

Austerity bites

A new age of austerity hangs over us as we settle into 2011 with many voluntary and community organisations already feeling the pinch.

The knock on effects of the Government's financial squeeze mean the reality of reduced budgets and an uncertain future are causing widespread concern in the sector.

As we look to rein in our spending and deliver services more efficiently, the situation will not be helped by an increased demand for those very same services, from the people we support.

In recent years we have seen a shift in the way we are expected to deliver services. This, coupled with the new economic environment in which we are expected to deliver more for less, will leave many groups overstretched and struggling to keep up.

In this borough we are fortunate in that we have avoided some of the savage cuts that have raised alarm bells in other areas. We are pleased that the council has listened to the views of voluntary sector representatives, that cuts should be implemented equally across the board rather than favouring some services over others.

Whilst we understand challenging times mean that the council has difficult decisions to make we hope our sector's voice means our local communities do not lose out.

It will be important for us to map the way that the austerity drive impacts on our organisations, we need to evidence the effects on frontline services, on staff and morale. We also need to share our ideas on ways of coping.

A new Cuts page on our website will update you on relevant news and also share resources and information about anti-cuts campaigns. In many areas community led campaigns are springing up



More to come? – In December VCS groups from across London protested against cuts in London Councils funding.

to try to shape the debate and challenge the way austerity measures are being implemented. Alternatives are being put forward for dealing with the budget crisis.

It is important that our communities are represented in this debate, only through enabling their voice can their needs be placed at the centre of decision making.

In this issue...

Editorial	2
Feature: <i>Change is a Gonna Come...</i>	3
Organisational Development: <i>Supporting the Sector in 2011</i>	4 / 5
Health News	6
Partnerships & Forums	7
Coping with Cuts...	8

CONTACT US

Chief Executive

Mary Gardiner 020 7243 9803
mary@kcsc.org.uk

Office Manager

Harjit Dhaliwal 020 7243 9801
harjit@kcsc.org.uk

Organisational Development Team

Organisational Development Manager

Lev Pedro 020 7243 9809
lev@kcsc.org.uk 07540 721765

Senior Organisational Development Advisor

Siobhan Sollis 020 7243 9807
siobhan@kcsc.org.uk

Development Officer

Brenda Nambooz 020 7243 9807
brenda@kcsc.org.uk

Policy Development Team

Policy Development Manager

Angela Spence 020 7243 9802
angela@kcsc.org.uk

Administrative Officer/Personal Assistant

Mohammed Miah 020 7243 9808
mohammed@kcsc.org.uk

Community Leadership

Patrick Little 07538 238946
patrick@cvshounslow.org.uk

Development Officer

Personalisation Awareness

Aneesa Chaudhry 020 7243 9800
aneesa@kcsc.org.uk

Information and Communications Officer

Kuldip Bajwa 020 7243 9804
kuldip@kcsc.org.uk

4minds Project Team

Community Development Worker

Jane Palmer 07540 721763
jane@4mindsproject.org.uk

Team Administrator

Shabana Siddique 020 7373 9113
shabana@4mindsproject.org.uk

KENSINGTON & CHELSEA SOCIAL COUNCIL

London Lighthouse
111-117 Lancaster Road
London W11 1QT

020 7243 9800

info@kcsc.org.uk
www.kcsc.org.uk

Charity no 1087457
Limited company no. 4146375

Kensington & Chelsea Social Council (KCSC)

works to support locally focused
voluntary and community
organisations serving local residents.

The views expressed in Link are not
necessarily those of KCSC.

A WORD FROM OUR CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Our history has taught us that uniting as a local sector works to the great benefit of local people. This, coupled with good relationships with statutory funders means we remain in a relatively strong position compared to other areas.



Mary Gardiner

than 15 groups request it. Changes to the VOFs are also planned and are detailed on page 7.

The other big change we are introducing is a new and more relevant web site. We hope to keep you better informed of sector developments

and engage those of you who are often too short of time to attend meetings. This does not mean we will stop our face to face work which is always our main focus, but we do hope we can deliver more and improve access to our services.

Part of our new offer will be a virtual forum for Social Enterprise offering guidance and support. Later in the year we will be offering subsidised places at the School for Social Entrepreneurs for organisations that show they are ready to develop their plans further.

For those of you that are worried about this potential departure from tradition we maintain our strong views on equalities and commitment to supporting small and BME organisations, and we have plans to strengthen our work in this area over the coming year.

Please let us know your thoughts on our current range of services and future plans. It is important for us all during this time to keep an eye on the mission that we share. That of reducing poverty and disadvantage, and working to support communities to develop a voice that is heard and responded to by decision makers. Best wishes for 2011.

However, we still face uncertainty. We know that the council are talking to our neighbouring boroughs of Westminster and Hammersmith and Fulham about delivering more joined up services. One council has expressed thoughts on a possible approach supporting our sector and this is currently being considered by the other two.

