



COMPACT

MOORLANDS TOGETHER

**An agreement between the Voluntary
and Community Sector and Statutory
Agencies in the Staffordshire Moorlands**

8th June 2004

Message from Reverend Matthew Parker

The voluntary and community sector plays a vital role by promoting the health and well being of our local communities. Voluntary agencies increasingly provide services to people in need, community organisations act as the glue that binds people together in a common cause. The work of hundreds of organisations and thousands of volunteers enriches the lives of us all.

The role of the voluntary sector was identified in the first Staffordshire Moorlands Community Strategy published in August 2003. One of the ambitions of this strategy is to ensure that we enhance the role of the sector by developing improved partnership working. It seemed natural therefore that the Local Strategic Partnership should as one of its early actions seek to support the developing role of the voluntary and community sector and to assist statutory sector agencies to build productive relationships with the sector.

This Compact provides a framework, which will help to guide the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and statutory agencies. It recognises that we have complementary roles in the development and delivery of public services, and that we all have an interest in developing a vibrant and involved sector. It is the communities of Staffordshire Moorlands that will be the ultimate beneficiaries of our strengthened relationship.

Rev Matthew Parker
Chair of Moorlands Together Local Strategic Partnership

**A framework document within which
Voluntary and Community groups and
Statutory partners can understand what
to expect from each other**

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A Local Compact agreement between the Voluntary and Community Sector and the Statutory Agencies in the Staffordshire Moorlands

Participating partners include the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Strategic Partnership, the Council for Voluntary Service, Primary Care Trust and the District Council. There are many more local groups interested in and contributing to this document.

Status of this Compact

1. This document is a series of agreements on the relationship between the wide range of community and voluntary groups working in the Staffordshire Moorlands and local statutory agencies. It is not a legally binding document. Its authority is derived from its endorsement by the participating partners and the support deriving from wide consultation within our community.
2. It is intended to be the guide document wherever and whenever the statutory agencies and community or voluntary groups come into contact and work together for the benefit of our community.
3. The document is not exhaustive and should be seen as the framework and enabling mechanism to allow working partnerships to flourish. The Compact is a 'living' document that can be moulded by additions to accommodate each partnership. The active partners will review it at regular intervals (at least every 12 months) via the ongoing implementation process and joint implementation group.

WE AGREE THE FOLLOWING:

Shared Vision and Principles

1. This Compact shows the commitment of the Voluntary and Community groups and the Statutory Agencies to work together in partnership. The aim is to provide the best possible range of services to the people of the Staffordshire Moorlands.
2. It will support and develop the voluntary and community sector, whilst recognising its independence.
3. It recognises that voluntary and community activity is fundamental to the development of a safe and vibrant community for all, and that volunteers make a vital contribution. The activity of such groups is distinct from but complementary to the statutory agencies work.
4. The activity of all the partners will be undertaken under the shared principles of integrity, objectivity, transparency and trust.
5. The right of voluntary and community groups to campaign, within the law, to further their aims is recognised by all partners.
6. All partners recognise the importance of promoting diversity and equality of opportunity for all people, regardless of race, age, ability, gender, sexual orientation or religion. All community and voluntary groups (including black and minority ethnic groups) will be supported and welcomed, wherever they occur in our community.

Policy and Consultation

1. The areas of strategy, policymaking, service planning and provision, and setting of budgets are recognised as having important implications for partnership working. These activities have a crucial effect on the work of voluntary and community groups.
2. Consultation with mutual partners, who may be affected, will be built into forward planning at an early stage on all issues likely to affect partners. The purpose of the consultation will always be clear and processes transparent.
3. Sufficient time and resources will be provided to allow community and voluntary sector partners to participate in the consultation process and to respond adequately. Response times will be in line with National guidelines. Normally giving 12 weeks for community and voluntary groups to respond in an effective and acceptable way. The absolute minimum will be 8 weeks.
4. Confidentiality will be maintained by all parties and the use of responses limited to the original area of consultation. The rules on Data Protection and other laws must be observed by all.
5. Specific action will be taken to ensure that socially excluded or disadvantaged groups and communities are consulted.
6. Service users, volunteers, members and supporters will be informed and consulted, and their views will be accurately communicated to partners by all groups, e.g. voluntary and community sector participants. The basis upon which views are represented will always be made clear.

7. Where needed, an independent mediation and advisory service should be sought to resolve any dispute in applying this Compact. A code of practice on mediation and dispute resolution will be produced by the partnership, through the implementation group.

Volunteering

1. Every citizen will be encouraged to exercise their right to contribute to the well being of their community through voluntary activity.
2. We respect and appreciate that people in our community choose to give of their time and efforts freely, without coercion or pressure from others.
3. We recognise the principle that volunteering should not replace statutory provision or paid employment.
4. Volunteers should not incur additional costs as result of volunteering. Volunteering is about giving time not money.
5. Additional effort will be made to ensure socially excluded and disadvantaged individuals are able to volunteer.
6. We will actively recognise and promote the value of volunteering, sharing volunteering merit through local and national initiatives.
7. We will provide training; support and guidance when it is needed to ensure the efforts of volunteers are effective. The use of best practice principles will be encouraged.

