

# COMPACT AT WORK



## Gloucestershire: Promoting the Compact to Parish and Town Councils

Gloucestershire Association for Voluntary and Community Action (GAVCA), Gloucestershire Association of Parish and Town Councils (GAPTC) and Compact Voice worked together to promote the Compact to Parish and Town Councillors in Gloucestershire.

A series of evening workshops for local Councillors encouraged them to work closely with Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) organisations for the benefit of local people.

### Impact

As a result of attending the evening workshops, local Councillors became more aware of what the VCS offers, and the potential to work in partnership to deliver local services. They also had the chance to explore different ways of funding the VCS including giving grants and commissioning contracts, leading to reference to the Compact being included in new funding agreements between Parish and Town Councils and the VCS.

Following attendance at one of the workshops, Dursley Town Council became the first Parish or Town Council to sign up to the Compact in Gloucestershire. The Town Council did so because it recognised that its role is changing and that it will be working more closely in partnership with the VCS in future.

### What Happened

Parish and Town Councils are the most local level of government and have an important role in promoting community engagement and partnership working. In 2012, Compact Voice and NALC [published joint guidance](#) for Parish and Town Councils on the Compact.

Gloucestershire were keen to develop good working relationships at a local level and to promote the Compact to new audiences, including local Councillors.

Localism gives Parish and Town Councils a potentially bigger role in delivering local services. For example, in Gloucestershire, some Parish and Town Councils are taking on services, such as youth provision, that were previously run by the County Council but have been cut. Interestingly several are doing this in partnership with VCS providers who have expertise in working with young people.

With this in mind, Compact Voice supported GAVCA (whose work includes supporting the Gloucestershire VCS Assembly) and GAPTC to jointly plan workshop sessions aimed at Parish and Town Councillors.

The workshops were promoted via GAPTC mailings. The interactive workshops aimed to help local Councillors to understand the variety of organisations in the VCS, and to encourage them to work in partnership

**Published:**  
April 2013

**Theme:**

**Contact:**  
Hannah Gorf  
Partnership  
Support Officer,  
GAVCA

**Email:**  
[HannahG@gavca.org.uk](mailto:HannahG@gavca.org.uk)

**Phone:**  
01452 522600

### Compact Principles

1: Partnership Working

### Tags

Local Compacts

Implementation

Localism

...Continued

to deliver services through both grants and commissioning. The main message was that following Compact principles would help them to work in partnership effectively and get things right first time. The sessions included a quiz about the VCS, a partnership working scenario exercise and some input around different funding models and Compact principles.

The workshops highlighted a number of issues. Some Parish and Town Councils, particularly those from very small, rural parishes, regard themselves as the community so found the idea of working in partnership with community groups challenging.

Overall there was a lack of awareness of the make-up of the voluntary and community sector and what it could offer, particularly in relation to service delivery.

It also became apparent that some Parish and Town Councils had quite acrimonious relationships with local VCS organisations and were not always working well together. There was a low level of awareness of commissioning and most participants were unaware of the Compact.

## Quote

“In a predominantly rural county like Gloucestershire, developing good partnership working between the VCS and Parish and Town Councils is important. Public spending cuts mean that Parish and Town Councils are playing a bigger part in service delivery, often in partnership with the VCS.

With tailored support from Compact Voice we have been able to promote our Compact to a new audience. I hope Dursley Town Council will be the first of many local Councils to sign up.”

- Hannah Gorf, Partnership Support Officer, GAVCA

However, some parishes are starting to collaborate to provide services where this makes practical, geographical and financial sense.

Feedback from the events was positive, and local Councillors could see the value of working in partnership with the VCS. Some were reluctant to consider signing up to the Compact which they viewed as yet another level of bureaucracy but others were more enthusiastic. One Councillor said “I plan to suggest to my local Council that we sign up to the Compact. We are working more and more with VCS organisations, both through providing grants and commissioning work. Joining the Compact is really relevant for us in these changing times.”

Encouragingly, as a direct result of attending one of the sessions, Dursley Town Council became the first Parish and Town Council to sign up to the Gloucestershire Compact. Other Parish Councils reported back that since attending the workshops they have integrated Compact principles into their service level agreements with VCS organisations with the aim of ensuring they are based on good practice.



## Relevant Compact Principles

1: Partnership Working

## Related links

- Gloucestershire County Council's Compact web pages: <http://www.gloucestershire.gov.uk/COMPACT>