



Voluntary Action Swindon

Strengthening the Swindon Community



Annual Review 2022-23

Trustees, Staff & Volunteers

Annual Report 2022/23

Trustees

Bob Barrett (Chair), **Stephen Henderson** (Vice-Chair), **David Bell**, **Ram Thiagarajah**, **John Markey**, (to 12/22) **Mark Flay**, **Sue Frawley**, **Sophie Peart**, **Stanislava Adamcova**

Our valued regular volunteers

Linda West, **Charmaine Fisher** + **Shabbir Ahmad** and **Chris Hills** who also volunteer.

Staff

Pam Webb, CEO to 31/3/23, **Carol Willis**, Funding and Governance Manager and CEO from 1/4/23), **Jol Rose**, Equality and Collaboration, **Alana Fiorelli**, Funding and Governance Manager (from Jan 23), **Rachel Hobbs**, Marcom & Business Administration Lead, **Katie Linstead** Veteran Support Navigator, **Seniz Mutlu**, Business Development, **Shaz Qaddus**, Finance (no photo), **James Moss**, Property, Office and Shopmobility, **Chris Hills**, Maintenance, **Mesut Mutlu** and **Jonathan Harris**, Shopmobility, **Karen Edmunds**, Café Mobility Team Leader, **Shabbir Ahmad** Café Mobility Assistant (no photo)



Pam Webb



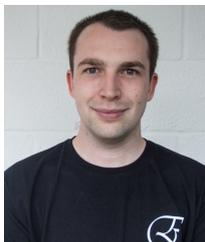
Carol Willis



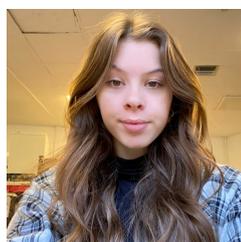
Jol Rose



Alana Fiorelli



James Moss



Rachel Hobbs



Katie Linstead



Seniz Mutlu



Chris Hills



Mesut Mutlu



Jonathan Harris



Karen Edmunds

Well, that was a quick but incredibly busy year! We were very proud to celebrate VAS' 90th birthday this year and all it has achieved since its launch in 1932. From its humble beginnings helping to strengthen the Swindon community and in 1972 following significant job cuts at the then Great Western Railway works, to all the vital services we deliver today to continue to support and strengthen the Swindon Community and particularly the vibrant and varied Swindon Voluntary sector which Swindon is so lucky to have.



We have seen a significant rise in demand for the VAS services this year which means we made some leadership and personnel changes.

Pam Webb in her CEO role, was seeing a huge increase in demand on her time due to the need to attend a variety of meetings representing the sector ensuring it continues to have a voice as a delivery partner of the Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care System (ICS). This also includes the Swindon Integrated Care Alliance (ICA), as well as Pam becoming the VCSE partner member on the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and representing Swindon on the BSW VCSE Alliance. This was coupled with Pam needing some family time with the impending arrival of another grandchild in April and supporting her elderly Mum. Pam decided in early January that the best course of action for her and VAS was to step down as VAS CEO to concentrate in the role as 'VCSE Strategic Lead for Integrated Care'.

With my full support and a succession plan in place, following an internal process, VAS' previous Funding and Governance Manager, Carol Willis agreed to step up as CEO. We also welcomed Alana Fiorelli, who joined us in January as the new Funding and Governance Manager to replace Carol, allowing for hand-over of the two roles.

VAS organised the Swindon Voluntary Sector Conference in November celebrating our 90 years. The feedback from the 113 attendees was overwhelmingly positive. This is being followed by with two smaller seminars later in 2023 one to promote volunteering and the other covering Inclusion and Diversity.



Chair's Report Cont.

Bob Barrett

The Cost of Living Crisis has also impacted on VAS, with our sector survey reporting a 72% increase in the demand on voluntary services, at a time when 34% saw a decrease in income, placing further demand for funding and governance support. To help with this Alana is now sending out funding opportunities daily to targeted organisations that have asked to be added to our database as 'looking for funding'. Resulting in over 300 funding leads sent out per quarter! She is also continuing to support the sector with in depth advice and guidance. Alana is also managing Katie and the Veteran Navigation Project.

