

Dear All,

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News

New on www.somersetmarkettowns.co.uk

New members of Somerset Market Towns Forum, Transition Town Langport get to work, and Towns learn how to acquire community buildings.

Greener Events – a guide to reducing the environmental impacts of conferences and seminars is available on the **oursouthwest website**. The guide includes a checklist to help you choose your venue, reducing emissions, using local food and, reducing waste before, during and after the event. The oursouthwest website is supported by GoSW. *(Item from SWAN)*

Rural Women's Network

Next meeting - Wednesday 14th May 2008

Where: Creech St Michael Village Hall (Postcode TA3 5QQ)

See <http://www.creechstmichael.net/php/aboutus/villagehall.php>

Time: 9.30 am to 12 noon

The focus for this meeting will be to provide lots of opportunities for Networking. You will have the opportunity to give a short 5 minute presentation if you would like and you can bring a stand or leaflets/literature for distribution. If you do want to set up a stand or get anything prepared before the meeting I will at the hall from 9.00am. To book your place - please e-mail Debbie Frankland at info@rwn-somerset.org.uk

Putting Communities in Control – Empowerment White Paper - Letter from Hazel Blears Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government. “The Government recognizes that local people usually know what’s best for their neighbourhood and this is why we want to make it easier than ever before for people to have their say in decisions affecting their community. The White Paper will

set out what Government and others are going to do to make this a reality, but I want your views to be at the heart of this document. Let's have an open debate about how we as a society can make global, social and economic change our ally; how we can harness the vast talent and potential of the British people to make every city, town, village and local community prosper....." [Read more...](#)

Speedier planning?

In announcing its review '**Planning Applications: a faster and more responsive system**' the CLG has been anxious to assure that it will make recommendations for improving the process, but importantly it will not seek to shift the balance of decision making, weaken important safeguards, or reduce public consultation. [The RTPI](#) has commented that quality rather than speed should be the priority consideration.

Eco-town guidance

Creating car-free areas, designing open spaces and allotments, forming community trusts, and rainwater harvesting are a few of the recommendations in the first [eco-town worksheets](#) from the Town and Country Planning Association (TCPA).

Energy for Exmoor event

The Exmoor Trust is sponsoring a major event at the Raleigh's Cross Inn on 2 May to examine the issues of installing micro-generating energy systems in such a sensitive rural area. The event will run 2 similar programmes starting at 9 and 2pm lasting. The programme will include talks by world authority on Ecology Sir Ghilleen Prance, Mukti Mitchell an expert on Low Carbon Lifestyles, as well as independent experts on all types of systems. There will be a chance to air problems of planning, funding and working with the agencies involved during a panel session.

To learn more about the programme or to book a place please register via www.exmoortrust.org.uk or tel Edwin Beckett 01643841406

Pop into the CAfE for energy saving ideas

Community Action for Energy (CAfE) is a programme from the Energy Saving Trust that is designed to promote and facilitate local community-based energy projects. It is a network of people who share a common interest in community energy projects and ideas. Membership of the network is free and by joining you can keep up to date with news on community-based energy initiatives, as well as hearing about funding opportunities, training sessions and other news from the network. Visit their website to find out more, and to sign up for regular ebulletins of useful information

<http://www.energysavingtrust.org.uk/cafe/newscentre/>

Second Homes

A [national report from Savills](#) suggests that in some parishes more than half the residential properties are second homes. Within these areas, average house prices are as much as 60% higher than the average for the local authority.

Sustainable Transport

Tax free bikes - <http://www.cyclescheme.co.uk/>

Somerset Carshare scheme - <http://www.somersetcarsharescheme.co.uk/>

Post Office Community Services

Following on from our item on the PO closures news in the last bulletin, interesting developments in Essex: 'In his budget report, leader of Essex County Council Lord Hanningfield committed 1.5m over the next three years to support the County's Post Offices'. [Read more...](#)

Training

'BUILDING BLOCKS TO SOCIAL ENTERPRISE'*at Magdalen Project Nr Chard

FREE Residential Training, * Saturday and Sunday, 7 and 8 June 2008

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE is any trading project which seeks to meet social aims. Examples may include a community-run village shop or child-care facility, a timber re-use scheme or even a leisure centre.

The AIM of the training is to support community and voluntary groups to plan and develop their own SOCIAL ENTERPRISE activity.

