

GRASSROOTS GLASTONBURY CONFERENCE REPORT

17th September 2010

Grassroots Glastonbury aimed to:

- raise awareness of potential of social enterprise to contribute to the rural economy, environment and community
- provide focused networking opportunities
- show how social enterprises can cut costs and be more sustainable by reducing carbon emissions

The conference took place on 17th September 2010 at Glastonbury Town Hall. It was organised by: Somerset Co-operative Services, SECo & Malcolm Allan, with logistical support from Somerset County Council & RISE and sponsored by Somerset Co-operative Services, SECo and The Co-operative. The conference was publicised using a variety of approaches, including posters and postcards, local radio, local press and email. However a straw poll revealed most people heard about it via email. Conference catering – morning coffee and tea, lunch and afternoon tea and cakes was provided by Nick Cottle.



Thanks to Paul Lund for the photo

Attendance

The conference was attended by nearly 100 people, with the majority of attendees came from Somerset, with some people travelling from Devon, Gloucestershire, Hampshire, Bristol and London, but perhaps the furthest travelled was Falmouth in Cornwall, a journey of over 300 miles there and back.

Chair and Speakers

The Conference was chaired By Malcolm Gloak MBE, (Somerset County Council) who recommended social enterprises in the Glastonbury area, such as the Mendip Credit Union. Cllr Gloak also drew attention to the Red Brick Building on the Morelands site which is to be transferred to community ownership as a Society for the Benefit of the Community, with the inclusion of local young people on the Board.

Speakers were Max Comfort of Stroud Common Wealth, Julie Harris of Cosmic and RISE and Kate Hewett of the Devon School for Social Entrepreneurs.

GRASSROOTS GLASTONBURY CONFERENCE REPORT

17th September 2010

Max Comfort - Stroud Common Wealth

As a social entrepreneur and thought-leader, Max works to achieve a high degree of sustainability in his community, Stroud in Gloucestershire, in areas such as affordable housing, community shared workspace, local green power generation and innovative social models of shared living.

Max talked about the importance of community resilience and gave some examples from Stroud, including Exchange, a community enterprise which lets out workshop space, Stroud Com-university and Common Ground Community Supported Agriculture initiative.

Julie Harris - Cosmic

Julie spoke about Ethical IT relates to the way Cosmic do business. As a social enterprise they measure success against the triple bottom line - profit, people and the planet. Cosmic incorporate ethics into the heart of the business, from the people they employ, the products they use and the way they work with customers. Cosmic has fair and collaborative working relationships that allow for change and new ideas.

Cosmic's aim is to improve people's digital lives. They deliver to individuals, businesses, voluntary and community organisations and the public sector, and have over 14 years experience of working at all levels in solving IT challenges and helping people take advantage of new technologies.

Cosmic Ethical IT is a Social Enterprise and has been awarded the Social Enterprise Mark. They are governed by a Board of Directors - both Executive and Non Executive. They are nationally recognised Social Enterprise Ambassadors and act as Regional ICT Champions for the South West. Cosmic was shortlisted in the impact category of the RBS SE 100 Index this year.

Kate Hewett - Devon School for Social Entrepreneurs

Kate Hewett is the Learning Manager at the Devon School for Social Entrepreneurs and she spoke about what it means to be a social entrepreneur. Social entrepreneurs have: clear vision, determination, intelligence, passion, an ability to get things done and authenticity. They look for sustainable responses to local needs.

Kate described the work of the Devon School for Social Entrepreneurs and introduced the audience to some of the students, including Sue Torr MBE who learnt to read at the age of 35 and has gone on to write a book, put on plays and is now establishing a social enterprise; Jan Copley who set up Greenheart, an environmental community organisation working to promote greener lifestyles amongst young people and Malcolm Allan, one of the organizers of the Grassroots Glastonbury Conference, who has a great passion for social enterprise and will be part of the team taking forward the Grassroots network. She said that the school was founded in 1997 by Michael Young (Lord Young of Dartington), a social innovator who'd previously launched the Consumers' Association, the Open University and around 40 other organisations. Lord Young said that "People, given the right opportunity, are capable of remarkable things."