As the local Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) we are also representing the whole sector at specific boards and forums to ensure that the voice of the sector is considered and heard as key partners. Meetings include the Swindon Health and Wellbeing Board, Swindon Safeguarding Partnership and all the Integrated Care groups as mentioned.

Swindon Community Hub, based at Sanford House, continues to be managed by Voluntary Action Swindon. We are proud to be the landlords to this unique provision in the heart of Swindon, which is home to 10 charities and Swindon Borough Council's Live Well team. Shopmobility can also be found on the Sanford House site. Which is an ideal site for ease of availability to those with mobility issues wishing to use the service, and close to bus routes. Café Mobility, which was awarded a 5 star hygiene rating by Swindon Borough Council's food hygiene inspectors this year can be found on this site and is open to the public as well as residents of Sanford House and of course the customers of Shopmobility.



I'd like to thank the VAS team for all their hard work this year, with special thanks to Pam for leading VAS and the team for almost four years, for her leadership through the difficult times of COVID and the formation of the Integrated Care System, as well as the Cost of Living Crisis. I also wish Carol all the best as the incoming CEO for VAS. I know she feels supported by the brilliant VAS team, and of course, the VAS Board of Trustees!

Bob

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Pam Webb

It has been such a privilege to lead the great organisation that is Voluntary Action Swindon for the last few years and I know it will continue to go from strength to strength under Carol's leadership, with the continued support of the dedicated and passionate Board of Trustees.



It wasn't an easy decision to step down as CEO at the end of March 2023, but then important decisions are never easy are they? I found myself spread far too thinly professionally and personally and something had to give. After working hard since July 2019 to broaden and raise the profile of VAS's work, I didn't want it to be VAS.

The role of VAS and infrastructure organisations like VAS, have never been more needed. Coming out of the darker days of the COVID pandemic to lunge head on into a major cost of living crisis has taken its toll on everyone but particularly the Voluntary Sector. It has seen a disproportionate increase in demand for its services, at a time when fundraising for its survival has never been tougher.

So why do I think it's important for VAS to be an influential partner in the developing Integrated Care System for BSW? Turn over to find out!



Strengthening the Swindon Community

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info@vas-swindon.org www.vas-swindon.org

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Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

All the IC's!

I now professionally live in a world of IC's! Integrated Care System (ICS); Integrated Care Board (ICB); Integrated Care Partnership (ICP) and Swindon Integrated Care Alliance (ICA). Why is it important for the Voluntary Sector to part of them?

Integrated Care Systems are difficult to explain, I like to use an analogy of professional football. A football team has to work in harmony, put personal ego's to one side and play as a genuine team. They have well practiced and efficient joined up set moves—when they start to lose goals, they strengthen their defence, otherwise the goals just keep coming.

Imagine now that the goal is a hospital and the balls are ill patients. What do you do when the shots on goal keep coming—do you build a bigger goal or spend the money on the best defenders you can buy?

In the world of Integrated Care, the members of the team are the NHS (budget holders) and strategists; Hospitals; Doctors; Pharmacists; Dentists; Community based health services ; Local Authorities: Public Health, Adults Services and Children's Services; Care Homes; Domiciliary Care providers and the Voluntary Sector. If this team doesn't work in in a joined up way and if it doesn't invest in the best defence, then people won't stay healthy or successfully manage any major health conditions and the hospital will simply see the patients just keep coming and life expectancy will reduce.

The other analogy with professional football is that a) the whole team are professionals (not amateurs) and b) they all need paying, admittedly some more than others for their degree of skill, but no-one expects a professional football player to step onto the pitch as an unpaid volunteer—but lots of volunteers add value to the wider experience of football.



