

Environment and Climate Change

The Third Sector is very active in sustainable lifestyles. A plethora of projects include energy reduction, energy generation, green spaces, using local produce, reuse, recycling, composting, paths, and community woodlands. Organisations can network with each other and statutory partners through the Scottish Borders Environment Partnership.

This is an area of growth for the Third Sector with many communities taking an active role in promoting caring attitudes, wiser use of resources and a better quality of life through specific environmental groups, transition groups and Development Trusts. The Third Sector is well placed to develop local projects in communities to protect the rich and diverse landscape, to promote sustainable use of resources and to take action on climate change.

Priorities are ongoing promotion of the importance of our environment and maximising use of government funding streams for the benefit of the Scottish Borders environment and people. Community led energy generation schemes will be encouraged as a means of income generation for Third Sector organisations and communities and organisations will make best use of funding from commercial energy generation.

Advice and Advocacy

The Third Sector is a trusted independent giver of advice and advocacy.

Citizens Advice Bureaux in the Scottish Borders provide free and impartial advice on a variety of subjects including Debt, Welfare Benefits, Housing, Employment and Relationships.

The current economic climate has dramatically increased the number of Borderers in financial difficulties seeking help and assistance and this has placed enormous burdens on the volunteer advisers. Between April and December, 2010 the CABx dealt with over 500 debt cases valued in excess of £6,000,000. Since 2008 the amount of requests for help has increased by 55%.

In difficult economic times advice and advocacy services face increased demand through stress and concern caused by job loss financial difficulties and cuts in services. Advocacy also enables users and carers to voice their opinions and needs by supporting the person centred planning approach in health and social care and empowering individuals to make their choices and opinions clear.

Priorities are to further develop advocacy services and to continue to provide advice to increasing numbers of local people at a time when funding is tight.

Community Participation

Active citizens are the heart of strong communities and the Third Sector supports communities to play a meaningful role in local decision making and service provision. The Third Sector provides opportunities for individuals to participate and grow through involvement on management committees, volunteering opportunities, network meetings to share experiences and such organisations as Scottish Borders Elder Voice.

Community Councillors are volunteers who provide a local voice in decision making. They have the potential to play a major role in active communities.

To maximise the capacity of local people to find local solutions to local problems they need information, support to run efficient organisations, access to funds and physical resources such as buildings or land.

Communities working in partnership with statutory bodies can often maximise success provided communities are valued as equal partners by statutory bodies and that communication between partners is excellent.

Priorities are maintaining and supporting voluntary commitment and sourcing support from infrastructure organisations which are stretched.

Scottish Borders Third Sector Forum

The Third Sector in the Scottish Borders embraces over 2000 voluntary, community, charitable and social enterprise organisations working across a vast spectrum of social, physical and economic activity. The Third Sector in contributes to Building Strong Communities, a Range of Services/Support and Policy making and Planning

This leaflet is our opportunity to present information on the role of Third Sector and the Third Sector Forum.



Third Sector Forum

The Third Sector Forum brings together voluntary, community and social enterprise networks and forums to provide opportunities for discussion, a common voice for Third Sector organisations throughout the Scottish Borders, sharing of good practice and identification and provision of training. The Forum also lobbies on behalf of the Sector and acts as a liaison group with statutory partners involved in Community Planning. Members who attend meetings are responsible for two-way communication with their network members.

The Third Sector Forum is key to the role of the Third Sector Partnership (see overleaf) and is facilitated by the Partnership. It is also responsible for Third Sector issues arising from the Scottish Borders Compact.

Member Organisations

Borders Citizens Advice Network	Volunteer Centre Borders
Scottish Borders Housing Network	Youth Borders
The Bridge	Berwickshire Association for Voluntary Service
Borders Voluntary Community Care Forum	Borders Childcare Partnership
Scottish Borders Elder Voice	Scottish Borders Community Council Network
Borders Disability Forum	Scottish Borders Environment Partnership
Borders Community Transport Network	Specialist Voluntary Youth Providers
Borders Social Enterprise Chamber	Scottish Borders Voluntary Sports
Councillor Len Wyse, Scottish Borders Council Voluntary Sector Champion	

Advisors: Scottish Borders Council, NHS Borders, Lothian and Borders Police

For more information contact : Borders Third Sector Partnership 01896 755370

Borders Third Sector Partnership (Support and Volunteering)

The Borders Third Sector Partnership (BTSP) provides support to our voluntary and community groups, volunteers and social enterprises. The BTSP believes that strong communities are places where the talents and skills of local residents are identified, valued and used and ample opportunities are provided for all to develop new skills needed to thrive in a changing world. The capacity of the BTSP to work with our communities is crucial to the development of these skills.

