



PROGRESS REPORT

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

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ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION

LINK SCHEMES

Marion Mason, Jane Sartin & Mary Hardwidge

Ensure effective scheme coverage

The Link Project has developed two new Link Schemes during the year which will cover the areas of Brinkworth, Dauntsey and Christian Malford (Dauntsey Vale), and Market Lavington, Easterton and Urchfont. Development work has begun in Lyneham, Tockenham, Bushton and Clyffe Pypard. The Link Schemes covering Tidworth and Ludgershall are to merge to provide a more sustainable service to those communities. Tisbury Link has expanded to cover the area previously served by the Donhead St Mary car scheme. Wiltshire County Council figures show that 92% of the rural areas of Wiltshire now have a Link Scheme service.

Improve standards of practice

Link Schemes are supported to maintain quality standards and keep abreast of current good practise through an ongoing programme of training. The Chairperson's meetings are well attended and deal with issues such as CRB checks and insurance cover. From 1st April 2008 all new Link Volunteers and Committee Trustees will be required to undertake a CRB check. The Co-ordinators and Management Committee seminars were well supported, one of which focused on volunteer recruitment and retention. 201 volunteers attended a training session during the year.

The Good Practise Guide which was produced in 2004 is in the process of being updated to reflect new legislation and current practise.

Partnership working

The Link development staff continue to work with related services in Wiltshire to support both the development work and the work of the Link Schemes. During the year discussions have taken place with the Community Development Officers at the County Council with a view to encouraging the Good Neighbour service by volunteers.

The Funding Partnership has agreed an interim funding arrangement for 2008/2009.

Publicity and promotion

As a sponsored charity of the West Wilts Show the West Wiltshire Link Volunteers staffed a stand for the 3 day event with publicity produced by Project staff.

Display boards for Volunteer recruitment have been used by several schemes at local events during the summer months.

ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007 – 2008

LINK SCHEMES

Aim: Advise and assist local communities in forming and operating link good neighbour schemes to support local people

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Ensure effective scheme coverage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 new Link Schemes set up • 40 new volunteers recruited • Evaluation of areas not covered in Salisbury District 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 new Link Schemes operating in M. Lavington, Easterton and Urchfont, and Brinkworth, Dauntsey and Christian Malford • 40 volunteers recruited • Tisbury Link expanded
Improve standards of practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 training sessions provided • 200 volunteers trained • Disseminate information about legislative changes • 3 established schemes to receive intensive support • 500 enquiries responded to providing information 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 training sessions held • 241 volunteers trained • Tidworth receiving support • 530 enquiries dealt with
Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attend local forums for discussing issues around health related transport • Establish working relationship with staff within Housing Associations to promote service and volunteering • £25,000 disbursed from the Link Scheme Grant Fund on behalf of the local authorities and the PCT • Secure ongoing funding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The funding proposal submitted to Westlea is awaiting a final decision • Grants totalling £33,000 have been distributed • Interim funding agreed for 2008/2009
Publicity and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Produce and distribute Audit of scheme activity • Ensure appropriate distribution of publicity • Develop new ideas for promotion and publicity with Pebley Beach • Attend West Wilts Show as sponsored charity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Audit produced • West Wiltshire Show attended • Link Schemes encouraged to plan publicity distribution on regular basis to promote volunteering

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

Liam Tatton-Bennett & Sheila Martin

Strengthen strategic partnership working

The three taskforces established at the beginning of the year under the DART Partnership have set up a new community transport small grants fund and disbursed 10 grants; provided continued support for the Wiltshire Wheels-to-Work service, undertaken a comprehensive survey of the transport needs of the education and employment sector, and facilitated joint working with strategic partners such as the WCC Extended Schools team.

The DART Partnership itself has provided intensive input into the development of the new Local Area Agreement for Wiltshire to advocate for the future provision of local community transport development and accessibility development activity. The Partnership has also helped to secure the future provision of the Community Transport development service in 2008/9.

Improve the effectiveness of community transport groups

Operational support has been provided to the network of 25 community minibuses across Wiltshire and Swindon, and the umbrella body which represents community minibuses in Wiltshire and Swindon (the Wiltshire and Swindon Community Transport Association), is now comprised of nearly all of the community minibus groups locally.

Bespoke training has also been delivered or hosted in key operational areas such as risk assessment, minibus safety, disability awareness, CRB checks and strengthening committees. A Community Transport Conference centred on the theme of social enterprise was held in November 2007. 40 learners plus six exhibitors were in attendance and feedback about the event was very positive.

Additionally, in-depth support has been provided to two existing community minibus groups to help them to establish four new community transport services. The new services that have been developed include a new shopper service for people living in rural areas surrounding Melksham and an employee shuttle service at Solstice Business Park. These services have helped the groups involved to improve their income generation and to broaden the range of services they offer to the community. One new community transport hub has also been established and a further two hub schemes are at advanced stages of development.

Identify local transport needs and promote community transport

Transport needs surveys were undertaken in Westbury/Warminster, and Chippenham community areas to identify local transport needs. Local Community Transport services promoted via amended Community Transport directory, Community Transport Newsletters, local and national Community Transport websites and outreach work. Future priorities also identified for new Community Transport service development.

ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007 – 2008

COMMUNITY TRANSPORT PROGRAMME

Aim: Improve access to services and facilities in a way which is sustainable and achieves social inclusion in rural areas

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Strengthen strategic partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide secretariat for 4 DART Partnership meetings • Establish 4 taskforce partnerships • Secure partnership funding post 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretariat provided for 3 DART meetings • 3 taskforce partnerships established • Community Transport funding secured for 2008-09
Improve the effectiveness of community transport groups	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide active support to 25 CT groups • Help establish improved income generation for 5 CT groups • Develop 3 CT hubs • Develop and deliver county wide CT conference • Develop one new CT service initiative 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Technical support provided to network of 25 CT groups, including training to 6 groups in risk assessment, 19 groups in minibus safety and disability awareness, 13 groups on CRB checks, 5 on loan finance and 4 on strengthening committees. 4 issues of CT News produced • Contracts training provided to 5 groups • 1 new hub developed • CT conference delivered • In-depth support provided to 2 existing CT groups to establish 4 new community transport services
Promote community transport	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Map need and establish clear priorities for services development in Wiltshire and Swindon • Make 5 presentations about community transport potential and opportunities to local communities • Develop effective information resource 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 transport needs surveys undertaken • 5 presentations made • Community Transport directory amended and local CT information included as part of a national website

WHEELS TO WORK

Helen Lines

Manage and allocate moped pool resource

Over the last year the Wheels to Work scheme has largely achieved its original ambitious targets of numbers of people helped via the direct provision of a moped and through the provision of transport information. The targets set at the beginning of the year were ambitious because they in fact exceeded the outputs anticipated by the scheme's primary funder - SWRDA.

A broad range of local people have been assisted via the scheme and nearly all of the people supported by the scheme have remained in employment or vocational training, having completed their six month loan period.

Partnership working

The scheme has built upon its strong working links with commercial partners including employers, local rider training centres and moped and moped equipment garages. Due to operational pressures it has not been possible to host a commercial sponsorship event early in the last quarter of the year; however, an event is planned for June 2008.

An outline business plan has also been written during this period to develop Wheels to Work social enterprise commercial activity in the future.

A 100% client sign up rate to Credit Union savings accounts has been maintained in the year. During the course of the year, approximately 60% of all clients have been able to purchase their own transport having finished on the scheme, with the majority using a Credit Union loan to enable them to do so.

The scheme has also built upon its working partnerships with Job Centre Plus, Connexions, Wiltshire County Council, Housing Associations and employment training centres.

The development of a South West Regional Wheels to Work group has progressed further during this period. To date, the group has managed to negotiate with insurance companies to reduce premiums for Wheels to Work schemes across the South West area.

Publicity and promotion

It was decided to keep publicity of the scheme to potential client's intentionally low key over the last six months due to the continued high demand for the scheme, with only a small amount of press activity and outreach work being undertaken. Publicity and promotion has instead been targeted towards potential funders of the scheme for 2008/9, with bids also being submitted to trust funds and charitable sources for this purpose.

ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007 – 2008

WHEELS TO WORK

Aim: Provide managed leased mopeds for people requiring access to work or work-based training

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Manage and allocate moped pool resource	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 moped users supported and on the road • 50 people supplied with transport information • Further potential new users identified • Explore moped pool and scheme expansion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 38 moped users supported • 44 supplied with transport information • Scheme development being investigated
Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore and develop commercial partnership support • Investigate potential of developing social enterprise activity to support the scheme • Continued development of partnership with Connexions, Job Centre Plus and Credit Unions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commercial sponsorship event planned for June 2008 • Social Enterprise outline business plan written • Partnerships built upon
Publicity and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 press features in First News and local media • 4 scheme newsletters produced • Attendance at 3 local career fairs and youth events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 press releases • DVD production completed • 4 scheme newsletters produced • Attended 2 career fairs

FIT TOGETHER (CONNECTING COMMUNITIES THROUGH SPORT)

Helie Franklin

Fit Together is a partnership project which works across Wiltshire with rural and isolated communities to increase the availability of sport and active recreation in a co-ordinated manner – in order to improve health and build stronger communities. This project is the vehicle to deliver outcomes relating to building strong, sustainable communities and improving health in the Wiltshire Local Area Agreement. It began in October 2007.

Increased participation

The project, though in its infancy, has developed working links with other organisations to ensure the opportunities to sustain rural sport and activity participation are explored. The project officer has been involved in many taster sessions across the county and is developing work to deliver sport in four key locations.

Partnership working

Fit Together is an innovative partnership project involving Community First, Youth Action Wiltshire, Age Concern Wiltshire, and the Wiltshire & Swindon Activity & Sports Partnership (WASP). The project management board is made up of members from the four organisations with an operational group that also includes West Wiltshire District Council; Westlea Housing Association and the Community Safety Partnership. This group is supporting the development and delivery of the action plan. The Lease of Life fund is also distributed through this project and includes Help the Aged as a partner.

Publicity and Promotion

The project has looked at many ways of getting the message out to the general public regarding its aims and objectives. A web link is provided by the County Sports Partnership and regular updates are included in their newsletters. A presentation was given at the regional Sport England conference to introduce the project which also gained many new and interesting contacts. Project staff have attended conferences, meetings and locally based seminars to promote the project.

ACCESSIBILITY & SOCIAL INCLUSION 2007 – 2008

FIT TOGETHER

Aim: To work across Wiltshire with rural and isolated communities to increase the availability of sport and active recreation in a co-ordinated manner in order to improve health and build stronger communities

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Increased participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • New participants – 150 females • New participants – 150 males • New participants – over 45s – 100 • New participants – disabled – 5 • New volunteers – supported and trained – 50 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 252 older people have been assisted to take part in activities • 60 people took part in Extend taster • 11 groups have received assistance to access sport and activities • 82 young people have taken part in activities • Initial volunteers approached and training sessions being designed along with Learning Curve and CSP to support sports volunteers
Partnership working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 key partners worked with to deliver the project • 6 focused meetings attended relating to sport and activity 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked with 5 key partners to begin delivery of work programme • Attended 6 focus meetings in relation to sport and activity provision
Publicity and promotion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the project to 4 area meetings • Publicity material prepared • Web and other media channels updated on progress of project 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Project publicised at 5 area meetings • Initial ideas for publicity explored • Web updates to CSP and CF • Publicity for events channelled through the CSP to local radio and media

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

PARISH PLANS & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Marion Rayner, Sharon Leney (until June 07), Cindy Robson (May – Sept 07), Katie Fielding & Becky Holloway

Expand networking between partners at district, county and sub-regional level on rural issues

The Community Development Manager worked with colleagues at Wiltshire Wildlife Trust and jointly held a workshop on climate change issues for local communities called 'Changing Climate, Changing Communities' which attracted 12 volunteers. A joint WWT/Community First Visioning workshop has also been held with staff members from both organisations to explore the concept of 'sustainable communities.'

Increase community participation/capacity building in community needs assessments

Activity has focussed on providing a new Parish Plan Workshop Programme of five sessions to parish plan steering groups which has been developed to encourage a consistent approach to parish planning in line with the new national Parish & Community Planning Toolkit which we are trialling. All five sessions were held in the first run of the programme and an extra session on Questionnaire Design was organised at the request of participants. The re-run has attracted fewer participants and we will consider different delivery methods for the future. Separate workshop sessions have also been held for parish plan groups in Salisbury District.

Encourage new community initiatives

Staff have responded to 45 new enquiries.

Information collected from a Parish Plan Impact Survey was used to create a database of parish plan actions that can be shared with local authorities and other agencies. This information was also shared with Community First colleagues ensuring that parishes had access to support from Community First with any unachieved projects. Presentations about parish plans were made at meetings of Calne Community Area Partnership and Northern Community Area Forum.

Improved awareness of community consultation and community action at the grassroots

Strategic work has been a strong focus this year. Staff have been involved in the SWAN Community-led Planning Forum that is developing a regional framework for community-led planning and a regional database. We have also been preparing a parish plan position paper to present to the transition team for the new Unitary Council.

Community Development presentations have been made at a community arts training course, to other RCCs in the south west and to visitors from Japan undertaking research into parish planning.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2007 – 2008

PARISH PLANS & COMMUNITY CONSULTATION

Aim: Promote community action to sustain local services through vibrant voluntary groups and organisations

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Expand networking between partners at district, county and sub-regional level on rural issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Facilitate collaborative working on 2 issues 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 (Working with WWT on climate change issues; older peoples' meal provision)
Increase community participation/capacity building in community needs assessments	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 new groups in communities assisted to identify and address local needs and, where appropriate, assisted with funding applications • 8 communities assisted with existing parish plans • 2 training sessions provided, training 20 volunteers 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9 new groups (Baydon, Berwick, Rowde, Wilcot, Atworth, Broad Town, Wilton, Laverstock & Ford, Newton Toney) • 11 assisted (Figheledean, Calne W'out, Cherhill, Dauntsey, Biddestone, Steeple Ashton, Bishops Cannings, Limpley Stoke, Baydon, Lydiard Millicent, Ashton Keynes) • 11 workshops - 90 volunteers (some overlap) • 1 workshop: Changing Climate, Changing Communities -12 attendees
Encourage new community initiatives	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 40 enquiries for assistance, initial response within 4 working days • 2 presentations made about community development support to assist with implementation of parish plans • 4 communities to receive advice about development of projects resulting from parish plans 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 45 enquiries, all responded to in 4 days except during staff leave • 2 presentations about parish plans (Calne CAP, Northern CA Forum) • 5 parish plans shared with colleagues for follow up
Improved awareness of community consultation and community action at the grassroots	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 articles/information sheets disseminating information about best practice • 2 case studies highlighting impact of parish plans • 2 community development services presentations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 First News articles, 1 info sheet: Publicity for Parish Plans • Impact survey report completed • Parish Plan Actions report collated • Parish Plan position paper in preparation • 4 CD talks (Japanese visitors, + 2 SWAN RCC's, Community Arts Training)

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Helie Franklin (until May 07), Sharon Leney (until June 07), Cindy Robson (May- Sept 07), Marion Rayner, & Lesley Taylor (from Nov 07)

Increased joint working

Support continued for the partnership at Highworth including assistance for a launch event for their market towns project. The Learning & Development programme in North Wiltshire was completed. A generic pack was produced for use in other areas during the year.

A programme of work in the Seymour area of Trowbridge to address community needs by strengthening involvement in the Tenants and Residents Association (Tara) and engaging decision makers was agreed. The project requires intense working with the Tara and partner organisations.

A project in Holt (in partnership with Holt Youth Group, Youth Development Service and WWDC) began in March 08 - working with a group of young people to build confidence, knowledge and ability whilst developing a project which will benefit young people in Holt. 'Things to do' is the focus and includes work on consultation, participation, rights/responsibilities, planning, lobbying and research.

Consultancy work for Extended Schools has taken place and is continuing. This is to facilitate the development of a forum in Durrington focussing on Every Child Matters.

