



COUNTY DURHAM  
A local voice for local people

## County Durham LINK Meeting/Event

<b>Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2011</b>
<b>Event: Alcohol Prevention Group</b>
<b>Number/range of attendees:</b>
<b>Purpose of meeting/event: Alcohol meeting</b>
<b>Record completed by: Robin Millerchip</b>
<p>Whilst the attendance at these meetings seems to have dropped, there is no doubt that those who are attending are serious about what they do, making for most informative and intelligent committee meeting. A rare experience! Most of the meeting was taken up with the "Virtual Family", its explanation and possible application and just a short review of other items on the agenda which were mostly items that were ongoing and will be followed up by written reports to committee members.</p> <p>"Virtual Family"? I am not a technology geek so this description of nearly two years work by a small group of staff at County Hall does not do its potential real justice, but bear with me.</p> <p>By using digital interactive technology, the viewer/client can create his or her family, give them some physical and character traits and then use them to represent problems the client faces either with their own alcohol problems or those in the family, whoever might be the cause or victim. Conversations between the viewer and the characters can be created as well as between the characters alone, but the trick is the data base can allow a vast number of ways to provide information and advice on alcohol prevention and treatment issues. The site will be trialled live in the spring and some issues still await settlement but it is still expected to be in public use in the first half of the year. As they used to say, "Watch this space!"</p> <p>There are a number of likely changes from April in line with budget cuts, but certainly the Virtual Family is a local council initiative that the voluntary sector can be involved with and help in its improvement and development when many other programmes will be curtailed.</p>
<b>Actions required</b>

