

Voluntary Action

e-briefing from **Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire**

February 2016 edition

Talking about Devolution

Devolution is not not a topic for the possible, distant future, but rather, is an active process which has momentum and is active in discussions in local communities including our own.

NAVCA in conjunction with Locality, published a paper recently to explain and focus this devolution agenda.

The paper, "**Realising the revolution: making devolution work for people and communities**" can be [downloaded here](#) and you can [read an introduction to it on the NAVCA website here](#).

Part of the paper outlines 5 headline principles which should be at the heart of devolution. They are:

- Creating a social economy.
- Meaningful representation of the voluntary and community sector within new leadership structures.
- Ensuring accountability through effective community engagement.
- Decisions taken at the most local level appropriate.
- Working with local organisations to support local commissioning and local delivery of public services.

The purpose of these principles should be to give a framework to local community led organisations on which to focus their local discussions. So if you or your organisation is currently involved in this devolution discussion, these principles would be a valuable place of you to start.

The topics is very 'live', with Rob Walsh, Chief Executive of NELC and Cllr Ray Oxby, Leader of the council speaking about devolution in the past week to attendees at the VCS Forum. The topic is going to be around for a while now, so if you are no 'up to speed' on devolution I recommend the paper for you to read.

this issue...

[01 News update](#)

[02 Volunteering news](#)

[03 MEMBER NEWS](#)

[05 Funding update](#)

[06 From VANEL](#)

February edition

This edition of the VANEL e-newsletter is running a bit late this month - sorry about that. But we hope you find it's packed full of useful news, ideas and links.

As always, if you're a Member or Friend, then we're always happy to receive your news (via editor@vanel.org.uk) for inclusion in either our monthly e-newsletter or our weekly e-bulletin.

01 News update

various general pieces of news, ideas, stories and thoughts we've picked up this month.

VCSE Strength Checker

The **Big Lottery** has just launched a new tool to help voluntary and community organisations to assess their 'strength' and improve their resilience.

The **VCSE Strength Checker** tool can be used for free by organisations across the UK wishing to develop and improve their resilience.

It will produce a personalised report highlighting an organisation's key strengths and areas to help them become more effective, including sustainability, marketing, strategy and planning, track record, quality and impact. The Big Lottery Fund will continue to work with the Cabinet Office to promote the tool and look for opportunities for development.

Organisations will also be signposted to other sources of support and funding including social investment. Information generated through the report could also help organisations in planning funding bids to trusts and foundations. It is expected that it will be predominantly used by small-to-medium organisations but can also be used by larger VCSEs.

[Go direct to the tool here](#) and [read all about it in the press release by Big Lottery here](#).

It's never too early to assess your organisation, review your issues and risks, plan for the future and steer yourself to a stronger, more resilient, more sustainable future. This tool may be a useful part of your toolkit in taking a good hard look at where you are and where you should be going. Management, trustees and committee members all take note...

How are your Digital Skills?

It seems that very little time passes between 'major reports' that highlight the digital divide that exists between those organisations that embrace technology and digital tools and those that don't. The key point is almost always that the voluntary and community sector is 'behind the curve' in this Digital by Default world.

So, here we are again - another report is out. "**Business transformation and the role of heads of digital**" looks at the digital competence of staff and volunteers within organisations and finds that 95% of organisations 'have no strategy for improving the digital capabilities of staff'. Without digital capabilities how are we making our organisations digital capable? ([Read about the report here and follow the link to the report](#)).

This, as always, is important stuff. At VANEL we still work with voluntary and community organisations that are ill equipped for the digital world now, let alone the digital world that's just around the corner.

It used to be that I'd be making the point that each and every organisation should have an up to date, functional, representative and accurate, well supported website, in order to work best with beneficiaries, partners, their community and to demonstrate their competence to potential funders, givers and supporters.

That's still true, but we're already moving well beyond websites. If you're not communicating via social media or ready to communicate via mobile devices, then you're again slipping further behind the curve.

No doubt organisations can continue as they are. But is the gap widening between those with technology that assists and benefits them and those without? Certainly a lot of these reports say this is so.

Does this sound familiar to you and your organisation? If so, the simplest step is to get in touch with us at VANEL. We have huge experience with technology and digital solutions for the voluntary and community sector - we just need the opportunity to talk with you about what would help you.