Expanded community participation

Work started in May 07 to investigate community based opportunities for meal provision to elderly/vulnerable people living in rural areas of Salisbury and Kennet. Collation of case study examples and mapping of existing provision was carried out. It became apparent that the more urgent need is to strengthen and support existing groups. Options were discussed with other organisations and those currently running groups in the area. A full report with recommendations was produced for Wiltshire County Council.

Developing capacity to enable community leadership

A six session programme 'Beyond the Parish Boundaries' was developed with Trowbridge Parish Liaison Group. This ran between Jan – March 08 with sessions on unitary status, WALC, village halls/community transport, parish plans, funding and planning. 11 parishes took part.

Better sharing of best practice

The Aiding Independence Technical Conference was attended.

Community Empowerment Focus Group in Salisbury was attended in March 2008.

Work this year has been affected by staff changes and sickness absence and by evolving local priorities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2007 – 2008

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Aim: Increase the involvement of people and empower local communities in effecting decisions that impact their lives

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Increased joint working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 community planning partnerships or working groups supported • 3 liaison meetings with local authority officers/ partnership organisations to deliver unified guidance • 4 partner organisations assisted with their training 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 (Highworth, Vision For Wroughton, Older People's work, WAYS) • 2 liaison meetings - NWDC, WWDC • Extended Schools work • Learning and Development Pack developed and opportunity to take part in programme offered to Amesbury Community Partnership
Expanded community participation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 community area partnerships assisted to develop through training, workshops or networking opportunities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 (Trowbridge-Seymour, Trowbridge Parish Liaison Group (11 parish councils took part) Holt young people's group). Offered to Amesbury
Develop capacity to enable community leadership	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work through existing groups to encourage wider engagement in community leadership • Work with partner organisations to support community leadership in 4 areas • Offering support to community partnerships to engage with young people 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1(Trowbridge Parish Liaison Group) • 1 (Trowbridge - Seymour) • Holt (working on some of the issues raised in the Bradford Community Area Plan)
Better sharing of best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disseminate information about best practice in articles, information sheets and support materials. • 2 regional and national events 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 (Aiding Independence Conference), Learning and Development Pack, development of the Jigsaw

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Karolyne Fudge-Malik & Anne Rees (until March 08)

Establish the Wiltshire Depot and specialist database for referral of minority issues and advocacy support

The Depot is now well established amongst the minority population and service providers. This year we have addressed issues from minority individuals such as how to sell a car, racist attacks, volunteer translators, training needs and homelessness. Two training events were held for people new to the UK on social behaviour. Service providers have been assisted with issues such as appropriate practices for working with diverse communities, current population trends, training for workers, health and safety and first aid. Requests for information have also been received from Cornwall, Hampshire, Gloucestershire and Glasgow.

Service development

Service development has been progressed through the Diversity Action Groups and Migrant Worker Forums, two of which are chaired by the Community Support Officer, and Wiltshire Social Inclusion Partnership (CSO provides secretariat). Information is gathered and disseminated through these forums. Practical projects include information events for migrant workers in North and West Wilts and 'Exercise Assist' - a county wide strategic planning and information event. Work in progress includes a diversity information book and the establishing of a county wide migrant worker strategic group. The CSO has also assisted with the World of Wiltshire cultural event and RPRC (bringing sensitive information to isolated communities). The CSO takes an active role in the Infrastructure Consortium Equalities group, Doorway Homeless project, Wiltshire Racial Equality Council, West Wilts Interfaith group, Black History Month, and the Criminal Justice Board Independent Advisory Group, and provides advice and information to the North Wilts District Council equalities and diversity group, the Probation service, and the Churches Partnership.

Cluster and group development

Building of relationships continues with identified clusters across Wiltshire and Swindon and established groups receive support and advice. In particular, CSO supports the development of SPY (for young people unsure of their sexual identity), coordinates the Older Lesbian Network and is progressing a county wide Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender support group.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2007 – 2008

COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Aim: To identify gaps in infrastructure and to support inclusion and a representational voice for black, minority and ethnic groups and individuals.

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
To establish the Wiltshire Depot, a virtual forum of VCS organisations, with strong links with other agencies for referral of issues from field workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 database developed of issues for tracking and analysis • 1 database developed of agencies for support and development • 30 service providers supported in providing services • 30 minority issues referred to appropriate agencies 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Depot and 2 databases established • 24 issues from service providers addressed and agencies supported • Information gathering and dissemination for service providers via forums • Information event held with 84 participants
Specialist database and advocacy support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 database of local and regional BME and LGBT support and resources • 3 relationships and working links established with agencies in region • 25 minority individuals, groups or clusters supported to access services 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 database updated • Working links established with 3 regional agencies • 46 issues addressed and support provided to individuals to access services
Service development – assessment and workshops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 joint assessments carried out • 4 development programmes run and devised. • 4 follow up reviews and assessments held. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Service development progressed through forums - DIAG, WSIP, and local migrant worker forums
Cluster group development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8 minority clusters/networks identified • 12 individuals put in touch with networks • 4 groups/clusters joint assessments • 3 workshops and development programme devised • 3 follow up support and revision delivered 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 training events held with 30 participants • 4 information events held with approx. 40 participants • Wiltshire World event held with approx. 200 participants • 12 individuals networked • 5 clusters, 7 groups supported

LOCAL COUNCILS

Katie Fielding & Penny Bell

Facilitate the involvement of local councils in the democratic process

WALC continues to raise awareness of local councils' powers through the County Circular and the advice line. The elections in May 2007 and first meetings of new parish and town councils created a large number of enquiries. There were questions surrounding the County Council's bid for Unitary Status and both of these major issues were reflected in the County Circulars of the first half of the year. An election to the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils Executive Committee saw a number of new members.

Provide administrative support services for the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils

Around 2,000 enquiries from parish and town councils came into the WALC office in 07/08, double the anticipated number. There were ten County Circulars sent out which all included information on updated legislation and the clarification of procedural matters pertinent to parish and town councils, as well as information from the National Association of Local Councils. As ever, the efforts of local councils in Wiltshire & Swindon to perform effectively and legally and to best value are increasingly evident. The Association saw the joining of two new town councils in membership, which leaves only one town council in the county not in WALC membership.

Dissemination of best practice

WALC held a training day for new councillors in June. This was over-subscribed with new members wanting to gain information about the role they were about to embark upon. This was followed up with a second course in March 2008 and there is a waiting list for a future course, which proves the enthusiasm and commitment of many local councillors in the county.

There has been promotion of the Quality Council scheme and close working with parishes interested in undertaking the accreditation. One parish and one town council have been accredited with Quality Status this year.

There has been continuing development of the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils website as well as the launch of South West Local Councils Associations website which the Local Councils' Officer developed with the ICT Support Officer.

Improved three-tier working

The local councils' officer continues to communicate with principal authorities in the effort to raise awareness of local councils. There has been discussion with the County Council regarding the proposed transition to One Council for Wiltshire and the effects this may have on parish and town councils and community governance.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2007 – 2008

LOCAL COUNCILS

Aim: Promote effective working with all tiers of local government and best practice among local councils

Objective	Key Performance indicators	End of Year Achievements
Facilitate the involvement of local councils in the democratic process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raise awareness of powers, roles and procedures through training and the promotion of good practice and Quality Status • Involvement of local councils in community initiatives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Held 2 new councillors' training courses • Promotion of Quality Status • Visit to Parish Councils to promote Parish Plans and interim assessment of Parish Plan Grant applications
Provide administrative support services for the Wiltshire Association of Local Councils	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1200 enquiries, initial response within 4 working days • 4 Executive meetings and AGM provided with secretariat support • 10 newsletters containing information relevant to the sector - production and distribution of information to members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2093 enquiries • 4 Executive meetings & 1 AGM • 10 County Circulars • 2 Quality Status Applications processed • Executive Committee Election
Dissemination of best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 training sessions • 120 clerks and councillors trained • Development of a training programme for local councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 training sessions • 101 clerks & councillors trained • Preparation of programme of training • Further development of WALC website
Improved three-tier working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plan and participate in seminars of joint interest at county, district and local levels • 3 Wiltshire Strategic Board meetings • 3 consultation meetings • 4 Parish Forum, 4 meetings developing relationships between local councils and principal authorities, • Enhanced involvement in South West Conference of Local Councils Associations to develop practices 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parish liaison meetings • Regional Quality Status Seminar • Attendance at WSB meetings • 3 SWCLCA meetings + away day meeting to discuss future regional projects • Launch and continuing development of SWCLCA website

RURAL HOUSING

Carol Southall & Penny Bell

Raise awareness of the need for affordable housing

The Rural Housing Enabler and Rural Housing Assistant continue to implement the agreed work plan. Extensive consultation has taken place with various parish councils and local communities to identify local housing need and gain local support. A lot of work has also been done by liaising with Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) and Local Authorities (LA's) to deliver affordable housing in the villages. This involves site appraisals with RSL's and Housing/Planning Officers, attending the LA's Preferred Development Partnership meetings, and holding regular meetings with Housing Officers to move sites forward and identify further potential sites.

