COMMUNITY SERVICE

Providing a service to your community

LOTHIAN & BORDERS COMMUNITY JUSTICE AUTHORITY

Summer 2009

Community Justice

By Councilor John Muir: Convener

Welcome to the second Lothian & Borders Community Service Newsletter.

This newsletter highlights the current range of excellent projects from across our area and demonstrates both the level of ongoing payback to the community and the quality of work that is being carried out in our communities.

Lothian & Borders CJA covers the five local authority areas of City of Edinburgh, Midlothian, East Lothian, West Lothian and Scottish Borders.

Community Service work offers a real alternative to short term prison sentences and has payback to the community at its heart. Community safety is paramount and all work is supervised and managed by the trained Community Service teams in each local authority.

We trust you will find the projects both inspiring and informative on how Community Service Orders are working to enable offenders to reinvest in their community through projects which involve hard work but which always have the community at heart.

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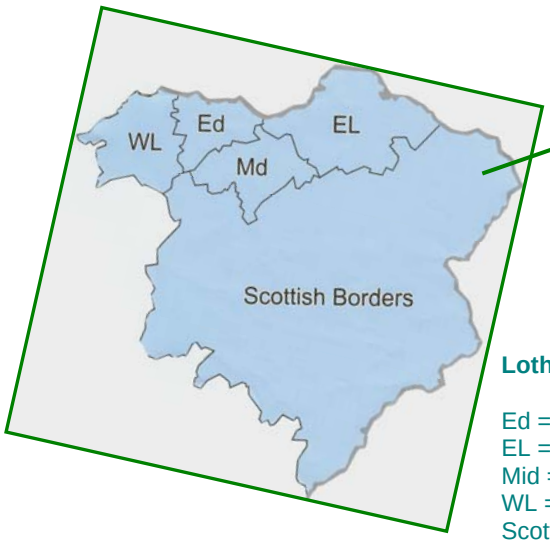
Your feedback on this newsletter is welcome. A copy can be downloaded from our website www.cjalb.co.uk. Please send your comments to our mailbox: cjal&b@scotborders.gov.uk

See Page 6 for the Extreme Makeover Results!!



Lothian & Borders CJA local authority areas:

Ed = City of Edinburgh Council
EL = East Lothian Council
Mid = Midlothian Council
WL = West Lothian Council
Scottish Borders = Scottish Borders Council

Inside an Individual Community Service Placement

Over the years individual Community Service placements have provided organisations with a valuable source of help. Low risk offenders on Community Service may be placed in a local voluntary organisation or charity to complete their unpaid work and assist the organisation.

Mandy and Janet work for Pilton Equalities Project (PEP) and have had a number of Community Service clients to assist in the organisation for two years. Pilton Equalities Project Neighbourhood group is a day centre for adults with mental health and other difficulties in North West Edinburgh. They have seen firsthand the benefits individual Community Service clients can have on an organisation in the local community and the changes and development that clients make throughout their unpaid work.

What do offenders on Community Service do for your organisation?

Offenders on Community Service work with us to assist vulnerable and needy group members who may be disabled and have mental health needs. With supervision and training they make a positive contribution to the work of the organisation. PEP provides an emotional, physical and mentally challenging work for Community Service clients with one- to- one support.

What does your organisation gain from offenders on Community Service?

For our group members it is good to have community service clients coming to assist from all different backgrounds. Community Service Clients cannot choose to phone up and say 'I can't be bothered today'. They have to be here which means we have regular and reliable assistance for the group. 6 or 7 Community Service clients out of 9 have gone on to volunteer for us and one has gone on to college. So you can see it has worked for us.

What do you think offenders on Community Service gain from helping your organisation?

When Community Service Clients first come to PEP they have had no experience of working with people with disabilities and it can be very scary for them. Working with the group helps build confidence so that starts to stop after a few weeks. Working with the group also breaks down barriers and often boosts Community Service Clients own life experience.

What support do you get from the Community Service team?

The Community Service team screens and risk assesses clients before they come to PEP. We then have a meeting with Community Service and the offender to decide if they are suitable. We keep in regular contact and if there are any difficulties or the offender failed to attend we contact the Community Service Team.

What difference has it made to your Organisation having offenders on Community Service assisting your organisation?

PEP's experience of working with offenders on CS has been overwhelmingly positive.

Thanks to Janet (left) and Mandy (right) from Pilton Equalities Project, for taking time out to answer our questions.

PEP
"Helping People Participate"

Project 1 – Longniddry Bents

Community Service came to the rescue when the stone-built information station at Longniddry Bents was damaged when hit by a vehicle.

