

Our new image – Style or Substance?

We hope you like our new website and social media pages. A lot of thought has gone into these changes and we want to share some of that thinking with you.

The new website is deliberately lighter and more upbeat in tone. This may seem strange during deepening spending cuts, but we want to reflect what is happening in Greater Manchester in response to 'austerity'. The paradox of cuts to public and social sector budgets is that a growing number of us, in councils, charities and business, have been galvanised with a deeper conviction that "we can do this together!" During the last year we have visited dozens of fantastic projects where ordinary people are making an extraordinary difference to the lives of people in their community. We are so impressed by these efforts, both old and new, that we have started to try to write about one each week.

Devolution also brings many opportunities, alongside the real challenges of doing more with less. During the next few years a lot of excellent work will be done within the Combined Authority to reform "public services so everyone will enjoy the benefits of Greater Manchester's growth and prosperity." We can be cynical about such statements of intent or decide to work with the Combined Authority and individual Councils to bring positive social change. That's the Manc way, and the way our members are overwhelmingly choosing. We cannot do much about international trade or government cuts, but we can decide to make a difference to the lives of the poorest in GM. We are choosing to emphasise this positive approach.

At the heart of our work together is the welfare of the poorest people in GM. Poverty in GM is not like poverty in parts of Asia and Africa. Poverty in GM is usually relative, not absolute, but is no less a social, political and ethical issue for all that. If we were being truly positive, we would probably rename ourselves to reflect the personal assets that we all have - very few people see themselves as poor. Last year we proposed such a change at an open meeting and, with usual British reserve, most people at the meeting nodded politely or said nothing. Afterwards was different. The overwhelming response from members after the meeting was to keep Poverty in our title - 'we didn't feel we should say it in the meeting, but...'

The word 'poverty' reminds us that we all have a responsibility to those who live alongside us and are worse off than we are. It's that simple. Whether we are council officials, charity workers, business people, students or retired, we can all play our part if we keep in mind the people at the centre of our work. The kernel of our work is a society that has a heart for people and not just economic measures. This is often the hardest thing for us to do. For beleaguered council and third sector leaders facing the next round of cuts, keeping the lives of the poorest in mind might easily take second place to those of long time colleagues being made redundant. Yet, despite the often almost overwhelming pressures, we must constantly remind ourselves of those people we serve.

To this end we have made two small, but, we think, significant, changes to our website and logo. Firstly, we have made use of the faces of people. Not maudlin or disrespectful images - in fact just the reverse - we have deliberately used images of people who might be poor, but who equally well might be us... and isn't that at the heart of the issue of poverty? Secondly we have changed our logo. It now has two people forming the 'm' in gmpa - a reminder of our people focus. And the four logo colours represent just how diverse these people are. In GM we have one of the largest numbers of languages spoken in any region of the world. Our BME community makes up a very substantial proportion of the population and yet they are often woefully underrepresented.

There is so much work to do, but the focus of our more upbeat approach is that "We *can* do this together!"

Mike, Peter and Chris

The logo for GM Poverty Action features the text 'GM Poverty Action' in a bold, blue, sans-serif font. Above the text are four colored squares: blue, teal, green, and yellow, which correspond to the colors in the gmpa logo. The text has a slight reflection effect below it.

WHAT THE DICKENS?

Wood Street Mission has been giving out food and clothes to struggling families since the 1870s. Why is there a need for the charity almost 150 years on? Is poverty really 'not like it used to be' and is negative stereotyping of people on benefits anything new?

A FREE EVENT
Thursday
9 June
6-8pm

Wood Street Mission
26 Wood Street
Manchester
M3 3EF

1920s Today

Places are limited so booking is essential.
For more information call 0161 534 3140 or go to www.woodstreetmission.org.uk

Perspectives on poverty in Manchester and Salford since Victorian times

MANCHESTER HISTORIES
WOOD STREET MISSION
gmpa

Many older people have vivid memories of queuing up for help on Wood Street yet find it hard to believe that decades later there is still a need for poverty relief work in Manchester and Salford. This event, in association with the University of Manchester and Greater Manchester Poverty Action, explores how poverty, and perceptions of poverty and inequality, have changed over the years. How has poverty changed? Is it really 'not like it used to be'? And is negative stereotyping of people on benefits anything new? A lively, interactive discussion chaired by Julie-Marie Strange from the University of Manchester with drinks and nibbles.

Please go to the [website](#) or email sophie@woodstreetmission.org.uk for further information. Click here to [book your place](#)

Wood Street Mission building will be open from 5pm for a tour and talk about their work prior to the main event.

Thursday, 9 June 2016 from 6.00 to 8.00pm
Wood Street Mission - 26 Wood St, Manchester M3 3EF

Who's who? In this section we focus on some of the organisations and individuals that make up GMPA. Some will be very familiar to you, others not so much. We hope that by sharing this information our community will find opportunities to collaborate and to support each other. Together we're stronger.



Mike Riddell is the Business Advisor at Sunshine House Community Centre in Wigan. His role is to help Sunshine House sustain itself commercially so that it can continue to help the

community in Scholes where it is based do more good and help more people.



Tracy Langton is Principal Rent Manager and Project Lead for Welfare Reform at Northwards Housing, an ALMO in North Manchester managing 13,500 properties.