Want to talk about technology? Contact Karl Elliott at VANEL (01472 361043) or email karl@vanel.org.uk for the first step.

Anti-lobbying changes

The government has now introduced an anti-lobbying clause which will be inserted into all government grants from as early as 1st May 2016. (Read an official [press release about it here](#)).

This is a pretty significant move, but clearly won't affect each and every organisation. But as always, with these important issues, the key is to keep informed and review how it affects your own organisation. I can only suggest that your management and board take a look at this issue before it comes into effect.

NAVCA have taken a detailed look at this and given their response, so it's worth starting there. [Read their article about this on their website here](#).

NCVO PhotoVoice competition open

Entries are now open for NCVO's annual competition, run in partnership with PhotoVoice, which celebrates their members' work using their pictures. It's open until 18th March and [you can find full information and details here](#).



02 Volunteering Support

Volunteer Audit - your help please...

We'd like your help. We're doing an audit of volunteering across Northern

Lincolnshire and that means getting feedback from as many volunteers as we can.

If your organisation hosts volunteers - whether that's one volunteer or many, then we'd like to ask you to make sure all your volunteers know about this survey and have an opportunity to fill it in. (It's an online form that will take just a few minutes to complete, but perhaps you can help any volunteers who might not have access to the Internet to be able access the form via your own computers?)

(Don't forget your trustees or committee members - they are volunteers too!)

The survey can be reached here <http://bit.ly/volsurvey16>. It should just take a couple of minutes.

If you are a VANEL or VANL member organisation then we'll be contacting you directly to ask your help with this audit. So thanks in advance for your help.

The audit will help us to expand our knowledge of volunteering across Northern Lincolnshire even more. And that in turn means we can focus our support needs even more accurately and usefully. All of that of course then means we're helping your own organisations further by hopefully improving the way organisations can work with and find volunteers.

Thank you in advance for your help with our survey.

North East Lincolnshire Volunteer Managers Network

The next meeting of the **North East Lincolnshire Volunteer Managers Network** will take place on **Wednesday 16th March** at West Marsh Community Centre, Beeson Street, Grimsby, DN31 2QH from 9.30am-12noon.

If you are already part of the network then you should already have received your invite, agenda and minutes of the previous meeting directly from Liz at VANEL. Please confirm back to Liz whether you are attending or not (liz@vanel.org.uk, 01472 231123).

If you've not received your invite, or are involved with the management of volunteers and would like to attend the meeting, then again, please speak directly to Liz. Attendance at the meetings is for VANEL Member organisations only, so please talk to us about membership if you would like further involvement.

At the meeting we'll look at various aspects of volunteer management including good recruitment techniques, good practices in volunteer management and more.

There will also be some more details about the next **V:Expo** which will take place on 26th May 2016. If you would like to attend this next Greater Lincolnshire Volunteering Conference at Lincolnshire Showground, then tickets will go on sale from 9am on 29th February 2016 via Eventbrite. Hold the date.

Further meetings for the Volunteer Managers Network are already scheduled for June, September and December, so if you would like more information just speak with Liz.

Interested in Volunteering?

If you are interested in volunteering then the process of getting support via the Northern Lincolnshire Volunteer Service is pretty simple. Call VANEL via [01472 231123](tel:01472231123) or email volunteer@vanel.org.uk and speak to someone in the volunteer service. They will be able to talk you through what your next steps are.

In many cases it might be useful for you to meet face to face for a short appointment to discuss your interests. In which case we'll arrange the most convenient appointment for you at one of our outreach venues. **Cromwell Road community Fire Station** is one of our latest venues, but we also run appointments at **Grimsby Minster**, at locations in Immingham and at the **Pavilion in Cleethorpes**.

If you're interested in any aspect of volunteering, just get in touch.

Don't forget you can meet VANEL to talk about volunteering in Immingham, Cleethorpes and Grimsby...

To make an appointment with a Volunteer Advisor: email liz@vanel.org.uk or call 01472 231123

[facebook/volunteergy](https://www.facebook.com/volunteergy)

More opportunities...

Lots more opportunities on Do-it...



Visit the North East Lincolnshire Volunteer Centre Facebook page for up to date news...

www.facebook.com/volunteergy

Winter Buddies

Despite the mild weather we're still in the mindset of preparing for more extremes, and although we've got a lot of Winter Buddies signed up to volunteer to help out if the weather turns bad over the next month or so, we could still do with more!

