

Dear All,

Wishing you all a Merry Christmas and we hope you and your projects have a prosperous 2008.

In this Bulletin:

News

[Opportunity to comment on the Somerset Community Strategy](#)

[Report out on this Summer's Flooding](#)

[Shop Local First – free leaflet](#)

[SMTF Business Plan now available](#)

Training

[Acquiring and Managing Community Buildings - free course, secure your place](#)

[Business Planning Course](#)

Funding

[Grassroots Grants](#)

News

Opportunity to comment on the Somerset Community Strategy

Two events are being held in January by the Somerset Strategic Partnership where local community groups can take part in consultation sessions about issues concerning Somerset. They will be covering issues such as affordable housing, climate change, economy and community safety.

[Read more...](#)

Report out on this Summer's Flooding

The Executive Summary of the Pitt Review into this year's flooding reveals gaps in the emergency plans of local authorities and the emergency services, and that the public could have been better prepared. [Read more from a BBC item and download the Exec Summary](#)

Shop Local First

Shopping locally is a great way to support small, specialised, local businesses who often provide greater choice and contribute to making our towns diverse and attractive to shoppers. Their products often carry less food miles than supermarkets and have a better relationship with local suppliers.

Support for local independent shops comes from many bodies including local Chambers of Commerce, organisations such as the [Association of Convenience Stores](#), the [Rural Shops Alliance](#) and pressure groups such as Friends of the Earth, who last year produced a campaign – [Shop Local First](#) – that outlines what people can do to promote local shops, with downloadable leaflets, posters and documents. [Read more...](#)

SMTF Business Plan now available

To view our new Business Plan, visit our website – [Click here](#)

Training

Acquiring and Managing Community Buildings - free course, secure your place

Somerset Market Towns Forum have arranged this course with ViSTA as so many of our members and contacts have aspirations, or definite plans, to take on community buildings. The course includes information on the latest developments in asset transfer.

The day course is on March 13th, but we expect lots of interest as the course is widely promoted by ViSTA, so please book well in advance. NB book direct using the link to the ViSTA website.

The course will be held at Charlton House, Shepton Mallet. It is the follow up to the Community Ventures training we arranged in Bridgwater in the Spring, when we promised to deliver more Community Ventures training on the other side of the County.

Course Details

The course will outline the Quirk Review and Asset Transfer and will provide information about the initiatives emerging from the Department for Communities and Local Government Pilot Project. The course will focus on:

- Legal structures,
- Planning and leases,
- Sub letting and hiring of rooms,
- Premises Licence and other licensing requirements,
- Policies (Health and Safety & risk).

Participants will learn and understand the options available to them and the legal requirements regarding the acquisition and management of a community building. They will be better informed to make appropriate and realistic choices regarding acquisition and understand their responsibilities and liabilities.

Date : 13/03/2008 **Venue :** Charlton House, Shepton Mallet

Costs : Free to individuals from rural VCS groups through DEFRA Rural Social Community Programme.

Trainers: Stephanie Linham - Directory Of Social Change – Stephanie has over 17 years experience at an executive level in the VCS and is currently involved in the asset transfer project funded by the DLCG.

To book via ViSTA follow this link www.vistaproject.org.uk/courses.php

Business Planning Course - book now!

Business Plans are becoming increasingly important for voluntary sector projects and social enterprises as they look to increase their own income and create a secure financial future.

This course is ideal for people and organisations who may be thinking about;

- * reviewing existing activities and starting up new projects
- * writing a Business Plan for a funding application
- * starting a new project that needs thorough planning

Somerset County Council and Community Enterprise Unit Ltd (CEU) are running a Business Planning Course for Social Enterprises. If you have an idea for a social enterprise or perhaps are looking at income-generating ideas for an existing voluntary sector organisation then this course will take you through the process step-by-step.

Course dates: 30th Jan, 13th Feb, 27th Feb, 12th Mar, 26th Mar, 9th Apr

Times: 9.30am - 3.30pm

Venue: North Curry Village Hall, North Curry

Cost: £30 for Social Enterprises or Voluntary Sector organisations, £120 for Local Authorities or VCS organisations with training budgets Places are limited and will be offered on a first come, first serve basis. For more details of the course and the booking form, please see the attached flyer.

Funding

Grassroots Grants

'Grassroots Grants' will launch in the new year and will run 2008-11. The Community Development Foundation has been appointed as lead national partner in delivering the scheme. The fund will include an £80 million small grants fund for community organisations; and a £50 million endowments programme. See attached press release.

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

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

We welcome feedback so that we can develop our services.

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