The training is for people who are:

- ❖ Members of existing voluntary or community groups
- ❖ People who are thinking about setting up a voluntary or community group
- ❖ People who have an idea for a project which both generates an income and provides a service to the community
- ❖ Other examples of SOCIAL ENTERPRISE may include out of school clubs, community cafes, food coops, IT businesses, reprographic services etc.

The training will be delivered by professional trainers with experience of community development and social enterprise. We will use a variety of methods including simulation, groupwork, presentation and individual action planning. There will be opportunity to share ideas and to hear from an existing social enterprise.

For more information and an application form contact one of the following:

Mike Atkinson, Social Enterprise Coordinator, Somerset County Council

Tel: 01823 355611 mob: 0787 966 8736 email: matkinson@somerset.gov.uk

Sue Duffen, Values Learning, Tel: 01823 665216 mob: 07966593354 Email:

sue.duffen@btinternet.com

Val Saunders, Values Learning, Tel: 01458 253224 mob: 07753681457 Email:

val.saunders1@btopenworld.com

ViSTA Training Programme

Courses running in April - either book online or ring ViSTA on 08453 580372

www.vistaproject.org.uk/courses

Personal Safety, Conflict Management and Preventing Harmful Episodes

Is your organisation aware of the personal safety issues when somebody works alone?

This course is aimed to raise awareness of risks in and around the workplace, it will teach you skills to recognise signs of conflict or violence and prevent a conflict escalating.

Date: 22nd April 9.30am - 4.30pm

Venue: Abbey Manor Business Centre, Yeovil

Cost: £78

Planning Your Fundraising Strategy

If you have some experience of fundraising this course is for you. It is ideal for employed staff, volunteers, trustees and committee members.

The aim of the course is to help develop a fundraising strategy to improve financial security and also increase your knowledge on fundraising methods.

Date: 23rd April 9.30am - 4.30pm

Venue: The Albemarle Centre, Taunton

Cost: £78

Business Planning and Optioneering

Are you involved in Business Planning or Business Development?

This is a really productive course that will take you through a step-by-step process to create a outline business plan. At the end of the course you will be able to state your organisation's missions, aims,

and values. You will be able to draw up a development plan, a 3 year budget and a funding strategy, plus other business planning methods.

Date: 21st April 9.30am - 4.30pm

Venue: Street Self-Help Centre, Leigh Road

Cost: £78

Funding

South West Regional Funding Bulletin goes live on April 15th 2008

News from Jodi Boxell at SVSN: For the last year there have been ongoing discussions with Funding SW and others to determine if it would be possible to develop a funding bulletin for the southwest. This will be a bi-monthly electronically distributed bulletin comprising around 20 pages of funding information on new grants and selected ongoing grants (e.g. from Trusts, Foundations, Lottery and Government). This will be supplemented by an optional section of up to three pages of local funding information from each of the Funding Advice Networks prepared by the FAN lead or their nominated representative: in Somerset this will be Jodi Boxell Contact Email: fundingbulletin@btinternet.com Each bulletin will offer:

- ❖ National/region sections
- ❖ FAN/County pages – funding, case studies, other (3 pages maximum per county)
- ❖ Other Regional Information (EU funding plus funding events of Regional importance – e.g. Big Lottery)
- ❖ Information will be categorised into themes such as Community and Community Development; Sports, Culture and Leisure and Health & Social Welfare.

Registration: The bulletin would be underpinned by a simple registration system, and the plan is to go live with the bulletin on April 15th 2008. Please note this bulletin will automatically be sent out to subscribers of Bits n Bobs.

Community Sustainable Energy Programme

The Community Sustainable Energy Programme is an open grants programme run by the Building Research Establishment, an award partner of the Big Lottery Fund. It has been set up to help community based organisations in England to reduce their energy bills. Two types of grant are available for eligible not-for-profit community based organisations: capital (up to a maximum of £50,000 or 50% of the project cost – whichever is lower) and project development (up to £5000 or 75% of the study cost – whichever is lower). It is anticipated that the fund will be operational from April 2008. For more information, visit: <http://www.communitysustainable.org.uk/index.jsp> or email your contact details to info@communitysustainable.org.uk and you will be contacted with any updates.

If you have been forwarded this email, and would like to join our mailing list, email matt@somersetccc.org.uk

To unsubscribe, please reply with 'unsubscribe' in the subject line.

We welcome feedback so that we can develop our services.

Matt Day

Information Officer

Somerset Market Towns Forum

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www.somersetmarkettowns.co.uk

Somerset Market Towns Forum – promoting and supporting community-based action to revitalise Somerset’s market towns