So if you would like to help, find out more on our website

www.winterplanning.org.uk and visit [the Buddies page](#) to find out how to get involved.

Immingham: Every Tuesday 9.30 – 5.00

Various locations around Immingham – We will provide venue details in Immingham when you book an appointment.

Cleethorpes: Every Wednesday 9.30 – 12.30

The Pavilion, Sussex Recreation Ground, Brereton Avenue, Cleethorpes. Make an appointment or just drop in for a chat with a Volunteer Advisor.

Grimsby: Every Friday 9.30 – 12.30

The Minster (St. James Church), St. James Square, Grimsby DN31 1EP. We are based in the Minster, just inside the main door. Pop in while you're shopping or book an appointment with a Volunteer Advisor.

Also in **Grimsby** (new): Thursday's 1-4pm

at Cromwell Road Community Fire Station.

03 Member News

New VANEL Members

Welcome on board to a new member this month:

Counting Hope

We're really pleased to announce that **Counting Hope** has now joined us as a member. Andy

YMCA Sleep Easy success

ORGANISERS of a charity sleep-out in Grimsby are celebrating another year of success after more than 50 people took to their cardboard boxes on a cold January night to raise funds for homeless charities.

Green, a very inspirational individual, founded the charity after being moved by the profound kindness of the inhabitants of Sal Island, Cabo. Counting Hope's aim is to empower the residents of Sal Island, Cabo Verde by helping them with resources that allow for a better education and the maintenance of dangerous buildings. Some great work has already been done with Franklin College and there is a lot more to come!

New website for Shalom

Shalom Youth Project (the Community of St John, St Stephen and Shalom) has a new website. You can now visit www.shalchurch.org.uk to find out more about the Church, the Youth Project and all the other community work they do. The website was built for Shalom by VANEL but with a large amount of the work done by John Ellis at Shalom after suitable training. The website itself was funded through the hard-effort fundraising of one of the Shalom volunteers who raised money through a half-marathon in the pouring rain!

If your organisation would like help with your website then contact Karl Elliott at VANEL who will be happy to advise or support you. (karl@vanel.org.uk)

CERT job vacancy

CERT have a vacancy for a Training and Development Officer. The deadline for applications is 19th Feb and you can [read full details here](#).

Communities Together newsletter

The latest Communities Together newsletter is out wishing you a Happy Chinese New Year and introducing you to the new Chair of Communities Together. [Read it here](#).

YMCA Humber's Sleep Easy event returned to the North East Lincolnshire shopping centre's multi-storey car park for the third year, marking the sixth time that the fundraiser has taken place in the area.

The aim of the night is for fundraisers to register and make a cardboard shelter in which they spend 12 hours to raise awareness of youth homelessness. They also gain sponsorship from friends, family and colleagues to raise vital funds for homeless charities in North East Lincolnshire.

The campaign has so far raised over £6000 with donations still coming in. It's congratulations all round to those who took part and their sponsors. The event was a great success (again) and helped to really focus on a difficult cause. YMCA have issued a specific Sleep Easy newsletter - [read it here](#).

Sleep workshops

Keepsake for Life (KFL) is a social enterprise that exist to support older people, people with dementia, carers and other organisations in similar fields. One of their services is "Sleep Matters" which has been piloted for a while now and KFL now offer a 2hr "Sleep Awareness and Information Workshop" to provide useful information around sleep issues. For more information about the workshop and the service [go here](#).

National Garden Week

As part of National Garden Week, **Green Futures** is holding an Open Day on **Saturday 9th April 2016 from 11am – 3pm at The Vanson Centre, Bradley**. The day will consist of everything good about horticulture and gardening in our area. Preparations are currently being made for the event so get back to [Elaine Atkinson at Green Futures](#) for more information (01472 870609).

05 Funding news

There are still a lot of grants and funding opportunities out there. Somewhere like **Funding Central** is of course a great place to start your search. Each month we'll list here a number of the opportunities that we've come across recently. Although we can't write your funding applications for you, if you are a Member or Friend then we at VANEL can always act as a 'critical friend', so please do get in touch (office@vanel.org.uk or 01472 231123). Check [online](#) for even more funding news.

Big Lottery 1:1's...

It's been a while, but VANEL are hosting another day of Big Lottery

How are your finances?

