

**Wiltshire VCS Assembly
Tuesday 27th September 2011
Lackham House, Chippenham**

SUMMARY OF THE EVENT

The second Wiltshire VCS Assembly of 2011 was held in Chippenham at Lackham House on 27th September 2011. Nearly 90 people were in attendance from a wide range of voluntary groups and organisations working across the county.

Terry Deegan, the Chairman of the Wiltshire Infrastructure Consortium (WIC) welcomed everyone to the event; he made a statement regarding the future of WIC and said that "an important decision had recently been made by the Board confirming that not only we will be continuing, but we are here to stay". He then gave a quick introduction to the WIC board members and welcomed Sarah Troughton; Deputy Lord Lieutenant for Wiltshire and Sandie Lewis from Wiltshire Council. He then introduced the first key speaker

CLlr Jane Scott OBE – Leader of Wiltshire Council

Jane spoke of how the community was alive and well in Wiltshire and she stressed how important the sector is to the Council. She went on to talk of the Big Society but would rather refer to it as strong and resilient communities.

She went on to describe the 18 areas boards which have come about from the unitary Council as of 2009 and how they are providing clear data and information out to communities and their importance in getting views and issues from the community. She spoke of the new scheme of Wiltshire Voices, where the Council are trying to engage the views of people who may not get heard otherwise.

She stated that there was no sense in taking funding out of the Voluntary Sector as the Voluntary Sector provide such value for money.

She has pledged to keep funding at the same level this year and next for the sector as a whole.



Debra Allcock-Tyler – Chief Executive, Directory of Social Change.

Debra first spoke of visioning for the sector and highlighted that a vision must be lived and breathed and is to inspire others, not to please a funder!

Debra gave a vibrant speech about the different motivations of the Public, Private and Voluntary sectors and how the language they use is often defines each sector but for community groups to be aware they must not lose their identity and stay true to their core purpose. Size of your organisation is not a measure of success but how well you have served the end beneficiary. She warned not to be lured by all money that is offered from funders if it does not fit in with the organisations true purpose.



She went on to discuss the Big Society and Localism and although likes the ideology of it, as this country has become somewhat of a blame culture, we need to face up to responsibility in our communities. Although the ideas have been spoilt by their implementation by government. She does not agree that private companies should win public sector tenders as they are not as accountable. Also the beneficiary should have access to choices and not be forced to choose one charity or organisation.

This is the true joy in life, being used for a purpose recognized by yourself as a mighty one. Being a force of nature instead of a feverish, selfish little clod of ailments and grievances, complaining that the world will not devote itself to making you happy. I am of the opinion that my life belongs to the whole community and as long as I live, it is my privilege to do for it what I can. I want to be thoroughly used up when I die, for the harder I work, the more I live. I rejoice in life for its own sake. Life is no brief candle to me. It is a sort of splendid torch which I have got hold of for the moment and I want to make it burn as brightly as possible before handing it on to future generations.

George Bernard Shaw

In the afternoon the third and fourth speakers were introduced.

Sandie Lewis & David Crisfield Wiltshire Council

Advice, Information & Signposting – A New Way of Working

They spoke about the new scheme which is in the development process regarding how people interact with the Council departments in sourcing information about Health and Social care services. They envision a single point of contact where people can access the correct service quickly. It will be about re-educating and changing the culture of the public away from using the Council as first port of call.



Workshop Introduction

Before the workshop sessions began Pippa Read and Janice Fortune gave an introduction to the workshops and spoke of the Transforming Local Infrastructure bid which Community First, Develop, Charities Information Bureau and Wessex Community Action are putting together by the end of October. This focuses on a Voluntary Sector Hub with a share of some resources, no mergers will take place. They ask for all comments and ideas to be brought forward on this subject by other community organisations before this date.



Afternoon workshop sessions

Delegates were then divided into selected workshops to discuss

'MANY VOICES- ONE VISION'

Creating Wiltshire's First Voluntary Sector Vision Statement

The following topics were discussed

- **Leading the Way with Our Values** – Getting the basics right (includes equalities. Facilitated by Marion Raynor—Community First
- **Sold on Social Enterprise?** Seeing and saying what works for us. Facilitated by Tim Coomer, Community First
- **Visionary Steps for Volunteering** – making the most of what we have and using the Volunteering Strategy. Facilitated by Inge Aben, Independent consultant
- **Friend or Foe? Competing; Collaborating** – Ways of Navigating. The Rocky Road to Success. Facilitated by Janice Fortune, Develop and Pippa Read, Community First
 - **It's Good To Talk** – New Ways of Networking & Communication Across the Sector (and with statutory and private sector) Facilitated by Meryl Hecquet, GROW
- **Fighting for The Future** – where we want to be in 5 or 10 years and why we want to be there. Facilitated by Sarah Crady, Wiltshire Citizens Advice

Main points from these discussions will be incorporated into a Voluntary Sector Vision Statement for Wiltshire which will help the Council with their Voluntary Sector Strategy.



The workshop facilitators fed back at the end of the day and to close Terry Deegan thanked all the speakers, facilitators and people for coming. Also a special thanks to the event organisers at Develop.

Please enjoy some pictures from the day...

