

Regular features of 'The Voice'

- **Training Opportunities** (page 1)
- **Events** (page 2)
- **An introduction to a Committee or Board** (page 3)
- **Introduction to.... and this quarter Suzy James (Voluntary and Community Sector Coordinator for Worcestershire County Council)** (page 3)
- **Procurement opportunities** (page 3)
- **Job opportunities** (page 4)
- **Jargon buster – for those new to the VCS** (page 4)

Features this Quarter

**Page 1—Introduction to Worcestershire's 'The Voice'** (by Elspeth Rolls Chair of WIC)

**Page 2 – So Why Represent?** (by Jim Smith – WIC - Engagement and Representation)

**Page 4 - The UK Vision Strategy** (by Rhian Thompson Worcestershire Association for the Blind)

For all 'The Voice' submissions or queries please E-mail Jim Smith at [WAVOCC@btconnect.com](mailto:WAVOCC@btconnect.com)

Please contact 'The Voice' if you have any issues with the accessibility of this document, as we are happy to distribute in other formats.

## **Introduction to Worcestershire's 'The Voice'**

'The Voice' is the new quarterly newsletter for the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) in Worcestershire, and is a part of the recent commission by Worcestershire County Council to encourage infrastructure support within the VCS.

We want 'The Voice' to be led by what our sector wants to hear, or would like to promote; while also providing essential information, recruitment activity, news and opportunities. Please do send any suggestions or submissions to 'The Voice'; we will always be looking for interesting articles, events or news for inclusion. Or, each quarter, we would also like to offer any organisation or group the opportunity to promote themselves by submitting a profile of their good work.

We also intend to insure 'The Voice' is a positive vehicle to help VCS representatives communicate with the sector.

I hope you enjoy 'The Voice', and it becomes a useful and effective sounding board and tool for the VCS across Worcestershire

## **And what or who is WIC?**

Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium was formed in 2003 in response to the government's ChangeUp agenda – a government programme that has been set up to improve the support and assistance that is available to voluntary organisations and community groups nation-wide.

The Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium is made up of voluntary organisations in the County that offer some or all of the following services:

- Start up and development support
- Information, advice and assistance
- Advocacy and representation
- Partnership building and brokerage
- Policy research.

It includes organisations that are there to support groups with a specific focus (on older people, younger people or black and ethnic minorities) as well as those that offer services to all the groups in their area or countywide.

In spring 2008 WIC successfully won the County Council tender for providing infrastructure to the VCS in Worcestershire. This bid was split across three themes:

- Business Support
- Volunteering
- Engagement and Representation – of which 'The Voice' is part.

## **Training Opportunities**



We will be updating this area with training opportunities on a quarterly basis. Please contact 'The Voice' if there are any training opportunities you would like to promote, or any training that is not yet available that you feel should be developed for the benefit of the sector.

## ***The Use of Representation***



The voluntary and community sectors are recognised as key partners in the planning and delivery of public services. This increased partnership working includes Local Area Agreements and Local Strategic Partnerships.

So why represent? In short, we have an opportunity to have a say on how the county is run, how money is spent, how the future of the county is led through the various stratagems, reports and recommendations produced at LSP level. A more incisive question might be, what are the dangers if we don't represent?

For the VCS contribution to be as effective as possible at these strategic levels clear engagement and representational structures need to be in place. A number of working principles underpin such structure, some of which are:

- The VCS itself must determine how and by whom it should be represented
- Engagement and representation processes must be clear and transparent
- VCS representatives will be drawn from relevant 'constituencies', either of the whole sector or relevant sections of it reflecting communities of interest, identity or neighbourhood
- All conflicts of interest will be acknowledged.
- Representatives must be able to draw views from and report back to their constituency's networks

- They will, therefore, reflect a broad cross-section of views and will be bound by any collective decisions taken, rather than representing their own or their organisation's interests

For further information on representation, or for any up and coming VCS representation opportunities in your area, please contact 'The Voice.'