NCVO has just published a report,

funding appointments on 17th March. Ros Aitchison is our new, regional Funding Officer for Big Lottery and she will be on Grimsby on 17th March for appointments with any groups wanting to discuss Reaching Communities or Awards for All applications.

So if you would like an appointment for that day (approx 45minute appointments), then contact Vicky at VANEL (vicky@vanel.org.uk) who will help make arrangements. There will be another opportunity, but not until May (or you can always get general advice from Big Lottery via their website or helplines). Get in touch if you are interested.

Bid Writing Workshops

Skills Plan are delivering bid writing workshops in Lincolnshire and Nottinghamshire and currently have places on workshops running in March 2016.

A well written proposal is critical to succeeding in bidding for funding and/or resources. Workshops are tailored for organisations who prefer to keep bid writing in-house and are applicable both to external funding bids and developing internal proposals for project funding and resources.

Local groups thinking about preparing bids and wanting some support may be interested in these workshops - the nearest of which will take place in Lincoln on 9th March.

The costs of the full day workshop are £105 per person. If you are interested, contact skillsplanuk@gmail.com for details.

If the workshop sounds of interest to you but cost or distance make this difficult to attend, then if you are a Member or Friend of VANEL we'd be happy to talk through your bidding/tendering questions to see if we can give you some initial support or signpost you to other support. Just contact VANEL via 01472 231123.

"Navigating Change" (funded by the Lloyds Foundation) looking in particular at the finances (and consequently the sustainability) of small to medium sized charities and voluntary organisations (£25k-£1k turnover). The report shows that organisations of this size are especially vulnerable in terms of their finances.

You can read the [blog about the report here](#) and [access the full report itself here](#). How does this compare to your own organisations? Does this financial vulnerability include you? So what steps could you and your board take to help tackle this vulnerability head on?

Funding roundup

Every month now we do a roundup on our website of the latest funding sources we've come across. The [most recent article is here](#).

Some have now closed, but here's a couple still open with deadlines soon, including:

First Utility Foundation
Community Trees Fund
British Youth Council Youth Voice initiative
Greggs Foundation
Britains Best Volunteer Awards 2016
Armed Forces Day funding
Comic Relief: Sports Relief Community Cash Fund
HRUK Healthy Hearts Grants
Galaxy Hot Chocolate Fund

[Take a look online](#) for all the details.

Small charities fundraising training programme now open

Charities can sign up for a range of training opportunities through our small charities fundraising training programme. The programme, worth over £100,000, will provide expert training to small charities from February to June 2016. It will help charities with an annual income of up to £1 million to generate more income to

support their vital work. [Read full information about this here.](#)

06 from VANEL

Staff changes at VANEL

Just one staff change at VANEL to announce this month.

Steven Lynn is joining us as a Community Link Champion; he'll be providing support and guidance for the safer community task groups and supporting local people to have an effect on response to reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. Welcome on board Steve.

"The View from the Top"

Issue 02 of our e-newsletter for Trustees and Committee members came out in January. We've been emailing it out to Chairs, Trustees, managers and committee members from our Member and Friend organisations. With a bit of luck you've had your copy by now.

If you've not received your own copy, ask your chair of trustees, maybe they've received it and you can get them to pass it onto you.

Or the easiest is to contact Karl at VANEL via karl@vanel.org.uk and we'll add you to the mailing list for the next issues.

"The View from the Top" focuses entirely on the governance side of your organisation. Leading a voluntary or community organisation these days needs strong leadership, so we hope that our, now bi-monthly, e-newsletter will help inspire you, challenge you or inform you so that you and your board can collectively do things differently (and hopefully better).

Issue 3 out March

If you'd like to receive your own copy of "The View from the Top", email Karl at karl@vanel.org.uk

Safeguarding Children Training

We are still currently planning another Level 1 accredited and certificated Safeguarding Children Level 1 course and have a few places left. Contact Peter for more details or [read more here](#).

Have you got news or events that you'd like to share through this newsletter? If you're a Member or Friend organisation then just get in touch via editor@vanel.org.uk and we'll look to get your news online and perhaps into an edition of this newsletter. ([more notes here](#))

- Don't forget our [Events calendar here](#).
- [Pass this newsletter onto a friend](#)
- follow our news [via RSS with this feed](#)
- Not actually a Member yet? [find out more](#)



Copyright © 2016 Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire, All rights reserved.

[unsubscribe from this list](#) [update subscription preferences](#)