At the Social Council we are not immune to the changes and challenges that all front line groups face. For the second year running our income will drop. Last year it fell by £50k and this year we face a reduction of £145k. (Largely due to end of the 4Minds Project – but also due to planned reductions from the government and Adult Social Care).

We will be making changes over the coming months to ensure we continue delivering the best possible outcomes for you as our members.

This will include reducing the number of meetings we service and only arranging training courses on a particular topic when more

Revised Local Compact – Out in February!

This important document safeguards a number of rights for voluntary and community sector organisations in our relations with local statutory bodies like the council and NHS. Any organisation working with the public sector needs to have a copy to hand.

The new version is expected to be ready by mid-February and will be available for download from:

www.kcsc.org.uk/compact

CHANGE IS A GONNA COME...

It is no secret that 2011 will be a challenging year. The coming twelve months will see us really start to feel the effects of last year's decisions to reduce public spending. It is the effect on communities, families and individuals that is causing the most concern for the voluntary and community sector.

2011 should therefore be a year in which the voluntary and community sector's voice is heard loud and clear. Our sector needs to come together in a way it has not done since the time of overt racism and discrimination.

We need to make sure that we speak up for the community to decision makers, tell them what is happening to local residents and collect the evidence which will help to stimulate debate and action. To do this we need to be pulling in the same direction and making all attempts to ride out these difficult times because it is a fact that people will need us now more than ever.

At the Conservative Party conference back in October 2010 the new Prime Minister David Cameron stated that the government is leading the change 'from state power to people power' – from 'big government to big society'.

But at the moment the term Big Society still means very little. Whilst it strikes a chord with our understanding of humanity and good will, it still feels like an empty promise.

Can Big Society address the fact that not everyone has the same capacity to participate and benefit equally?

Society is not equal and this means that circumstance will play a large part as to whether people can join in and to what extent.

'We are all in this together' is a phrase we have heard all too often – yet it sits uncomfortably when we can clearly see the inequalities in income and in wealth. Most workers will expect to get a below inflation pay rise during 2011, if at all. This will be set against rising costs for day to day living.

Currently almost one in five 16-24 year olds in the

“At the moment the term Big Society still means very little. Whilst it strikes a chord with our understanding of humanity and good will, it still feels like an empty promise.

Can Big Society address the fact that not everyone has the same capacity to participate and benefit equally? ”

UK is out of work, whilst more than one million women are jobless. 13 per cent of children are classed by Save the Children as living in 'severe poverty'. The richest 10 per cent of society now own wealth which is 100 times greater than the poorest 10 per cent and this gap has been growing for the last 30 years. We have a right to expect this to be reversed.

Big Society means that local communities will have a key role in the future in holding local authorities to account. The Localism Bill currently going through Parliament will strengthen these powers. The voluntary and community sector will be vital to the process of ensuring local people use those powers.

However, all this may not be as

simple as the Coalition government hopes. Society operates best when people feel happy and secure. The new period of austerity in 2011 threatens this.

In surviving these times the sector will have to face the prospect of mergers (forced or voluntary), reducing service provision and redundancies. Whatever the prospect we have to work together in order to emerge from this period stronger and better prepared for the hard years ahead.

Do you have something to promote?

If you are a local organisation why not advertise it on the Social Council website Community Noticeboard.

More info:

www.kcsc.org.uk/noticeboard

Supporting the Sect

The new Social Council business plan sets out our priorities for the next five years

Supporting frontline organisations to meet the demands of a challenging economic environment.

We will do this by:

- Providing governance support
- Supporting partnership working
- Supporting Social Enterprise development
- Mentoring leaders

Supporting the sector to address the challenges and opportunities which arise from national, regional and local policy.

We will do this by:

- Stimulating debate and action
- Conducting research
- Providing information on planning development
- Identifying good practice within the sector
- Providing customised training when required

Developing opportunities for organisations to contribute to the reduction of health inequality and improving health and well-being

We will do this by:

- Sourcing commissioning opportunities
- Supporting organisations tendering for contracts
- Maintaining strong links with relevant stakeholders such as GPs and the BME Health Forum



or in 2011

financial year. Here are some highlights.

Strengthening local representation and advocacy on behalf of the sector

We will do this by:

- Training and mentoring new and existing sector representatives
- Running quarterly forums and annual voluntary sector assemblies
- Providing strong leadership from the Social Council

Stimulating local action across the sector through lobbying and campaigning

We will do this by:

- Identifying and promoting national, regional and local campaigning
- Raising awareness on matters such as child poverty, housing and the environment
- Identifying and carrying out actions to bring about change

News from Change Up

The Change Up programme has now come to an end due to funding cuts. However the organisations that provide support to voluntary and community groups in Kensington and Chelsea are continuing to work together to co-ordinate their provision.

