

**Wiltshire VCS Assembly
Tuesday 1st March 2011
Cumberwell Park Golf Club, Bradford on Avon**

SUMMARY OF THE EVENT

The first Wiltshire VCS Assembly of 2011 was held in Bradford on Avon at the Cumberwell Park Golf Club on 1st March 2011. Nearly 90 people were in attendance from a wide range of groups and organisations working across the county.

Terry Deegan, the Chairman of the Wiltshire Infrastructure Consortium (WIC) welcomed everyone to the event, in particular, Peter Baxter, the Chair of The Wiltshire Compact, Sandie Lewis, Head of Community Strategy and Voluntary Sector Support at Wiltshire Council and the Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Wiltshire, Professor Christopher Mullard and the key speakers Julia Stafford and Sally Neath from Alba. The theme of the VCS Assembly was “Making the most of what we have” with the aim being to raise awareness about collaborative working and sharing resources and the opportunities that may be available to the voluntary and community sector in Wiltshire.

Professor Mullard spoke of how important such an event was. The sector is facing some exciting and challenging times which will provide considerable opportunities for all. Professor Mullard thanked everyone present for attending the VCS Assembly and for showing commitment and dedication.

Terry introduced the key speakers for the day, Julia Stafford and Sally Neath. Alba were recently commissioned by WIC to undertake a piece of research on Collaborative Working and Sharing Resources for its members. A copy of their presentation is available to download from the WIC website: www.wiltshireinfrastructureconsortium.org.uk

11.00am Discussion Groups

Delegates were divided into selected discussion groups to discuss ‘*What does all, this look like?*’ ‘*How could organisations work collaboratively within communities?*’

From the perspective of:

- ◆ *Your organisation*
- ◆ *Your community*
- ◆ *Different parts of the County*

11.45am Workshops

Delegates split into their workshops. These covered the following topics:

- Volunteering
- Equality and Diversity
- Funding
- Quality Standards
- Marketing

2.45pm Question Time Panel

The panel were available to take questions from the floor and consisted of the following members:

- Sally Neath, Alba
- Professor Christopher Mullard DL

- Peter Baxter, Chairman - The Wiltshire Compact
- Sandie Lewis, Head of Community Strategy and Voluntary Sector Support - Wiltshire Council
- Maggie Rae, Joint Corporate Director of Public Health and Wellbeing - Wiltshire Council and NHS Wiltshire

Closing Remarks

Terry thanked all workshop leaders, facilitators, attendees and WIC for organising another successful VCS Assembly. It is clear that a common commitment is shared amongst all towards Wiltshire and its communities. As the challenges facing the voluntary sector increase, so does our collective determination to work together for the common good. This latest VCS Assembly will send a clear message that we really are open for business and we intend to make a difference.

This was Karen Winchcombe's last VCS Assembly as the WIC Development Managers post comes to an end on 31st March 2011. Terry thanked Karen for her invaluable support throughout her time with WIC and wished her well for the future.

The day ended at 3.30pm.