Continuing the analogy, we all know there is money in football—just as NHSE has fairly deep pockets. But current pockets are going to run dry if they don't start investing in more defence.

This leads me to the Integrated Care world's description of this conundrum 'Left Shift', which could actually be quite a good description of a football set piece—but actually means investing more in preventative health.

Here is the vision for the BSW ICB:



The Voluntary Sector has an important role to play as part of this team, particularly helping to delivery the first two objectives. Whilst this sector is also one of the least acknowledged defenders of ill health (both physical and emotional).

It's important that it is part of this professional team, and also important that it is invested in as part of this professional team to ensure that the systems capacity for defending ill health is increased and importantly sustained.

So, well I focus with other colleagues, on ensuring that the sector is a valued and funded partner in Integrated Care, I'm delighted that Carol will be focusing on ensuring VAS continues to be a valued and sustained partner in Swindon 'Strengthening the Swindon Community'.

Pam

“ I very much look forward to leading VAS and all its vital core services on the next stage of its journey and to continue working with Pam as she champions the sector in the Integrated Care System. “ Carol



Collaboration and Sector Voice

SWINDON VOLUNTARY SECTOR CONFERENCE 2022



Swindon Voluntary Sector Conference was a chance for the sector to come together, discuss key issues of our time, and celebrate VAS' 90th birthday in style.

Keynote speakers and table discussions covered topics including Integrated Care, the costs of living crisis, and engaging with Swindon's diverse communities.

Exhibition and information stands were provided by the National Lottery, Wiltshire Community Foundation, The Live Well Team and other organisations key to the success of the sector.

Feedback received after the conference was overwhelmingly positive, with attendees appreciating the speakers, discussion time and user-friendly venue. Several people remarked that the need for greater cooperation and collaboration remained significant: "our organisations must collaborate, too much is being duplicated" was a typical comment.

VAS is grateful to the conference sponsors who made this event possible: Zurich Community Trust, Arval, Amazon, Wiltshire Community Foundation and the Swindon and Wiltshire Local Enterprise Partnership.



Collaboration and Sector Voice

VAS worked tirelessly to promote collaboration and information sharing across the sector. We facilitated several networks where organisations with similar aims - from both voluntary and statutory sectors - could come together to share and discuss.

These included:

Swindon Wellbeing - a network for organisations working to raise awareness of and support people with mental health issues. VAS continued to coordinate meetings, provide administrative support, and keep the network's online presence up to date.

We coordinated several awareness-raising activities including for National Mental Health Awareness Week, with press coverage and an info stand at the Hub in the town centre.

Health, help & therapy network - a network for organisations that provide support and help to people with long-term conditions, illness and disability.



Feeding Swindon Partnership - having played a key role in setting up the Swindon Food Alliance, VAS supported the Partnership with connections and awareness raising.

Swindon VCSE Leadership Alliance - an alliance of Swindon sector leaders continued to meet regularly to hear updates on key developments in the Integrated Care System and other key initiatives and to share learning and knowledge across the sector.

Youth Worker Collective - VAS helped to set up and support a new network for community-based youth workers; with regular face-to-face meetings, this network is proving invaluable for providing peer support and information/skill sharing between workers employed by different organisations and in different sectors.

Ageing Well Network - VAS helped to set up and coordinate meetings for this new network, focused on organisations that support older people.

Shopmobility

We continued to deliver the Swindon Shopmobility scheme which is available for anyone with limited mobility and provides a selection of manually propelled and battery powered wheelchairs and scooters. These are provided to help people with mobility difficulties when using the facilities in Swindon's town centre.

Available equipment includes:

- Mobility scooters
- Power chairs
- Manual wheelchairs
- Fold up scooter for weekly hire



We continued to deliver our servicing and repair offer to local residents, providing a low cost scooter and powerchair servicing. This service which was launched in September 2021 is also used to maintain our own equipment.