The officers have been involved in county and regional working practices to publicise the need for affordable homes in villages. This has involved writing articles for First News, giving presentations to Parish Councils and local communities, and facilitating and attending workshops, as appropriate.

Work has also begun to organise and facilitate a regional conference based around rural sustainability and the Code for Sustainable Homes. This is being organised by the South West group of Rural Housing Enablers, with the aim of continuing to raise the profile of rural affordable housing issues.

Ensure establishment of suitable projects for which there is strong community support at the parish level

Much work has been carried out with local parishes to give them the opportunity to consult on various schemes. This has been achieved by holding open meetings in villages where a potential site is found, and providing both the public and local members with an opportunity to view the proposals and give any feedback. This is a highly effective way of ensuring community involvement and obtaining the views of the local people.

Three affordable housing sites have been completed and occupied by tenants, three further developments are on site now and others are still going through the planning application stages with further consultation being carried out.

Involvement, cooperation and networking with rural development partnerships

The Rural Housing Enabler continues to support community planning work.

Regular meetings are held with the South West group of Rural Housing Enablers to discuss good practice and share any regional issues or concerns. The group will be meeting with the Housing Corporation in 2008/09 to work towards continued funding for Rural Housing Enablers and streamlining service delivery

The Rural Housing Enabler is part of the IDeA mentoring scheme for other local authorities.

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT 2007 – 2008

RURAL HOUSING

Aim: Implement a rural housing enabling programme to facilitate the development of affordable housing at the parish level

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
<p>Raise awareness of the need for affordable housing with adequate management procedures for the project</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make contact with Parish Councils and local landowners • Facilitate at least 12 housing needs surveys • Convene regular meetings with the Chief Housing Officers Forum, Steering Group and consultative partnership, involve officers from all 5 District Councils, and developing RSL members as and when required 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Advice has been given to 11 parish councils and 7 landowners • 5 HNS completed and 5 others have been commenced • Regular meetings have been held with all relevant officers
<p>Ensure establishment of suitable projects for which there is strong community support at the parish level</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Site visit every community identified in the programme that shows an interest in affordable housing • Engage with a minimum of 5 communities to secure support for the delivery of 30 affordable properties per year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Every site has been visited and advice given to the parish council and RSL • Work continues with Blunsdon, South Marston, Semington, Hilperton, Southwick, Lyneham and Bradenstoke, Sutton Benger, Broughton Gifford, Dinton and Barford St Martin, Coombe Bissett, and Steeple Langford
<p>Involvement, co-operation and networking with rural development partnerships</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise between the key partners especially within the context of the community planning processes • Provide a forum for discussion of policy issues surrounding the provision of affordable rural housing • Meet quarterly with RHE's for other areas to promote good practice and efficient core ways of working 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued working with community planning and parish plan processes. Advice given to Figcheldean, Teffont. Working with Devizes, Warminster, and Trowbridge community planning groups • Held open consultation meetings at Southwick, Broughton Gifford, The Donheads, Lyneham and Bradenstoke, Sutton Benger, Winterslow and Dinton, Barford St Martin • Continued to meet with regional and national RHE's quarterly to discuss best practice and how to evolve the role for the future

RURAL ENTERPRISE CONSULTANCY

David Beaton & Marion Whitehead

Develop consultancy services to Third Sector organisations and the Public Sector

CF Consultancy service has been widely marketed across Wiltshire and Swindon, targeting parish and town councils, village hall committees and Rural Community Councils across the region and in neighbouring areas. The service has tendered for a range of contracts with organisations including NCVO and the Performance Hub in partnership with Gloucestershire Rural Community Council, for which we were short listed, Dorset Rural Transport Partnership, parish councils and villages halls in Wiltshire. The two public sector contracts that we were invited to participate in as a voluntary sector partner have been withdrawn.

Utilise skills and experience of Community First staff in: Parish Councils, Village Halls, Transport, Housing and Village Shops.

Work with personnel within Community First as and when opportunity arises.

Joint working with the Village Halls Adviser has led to a successful tender to Ludgershall Parish Council to facilitate a feasibility study and community consultation on a new village hall. The Principal Consultant has now been asked to project manage the new building. Through a course facilitated for the Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships a contact has been made with Seagry Village Hall for a similar project. Broad Town Parish Council contracted with CF Consultancy to carry out a consultation exercise which has led to the development of a Parish Plan group now working with the Community Development team.

Provide unrestricted net income to Community First.

Establish target income.

The Consultancy Service was successful in bidding to the Sustain the Plain programme to undertake a trans-national project with carnival groups in Ireland and Wiltshire. The Wiltshire team had a very successful visit to County Wexford and a return event took place in Wiltshire in February/March 2008. The Principal Consultant has successfully led the development of the Store is the Core pilot for the South West, together with the Plunkett Foundation, Rural Shops Alliance and SWAN, funded for a year by SWRDA, and will provide project management for the programme.

RURAL ENTERPRISE 2007 – 2008

CONSULTANCY

Aim: Facilitate the development of CF Consultancy as the stand alone consultancy arm of Community First

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Develop consultancy services to Third Sector organisations and the Public Sector	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact all Parish Councils and Village Halls in Wiltshire • Contact other RCC's explaining services • Tender for all consultancy opportunities. Expected revenue: 4 projects at an average value of £15,000 each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Completed • Completed • No tenders yet successful at this value
Utilise skills and experience of Community First staff in Parish Councils, Village Halls, Transport, Housing, Village Shops	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake at least 6 projects at an average value of £2,500 focusing on Parish Councils and Village Halls • Carry out 2 project management assignments for Village Halls at a value of £5,000 each 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 projects completed • One project management assignment currently underway
Provide unrestricted net income to Community First	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carry out 2 project management assignments for LEADER+ at a value of £6,000 each • Project management of South West Village Shops study at a value of £30,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One project management assignment currently underway • Store is the Core project management successfully underway

CREDIT UNIONS

Sarah Perkins & Helen Cotter

Support and strengthen local credit unions

The credit union project has developed new initiatives in order to spread the word more effectively. These include work described below. The schools project in West Wilts has been evaluated and found to have been highly successful, although regular support is required from Community First to keep up motivation amongst volunteers. Other schools are still interested in introducing the scheme but, until funding for more time is available, this is unlikely to take off in a big way. A new collection point was set up in Bradford on Avon, and Wootton Bassett was relaunched. In addition to working locally, we have been involved in meetings to start a credit union in Newbury and have offered support to a group in Hampshire.

Disseminate best practice

Monthly meetings of credit unions have been held in order to discuss possible merger across the county. This would lead to a larger credit union able to operate on a more professional level. Representatives from Wiltshire Credit Unions were taken on a visit to one in Bournemouth to see how they had benefited from a similar process.

In November a group of five representatives from credit unions and CABx visited credit unions and Money Advice/Budgeting services in the West Cork area of Ireland. This was both informative and motivating. It also had a very positive impact on the working relationship between our two local services.

Raise awareness of credit unions, GOOD and MABS services

Community First has continued its promotional work with the development of publicity materials and submission of press releases. Closer working with housing associations (particularly Westlea, which now employs Helen to do outreach work for 10 hours each week) has enabled us to reach a much wider audience. As a result credit unions across the county have been growing.

Address financial exclusion

Our partnership with South Coast MoneyLine has been made formal and our first loans were made in November. Each of the 70 people we have made loans to have been introduced to the idea of credit unions and we are optimistic that they will start to spread the word amongst those who would most benefit so that membership of our credit unions will grow more quickly.

