



Mendip Community Newsletter

Photo: Ann Watson

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Recognise this place?

Photo: Ann Watson

Mendip Community Support



Volume 2 Issue 3
Autumn 2008

P.A.C.E Group Visits Stourhead

P.A.C.E group visited Stourhead on a glorious sunny day at the end of September. The group, whose title stands for Personal Achievements and Creative Experiences, were trying to find out how accessible the house and gardens are for people with physical disabilities.

Heather Smith, the National Trust's Head of Access for All, had already visited P.A.C.E, at their base at Gore Hedge in Frome, and talked about the N.T.'s aim to make all their properties more accessible for people with disabilities. The group's aim was to find out how well they had succeeded at Stourhead.

David and Anne can't wait to try out the Batricar.



Phil emerging from the Mendip Community Transport van with Nigel and Carol in the background

The day started at the café with a talk by Gilly Beer, a volunteer garden guide, on the history of the house and garden. Then both Gilly and Heather accompanied the group members on their garden tour. Two photographers from Frome and Selwood Camera Club also went along, taking pictures to provide the group with a detailed record.

The members, who have a range of mobility problems, set off round the garden with both powered and

manual wheel chairs and on foot, along with several staff and volunteers.

They also used the National Trust's Batricar which proved particularly popular (See the photo of David and Anne).

They stuck to the recommended wheel chair friendly paths, but even these proved quite steep and, at times, difficult to negotiate. There was a particular problem where gravel had been washed away around concrete drains across the paths.

At the end of the garden tour, two of the members went up to the house to try out the new wheelchair lift at the front entrance, while the rest went back to the café and a well earned cup of tea.

The new lift which runs on tracks, 'Just like a tank' according to Pat, is being trialled at Stourhead and, if successful, will be used at other N.T. properties.

P.A.C.E. will produce a detailed report on their findings, along with photographs from the Camera Club, for the National Trust to help them plan future provision. The group would like to thank Georgina Mead, a volunteer for the N.T. for organising the day, as well as their own volunteers who helped to make it such a success. This was just one more project for P.A.C.E, who are currently producing a study on accessibility in Frome, as well as a leaflet on walks suitable for wheelchair users.



Gilly explaining the finer details of the planting.

Photos: Ann Watson

Welcome to our Autumn 2008 Edition

Funding is becoming a major issue for a large number of voluntary and community sector organisations. As we read in the national press of the probability of recession the funding situation is going to get harder for all of us. It is unlikely to improve over the coming months. MCS can provide advice as to possible sources of funding but even this is going to get harder. We need to consider working together in partnership, sharing our skills and resources in an attempt to make us more sustainable. We are in the initial stages of planning a Voluntary Sector Fair to take place in Mendip. This is intended not only to provide publicity, but will be an opportunity for local fundraising and obtaining volunteers. Your ideas would be welcome.

The government is placing an ever increasing burden on the role of the Third Sector. (Their words not mine). Local Area Agreements propose closer working relationships between the statutory bodies and the Voluntary & Community Sector. To enable us to meet these challenges MCS is actively strengthening its role of acting as a conduit between the front line organisations and the statutory bodies as a means of ensuring that local councillors are aware of the issues effecting us all and we in the Sector are kept fully informed. If you have any issues or comments on these challenges please e-mail our offices with your views. It has always been our intention to produce a newsletter, which not

only outlined the role Mendip Community Support plays in the community, but to provide good news stories from the voluntary organisations active within Mendip. Thankfully we are currently funded by Mendip Housing, but there is a need for us to produce a sustainable newsletter. Hence we would welcome advertisements, which can be placed for a very reasonable charge.

Tony Shepherd

Manager,
Mendip Community Support

<p>Copy deadline for our next issue is Friday 30th January 2009</p>
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Mendip Environment C I C

Mendip Environment is a new organisation formed to help Mendip communities protect and enhance our environment and combat climate change. Across Mendip, many individuals, families and local groups are actively 'greening' their lifestyles and encouraging others to do so. With the rising costs of food and oil, the credit crunch and increasing concern about climate change, more and more people are recognising that we all need to make changes, both to reduce our living costs, and to save energy.