### ***WIC - Representatives' Listening Event***

All current representatives that attend County or District strategic boards are encouraged to attend this 'Listening Event' on the 11th September 2008, 6pm-8pm. Run by WIC, this event aims to refine our representation process by hearing what you have to say about your experiences. WIC would like your input and your knowledge to better the induction process for new representatives; the feedback procedures; and the support available to those in this valuable role. We will also be providing cheese and wine, and anticipate that this evening will be both enjoyable and productive.

The venue will be St. Richard's Hospice Foundation, Wildwood Drive, Worcester, WR5 2QT

For further details or to reserve a place, please contact Jim Smith at:

wavocc@btconnect.com

T. 01684 575545

### ***Events***

#### ***Rotary Charity Concert for Worcestershire Association for the Blind.***

Buddy Holly and the Crickets. The Forum Theatre Great Malvern, Sat 20th September 2008 7.30pm.

For tickets contact Malvern Theatres on 01684 892277



The Worcestershire Partnership is pleased to announce the launch of a three-year £1 million Health Improvement Fund. Organisations are invited to submit bids of up to £75,000 for projects that help deliver the health targets in Worcestershire's Local Area Agreement, namely:

- Increase adult participation in sport
- Reduce the number of people admitted to hospital because of injuries caused by alcohol
- Reduce obesity among primary school children
- Increase the opportunities for young people to take part in positive activities
- Reduce the number of under 18's falling pregnant
- Reduce the number of deaths from circulatory diseases amongst under 75s
- Reduce the number of people who smoke

Applications may be for capital or revenue, may be for small amounts and can be for one or more years funding (within the lifetime of the 2008 – 2011 LAA). Preference will be given to applications that target recognised areas of need and that demonstrate close partnership working.


Two hundred thousand pounds is available in the first year of the fund and the closing date for applications is 30 October 2008.


An information workshop to explain more about the fund and to give help on how to apply will take place on 2 September 2008, 1.30pm – 3.30pm in the Council Chamber at County Hall. Places for the workshop should be booked with Jo Portman on (01905) 760040 or [jo.portman@worcspct.co.uk](mailto:jo.portman@worcspct.co.uk)



**Current Tenders from Worcestershire County Council**

[Children's Centre - Charford Bromsgrove](#) £113,003 pro rata Yr I £113,033  
Yrs 2 and 3 indicative 15/09/2008 01/01/2009 [Sue Boyd](#)

 [Children's Centre Malvern Link and rural areas to the east](#) £123,033 pro rata Yr I £123,033  
Yrs2 & 3 indicative 15/09/2008 01/01/2009 [Sue Boyd](#)

 [Children's Centre Teme Valley, Tenbury Area](#) £123,033 pro rata Yr I £123,033  
Yrs 2 & 3 indicative 15/09/2008 01/01/2009 [Sue Boyd](#)

 [Admission Prevention Scheme for Older People in North & South Worcestershire](#) (Not Set) 01/09/2008 05/04/2009 [Sandie Graham](#)

**An Introduction to.....**

Suzy James:

**Is the new Voluntary and Community Sector Coordinator for Worcestershire County Council.**

Suzy's first job was with Play Board a national organisation set up to promote play in the 1980's. Since then she has had a variety of roles culminating in her last post at the University Hospital Birmingham, where she spent 8 years working as a Project Manager on an innovative recruitment model which involved working with European Social fund.

Her current role poses new challenges in overseeing the new grant giving process and seeking to embed the Compact both at County Hall and with partner organisations. In addition Suzy is keen to identify new ways of working which build on good practice and partnerships.

Her first 2 months have been in Suzy's words ' a vertical learning curve' and extremely interesting. Round 1 of the grants have dominated to date, however, she now looks forward to engaging with other agendas which will impact on both WCC and the VCS.

'The Voice' asked Suzy 'where will you be in 3 years time?'

Suzy responded, 'well, this is always a golden question, however, the challenges of this role will influence future direction, and I look forward to an interesting journey!