Current work includes:

- Supporting trustees and trustee recruitment
- Jointly advertising training courses
- Looking at developing a building to house voluntary sector organisations including the support services

TRUSTEE SEMINAR

12 March 2011

10.30am - 2pm

Small Hall, Kensington Town Hall

One in a series of seminars for trustees of voluntary and community organisations serving the borough of Kensington and Chelsea.

Come along and network with other trustees while discussing and learning more about good charity governance.

This seminar will cover:

- Steering your organisation through challenging times
- Dealing with change in your organisation
- Report into mergers in locally based voluntary organisations
- What trustees need to know about involving volunteers

To book go to:

trustee-seminar-2.eventbrite.com

NHS changes – how will it affect us?

The Secretary of State for Health claims that the biggest reorganisation of the NHS since its creation will have no impact on the public. Over the next two years, until the proposed GP consortia take over the commissioning function, our local health commissioning organisation, NHS Kensington & Chelsea, is shedding 80 per cent of its staff and combining its functions with our two neighbouring boroughs.

So it's difficult to see how this will not affect the front line. And with no community engagement specialists in the new local NHS management structure, and no dedicated voluntary-sector commissioning role, we're wondering how all the really good partnership work that has developed between the voluntary sector and the local NHS will continue. We also need to know how commissioners will be able to involve local residents in decision-making, which was a feature of the previous government's approach.

But where there is crisis, there can often be opportunity. On your behalf, the Social Council will be working at a strategic level to engage with the

emerging GP commissioners and ensure that communities and local voluntary organisations are not left behind. We will also support you to take part in relevant consultations.



We will soon be advertising a joint meeting with our neighbouring boroughs to discuss the NHS restructuring and to help you respond to relevant consultations.

Get involved – keep an eye on the Department of Health consultations webpage

www.dh.gov.uk/en/Consultations

BME Health Forum launches maternity project

The project aims to gain a greater understanding of how maternity services in St Mary's and Queen Charlotte's hospitals are meeting the needs of Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) women and to use the experiences of the women to improve the service for BME women. The project will follow the journeys of ten pregnant women who will record their experiences of maternity services from their first appointment to their postnatal appointments. The women will be trained to liaise with service providers and patient groups and will be encouraged to develop a peer support network.



More info: Nafsika Thalassis
nafsika@bmehf.org.uk

020 7150 8128
www.bmehf.org.uk

SEXUAL HEALTH CONFERENCE

Wednesday 30 March 2011, 10am – 4pm
At the Charity Centre, NW1 (near Euston Station)

If you work to promote sexual health or support people living with HIV in Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington & Chelsea or Westminster this one-day conference is for you. Get in touch by 10 February if you would like to contribute.

More info: Lev Pedro
lev@kcsc.org.uk

www.kcsc.org.uk/sexualhealth

Health consortium now ready for business

The culmination of several months' work involving more than 40 local organisations, KCSC has now registered a trading company 'Community Enterprises Kensington & Chelsea Ltd'. It will provide a contracting vehicle to win public-sector contracts for the local voluntary sector. In February we will be advertising for an advisory group that will develop processes and procedures for responding to potential future contracts.

Consortium Development Workshop

Thursday 17 March 2011, 10am – 4pm

For organisations that are interested in bidding for and delivering public-sector contracts through a consortium.

- The changing operating environment
- The pros and cons of different consortium models
- Understanding and mitigating risk

Participants from all sectors are welcome (e.g. health, regeneration, children & families).

Presented in partnership with CAVSA Hammersmith & Fulham.

More info: Lev Pedro www.kcsc.org.uk/healthconsortium
lev@kcsc.org.uk

THANK YOU FOR YOUR SUPPORT

Voluntary Organisation Forum (VOF) members had the chance to discuss their outlook for 2011 at the final Main VOF of 2010. The forum meeting held on 8 December was well attended by many of the voluntary and community organisations that have participated and shown their support through the year. Members had a chance to review the past twelve months and

also catch up with the latest developments in the sector.

The Social Council would like to thank the sector for supporting the forums through attendance and participation in discussions and hope to see them go from strength to strength during 2011 – when the VOF review recommendations will be implemented.

Borough Voluntary Organisations Advisory Group (BVOAG) and Kensington and Chelsea Partnership (KCP) Elections for 2011/12

New elections for voluntary and community sector representatives were held at the Main VOF meeting on 8 December. Currently, representatives serve a term of three years on the KCP and BVOAG before elections are called. A call for nominations was sent out in the autumn and a number were received from both new candidates and current representatives seeking re-election.

However, following the election not all places were filled. This has led us to reflect on the current number

of available positions and the themes those roles represent, in particular on the BVOAG.