Mendip Environment is working with a range of local schemes encouraging sustainable living, from the 'Transition Initiatives' like those in Glastonbury and Frome, to smaller, village-based ones. Projects we have already started developing, in partnership with local groups, include:

Mendip Energy Volunteers; free energy audit for every home in Mendip
Mendip Energy Volunteers is a new initiative offering free energy advice and help with getting insulation installed, to all households in Mendip. Since May, 22 trained volunteers have been visiting homes

across the district, providing information on insulation grants, alternative fuel suppliers, central heating systems and solar heating. They can arrange for the installation of cavity wall and loft insulation if needed, and households on low incomes, or with someone over 70, can often have the insulation installed for free. The volunteers can also help with getting a lower energy tariff for those in fuel poverty (where householders are spending more than 10% of their income on heating). If you live in Mendip and would like to have a free energy audit carried out on your home (this takes around one hour), contact John Tolson on 08450 177016 or email john.tolson@mendipenvironment.org.uk

On-line guide to green living for Mendip residents
Mendip Environment's new website includes a guide designed to help Mendip residents green their homes, gardens, shopping and travel by providing practical ideas, local information and contact details. If you want to know more about reducing your energy bills, buying a discounted water butt or

low energy bulb locally, getting an allotment, using Mendip cycle routes, installing renewable energy technologies, and much more, see the guide at www.mendipenvironment.org.uk

Skills for Sustainable Living
Could you help Mendip residents move to a lower energy future by sharing your skills and knowledge in areas like growing food, keeping chickens, installing solar panels, preserving fruit or making natural soaps? If you would like more information about this project currently being developed, or think you can help, please contact Hannah Solloway by phone: 08450 177016 or email: hannah.solloway@mendipenvironment.org.uk

Mendip Environment Community Interest Company is an independent social enterprise supported by the Mendip Strategic Partnership, Mendip District Council and Ecos. For further information or to get involved, call 08450 177016 or visit www.mendipenvironment.org.uk

Local support with high fuel bills and cold homes

Unless your head has been buried in the sand for the last few months, you will be aware of the devastating impact of spiralling fuel bills on ordinary people across the UK.

The Warming Mendip project is a local response to this problem, offering a one-stop source of advice and support for people living in cold, damp homes, or struggling to pay their fuel bills. We have already helped over 200 people in the Mendip area since our launch in February 2008.

Warming Mendip brings together local experts to offer:

- Friendly advice on how to stay warm and lower fuel bills
- Support with benefit entitlement checks and application forms
- Impartial information on heating and insulation grants

Audrey Beech lives with her mother in a bungalow near Frome. Although the property has night storage heaters, Mrs. Beech didn't understand how they worked, and was worried about high electricity bills. She was instead heating her home with gas burners, which were giving off so much water vapour that the home was suffering badly from damp and mould.

Mrs. Beech was delighted with the support she was given when she called Warming Mendip about these problems. "They helped me as much as they possibly could" she said.

As well as giving Mrs. Beech advice on using her storage heaters efficiently, the Warming Mendip advisor also discovered that Mrs. Beech and her mother were entitled to a cheaper 'social' tariff for their electricity, which Mrs. Beech says will make managing her bills a lot easier.

Sarah Jeffrey, the Warming Mendip project manager said "We provide straightforward advice for people who want help with high fuel bills, cold, damp homes, or checking whether they are entitled to any benefits to help them pay the bills. Together with our partners we have the knowledge and skills to join up the dots and help people like Mrs. Beech make big changes to improve their lives".

To get in touch with the Warming Mendip team call free phone 0800 512 012, or email warmingmendip@cse.org.uk.



Noticeboard

Does your group have difficulty finding venues for its meetings and activities?

Mendip Community Support has received several requests for help in finding venues. We would like to compile a list of venues and the facilities they offer. If you can recommend a hall or room anywhere in the Mendip area, please let us know:
by phone: 01749 346830,
email: mcsupport@mbzonline.net
or by post: 62, High Street,
Shepton Mallet,
BA4 5AS

In the mean time you can find details of village halls in Mendip on the following website:
www.somersetccc.org.uk/munity_hall_advice/halls_directory

Mendip YMCA works with 16 to 25 year olds who are either homeless or threatened with homelessness in the Mendip area. We are appealing for

host families in Street and Glastonbury

because we run a scheme called MEAG, where a young homeless person is accommodated for up to 7 nights bed & breakfast in a family home.