*(An Introduction to a Committee or Board )*  
**Worcestershire Partnership Board**



*(Above: picture of all members of the Worcestershire Partnership)*

The Worcestershire Partnership could be seen as the most influential board in the county.

The Board brings together local government, public services such as health, learning providers, police and probation, voluntary and community organisations and local businesses within Worcestershire.

It oversees issues that affect Worcestershire residents' quality of life - such as crime, health, jobs, education and transport and aims to tackle and foresee future issues.

For further information on the Partnership Board please go to <http://www.worcestershirepartnership.org.uk>

## UK Vision Strategy

In April this year, the Right Honourable Alan Johnston officially launched the UK Vision Strategy. So what is this "strategy"? Is it another document to gather dust on a shelf? We certainly hope not as this document will play an important part in shaping future provisions and services for people with sight loss. It is the key to achieving changes which are desperately needed.

The strategy has been developed by a wide range of people from health, social care, the voluntary sector and most importantly service users. The strategy has three specific outcomes. These are:

- Improve the eye health of the people of the UK
- Eliminate avoidable sight loss and deliver excellent support for people with sight loss
- Inclusion, participation and independence for people with sight loss.

It is important that service users and professionals from across the board know about the outcomes and how they could impact on the services they receive and deliver.

Worcestershire Association for the Blind is holding an event in September to launch the strategy to both providers of services and to service users. Sight loss can affect anyone at any time and at any age. At some point service providers will come into contact with someone with significant sight loss and it is important that they remove barriers so that people with sight loss can exercise independence, control and choice.

If anyone is interested in finding out more about the strategy or attending the launch in September please contact Rhian Thompson at Worcestershire Association for the Blind on 01905 723245.

## Jargon Buster!

- LSPS: Local Strategic Partnerships
- WIC: Worcestershire Infrastructure Consortium
- SCS - Sustainable Community Strategy
- WCYVS - Worcestershire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
- WSCB - Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board

## Job Opportunities



Have you ever thought how much your organisation spends on recruitment each year? How much that is in total across Worcestershire, across the year, the sector!

Charity Times (2003) asks: 'How many organisations have really calculated the real costs of their recruitment process, and, therefore, their most efficient and cost effective method of recruiting?'

Well why not make best use of the wide distribution of 'The Voice!'

Each quarter we aim to dedicate space to advertise your job opportunities, find you the staff you need at the right time, and save you money!

Contact 'The Voice' to place a free recruitment advert (open to submissions from 29.09.08) Please note space is limited and adverts will be placed on a first come first served basis.

## Mentoring and Befriending Foundation

The Mentoring and Befriending Foundation (MBF) is the national strategic body offering support to practitioners and organisations working across the mentoring and befriending field. MBF has a team of national staff, working from the head office in Manchester with Regional Co-ordinators based in each of the nine Government regions of England.

Mentoring and befriending programmes exist all over England working with all ages, different groups of people, in a wide range of settings, and tackling a variety of issues. They are across all sectors and engage volunteers to build relationships with individuals who need support at key times of transition or stress in their life.

Sue Wragg is the Regional Co-ordinator supporting organisations across the Worcestershire area and Sue provides specialist support for organisations wanting to set up mentoring or befriending programmes or those who wish to develop an existing programme further. Sue is involved with an ongoing consultation and mapping exercise to identify all programmes in existence and to identify both good practice and where support is needed.

The Approved Provider Standard (APS) is the only national standard specifically designed for mentoring and befriending programmes and is a reliable benchmark of safe and effective practice. APS is supported by the Cabinet Office and the Department for Children, Schools and Families and MBF promotes it as a way of ensuring consistency and quality of programmes.

For further information please contact Sue Wragg on 07932 453498, [sue.wragg@mandbf.org.uk](mailto:sue.wragg@mandbf.org.uk) or take a look at the website at [www.mandbf.org.uk](http://www.mandbf.org.uk)