We held an extremely successful Financial Inclusion Seminar in November that was attended by 41 people. This was followed up in March and will undoubtedly lead to interesting developments for those who are financially excluded in Wiltshire.

RURAL ENTERPRISE 2007 – 2008

CREDIT UNIONS

Aim: Promote and support credit unions to help meet the financial service needs of people in rural communities

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Support and strengthen local credit unions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Participate in development of CU in one other county • Be directly involved in relocating one credit union collection to a shop • Assist one credit union to employ one local member of staff for a credit union • Introduce two new branches and help re launch two branches • Evaluate schools' branches and report – roll out if appropriate 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attended 3 meetings of proposed new Berkshire Credit Union • Not yet possible, discussions with Sarsen • Wootton Bassett re launched successfully. B-O-A branch opened • Evaluation showed great success. 4 schools operating savings schemes at the end of year and others interested
Disseminate best practice	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Issue 4 fact sheets to local credit unions • Hold 1 seminar for all credit union volunteers and workers in Wiltshire • Recruit 10 volunteers; train 10 volunteers • Attend 10 credit union management meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 issued • 2 held • 6 volunteers recruited; 14 attended training • 12 meetings attended
Raise awareness of credit unions, GOOD and MABS services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work on one radio campaign and produce 10 press releases • Make 8 presentations to groups and individuals • Support 4 local promotions such as doorstep awareness raising 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 community radio; 9 press releases • 9 presentations made • 13 local promotions supported
Address financial exclusion	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Organise one strategic meeting of those who are interested in financial exclusion • Pilot 1 new service aimed directly at the financially excluded 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial exclusion meeting hosted by us in November and has led to a more strategic team being formed and another meeting held in March • New loans facility introduced across county • Interviewed 200 customers and completed 72 loans.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

David Beaton

Enhance sustainability and independence of third sector organisations in Wiltshire and Swindon by supporting the development of a range of enterprise activities

Following the development of the Social Enterprise Strategy for Wiltshire, partners had committed to the creation of two Social Enterprise Adviser posts, one of which was to be hosted by Community First. Due to the timing of the bidding process, Wiltshire County Council was only able to secure limited funding which resulted in a one year contract to provide very specific outputs. This did not allow for the employment of staff. Co-Operative Futures acted as the lead body to tender for the contract in partnership with Community First, Learning Curve and the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust. Community First is contributing support for one new social enterprise, a number of business support sessions and training through the consultancy service.

Create learning opportunities.

Provide training courses as and when required.

Social enterprise training was given at the Transport Conference in November.

Increase, maintain and/or improve services delivery in remote rural areas

With limited resources this has yet to be decided although support is being given internally to staff to develop initiatives to improve rural service delivery.

RURAL ENTERPRISE 2007 – 2008

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

Aim: Facilitate the development of social enterprise activity in Wiltshire & Swindon

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Enhance sustainability and independence of third sector organisations in Wiltshire and Swindon by supporting the development of a range of enterprise activities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Contact up to 50 Wiltshire voluntary groups • Contact up to 60 village halls • Contact up to 10 community transport teams • Deliver targeted small business social enterprise advice and support 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Working in partnership with Co-Operative Futures to deliver social enterprise outputs jointly • 6 potential social enterprises currently being helped
Create learning opportunities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 meetings to explore expanded enterprise activity • 1 training session • 5 people x 15 hours training (60 hours approx) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 training session took place November 2007
Increase, maintain and/or improve services delivery in remote rural areas	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 meeting to improve rural service delivery including <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Development trusts or village companies ○ Joined-up parish councils ○ Tourism social enterprises 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Still under discussion

VILLAGE SHOPS

Tim Coomer & Marion Whitehead

Expand networking between partners at district, county and sub-regional level

The Post Office 'change' programme has remained high on our agenda over the past six months; Rural Post Office closures will have the single biggest impact on village retailing in recent years. The Village Shops Adviser (VSA) advised a number of Parish Councils, County and District Councils, through the area consultation process, and wrote a comprehensive response to the closure of 22 Post Offices in Wiltshire. The Village Shops Adviser has sat on the Wiltshire Post Watch panel for over two years and has forged close relations with Post Office Field Change Advisors as members of the Village Shops Forum group organised quarterly by Community First. Community First has also been instrumental in sharing the concerns and issues of sub postmasters and retailers with appropriate bodies, and enabled representation for all rural communities in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Community First, with its partners the Village Retail Services Association (VIRSA), the Rural Shops Alliance and SWAN (the regional umbrella organisation for South West RCC's) has begun to deliver the Store is the Core programme supporting village shops and communities throughout the South West with a combination package of expert advice and capital funding. Sixty retailers and twenty two emerging community shop groups have been accepted onto the scheme and will receive advice over the next six months.

The VSA also sits on the Fairtrade Coalition, with the Wiltshire Wildlife Trust, to support Fairtrade groups throughout Wiltshire and champion the movement, and also the county Countryside and Land based Group concerned with issues around land management and local food, production, promotion and distribution.

Maximise the social, economic and environmental impacts of a healthy retail sector in village locations

The Securing the Future of Village Retailing programme has supported a mixture of 126 retailers, small businesses, parish councils and social enterprise/community groups from November 2006. Retailers have been supported with visits profiling their stores and in some cases with intensive advice and support. A quarterly newsletter has been circulated to all retailers with topical articles, news, retail tips and sector information. The VSA organised a successful half day Village and Community Retailing Seminar attended by over 20 independent and community retailers.

Encourage new community based initiatives to deliver services in rural communities

We have been actively working with social enterprise groups and supporting eight emerging community shop groups helping to develop their ideas for a community shop in their village. With the closure of Post Offices we expect to see further increases in the number of groups wishing to explore setting up a shop or providing alternative post office and retail solutions for their communities. The VSA also has an active role in supporting the existing community shop groups by arranging networking meetings and fulfilling an ongoing mentoring role previously undertaken by a VIRSA fieldworker.

Manage the Business Grants and Loans Fund for shops, small businesses and social enterprises

We have received a total of 16 enquiries to the combination Grant and Loan Fund in the past six months, and 121 enquiries over the two and a half years the fund has been open. A total of £32,000 has been awarded within the last six months with all four beneficiaries actively supported through business planning and making a full application for grants and loans.

RURAL ENTERPRISE 2007 – 2008

VILLAGE SHOPS

Aim: To enhance the financial viability of village retail services and to develop innovative solutions to the delivery of local services

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Expand networking between partners at district, county and sub-regional level	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-ordinate existing support and provide signposting for retailers seeking advice • Advise and influence local, regional and national strategies on the issues associated with village retailing and the rural Post Office network • Develop links with relevant agencies and key partners 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A comprehensive database of village shops is maintained and 43 shops have been visited and profiled over the past 12 months • Submitted a response to the area Post Office closure consultation • Store is the Core project underway – 60 retailers to be supported
Maximise the social, economic and environmental impacts of a healthy retail sector in village locations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide business support and tailored retail advice for 60 private and community enterprises • Research: Identify communities in rural Wiltshire and Swindon most at risk from the closure of retail outlets and Post Offices • Encourage trials of local foods and Fairtrade products in 10 outlets 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 126 businesses/enterprises have received business support to date (Nov 06 – March 08) • A full exploratory report has been completed in partnership with WCC • Trials of local food have been encouraged in a number of shops
Encourage new community based initiatives to deliver services in rural communities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide 15 community groups with assistance • Identify and target communities and encourage initiatives • Encourage innovative ways of providing services locally 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 14 community groups/social enterprises have received ongoing support over the past 6 months • Targeted support to communities affected by Post Office closures • Expressions of Interest have been submitted to deliver new innovative programmes
Manage the Business Grant and Loan Fund for shops and social enterprises	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Enhance processes and systems to operate the scheme efficiently and effectively • Support retailers through 15 applications to the BGLF 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • BGLF processes and systems have been reviewed and amended • 21 businesses have been supported through the process

RURAL REGENERATION GRANTS PROGRAMME

Gillian Barber & Alison Crawford

Review and restructure SOLVE fund operations as appropriate

Stage one of reviewing and simplifying the paperwork relevant to the SOLVE community fund application process is complete and work on further simplifying the application form has been put in place. Membership of the SOLVE Community Fund panel has reduced at this tail end of the year and appropriate new members need to be sought in the next few months. The paperwork for the Transport arm of SOLVE has been revised, in consultation with the appropriate panel members and the Transport Manager, in the light of the new funds available for distribution.