The Social Council will be reviewing voluntary and community sector representation on the BVOAG, and in due course, will provide an update on the number of representative positions available and the roles they fill.

New representatives on the BVOAG and KCP will take up their positions from April 2011.

VOF Review Outcome

As many of you many know, the forums were reviewed in the second half of 2010 by a task group of the Community Equality and Inclusivity Partnership (sub-partner of the KCP).

Chaired by Zrinka Bralo, director of MRCF, members undertook a process of interviews and desk research to assess the value of the VOFs.

The review identified significant support and enthusiasm for the VOFs. The findings are helping to identify how forums support individuals and organisations, encourage communication and engagement, help promote partnership working and benefit the users of local services.

However, there was a strong sense that the VOFs

could be further improved and the report recommended a tighter framework from which it would be easier to measure outcomes.

The Social Council agree that there is a need to continue to strengthen the forums and will maintain the sub forums i.e Children, Young People and Families and Engaging Communities. The Older People's Forum will possibly be widened to include health and well-being, bringing together a range of organisations working in adult health and social care.

The Main VOF will be much more interactive and provide the sector with the opportunity to raise issues that matter to them. It will consider ways in which the Social Council and wider sector can work together to address or challenge important issues.

Some of your comments from the review:

"I do think it's a networking opportunity. It's a great opportunity to gain information..."

"It is useful to have access to senior councillors via KCP and BVOAG but perhaps this is not always used effectively."

"The VOF gives strategic direction but it also briefs on key issues and strengthens the voluntary sector."

Please give us your thoughts on the Review of the VOFs or get in touch with us if you are interested in a role as a voluntary sector representative.

Minutes, agenda and news from all of the forums are published on the Social council website.



In 2011 we want to turn the Spotlight on to local organisations that have been affected by cuts in funding and learn some lessons from how they have coped.

In the first in the series we spoke to Clare Richards, Chief Executive of The ClementJames Centre.

What does the ClementJames Centre do?

We are a local charity offering:

IntoUniversity – a long-term multistranded programme enabling children and young people to raise their aspirations and fulfil their potential. We offer academic support, trained mentors, a programme of workshops and advice and guidance. **Communicate** – an adult learning programme providing ESOL and basic skills classes to local hard-to-reach adults. **IntoWork** – a new programme supporting long-term unemployed to find employment.

We also have a Community Garden – open to the public throughout the year and a Community Shop – providing clothing, household goods and food to local families in need.

The demand for our services is greater than ever – with waiting lists for all of our adult classes and over 1000 children and young people accessing our IntoUniversity Programme each year, but finding the money to run these programmes is more challenging than I have ever experienced.

How have the cuts affected The ClementJames Centre?

Several pots of Borough funding that we have relied on for the past few years no longer exist and the change in government's funding of adult learning means that the majority of our existing adult learners are no longer eligible for free classes.

Under the government strategy on skills, the only people eligible for full funding are those on "active benefits" – jobseeker's allowance or employment support allowance. Those on "non-active benefits" such as income support will not be eligible.

Many of our learners are women in domestic isolation, caring for children or in low-paid jobs. They have sought to learn English, not only to improve their lives but those of their children and they also wish to make a greater contribution to their community.

How will you address these cuts?

We have always balanced the funding risk between trust funds, individual donors and Council funding, but this year will present a funding challenge! We have squeezed the budget as much as we possibly can – without reducing our staff team or our service delivery, so that we can continue to provide



ESOL and basic skill class provided as part of 'Communicate'

services that meet a clear need in the community. We have already put out an appeal to our donors for stationery and I.T. equipment etc. and we've been overwhelmed by their generosity.

We will be seeking funding from additional trusts though inevitably, with the cuts to public funding, there will be more charities competing for trusts' funds. We will be trying to attract new individual donors and thinking creatively about other sources of income.

What effect has this had on staff?

Like many charities we are fortunate to have a highly skilled, highly motivated, talented and hard-working staff team who aren't highly paid. I don't want to burden them with worries about funding, but they are anxious about the year ahead and particularly the adult learning team (as it is always harder to find trusts or individuals who will fund adult learning than it is to find funds for children and young people).

However, it is valuable to pool everyone's ideas about money saving and money raising and this will be one of the key themes of our annual vision day next week – when staff and trustees come together to look strategically at our future.

Developing Social Enterprise

'Social enterprise' is a broad term which could mean anything from a company with social aims to a charity that wants to introduce a more enterprising or entrepreneurial approach and identify new ways of generating income.

In 2011 we will be offering potential Social Enterprises a specially tailored programme of support.

If you have an idea for developing a new product or service, please contact the Social Council.

For further details visit the new Social Enterprise support page on our website.

More info: Aneesa Chaudhry
aneesa@kcsc.org.uk

020 7243 9805
www.kcsc.org.uk/socialenterprise