

Voluntary Action Swindon Annual Review 2014/15

Voluntary Action Swindon



**Charity No: 287732. Company No: 1604168.
A charitable company limited by guarantee**

Voluntary Action Board of Trustees

Mansoor Khan - Current Chair (Elected May 2015)

Nazma Ramruttun - Chair from September 2014 to May 2015. Currently Vice Chair from May 2015

Jaginder S Bassi - Co-Optee

Voluntary Action Swindon was formed in 1932 as the Swindon Council of Social Service, administering help to the unemployed and disadvantaged. Voluntary Action Swindon has a unique role serving as a mediator between the public sector and the third sector. Voluntary Action Swindon contributes significantly in bringing the diverse sections of our community together, promoting the wider engagement and participation of the third sector in the Swindon Strategic Partnership and Local Area Agreement.

Our Strategic aims are:

- To improve the capacity and quality of voluntary and community organisations.
- To facilitate liaison and collaboration within the voluntary and community sector and between the voluntary, public and private sectors.
- To enable voluntary and community organisations to gain greater access to information, public support services and facilities.
- To identify and prioritise the needs of local communities and develop appropriate responses.

We're up to date and on the web



To go to the VAS website www.vas-swindon.org



The Voluntary Action Swindon online Directory is a comprehensive source of contact information for Voluntary and Community Sector groups in Swindon. Just go to www.vas-swindon.org.uk



Browse our pictures, info and news www.facebook.com/vas-swindon



Get short, timely messages from VAS www.twitter.com/vaswindon



From the Chair - Mansoor A Khan



It seems no time at all since I joined the VAS board and I'm now approaching my 6th AGM as a trustee. This year was challenging and I thank all staff, volunteers and stakeholders for their support.

VAS has played a key part in representing the sector with Statutory partners, including representing the sector on the One Swindon Partnership and Swindon Health and Wellbeing boards. Working with sector colleagues through SCIP, we engaged with the Council and organised a successful Community Conference. VAS promoted awareness within Voluntary & Community sector groups of the opportunities offered by the European Structural & Investment Fund. VAS represented the sector on the Swindon & Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership ESIF Committee. In late 2014 we successfully secured funding from the One Swindon Partnership Board for a new Strategic Network Development Manager.

VAS continued with projects from previous years and looked for new partnerships to improve our contributions to the sector.

Community Sector Support - VAS provided support to Voluntary & Community groups on organisational and financial issues. VAS also supported the Swindon Equality Coalition and Sports Forum. Funding advice and training sessions were also held throughout the year.

Swindon Advice & Support Centre (SAASC) - is established with VAS managing the building which houses 8 local charities and organisations providing a convenient single point of access to a wide range of support services.

Strategic Network Development - the role was introduced in December 2014 to develop better links between the Voluntary & Community sector and public sector improvement programmes.

Time Bank - built on the principle of being a good neighbour with someone giving a helping hand with the favour then returned. VAS worked with the Volunteer Centre to set up Time Banks in Penhill and Taw Hill. The project ended in March 2015.

Involve Swindon - a network of companies, statutory bodies and voluntary groups working together to encourage employees to give their time to develop and share their skills and knowledge through volunteering. Involve Swindon is seen as innovative, leading the way of growing employer supported volunteering, and attracted the attention of the Cabinet Office.

Building Health Partnerships - a partnership with Swindon CCG to develop relationships between health commissioners and the voluntary and community sector with the ultimate goal of improving health services. The project ended in October 2014.

Some of last year's achievements

- *Over 400 news items communicated via our weekly e-bulletin (VAS id) promoting voluntary and community events and activities. New features in VAS id now include voluntary sector job opportunities, dates for your diaries, governance and legal updates.*
- *New Strategic Network Development Manager role introduced in December 2014 with funding from One Swindon Partnership Board to develop better links between community & voluntary sector groups and public sector improvement programs.*
- *Over 80 people/groups have attended VAS organised awareness events regarding new ESIF European funding.*
- *VAS was part of the organising committee for the very successful community & voluntary sector conference – the first to be held in many years.*
- *Training and network sessions were attended by over 230 people who gained new skills, including in IT, trustee responsibilities, social media, HR, first aid and health and safety.*
- *Over 85 one-to-one tailored advice sessions provided on funding and finance.*
- *Over 40 one-to-one tailored advice sessions provided on governance and organizational.*
- *Community Fair held in partnership with Swindon Libraries.—15 voluntary groups and local charities seized the opportunity to promote the services they provide locally. This resulted in over 300 conversations taking place between the general public and organizations. These events help the general public understand more about the wide range of services provided in Swindon. One of the day's highlights was the recruitment of 2 new volunteers to help support the development of the Swindon Older People Forum website.*
- *8 local organisations moved into the newly refurbished Sanford House building as part of the Swindon Advice & Support Centre (SAASC), with an additional 4 organisations using the hot desk facilities on a regular basis.*
- *4,650 individuals have attended meetings or training sessions at SAASC in the last year.*

Equality Coalition Achievements

- *Over 4000 Equality related news items, and information updates were posted to the Swindon Equality Coalition Facebook page. Comments were encouraged from friends of the Coalition on a number of Swindon Equality issues. Over 1140 friends of this page engaged with this activity by either liking, commenting or sharing news with their own or other Facebook pages.*
- *2 Equality Coalition Events were held with over 70 people attending. The events were themed on anti-bullying and economic inequalities.*
- *The Coalition and its members have played a helpful role in developing partnerships over the past year. An example of this is the working together of the Police and a protected category youth group delivering a zero tolerance campaign against homophobic bullying to 3500+ students across five schools in Swindon. The Wiltshire Police now continue this vital awareness work under their Diversity Agenda, with plans to move into Primary schools also.*
- *“Let’s Loop Swindon” is a local initiative, part of the national initiative “Let’s Loop the UK”, set up to encourage the right use and management of Hearing Loop provision in all publicly used establishments. Coalition members have been involved both at steering group level and in delivery of the project.*
- *Six working group meetings took place throughout the year working through equality issues.*

Sports Forum Achievements

- *2 Swindon Sports Forum events were held with over 120 people attending. Talks were given by Justin Tomlinson MP, an update on the Leisure Change Program along with information on the National Activity Strategy provided by Public Health at Swindon BC. Talks also included an update on the Club Leaders program, the launch of the Sports Forum grants and how the Sports Forum could utilise the support of the Volunteer Centre in Swindon to engage with more volunteers.*
- *This year has seen over £15,000 awarded to over 15 different sports clubs or individuals supporting the development of sports and sporting activity in the town.*
- *The Swindon Sports Forum spent £6000 on the delivery of the workshops with Oaks Consultancy which has resulted in £105,000 of funding for Sports clubs in Swindon.*

Services We Provide

Room Hire: A 50 person Conference Room located right in the centre of Swindon—very flexible room layouts, equipment hire also available. The room allows for small groups and large events. Other rooms are also available.

Printing Services: Printing services at competitive prices. We can do both small and large print jobs.

DBS service: We are a registered DBS Umbrella Body, so are able to check and send off any DBS you require.

Funding Advice: Access to **FREE** Funding Advice Surgeries.

Networks/Forums: Access to a wide range of forums and networks supported by VAS which include the CEO Network, Trustee Network, Community Buildings Network, Sports Forum, Voluntary & Community Forum and the BME Forum. All providing opportunities to network, share ideas and best practice.

Communications: Promote your group and the services you provide within our weekly e-bulletin that has a readership of 800+ (VAS id). We also have a quarterly newsletter, Facebook and Twitter accounts

Access To Networks: Access to the Trustee Network, Community Buildings Network, the Voluntary and Community Forum, the BME Forum, the CEO Breakfast Meeting and the Swindon Fundraisers Group. All providing opportunities to network, share ideas and best practice.

VAS Directory: An online directory listing over 1500 groups and organisations that provide services to the voluntary and community sector. **FREE** to register your group.

Information And Advice: **FREE** information and advice available and access to a wider regional or national network through VAS.

Governance Advice: Advice to groups when they need it.

Training Program: VAS has a brand new training program in place which will bring more training opportunities to the Voluntary sector in Swindon. For more information on the courses visit www.vas-swindon.org/training.html

Swindon Equality Coalition: We support the running of the Swindon Equality Coalition, hosting multiple events throughout the year as well as a number of Equality Coalition Working Group meetings throughout the year.

Swindon Advice & Support Centre: A central hub where the people of Swindon can go and get advice and support from a number of key organisations.

Financial Report April 2014 — March 2015

This summary financial information is taken from the Trustees' annual report and statutory financial statements, which has been approved by the Trustees before the AGM. The statutory financial statements, on which the auditor, Chris Vaughan Reeves & Co has given an unqualified audit report, will be submitted to the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission.

This summary information may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full Trustees' report, statutory financial statements and auditors' report may be downloaded from the charity commission website - www.charity-commission.gov.uk or on the VAS website on the 'About Us' page.

VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2015		
	2014-2015	2013-2014
	£,000	£'000
Income		
Rent	51	33
Printing	7	6
Training	2	4
Interest	2	2
Other	7	4
Projects		
SBC—Strategic Development	13	-
SBC – Community Sector Support	125	125
UK Online	-	6
Building Health Partnerships	32	18
SBC/Job Centre (ILM)	19	26
SBC – Time Bank	21	21
SBC – Sanford House	76	2
VCS – Involve	8	9
Other Income	-	13
Total Income	363	269

Auditor: Chris Vaughan - Reeves & Co, Argyle Street, Swindon, SN2 8AR

Financial Report April 2014 - March 2015

VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2015		
	2014-2015	2013-2014
	£,000	£,000
Expenditure		
Staff Costs	-257	-153
Other Costs	-117	-113
Depreciation	-6	-11
Audit fees	-2	-2
Total Expenditure	-382	-279
Net Deficit	-19	-10

Balance Sheet	2014-2015	2013-2014
Fixed Assets	90	96
Bank Accounts	240	262
Other Assets	6	16
TOTAL	336	374
Liabilities	-57	-76
Net Funds	279	298

Reserves Policy

The Trustees have examined the reserves policy in the light of the predominant risks to the charity. The reserves are required to cover late payment, loss of grant aid funding and other shortfalls of income so as to ensure full and timely delivery of, or appropriate exit from, planned programmes and ongoing provision of services. A policy has been established whereby unrestricted funds, not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity, should be four months of running costs. A designated sum of £70,000 has been set aside for the property maintenance fund and a further £55,000 for the operational reserve fund. A designated sum of £10,000 has been set aside for the property fund, which will allow Voluntary Action Swindon to identify new premises and pay for surveyors and architects, when appropriate. Voluntary Action Swindon will continue to build reserves through operating surpluses if available.