

Conference Biogs

Matt Gott



Matt has worked at Swindon Borough Council since 2005 and has recently taken the role of Board Director for Localities, leading the Council's localism agenda. Before joining Swindon Matt was Regional Director of Audit and Inspection at the Audit Commission. He has also held roles in central government, in policy, finance and Ministers' private office.

Matt is married with three children and is Chair of Governors at a large secondary school in Bath. In his spare time he is a keen modern linguist and an intermittently enthusiastic cyclist.

Cllr Roderick Bluh



Councillor Roderick Bluh entered local government politics in June 2004 after a highly successful career in accountancy. He qualified as a chartered accountant in 1981 and moved to Swindon to establish his firm's new branch in 2001.

Having been appointed to the cabinet in May 2005, Roderick was given the Economic Development, Regeneration & Development Issues. As part of this, he started developing his concern for sustainable communities, an interest he has maintained since becoming Leader of the Council in 2006.

Roderick is leading a whole-scale transformation of how the local authority works with partners in the public, private, voluntary and community sectors to deliver better results for the people of Swindon through the multi-agency One Swindon agreement and a large scale social enterprise for adult social care. Instead of being primarily a service provider, his administration is developing the council's role as a place shaper, and as the democratic governance of the new community budgets. Before localism was adopted as government policy Roderick was developing the Connecting People, Connecting Places programme to devolve power from the council to neighbourhoods. In support of the Big Society his administration is also pioneering new ways of ending the cycle of dependency on the state from "chaotic" families through the LIFE programme.

Val Weston

Val Weston is an Advanced Skills Primary Teacher for Music in Swindon and has been involved in music making for many years since starting as a flute player in Swindon Young Musicians in the 1970s.

She has conducted Wind ensembles and choirs for Swindon Young Musicians, Swindon Orpheus Choir, Swindon Opera Chorus, Swindon Infant and Junior Music festivals, North Wiltshire Music festival and conducted 'Steam' by Allan Symonds at the opening of the Steam Museum in 2000 and at the Millennium Dome as part of 'Swindon Our Day'. As conductor for Janice Thompson Performance Trust she has conducted 'Brunel, the little man in the tall hat' children's opera and performed as conductor for Music For Youth finalists twice.

Val believes that everyone has the capacity to make music and in doing so have a great time and make new friends. She is really proud of the Bigsingthing and what it has achieved in such a short time.

Gavin Jones



Gavin joined Swindon Borough Council in 2004, having previously worked in a variety of private sector organisations and market sectors and has been Chief Executive since 2006.

Immediately prior to joining SBC, Gavin worked for SITA (a Global airline and telecommunications provider) as Vice President for Customer Services and Marketing with global responsibilities.

Gavin previously worked in Information Technology with British Telecom. From here he moved to the TSB Trust Company and then onto Galileo International, where he was Business Development Director for Europe Middle East and Africa.

Gavin is a Board Member of the national think tank the New Local Government Network, (NLGN).

Gavin is married with 2 daughters. Although having worked abroad for a number of years, Gavin was brought up in Swindon and has lived near or in the Borough for most of his life. He has a degree in IT and enjoys playing lead guitar in a blues band, and is a keen runner, cyclist and tennis player.

Diana Finch



Diana Finch has been CEO of Swindon Carers Centre since July 2010. Her background has been primarily in the financial management of organisations for many years – in the 1980s she was a freelance systems analyst and management accountant, she then moved into the design and implementation of accounts software. She developed a broader skill-set in the late 1990s, during several years of community development volunteering in Bath whilst her children were young, and this led her to choose to develop her career in the charity sector in the last decade. Recent work includes the role of CEO at Bath Centre for Psychotherapy and Counselling, and acting as a freelance consultant to several charities and commercial organisations, resolving management issues of various kinds including financial.

Outside of work, her main interests are languages and dance, as these are both key elements to understanding the communication of emotion, which she sees as the key to honest and meaningful relationships with others in all areas of life. She has two daughters, one in year 13 and one in year 11, meaning that her home life is currently a fury of hormones and exam stress!