Tracy has almost 20 years' experience working in social housing and her current position sees her direct the welfare reform strategy for Northwards Housing and head the rent and money advice teams.

Welfare reform has had a tremendous impact on tenants and created considerable hardship amongst many. As well as extensive outreach work road shows and direct contact with tenants Tracy's team are currently helping to steer Northwards through the challenges posed by Universal Credit. She is passionate about social justice and in her spare time acts as a trustee on the Helena Kennedy Foundation.

Sunshine House in Wigan

is a model community centre. It's about people doing good, people feeling valued and people in community. They believe every community should have a Sunshine House at its heart.

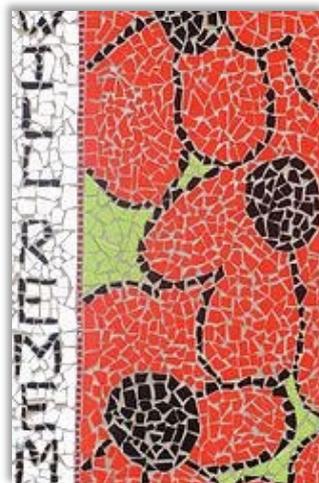


Vision: A better Scholes through contribution to community.

Mission: "We back people to become self-employed or to build successful local businesses that benefit our community."

Sunshine House has a 3 year people-centred transformation initiative, with an aim to significantly accelerate the growth and impact that comes from self-employment, community enterprise and

community contribution. Success at the end of the three years would mean that the volunteer credits (their measure of success) is a better recognised and more highly valued way of addressing local economic, social and environmental challenges, and one that can be scaled to support others across the borough and the wider GM region to do just the same.



Remembrance Mosaic outside Sunshine House

[More information](#)

Forthcoming Events:

GMCVO Access and Connect

A resource fair for social enterprises

Tuesday April 26, 2016 9.30am to 4pm at St Thomas Centre, Ardwick Green North, Manchester, M12 6FZ

Need advice to raise investment for your social enterprise? Ever wondered how to negotiate your way through local supply chains? Want to meet, network and share information and experiences with other enterprises who can understand the challenges you face? On the day, the St Thomas Centre will be buzzing with stalls from social investors providing practical advice and information and representatives from local social enterprise networks and hubs.

Delegate fee: £10 (payable in advance) [More information](#)

Greater Manchester Living Wage Campaign

Please join us for our next meeting to discuss how we bring on board more Living Wage employers and plan new actions.

Time: 2-4pm Date: Tuesday 17th May
Venue: Unison, Arena Point, 1 Hunts Bank, Manchester, M3 1UN

We hope to see you there. Why not in the meantime keep 'liking' and sharing our [Facebook page](#) to show your support.

Welfare Conditionality: Sanctions, support and behaviour change – Voices from Greater Manchester

12.30pm – 4.30pm, Friday 17th June 2016, MediaCityUK

This conference presents preliminary findings from a project called [Welfare Conditionality: Sanctions, support and behaviour change](#). This is a five year project focusing on the impact and ethicality of conditionality across a range of policy areas. The project is creating an international and interdisciplinary focal point for research on welfare conditionality and aims to provide a new and wide ranging evidence base to inform future policy and practice. GM is one of the fieldwork sites for the research and the aim of this conference is to give voice to these welfare service users.

[Find out more or register to attend the event](#)

For more information about Greater Manchester Poverty Action please visit our [website](#), follow us on [Twitter](#) or visit our [Facebook](#) page.

If you would like to contact us or submit an article for inclusion in a newsletter please get in touch in one of the following ways:

Post: c/o 5th Floor Church House, 90 Deansgate, Manchester M3 2GH

Or contact our Communications Manager: Chris Bagley T: 07419 774537 [Email](#) and we will reply as soon as possible.

NB GMPA does not have full-time dedicated administrative support so please do not expect an immediate response.

CELEBRATE DIVERSITY

Equality and Diversity Week

Come along to this FREE event at Pinewood House Education Centre, Stepping Hill Hospital SK2 7JE on Thursday May 19, 2016, between 9am – 5.00pm to join in with our celebrations (Lunch will be provided).

Our full day event is open to the public who are interested in learning more about different religions and their cultures, covering Christianity, Islam, Hinduism, Sikhism and Judaism.

Entertainment will include fabulous Bollywood Dancers and an Acapella Choir and there will also be an opportunity for you to ask questions.

[Register to attend](#)

We hope you like the new look! In addition to the change of image here and on [Twitter](#), we now have a new [website](#) and a [Facebook](#) page.

All these platforms are there to share news and opinion from our readers, from GM Poverty Action and from our community.

We want to celebrate our successes, find new ways of working together and provide a voice for the people living in poverty in our region. But we can only do this with your help and support.

For more information or to share your news please contact [Chris](#) or [Peter](#).

Why GM Poverty Action?

In the Recommendations Report of the GM Poverty Commission, 2.4 *Maintaining Momentum on Poverty* called for the formation of a Poverty Action Group to help take forward the work of the Commission.

A small number of public, private and civic sector individuals came together to form GMPA - a 'coalition of the willing'. This group has since grown to nearly 90 organisations and individuals.

GMPA is based upon principles of cooperation between organisations.

Copies of previous newsletters are available on our [website](#)