Do you have a spare room?

All the young person requires is a safe place to stay with their own bedroom, washing facilities and one hot meal a day. They won't stay in your home during the day as they will be busy being supported by our other Schemes such as Family Mediation, Resettlement Support and Move-on. This is a very rewarding scheme for both the young people and our providers, some of whom have been assisting us for years.

We will pay you £15 per night for this valuable scheme.

If you think this is something you may be interested in, please contact Carol Plenty for an informal chat on 01749 674773 or visit our website: www.mendipymca.org.uk.

Keeping Warm in the Winter

With winter approaching rapidly it is important to know how to keep yourself warm and fit. There are several ways this can be achieved including eating well, keeping active and wearing adequate clothing.

Eating well during the colder weather is important. Regular hot meals will help you feel warmer and a healthy diet will help keep energy levels up and maintain bodily functions. A few tips for healthy eating are highlighted below:

- Eat at least 5 a day of fruit and vegetables
- Eat more starchy foods, such as potatoes, bread, pasta and oats
- Eat more wholegrain cereals and foods rich in fibre
- Have regular hot drinks in cold weather to keep warm
- Eat some protein rich foods e.g. meat, fish
- Reduce sugar intake by avoiding sugar in drinks and cutting down on sweet foods.
- Moderate daily intake of alcohol. Limit it to 2-3 units for women and 3-4 units for men.

Keeping active is important for overall health throughout the year. Moderate exercise such as walking briskly or swimming can be very beneficial as they help maintain weight, reduce or control blood pressure, keep joints supple and help the body to regulate its own temperature which is especially important in the winter months.

- Take care when out walking (avoid ice patches and even the heavy down pours)
- Try not to sit for too long as this can make you feel cold
- When sitting try to keep joints moving

The overall aim for activity levels is currently 30 minutes of moderate physical activity on 5 or more days of the week. This can be broken down further to begin with into three 10minute or two 15 minute bouts of activity. It is important to start off slowly and build your time up gradually. Doing any activity is better than none at all.

Wearing adequate clothing is essential in winter. At home try to wear several layers of thinner clothes, this helps trap the heat between the layers and therefore we feel warmer. The best clothes to use are those made of wool, fleece or cotton. In the evening why not use bed socks, thermal underwear and pyjamas.

Again, when you are outdoors wear several layers under a coat. Invest in a hat, scarf and gloves as we lose a lot of heat through our head and hands.

If you would like to get active or learn about current activity opportunities available in Mendip then please contact Tracey Kenyon at Mendip District Council by phone: 01749 648999 or email: kenyont@mendip.gov.uk

'Whatever time of the year keeping active is very important for overall health'

the place² can help you keep active this Winter

Health walks take place on a Wednesday afternoon twice a month.

All walks are between one and four miles and can take from 45 minutes to 2 hours.

Health walks are ideal for people who want to improve their general health and well being. They are suitable for all ages and it is a fun way to take up walking in a safe and sociable atmosphere.

All walks are free. Please come prepared with suitable clothing and footwear and a drink. Meet at the

designated point for a prompt departure.

Walks coming up include:

- A short to medium length walk on November 26th
- A short walk on December 10th
- A Boxing Day walk in Compton Dundon

'Doing any activity is better than none at all.'

The Place² runs other courses that will help you keep active, these include:

Middle Eastern Belly Dancing, Thursdays, 1.30pm - 3pm.

Flexercise, Gardening and Tai Chi.

Courses run on various days and in different locations so please contact The Place² for more information: by phone 01458 447248 by email: info@theplace2.org.uk or by visiting the website: www.theplace2.org.uk

Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

The **Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF)** is the national strategic body offering support to practitioners and organisations providing mentoring and befriending. The aims of the foundation are to provide capacity building support to projects and promote quality standards in mentoring and befriending through the **Approved Provider Standard**, the national benchmark for safe and effective practice in mentoring and befriending.

