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Chairman's Introduction

I have really enjoyed the year as Chairman of Ledbury CVA. I would like to thank the staff, volunteers and trustees for making the CVA such a thriving organisation.

Geoff Knock retired at the end of December 2008. As Geoff did not want a formal gathering the trustees recognised his service to the CVA with a gift and our sincere thanks for all the work he had done for the CVA and for Ledbury.

In April of 2008 we welcomed Tess Brooks- Sheppard to run the volunteer section of the CVA. Tess is dynamic in her approach to the work and we have seen many developments since she has joined us. We hope that Tess will spend many happy years with the CVA.

The board of trustees welcomed Hazel Turner from Colwall. Hazel replaced Nicky Carless as the representative from Colwall Parish Council. We also received the resignation of Mr Mike Robins. We would like to thank both trustees for their service to the CVA.

The building received a makeover during October and November. Mr Michael Howard, the owner of the building, was keen to respond to our request for decoration of the external façade. The staff and skip made the interior look more spacious. The Mobility Centre makeover was funded by us with a donation of a skip and the job being done by a local young man Simon Davies.

It was my great pleasure to host the CVA Christmas Party. Over forty people attended the function in December. It was an occasion when volunteers could actually meet each other, as in many cases they do not meet during the course of their work for the CVA.

We have been able to secure grants to enable us to continue working in the community and look forward to developing new projects. We were fortunate also to be remembered in the will of a local lady. In the current climate of financial unease I am confident the CVA will continue to give the good service it has always given. We rely on the community for our survival and hope we provide the community with services that make life a little easier.

As you will read in the report the CVA is a strong organisation but that can only be maintained by the dedication of staff and volunteers so please give your support.

Our offices are open every day from 9.30-12.30 pm please feel free to drop in and see what we are doing and even offer to volunteer if you feel like it.

Jann Robinson -- Chairman



Community Voluntary Action is an umbrella organisation supporting and encouraging voluntary activity in its area of benefit.

It is made up of representatives of bodies sharing common area of interest and brings together organisations and groups in the voluntary sector to link common goals with those of the statutory sector.

Area of Benefit





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Community Development & Support Services for Voluntary Groups

During the course of the year we have been engaged in a wide variety of Community Development work including the provision of infrastructure support services to the local voluntary and community sector.

Both embryo and established local groups have sought assistance from us, on many different topics, and we have been pleased to be able to help them with appropriate information and advice.

Work to facilitate routes of representation, liaison and consultation for voluntary groups has continued to be undertaken jointly, with the other Development Agencies of Herefordshire, through the Voluntary Sector Assembly project. In addition we have been collaboratively working with the other members of the Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium to enhance the provision, marketing and delivery of our various infrastructure support services to the local voluntary and community sector. Ledbury was also part of the partnership with HVA and six other partners in creating a funding bid to the National Lottery resulting in funding for a new post in Ledbury. As part of the R.E.A.C.H project the post holder will support rural groups to develop and grow within the Ledbury area and 23 surrounding parishes.

Our quarterly published newsletter has continued to provide a medium for local groups to publicise their activities, and our Community Lunches/Volunteer coordinators forums have afforded local groups an opportunity to network, and to benefit from informative presentations given by our own project staff or by guest speakers.



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The Volunteer Centre (formally the Volunteer Bureau) has gone from strength to strength and continued to grow over the last year. There has been an increase in the number of volunteers looking to be matched with volunteering opportunities in Ledbury and the surrounding area. The increase in volunteering has been the result of increased advertising with the 'Volunteer Fair' in May, our stand at the Carnival in August, a stall at John Masefield School in September, and a stand at the Christmas fair at the Children's Centre. The Volunteer Centre has also secured regular advertising of volunteering opportunities in the Hereford Journal, Ledbury and Colwall Focus and other local newsletters. Another increase in volunteering was a result of the campaign for more volunteers with a flyer about the centre and all opportunities, being delivered to every home in Ledbury. The Volunteer Centre also continues to have local groups and volunteers register their interest with our V-Base for entry on to the national database with www.do-it.org.uk

The Volunteer Centre has seen a physical transformation over this last year with all rooms being cleared and redecorated. This occurred with help from volunteers in National Volunteer Week in October filling a 10 yard skip.

