

# **SOCIAL ENTREPRENEURS NETWORK**

## **CONSULTATION EVENT**

**18/10/06**

This was the inaugural meeting of the proposed Social Entrepreneurs Network for Bournemouth, Dorset and Poole. Participants were consulted about what barriers they faced to developing their initiatives and what they wanted the new network to be.

### **BARRIERS TO DEVELOPMENT**

- Time. People felt that they had often underestimated the time needed to develop their projects and were also pressured with work commitments
- Funding and particularly continuity of funding
- Continuity of interest from funders and beneficiaries
- Marketing and access to marketing skills
- Affordable venues open at appropriate times
- Having to work on your own with no one to talk through issues. Though sometimes working on your own was a positive aspect
- Accessing people who want the service
- Recruiting and training volunteers
- Identifying and establishing need
- Identifying and defining product
- Motivating others
- Communicating in a way which involves people
- Control. Letting go. Delegating and sharing vision
- Fear of competition and plagiarism
- Legal structures. Directors and Trustees
- Lack of a track record
- Investing time in personal development and networking

Some solutions were suggested

- Trade event was a suggestion to increase exposure.
- Developing marketing and PR skills
- Developing a brand
- Motivated co-ordinator
- Systems-Live Action Plan
- Training and skills development
- Having a PO Box No.
- Software e.g. Project
- Training in time management

## WHAT KIND OF A NETWORK

- Social Entrepreneurs was queried as a title
- Should have a forum and e.network
- Local and national
- Encourage new sparky people
- Not just a talking shop
- Linking to new and other networks
- Support people who are lone working
- Have a contact sheet
- Helps with publicity
- Professional development with guest speakers.
- Once a month, 6-weekly. Various intervals were suggested
- Funding updates
- Funding application workshops
- Positive news feedback
- Fun not worthy
- Inter supporting
- Attending each others projects
- Encouraging others to deliver
- Needed a name with Social Entrepreneurs Network as a strapline, Names suggested: 'The Den', 'Fantastic Gateway', 'Fly to the Moon'
- Extend to small businesses via other networks
- Extend membership to other social entrepreneurs
- Formal and informal opportunities
- Skills audit directory
- Short networking events strictly controlled to all about a minute or a minute and a half for each person. Could include a talk by a successful social entrepreneur or a presentation such as by Business Link
- Breakfast meetings or early evening networking meetings
- How to tap into major donors
- How to access funding through corporate social responsibility
- Request that meetings were not on a Monday or Friday
- Meeting venues should have parking and refreshments should be provided.
- Website should have web links for guest speakers.
- We should not seek to define who social entrepreneurs are. They can identify themselves