For information or donations contact Lyn Bird by telephoning **02380 410792**

Focus on Local Groups & Organisations

LAUNCH OF NEW VILLAGE CARERS SUPPORT GROUP



Support, help and information for Carers in the villages of Appleshaw, Clanville, Fyfield, Kimpton, Redenham, Thruxton and Shipton Bellinger – all near Andover – will be available following the recent launch of the Village Carers Support Group. The Launch was well attended by local Carers and representatives from groups and organisations. Miss Ann Lewin, a former Carer, poet and the Mayor of Test Valley, Councillor Pat West both spoke with great feeling of their own experiences of caring for relatives and the sense of isolation and desperation that many carers can feel. Mrs Dawn Elson, the Carers Group Co-ordinator said, “The aims of the Group include enabling Carers who live in our villages to have a point of contact, a place to meet every month to share concerns, to be listened to and to hear from relevant speakers. The Group will be ‘mobile’, that is moving around the villages in rotation, to provide access to Carers who are unable to travel to groups in Andover or Winchester.” Dawn went on to explain about future plans for training sessions for Carers. “We are planning to run Carers Awareness Sessions, a six week course covering some aspects of caring; also in the pipeline is a short series of Mental Health Awareness Sessions. The sessions are for current, former and future Carers who live in the named villages.”

Anyone wanting further information regarding the Village Carers Group, please call Dawn on **01264 771879**.

ANDOVER SHOPMOBILITY

Shopmobility is a scheme to provide you with the loan of a wheelchair (manual or powered) or a scooter to do your own shopping. The service is available for the young and old alike – anyone who has difficulty getting about. You may have a broken leg, a permanent disability or have problems getting from your car into your wheelchair. Or maybe you are just feeling less confident on your feet. We are here to help you.

We are based conveniently at the side of Waitrose supermarket, next to Andover Bus Station and the multi-storey car park.

Shopmobility can provide you with a selection of electric scooters, powered and manual wheelchairs, any of which can be hired from as little as £2 per day for members or £3 per day for non members. Membership is available at £5 per year, which also entitles you to our newsletter as well as the lower rental charges. We welcome new volunteers at Shopmobility – we need helpers in the showroom to assist people with equipment and to and from the bus.

Equipment can be booked in advance or is available when you arrive. Prior advice of your arrival will enable us to meet you and help you into your chosen vehicle.

For more information and advice please call: Bruce Rupenthall on **01264 352000**

Andover Shopmobility, Bus Station, Andover, SP10 1QP

Choice Freedom Independence

The Children's Fund



The Children's Fund is a major government initiative aiming to improve the well-being and life chances of children aged 5-13.

Amongst its aims, are the improvement of school attendance, the reduction of crime and the support of children and young people at risk of social exclusion. An exciting part of this fund is that it is distributed at local level by a partnership of local people, which the government hopes will mean that the money really reaches those who need it.

Test Valley's share for this year is approximately £170,000 and this is being used by a dozen local projects both large and small who are already helping to make a difference to local families.

The Projects

Mountbatten School Play scheme has received money to provide extra support staff, so that children with special needs can join in the fun.

Rock Solid Youth Club has converted a basic commercial vehicle into a state-of-the-art mobile youth club. The club not only provides a meeting place for young people who might otherwise be roaming the streets but also can help combat the problems of drug and alcohol misuse.

Winton School has a project helping children with behavioural difficulties, they are providing mentoring and counselling services as well as lunchtime and after-school activities.

Andover Young Carers group are helping support children where a family member is dependent on drugs or alcohol or is experiencing mental health problems.

Kids Church is a group working in Andover in several primary schools, it has trained staff, to counsel and support children experiencing family difficulties and who may be at risk of being excluded from school.

A similar project aimed at helping those at risk of school exclusion is also happening in Romsey at **Mountbatten School**.

Some of the Health visitors in Andover are using the fund to provide a tried and tested programme called **Family Links** which looks at the emotional needs of primary school children and helps develop important aspects such as their self-esteem.

The fund is giving voluntary groups the chance to access important child protection training and policy writing assistance from the **NSPCC** and also helping the NSPCC work to prevent bullying in some of the schools in North Baddesley.

Thanks to this money **21st Romsey Scouts** is setting up a system of bursaries and uniform hire for families on low incomes.

A small grant has gone to **ROX** youth club to provide extra equipment.

