

### News

#### **Volunteers Required – Rochdale Fair Trade Forum**

The Fair Trade Forum is the steering group that monitors Rochdale's Fair Trade status. Rochdale became a Fair Trade Borough in 2006 but this status is now up for renewal. The Forum meets on an occasional basis usually at teatime/early evening. This is an opportunity for those people who are interested in the promotion of fairly traded products and are keen to encourage further take-up.

Information regarding **volunteering** please contact the Volunteer Centre CVS Rochdale 01706 631291

For information regarding the Fair Trade Forum, please contact: Jan Hicks on 01706 648779 or [janhicks@btinternet.com](mailto:janhicks@btinternet.com)

#### **Volunteer of the Year Awards 2011**

Nominations are now open for the Rochdale Borough Volunteer of the Year Awards to recognise the significant and meaningful contribution made to the community by volunteering. So if you know someone who deserves a "BIG THANK YOU" then take a few minutes of your time to complete a [nomination form](#).

This year's categories are;

- Volunteer of the Year Award
- Young Volunteer of the Year Award
- Group volunteer of the Year Award
- Volunteering Involving Organisation of the Year Award
- Skills Ambassador Award
- Literacy Changes Lives Awards

**Closing Date Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2011**

#### **Empty homes funding opened to VCS**

Voluntary sector organisations will soon be able to apply for Government funding to bring empty homes back into use. Communities minister, Andrew Stunell, has announced that voluntary and community groups will be able to bid for a share of a £100 million funding pot aimed at schemes that turn empty properties into affordable housing. Bidding guidance will be published shortly.

The minister also announced that property owners who leave their homes empty for more than two years could be hit with a tax hike to "spur" them into bringing them back to use.

The Government is due to launch a consultation on an 'empty homes premium', which would give councils the ability to charge extra council tax on homes that have been left empty for more than two years. At present, properties are exempt from council tax for the first six months they are empty, after which councils are allowed to charge full council tax or set a discount at anything up to 50 per cent.

#### **Charity leaders' confidence reaches new low, NCVO survey finds**

Ninety-eight per cent of charity leaders think economic conditions in the voluntary sector will be 'negative' in the next 12 months, according to new research from NCVO.

The most recent edition of the NCVO's quarterly *Charity Forecast* survey shows confidence in the sector's economic conditions has fallen to its lowest level since the survey began in 2008.

To the question "do you think the economic conditions within the voluntary sector will be negative, neutral or positive over the next 12 months?", 98 per cent say conditions will be negative, a rise from 90 per cent in the previous edition of the survey, published in June.

The report, based on a survey of 80 chief executives, directors, trustees and senior managers in August and September, says that 60 per cent of respondents believe the financial situation of their charity will worsen in the next 12 months, an increase from 53 per cent in the previous survey. Twenty-five per cent believe there will be no change and 15 per cent say they expect conditions to improve.

[from: *Third Sector Online* 28.9.11]

### **Charities need to do more to secure long-term future**

While charities are exploring various strategies to continue their activities, "very few are doing enough" to ensure they are still around in years to come, according to a report on risk and financial controls in charities.

The 10th annual risk report, *Managing risk: Operating in the new world*, by the Charity Finance Directors' Group and accountancy firm PKF, analyses information from 288 charities about how they are responding to social, policy and financial changes.

The report highlights a "fundamental imbalance" between supply and demand in the sector, with charities seeing increased demand for their services but being unable to invest enough to meet that demand.

One of the report's authors said: "There is little sign of the situation improving in the foreseeable future, which means that many charities are faced with a business model that no longer works in the longer-term".

Among the findings from the survey are that three in five charities have seen their income has fall as a result of changes in public policy, and that one third of charities still do not have a risk policy.

[www.cfdg.org.uk/Policy/have-your-say/surveys/closed-surveys.aspx](http://www.cfdg.org.uk/Policy/have-your-say/surveys/closed-surveys.aspx)

[from: *Civil Society e-News* 2.11.11]

### **Charity workforce grows by 40 per cent**

The number of people employed by charities has risen by 40 per cent in the past decade, according to new research published by NCVO.

The *UK Voluntary Sector Workforce Almanac 2011* shows that at the end of 2010, the total voluntary sector workforce was 765,000, compared with 547,000 in 2001. These figures equate to 2.7 and 2 per cent of the UK workforce in 2010 and 2001 respectively.

The almanac, which is based mainly on data from the Government's Labour Force Survey, shows that in 2010, 68 per cent of the workforce were women, 51 per cent worked in organisations with fewer than 25 members, and 38 per cent were employed part time.

Voluntary sector employees earned an average of £398 per week, compared to £453 and £467 in the private and public sectors respectively.

[www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/workforce#Almanac](http://www.ncvo-vol.org.uk/workforce#Almanac)

[from: *Third Sector Online* 26.10.11]

### **Free membership until 2012**

Justgiving (fundraising website)

Join JustGiving now and you won't pay the normal monthly subscription fee of £15 (plus VAT) until January 2012.

This offer is only available to charities new to JustGiving. [Read our terms and conditions.](#)

### **Sustainability festival imagines a 'futureMANCHESTER'**

At venues across Manchester 25 November – 2 December

This November futureMANCHESTER, the city's festival of all things sustainable and environmentally friendly, will return for a second year with a jam-packed schedule of events, talks and workshops for everyone to enjoy.

The festival showcases the work of Manchester organisations who are working together to make the city a greener, healthier, fairer and more sustainable place to live, work and play. Many of these organisations are also involved in delivering the city's climate change action plan, *Manchester: A Certain Future*, and the festival is just one way of publicising Manchester's ambitious plan and of getting the whole city involved in realising targets.

To see what's on near you visit: [www.merci.org.uk/futuremanchester](http://www.merci.org.uk/futuremanchester)



COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE

**Rochdale**

[www.cvsr.org.uk](http://www.cvsr.org.uk)