

- Action Hampshire
- Basingstoke Voluntary Action
- Communities First Wessex
- Gosport Voluntary Action
- Hart Voluntary Action
- One Community
- Rushmoor Voluntary Services
- Unity

Page 2

Hart's Green Garden

Gosport's Cultural Consortium

Page 3

£2,00 Lottery winner in Gosport

Addressing volunteer resilience in Test Valley

Rushmoor's Grub Hub

Page 4

Incredible Edible in Rushmoor

START rape & sexual abuse counselling service

One Community reaching out through digital platforms

Nexus

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BVA Celebrating Volunteers



BVA had a blast spearheading their Volunteers' Week campaign, celebrating the contribution volunteers have made to the local community. They called out to their members to nominate people who deserve a token of appreciation and received over 100 responses back regarding

volunteers who deserve to be recognised for their excellent work.

BVA's token of appreciation scheme involved bringing partners together, which included liaising with the mayor's office to pull together personalised letters of appreciation, as well as the Basingstoke Loddon Rotary, to help deliver these letters and tokens of appreciation to households across the borough. Working in conjunction with these partners meant that BVA's scheme was a great success – every volunteer



that was nominated received both their token and letter.

Traditionally, BVA celebrates Volunteers' Week in the form of an afternoon tea, but due to restrictions this time around, they had to think outside the box. Reaching out to the community meant that they managed to get just under 100 volunteers nominated from a wide variety of good causes.

The BVA Team thought that it would be a good idea to share how so many others got involved throughout Volunteers' Week, by showcasing a fantastic range of photos and good news stories across their social media. This also gave them a chance to catch up and have a chat with some of their wonderful local groups, asking what help they currently need.

Produced by Hampshire Councils for Voluntary Service, who would be delighted to have your feedback. Please contact Julia Allan 023 8090 2457 jallan@1community.org.uk

Featured articles represent the views of the contributing CVS



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Supporting the voluntary and community sector

Gardening Gloves at the Ready for Hart's Green Garden



Hart District Council's Countryside Service has broken ground on an exciting new green gardening space at Edenbrook Country Park in Fleet. The Council has been working closely in partnership with Hart Allotments Association and Hart Voluntary Action (HVA) to develop the Green Garden – a community space for residents to Grow Together, in more ways than one.

Hart's Green Garden has separate plots available for members of the local community to rent, as well as offering a generous shared gardening space, which will be overseen by HVA's Minding the Garden Project. The project aims to create a welcoming, sustainable, and

inclusive gardening space where people from diverse backgrounds can come together around the shared interest of gardening.

The Council has appointed community-focused landscape architects Groundwork (London) and contractors Southern Landscape Construction to start the creation of Hart's Green Garden. Works started on site at the beginning of June.

Hart's Green Garden will enable structured social and therapeutic horticulture activities run by HVA. It will also facilitate use of the space by local community groups and voluntary organisations whilst providing opportunities for local community members to get involved and support the project. Shared areas include a covered outdoor space, compost bays and a variety of raised beds, which it is hoped will encourage connections between all site users.

Caroline Winchurch, HVA's Chief Executive said: "We are looking forward to welcoming anyone who is interested in community gardening to the Minding the Garden area of Hart's Green Garden - we are open to enquiries from individuals and organisations and seek to cater for all abilities. Membership is open to all."

More details at this link <https://www.hart.gov.uk/harts-green-garden>

HVA would like to thank Hart District Council for matching a grant from Hampshire County Council's Local Solutions fund to get community activity up and running at Hart's Green Garden with a focus on providing a new outdoor opportunity for social interaction and inclusion.

Making Progress in Gosport



Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA) is delighted to be a partner organisation in the Gosport Cultural Consortium, which will create and deliver a programme of community-led cultural activities over the next three years, thanks to a grant of £100,000 from Historic England. The project is part of the High Street Heritage Action Zones programme (HSHAZ), which plans to transform disused or underused high street buildings and establish new creative, cultural, residential and commercial opportunities. The partnership, led by Hampshire Cultural Trust, also includes representatives from Bridgemary school, Gosport Tourist

Information Centre, Gosport Heritage Open Days, Motiv8, The Diving Museum, U3A and Gosport Discovery Centre.

The first event, a 'Makers Market' showcasing the talents of local makers, crafters and artists, was held at the end of May. Hugely successful, attracting 625 visitors, it also gave GVA an opportunity to showcase its services and promote local volunteering opportunities ahead of Volunteers' Week. There was lots of interest in volunteering, largely as a result of increased publicity around the incredible efforts of volunteers throughout the pandemic. As many community groups start to put plans in place for re-opening, finding new, enthusiastic volunteers is at the top of their wish lists. GVA was keen to support them by highlighting some of the roles in its Volunteer Opportunities Bulletin.

£2,000 Lottery Win for Supporter of New Gosport Good Cause



A supporter who only signed up to Gosport Community Lottery in February, to support one of the newest Good Causes, community library Lee Hub, won £2,000 in one of April's lottery draws! The winner plans to use the winnings towards some away breaks for himself and his wife to enjoy: "I chose to support Lee Hub as it is very important that we have this kind of facility and asset in our community. There's an amazing opportunity for the whole of the Lee-on-the-Solent community to utilise the wonderful building and its offering. By people entering the Gosport Community Lottery and purchasing a few tickets here and there it

provides the trustees funds towards the ongoing running costs of the hub, which is imperative to ensure its future ongoing support."

