



Your voice on local health and social care

Welcome to the Somerset Local Involvement Network newsletter for April & May 2009

Are We Nearly There Yet?

Governance and Accountability ... What does it really mean?

Your stewardship group have the unenviable task of agreeing the ways in which they will work and publishing some policies. This is what we mean when we talk about 'governance'.

The LINK is for the community of Somerset and is run by it. That means we need to be clear about how and why we do what we do, and what we spend our money on. This is 'accountability.'

In a bit more detail this means:

Accountability is about taking time to explain to people what you are doing, why, and how you are doing it.

Another way to say this is that it is about taking responsibility for actions you take and decisions you make.

Being accountable to local communities should be at the heart of LINKs and underpin everything that it does. We are accountable to the local community and ultimately to the Government.

How do we make this happen?

Help and Care, as the host, have a responsibility to make the LINK network work properly.

Because Help and Care has lots of LINKs contracts, we have done some research and training which is being shared by all of our LINKs.

We have developed some governance templates and training modules on 'decision making and accountability', among other areas.

Your stewardship group are just embarking on this process right now. They are agreeing how to run their meetings, what to do about our governance procedures and are going through training to move forward the work of the LINK with confidence and knowledge.

Stewardship group members have met once a month during March, April & May. Notes from meetings are posted online once they've been approved at the following meeting. Please let us know if you'd like these supplied in an alternative format. Next meeting: June.

In this edition:

- The stewardship group's progress
- Colleagues coming & going
- Development officers in the community



The Somerset LINK stewardship group at their first meeting held in North Petherton

Something got your goat?

Tell us about it right now

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You Say Goodbye, and I Say Hello

Julie Chant, who was elected to the stewardship group, was unable to take up her position due a change in her personal circumstances.

The locality manager's post has been extended to four days a week and the host team is looking forward to welcoming a new manager to the team following the departure of Lynda Chatfield in April.

We are sorry to say goodbye to our development officer Amy Morse who is following her dream to live the good life in Bulgaria.

Amy said: "I'm really looking forward to my new adventure but sorry to be leaving the LINK at this exciting time."

We've also enjoyed working with Nicole Kirbyshire who has been out and about with Amy but is now moving on. Nicole said: *"Being out in the community has been great and I really hope people continue to have their say."*

Ads for all vacancies have appeared in the press and interviews are being held on June 18.

Whistle Stop Tour

The LINKs development officers have been out and about in April and May. Here's just a few of the people we've been to say 'hi' to:

Taunton Deane Council for Voluntary Service (CVS); Somerset PCT; Somerset Partnership; Glastonbury & West Huntspill SUN meetings, Wyvern Health Participation Forum; Somerset Older Citizens Alliance; Volunteer Managers Network; Balsam Community Centre in Wincanton; Headway Centre in Yeovil; MIND in Taunton and ENGAGE in West Somerset.

Time for Tea? Quack... Quack

Welcome to the first in a series of new features - Time for tea? - which focuses on a local community group we've visited.

Development officer Amy Morse packed up her cossie and flippers for tea and a slice of soggy cake with The Mendip Mallards.

You don't need to be able to swim to become a Mendip Mallard.

A desire to enjoy the water is all that's needed.

For over 25 years The Mendip Mallards have provided a safe place for people of all ages and physical abilities to enjoy swimming and splashing around in the water.

The club is open to anyone who feels that exercise will improve their users and people with mental health problems or learning difficulties.

Family members and carers are encouraged to join in the fun.

Helpers are available in the pool although anyone needing one-to-one help would need their own carer/family member.

Amy said: "The Mallards is a great group providing fun and fitness for all. We look forward to keeping in touch with the Mallard through the LINK and hope they swim to victory at their next gala."

The Mallards meet every Sunday at Strode Pool, Street from 12.30 to 1.30pm. Call Norman Purcell on 01963 240439 or 07774 111825, or just turn up. Visit www.mendip.org.uk/mda.

Maximise your potential

Do you belong to a local group or organisation? Do you need more exposure?

Add your group to the [LINKs website](#) and start online discussions, post photos and advertise your news and events in your groups dedicated interactive area – FREE.

Revealing? Dreary? Helpful?

We want to give you the news you want, when you want it so please tell us what you do and don't want in your newsletters.

If you'd like to [submit](#) an article for consideration in the July edition please let us know by July 1.

Newsletters are currently issued every two months with more updates online.



P.S please pass me on to a friend



A member of The Mendip Mallards enjoys a dip

Go Green

Save the trees and conserve the cash – receive this newsletter online, instead of by post.

This is the first edition of the newsletter to be sent out in an e-format so why not jump on the band wagon - go green and go online.

Burns Consultation

Give your views on the proposed regional specialist burns unit by completing The South West Specialised Commissioning Group questionnaire or go along to a consultation event.

www.swscg.nhs.uk/consultation

01392 449 839. Replies by June 30.