Testway Sevens has used the fund to help with its excellent series of sports sessions for children on Andover's housing estates. This scheme has really helped to reduce vandalism and provide positive things for the children to do.

For more information please phone 01264 368837

MENCAP

MENCAP supports projects that expand voluntary work in the field of health and personal social services, designed to be of help to children, young people and/or adults with a learning disability. As priorities MENCAP is particularly interested in funding local voluntary organisations which: Can demonstrate that their projects are focused upon the Department of Health's specific priority areas - Are committed to promoting independence and reducing inequalities in health, in particular for children, young people, adults, older people and people from black and minority ethnic communities, with a learning disability, in urban and rural communities - Provide dynamic and creative opportunities for volunteers, and which enable users of services to themselves become volunteers - Develop a volunteer strategy, including the establishment of good practice principles and systems, to increase accessibility and sustain quality volunteering. Application process: MENCAP awards grants to its affiliated clubs and societies, and other groups, for projects which are designed to be of help to people with a learning disability.

For further information please contact:

John Oliver
Stockport, SK3 0BT
Tel: **0161 968 9250**
Fax: **0161 968 9251**

Down's Fit Sports Club

We are a group of youngsters – aged 10+ (no upper age limit, although the average age at the moment is 16) – who enjoy a bit of fun and exercise every Sunday morning from 10.30 – 12.noon at Knightwood Leisure Centre, Chandlers Ford. The Club is free refreshments are provided at half time. We have a go at a variety including football, basketball, hockey and tennis. We all play at our own level and have lots of fun. If you have Down's syndrome, or a similar disability, please telephone Sally Eshraghi for more information on **02380 263194**



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BT '195' still free

A free directory enquiries number for disabled people is still available, despite the market being opened up to competition in August.

Anyone who cannot hold, handle or read a phone book can use the free BT 195 service. To register tel **0800 5870195**, although you will need to fill in an application form and provide evidence of your disability.



Stop Press.....Disability Event in Andover

INCLUSIVE OF ALL IMPAIRMENTS LOW LEVEL CIRCUITS, AGE 16 +

Andover Leisure Centre and Test Valley Borough Council with Support from Social Services will be offering three taster sessions of Low Level Circuits at Andover Leisure Centre on Saturday 29th November, 6th and 13th December from 2 pm - 3pm in the main fitness studio. The aim is to make this inclusive of all impairments. To book a place on the taster sessions for you and support (if required) or for more information please contact Andover Leisure Centre on **01264 347100**.

Disability Advice and Information Service



Part of Alabare Christian Care Centres, we are here to provide information and advice about all aspects of disability and disability-related issues. Anyone can contact us with an enquiry. We have a range of information about such topics as:



- specific illnesses and disabilities
- holidays
- benefits and grants
- specialist equipment and aids
- and many others.....

We have access to a specialised database, as well as the internet and a large number of printed resources. If appropriate, we will refer clients to other specialised services. We offer a free, friendly, professional and confidential service.

We are open at the following times:

Tuesdays, Thursdays and Fridays: 9 a.m – 12 noon and 1 p.m. – 5 p.m.
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. – 1 p.m.

It is possible to make appointments to discuss more lengthy, complex or confidential enquiries. Enquirers do not have to live in the Salisbury area – we have recently had enquiries from Devon, Wales and the USA!

Contact details: Enable
33 Brown Street
Salisbury SP1 2AS

Tel. **01722 416189**
e-mail enable@alabare.co.uk

Registered charity no. 1006504

The Access All Areas Award

The Access All Areas awards are looking to recognise and congratulate small organisations that have made any imaginative changes to the way they provide their services so that disabled people can use them.

For details visit the following website: www.disability.gov.uk/dda/awards.html

Update on Government Review of Charities

CHARITY & VOLUNTARY SECTOR REVIEW

THE GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSE

BACKGROUND

Tony Blair launched a review of the legal and statutory framework for charities in mid 2001. The results were published in September 2002. In the consultations that followed just under 1100 individuals and groups submitted comments. The government this week issued its response and has outlined its legislative proposals. A draft Charities Bill is to be published as soon as possible.

