

Voluntary Action Orkney 'Connect Project' Awards Presentation

On Friday 7th February young people from VAO's Connect Project had their recent hard work and success recognised in an award ceremony held at Voluntary Action Orkney. There were a wide variety of certificates presented including seven Level One Bikability Awards, three Bronze Youth Achievement Awards, three Saltire Awards, four Elementary Food Hygiene Awards and four Emergency First Aid Certificates.

Alex Clark from Cycle Orkney who has worked with the young people to complete the Level One Bikability said it was great to see young people enjoying cycling. I was impressed by the young people's enthusiasm in learning to ride a bike safely.

Fraser Devine (Volunteering Team Leader, VAO) who presented the young people with their certificates said "it was great to see so many of the young people there celebrating their achievements. Over time, we see such a change in them.

Through involvement in a wide range of activities, they become more confident individuals with improved employability skills and communication, helping them to move on to either further learning or employment.



Joint Mini Sports Day

Friday 7th of February saw the first joint mini sports day for the Connect project, the Orkney Blide Trust, St Colms, and the Orkney College pathways to independence students. The idea for the sports day was envisioned by Hannah Stanger from the Connect project and Suzy Hopkins from the Blide Trust who decided that it would be great to have a multi-agency sports day that was inclusive of everyone no matter what their ability and that would bridge the gap between these services.

The response was overwhelming and saw around 40 people from across the organisations registering to take part. The sports day was held in the arena at The Pickaquoy Centre who also kindly agreed to sponsor the event. The events included sit down Javelin, 100m sprint, 200m sprint, 4x100m relay, tattie and spoon race, Tug of war, boccia and indoor football.

Medals were presented to the winners by Katie Foulis from KT sports. We would like to say a big thanks to Katie for presenting the medals as well as to all the staff the Connect project, St Colms and the staff from the pathways to independence course at the Orkney College.

We would like to show our gratitude and appreciation to The Pickaquoy Centre who allowed us to hold our event in the arena for free and of course all of the fantastic participants. Ryan Thomas, Daniel Ogg, David Hodgkinson, Kirsteen Munro, Helen Jarvis, Phil Fox, Steve Corse, Sharon Winters, Emma Mackintosh, Laura Gray, Lorna Tulloch, Daniel Clough, Alex Fender, Colette Harvey, David Atkinson, Rhoda Halcro, John Kent, Freda Chalmers, Jennifer Wainwright, Susanna Wainwright, Matthew Laird, Isla Macnaughton, Robert Chalmers, Eric Gray, Kathryn Mackintosh, Craig Williamson, Dan Clewitt, John Mee and Mark Nicol.

Everyone had a brilliant day and we hope to do this again next year.

Planning for the Scottish Referendum – a new guide for charities

Charities are being encouraged to join in the independence debate and to help Carnegie UK Trust and the Association of Chief Officers of Scottish Voluntary Organisations (ACOSVO) have released a 10 step guide.

- Read up on the guidance
- Ask for support from the sector and intermediary/ umbrella bodies, eg VAO
- Engage your trustees
- Think through whether current structures are fit for purpose
- Think about your funding model and how this might change
- Speak to your staff and volunteers
- Focus on your beneficiaries
- Brief colleagues in the rest of the UK on what you're doing and why
- There is no correct response but there is an opportunity
- Review post-September 2014 and report back to the board

If any organisation would like to discuss issues relating to the referendum please get in touch with VAO.

Home workers wanted to take part in research

Researchers at the University of Strathclyde are investigating the ability of Scottish home workers to solve 2D and 3D graphical problems at home via the internet and a home computer.

Anyone living in Scottish rural areas can register their interest and will be rewarded for their time with Amazon gift vouchers for each task successfully completed.

For more information: <http://www.ruralgateway.org.uk/en/node/8574>

The Orkney Social Enterprise Network

Seven participants attended the last session in January and Sue Sulat the Finance and Administration Manager at The Pickaquooy Trust came along to answer questions about her business model, people management, and the effects of the new facilities on their turnover, staff and the community.

The session was very positive and ended with opportunities for joint development of business opportunities discussed with some really exciting conversations happening.