Headline stats for the year:

- 479 members
- 54 new members
- 29 people accessed the service as temporary member
- The service was accessed 2,629 times during the year, a 12.8% increase
- Average monthly unique users increased by 22.4%, from 81.75 to 100.08

We also worked with Zurich Community Trust to deliver an open day for Shopmobility customers which included an afternoon tea and a live brass band performance and in December they also kindly provided 40 Shopmobility customers with a Christmas gift.



Following a trial day for staff, volunteers and trustees of Voluntary Action Swindon in mid April we were delighted to launch Café Mobility in June 2022.



Shortly after our launch we were awarded a food hygiene rating of 5 by SBC's food hygiene inspectors.

The café, which is fully accessible for those in mobility scooters and wheelchairs, has provided a safe welcoming space for Shopmobility customers to meet with friends and family in a safe welcoming space.



We are also encouraged by the number of Swindon residents already using the Café to help sustain the vital Shopmobility service in Swindon.

However we would love to see more and more local residents using the café whilst in the town centre.

The aim of the café has always been to ensure it is as environmentally friendly and ethical as possible. We are therefore not only delighted to be offering “Change Please” coffee within the café but also to be receiving great comments from customers about the taste of the coffee. Change Please is a social enterprise who invest 100% of their profits into giving people experiencing homelessness, a living wage job, housing, training, onwards opportunities — and a fresh shot at a life. You can find out more about Change Please on their website <https://changeplease.org/>



Sanford House

We continue to proudly manage Sanford House, Swindon's Community Hub, home to 10 of Swindon's support, advocacy, and advice charities and from this year, the Swindon Borough Council's Live Well team.



We have been encouraged to see the demand for room hire and meeting space has pretty much returned to our pre pandemic levels, which although was something we had hoped to see, this has happened much faster than we expected.

In addition to this, we have seen an added increase in demand for office space from potential new tenants, which we have unfortunately been unable to accommodate due to being at full capacity, but this is again is a positive sign of the reputation the building has both locally and further afield.

Throughout the year we were also delighted to be able to host a number of adult courses delivered by Whitehead Ross Education & Training and Swindon Borough Council.

These courses included:

- **ESOL**
- **GOALS**
- **Employability Skills**
- **Sleep Well**
- **Talk English**

All of these courses aimed to help people back in to employment by increasing the skills level and employability of those attending.

Throughout the year we were pleased to be able to continue supporting the COVID vaccination roll out by hosting a weekly vaccination clinic within the building. In addition to this we were also



able to provide additional dates when required to ensure that anyone who wanted to be was able to be vaccinated, even when all the other vaccination clinics were closing.

We also continued hosting NHS support services for families with children with ADHD helping this service to catch up post pandemic.

We were delighted to be able to support the 2022 poppy appeal, the building was the distribution hub for all of the poppies sold within Swindon.

Sanford House was also proud to support and host Stay Well At Home sessions. These wellbeing sessions were held weekly providing tools, tips and information about:

- Healthy eating
- Staying safe and warm
- Improving strength and balance
- Mental wellbeing
- Getting active
- Financial awareness
- Keeping connected
- Scam awareness
- Carers rights



Equality & inclusion



The Swindon Equality Coalition (SEC) was again the focus of much of our work around equality, diversity and inclusion (EDI), and VAS continued to coordinate and provide administrative support for the coalition's core group.

The coalition picked up a number of issues over the year including barriers to accessing GPs for people with protected characteristics, and difficulties for people with learning disability accessing leisure facilities.

Over the year, VAS engaged with diverse communities across Swindon, building bridges and helping other organisations develop their connections. Communities we worked with included: Hindu, Muslim, Nepali, South Asian, West African, LGBTQ+, older people, young people, people with disabilities, and more - several of which provided representatives to join the SEC core group.



Development of a forum for young people to build skills, gain confidence and have their views heard - on equality issues and much more - moved forward as VAS was successful in gaining four years' funding from the National Lottery for a new Swindon Youth Voice Project. The project is a partnership of 5 organisations, led by VAS, and will work across sectors with all youth provision organisations in the Borough to promote collaboration and cross-working, as well as to provide a rolling programme of workshops to support the development of the youth voice.