The proposals include:

DEFINITION OF A CHARITY

The four long-standing classes of a charity:

- Relief of poverty
- Advancement of education
- Advancement of religion
- Other purposes beneficial to the community

Are to be replaced by thirteen categories (the September proposal was for ten):

- Prevention and relief of poverty
- Advancement of education
- Advancement of religion
- Advancement of health
- Social and community advancement
- Advancement of culture, arts and heritage
- Advancement of amateur sport
- Promotion of human rights, conflict resolution and reconciliation
- Advancement of environmental protection and improvement
- *Promotion of animal welfare (not in the 2002 proposals)*
- Provision of social housing (not in the 2003 proposals)
- *Other purposes beneficial to the community*

PUBLIC BENEFIT

The automatic presumption that both the advancement of education and the advancement of religion are charitable is to be removed. The proposals specifically state that this will not affect the continuing charitable status of religious organisations carrying out missionary and evangelistic work. In future all charities must show that they have been established for public benefit.

CHARITY TRADING

The recommendation in the consultation document that charities should be allowed total freedom to trade has not been accepted. Restrictions will continue.

AUDIT THRESHOLD

Charities will require an audit when their annual income exceeds **£500,000**. This is an increase from the current **£250,000**. If a charity has income below **£500,000** but has substantial assets it will require an audit. The asset threshold has not yet been set. Charities with income between **£250,000** and **£500,000** will require independent examination by a qualified professional. Charities below **£250,000** can continue to use an independent examiner who is reasonably believed by the trustees to have the requisite ability and practicable experience to carry out a competent examination.

REGISTRATION OF SMALL CHARITIES

Charities will be required to register with the Charity Commission when income exceeds £5,000 (currently £1000). Voluntary registration will be available for charities with less than £5000 income.

PLACE OF WORSHIP AND OTHER EXCEPTED CHARITIES

Places of worship and certain religious charities and groups such as Scouts and Guides have been excepted from the obligation to register with the Charity Commission. This will change and the initial registrations threshold for formerly excepted charities will be £100,000. Work remains to be done on arrangements for the orderly registration of different groups of excepted charities.

CHARITABLE INCORPORATED ORGANISATION

A new legal form designed specifically for charities is to be introduced. There will be provisions to allow existing charities to convert easily to the new structure if they wish to do so.

PAYMENT OF TRUSTEES

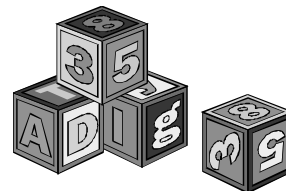
It will be possible to pay individual trustees for services to the charity outside their duties as trustees. There will be limits that are not yet defined, on the number or proportion to trustees who may be paid on the amount an individual may receive.

Funding and Community Information

Details of *Futurebuilders* fund announced

The Government has finalised proposals on its futurebuilders project - the one-off £125 million investment fund set up to help voluntary and community organisations in their public service work.

The report is the result of a recent consultation period between the Government and the Voluntary and Community sector, which saw discussions held in each English Region.



The fund is targeted at organisations working within or across the fields of:

- * Health & Social Care
- * Crime
- * Community Cohesion
- * Education & Learning
- * Support for Children and Young People

The process by which the fund will be distributed includes different types of loans and grants with the onus on flexibility so it will not be allocated to certain regions nor have minimum/maximum levels of investment.

Commenting on the fund, Paul Boateng, Chief Secretary to the Treasury, said, "The fund will showcase what the sector can do when enabled to function at its best. I am confident that the unique design of the fund will help the money reach those in the sector who will make best use of it."

"Once the fund manager has been appointed in November, further details including how to apply to the fund and criteria for eligibility will be released.

Copies of the consultation document and final design of the fund are available to download at the 'futurebuilders' section of www.hm-treasury.gov.uk or by contacting the Treasury's Public Enquiry Unit.

Hampshire Drug Action Team (JCM)

The Joint Commissioning Team of Hampshire Drug Action have announced a small grants programme to address issues facing adults including: Reducing Waiting Times, Capacity Building, Harm Reduction, Advice and Information. Grants are also available for working with young people especially: Targetting Vulnerable Groups, Developing Care, Harm Reduction, Advice and Information and Diversity Promotion.

For more information please contact: Dawn Elson of TVCS on **01264 362600**

Older People's Social Groups - As part of our Community Resource Project we are working with partners to increase the number of Older People's social groups in rural areas of Test Valley. The aim is to help new and existing groups provide formal and informal social groups which will take place in their village at a time to suit them - If you would like to know more or discuss an idea you may have please contact Greg Alexander on **01794 519998**

Funding Information

Hampshire is a fantastic area to recruit additional supporters in a number of high-profile major events such as the BUPA Great South Run and the Victory 5M. Timeoutdoors.com works with race organisers in Hampshire to promote their events and take entries through the timeoutdoors.com website.

