

## Milltown Day Workshop

### Introduction

Milltown Day Workshop is part of a Camphill Community based in South Aberdeenshire which aims to create and maintain a home and working environment for a group of adults with special needs. In Milltown, people from the area join the residents for the Day Workshop. The different activities include refurbishing tools for 'Tools for Self-Reliance', therapeutic craftwork, growing plants for sale, and jobs on the smallholding.

### Social accounting and audit

Milltown's Richard Firth was introduced to the first CBS Network/REAP cluster group through another participating organisation. It would be fair to say that he experienced initial trepidation in taking part in the cluster, and whether or not the process would be relevant and appropriate to the Milltown Day Workshop and the culture and ethos behind it.

The main driver at this stage was that a contract with local government *insisted* the Workshop have a quality assurance system in place, and as they didn't have one at that time, they hoped that social accounting could be a solution.

Milltown have now taken two sets of accounts to panel with a three year gap in between. Richard felt that this gap between social accounts was appropriate to their organisation as *"what we do and the people involved do not change that much"*.

### Benefits and value of social accounting and audit

The first set of accounts was produced within a cluster, and the second were done completely independently. Richard felt that the cluster was a very good introduction to the process, and felt that the mentoring provided by CBS Network was a crucial factor – *"It would not have worked initially without (someone) coming up and prodding us along"*.

A positive development for future audits is that *"Until now it was a struggle to find the time but I managed with the help of supportive colleagues. Now we have a second person actively involved in doing it and so the workload is shared"*.

Richard feels that this is a very positive development as one of his biggest fears was that if the process was invested in one individual no one else would take ownership of it and if that key individual moved on social accounting might die out and all of the expertise and knowledge would be lost to the organisation.

### **Negatives, problems, snags**

Like many small organisations, time was the biggest factor which impacted on Milltown, in particular the time that it took to write up the accounts prior to panel. As mentioned earlier, it was initially seen as being driven by one person who was trying to carry out the process with very little internal support and with no additional time allocation.

### **General thoughts on social accounting and audit**

Richard feels that the process has been positive overall and one which has benefited his organisation. He views social accounting *as* a very useful tool, and one which he would like others to be more aware of, but his one note of caution is that he perceives a *possible* trend to create a 'social audit industry', which may become overly bureaucratic and inflexible.

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