Identify new and/or increased sources of funds for SOLVE community development

The money for the SOLVE community fund has remained the same over the past few years with no increase in contributions from partners. Under these circumstances it is unwise to promote the fund, as was done in Salisbury District in the first half of the year, resulting in a flood of appropriate applications and the majority of the money available having being spent when only half way through the year. Applications continue to be made to charitable trusts, and other funding possibilities are being explored in an effort to increase the money available for distribution. The total annual sum of £10,000 is all that is presently available for the support of small, grass roots activities that benefit local communities.

Develop diversity and security of sources of Landfill Communities Fund funds

Good working relationships continue with Hills, Viridor, CSG and Biffa, the four landfill operators supporting applications for funding. An increase in funds for distribution during the present financial year has been received from both Hills and Viridor and it is anticipated that this level of funding (at least) will continue for 2008/9. Each operator has been asked to confirm its' criteria for the coming year in order to ensure that applications from CF have the greatest chance of approval.

Review LCF and SOLVE admin systems

Some work has already been undertaken towards simplifying the administration of both areas of benefit and will continue in the early part of the next financial year. Records in general are maintained and monitored as previously established and approved.

Develop and implement targeted marketing strategy to match available grant funds (LCF and community grants)

Promotional leaflets have been updated and distributed at meetings with community development staff in District Councils and CF. A targeted marketing strategy has not yet been developed but the matter will be addressed in the early part of the next financial year.

RURAL REGENERATION 2007 – 2008

GRANTS PROGRAMME (LANDFILL COMMUNITIES FUND & SOLVE FUND)

Aim: Enable groups and organisations, through the disbursement of grant funds, to address local community needs

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Review and restructure SOLVE fund operations as appropriate	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Revised publicity material promoting grants available and application system 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stage one of simplification completed – further work to be undertaken in 2008/9
Identify new and/or increased sources of funds for SOLVE community development	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Additional £10,000 sourced by year end 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Applications sent to 15 potential sources of income to date – no positive replies and 6 refusal letters received – work continuing to identify and apply to additional sources • Plans to approach Chambers of Commerce during 2008/9
Develop diversity and security of sources of LCF funds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop ongoing relationship with an additional LSO (currently 3) • One direct meeting per annum with senior staff of each LSO • £540,000 of LCF grants attracted and allocated • Ratify grant policies with each LSO • Develop relationships with statutory and community bodies in Hampshire and Northants 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing relationship with Hills, Viridor, Biffa and CSG • Recent meetings with Hills, Viridor and CSG • £548,000 of grants allocated • Grants policies for each LSO decided by them and conveyed to CF – monitored with each LSO • Successful grants in Hampshire and Northants in recent months – will continue to promote LCF in these areas
Review LCF and SOLVE admin systems	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Production of quarterly tables of grant applications in pipeline and grant funds committed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing records maintained
Develop and implement targeted marketing strategy to match available grant funds (LCF and community grants)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 promotional leaflets or similar publications • 16 articles for <i>First News</i> • 4 press releases • 2 meetings pa with each DC and SBC • Meetings/contact with 4 Town Councils 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotional leaflets simplified and distributed • Items produced for each edition of First News • No independent press releases to date – to be addressed during coming year • Meetings with NW, WW and Kennet DCs – matter of meeting Salisbury and Swindon still to be addressed • Fordingbridge-Hampshire, Wootton Bassett-Wiltshire, Kettering-Northants, Chippenham-Wiltshire

WILTSHIRE FORUM FOR COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIPS (MARKET TOWNS PARTNERSHIP)

Nicki Coyne

Community First has been providing Management Support to the Forum on behalf of Wiltshire County Council from March 2006 – September 2007. The Programme Manager was seconded to Community First for the lifetime of the funding agreement between WCC, the Countryside Agency and SWRDA. Funding for the post has not continued but the Forum has received a small amount of funding for part-time support until March 2008 and was offered office space at a very low rate by the Wessex Chamber of Commerce.

Community First has provided both administrative and peer support to the Programme Manager to deliver a programme of training and development to the Community Area Partnerships. We continue to have a very good relationship with the Forum and are discussing possible support post March 2008.

The Forum has been working actively with the local authorities to support the community area partnerships in the transition to the unitary authority, facilitating a debate on the proposals with partners and inviting WCC to present plans for future relationships between the area partnerships and the new area boards at a conference in September.

The Chief Executive facilitated a workshop at the Forum's January conference on the draft plans for the Local Area Agreement, the new Family of Partnerships arrangements, RDPE and Local Action Groups.

Representatives of market towns in the county were invited to attend an event in December to inform prospective partners of the RDPE 2007 – 2013 bidding process.

RURAL REGENERATION 2007 – 2008

WILTSHIRE FORUM FOR COMMUNITY AREA PARTNERSHIPS

Aim: To regenerate the physical and social fabric of Market Towns through a programme of community engagement and investment

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Identify the technical support required for community area partnerships/market towns groups, including skills development, training and accessing funding	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 training events • Support local consultation events • Direct support to community partnerships that require it 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2 events held • Support given to Highworth
Facilitate the development of the Forum through networking, sharing best practice and information and joint working	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 annual Forum conference • 1 network meeting • Maintenance of the website for the forum • Newsletter disseminated each fortnight 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mid-year network meeting held in September • Website operational and maintained • Newsletter disseminated • Forum conference supported in January 08
To address funding issues and seek opportunities for funding for the work of the forum and its projects, and improve management of existing funding streams	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liaise with funders to support activities of partnership • Establish service level agreements to undertake joint training activities for partnership members • Establish relations with champions of LAA blocks • Liaise with existing funding agencies to ensure effective management of funds 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding agreements ended Sept 07 • Negotiations underway with MCTA
Provide a collective voice at district, county, sub-regional and regional level, with the ability to influence policy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elect representatives to sub-regional partnerships 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Forum holding direct negotiations with partners to the new unitary to discuss the role of community partnerships

RURAL RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP

Sue Dewberry (until Nov 07) & David Beaton

Context

Community First provides one of the three key staff (the 'Secretariat') administering the Rural Renaissance Programme, Great Western Enterprise South West and the County Council hosting the other two. 2007/08 marked the end of the Rural Renaissance Programme as such, but towards the end of the year transitional funding for 2008/09 was negotiated with SWRDA who administer the Programme. A close of Programme event is being held at Market Lavington on 1st May. The Programme now sits within a broader framework in Wiltshire under the general title of Rural Regeneration, and future funding streams will be handled under these arrangements. During the year Sue Dewberry left to move to a new job, and David Beaton, Community First Consultancy, took on the mantle in the remaining few months.

Progress in 2007/08

Virtually all the available RR funding was allocated by 31 March 2008, with public and private sector leverage on target. Remaining small amounts of funding were allocated via a 'Small Projects Fund' (SPF) mechanism, in line with the agreed Rural Renaissance and Modernising Rural Delivery (MRD) funding criteria.

The SPF was administered from Community First and provided an opportunity for small businesses and voluntary and community organisations to bid for small amounts of funding, thus delivering short, focussed projects providing clear and tangible economic benefits in the rural communities of Wiltshire and Swindon. The grants were between £5,000 and £15,000 each.

Contribute towards delivery of contracted outputs in partnership with GWE and Wiltshire County Council

The Secretariat is confident that the majority, if not all, of the outputs specified in the RDA contract will have been met by 31st March.

Co-manage and deliver existing full Rural Renaissance Programme projects and new Modernising Rural Delivery (supplementary to the RRP) projects

The Secretariat meet every two weeks for regular monitoring of RRP and MRD projects where it is felt they may be underperforming. The project is visited by a Development Officer and, where it is felt necessary, the project is asked to provide additional evidence, reports and cash flow/forecast spreadsheets. Action is taken on the basis of individual project reviews should failure to meet contracted outputs become evident. Where appropriate, one or more of the Secretariat staff provide additional support.