Timeoutdoors.com can help you raise charity funds by promoting your charity to thousands of runners taking part in these local events. Having raised well over £34,000 for charities since February this year, the charity success of timeoutdoors.com, is set to continue. For further details or an informal chat - call Elaine on 08456 585 600, email elaine.aronson@timeoutdoors.com, or visit their website at www.timeoutdoors.com

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation Announce a new £3m Loan Scheme

A £3m loan-making pilot could help Esmee Fairbairn Foundation set a new trend for funders - this may be the alternative to searching for new funds and funders.

Loans range from £10,000 to £250,000, interest rates are set from nought to seven per cent. Charities, organisations with charitable objects and non-charitable organisations with a social purpose can apply, where the loan is for a charitable purpose. Applications must be for work in the Foundation's areas of interest and funding priorities outlined in its guidelines.

For more information contact:

Esmee Fairbairn Foundation
11 Park Place, London SW1 1LP
Tel **020 7297 4700**
email: info@esmeefairbairn.org.uk
website: www.esmeefairbairn.org.uk

Source: Voluntary Sector October 2003

Local Network Fund

Provide grants to local groups for work with disadvantaged children and young people in Hampshire, Isle of Wight Portsmouth and Southampton.

Does your group help children and young people? If so it may get a grant from the Local Network Fund of up to £7000. Grants are usually made for one year but some two year funding may be considered.

For more information and an application pack please call **0845 113 0161**.

TVCS can help you complete the form and give advice on eligibility.

Between April 2002 and March 2003 TVCS helped Test Valley groups obtain £36,000 from this fund - call Greg Alexander on **01794 519998**.



Funding Opportunity! Community Dividend



The Community Dividend scheme uses donations from Co-operative Dividend cardholders that, in turn, are used as grants to organisations of between £100 and £5000.

You may be **eligible** if your group or project helps or is involved with:

- young people
- people with disabilities
- the elderly
- education projects
- community issues
- the environment
- Credit Unions
- Health

To find out more please telephone : Freephone **0800 0686 727**
Minicom **0800 0686 717**

write to : Co-op Freepost MR9 473, Manchester M4 8BA
email: customer.relations@co-op.co.uk

check out : www.co-op.co.uk
or simply **collect an application form from in store**

You or your group must hold a Dividend card to apply,
collect information in store or
phone the card helpline 0845 0901456

Musicians with skills to share?

Are there any musicians out there? Would you like to perform to an eager group of children? If the answer is "yes", please contact Mrs. Kate Mason at Vigo Junior School, Vigo Road, Andover, Hants, SP10 1JZ.

Tel **01264 365160** We are looking for musicians of any musical style to provide live music experiences for our children, the majority of whom have never seen a "live" performance before. This would have to be a voluntary offer of your time as the school is unable to fund such experiences. We look forward to hearing from you.

If you would like to promote your organisation in this newsletter – please contact Greg Alexander at TVCS.

Items are welcomed from voluntary and community groups and projects in Test Valley

Guides, Helplines & Resources

The Pregnancy Crisis Centre

Charity No 1077986

Finding out about an unplanned pregnancy can be a confusing and frightening experience. You may not know who to turn to for advice, help in making good decisions and support.

The Pregnancy Crisis Centre is there to listen, understand and offer help. You will find someone to talk to, whom you can trust and who is trained to provide emotional and practical support when it is needed during a very difficult time, where you won't be pressurised or panicked into making sudden decisions.

Also available at the Centre is free pregnancy testing, post abortion and miscarriage counselling. Practical help is also available including short term accommodation, baby clothing and equipment and advice on available benefits

Volunteer staff at the centre also give their time to visit local schools to give talks as well as becoming "buddies" to individual clients where it is appropriate. Perhaps you feel you have something to offer yourself, such as unused baby equipment or clothing and maternity wear. You may feel you could become a volunteer yourself. All volunteers are given 50 hours training and full support by an established team.

The Centre is open on Tuesday afternoons from 2pm – 4pm
Wednesday & Thursday mornings from 10am – 12noon
And on Tuesday evenings by appointment only.

