



New offices for CCS...the last week of February saw all the CCS staff working hard to condense 18 years worth of files from a large office into premises half the size! This has proved to be a very worthwhile exercise and although the space is much smaller in terms of square footage; it is well planned and open, resulting in a much more efficient use of space and a bright, airy working environment. All contact details remain the same (as below). Why not make an appointment to visit us and see for yourself and while you are here discuss how we can help support you and your village or community group with positive action!

Call 01823 331222 or email info@somersetccc.org.uk

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Village Agents are an innovative response to a recognised need that many people living in our rural communities are unable to connect with the key services that help maintain well-being and support their quality of life. The Community Council for Somerset is currently establishing the '**Somerset Village Agents Project.**' This is a tried and tested concept originating with our sister organisation, Gloucestershire Rural Community Council. We have been successful in obtaining funding for this project.

What do Village Agents do?

Village Agents will support people living in rural areas of Somerset, bridging the gap between the local community and the statutory or voluntary organisations able to offer help or support.

We will have a team of 15 part-time Village Agents who will:

- provide high quality face-to-face information and support
- offer a facilitated signposting service and put people in direct contact with the appropriate agency using the Somerset Advice Network's Common Referral System
- help individuals make informed choices about their future needs
- work in small clusters of communities across Somerset
- identify unmet need in their communities
- primarily support older people, but other disadvantaged and isolated people are also able to receive Village Agent support
- be recruited locally and receive ongoing training
- be supported by a part time project manager.

Contact us:

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Victoria House
Victoria Street
Taunton
Somerset
TA1 3JZ
01823 331222
info@somersetccc.org.uk
www.somersetccc.org.uk

The scheme works because Agents live close to the communities in which they work. Consequently, they know the villages and their people well. Rather than proffering advice, Agents will provide an overview of services available in the county and offer help to access them. They help in myriads of other ways too - thus winning the trust of those they help and enabling particularly older people to stay independent for longer.

For further information, contact **Sarah Aston, Village Agents Project Manager**

Email: sarah@somersetccc.org.uk **Office:** 01823 331 222 **Mobile:** 07971 024496

VILLAGE AGENTS

Recruitment Advertisement

The Community Council for Somerset is looking to appoint **Village Agents** to support the first six selected parish 'clusters' in Somerset.



8 hours per week - salary £12,145 pa pro rata
(plus travel expenses) Approximately: £6.65 per hour

One Agent per cluster

- Cluster 1:** Marston Magna, Corton Denham, Mudford, Queen Camel, Rimpton and West Camel.
- Cluster 2:** Creech St Michael, Ruishton, Thornfalcon and West Monkton.
- Cluster 3:** Stoke sub Hamdon, Chilthorne Domer, Montacute, Tintinhull Norton sub Hamdon, and Odcombe
- Cluster 4:** Stoke St Gregory, Burrowbridge, Lyng, North Curry and Othery.
- Cluster 5:** Godney, Meare, Sharpham and Wookey.
- Cluster 6:** Chewton Mendip, Binegar, Emborough, Litton, Priddy, Rodney Stoke and Ston Easton

Candidates will need to be committed to helping vulnerable people, live in or close to, the cluster of parishes they serve, be able to communicate effectively, have use of a reliable car and possess basic IT skills.

For further information, an application form and details of **Village Agent Information Sessions** please visit www.somersetccc.org.uk/latest-news.php or telephone **01823 331222**.

Closing date for applications is **12 noon on 16 April 2012**. Interviews will take place **week beginning 30 April 2012**.