The School for Social Entrepreneurs (SSE) exists to provide training and opportunities to enable people to use their creative and entrepreneurial abilities more fully for social benefit. SSE supports individuals to set up new charities, social enterprises and social businesses across the UK.

The SSE runs practical learning programmes aimed at helping develop the individual

GRASSROOTS GLASTONBURY CONFERENCE REPORT

17th September 2010

entrepreneur and their organisation simultaneously. The SSE believes that social change is people-powered, and that the most valuable assets and resources we have are human ones. Each programme combines specific elements designed to provide an intensive, complete package of support that meets the needs of social entrepreneurs. This person-centred approach has been independently proven to create sustainable, thriving organisations that provide significant, lasting social and economic impact.

Workshops

There was a choice of 3 morning workshops: Communities taking care of themselves, led by Max Comfort, Community shares, led by Alex Lawrie (Somerset Co-operative Services) and Business support for Social Enterprise in the South West, led by Julie Harris. Afternoon workshops included a social enterprise business networking session, led by Kate Whittle, (Somerset Co-operative Services) Local food and the environment, led at very short notice by Nikki Clark (Eastover Organics) and Finance for social enterprise, led by Alex Lawrie and Chapman Harrison/ (Charity Bank).

Offers and Wants

An interactive exercise encouraged conference participants to write up their wants or needs for the development of their social enterprise, as well as any offers of help they felt they could provide. A summary list is attached at the end of this report.

For the plenary session we were joined by Ed Mayo, General Secretary of Co-operatives UK, who described how co-operatives are an ideal means of utilizing skills and talents to create long term viable and sustainable social enterprises. He mentioned football clubs such as Real Madrid and Barcelona which are owned by their supporters and in the UK Manchester United break away supporters have created a successful social enterprise football club. Ed wound up the conference by encouraging participants to build on the positive and enthusiastic response the conference had achieved.

Outcomes

Grassroots Glastonbury achieved its main aim – which was to ensure that the discussion, debates and learning were carried forward in the form of a County-wide network – Grassroots Somerset – which participants were invited to sing up to. Lindy Booth of cascade volunteered to take on the job of organizing a follow-up meeting to discuss setting up and supporting a network for social enterprises to provide mutual support in Somerset.

Feedback

Feedback forms were received from 20 people, with the majority very happy with the conference, especially the speakers. Most people said they thought the conference was well-prepared and well organised. One person commented they would have liked more information on the content of the workshops beforehand, while there were congratulations to Nikki Clark of Eastover Organics on rising to the challenge of leading her workshop at such short notice.

Thanks to Malcolm Allan for his contribution to the report, and Paul Lund for photographs.

GRASSROOTS GLASTONBURY CONFERENCE REPORT

17th September 2010

OFFERS & WANTS *(contact details omitted)*

OFFERS

- Vamped by Kali - Redesigned/recycled clothing for sale; would like to set up a recycled clothing bank
- BSc Hons Environmental Studies - I'm looking for paid work but will also do work on a voluntary / barter / costs basis
- GFM A great way to promote your SE – on community radio Tel: 01458 835299
- Energetics for Kids aged 5 – 15: Energy awareness, through game playing drama and art; allowing children to remain connected to themselves, others and the environment
- Do you want to run an Art Gallery?
- Time; knowledge; enthusiasm
- Management / leadership; Assertiveness / personal development; Training professional / also facilitation, some coaching; Can offer some hours, Taunton based
- e-commerce / website advice

WANTS

- A Treasurer please SECO
- CAR CLUB 4 GLASTONBURY
- Mendip YMCA Board members with business / finance &/or housing experience, training provided
- HOME EDUCATOR - Looking to help set up a 'free' school in Glastonbury
- Young People aged 13-25 with an interest in social enterprise, to help develop a qualification, John Addicott, Somerset Rural Youth Project
- Mendip YMCA; Help to develop supported housing / social enterprise model – less reliant on LA funding – purchase adjoining property
- A lap top – for office/admin; Contact with Phone Co-op; Mutual aid & support
- Volunteers! Eastover Food Co-op
- Online marketing person, P/T paid