

LEADING LIGHTS



Name: Stephen Nightingale
Job title: Chief Officer
Organisation: CVS-WD

A brief outline of the organisation:

An infrastructure Organisation supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector organisations based in Warwick District to achieve excellence in all that they do.



Why do you do this work?

In my last Health Service post I had regular meetings with three Chief Officers from the Councils for Voluntary Service, and was a Board member of one CVS for some years. When I took early retirement from the NHS it seemed a logical move to bring my people management and change management skills to the Voluntary Sector. In a way, I feel that I have been answering a calling to come and settle in this part of the country, as my wife and I are very happy living in this area.

If there was one thing you could change for the Sector, what would it be?

To be able to infuse all the Voluntary and Community organisations with two or three new skilled Trustees, all determined to seek the best ways of meeting the needs of their clients.

What has been your proudest moment?

This is a difficult question, as basically, I am extremely proud of all my staff, past and present. There have been perhaps two moments in my ten years at CVS that stand out – the first was when CVS was awarded Warwickshire Employer Of Choice (small business section) in 2004.

I was also extremely proud of the Co-ordination, Communication and Capacity Building Team at the final AGM of the South Warwickshire Together Partnership Board. The team had gained recognition for their excellence in managing the Promoting Inclusion and Enterprise programme across South Warwickshire. The programme was very successful in creating a total programme spend of £14m against an initial target of £11m.

What was your greatest disappointment?

My greatest disappointments have been when voluntary sector organisations have failed to survive, these have included the Warwick REC, the Young Housing Project and the Ocean Drop In Centre. My concern is not so much for the organisations, but those people who were served by them. Whilst the REC has been replaced by the WREP, services for homeless young people and the people who were served by the Ocean Drop In Centre have not all been replaced.

What was the most useful mistake you've ever made and how was it useful?

Not exactly a mistake, but the most useful and far reaching experiment I tried some 16 years ago, was to ask staff who reported to me to give me an honest appraisal of my managerial and leadership skills. My staff were quite scared of this – unsure of what repercussions might follow! They decided to do this as a group, so that they couldn't be singled out! Because I took on board their constructive criticisms, and did something about them, I found that in supervision and appraisal sessions they were suddenly quite willing to talk about their own weaknesses and strengths in a much more open and positive way. It has been my leadership style ever since to encourage my staff to be critical of me in a constructive way. And they do tell me – sometimes quite forcibly – and mostly they are right. I am never too old to learn. I believe that is why CVS is such a happy team and a great organisation in which to work.

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What would you motto be?

I have a number of mottos – none of them original -

'Do unto others as you would be done by.'

'You are never too old to learn.'

'Honesty is the best policy.'

'There is a nugget of gold in every single person – if we would take the time to look for it.'

'Take time to discover and be yourself'

What is your favourite colour?

My favourite colour is blue – there are so many shades of blue, from the bluey green of the seas in the Caribbean; the Blue grotto in Malta; the blue sky of a Summers Day; the blue of the gentian growing by the mountain roads in the Dolomites. It is a truly remarkable and wonderful world we live in. We all need to act now to ensure it continues to be wonderful for our grandchildren and their grandchildren.

My favourite book

I have read a number of books lately that have meant a great deal to me.

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| The Enduring Melody | Michael Mayne - a story of faith through suffering. |
| Purpose Driven Life | Rick Warren |
| Courageous Leadership | Bill Hybels |
| Growing Leaders | James Lawrence |

My favourite quotation

"Our continual mistake is that we do not concentrate upon the present day, the actual hour, of our life; we live in the past or in the future; we are continually expecting the coming of some special moment when our life will unfold itself in its full significance.

And we do not notice that life is flowing like water through our fingers, sifting like precious grain from a loosely fastened bag.

Constantly each day, each hour, God is sending us people, circumstances, tasks, which should mark the beginning of our renewal; yet, we pay them no attention, and thus continually we resist God's will for us. Indeed, how can God help us? Only by sending us in our daily life certain people, and certain coincidences of circumstances. If we accepted every hour of our life as the hour of God's will for us, as the decisive, most important, unique hour of our life – what sources of joy, love, strength, as yet hidden from us, would spring from the depths of our soul."

From a Diary of a Russian Priest – Alexander Elchaninov

Favourite Music

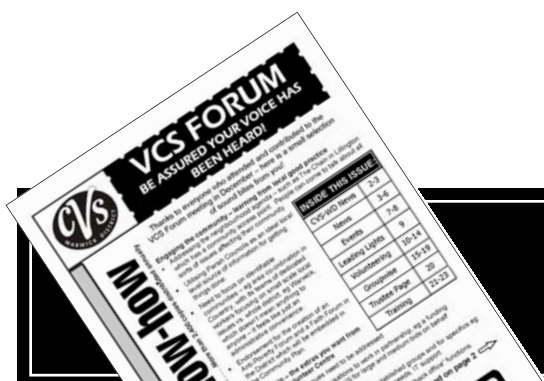
Mozart 'Marriage of Figaro' especially 'Sul Aria'

Mozart Serenade No 7 in D major "Haffner" especially the violin concerto it contains in the middle movements.

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