The Volunteer Centre has also created information points within each of the 23 parishes of Ledbury where individuals can access information about the service of the Volunteer Centre and CVA as a whole. The Volunteer Centre has also continued to help a number of small and developing local charities and projects to start up and find resources to help them to grow.

The Volunteer Centre has also worked along side the V Youth Volunteering project at HVA to develop volunteering opportunities in Ledbury and the surround area for young people. There has also been joint working with H.E.L.P to develop joint venture to provide volunteering opportunities and education for those for whom English is a second language which is due to start in May 2009.

The market research that the Volunteer Centre under-took with help from Herefordshire Council in August, resulted in a funding application being made to Lloyds TSB for 'The Stepping Stone' project supporting volunteers with additional needs.

The Volunteer Centre has also continued to hold Community Lunches throughout the year with volunteers and organisations being able to come along and have some input to the Volunteering Code currently being created as part of the Compact, and find out about sustainability and the Sign Posting Scheme.

The Volunteer Centres volunteer Jean Harper was joined by Peter Barnard and Kelly Bicknell this year helping with all the added paperwork from the increase in advertising.

Project Co-ordinator
Tess



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LEDBURY SHOPMOBILITY & INDEPENDENT LIVING CENTRE

The past 12 months has seen many changes to or Shopmobility. We disposed of old equipment and office items making more room. We had the sink area refurbished and retiled and the office was painted. Smaller improvements such as a vacuum cleaner and a small fridge were welcomed by our volunteers.

Our range of equipment includes: Electric Scooters, Crutches, Pressure Cushions, Walking Sticks Wheel Walkers, Manual Wheelchairs, Commodes, Wheelchair and scooter covers: *(enabling clients to use equipment in inclement weather).*

A small electric scooter and very nice wheeled walking/shopping aid were donated during this period.

The following volunteers helped to run the Mobility Centre this period:- David Turner, Dennis Greensmith, David Goodwin, and Alistair Snook. We also welcomed Hilary Underwood in as our Saturday volunteer. Sadly Dennis Greensmith had to finish and we thank him again for all he has done in helping us provide this service. Thank you all for your support: without you the centre would not operate.

Members of staff at the Ledbury Council Office have always been helpful and we thank them for their continued support. We extend our thanks also to members of staff at Halo who accept equipment returned out of the mobility centre opening hours at weekends.

The continued financial support throughout the year of the Eveson Charitable Trust and Herefordshire Council is much appreciated

Reg Taylor
Project Coordinator.



Ledbury Town Council



**The Eveson
Charitable Trust**



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Community Transport

Ring and Ride

The Ring & Ride service has been in operation since 1989 and during this period from establishment to date the service has again experienced constant user growth. During the past year, single passenger journeys, provided for regular, existing and new clients, have again averaged in excess of 350 per month.

An Awards ceremony took place on Saturday 28th February 2009 at The Kindle Centre, Hereford. Volunteer drivers and desk volunteers from our Ledbury 'Ring and Ride' service were awarded ten and fifteen year service awards.

The ex SAS soldier 'Brummie' Stokes MBE, BEM presented 15 year awards to Rosemary Ballard, Maggie Clarke, Cicely Palmer, Kate Greenall, Jessie Williams, Fred Drayson, Gwen Rose, Christine Bebbington and Alan Mason. Ten years awards were presented to Liz Ogilive-Smals, Barbara and John Dutton, Brian Meadows, Rex Chamberlain, Michael Burke, Arthur Wrench and John Astbury.

Our Ring and Ride monthly newsletters have proved to be popular and are an excellent method of passing information to our volunteer drivers.

In addition to journeys to Herefordshire located hospitals, clients have also been transported to hospitals in Birmingham, Worcester, Gloucester and Cheltenham. During this period we continued to transport people to and from MIND in Hereford. More recently we received requests to take people to and from the Day Centre on Tuesdays, Wednesdays and Thursdays.

We again record our gratitude to our dedicated Ring & Ride Volunteer drivers and our Journey booking (R&R desk) volunteers and their supporting families. Without our volunteers, who willingly give freely of their time, we would be unable to provide this much used and much valued service.

