



Media release

Issued: 1 December, 2017

Third sector urged to 'diversify leadership to enhance civil society'

Professor Laura McAllister, Professor of Public Policy at the Wales Governance Centre at Cardiff University and Chair of the National Assembly Expert Panel into Electoral Reform, and former Chair of Sport Wales and board member of Stonewall, has urged every sector to seek more diversity in its leadership to enhance civil society across the country.

At Wales Council for Voluntary Action's (WCVA) Annual General Meeting in Llandudno, Professor McAllister gave the second annual lecture for the third sector. In it, she spoke of the crucial political juncture created by Brexit, austerity and instability at the Senedd and Westminster, and the opportunities for change this all creates. 'Now more than ever is a time for enhancing civil society,' she said.

She told delegates of the need for all sectors to diversify by attracting new leaders from all backgrounds to bring in fresh ideas and to challenge and criticise what has come before. A more diverse leadership in all areas, she said, should bring new ideas, a creative spark and a willingness to listen to all people across all of Wales, in particular those who feel left behind, without a stake in democracy. This new breed of leadership should greatly improve civil society all over the country.

Professor McAllister's lecture follows the recent Charity Commission report on diversity in boards, which showed that charity boards are not reflective of the communities they serve, and the publication of the new Charity Governance Code, a tool to help charities achieve high standards of governance.

She was introduced to delegates by Michael Sheen, actor, activist and President of WCVA.

Ruth Marks, WCVA Chief Executive, said: 'Professor McAllister's words ring true as a way forward for the third sector during a period of great upheaval. Organisations across all the sectors should look at their leadership and ask if it is truly fit for purpose and truly representative of the communities they serve. Becoming more diverse strengthens leaders and leadership around Wales and makes these new leaders more likely to unite Wales' communities than those that people feel do not reflect them or their hopes and aspirations.'

You can watch Professor McAllister's lecture on WCVA's website, www.wcva.org.uk.

WCVA has strengthened its own governance by moving to a Group Structure agreement which will allow for more effective working with external organisations. Cynnal Cymru will join the structure as partners of WCVA from 1 April next year.

The AGM also saw the launch of WCVA's Members Charter, which reaffirms our pledge to put our membership at the heart of all we do.

<p>For more information please contact David Cook or Lynne Reynolds on 0800 2888 329. WCVA website www.wcva.org.uk</p>
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Notes to editors:

- WCVA is the national membership organisation for the third sector in Wales. Our vision is for the third sector and volunteering to thrive and improve well-being for all. We achieve this by influencing, connecting and enabling.
- Cynnal Cymru - Sustain Wales (www.cynnalcymru.com) is the leading organisation for sustainable development in Wales. Established in 2002, Cynnal Cymru has grown from a Government funded organisation to a flourishing, independent not-for-profit charity with bold ambitions to make Wales the first Sustainable Nation.



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