



Press Release –26 June 2007

**Surrey Community Action Annual Conference
Working Together - Engaging Communities**

Left to Right – Debra Alcock-Tyler,
(Director of Social Change)
Jean Roberts-Jones, (Chief Executive
Surrey Community Action)
Sue Douthwaite (Cass Business
School, London)
Peter Grant, (Cass Business School
London)



Surrey Community Action's annual conference at Royal Holloway College was a focal point for over 120 voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) and others involved with them to come together to hear well known speakers addressing topical themes that affect all organisations and groups both big and small alike.

The conference provided great opportunities to network and share ideas and issues with delegates from other organisations and sectors.

The 2007 theme – 'Working Together: engaging communities' – focused on the role of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in delivering community engagement as foreseen in the Government White Paper.

The morning keynote address and debate featured well known speaker, Debra Alcock-Tyler (Director of Social Change) who led a lively debate on 'Its

not the role of the VCS to help government to promote civic engagement', which was convincingly defeated.

One of the conference highlights was the Voluntary and Community Lecture, delivered by well known writer and broadcaster Nick Cater. Nick's theme was "Why won't someone just give us the money and let us get on with it" where he challenged voluntary organisations to look critically at where their funding is coming from and how sustainable it is. He reminded his audience that 'it's a tough world out there with a lot of small organisations chasing a decreasing amount of money – the successful organisations will be those who work together to increase efficiency and effectiveness'.

"Challenging speakers, interesting workshops, great networking sums up many of the comments from the delegates" said organiser Peter Smith, Head of Organisations at Surrey Community Action. "Taking time out from a busy schedule is difficult so we aim to ensure delegates find the day useful, informative and hopefully enjoyable".

This year's conference was supported by Linetex, Businesslink and Surrey County Council.

Surrey Community Action is resourcing the Voluntary and Community Sector across Surrey through access to advice, training, funding and advocacy. Surrey Community Action actively promotes volunteering and our website www.surreyca.org.uk can signpost you to local opportunities at a volunteer centre near you. Help is especially needed in health or as a school governor.

If you are interested in volunteering the details of local volunteer centres in Surrey are on our website: www.surreyca.org.uk/vb.htm