NEWS in BRIEF Sedgemoor District Council's Affordable Housing Team is running a **free to attend** Rural Housing Seminar for Sedgemoor Parish Councils on 30th April 2012 at the Isle of Wedmore Golf Club. This event has been organised for people to learn more about affordable housing (AH) – what is it, why is it important to village life and how new homes might be provided. Sedgemoor's Development Manager, Duncan Harvey is keen to encourage parish councils to attend this seminar and said "Housing is about more than simply putting a roof over people's heads. A good quality, affordable home helps people live healthier, happier lives. Good homes that stand the test of time can transform communities; improve outcomes for families and individuals. This Council has a strong commitment and aim towards ensuring that everyone has the opportunity of living in a decent home, which they can afford, in a community where they want to live. Despite a fall in local house prices, the affordability of housing is the single most significant barrier to anyone seeking a home of their own". Mr Harvey added "We have been very successful in recent years in terms of rural AH delivery across Sedgemoor. We would like to help more rural communities to tackle their housing needs. The Seminar will include talks from Parish Councils who have had new homes built and learn about local experiences". If you would like to attend please contact **Elaine Oliver, Affordable Housing Development Office at Sedgemoor.**

Tel: 01278 436485 Email: Elaine.oliver@sedgemoor.gov.uk

Training Opportunities

Woolavington Rural Activities Project (WRAP) have been awarded funding to host a Community Youth Work Training Programme in Woolavington. The "Introduction to Youth Work" course which is for adults over the age of 18 will start in the spring and will be based at Woolavington Village Hall. Training by VISTA group will be accredited to NVQ standard & will alternate one day per week with a drop-in support day. Materials, refreshments and crèche facilities will be free of charge. This is a great opportunity to meet new people and gain a qualification and will enhance future employment potential. For **further details:**
Tel: 01278 783719 Email: wrap2@tiscali.co.uk

Diary Date! **'Dare to Dream'** Thursday 24th May 9.30 am - 7.30 pm
Taunton Conference Centre, Somerset College,
Wellington Road, Taunton TA1 5AX

Dare to Dream is an exhibition and conference for ambitious **growth orientated entrepreneurs and those who want to grow a seed of an idea.** The event will feature thought-provoking seminars and not to be missed key note speakers, including Natasha Scribbins (the Apprentice). This event will help inform, inspire, educate and motivate people to realise their full potential.

Call—01823 331222 or email: keeley@somersetccc.org.uk for information

Somerset Skills & Learning

Volunteer Support & Training - L2

Starting Thursday 26th April
10.00 am - 12.00 pm (10 sessions)

Somerset Skills & Learning
4 Corams Lane
Wellington
TA21 8LL
(01823) 663000

Volunteer support and training is for anybody who is already in a voluntary capacity or who is thinking about voluntary work. The course helps you to develop skills such as listening and team work and you will have a chance to brush up your English and Maths as well.

Volunteering is a good stepping stone to work!

Life's a learning curve

www.learnsomerset.co.uk



Store is the Core training seminars are **FREE** to attend and tailored for **village retailers**. There are two themed events designed to help retailers better analyse their business through a combination of presentations from an expert in the field and group discussions. For this round of seminars the two themes to choose from are: **THEME 1** - Marketing & Market Research (Reach and Understand Your Customers) and **THEME 2** - Effective Selling Space (Range Layout & Merchandising). Each Seminar lasts for 4 hours with plenty of opportunity for retailers to network and discuss current issues.

For more details contact: Tim Coomer, Rural Enterprise Adviser, Community First:
Visit: www.communityfirst.org.uk Email: tcoomer@communityfirst.org.uk Tel: 01380 732812

| County | Theme | Date (2012) | Venue |
|-----------|-------|-------------|--|
| Devon | 2 | 18th April | Royal Oak, Station Road, South Brent, TQ10 9BE |
| Devon | 1 | 17th April | George Hotel, Broad Street, South Molton, EX36 3AB |
| Dorset | 2 | 23rd May | Crown Hotel, Blandford Forum, West Street, DT11 7AJ |
| Somerset | 2 | 2nd May | Pilton Village Hall, St Mary's Lane, Pilton, BA4 4BB |
| Somerset | 2 | 3rd May | Bishops Lydeard Village Hall, Mount Street, Bishops Lydeard, TA4 3LH |
| Somerset | 1 | 18th June | Mudford Memorial Hall, Mudford, BA21 5TE |
| Wiltshire | 1 | 29th May | Langford Lakes Ed.Centre, Steeple Langford, SP3 4NH |
| Wiltshire | 2 | 14th June | St Mary's Church Hall, Silverless Street, Marlborough, SN8 1JQ |