All current projects have been required to complete a Project Closure Report for consideration by the RRP Management Group, and these will inform the overall programme evaluation.

To work with the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative

Two projects were identified from Calne and Melksham for potential MCTi funding. Unfortunately, both were rejected for not meeting the criteria for economic regeneration and/or delivery within the tight timescales.

RURAL REGENERATION 2007 – 2008

RURAL RENAISSANCE PARTNERSHIP

Aim: To address areas of economic, social and environmental imbalance to improve the quality of life and well being in rural areas

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements (by the Partnership)
To contribute towards the management and delivery of the Rural Renaissance Programme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prepare papers and reports for 7 RRP Management Group meetings and 7 Programme Executive Group meetings • Maintain working contact with key members of the Partnership and liaise with partners, the Accountable Body and funders, as appropriate • Complete and submit all output reports on a timely basis • Compile and monitor financial reports and submit in the required format on a timely basis • Prepare and submit quarterly claims to RRP Accountable body 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 RRP Mgt Group Meetings • 7 PEG meetings • Continued working relationships with Partnership and funders • Output and financial reports submitted to PEG & Mgt Group meetings • Quarterly claims prepared and submitted
Contribute towards delivery of contracted outputs in partnership with GWE and Wiltshire County Council	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 140 jobs created • 150 people assisted to get a job • 15 new businesses created demonstrating growth after 12 months • 1200 businesses assisted to improve their performance • 1500 people assisted in their skills development as a result of the RDA programme • 200 adults gaining basic skills as part of the skills for the strategy that count towards the Skills PSA target • 4000 sq metres of workspace created 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Awaiting end of year figures to 31 March 08 to be prepared by the RRP Manager • The outputs listed are for the whole of the Rural Renaissance Delivery Plan, the majority of which have been achieved. The programme has under achieved on skills development and adults gaining basic skills
Co-manage and deliver existing full Rural Renaissance Programme projects and new Modernising Rural Delivery (supplementary to the RRP)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-manage 31 'live' full Rural Renaissance Programme projects to the value of approx £1.9m • Co-manage 7 'live' MRD projects to the value of £476k • Co-manage 'Big Ideas Fund' – to be developed 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • RRP & MRD revenue & capital fully allocated. Monitoring Project outputs & expenditure • 31 projects developed and 7 approved for Small Projects Fund
To work with the Market and Coastal Towns Initiative	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide advice and guidance to 6 potential projects for MCTi funding • Attend 4 Community Area Partnerships Meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 potential projects for MCTi • 4 CAP Meetings attended

SUSTAIN THE PLAIN

John Dowsett

Maintain and improve management procedures

The Programme was given a favourable audit comment following its inclusion in a sampling of LEADER programmes. It is thought that this Programme's overall administration and management systems compare very favourably with those of other LEADER + Programmes in England. The increasing involvement of the community area representatives in the running of the Programme has been one of its' strengths. The Programme was comprehensively audited over five days by SWRDA on behalf of GOSW in December and January and after some minor adjustments has a clean bill of health.

Facilitate funding and development of appropriate initiatives

The Programme is in its final stages now, with all of the funds allocated apart from those in its Small Grants Fund. In the delayed start to the Programme there was enormous pressure to allocate funds and start the claims process, and this probably led to less time and resources going into identifying and working up the most innovative and effective projects than would have been desirable. However, in the later stages of the Programme, and with more funds being made available, it has been possible to extend and shape existing projects, concentrating particularly on activity in areas and villages where the military presence is strongest.

Manage relationships with organisations, groups and communities

The Programme has continued to work closely with a large number of groups and organisations in its' target area. In this respect it is worth emphasising the Small Grants Scheme which by the close of the Programme will have distributed more than £200,000 to some 150 groups.

Work towards sustainability of the Programme's work and funding post LEADER+

Considerable work is now being invested in working with the County Council and other partners in developing a successor to the Sustain the Plain programme on Wiltshire. The new funding falls within England's overall Rural Development Programme 2007–2013. A bid to SWRDA is currently under construction which will build on the work of Sustain the Plain.

RURAL REGENERATION 2007 – 2008

SUSTAIN THE PLAIN

Aim: Improve the quality of life in communities around Salisbury Plain and make best use of natural & cultural resources

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Maintain and improve management procedures in accordance with the Programme Business Plan and with LEADER + requirements	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All projects to receive Level 2 monitoring visits • 4 PMG meetings and project visits • 1 training session for PMG Small Grants Panel members • Total 15 projects wound up with all admin procedures complete 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 85% complete • 4 meetings and 4 visits • No longer required • 10 wound up
Facilitate funding and development of appropriate initiatives that will fulfil the Programme's objectives, target outputs and results	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3 international co-operation projects approved and running • 1 local co-operation project complete • 95% of output targets in 05/08 Plan met • Programme expenditure matches forecast agreed with GOSW/DEFRA • Admin and management expenditure on track within 15% capital 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 international co-operation projects involving Greece, Ireland, Germany and Hungary • 2 local co-operation projects involving the New Forest and LEADER + groups throughout the South West • Completely on target • Currently 13.5%
Manage relationships with organisations, groups and communities in the Programme Area	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 press releases • Website updated • 4 articles in First News 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Press release to 8 newspapers and other media, 1 radio interview • In hand
Work towards sustainability of the Programme's work and funding post LEADER+	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 5 SW LEADER+ liaison meetings • Participate in minimum 2 regional and national LEADER+ events • Participate in design of framework for delivery of funding under LEADER process 2007–2013 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 4 meetings held and attended • Participated in 2 events • Several meetings and briefings held and attended. Facilitated briefing for local partners in December

VILLAGE HALLS

John Dowsett & Jennie Lane

Provision of a comprehensive advice and support service

The Village Halls Advice Service remains much in demand. The vast majority of enquiries revolve around funding issues or the increasing burden of legislation. Occasional Briefing Notes were introduced some two years ago as an efficient means of getting key information out to hard pressed village hall committees without burdening them with unnecessary reading matter. The service also reaches village halls through the highly regarded briefing days and AGM. This year they were held relatively centrally at Market Lavington, Derry Hill and Easterton, and the average attendance was fifty eight. The AGM included a market fair for suppliers to village halls, and a keynote speech by Sylvia Brown, OBE, Director of ACRE. All of the events incorporated small workshop sessions allowing plentiful exchange of good practice. Topics covered over the year included project management, undertaking risk assessments, hall cleaning techniques, and employment issues. The year also saw preparation for and the launch of the Hallmark Scheme, an ACRE-backed initiative raising standards in village hall management.

Enhanced communication and co-operation

The Village Halls Adviser works very closely with, and provides the Secretariat to, the Wiltshire Village Halls Association (WVHA). There are very few such Associations in the country, and the WVHA provides a valuable focal point for Wiltshire Village Halls. Membership of the WVHA has now reached an all time record of 183 members, partly attributable to the higher profile achieved through the briefing days. There are an estimated 230 Halls in Wiltshire, not all of them in active use, and the aim is to reach membership of 200.

Improved liaison with local authorities

Considerable effort is going into improving the operations and servicing of the County Village Halls Grants Panel to which the District Councils contribute 2/7ths and the County Council 5/7ths. The Panel is the main vehicle through which the Districts, County and Community First come together on village hall issues. This year twenty Halls applied to the Panel for funding, nearly twice as many as hitherto, and the Village Hall Adviser visited and met all of their Committees, accompanied by the appropriate District Councillor in some cases. The amount awarded for 2007/08 was some £73,000, and for 2008/09 was £83,000. The bulk of these grants was for improvement works between £10,000 and £40,000 such as new floors, heating systems and re-roofing, while a minority were for much larger works such as total refurbishment or new halls.

Major issues for Halls

Most issues for Halls fall into two neat categories: funding major improvements and extensions, and coping with the burden of legislation. The Village Halls Advice Service aims to support them in addressing these issues – and encourage their Committee members to carry on with their good works!

