



*13<sup>th</sup> October 2010*

## **National campaign “Better Together” launched to promote community involvement**

**Campaign is launched by The Wheel in partnership with EBS Building Society**

**13th, October 2010** - A national campaign to promote community involvement entitled 'Better Together' was launched today by The Wheel in partnership with EBS Building Society. The campaign which will run from today, October 13th, until the end of November, will focus on a new website: [www.bettertogether.ie](http://www.bettertogether.ie) which will enable community and voluntary groups from all over Ireland to connect with the public through "digital storytelling". Charities, clubs and associations who upload videos to the website will be entered into a national competition for the most inspiring and engaging stories.

The public is invited to visit the site to view videos, connect with charities, clubs and associations in their area and show their support by volunteering, donating or just getting involved. The public vote for their favourite videos will decide three winners – each of whom will receive a cash prize of €3,000 for their charity. To help the groups get started, there is a free guide to producing an online video available on [www.bettertogether.ie](http://www.bettertogether.ie).

The Wheel is an umbrella body representing over 800 community and voluntary groups across the country. The Better Together campaign has been developed by The Wheel to showcase the work that community and voluntary groups do each day throughout the country.

Research shows that every year, two-thirds of adults engage in the social, cultural and humanitarian activities offered by Ireland's 19,000 community and voluntary organisations.

Speaking at the launch Deirdre Garvey, Chief Executive Officer of The Wheel highlighted the importance of community and voluntary groups and the role that volunteers can play in helping to support that work: "Voluntary groups build the networks and relationships that contribute significantly to Ireland's economy and quality of life. These organisations make Ireland a better place to live by caring for the vulnerable, enthusing and training young people, preserving our natural and cultural heritage or giving people the opportunity to create art or play sports.. The campaign that we are launching today, in partnership with EBS Building Society, is designed to help promote the opportunities that are available for groups, while also highlighting the impact that people can have through their participation."

Speaking about the use of "digital storytelling" for the Better Together campaign, Ms Garvey said "video is now the most popular medium on the Internet and it is a very effective tool for community and voluntary groups to showcase the impact of their work. It allows the public to see how these groups are changing people's lives for the better and how they can get involved in supporting that work – particularly important in these difficult economic times".

She added: "We are extremely grateful for the support of EBS in helping to make this campaign a reality. By working together we are in a position to roll out a national campaign that can have a significant impact both on the community voluntary sector and on people who have been waiting for something to act as a catalyst to get them to actively engage with a local or national organization near them."

Commenting on the partnership Aidan Power, Head of Marketing at EBS Building Society said: "2011 is the European Year of the Volunteer which helps to make this campaign even more timely and relevant as we anticipate that it will definitely heighten peoples' awareness of how and why they might support community groups and get involved in the numerous charities that exist around us.

"Getting people to make a serious commitment to volunteering can be a challenge - very often the will and desire is there to get involved but following through is sometimes a little different. We are hopeful that the Better Together campaign will encourage people to really get engaged in the year ahead and that this participation will have a positive impact both on the charity and organization that they support and also on themselves."

For further information on the Better Together campaign log onto [www.bettertogether.ie](http://www.bettertogether.ie). The closing date for entries is the 15th of November 2010.