

WORKSHOP LEADERS



Heidi Fisher – Make an Impact

Heidi is a specialist in social enterprise and social impact. She has worked with hundreds of social enterprises, CICs and charities over the past 20 years.

Heidi's background is as a Chartered Accountant, having trained with PricewaterhouseCoopers. She founded Harris Accountancy Services CIC – a specialist social enterprise accountancy firm before setting up Make an Impact CIC. Heidi is a Board member for the CIC Association, as well as three other CICs and two charities.

Heidi has worked with start-ups through to those with over £1 billion of income supporting them to become more sustainable, develop their trading income and to measure and report the impact they have. Heidi is the author of the book "Social Enterprise: How to successfully set up and grow a social enterprise."



John Clarke – Social Telecoms

John Clarke is Director and Founder of Social Telecoms, a leading provider of telecoms and WiFi solutions for social housing communities, landlords and councils.

Social Telecoms works in partnership with Housing Plus a West Midlands based social landlord to run a community based digital inclusion project - The Digital Den.

The Digital Den delivers WiFi, internet access and employment services to Housing Plus customers on the Castlefields and Meole Brace estates in Shrewsbury.

Funded by Social Telecoms corporate work the project has won a number of awards over the 4 years it has operated and demonstrates the use of commercial knowledge to improve the lives of those around us through better access to online services.

John is also currently Chairman of Beacon for Life CIC.



Sarah Fraser - Willmott Dixon Foundation

Sarah Fraser is Head of the Willmott Dixon Foundation, their vehicle to drive social value throughout the business.

In her role, Sarah is responsible for developing, monitoring and measuring the Group's community investment activities and ensuring they leave a lasting positive legacy in the communities in which the group work.

Unlike other targets of its kind, Willmott Dixon does not measure its work on financial cost, number of apprenticeships or hours accrued but on whether its initiatives have actually had a positive impact on individual lives.

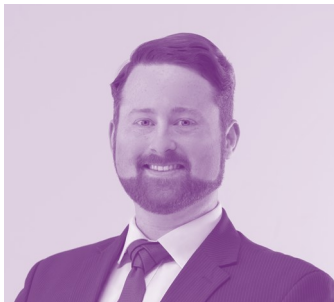


Melanie Mills – Big Society Capital

Melanie was previously the Chief Executive of Social Enterprise West Midlands (SEWM) CIC and led the organisation from a publicly funded project to a sustainable social enterprise through four years of trading and growth. SEWM's income was directly generated through the sales of products and services so she has first-hand experience of the challenges and opportunities that social sector organisations face in order to be successful businesses.

Melanie brings a frontline perspective to the Big Society Capital team and particularly focuses on developing relationships with social enterprises and charities across the Midlands and the North of the UK and raising awareness of social investment. Since joining the team she has helped lead the Social Investment Tax Relief ~Campaign 'Get sITr', has instigated a new initiative Let's Talk Good Finance and is passionate about our most recent initiative GETINFORMED – Social Investment for Boards. Melanie is passionate about helping to translate the opportunities that social investment can present to help social enterprises and charities create even more social impact.

Melanie is also the Social enterprise champion for the Greater Birmingham and Solihull LEP, Chair of Governors at a Local Authority Maintained School and a Charity Trustee in her spare time.



Richard James - Shropshire Council

Richard is Shropshire Council's Strategic Development Lead for Housing heading up the construction of Shropshire's four centres for excellence. Richard works across the local authority, linking up local, national and international business, local members, education and the voluntary sector to improve education, economic development and the provision of care in Shropshire.

Richard is leading "the Alexa project" - an experimental trial in partnership with Amazon, Hitachi and Microsoft to test the capabilities of smart consumer technology. The aim is to use consumer tech as a more advanced and cost effective way to improve public sector services and to offer more, for less than ever before. The partnership is developing Alexa for use in assistive technology, planning technology, contact centre technology and even to tackle social isolation - an increasing issue not just for rural areas such as Shropshire.

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