



As you may have heard VAEF has been looking for a new home since Autumn last year due to having to move from Homefield House at the end of March. This has not proved an easy task for us and disappointingly we have not to date managed to secure a permanent base to operate from. On a positive note Epping Forest District Council have offered us the use of some offices at their Hemnall Street base in Epping on a temporary basis. For those of you that know Epping the offices are based within the Epping Leisure Centre, but we will of course be advising you shortly of full contact details. As mentioned we will be moving at the end of March therefore please accept my apologies in advance of this if VAEF services are a little disrupted during this period.

Longer term it is still essential that we find a permanent base so it would still be very much appreciated to hear of any options we may be able to consider.

Lastly can I take the opportunity to thank the many groups and individuals that have taken the time to contact our office to offer ideas for premises and also to express support for the continuation of our organisation. Can I also assure you that the VAEF trustees, staff and volunteers are determined that our accommodation challenge will be met, enabling VAEF to continue to provide support to the Epping Forest voluntary and community sector along with the many individuals we also help.

Jacqui Foile, Chief Officer

Awards for service providers transforming lives in Essex

Service providers which are transforming peoples' lives in Essex have been commended at Essex County Council's second annual Supplier Recognition Awards.

The ceremony celebrates the Council's top suppliers and their achievements, which this year range from helping people with learning difficulties access life-changing voluntary work, to providing superfast internet in hard-to-reach rural areas.

There were 32 entries in four categories all showcasing the variety of Council service providers' commitment to innovation and digital to improve outcomes for residents in the county, while providing better value to taxpayers.

CLlr David Finch, Leader of Essex County Council, said: "These awards celebrate the outstanding contribution external service providers make to improve the lives of residents in Essex."

"Together we are providing services in new and improved ways at lower cost, but also investing for the future so that Essex is a better place in which to live and work."

Voluntary Action Epping Forest were thrilled to be awarded the **Corporate Social Responsibility award**. The VAEF Supported Volunteering Learning Disabilities Project helps people with learning difficulties become volunteers, working in conjunction with their carers and other support services. Each client, whether seeking an individual or group activity, has his or her own personal development plan. For some, it is for company and just getting out of the house, but for others it is a stepping stone to employment or leading a more independent life. Voluntary Action Epping Forest currently works with 125 volunteer-involving organisations and is continually seeking new placements for clients as well as identifying ways of improving existing ones.

Best local small to medium enterprises award was presented to Channels & Choices who offer independent therapeutic child care services for children and young people.

Best use of digital technology awarded to Openreach ECC has a contract with Openreach to deliver Superfast Broadband to areas of Essex deemed 'not commercially viable' by the market.

Forward thinking innovation awarded to Family Mosaic Floating Support The Essex Floating Support Service offers help to people across the county experiencing a range of problems, including financial hardship, health-related problems and housing issues.



Photograph courtesy of Essex County Council.

Pictured left to right:

Sally Panrucker, VAEF Supported Volunteering Manager
Jacqui Foile, VAEF Chief Officer and
Cllr John Aldridge, Essex County Council Chairman

INFORMATION



Ain't No Mountain High Enough

An Exciting Music Project for 16-25 year olds

Our music-making project for young people with learning and/or physical disabilities and special needs has got off to a roaring start. We offer the chance for young music makers to set off on a musical journey over the period of a year, celebrating achievement and success as we go.

Our project aims to develop and improve musical, personal and social skills through participation in structured, individual and collaborative musical activities. Sessions are both formal and informal in nature and there are planned trips to musical performances, places of interest and meetings with bands and performers. Participants will also have the opportunity to play live, should they wish.

Working in partnership with Epping Forest College, Oak View School, Loughton Youth Project and local PHABs, the project has already delivered 11 musical taster sessions to over 100 potential music makers. These sessions offered the opportunity to try singing, drums and percussion, guitar and bass and keyboards. These have been received very well and we are delighted to have signed up close to 30 young musicians who wish to join the project. We have now finalised their details and planned the many sessions we need to deliver. Delivery of this schedule began Wednesday 9th January 2018.

I will be blogging regarding the progress of the project on the Youth Music Network. Youth Music is the national organisation which has funded the project, following our successful bid last year. There will also be a Face Book page, along with some content on YouTube.

The project received a very generous donation from the New Redbridge Wind Orchestra and I have commissioned a vocal coach to work with a small group of project members with a view to creating a singing ensemble. The first session will have taken place by the time you are reading this.

Watch this space for further updates as the project continues.....

Marc Balkham

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Tue 10th - YOUNG FARMER — meet and work with all our newborn animals. Farm tour, woolly jumper, goat show, pony and cart, bugs.

Wed 11th - PIONEER — go on an adventure in off site canoeing on the river, orienteering and mountain biking in Hainault Forest.

Thu 12th - EXTREME ADVENTURER — Ropes, climbing, abseiling, caving and zip wire. Are you brave enough?

Fri 13th - CREATOR — a full day of Springtime environmental art, crafts and cookery.

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