Daniel Rose



Daniel Rose is Head of Insight for Swindon based charity the National Trust. Over the last year he has been leading national research into the future of volunteering and understanding what it means to the public and therefore the impact on volunteer-involving organisations such as the Trust. Daniel will share with the conference the latest findings in volunteering trends, audiences, challenges and opportunities.

The National Trust is a charity and is completely independent of Government. It is the largest conservation body in Europe. It relies for income on membership fees, donations and legacies, and revenue raised from its commercial operations.

It recently reached 4 million members and 62000 volunteers. More than 14 million people visit its pay for entry properties, while an estimated 50 million visit open air properties.

It protects and opens to the public over 350 historic houses, gardens and ancient monuments. It also looks after forests, beaches, farmland, islands, castles, nature reserves and villages – for ever, for everyone.

Natasha May



Natasha joined Nationwide Building Society's management development programme in 2008 after graduating from the University of Bath. The two-year scheme involved a series of placements in a range of business areas and roles, combined with a structured learning schedule focusing on Nationwide's leadership capabilities.

Natasha joined Nationwide's Corporate Affairs Division in 2010 as part of the corporate responsibility team. Natasha manages the employee engagement agenda, focusing on involving employees in corporate responsibility and community initiatives, as well as running the employee volunteering programme.

Carol Orow



Carol Orow has been Voluntary Services Manager for the Great Western Hospitals, NHS Foundation Trust since October 2008. She is responsible for the development, promotion, organisation and management of volunteers across the Trust, which since 1st June 2011 has also included responsibility for volunteers across the Wiltshire Community Health Services (WCHS), expanding the Trusts volunteer numbers to some 560. In addition, her role includes liaising with other voluntary organisation managers/coordinators who also provide volunteers at the hospital and in the community, e.g. British Red Cross, Hospital Radio and WRVS.

Her background has been primarily in "people management" in a number of Customer Service organisations, such as Thomas Cook, RAC Motoring Services and Carillion Heath (Facilities Management). She has always, ironically, volunteered in her spare time within hospital environments and hopes that by drawing on her own experiences of doing so, is able to give greater awareness, empathy and enthusiasm for leading the Voluntary Services Department forward. Outside of work, her main interests are travel, going to the theatre, eating out and socialising with friends and family.

Cath Compton

Cath is a Health Walker in the Walcot Area. She has a vast interest in volunteering which started when she was at school in Purton. Cath became a Health Walk Leader after attending one of the Health Walks run by the Lifestyle Centre, which encouraged her to train and qualify to run her own Health Walk. Cath now runs a walk in Walcot every Wednesday morning but also still participates in her original Friday morning Womens fitness walk with the friends she made from the Lifestyle Centre.

Cath doesn't see what she does as volunteering, to her it is something she does to share opportunities and inspire other people. Cath spent her working life as a carer and now visits people in the community who might need a bit of extra support and to see a friendly face during the day. She also volunteers at Restore which is a charity shop in Park South. Cath continues to set personal goals and has been very successful in achieving these goals, which has included raising money for charity through multi-terrain runs and Race for Life. Cath's next challenge is to learn to be a trainer in seated exercise.

David Wreathall



Following a successful 20-year career in marketing, David wanted to do something to make a difference. So, as well as becoming a tutor with the Leadership Trust, he took on professional and voluntary fundraising roles, which led to starting up Inner Flame. His idea was to make training from the professional world available to young people at a crucial time in their development.

Inner Flame is a charity which offers training to inspire and motivate young people to reach their potential, building confidence and supporting people aged 14-24 to achieve their goals. David has added *"I am passionate about leadership and coaching. By sharing this with young people, we can make a huge difference in helping achieve their potential."*

Tom Charnock



Tom was born in Merseyside and completed an Engineering Apprenticeship on leaving school and then worked in various industries including the motor, shipbuilding and toys. Tom moved to Peterborough with the toy industry and came to Swindon in 1980 to start Bluebird Toys. More recently Tom has been very involved with the Strategic Development of the town including a hotel for

Honda and Keypoint.

Tom is Chair of Stanton Fitzwarren Parish Council, a member of Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC), a former Trustee of Voluntary Action Swindon and was elected as Chair of Swindon Strategic Partnership Overview & Monitoring Group in 2007 and has an Observer role on the Partnership Board.