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation can provide:

- Advice in setting up or developing a mentoring and befriending scheme
- A wide range of publications, resources and leaflets
- A website featuring news, events, research, case studies, funding opportunities and downloadable resources.
- Guidance and support to help organisations achieve the

Approved Provider Standard

- Regional and national networking opportunities and training events

Suggested links:

MBF Community Cohesion Report – April 08 :

http://www.mandbf.org.uk/fileadmin/filemounts/general/Publications/Community_Cohesion_Report/4484-MBF_Cohesion_final.pdf

Approved Provider Standard:

<http://www.mandbf.org.uk/goodpractice/aps/>

National Training programme

<http://www.mandbf.org.uk/news/events/training/>

Free MBF event in Somerset see details below

Resources and publications

<http://www.mandbf.org.uk/resources/publications/>



If you run or work for a service that provides mentoring or befriending or are interested in setting up a service and would like to access the support and guidance of your mentoring and befriending coordinator please contact **Melanie Merrill SW Regional Coordinator** for the Mentoring and Befriending Foundation on 07983 525614 or e: mel.merrill@mandbf.org.uk

Good Practice in a Changing Befriending Field-South West

a regional networking and development opportunity for befriending practitioners

Thursday 27th November

09:30 - 15:30

at

Junction 24 Ltd, Regional Rural Business Centre, Market Way,

North Petherton, Somerset TA6 6DF

This event is specifically designed for those individuals managing, coordinating or responsible for the delivery of befriending provision and will provide you with the opportunity to meet with fellow practitioners from within the befriending field to exchange information and share experiences of co-ordinating or managing a befriending programme. The event is FREE of charge to practitioners and includes lunch; however a cancellation fee will be charged for non attendees without prior notice.

To book your place go to:

http://www.mandbf.org.uk/testing_events/good_practice_in_a_changing_befriending_field_sw/

Volunteering

Volunteer Profile

Name: Karen Wright

Age: 28

What volunteering work have you done?

I started volunteering for Routes, the Advice and Guidance Service for young people in Frome, and then began volunteering in the evenings at the YMCA Foyer, which provides accommodation for young people with support needs. I have now been taken on as a paid staff member at the Foyer and with the grand title of relief residential support worker.

Why did you decide to volunteer?

I moved to Frome from London with my partner and baby. I didn't want my daughter to grow up in a city and my partner has relatives here in Frome. After being a full time mum for a while, I decided I wanted to try volunteering and I thought I might enjoy working with young people. I went to Routes looking for some careers advice and ended up working for them as a volunteer.

What sort of work did you do before you came to Frome?

I've done some interesting jobs, even though I didn't do as well as I might have done at school. It was a tough East End school and for the last year or two I didn't often go to school at all, but I did end up with a full range of GCSE's from A to E. After school, I started work as a crew member for a lighting and sound company and went on tour with Britney Spears and Eric Clapton amongst others. It sounds like a glamorous life, but I was the only girl in the crew and it isn't all that glamorous going up and down ladders, installing lights etc. While I was doing this job I started getting into yoga and fitness. I'd always liked PE at school, but never did anything with it, so I decided to take diplomas in anatomy and physiology and became a personal and fitness trainer. Later I learned massage techniques and alternative therapies and worked for a while as a holistic therapist in an Eco retreat in Turkey.

What made you want to work with the young people at the Foyer?

Getting involved with young people was a challenge and I felt more attracted to them than to working with older people. Well I still consider myself a young person anyway. I think that because of my experiences at school and afterwards, I can relate quite well to young people who have problems in their lives. I also feel that I understand the highs and lows of communal living quite well, as I lived in a large alternative housing co-operative in London for six years.

What have you got out of your volunteering experience?

I've learned an enormous amount and gained lots of experience and skills in working with young people.

From the very beginning I was encouraged to get involved in projects and try out my own ideas. I've been given excellent training and treated very much as one of the team from day one. Best of all, volunteering at the Foyer has given me a career change and a new job that I love.

The YMCA are still looking for volunteers for many different jobs from hosting emergency accommodation for young people to helping in the YMCA shop. For more information visit their website www.mendipymca.org.uk or phone 01749 679552



Karen Wright who volunteers for Mendip YMCA

Photo: Ann Watson

Volunteering opportunities at the Bishop's Palace, Wells

Volunteers are needed for stewarding, welcoming visitors, as tour guides and Family and Children's Activities Support Workers between April and December. Gardening volunteers required all year round. Training and support will be given.

