

**Wiltshire VCS Assembly  
Tuesday 28<sup>th</sup> September 2010  
Milford Hall Hotel, Salisbury**

**DISCUSSION GROUP NOTES**

***What will the VCS need to do to be ready for the BIG SOCIETY?***

***From the perspective of:***

**◆ The VCS as a whole**

- Get organised, know your purpose, listen, challenge, communicate
- Sort out PR – let statutory sector/communities know what VCS does and the impact. Be professional in approach.
- Mapping exercise: what's out there, where are the gaps, who's who and how it fits (a diagram showing this would be useful).
- Need an information point – website? Clear and simple.
  - Tenders/contracts – maybe thematically to help joint working
  - Signposting
  - What's happening now/future
  - Case studies
  - Useful links
- Encourage our partners to be flexible and work in partnership
  - Be credible partners
  - Agree impacts may not be numerical
  - Less on outputs more on outcomes
- Set up a volunteer bank
- Be proactive
- Work to Compact

**◆ Your organisation/agency/board/forum**

- Advertise wares and make sure statutory bodies/partners/communities know what we do and its value
  - Get organised and be ready to take on challenges
- Consider asset sharing and sharing back room functions
  - Join forces
  - Be organised and ready to tender
- 'Partnership working'- do it don't just say it
  - Don't reinvent the wheel
  - Merges not necessarily the only way – merit in collaboration
- Watch the bureaucracy – less is best
- Consider the skills available from the aging population and use them
  - Get people trained
- Spend funds effectively and achieve
  - Recognise economic/social impact of what we do

## ◆ You as an individual

- Accept you can make a difference
- Ask the right questions
- Get involved
  - Community led planning
  - Big Society events
- Be aware of your skills
- Talk to others, raise awareness

## Common Points

- Get involved
- Know what is wanted, what is out there, what is needed
- Spread the word about Big Society and benefits of volunteering
  - Be positive its not just about outputs
- Be diverse, stay diverse, celebrate diversity
- Need to change cultures and be positive about the opportunities
- Listen
- Communicate through the VCS Assembly/Fora etc
  - Recognise consultation fatigue
  - Find new ways to engage

## WIC

- Lobby on VCS wide issues e.g. streamlining CRB checks
- Raise with statutory bodies and partners where their publications don't reflect/acknowledge the work done in partnership with VCS
- Work with statutory sector/partners to get information on tenders and contracts
- Move forward on the Core Standards to help VCS organisations with grant/tender processes
- Keeping VCS in mind of statutory bodies and partners
  - Representing their interest
  - Encouraging bodies to interact with VCS
  - Championing the VCS
  - Encourage feedback