PEER SUPPORT GROUPS

VAS helped set up and develop peer-support groups to give people with protected characteristics a space to build confidence and find their voice— we support groups for people with disability, people with lived experience of mental health issues, people with learning disability, and people from Swindon's LGBTQ+ communities.

Equality & inclusion

SWINDON VOLUNTARY SECTOR CONFERENCE 2022

The Swindon Voluntary Sector Conference - organised by VAS and held in November - provided a platform to showcase good practice and promote discussion within the sector during a session entitled 'connecting with and engaging diverse communities'.

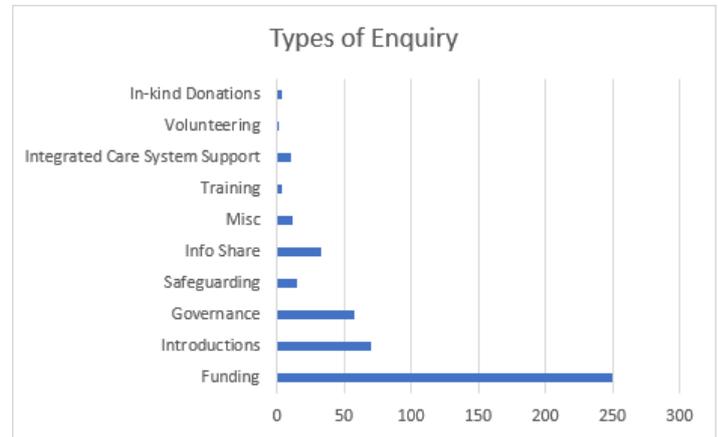
The conference provided a springboard for further conversations with individual charities and community groups - consultancy, training and support around EDI was another major element of VAS' work during the year, helping organisations to become more inclusive, providing advice and information on policies, good practice, research and outreach.



VAS held 6 online training sessions over the year, covering the basics of EDI for voluntary organisations and community groups - these training sessions can be run as bespoke sessions for an individual organisation and are also available as open courses, free to anyone from the sector in Swindon.

Funding and Governance and Sector Support

VAS supported a total of 229 organisations during the period March 2022—March 2023, with a total of 437 funding, governance and advice interventions.



These charts indicate the number of organisations we support with the number of interventions per quarter. The figures are very similar to the previous year. We are using Insightly (our CRM customer relationship management system) to mark those organisations as 'actively looking for funding'. We will then send out daily e-mails with funding information. These blanket e-mails number 300+ per quarter.

Governance

We've continued with our focused governance support, helping organisations set up and with governance issues. We have continued working with:

- Swindon Sister's Alliance. Emma has now opened another two shops in Swindon and is working with Swindon Borough Council and Nelson's Trust to support those that have been victims of domestic abuse.
- New Era Music. Valtko has now established his organisations as a CIC.

We've helped others looking to set up and talked over the different forms of organisations and helped them make the right decisions. New organisations we have supported are:

- Chloe's Fight CIC
- Croft Junior FC

Funding and Governance and Sector Support

We continue to support the sector to access funding opportunities, and are aware of the following successful bids, as a result of working with VAS:

- **FYI CIC who have since gone on to successfully secure a 2 year funding bid to raise awareness of mental health issues in the South Asian community. This funding totaled £50,886 from Health Inequalities Funding.**
- **Alternative Angels—secured two funding bids, one from National Lottery (£4750) and one from Wiltshire Community Foundation (£4650).**

UK Shared Prosperity Funding—we worked with Swindon Borough Council to promote this funding to the voluntary sector, with members of the VAS team working as part of the steering group to score bids. Successful organisations were:

- ♦ **The Harbour Project**
- ♦ **The Alzheimer's Society**
- ♦ **Julian's House Hospice**
- ♦ **Building Bridges programme delivered through Community First**