Reg Taylor
Ring & Ride Coordinator





Community Transport

The stalwart 16 seat Mercedes we own and the smaller, Herefordshire Council provided Scudo continue in service and we have said fare-well to the old, tired Fiat and took ownership of a shiny new Iveco, 12 seat plus driver, minibus.

The Council intend to sell us the Scudo on April 1st at a nominal fee and all is in hand for the transfer, etc. Though this is aging we should still have considerable use from it and the community benefit. The Mercedes and the new Iveco are sound vehicles.

We covered 11,700 miles this year. (5876 in the Mercedes, 3575 Iveco and 2249 in the Scudo).

Overall we continued to serve many of the same clubs and groups in Ledbury and District and again had the contract for the Day Centre awarded to us.

The Ledbury Youth First group made little use of us in the last year possibly due to their own restructuring. Also numbers had dropped in a couple of other groups, e.g. VIPs, (sight impaired) and Day Centre that meant we made more economical use of either the Scudo alone or Iveco that worked well for all.

In the last few weeks the outlook has improved, with rising numbers and more clubs leading to requests for more of our involvement.

Unfortunately the Town Council found they could not continue funding the weekly town shoppers service that helped up to a dozen local ladies to the shops and other businesses on a Friday for a considerable time. The advent of free bus passes was a pre cursor to this together with other considerations I'm sure but the service we offer helps support the individual more. As a result there has been a push towards a 'shopping club' that is about to start in April with a small club fee being charged and we hope with donation(s) by local providers.

Many thanks must go to Ian Wheeler, who again, not only helps individual groups but supports us constantly and reliably with his driving.

Peter Pearson and John Astbury, with our own trustee, Graham Lloyd, must also receive our gratitude for their help.

Not wishing to get into lists of names we have in the last year had great support from several, including two new volunteers, who have given their time to help with driving. My personal thanks to the individuals who have worked to maintain our service and helped me.

In spite of a difficult year with spiralling fuel costs, some horrible weather together with a need to tighten the purse strings, all has run quite smoothly. The coming few months look more settled and much brighter with enquiries for new bookings and hopefully a more competitive price structure for the one off trips with high mileage.

Project Co-ordinator

Clive Edwards



Ledbury Town Council





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Herefordshire Voluntary Sector Assembly

Herefordshire Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA) is a forum set up by voluntary and community organisations operating in Herefordshire. Through the VSA, the sector can debate issues of common concern at an annual assembly and elect (or select) representatives to sit on strategic groupings such as Herefordshire Partnership. Geoff Knock used to attend meetings of the VSA steering group on behalf of Community and Voluntary Action Ledbury and District. On behalf of the VSA I would like to thank Geoff for his contribution and efforts on behalf of the VSA.

In the past year (2008 -2009) VSA Reps have been involved in the selection processes for senior local public sector appointments; the review of Herefordshire Partnership's Local Area Agreement (LAA); the setting of local targets and the inclusion of NI6 'Participation of regular volunteering'; as well as making sure that the sector is featured strongly in the narrative that accompanies the LAA, known as the 'Story of Place'.

In December 2008 Herefordshire Partnership was restructured. Six policy and delivery groups were created including two new groupings, 'Stronger Communities' and 'Health and Wellbeing'. This prompted a review Voluntary and Community Sector representation and participation in Herefordshire.

The VSA in partnership with The Alliance, HIC and the Community Development Partnership set up a steering group, drawn from all partners to manage this review, which is jointly funded by Herefordshire Partnership and NAVCA's Big Lottery sponsored 'Improving Local Partnerships Unit'. The steering group appointed nationally acclaimed specialist, Hasnah Sheriff to undertake the review, which began this March and will be completed in June 2009.

The most recent Assembly, held in January 2009, was highly successful. Delegates heard from Kevin Curley, Chief Executive of the National Association of Community and Voluntary Action about the opportunities and threats currently facing the sector. They were also able to put questions to both the Leader and Chief Executive of Herefordshire Council.

The VSA would like to thank Herefordshire Partnership for its continued support, and NAVCA for contributing to the review of representation.