By growing the capacity of local people, the BTSP supports our Borders communities; building strong social networks founded on high levels of volunteering and skilled support. The Borders Third Sector Partnership is pivotal to enhancing community assets of all kinds, effective community-led planning and stronger local governance. The BTSP acts as the contact for Community Planning and liaises with the Third Sector Forum to provide quality representation of the Sector on a wide range of partnership groups.

Priorities for the BTSP are providing training and information, supporting recruitment and support of volunteers, providing good practice guides, project and business planning, networking opportunities, promotion of the sector, representation of the sector and supporting income generation by the sector

Community Care

The Third Sector provides a wide range of services across community care to the population of the Scottish Borders, including Mental Health, Drug & Alcohol Dependency, Unpaid Carers, Learning and Physical Disabilities, Housing and Older People's Services. These services are often commissioned by Scottish Borders Council and NHS Borders. The sector is pioneering in new approaches to 'filling the gaps' in services and meeting changing needs, in many cases securing external and national funding to pilot and sustain such projects.

Third Sector community care organisations face increases in demand as an ageing Borders population means an increase in long term & complex conditions, and as poverty and deprivation become key factors in the health and wellbeing of individuals across the region. This is compounded by the loss of external funding as well as cuts to contracts with statutory agencies.

Priorities for Community Care organisations are to change and develop with the demography and needs of the Scottish Borders, to continue to identify new services in response to need and demand and to ensure that user and carers are involved in policy and service development.

Children and Young People

The Third Sector provides 45% of the pre-school education in Scottish Borders and delivers a range of services for very young children and their families through the 35 playgroups and parent & toddler groups. 50% of out of school care is provided by the Sector.

Play Borders provides networking opportunities and a range of services for its members.

The Third Sector is an important source of support for young people in the region. There are youth projects, groups and non-uniformed clubs across the Scottish Borders region. YouthBorders provides networking opportunities and representation and is leading on a project to strengthen local community based youth work providers, by enabling them to work together, through joint working and working across the whole of their localities.

The Third Sector also provides a wide range of specialist services for more vulnerable children and young people and these providers work together through a network.

All the above organisations face challenges with specific legislation around the protection of vulnerable children and young people and the need to obtain greater qualifications

Third Sector Children's and Young People's groups are ideally placed to provide support to children and young people, and to work to enable young people to become contributors to their communities.

Priorities are representation of the children's and youth sectors at strategic and partnership groups, sustainability of organisations, and training for staff, volunteers and management committee members

Some Facts and Figures

1282 people are employed by 3rd sector care organisations. Over 4600 volunteers are actively engaged in the health and social care sector with over 2000 of them undertaking direct service provision

Citizens' Advice Bureaux helped 17,828 Borderers gain £5,269,245

2152 volunteers actively engaged in sport and four out of every five sport coaches are volunteers.

CVSs helped organisations to draw in virtually £3m of external funding towards regeneration and community buildings.

'Formal' volunteering alone is estimated to be worth £35m per year to the Scottish Borders economy.

Sport and Arts

Participation in voluntary led sport and physical activity is open to all develops a lifetime healthy culture and improves health and wellbeing and leads to more vibrant communities which brings an economic benefit. Third Sector organisations provides competitive team and individual sports such as football, tennis, rugby and swimming and also provides opportunities for recreational physical activity.

The Third Sector provides a huge volunteer and coaching base and much of the sport in communities relies wholly on the sector for its survival.

The Third Sector also provides our swimming pools and sports centres.

Third Sector arts and cultural organisations provide cultural activity and add to community wellbeing through a wide range of activities including local festivals, visual arts, craft groups, drama and music groups and therapeutic groups across all ages. The Sector contributes to sustaining the culture of Scottish Borders by the provision of activities in communities.

Priorities are to maintain the number of volunteers and to provide the support and training they need. It is also a priority to maintain sports facilities and arts venues so that community activity can continue and grow.

Rurality

The Third Sector plays a key role in the development of thriving and sustainable rural communities.

Transport is an essential commodity for people in the rural Scottish Borders and Community Transport is available to all residents through a variety of Third Sector organisations which collaborate through a community transport network. The main users are those with disabilities or mobility problems, wheelchair passengers, housebound and not for profit community groups. This valuable enables people who are unable to access alternative transport to be socially included and able to participate.

Third Sector organisations are vital to rural Resilience Planning as is demonstrated in severe winter weather when the Mountain Rescue service provided transport.

There are 90 Village Halls and many other community buildings throughout the Scottish Borders which are managed by voluntary committees and they provide local access to services and activities to communities which are some distance from statutory provision. They share information and good practice through Federations.

The Third Sector has major involvement in local festivals, including civic weeks, agricultural events and other annual festivals. In addition many hold community events of their own in localities.

A priority for community buildings is sustainability, whilst keeping the services offered affordable for local people. Community Transport priorities include continuing to provide an affordable service in the face of increased demand. All the above prioritise recruitment and support of volunteers.