We worked with colleagues in the Integrated Care Systems to promote new Health Inequalities Funding to Swindon systems partners including the Voluntary Sector. The following voluntary organisations were successful in receiving funding:

- ♦ **Changing Suits**
- ♦ **Citizens Advice**
- ♦ **Kennet Furniture Recycling (Swindon Crisis Provision Fund)**
- ♦ **Central Swindon North Parish Council—leading a partnership with the Salvation Army, Night Shelter, Renew CIC, Stepping Stones, Penhill Community Café and Food Cycle.**

Veteran Support

Voluntary Action Swindon are proud to have signed the Armed Forces Covenant and to employ a Veteran Support Navigator. Following a successful bid to the Veteran's Foundation we are now in the second year of funding for this project. We are running a veterans drop-in on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at different locations, as well as becoming members of ASDIC (The Association of Service Drop-in Centres). The drop –in is an opportunity for veterans to meet up for a social and to be able to access services such as DWP, Help for Heroes, Op Courage for support.

From further veteran feedback and another successful bid from The Armed Forces Covenant Trust we are now running a wood-work project in partnership with Penhill Renew Project.

We are hoping to sustain this project and will continue to seek additional funding to enable us to support the 9500+ veterans in Swindon.

We've also supported the Armed Forces Day for the last two years. A great day to celebrate and appreciate our Armed Forces in Swindon.



Training courses at VAS

We are able to offer the following training courses:

- First Aid
- Board Governance
- Manual Handling
- Safeguarding
- Food Safety
- Leadership & Team Building

We can also offer training in:

- EDI
- Charity Governance Code

If you are interested in any of the above courses, or have any training requirements, please get in touch by emailing info@vas-swinton.org or calling 01793 538938 so we can discuss your needs.

Visit our website for full details: <https://vas-swinton.org/services/training/>



Services at VAS

Our key support to the local sector and community



Funding & Governance Advice

Alana is here to help you with funding sources, bid critique and governance advice.

Alana@vas-swinton.org



Equality & Collaboration

Jol is here to help you raise any equality issues and to encourage sector collaboration.

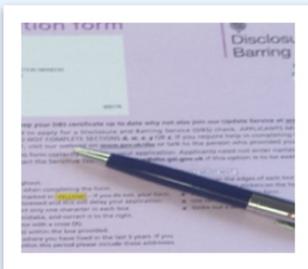
Jol@vas-swinton.org

Shopmobility



Enabling independence in Swindon town centre. Mobility Scooters and Power and manual wheelchairs for hire.

07379 689128



DBS Checks

VAS is registered umbrella body for standard and enhanced DBS checks.

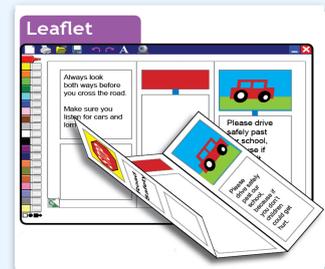
info@vas-swinton.org



Room Hire

A range of conference and other rooms available for hire from £15 an hour.

info@vas-swinton.org



Printing and Copying

Charity leaflets, newsletters, posters and all your copying needs at preferential rates.

info@vas-swinton.org

VAS id (information digest) is our weekly e-bulletin, helping to keep you up to date with voluntary and community sector news. Sign up to receive national and local news, upcoming community events, training courses, funding opportunities, voluntary and community sector vacancies, charity law updates, and advice on fundraising and governance.

