

## New VCS Representatives

There are a number of new representatives this quarter:

*Parents Matter Board*—Sarah Melville from Turning Point.

*Strategic Partnership Choice and Control Panel*—John Taylor from Community First on behalf of WIC

We also welcome new additions to the short term representatives bank:

- Hannah Bishop Sporting Chance project
- Jeff Robinson Redditch YMCA
- Jacky Rattue of St John's Ambulance.

Jim Smith of WAVOCC will be running a short term representative induction on Monday May 24th. If you are interested in short term representation and would like to attend the induction to get a taster of this work contact :

Jim Smith at [wavocc@btconnect.com](mailto:wavocc@btconnect.com)

## VCS Representatives' 4th Listening Event 25th February



This event, 25.04.10, brought together VCS Representatives to discuss 'Representation: Communication, Influence & Change.' Participants were addressed by Mark Jackson, the Chief Executive of St Richard's Hospice, who discussed his experience of representing the sector at local and regional strategic meetings. He gave examples of where he was able to express opinions on behalf of the sector and where he was able to influence decisions.

Areas discussed were as follows:

- Consultation: 'Representative's Code of Conduct'
- A Countywide Perspective of representation
- Consultation: 'Systems for Deputising/Replacing a Worcestershire VCS Representative on an LSP' doc
- 'Communication, Influence & Change'
- How VCS activity contributes to LAA targets

For a full briefing sheet and details of the day visit:

[http://www.winc.org.uk/past\\_vcs\\_representative\\_events](http://www.winc.org.uk/past_vcs_representative_events)

## Hot of the Press! Open Election - the Strategic Partnership for Choice and Control Panel

WIC have just conducted an election via our election process. There were two candidates for The Panel, and organisations/individuals were given a two week deadline to get their vote placed. The successful candidate is Keith Sherman, an experienced VCS Chief Officer and VCS Representative who is now a Trustee of Bromsgrove and District Age Concern.

### WIC Members Are:

Age Concern Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Bromsgrove and Redditch Network (BARN)

Community Action Wyre Forest

Community First in Herefordshire and Worcestershire

Community Action Malvern and District

Droitwich Spa and Rural Council for Voluntary Service

Evesham Volunteer Centre

Pershore Volunteer Centre

Worcester Volunteer Centre

Worcestershire Association of Voluntary Organisations in Community Care

Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services

Worcestershire Racial Equality Council

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NEWS FOR THE VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY SECTOR IN WORCESTERSHIRE

# THEVOICE

### Note from the WIC Chair

Strengthening communities and the importance of volunteering are two of the themes that are being voiced by all three main parties as the election draws nearer. But what do they mean? I believe that for communities' read neighbourhoods' and that there will be moves to shift power, influence and responsibility into the hands of communities.

The VCS will be key players in this and groups, organisations and their committee members need to aware both of the possibilities and the responsibilities they take on...*For the Chair's view of WIC's role in this work please turn to page 3.....*

To submit copy for The Voice please contact:

Jim Smith

[wavocc@btconnect.com](mailto:wavocc@btconnect.com)

### this issue

'WIC Listens'

Webinars

The Volunteering Forum

VCS Representatives' 4th Listening Event

## Webinars = WIC Training delivered online

WIC are pleased with the success of our first training courses delivered online—or 'Webinars'. Research and piloting of software has been focused on providing accessible online learning for the sector. This technology has been brought together with expert tutors in their subject areas, who are also experienced in delivering training online. This is a sample of what our virtual delegates have had to say so far:

- "I enjoyed this course very much, found it very effective .... "

- "Found it interesting and a clear explanation of the difference between Outputs and Outcomes"
- "It is the way forward, great not having to travel"

Upcoming webinars include:

- 5<sup>th</sup> May - Project Management - introduction to Prince2
- Date to be confirmed - Business Planning and Sustainable Business Practice

For details email Cheryl Cooney at [Community First at Cheryl@comfirst.org.uk](mailto:Community First at Cheryl@comfirst.org.uk) or phone 01684 312739

### A DATE FOR YOUR DIARY

Worcestershire County Council Grant Evaluation Meeting  
13th May, 9.30am - 11am  
At St Peter's Baptist Church, St Peter's, Worcester.