The social enterprise network meetings take place quarterly on a Wednesday at 11am at the VAO Offices. If your organisation sells goods/services, then you are welcome to come along for a cup of coffee, a muffin and a chance to speak with other people.

If you would like to find out more please get in touch with Meghan at VAO 01856 872897.

Further meetings will take place April 16th, July 16th and October 15th. Our organisation under the microscope in April will be Orkney Disability Forum and their trading arm, OCTO. Hazel Aim will be giving a brief chat about the activities and will then be answering questions.

Carers UK- new app 'jointly'

'Jointly' is a tool to help families manage care for loved ones alongside increasingly complex lives. Available for mobile phones, tablets and computers, it offers a simple, practical way to share information and co-ordinate tasks amongst an invited circle who are helping look after a loved one.

- Private and secure group messaging to keep everyone informed and better connected.
- Profile and contacts page, with easily accessible vital information such as medication lists.

Shared calendar and task lists to coordinate responsibilities, organise what needs to get done and store important information.

Access the App here: <https://www.jointlyapp.com/>



Need space for your next meeting?

Our central location and competitive rates make VAO an ideal venue
contact us for rates...

Dates for your Diaries

March 7th – Basic Bookkeeping, VAO 2.00 to 4.00pm. Just taken on the role of Treasurer, need a pointer in the right direction, need a refresher. A fee will apply.

March 19th – Want to start a group, VAO 6.00 to 7.30pm. Thinking of a cause, have a hobby, want to start a group but not sure how, unsure of legal structure or what a social enterprise is. Free session.

March 26th - Business planning for the third sector, VAO 2-4pm. Unsure of your organisations direction for the year, do you have a project you need to plan for, come along and find out how to construct a plan that is useful to you and your organisation.

Can-Do Guide to running events

The Can-Do guide is an interactive guide to organising community events. Published by the Cabinet Office the guide aims to dispel a raft of inaccurate myths leading, it is hoped, to a surge in community events over the coming year.

For more information, visit the government's website: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/can-do-guide-for-organisers-of-voluntary-events>

Renewed warning about drinking craze

Following last week's warning by the Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership over the internet drinking craze 'Nek Nomination', NHS Orkney's Director of Public Health, Dr Louise Wilson, has reiterated the dangers of this game following an admission to the local hospital suspected to be linked to 'Nek Nomination'.

Dr Wilson said, "We are very concerned about young people putting themselves into danger through this craze. Mixing high volumes of alcohol and consuming quickly can prove fatal, particularly in young people. We certainly don't want the Orkney community to experience a tragedy as a result of this 'game'."

Orkney Alcohol and Drugs Partnership issued their warning last week about the potential dangers of this craze. They are now trying to reach out to parents to be aware of the peer pressure surrounding young people to take part and the role parents have in supporting their children to resist peer pressure.

For more information visit www.parentingacrossscotland.org or call 888116 to get the 'you, your child and alcohol' booklet.

New social impact tool available

Explore a range of tools to help you attract social investment through a strong demonstration of your social impact.

For more information visit www.sibgroup.org.uk/impact.

If you would like help to identify outcomes, outputs and methods then please contact VAO.

People Management

Following recent enquiries, and through our own market research, we have decided to offer this service to local organisations within Orkney. We understand the Orkney Community and economy and therefore have created an accessible, low cost, responsive service with a flexible fee structure.

We provide assistance with: Recruitment, HR Advice, Policies, Training and Development.

Whatever your issue, no matter how small, don't hesitate to give us a call. Phone 01856 872897 or email hannah.ker@vaorkney.org.uk for more information.

Office space available

We currently have some office space available in our shared accommodation within Anchor Buildings.

As part of the shared space, all tenants benefit from reception services, free use of meeting rooms, free use of the window display area and access to office equipment and services.

We also offer a Hot Desk service which can be booked on a regular basis or used ad hoc. Free WIFI is included in the low hourly rate and VAO members benefit from reduced charges. Please contact Cath Russell on 872897 or email cath.russell@vaorkney.org.uk for more information.