Located behind the baptist church at : Oak Bank Family Centre (Pregnancy Crisis)
Oak Bank off South Street
Andover, SP10 2BK
01264 351111

Mind out at work

A recent survey by the Work Foundation, to coincide with the launch of a Department of Health (MindOut) practical guide to managing and supporting mental health in the workplace, found that managers currently have minimal ability to cope with this.

Links to Work Foundation report and how to order a hard copy of the guide are at http://www.mindout.net/wm/w02_news_info.asp

or download the MindOut Line Managers' Resource Pack in pdf format, 270kb,direct: <http://www.mindout.net/iw2ta/downloads/LineManagersResource>

We aim to include items related to **disability awareness** in each edition of the Valley Messenger. Please send us any items that may promote disability groups or raise awareness of current issues and initiatives
Please contact Viv Parsons on **01794 519998**

Connexions is a new national service, aiming to provide information, advice and guidance for 13 to 19 year olds, and those up to 24 years old with learning difficulties or disabilities. Connexions Personal Advisers work in schools, colleges, Connexions Centres, Connexions Careers Centres and through other locations in the community.

The local Connexions team

We are very keen to link with voluntary groups in Test Valley, finding out what you do, keeping you informed of Connexions developments as the service becomes established and looking to work together for the benefit of young people in the district. Please contact us if you would like to know more about what we are doing, if you would like us to meet your group or if you have any other questions.

We are shortly moving to premises in Andover town centre:

Connexions, Test Valley local office, 1st floor, Portland House
Chantry Centre, Andover, SP10 1LP
01264 369947.

In the meantime, contact Kevin Sawers, Voluntary and Community Sector lead, at our Winchester office on 01962 878303, 07980 591241, kevin.sawers@hants.gov.uk

Connexions training

There is training available if you want to find out more about Connexions, ranging from a one-day introduction to a 10-month diploma. Backfill funding for voluntary sector workers is available for some courses. Find out more at the Connexions South Central Website, www.connexions-southcentral.org.

Or you can contact Lynn Paterson, Training Co-ordinator, on 023 9283 4749, 07789 170608, lynnpaterson@connexions-southcentral.org

Small grants application process

There are two streams of grants – up to £1000 and up to £30,000. Most grants are expected to be below £10,000, as we want to manage larger awards through a contracting process to foster greater security for larger plans and new projects.

Go to the Connexions South Central Website, www.connexions-southcentral.org

Alternatively, contact Becky Davis, Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator, on 023 8063 4433, 07717 665540, beckydavis@connexions-southcentral.org

Applications are considered twice yearly, the next deadline is 31st May 2004.

**This newsletter is posted free to members and partners of Test Valley Community Services. If you no longer wish to receive it please contact us. We are currently updating our database and address list – your cooperation will be appreciated.
Thank You – Test Valley Community Services – 01794 519998**

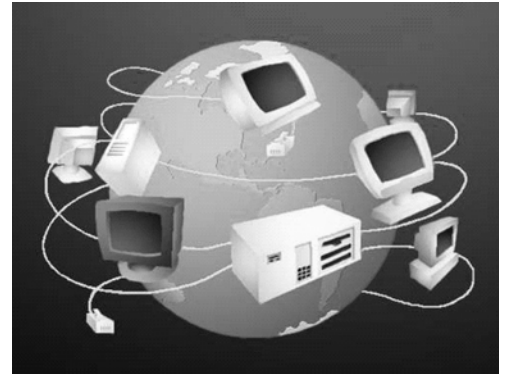
This is a website listing individuals/organisations who are offering donated computer equipment and hardware to UK charities.

Charities should check the listing and contact the individual donors themselves.

Full information about receiving or donating equipment can be obtained from the website: www.donateapc.org.uk.

Computers for rural people

The Arthur Rank Centre - the churches national ecumenical rural chaplaincy centre based at Stoneleigh, (see www.thearthurrankcentre.org.uk), runs a scheme called Computers for Rural People.



Using ex-government stock, fully refurbished and guaranteed, they can provide reasonably priced second hand computing equipment for rural people and small organisations with limited resources (not just churches).

People purchasing equipment are asked to make a small donation to the Centre. Anyone interested should contact

David Long
The Arthur Rank Centre,
Stoneleigh Park
Warwickshire CV8 2LZ
01295 788242
davidlong49@hotmail.com

Tel.
e-mail.