For further details contact Suzy James at [sjames2@worcestershire.gov.uk](mailto:sjames2@worcestershire.gov.uk) T: 01905 72(8650)

 **Worcestershire**  
Infrastructure Consortium

THEVOICE

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## The VCS VOICES HUB

Examples of feedback from representatives this quarter include:

- 'Worcestershire Arts Partnership'
- 'Health and Social Care Partnership Board'
- 'Worcestershire Partnership Board'
- 'Worcestershire Partnership Management Group'

Since construction, the 'Representatives Feedback Area' of the WIC WebPages has been visited 1249 times and can be visited at : [http://www.winc.org.uk/vcs\\_representatives\\_feedback](http://www.winc.org.uk/vcs_representatives_feedback)

Future requests for VCS representatives will include: Integrated Youth Support Strategy Group and Total Place - NEET. Please look for details from WIC members who will inform you of future representative opportunities or for further details of our work contact:

Jim J Smith  
at:wavocc@btconnect.com

## WIC's Response to 2009 Feedback and Evaluation



WIC are keen to listen to the expressed needs of the VCS locally. We do this in a number of ways: by collecting evaluation and commentary from events such as Volunteering Forums, training programmes, Representatives' Listening Events and by collating the views of attendees from our annual conference.

In addition to this WIC run a number of surveys

**“ WIC are keen to listen to the expressed needs of the VCS locally.” “**

such as Feedback from Service Users and Partners and Business Support Impact Analysis.

Each year WIC continues to deliver services that are identified as useful and responds to newly expressed need.

The WIC 2009 user survey noted that the 'statutory sector does not appear to know about the mechanisms for electing voluntary sector representatives.' We responded with the production of a open process for choosing representatives. During April we ran an election for the Choice and Control Strategic Panel.

In fact calls for VCS representatives have greatly increased during the last month, and WIC are currently handling the process for the recruitment of seven long-term VCS representatives. At the VCS conference in November you stated, in the Economic Downturn Workshops,

that it is 'difficult to find a way through funding sources as there is too much information.' WIC has responded by producing a Funding Opportunities area on our webpages. This tracks local, regional and national funding streams.

## The Strength in the Diversity of VCS Representation

So why do we need so many VCS representatives from across the sector? Answer: It is the best way to show the strength, range and depth of the VCS. It also truly indicates our diversity to statutory partners in Worcestershire.

Perhaps some partners may have the perception that the VCS consist of couple of organisations in a few of the regions' towns who are loosely linked. They may not recognise that there are thousands of organisations and groups, and there are thousands upon thousands of volunteers. But can this perception be true when our VCS reps continue to grow in number and diversity?

Through representatives' feedback, and the process and systems support available through WIC, we all have the opportunity to represent and measure our effectiveness and influence upon and within the Worcestershire Partnership and other Partners, decision making panels.

## Shenstone Group and Total Place

Last year Worcestershire Partnership, the county-wide Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) set up the Shenstone Group. It is a 'think tank' made up of representatives from: statutory bodies such as the County and District Councils, the NHS, the Police, key private sector companies the voluntary and community sector

The aims of the group include:

- to improve the quality of life for local people
- strengthen civil society
- enhance short and long term economic prospects
- address the broad range of 'wicked issues' that no single sector or agency alone can tackle

The VCS representatives are Cathy Clement, Philip Talbot and Richard Quallington. The Bishop of Worcester is also a member of the Group.

Total Place is a government initiative designed to look at enhancing partnership

working across agencies in all sectors, in particular the impact of total public expenditure in local areas. Worcestershire was invited to become one of thirteen pilot projects.

The three projects chosen for Total Place are:

- Areas of Highest Need – improving outcomes in disadvantaged neighbourhoods through empowering the community and more joined up public services
- Reducing the number of young people not in education, employment or training
- Public sector estate – looking at whether the buildings etc. in public ownership could be rationalised

The County's submission to 'Total Place' can be found on: [www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk](http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk). It provides information about this innovative way of working and is well worth a read.

## From Page 1: Note from the WIC Chair

...It is part of the role of WIC member organisations to keep the sector informed about the possibilities WIC members can also provide or signpost to the support and training that may be required.

The recession has seen an increase in the number of people looking for volunteering opportunities. Many of these are already highly skilled. Others are new to work and looking at volunteering as valuable work experience. Does your group or organisation need more support? The more specific you are about the abilities and skills you require and the support and training offered the better the chance of getting 'just the right person'.

If communities are to be strengthened and increased numbers of volunteers are looking for placements funding needs to be found. I hope the next government recognises that goodwill is not enough.

## The Volunteering Hub

Over 50 volunteer coordinators from across Worcestershire attended the Volunteering Forum last month at Hindlip Hall. Through 2 workshops run in parallel we explored the development of strategies and policies to support volunteers and volunteering best practice, and the law and how this affects rural volunteering. Robin May from Training Cycle and Lynn Blackadder shared their knowledge and expertise with all present and delivered two exceptional workshops.

If you would like to receive a copy of the notes from any of these workshops please contact your local Volunteer Centre or visit [http://www.winc.org.uk/volunteering\\_forums](http://www.winc.org.uk/volunteering_forums)

For more information contact Gabi Gogan 07525 335 184 or email at [volunteeringhubworcs@yahoo.co.uk](mailto:volunteeringhubworcs@yahoo.co.uk)