



**VIEWPOINT
COMMUNITY
MEDIA**

Viewpoint End of Year Newsletter 2014

Hello Viewpoint friends,

This has been a very busy year for Viewpoint, but the aim of these newsletters isn't to load you with detailed information, rather to pick out key moments in the Viewpoint story to share with you.

Last year ended with the wonderful **Swindon Viewpoint 40th Anniversary Concert** at MECA; and it was gratifying that so many fine local musicians and artists wanted to support the town's community media service. A great time seemed to be had by all and the event (plus sales of the specially brewed '**Anniversary Ale**' from **Arkells**) raised over £600 of much needed funds, which was the first income for the newly established charity **Viewpoint Community Media**. You can watch some of the concert here: <http://www.swindonviewpoint.com/video/viewpoint-anniversary-concert-tin-spirits-bodhisattva.....> and much more is to follow.

Several small grants, from the Council and the Lottery were also secured to help publicise the 40th anniversary and for basic admin expenses. Through these Viewpoint acquired design and publicity work and held several engagement events. Viewership grew markedly this year, and we now have over 90,000 (regular, repeat) viewers according to website statistics.

The year also saw another special event when current directors and founding members of Swindon Viewpoint gathered for a **40-year reunion**. Representing the original team from the 70s were Jigga Dunn, Lizzie Halfacre, Peter Knight, Hoppy Roy, Michael Barrett and Rupert Kirkham. You can read more here: http://www.swindonadvertiser.co.uk/news/11407698.Putting_the_past_in_focus/

Perhaps the main focus this year has been to advance the way the service is managed. You won't need reminding that Viewpoint is different to other media services (where private owners decide the voice and content); this is yours, the public's service to influence and direct. Much work has gone into putting in place the right mechanism to make sure you can do that effectively - and to ensure it continues to be accessible and accountable to you into the future.

The new charity constituted to manage the service - **Viewpoint Community Media** - was for practical purposes set up as a 'Foundation' model, (whereby self-appointed Trustees make the decisions). It has over its first year however swiftly moved to reconstitute itself as an 'Association' model wherein groups in the local Community and Voluntary Sector join as members and then nominate and elect the majority of the Trustees who will decide its future direction for you. A few spaces are reserved for appointing key roles (necessary to operate), such as Treasurer and Fundraiser.

To launch this we held, in conjunction with Swindon Community Infrastructure Partnership, a **Swindon Community Conference** at the National Trust headquarters in October - to which groups in the Community and Voluntary Sector were invited. Many important topics for the sector were presented and discussed, including, of course, **Community Communications** for Swindon, and groups present were invited to join Viewpoint Community Media's new membership. There was an excellent response and we kick off with approaching 30 groups as members!

We will spend the next few months building on this initial response (since of course not all eligible groups could attend the event) and then we will progress the first election

next year. If you are a part of, or know of, community groups you think should be members, please put them in touch and we will send them a membership pack. Similarly, if you would like to become a Trustee but are unsure how to do so, contact us by email on contact@viewpointcommunitymedia.org.uk and we'll be very happy to discuss the role with you.

Viewpoint also needs help making the service happen in more hands-on ways. If you would be willing to volunteer in any production or support capacity, please get in touch. It's fun as well as very useful to the town and you'll find you significantly develop your skills as well as learn interesting new ones.

Viewpoint has also been active on the national scene, with two of its Trustees serving as elected members of the Council managing the **Community Media Association**. As the most experienced community media operation in the country we are doing what we can to support newer initiatives around the UK, and this year hosted a special display at the CMA Annual Conference in Leicester where we talked to many groups.

Hundreds of interesting new films have been made and shown via Viewpoint this year. If you have free time over the holiday, why not spend some of it browsing on the website and catching up? You can brush up on what's been happening lately with current programmes or delve into fascinating local history (another valuable strand of our activity is collecting and restoring films made in or on Swindon or Wiltshire in the distant past). Fascinating films from the 30s and 40s that would have otherwise deteriorated in lofts or ended up in skips have come to light this year - and joined our huge catalogue that now stretches back over a century to the very birth of the moving image.

It's unknown of anywhere else in the country with such a comprehensive 'living diary' of its life and times, and the collection demonstrates that there is plenty to be impressed with and proud of in Swindon.

More good news is that we have secured some funding to provide and pay for places on media project training. It's limited, so we are aiming to offer these first of all to our signed up 'member' community groups. If you are one of them, and you feel one or several of your group could benefit and bring back skills for you to use, then please let us know as soon as you can.

Looking forward to the year ahead and to Swindon's ever-increasing involvement in running Britain's original Community Media service - and wishing you all a very enjoyable holiday and a Happy New Year.

The Viewpoint Team