Community and Voluntary Groups

The Voluntary and Community Sector in the Moorlands is made up of individuals, groups, networks, traditions, faiths and patterns of behaviour. They share the same physical neighbourhoods, living conditions or common understandings and interests. It is the community itself taking action to get things done. Often its activity is informal and sometimes invisible. These groups, small or large often share values such as, mutuality, equality, social justice and co-operation to deliver local needs at a personal level. A healthy and sustainable community in the Moorlands should include a wide range of community groups, which helps the Moorlands create a strong sense of belonging.

1. Community organisations have expert knowledge about needs in their community and can inform the voluntary and statutory sectors about those needs and the targeting of appropriate resources. They can highlight areas such as the difficulty in access to work and services in the rural areas.
2. They can act as the voice of a community and should be given encouragement and support in that essential role.
3. Community organisations need to be assisted to encourage them to be inclusive of their own diverse communities.
4. Community groups can often work in isolation and may miss important information and opportunities to participate in networking structures. Support to bring these groups into the local influencing structures, via the umbrella organisations, needs to be funded and developed adequately.

5. There are no single characteristics that identify voluntary or community groups. Both will share many features and there will be a few that will not fall clearly into either category.
6. *Appendix 1* provides an indication of the typical features of voluntary organisations and community groups.

Funding

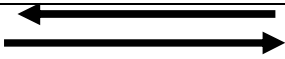
1. Resources will be allocated against clear and consistent criteria, including value for money and the need to obtain best value.
2. There will be common, transparent arrangements for agreeing and evaluating objectives, and their associated targets. High standards of governance and conduct should be maintained; reporting and accountability obligations should be met.
3. Funding policies will take account of the objectives of voluntary organisations and their need to operate efficiently and effectively, including the ability of organisations to generate income for their management and growth.
4. Longer term planning, stability and the sustainability of voluntary organisations are enhanced by long-term or multi-year funding, and by timely decision making and communication.
5. Both fund holders and funding recipients will be careful not to compromise organisational objectives or independence.

6. There is a need to support and develop the infrastructure of the voluntary and community sector. We will make a positive difference to the funding relationship between the statutory, voluntary and community sectors in the Staffordshire Moorlands
7. Equal access to funding opportunities will be promoted through appropriate and timely communication, adequate response times, transparent decision making processes and the availability of advice and guidance.

Appendix 1

Community Groups and Voluntary Organisations

Some typical features of voluntary organisations and community groups are shown in the following table:

	Range	
Community Groups		Voluntary Organisations
Members	Led by	Staff
Community of interest	Serves	Wider area
Less formal	Structure	More formal
Low or none	Income	Higher
Membership	Base	Client
Self help – mutual support	Provides	Support and development
Informal, independent	Services	Specialist or contracted
Community of interest	Represents	Client groups

While there are no single characteristics for the community sector, many of the features on the left hand side of the table will be shared by most community groups and voluntary organisations. There will be a few that will not fall on one side or the other. Some may move in either direction over time. Some community groups may develop into larger voluntary organisations, although many will want to stay small, keeping their original purpose and focus.

Development Process

1. Summer 2003: Moorlands Local Strategic Partnership identifies the creation of a compact for the Staffordshire Moorlands as a priority within the community strategy.
2. October 2003: A writing group meet for the first time to consider an initial document based broadly on the national compact and established compacts in Staffordshire, (i.e. Tamworth and East Staffordshire).
3. November 2003: A Steering Group consisting of 14 representatives of the voluntary and community sector and officers of the LSP, district council and Primary Care Trust meet for the first time to consider the drafting of a compact suitable for the Staffordshire Moorlands.
4. December 2003: Officers of the LSP and the Staffordshire Moorlands Council for Voluntary Service create draft 3 of the compact based on the guidance from the Steering Group.
5. January 2004: Draft 3 of the compact is circulated widely to over 120 voluntary and community groups across the Moorlands asking for comments on the contents and any additions that may be needed. Consultation is open till March 19th 2004. At the same time statutory partners and parish and county councils are consulted.
6. 4th February 2004: The Steering Group hold a consultation event at Leek Cricket Club. Mrs Barbara Lowndes, a 'compact champion' addressed over 40 community and statutory representatives giving an overview of compacts at national level and offering her experiences of creating a compact for Tameside. The delegates then went on to consider draft document 3 and feed their working group contributions back to the Steering Group
7. February 2004: The secretariat to the Steering Group create draft 4 from the event responses and then draft 5 as responses from the community are received.

8. Wednesday 17th March 2004: Steering Group meets for the second time to consider revised draft and submissions from the CVS regarding defining the wider community. The group agrees to extend the consultation period to the end of April, to allow parish councils and other remote groups time to meet and respond. The implementation process is discussed.
9. Compact Steering Group meets on Thursday 29th April 2004 to accept draft document 8 as the final consultation document to be offered for wide consultation in the community and, subject to no major representations, to be taken to Moorlands LSP at its AGM on Wednesday 16th June 2004 for signature by the chairperson and other partners.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

STATUTORY PARTNERS

Organisations working in the Staffordshire Moorlands to provide tax funded services such as local government, health care, Police, Fire and Rescue and others. They are the main group of fund holding partners.

COMMUNITY GROUPS

(See appendix 1)

Community organisations working directly with local people, they have expert knowledge about needs in their community and can inform the voluntary and statutory sectors about those needs and the targeting of appropriate resources. They act as the voice of a community and provide essential support at the point of contact. They can highlight areas such as the difficulty in access to work and services in the rural areas.

VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

(See appendix 1)

A more formal organisation, often with paid workers as well as volunteers. These organisations often work for their members in areas such as development and representation, and overlap and complement community groups.