RURAL REGENERATION 2007 – 2008

VILLAGE HALLS

Aim: Support local committees in providing, maintaining and developing village & community halls and their usage

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Provision of a comprehensive advice and support service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 400 enquiries, initial response within 4 working days • Increase WVHA membership from 170 to 180 • Co-ordinate pilot of ACRE Hallmark scheme • 2 occasional briefing papers for Village Halls issued • 4 briefing events for Village Hall Committees facilitated – total 120 attending 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 65 enquiries (change in recording system) • Reached 183 by March 08 • Hallmark launched; Visitor training day • 3 occasional briefing papers issued • AGM/briefing day held • 2 briefing events
Enhanced communication and co-operation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 6 WVHA meetings arranged and staffed • One Village Hall page in each issue of First News • WVHA AGM with national level speaker • Participation in organisation of annual national Village Hall Advisors conference • Attendance at 6 meetings of SW Village Hall Advisors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 meetings held • Achieved – 4 issues • Achieved • 4 regional meetings attended
Improved liaison with local authorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 15 applications to the County Village Hall Grants Scheme • 6 technical assessments for SWAG • Continue close liaison with appropriate Local Authority officers concerned with village halls at individual meetings 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 21 applications processed • 6 assessments made • 2 meetings held

COMMUNITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Jennie Lane (Village Halls) & Penny Bell (Parish Councils)

Offer lower premiums to village halls in the South West and West Midlands

This year has seen a major effort in agreeing with our partners (Suffolk ACRE and Community Lincs) the details of the new national 'Village Halls Plus group' insurance for village halls, a logical extension of the previous work more locally. It was finally launched in October and November. Considerable effort has been continuing on agreeing (and improving) the policy details and premium rates, and we have played a major hand with Zurich in creating a policy which we believe is highly competitive and meets the needs of Village Halls. There are now a number of players in the market, but we are hoping to achieve around 25% penetration in our area (South West and West Midlands) within three years. Premiums are certainly lower than they were a year ago, and so the main stated target has been achieved. The targeted penetration for the year end (450 Halls, in practice 215) was not achieved for two main reasons; the launch of the scheme was delayed by more than six months for reasons beyond Community First's control and, secondly, since Community First first entered the market with Zurich there are three additional new (and very competitive) players. The 2008/09 year starts with a major publicity drive with newly developed material.

Increase WVHA membership income and financial support for the village halls advisory service

A target of 180 Halls in membership has been achieved (183 as at 31st March 2008), but it has to be said that the insurance related business has probably not played a major part in this.

Offer lower premiums to parish councils in Wiltshire, Devon, Dorset, and Gloucestershire

This year has seen the successful expansion of the parish council insurance scheme into the county of Gloucestershire, with the Scheme now officially operating in four counties across the South West. The scheme this year attracted 89 new parish councils, bringing the total number of councils on the scheme to 413, which is well above our target of 360 by March 2008.

As well as extending the scheme to Gloucestershire, we are continuing to attract new parish councils from Wiltshire, Devon and Dorset, and are also getting interest from further afield, including Cornwall and Herefordshire, proving that the premiums are competitive and of financial benefit to local councils.

Staff have been concentrating efforts towards streamlining the administration of the scheme, and are working closely with other RCC's to achieve this. A visit to Suffolk ACRE took place in January 2008 and it is hoped to work in partnership to utilise a new software package that will simplify the administration of the scheme.

Work has also been completed on simplifying the proposal form and other relevant documents, and further work has taken place on improving the page on the Community First website. The aim is to simplify the administration process as much as possible to allow for further expansion into other South West counties, thus securing further income for Community First.

RURAL ENTERPRISE 2007 – 2008

COMMUNITY INSURANCE SCHEME

Aim: Provide local councils and village hall committees with competitive insurance cover

Objective	Key Performance Indicators	End of Year Achievements
Offer lower premiums to village halls in the South West and West Midlands	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the village hall insurance scheme in RCC publications and at events throughout the South West and West Midlands • 450 village halls on the scheme by March 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major launch during October and follow up mailing in March to 2,200 Halls • 215 Halls on scheme March 2008
Increase WVHA membership income and financial support for the village halls advisory service	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote benefits of scheme to non-members of WVHA • 180 WVHA members • £5,000 net financial contribution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £4,500 contribution (rising in 2008 – 09) • 183 members
Offer lower premiums to parish councils in Wiltshire, Devon, Dorset and Gloucestershire	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote the parish council insurance scheme in the appropriate local council association publications • 360 parish councils on the scheme by March 2008 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promotion done through relevant County Association publications • 413 parish councils on the scheme as at March 2008
Increase WALC membership income	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Promote benefits of scheme to non-members of WALC • 5 new WALC members 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Letters to all non-members sent out explaining benefits of WALC membership, including the insurance scheme • 4 new WALC member councils
Offer lower premiums for Playing Fields Associations in Wiltshire and Devon	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Publicise the Playing Fields Association insurance scheme as appropriate • 40 Playing Fields Associations on the scheme • £1,000 fee income generated 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Discussions underway to offer this policy nationally • 40 on scheme • £1,582 income

ABBREVIATIONS and ACRONYMS

ABCUL	Association of British Credit Unions Limited	PC	Parish Council
ACE	Access to Credit Unions for Everyone	PFI	Private Finance Initiative
ACRE	Action with Communities in Rural England (national RCC network)	PCG	Project Co-ordinating Group
BC	Borough Council	PMG	Partnership Management Group
BME	Black Minority Ethnic	PTU	Passenger Transport Unit
BSOG	Bus Service Operators Grant (for Community Transport)	RCC	Rural Community Council
BTCV	British Trust for Conservation Volunteers	RDA	Regional Development Agency (also SWERDA)
CAB	Citizens Advice Bureau	RDPE	Rural Development Programme for England
CDFI	Community Development Finance Institution	RHE	Rural Housing Enabler
CIB	Charities Information Bureau	RIPE	Rural Inclusion Practice Exchange
CRB	Criminal Records Bureau	RISE	Regional Infrastructure for Social Enterprise
CSP	Community Safety Partnership	RPA	Rural Payments Agency
CTSGF	Community Transport Small Grants Fund	RPRC	Reaching People in Rural Communities
CVS	Council for Voluntary Service	RTP	Rural Transport Partnership (also WRTP)
DACS	Department for Adult and Community Services	SBC	Swindon Borough Council
DART	Delivering Accessibility and Rural Transport	SBS	Small Business Service
DC	District Council	SDC	Salisbury District Council
DEFRA	Department of the Environment, Farming and Rural Affairs	SLA	Service Level Agreement
DIAG	Diversity Issues Action Group	SPY	Salisbury Pride Youth
DVIP	Domestic Violence Intervention Project	StP	Sustain the Plain (also LEADER+ Programme)
EAGGF	European Agricultural Grant and Guidance Fund	SWAG	South West Area Grants
ESF	European Social Fund	SWAN	South West Area Network
GOOD	Get Out Of Debt	SWRDA	South West Rural Development Agency
GOSW	Government Office South West	UKCU	UK Credit Unions
HARTSPOG	Hard to Reach Strategic Planning Group	WALC	Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
KDC	Kennet District Council	WAYS	Wiltshire Alternative Youth Sports
LEADER	Liaison Entre Actions Development Economique Rurale	WCC	Wiltshire County Council
LGBT	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender	WCF	Wiltshire Community Foundation
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership	WEA	Workers Educational Association
LTCS	Landfill Tax Credit Scheme	WFCAP	Wiltshire Forum of Community Area Partnerships
LTP	Local Transport Plan	WREC	Wiltshire Racial Equality Council
MABS	Money Advice & Budgeting Service	WRIF	Wiltshire Rural Initiatives Fund
MCTA	Market and Coastal Towns Association	WRTP	Wiltshire Rural Transport Partnership
MCTI	Market and Coastal Towns Initiative	WSB	Wiltshire Strategic Board
MPV	Multi Purpose Vehicle	W&SCTA	Wiltshire & Swindon Community Transport Association
NACUW	National Association of Credit Union Workers	WSIP	Wiltshire Social Inclusion Partnership
NCVO	National Council for Voluntary Organisations	WVHA	Wiltshire Village Hall Association
NWDC	North Wilts District Council	WVCP	Warminster & Villages Community Partnership
PALS	Patient Advice & Liaison Service	WYAOP	Wiltshire Youth Arts Partnership