The Countryside Ranger Service has had help from Community Service over the years on various projects and this was one they knew the team could help with.

The Community Service workgroups first of all chipped away the old cement and cleaned up the remaining stone. After estimating the sand and cement required the group then reinstated the stone work to its former glory.

Longniddry Bents is a favourite spot for dog walkers and families and the workgroup received positive feedback from both the public and the Countryside Rangers.

The Information Station restored

Project 2 – Haddington Garden Trust Project

The Garden Trust is refurbishing the 17th century public walled garden at Haddington House, known locally as the 'secret garden'.

Community Service were approached to provide some expert help and using the Trust's drawings they marked out the site, rotovated the soil and pegged & boarded walkway paths. The workers also refilled the existing stone herb containers.

Not a secret anymore

With the planting beds made ready by the Community Service workers, the next stage was to lay turf creating pathways for the public to be able to walk round and admire the selection of shrubs and hedging planted by the Garden Trust.

The Garden Trust are delighted with the finished result and plan to contact the Community Service team the next time they have a similar project they need help with.

Project 1 – Cornbank Primary School, Penicuik

Midlothian Community Service Team has carried out projects for primary schools in Midlothian including Mayfield and Newtongrange Primary Schools.

Cornbank Primary School was already working with 'RBS Supergrounds', a Royal Bank of Scotland community programme which promotes child learning through play, and approached the Community Service team for some help.

This project involved the Community Service workers building garden furniture in their workshop as well as doing landscaping work.

Project 2 – Artlink Scotland

The Community Service Team has a long standing relationship with Artlink Scotland working on projects including fencing, landscaping and development of vegetable plots.

The workers at this location have been working hard digging over and planting vegetable plots at the Bush Estate in Penicuik.

Project 1 – Duns community garden

Neglected and run down this large garden in Duns was rescued by Scottish Borders Council who have leased the ground to their Community Service Team to develop and grow organic produce for the local community.

In 2008 the garden and greenhouse received a complete overhaul and the team started growing vegetables. This proved successful and the vegetables were distributed through the NHS Healthy Eating Network to local healthy eating groups.

In spring 2009 a 40 foot poly-Tunnel was erected to expand the growing area. Planting & harvesting is now possible right through until Christmas.

From eyesore

to

Community Garden

The project has been led by the Community Service Supervisor, John Heatlie. John's team work in the garden at least one day per week, producing a wide variety of organic produce which is provided to local people who are most in need.

This project has helped the people serving their Community Orders develop practical gardening skills, do healthy activity and learn how to work as a team. The garden layout is suitable for all level of abilities and everyone who has been involved has taken great pride in their work, with many people returning to see how the garden is getting on even though they have completed their required hours of unpaid work.

Looking good for all the community to share and get their 5 a day!

Community Service Projects in West Lothian include a range of activities which benefit communities across the area. A lot of these projects involve close working with other West Lothian Council departments to help the people who receive their support.

These projects include:

- **West Lothian Council Housing Department - Local voluntary housing initiative**
  Collecting and recycling furniture and helping to clear out houses that have been abandoned by tenants.
- **West Lothian Council's Children & Families team – House removals**
  Carry out house removals for families who have been the victim of domestic abuse.
- **West Lothian Community Care (Older People) Team – Moving home**
  Assisting people who need to move to supported accommodation.
- **West Lothian Council Mental Health Team – Gardening work**
  Helping clients who have fallen victim to bogus workmen, with garden clearance work

The Community Service Projects also involve a range of projects with local charitable partnership organisations:

Prehistoric Frolic

This interactive educational site for children is in the form of a Prehistoric Frolic. The Community Service team were provided with the plans to construct an Iron Age encampment, including a hut, fire pit, herb garden and animal pens for livestock such as Soay Sheep.

An alder wood frame & woven willow

Soay Sheep

Painting, Decorating and Gardening

The Community Service painting & decorating team has completed maintenance work on a local Scout Camp, Bowling Club and a Community Hall, whilst the gardening team has helped to maintain grounds of a local Church to make it ready for the summer community activity programme including the local fete.

Linlithgow Union Canal

Community Service has supported the Linlithgow Union Canal Society for many years (see 2008 newsletter) and recent work has seen the completion of the 'Winchburgh branch project' where a storage unit used to house essential maintenance equipment has been upgraded.

Cyrenians – Kirknewton Farm

In partnership with Cyrenians the Community Service team has been helping with their fruit harvest that is distributed to local communities most in need of fresh fruit.

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