Christmas: Fun Or Fraught? 'OURTIME IS YOURS' MAY BE ABLE TO HELP

Shopping and making arrangements for Christmas can be stressful and daunting. If you are elderly and suffering from failing eyesight or arthritic hands your difficulties are compounded, particularly if you are not fortunate enough to have support from family or friends.

Valerie and Sue can help you enjoy Christmas without the need to struggle in busy shops, carry heavy bags or endure lengthy queues at the Post Office. They can help you write and post Christmas cards and letters to family and friends; buy and wrap presents and make arrangements for special food orders and all the Christmas trimmings to be delivered to your door.

Their Home Support Service, OURTIME Is Yours, is affordable and can be tailored to suit your individual needs.

For peace of mind, call Valerie or Sue on 01252 641771

FAMILY LEARNING DAY – SUNDAY 12TH OCTOBER 2003

The Test Valley Fun Day was a great success. Over 600 people, children and adults took part in the event in Andover, Romsey and Stockbridge. Families followed a trail around the respective towns with their Passport to Family Learning visiting venues where fun activities and workshops took place.

Organisations including the **Fire Station, Police Station, Local Leisure Centre, John Lewis – Waitrose, Museum Services, Youth in Romsey** and **Romsey Abbey**. The organisations were fantastic and enjoyed participating in the event, “Thank you to all!” said Samantha Herrick of Romsey School, co-ordinator of the event across the borough. Children were able to collect a variety of freebies as well a stamp on their passport showing they had visited the activities. Families had to collect a minimum of four stamps before they could move on to Stockbridge to continue the fun! Stockbridge School was the venue for more activities and families from Andover, Stockbridge and Romsey joined together.

Samantha continued, “The face painting lessons went extremely well with many parents taking part and enjoying it! Whole families were learning how to paint faces, with a competitive element creeping in with Mums & Dads vying for the best painted face, and lots of happy children as a result.”

Other organisations running activities such as the **Saints Soccer School** were very impressed by the way families joined in together and the kid’s success rates were often quicker than their parents! Families seemed to thoroughly enjoy themselves and were keen to pass on their thanks for a great free day out! Having free transport was essential for some families who wouldn’t have been able to participate without it.

Since the event there has been plenty of positive feedback from people who were there in one or more venues. One mother saying, “I left my house at quarter to nine, got back at 5 and I was absolutely shattered but we all had a fantastic day!!”

The aim for the day was to give families a fun and informal opportunity to experience learning together. The Campaign for Learning, the national organisers of the Family Learning Weekend initiative, released some research to coincide with the weekend which revealed that parents’ involvement in their children’s education has a bigger effect on their success in school than any other factor. Kids whose parents are involved in their schooling do up to 25% better than pupils with families who are not involved. The interest that parents take in education is much more important than the parents’ own education, social class or income in explaining how well the children are likely to do.

Family Learning Weekend has been running now for 6 years, and thousands of events took place all around the country this year. Next year, Family Learning Weekend will become Family Learning Week in Test Valley!!

For more information please contact:

Samantha Herrick:	Romsey Community School :	Tel. 01794 522106
Paula Page	The Andover Family Learning Project	Tel. 01264 359062

The Trustees and staff of Test Valley Community Services would like to thank the following for their support:



Test Valley Borough Council - Grant towards central costs
Hampshire County Council - Grant towards central costs
Romsey Town Council – Continued Support
Romsey Extra Parish Council – Continued Support

Can you help us to reach the community? Articles and events are always welcome from voluntary and community groups - please contact us: 01794 519998

The views and opinions expressed in The Valley Messenger are not necessarily those held by the staff and management of Test Valley Community Services. We are always pleased to include contributions from any of our readers and welcome articles and information. We are not able to recommend any of the services offered through advertisements in this publication.

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Central Team

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Greg Alexander	Community Resource Manager	Romsey Office
Lin Webb	Finance Officer	Romsey Office
	<i>(part-time 10.am-4pm Mon, Tues, Weds, Fri)</i>	
Lynne Guyatt	Administrator	Andover Office
	<i>(weekday mornings)</i>	
Debbie Forder	Administrator	Romsey Office
Viv Parsons	Administrator	Romsey Office

Volunteer Centre

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	General Enquiries	01794 519998
	By Appointment	01264 362600

Projects

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Debra Ramchurn	Community Mental Health Development Project	Tel: 01264 333833
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