For more information about the Review of Participation and Representation in Herefordshire, or about the work of the VSA visit www.thevsa.org.uk or call VSA Coordinator Sue Black on 01432 343 932.





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Ledbury & District Access Group

The Access Group has continued to hold quarterly meetings with our colleague in the Hereford Access Committee and our joint meetings with Ledbury Town Council, Herefordshire Council and other interested groups.

These meetings have been very productive and during the last year we have seen the installation of a pedestrian crossing in New Street. A first for Ledbury! We hope a pedestrian crossing will be installed in Bye Street during the coming year but the location is presenting Herefordshire Council with problems.

The Access Group is still a focus for disability issues in Ledbury and we are currently looking again at Woodleigh Road and the junction with New Street, dropped crossing requirements in Homend Crescent and the general condition of existing crossings, many of which have been damaged by vehicles.

The Access Group is pleased to respond to any access issues but people with internet access can report pavement and road problems directly to Herefordshire Council using streets@herefordshire.gov.uk

Access to our lovely old buildings has long been a problem but we are pleased to report that the renovation of the Old Cottage Hospital has allowed all work units to be wheelchair accessible from the Homend. In addition there is a fully accessible toilet.

We are following with close interest the renovation of the Master's House and the new library. The installation of an automatic door on the Master's House has allowed full access to the TIC and Info in Herefordshire.

I would like to thank all who support the Access Group.

Roger Hughes (Access Group Leader)



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Acknowledgements

Community Voluntary Action is grateful for the support received by way of annual grants, donations from local groups and individuals. We also receive 'help in kind' by way of advice, information and encouragement from many individuals, organisations and statutory authorities. Our thanks is extended to everyone who has contributed to the overall success of Community Voluntary Action during the past year, with special thanks to Committee members, staff and dedicated volunteers involved in the various activities helping to provide and support numerous community services.

Herefordshire Council	Ledbury Town Council	Colwall Parish Council
Eveson Charitable Trust	Alexandra Rose Day	Stretton Grandison Parish Council
Advantage West Midlands	McKechnie Foundation	
Herefordshire Partnership	Ring & Drivers –Donations	
Les Davies Accountant	R & C B Masefield- Solicitors	
Community First	Sundry Donations & Supporters	

Personnel 2008/2009

Membership of the Council is open to all voluntary and community groups within the Community Voluntary Action geographical 'Area of Benefit'. The Council normally meets once a year, at the Annual General Meeting when it elects honorary officers and other Executive Committee members who develop and implement policies and strategies for the organisation. The Executive Committee meets bi-monthly; Sub-Committees, Project Steering Groups and Working Parties are set up as appropriate during the year.

Dr Jann Robinson **Staff:**

Chairman

Graham Lloyd

Treasurer

Chief Officer

Geoff Knock (retired
31/12/08)

Anne Bradshaw

Finance Officer

Clive Edwards

Executive Members

Project Co-ordinators

Cllr.K.Francis

Mr. T Lafford

Reg Taylor

M.B.J Buttery

Mr. J Meredith

Cllr H Turner

Cllr M.

Mrs U Morgan

Harding

Cllr P. Watts

Office Volunteers:

Pat Symonds, Jean Harper

Ring & Ride Clerical Support:

Christine Bebbington, Maggie Clark, Gwen Rose, Rosemary Ballard. June Smethurst, Margaret Phillips, Rosalie Cross, Lorraine Lumsden

Ledbury Volunteer Centre Volunteers:

Jean Harper, Peter Burnard Kelly Bicknell



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We hope you will find the Annual Report of interest and would welcome any comments or feedback on any of the content.

Contact Us

General Enquires	01531 636006
Ring and Ride	01531 635503
Shopmobility	01531 636001
Volunteer Centre	01531 635339
Community Transport (Minibus)	01531 636333

You can also email info@voluntaryactionledbury.org.uk

Write to or visit:
Community Voluntary Action
Salter's Yard
Bye Street
Ledbury
Herefordshire
HR8 2AA



Charity Reg No: 700663

We are a member of:



The National Association of Councils for Voluntary Service



Volunteering England