Since the launch of the lottery, run by GVA and Gatherwell, there have been 3,807 winning tickets, representing prizes valued at £28,882, and on average there are 26 winning tickets per week. The lottery has raised a fantastic total of £107,604 in total for charitable work in Gosport.

Unity Actively Tackling Volunteer Resilience



If nothing else, the Covid Pandemic has taught us much around resilience. Not only in the community, but also within the army of volunteers that has consistently risen to the challenge throughout 2020/2021. But at what cost?

Unity identified a percentage of regular, registered volunteers looking for alternative, more varied opportunities. It became clear through regular communication that volunteers' wellbeing needed some support.

Unity was well placed to develop the Volunteer Resilience Project, targeting volunteers who have been recruited to support the COVID-19 related activities in the community, volunteers who have been dormant due to the closure of their community organisation, and volunteers who are active, but maybe feeling isolated. In collaboration with Mind, Unity is also helping to identify volunteers to support their new webchat, and support individuals into alternative opportunities.

The first of a series of monthly events ran at the end of April, setting the scene and exploring the term "resilience". It was attended by 16 volunteers and three representatives from local groups. An open discussion resulted in people expressing their concerns and feelings but also positive emotions too with many feeling inspired, hopeful, grateful, proud and connected to their communities.

A Mindfulness session was run to celebrate Volunteers' Week too and plans are in place to provide a Walk n Talk group and other practical support.

The next forum is planned for 6 July. This will focus on how the pandemic has impacted on the roles of the volunteer coordinators and their groups.

The Grub Hub

During the pandemic a food hub was created at Princes Hall, Aldershot. This is managed by Rushmoor Borough Council (RBC) run by volunteers and stocked by local supermarket donations. It aims to address both food waste and food poverty. RBC and Karuna Action have done much to acquire funding, identifying a building and bringing together a partnership group to get the project off the ground. RVS and Park Church, Aldershot, are part of that group, working towards taking the project through the next phase, which includes opening a community store in Aldershot; establishing the board of trustees and registering as a CIO (association).

RVS is playing a key role in moving the project forward whilst the charity registration is going through - hosting the Grub Hub Coordinator role, and holding the lease and insurance until such time the new board of trustees is established and ready to take it all on. Thanks to funding from Connect4Communities and DEFRA, this partnership project is all revved up and ready to go!

Incredible Edible is Blooming Marvellous



RVS' supported garden volunteers project, Blooming Marvellous, has teamed up with the town centre teams, to create Incredible Edible planters! Rushmoor has joined the Incredible Edible movement, installing 12 edible growing planters in the town centres for everyone to enjoy. The planters contain seasonal tasty plants, herbs and flowers which are all edible and they are designed, planted and maintained by Blooming Marvellous in partnership with Rushmoor Borough Council. Blooming Marvellous is a supported adult gardening project for people with, or recovering from, mental health issues.

START *It's never too late*



It's never too late

Since the merger of Community First's RASAC (Rape and Sexual Abuse Counselling Service) and BRASACC (Basingstoke Rape and Sexual Abuse Crisis Centre) into START, the newly formed organisation has been providing support to survivors of sexual abuse and trauma in Central and North Hampshire.

START's new strapline "*It's never too late*" reflects the fact that the organisation is here to support survivors, regardless of where they are in their recovery journey or how long it has been since sexual abuse or trauma occurred.

Service Manager Steve Witheyman said, "During the COVID-19 pandemic we have seen a steady rise in referrals. Times of increased loneliness, loss, and challenges for many people can bring past trauma to the fore, so services like ours are needed more than ever. We are pleased to have increased our capacity to support more people by joining forces as START. We welcome referrals both from individuals and from other agencies."

START offers counselling support to adults and under 18s, as well as STEPS (Surviving Through Empowerment & Peer Support) groups. In 2020, their services received accreditation from LimeCulture CIC and the Male Survivors Partnership that recognised them as a quality provider for male survivors. The new residential Lotus programme is due to start later this year.

The new organisation currently has three offices: Westbury at 13 City Road, Winchester SO23 8SD; The Orchard in White Hart Lane, Basingstoke RG21 4AF; and The Bridge on 31-33 Bridge Road, Andover SP10 1BE, and is expanding and adding Aldershot to its locations.

One Community Reaching Out Through Digital Platforms

During a time when it has been difficult to get out and see people face to face, One Community has been making the most of its digital platforms and through its regular radio shows, broadcast live from its offices with interviewees connected by Zoom.

During Volunteers' Week, when One Community would usually have been holding volunteer recognition events and celebrations, instead they recorded short films highlighting volunteers' activities, posted to social media, to raise awareness of volunteers and volunteering and most importantly to say thank you.

Another example is the promotion of men's mental health, beginning with a radio broadcast on their weekly Unity 101 show, interviewing Nathan and Chris from ManGang. ManGang is a network of men, who meet in Eastleigh, Winchester and Southampton, when they are not on Zoom, who believe that it's not weak to speak.

Nathan and Chris spoke very movingly with One Community's Naomi Stock about their own experiences and how the support of ManGang has helped them. The interview is still available as a [podcast](#)

One Community has also been using its social media platforms to promote men's mental health during Men's Health Week - 13th-19 June. The theme for this year is beating stress.

