

ROC on Eastbourne!

The Bishop of Lewes, the Rt Rev Wallace Benn, joined Sussex Chief Constable Martin Richards and the Borough Commander for the Fire & Rescue Service, Julie Gilbert-King to launch ROC - Redeeming Our Communities - at the Winter Gardens on 12th October. A recorded message from Mayor Carolyn Heaps provided inspiration to all with her plea to 'ROC on Eastbourne!' East Sussex Police Commander Ch Supt Robin Smith, Eastbourne's Ch Insp Jayne Dando joined around 400 people who attended the event to hear the speakers explain that through faith, partnerships and action, relationships within the community of Eastbourne can be created, improved and energised.

Energy was not in short supply when the founder of ROC, Debra Green, told the audience how she had worked with communities in Manchester and elsewhere to develop community centres in conjunction with Partners such as the Police and Fire Service.



The evening was introduced by Chair of Churches Together for Eastbourne, Martyn Relf, who thanked all those who had helped to bring ROC to Eastbourne.

The Chief Constable spoke about public service and likened the Police Service to that of the Clergy with many shared principles such as the desire to form strong, positive communities and promoting equality, fairness and respect for all. The Community Safety Partnership was one of a number of organisations that were represented at the meeting with information stalls.



The Eastbourne Police stall was staffed by Sgts Fi Munro and Ed Ripley. There were numerous other information stalls for organisations such as Save the EDGH, Eastbourne Foodbank, the Winter Night Shelter and Action for Change to name just a few.

A presentation by the Senior Head of Community at Eastbourne Borough Council, Ian Fitzpatrick, highlighted how Neighbourhood Management relied on a partnership approach to help improve all aspects of community life including health, job creation and education opportunities.

Portfolio holder for Community at Eastbourne Borough Council and Devonshire Councillor, Margaret Bannister was also at the event. "The launch of ROC in Eastbourne will enable the different organisations and faiths to transform the lives of many people by working together much more closely. We know that the experience of ROC in other towns and cities has helped cut crime and antisocial behaviour which is already very low in Eastbourne. ROC will provide an opportunity for the community to continue to build a strong future for the town".



As the evening drew to an end, Martyn Relf invited everyone to the next ROC event, which will be the first of many Conversations, to be held at 7pm on Thursday 24th November at the Town Hall to develop the next stages for ROC in Eastbourne.