For more information please contact Anneli Connold the Volunteer Co-ordinator at the Bishop's Palace by phone: 01749 678691 extension 202 or by email: anneli.connold@bishoppalace.org.uk

Dates for Your Diary

Shepton Community Forum

Friday 28th November, 12.15 to 14.00

More information from MCS on 01749 346830

Hillmead Community Centre, Shepton Mallet

Frome Christmas Spectacular

Sunday 30 November, Noon until 6pm

Frome Town Centre

Experience a true family festive occasion with Christmas lights, carol singing, entertainment, music and firework display.

For information contact Sue Wilthew on 01373 465757

Reindeer Parade and Christmas Festivities

Sunday 7th December 2008

For the second year reindeer will be parading in Wells Town Centre pulling Father Christmas in a sled. Please see local press for more information.

Wells Carers Group

First Tuesday of each month from 10.30 to 12.00

St John Ambulance HQ, Charter Way, Wells BA5 2FB

For more information contact Maggie Charlesworth on 01749 334396

Frome Community Forum

Wednesday 21st January 2009, 12.15 to 14.00

More information from MCS on 01749 346830

**Phoenix House, Dommetts Lane,
Frome, BA11 4JS**

Advice Evening for Voluntary Groups

Wednesday 28th January, 19.30 to 21.30

*For more information or to reserve your place
phone MCS on 01749 346830*

Frome Library



ViSTA specialises in providing education and training for staff and volunteers of voluntary and community sector organisations and community learners. Details of training courses for 2008/9 are now available from the website: www.vistaproject.org.uk by emailing: Debbie@vistaproject.org.uk, by phone 08453 580372 or 01 458 259487 or by post: Town Hall, Bow Street, Langport TA10 9QR.

Deadline for items for our next newsletter: Friday 30th January 2009

**Contact us by phone: 01749 346830, by email: mcsupport@mbzonline.net,
or by post: 62 High Street, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5AS**

Shepton Community Brings Back Food Co-op

We are resurrecting the Shepton Mallet Food Co-op as part of a Health & Wellbeing initiative run by local people. On 2nd October 2008, new group members voted for The Best Supplier and the result was local Shepton High Street Supplier - Reg's Veg in Town Street.

This co-op is here for everyone to use. Come to Hillmead Hall each Thursday between 11.45 and 12.30, where you will be able to place orders and collect your bags of veg. The co-op runs back to back with the Toddlers Group run in the Hall between 12.30 and 2.30, so you can bring your children along to the toddler group and do your veg shopping at the same time!! Orders can be placed and paid for the first week and collected the next week. Order sheets are available & you can sign to join the group. You do not have to order EVERY week.

If anyone has a spare hour occasionally, if there is such a thing, the group are looking for shoppers and helpers to join the co-op, so do come along, you will be very welcome.



If there is something specific that your family never eat then you can specify not to get that item but bags are normally staple root or green veg and a few extra of whatever is in season. It's fresh and local. Reg goes to Bristol market on a regular basis and buys locally where possible. It's NOT organic, however, this is something that could be considered in the future if enough people show an interest.

If you would like more information or to order some veg, please contact Ros by phone: 07809 193012 or by email: rlavington@mendiphousing.co.uk

This co-op is here for everyone to use. Come to Hillmead Hall each Thursday between 11.45 and 12.30

Local Food Guide for Glastonbury Launched

Following months of research and development Transition Glastonbury recently launched its guide to local food. Entitled 'A celebration of local food', we aim to promote food projects and businesses who are making the commitment to shortening supply chains, supporting local producers and who are serving fresh local produce to guests and customers. The guide has been produced by volunteers and is a pilot publication, we hope to review the impact after it is in circulation.

We launched the guide as part of the Mendip Food Festival and we held a competition at Glastonbury Farmers Market on Saturday 25th October.

Children aged 5-12 were invited to pick up one of the guides and search for hidden food treasure around the town and then match up produce to farmers market stalls. The winners received wonderful local food prizes. We promoted the competition to local schools with support from Somerset Food Links. If you would like to find out more please visit <http://transitiontowns.org/Glastonbury/Glastonbury>

An on-line version is also available. If you are interested in talking to us about the project or getting a copy of the guide please contact: carolinelewis_ot@yahoo.co.uk or 01458 833 420

This project was part-funded by Mendip Strategic Partnership and local businesses and many thanks to Mendip Community Support as winning the photo competition has helped this project progress!