During the last year we:

Sent 58 editions of VAS id

811 news items included

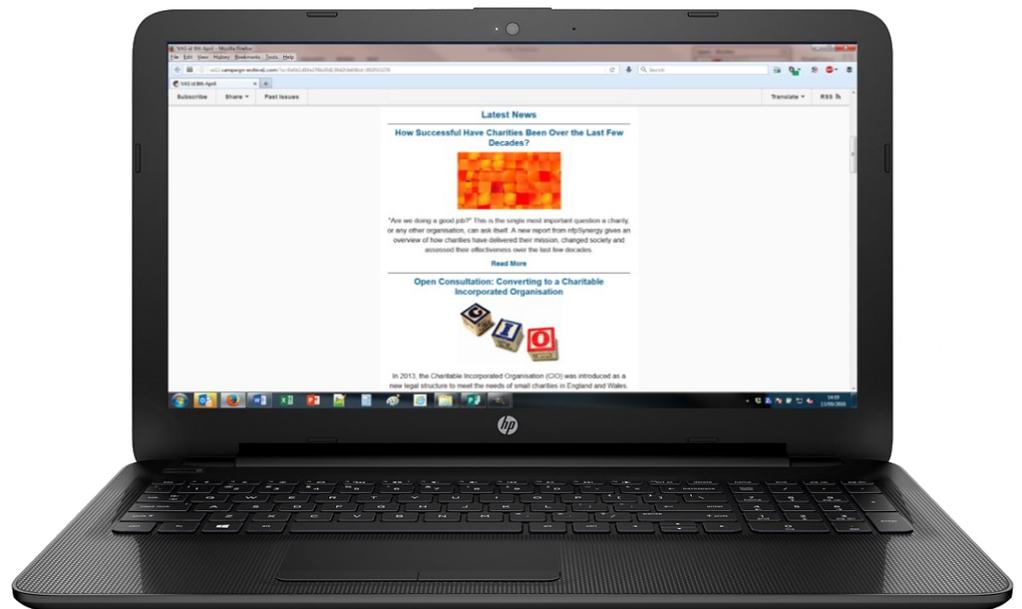
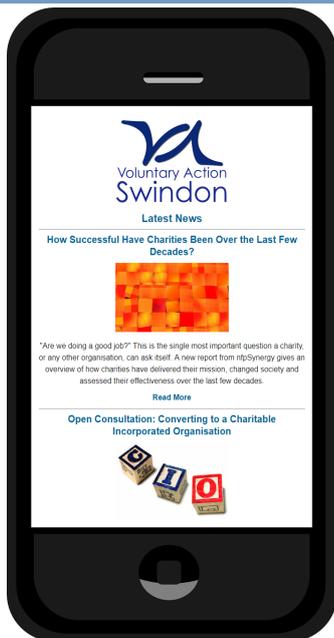
108 job vacancies advertised

Over 108 funding opportunities advertised

11 trustee vacancies advertised

24 volunteer vacancies advertised

Reaching 773 readers



Sign up here:

<http://vas-swindon.org/subscribe>

Social Media



VAS Social media feeds across Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn regularly share information for the sector and cross promote activities within the sector. To follow VAS search for Voluntary Action Swindon

We continued to see a big increase in followers across all our social media feeds last year.

Our posts include:

- Support services available through VAS
- Veteran support and social events including Veteran woodwork activities
- Mental Health support services
- Funding opportunities
- The Swindon Shopmobility service and the service and maintenance offer
- Suicide prevention support
- Adult Community Learning opportunities
- Services for people with Dementia
- Charity Governance advice
- Support for Refugees and Asylum Seekers
- Promotion of Café with a Heart
- Surveys relevant to the community and voluntary sector
- Food poverty support
- Support for 18,000+ unpaid carers in Swindon
- Youth support services including mentoring schemes
- Local Authority news
- Elderly support services
- LGBTIQ+ events and services
- Cost of Living help
- How to engage in Volunteering
- Help for homelessness
- Equality and inclusion training
- Community events and activities
- Advocacy and other support for Adults with learning disabilities
- Training and workshops
- Trustee support
- Job opportunities

