

Carmarthenshire Volunteer Organisers Network – CVON

Minutes

Tuesday 7th July 2020 via Zoom

Present –

1. Nevil Williams	Radio BGM Llanelli	
2. Jane Hemmings	CAVS	jane.hemmings@cavs.org.uk
3. Alud Owen Jones	CAVS	alud.jones@cavs.org.uk
4. Kate Evans	National Wool Museum	
5. Jamie Horton	CAVS	jamie.horton@cavs.org.uk
6. Jackie Dorrian	CAVS	Jackie.dorrian@cavs.org.uk
7. Marie Mitchell	CAVS	marie.mitchell@cavs.org.uk
8. Neil Goulbourn	Energy Saving Trust	
9. Piers Lunt	Tywi Gateway Trust	
10. Marg McNiel	See Around Britain	
11. Jack Burrows	British Heart Foundation	
12. Judith Collins	Carmarthenshire Counselling Serv	
13. Sharon Condon	South Cefncaeau (Ty Enfys)	
14. Alice Freeman	Leonard Cheshire	
15. Andrea Edwards	West Wales Action for Mental Health	
16. Adam Hearne	West Wales Walking for Wellbeing	

1. Welcome & Introductions

Jane welcomed everybody to the meeting, and everyone introduced themselves, with opportunities to give some further information about their respective organisations. News included: Sharon Condon (who also is Scouts secretary), have been utilising volunteers from other organisations – needs information on working with their own volunteers in future, particularly if there are further “lockdown” periods; Nevile, Radio BGM, asks about volunteering policies and whether DBS is still free for volunteers (Yes, according to gov.uk); Judith (Carms Counselling) asks how to keep everyone involved safe when returning to face-to-face counselling; Andrea (WWAMH) reports on remote working via Zoom etc, and also notes the need to plan for return to office-based and face-to-face; Alice (Leonard Cheshire) spoke about remote volunteer support, befriending, admin and music workshops – they will also require guidance on returning to F2F working; Kate (National Wool Museum) reported on their work; Piers (Tywi Gateway Trust) spoke of the way that they have started to return to volunteering, utilising risk assessments, modified working practices and time slots. They would like to increase the number of volunteers working as soon as it is safe to do so; Adam (West Wales Walking for Wellbeing) utilised the Volunteering Wales platform to recruit new volunteers. He has been using Zoom to train volunteers in readiness for when it is safe to resume active participation; Neil (Energy Saving Trust) is reminding people of the help and advice on offer by joining the Priority Register; Other participants, including CAVS staff, introduced themselves.

Apologies

Mark Thomas (UWTSD); Andrea Thomas (Ammanford JCP)

2. CAVS & Volunteer Centre News

Over 1000 people registered on Volunteering Wales, pledging their time as volunteers during the Covid Pandemic. Many of these found roles with NHS (ongoing) and Carmarthen County Council, along with other “Formal” volunteering providers such as Leonard Cheshire, West Wales Walking for Wellbeing, a number of food banks, and so on. However, much of the formal volunteering which occurred pre-Covid has been put on hold, the result being that there are far more volunteers (whether seasoned or new) than formal volunteering opportunities at present. To an extent this is balanced by the creation of community volunteering groups that have grown spontaneously due to need.

Sarah (CAVS), gave a brief summary of funding available, including Covid-specific, ranging from Children In Need and other large funders, to smaller, sometimes more quirky, foundations and trusts. Contact sarah.herbert-jones@cavs.org.uk for further information.

3. Discussion

- Although there is some guidance on re-opening community venues and re-starting volunteering, much of it is aimed at England, and may not be wholly relevant here. There are also a number of gaps and questions raised.
- Key message at the moment is to remain cautious and patient.
- Use of “buddies” from the same household to help people with special needs or requirements.
- Alud will try to get a timescale from TSSW as to release of guidance for re-starting formal volunteering
- Some roles and provisions are harder to adapt to remote working. For instance counselling, although possible remotely, is often preferred “in person”.
- It is interesting to note that although face-to-face is generally preferred, there have been some benefits to remote working.
- Another difficulty is not knowing the scale of planning required, in that we don’t really know how long a certain guideline or regulation will hold true, so the ability to remain fluid and to react to changes is key.

4. Any Other Business

Neil Goulbourn of the Energy Saving Trust gave an account of the services they can offer, and invited anyone who may need their assistance to get in touch. See email address in the list of attendees.

5. Date and Time of next meetings:

Tuesday 10/11/2020 Venue to be confirmed.

Please note: Time of next main CVON meeting to be confirmed, but also we are likely to call smaller, ad hoc meetings as required, to discuss and disseminate new advice and guidelines as they become available. Meeting details will be sent to all on the mailing list.