

## Statement to Cabinet

Cllr Martin Veale

As you have heard, the Volunteer Centre is a Community Charity that directly affects what we as a Council do, within the Bath and North East Somerset area. It fits in perfectly with the aspirations of this Coalition Government and the ethos of this administration....it provides a vital service for the Council and community, matching volunteers with the charities that need them.

Only a few weeks ago, as Chairman of this Council, I recognised the huge amount of work done by significant numbers of volunteers throughout our region not least of which was Special Award Winner - Mike Plows, the Manager of the Centre. He is only one of two paid employees at the centre. Unexpected but estimated numbers indicated - in excess of 300 people tuned up on that awards night.

It is well known that our officers consult with the Centre on a regular basis proving that the service they offer..... is needed, is relevant and necessary. As a council we are facing cuts in all directions but I would ask this Administration, in its final days, not to make volunteering a political ball to be batted back and forth but to see that the relatively small amount of money required to stabilise them over the the next 9 months is crucial.

The previous funding sources have stopped for the coming year and other 'promised' funding alternatives have not been realised. I would ask that you find the £10k needed to bolster the charity's finance until they report back to the Council in the Autumn of this year. The trustee team has been refreshed and bolstered but need time to develop a revised funding strategy, they are requesting the Council to further help in backing them... to tide them over. They are ready, willing and able to explore all creative alternatives to preserve this vital service for the community into 2016 and beyond.

27 years of experience, growth and results should not be allowed to atrophy by default....

I support the work that the Volunteer Centre does both as Chairman of this Council and personally. I believe we should work with this group to help the service survive and beyond, to thrive into the future."

Cllr. Martin Veal