Finance Report Summary

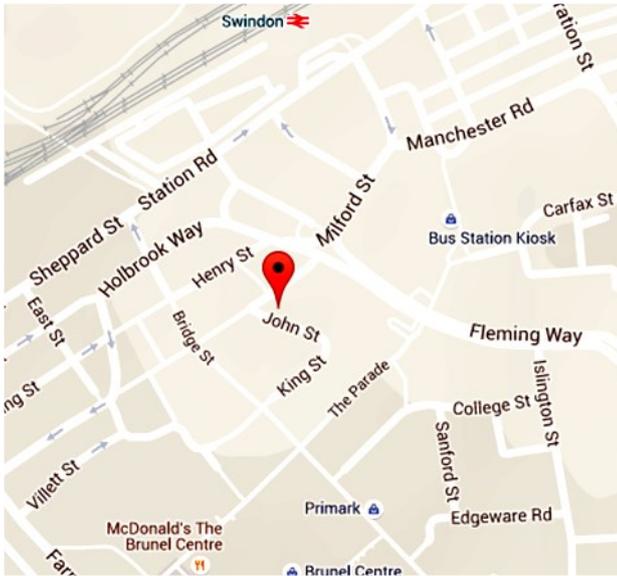
This summary financial information is taken from the trustees' annual report and statutory financial statements, which has been approved by the trustees before the AGM. The statutory financial statements, have been externally audited by Monahan's.

This summary information may not contain sufficient information to give a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. The full Trustees' report, statutory financial statements and independent examiner's report may be downloaded from the VAS website or the Charity Commission website - <http://www.charity-commission.gov.uk>

<u>VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY:</u> <u>YEAR TO 31 MARCH 2023</u>			<u>VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO</u> <u>31 MARCH 2023</u>		
	2022- 2023	2021- 2022		2022- 2023	2021- 2022
	£,000	£,000		£,000	£,000
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Rent	85	59	Staff Costs	-283	-224
Printing	2	1	Other Costs (4)	-187	-187
Training	2	0	Audit Fees	2	-6
Interest	2	0	Total Expendi- ture	-468	-417
Other (1)	37	42	Net Deficit/ Surplus	3	101
PROJECTS/FUNDING			BALANCE SHEET		
SBC - Community Sector Sup- port (2)	100	99		2022- 2023	2021- 2022
SBC - Sanford House	117	120		£,000	£,000
The Veterans Foundation	23	20	Fixed Assets	95	101
Wiltshire Community Founda- tion	5	0	Bank Accounts	446	285
National Lottery	1	95	Other Assets	39	79
Other Income (3)	97	82	Total	580	465
Total income	471	518	Liabilities	-147	-35
			Net Funds	433	430

- (1) Other includes income from our DBS service, donations, charges for advertising and VAS id. Income from Shopmobility and Café Mobility services.
- (2) Includes SBC Community Sector Support and Shopmobility Service Grant.
- (3) Various grants for projects and participation grants.
- (4) Costs include project spends, admin, premises expenses, community print and publications, governance costs and training costs.

How to Find Us



Voluntary Action Swindon

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Tel: 01793 538 398

Email: info@vas-swindon.org

Web: <http://vas-swindon.org>

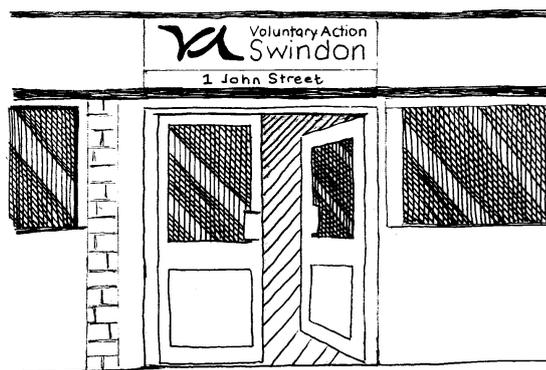


<https://www.facebook.com/VoluntaryActionSwindon>

<https://x.com/vaswindon>

We are based in the town centre, a 10 minute walk from the bus station. You can reach us by turning onto Fleet Street and following the road to John Street.

Our building is on the left. The cheapest car parks near to us are the Whalebridge (Islington Street, SN1 1TN) and Spring Gardens (SN1 2BF) car parks.



Special thanks to our funders:

