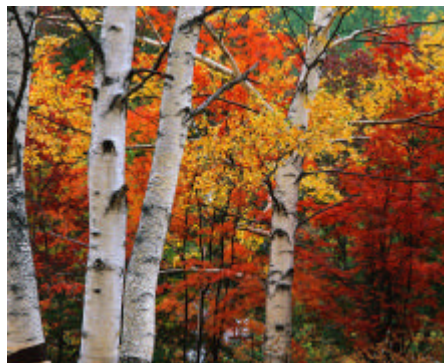


Trustees Together

Promoting and Supporting Trustee Development



AUTUMN 2007

Welcome to the **Fourth** Edition of the newsletter for the East of England's Trustees Together – for you, about you!

Mahesh Mistry

of the Ipswich & Suffolk Indian Association writes:

Why Volunteer?

I came to Ipswich in my late 20's and found that there was not much available for Indian community, especially for my generation, here. At that time, I was freshly coming from India, where I had an exceptional social life, as I could go and visit my friends/family any time of the day or night without any prior arrangements.

In India, when a community wanted something done and they knew that you had certain skills that were needed for the project in hand, the community leaders will approach you and ask for your help. In most cases people approached in this manner gave up their time and volunteered as a sense of duty for the community.

In a similar fashion, I was approached by certain community members and asked, if I could help them by teaching Gujarati language, culture and values to children in the community. Being a young parent myself, I appreciated their dilemma where by the children were slowly forgetting their language and culture because they had little exposure to this, in a town like Ipswich. I agreed to take on this challenge and started a small community school with their help and support.

This experience has taught me the importance of combining and balancing, both cultures of India and England, without confusing the children, whilst making them proud to be part of both communities. This encourages the children to talk about their culture and enhance community cohesion. As a result some children decided to sit their GCSE Gujarati Language and they were all proud that they all passed with A* to C grades.

Four years ago, I was approached by some like minded community members and asked if I would like to come and join the Ipswich & Suffolk Indian Association (ISIA) committee who needed a fresh outlook to the future. I decided to join the committee and felt that despite ISIA doing

excellent work for the Indian and wider community it wasn't being recognised. With a fresh outlook I was asked if I could do something to increase ISIA's profile in the community at large.

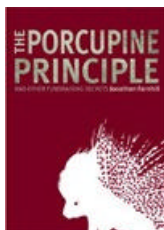
Trying to get volunteers to help you do this is a great challenge because most of the committee members are working full time and have other commitments as well. Despite this we have managed to hold 2 very successful Indian Summer Mela, in partnership with Ip-Art Festival in Christchurch Park, where ISIA's profile has been brought to the forefront because the events were attended by over 5000 people last year and over 8000 this year. Since inception of the Indian Summer Mela 5 years ago the attendance has increased 10 fold.

Being a trustee of ISIA and trying to get momentum and enthusiasm of all who give their time voluntarily and co-ordinating it all was/is a great challenge. But after seeing the results of all the hard work put in, it made us all proud, that we are part of a community which has a rich, lively, varied, culture that combines both East and West.

As a trustee I am also able to promote community cohesion to the public at large by giving a better understanding of different cultures and values. Personally, I feel that I am giving something back to the community by passing on my experience, skills and knowledge.

I was unaware that Trustees & Volunteers can gain additional skills by attending various courses and workshops that are especially designed for them, so that they can then help their voluntary organisations. Having attended such a course I found that the information gained helped me greatly in my role at ISIA.

On the Radar:



The Porcupine Principle

This book is not a 'step by step' fundraising guide, but a means to enable people to reflect on their practice and challenge them to work and think in a different way. It provides a fascinating and humorous look at the field, revealing the sometimes uncomfortable truths about both fundraisers and givers.

Available September from the Directory of Social Change

<http://www.dsc.org.uk>

More



Holiday

The statutory holiday entitlement is changing. The holiday entitlement will increase to 24 days from 1st October 2007 and to 28 days from 1st April 2009. When fully implemented full-time workers will get a minimum entitlement of the current 20 days plus 8 bank holidays each year. For part-time workers, the entitlement is pro rata. These proposals relate to England, Wales and Scotland. The Department for Employment and Learning in Northern Ireland is bringing forward proposals for Northern Ireland.

More information on the changes to statutory holiday entitlement can be found at <http://www.berr.gov.uk/employment/holidays/index.html>

Guidance for employers on how to implement the increase is available on the Business Link website. <http://www.businesslink.gov.uk/bdotg/action/detail?r.s=sl&type=RESOURCES&itemId=1074414822>



TO PAY OR NOT TO PAY?

In the previous edition of the Bulletin we posed the question?

SHOULD TRUSTEES BE PAID?

The new Charities Act includes a provision which allows trustees to be paid for services provided to the charity (other than expenses) in certain circumstances. This provision is not expected to come into force until early 2008

Here are some of your responses:

Payment of Charity Trustees: Just say "No"

Think about this: what is the one feature that distinguishes a charity from any other legal form?

Is it our commitment to the community? No: plenty of social enterprises can demonstrate a solid social commitment.

Is it our principles? No: we certainly don't have a monopoly on principles.

Is it our dependence on volunteers? No: just look at the volunteers in Hospitals or the Police force.

Is it our funding arrangements? No: the public donate money for politics too and commercial corporations regularly receive public monies.

If there is one feature that distinguishes a charity, it is this: we are controlled and governed by people who donate their time freely because they support a particular social purpose or good cause. Charity trustees are unpaid and nor can they benefit in any way from their association with the charity.

It is *this* characteristic that all charities share, and it is *this* characteristic that distinguishes charities from other legal forms.

If it aint broke ...

For many long years, this system worked fine. Everything was simple, the lines were clear, everyone knew where they stood and the principles were easily understood by supporters, funders, donors and members of the public.

Britain often claims a pragmatic and commonsense approach to law, and you might think that this was one area where we had actually got it right. I did.

But then these crystal clear waters were stirred and muddied in 2004 when new rules were brought in to allow the payment of trustees in certain circumstances where there are explicit legal powers.

The Charity Commission's guidance recognises that "unpaid trusteeship has been one of the defining features of the charitable sector". But it goes on to state: "there may be circumstances in which it is in the interests of a charity for one or more of the trustees to be paid."

Really? I cannot think of a single circumstance that might justify a charity risking its reputation and good name in this way. Perhaps I lack imagination.

But if I do, the Charity Commission are there to help with some examples:

- in some cases, the trustees may have a discretionary power which allows them to employ one or more of their number to provide specific goods or services to their charity over and above normal trustee duties;
- a trustee professional (e.g. solicitor or an accountant) may have the power or right to charge the charity for providing their professional services to the charity, or for merely acting as trustee.

Oh dear, oh dear.

Maybe there are occasions when a trustee might say, "don't pay them, I could do it cheaper." But this is precisely when someone should say, "no".

Because no matter how good a deal it is for the charity, and no matter how well intentioned, and no matter how well the deal is presented, people will be suspicious. Some will just feel slightly uncomfortable. Some will smell a rat. Some will hear alarm bells ringing. Some will see dirty deals stitched up behind closed doors. For everyone, it will leave a nasty taste in the mouth.

However I ought to make clear that this is not about the repayment to trustees of legitimate out-of-pocket expenses!

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As a general principle, trustees should not be paid for fulfilling their basic voluntary duties (for example, attending committee meetings, acting as secretary) for the organisation they serve. However, I do think they should be offered financial recompense for duties over and above their original commitment. This would include attending training, participating in organisational review, etc. The question then is what is an appropriate payment, given that individual circumstances vary widely?

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My honest opinion is no they should not get paid, the role of a trustee is as a volunteer. If we start to go down this route could this not start a precedence that other volunteers who equally play a vital part in an organisation's delivery should feel they get paid?

What I feel is that all trustees should be encouraged to claim out of pocket expenses i.e. travel and telephone calls and perhaps be given some remuneration for work over and above the usual trustee activities (if they attend a training course and have to take a day's holiday from their work or if they take on some additional research that takes up more time). Claiming of out of pocket expenses is not a practice many trustees are comfortable with and many organisations fail to offer, by making it a regular part of the process all trustees will feel able to make a claim.

To contradict this in a real world if organisations offered trustees payment it may encourage more people to become a trustee and to commit to their role more. However, to my mind this would

then attract people for all the wrong reasons. It may help to alleviate some of the problems with recruitment of trustees!!!

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My short answer to this is that Trustees should not be paid.

My long answer would be that they should be paid BUT this would fundamentally alter the nature of Trustee recruitment and retention. I do not believe that the voluntary sector is prepared for this radical shift in thinking. I think that as things stand there is already enough 'trustee careerism' which prevents true community representation. If Trustees were paid I can only imagine that selection may well shift toward 'those in the loop' rather than a broader spectrum of society.

RESOURCES



eLearning to Drive has changed its name!

Go to the newly **REVISED** easier to use website

www.trusteElearning.org.uk

Launching at the NCVO Annual Trustee Conference Monday October 8th

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW ABOUT BEING A TRUSTEE

It is **still** a **free** flexible toolkit **supported by the NCVO Governance Hub** that you can work through at **your own pace** in **your own time**. Pick and mix the modules that are of interest to you or view it as a refresher course or introduction to Trusteeship. Develop your skills and knowledge to enable you to lead your organisation more effectively.

Contact ionne.hammond@savo.co.uk with your local news on Trusteeship or ring 01473 273273



eMAIL
eMAIL

THINK
before you write

and

THINK
before you press
the button

- Would I say this to the person's face?
- Could my e mail be misinterpreted?
- Have I included any confidential information?
- Could this be an area of conflict or provocative?

Do

- create a good impression by using an opening e.g. 'Hello Adam' and closing e.g. 'Regards Eve'.
- use a descriptive subject line.
- only cc those people who really need to read it.
- try to include all important information concisely in the first paragraph and not the last as many people may only skim through.
- if you have a request within your e mail define it clearly, indicate a timetable and give background information.
- If you email is not a request then label it FYI (For your information).
- respond in formal or chatty tone depending on the e mail you receive to establish a rapport.
- correct spelling and grammar.
- remember to ensure that the subject matter is clearly stated if your correspondence is ongoing and you include someone 'in the loop' at a later stage,

Do not

- use jargon or abbreviations that may not be understood
- send your e mail without re-reading to catch and correct any mistakes.

Remember

- email messages are permanent even when you delete them from your inbox or outbox. They can be recovered from your organisation's network and even from your own computer hard drive.