MENDIP COMMUNITY SUPPORT

**62 High Street
Shepton Mallet
Somerset
BA4 5AS**

Phone: 01749 346830

E-mail: mcsupport@mbzonline.net



Your local correspondents are:

Wells: Carol Plenty, Mendip YMCA,

CPlenty@mendipymca.org.uk

**Shepton Mallet: Jean Growney, Mendip All
Drummers, jean@ivyhouse.therapies.co.uk**

**Frome: Ann Watson, Mendip Community
Support,**

**Glastonbury & Street: Claire Chettoe,
Mendip Community Support**

**You can also contact them via the
Mendip Community Support office**

You can contact the MCS team by phone or email:

Tony Shepherd:

07966697596

tonyshepherd1@onetel.com

Ann Watson:

07968244573

annwatson1@onetel.com

Claire Chettoe :

01749 346830

07971912452

mcsupport@mbzonline.net

Are you a member of Mendip Community Support?

Advantages of membership include:

- **advice on setting up & developing groups, current legislation**
- **early notification of events, training & funding opportunities**
- **free equipment hire**
- **reduced price advertisements in our newsletter**

And best of all it's free!!

Contact us for a membership form

on 01749 346830 or email: mcsupport@mbzonline.net

The copy deadline for the next issue is **Friday 30th January 2009**

Articles can be taken to your local correspondent or posted or emailed to the MCS office.

The views expressed in this newsletter are not necessarily those of Mendip Community Support

Funding File



Managed by the Community Development Foundation
Funded by the Office of the Third Sector



Whether it's helping local clubs get hold of new kit, coaching new volunteers or simply giving the village hall a fresh lick of paint, **Grassroots Grants** aim to make a real and immediate difference to the work of any small and local community groups with annual incomes below £20,000.

The programme, funded by the Office of The Third Sector in the Cabinet Office and administered in Somerset by the Somerset Community Foundation, offers grants of between £250 and £5,000 to support activities that lie right at the heart of our local communities.



Mendip All Drummers - who have received funding from SCF in the past

Projects in Mendip awarded grants in September included:

Group	Activity
In Touch	Community visits to support families who have been affected by someone else's drink or drug abuse.
Clarrie Dunbar Disabled Bowlers	Purchase of specially adapted wheelchairs and ramp
Godney Playing Field Trust	Purchase of equipment to improve outdoor community space
Mean Moves	Breakdance classes and development of youth-led community group
Mendip Disabled Association	Activities promoting the association and developing better links with statutory and voluntary organisations involved with disabled people

These are just examples and we would expect applications to reflect the needs of local groups and local people and address issues of disadvantage.

How to apply:

Applicants should complete a Grassroots Grants application form which can be downloaded from our website (www.somersetcf.org.uk), or alternatively they can contact the office for a paper copy.

For any further information, please contact us on 01458 833133 or e-mail info@somersetcf.org.uk



Since February 2008 we have helped over 200 people in the Mendip area. Here is some of the feedback we have had...

“The extra money is making a big difference...everyone has been so helpful”

Mrs. Harvey, Wells

“The help was absolutely outstanding... and my new boiler works perfectly”

Mrs. Griggs, Frome



Expert advice and support for local people living in cold, damp homes, or struggling to pay their fuel bills.

We can help you or someone you know with...

- Advice on how to stay warm and lower fuel bills
- Benefit entitlement checks and help with filling out the forms
- Applying for heating and insulation grants

Call us free today on
0800 512 012



Warming Mendip is a partnership of energy experts and local benefits advisors. It is funded by the Big Lottery Fund and managed by the Centre for Sustainable Energy.

Advertising space is available to buy - rates on request, with a substantial reduction for members of Mendip Community Support. Contact us by phone: 01749 346830, by email: mcsupport@mbzonline.net or by post: 62, High Street, Shepton Mallet, BA4 5AS

We would like to thank everyone who has made our Community Newsletter possible, especially our correspondents and all our contributors.

