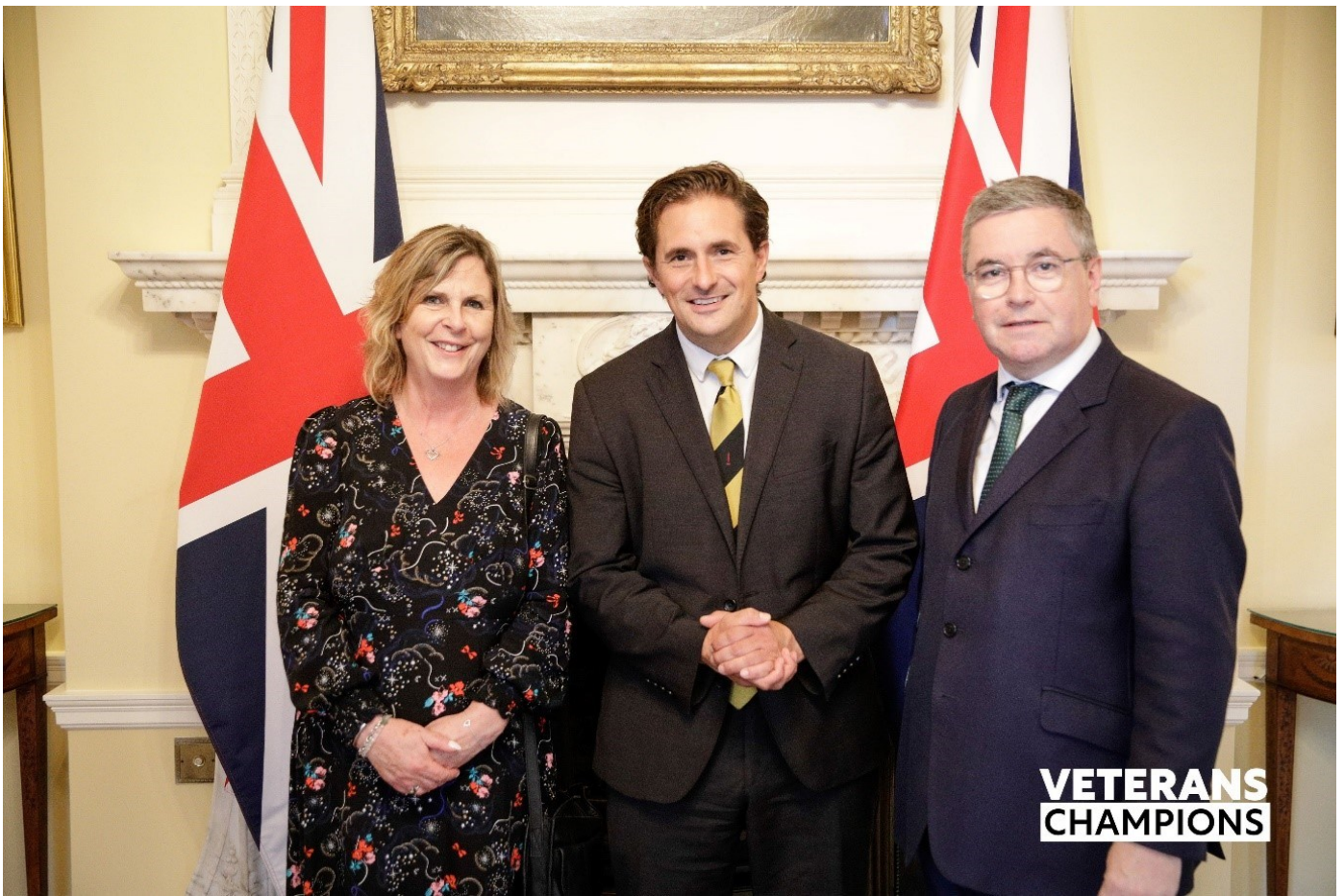


Voluntary Action Swindon

Strengthening the Swindon Community



Annual Review 2023-24

Trustees, Staff & Volunteers

Annual Report 2023/24

Trustees

Bob Barrett (Chair), **Stephen Henderson** (Vice-Chair), **David Bell**, **Mark Flay**, **Ram Thiagarajah** (to 10/23), **Sue Frawley** (to 12/23), **Sophie Peart** (to 7/23), **Stanislava Adamcova** (to 1/24), **Steve Barnes** (co-opted 1/24)

Our valued volunteers (as of October 2024)

Linda West, **Charmaine Fisher** and **Ann Flyn**

Staff (as of October 2024)

Carol Willis CEO, **Pam Webb** VCSE Strategic Lead For Integrated Care, **Shaz Qaddus** Finance Officer (no photo), **Terry Johnson** Inclusion, Collaboration and Community Development Manager (from April 2024), **Alana Fiorelli** Funding and Governance Manager, **Rachel Hobbs** Volunteer And Digital Marketing Co-ordinator, **Lisa Gibbons** Youth Voice Project Manager (from September 2023), **Lily Kendrick** Business Admin Apprentice, **Katie Linstead** Veteran Support Navigator, **Seniz Mutlu** Business Development Manager, **Chris Hills** Maintenance co-ordinator (who also volunteers), **Mesut Mutlu** Shopmobility Supervisor, **Olivia Venables** Customer Service Apprentice (no photo), **Shabbir Ahmad** Facilities Assistant (no photo), **James Moss**, Property, Office and Shopmobility Manager



Carol Willis



Pam Webb



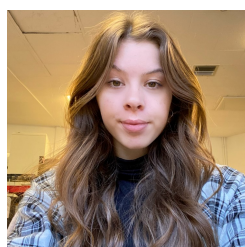
Terry Johnson



Alana Fiorelli



Lisa Gibbons



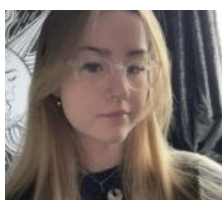
Rachel Hobbs



Katie Linstead



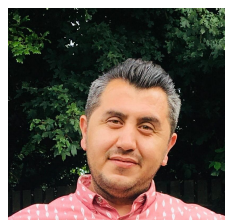
Seniz Mutlu



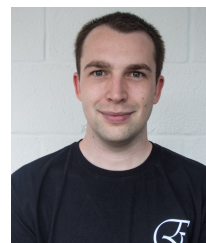
Lily Kendrick



Chris Hills



Mesut Mutlu



James Moss

This was Carol Willis' first year as CEO, and I would like to express thanks to her for her hard work in continuing to steer VAS following on from Pam Webb's excellent leadership. Pam is fortunately still with VAS as the VCSE Strategic Lead for Integrated Care and also offers support to Carol in her first role as CEO.



At the end of March 2024, Jol Rose left VAS after 3 year's service. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Jol for all his hard work in developing Inclusion and Collaboration across the town and of course for leading the organisation of the Swindon Voluntary Sector Conference in November 2022. His energy and enthusiasm will be missed!

Being in the final year of our 4 year Vision and Business Plan, the Board of Trustees, CEO and staff will be working on developing a new 4 year plan. Most of the original objectives have been reached, some will be continued. These will be reviewed and a new plan generated. One of the areas we are looking at progressing is Community Development. When Jol left us in March, and we were lucky enough to recruit Terry Johnson. Terry comes to us with a wealth of experience in community development as well as working as a Commissioner at SBC and for the Alzheimer's Society. Using Terry's experience in community development, we want to actively enhance community voice, and tackle inequalities by creating networks and listening to how people are feeling and to map local community assets. We plan to look at the challenges that individuals and communities are facing and feed this back to statutory organisations and stakeholders. With the outcome that people actively want to do something within their communities to make a difference and to feel proud of where they live. We will also give them the space to come up with solutions. Terry joined us in April.

Chair's Report Cont.

Bob Barrett

The demand on VAS services has continued to rise as financial challenges within both Swindon Borough Council and the Integrated Care Board are having significant knock-on effects to the voluntary sector in Swindon, and we envisage that things will continue to be a challenge in the coming year. We will continue to be the voice for the sector and raise suggestions and challenges as a collective voice whenever appropriate.

It was good for VAS to gain recognition for our Veteran Navigation Service by being invited to attend a celebratory reception at 10 Downing Street by our then local MP for Swindon South, Rt. Hon. Sir Robert Buckland. This event was hosted by the Rt. Hon. Johnny Mercer, Minister for Veteran Affairs. Carol attended this last September on behalf of VAS. Photo on the front page!

Thanks to a grant from the National Lottery, VAS are the lead partner delivering a four year collaborative Youth Voice project. This project aims to help bring together youth services in Swindon and make sure that young people can access the help and support they need and to be able to get their voices heard to influence decision makers. It is great to see a collaboration like this delivering the project. We are working with SMASH, Prime Theatre and Swindon and Gloucestershire Mind.



I'd like to thank the VAS team for all their hard work this year. I feel due to financial pressures on statutory services, VAS and the services of the VCSE in Swindon are going to see even more demands in the future. I know the Board, staff and CEO of VAS will continue to work their hardest to maintain these valuable, professional services for the people of Swindon.

Bob

Chief Executive Officer's Report

Carol Willis

I can't believe how fast this first year in my role as CEO has past! I am ever grateful for the support of Bob and the Board of Trustees, and the great team we have here at VAS, with a special thanks to Pam. Although Pam stepped down last year from the role of CEO, and despite the demands of her part time (!) role as VCSE Strategic Lead for Integrated Care, she still found time to hand over, and continues to answer my many questions and support me in my role.

People Like Me

VAS has seen an increased demand from statutory services, wanting the views of people with lived experience, 'experts by experience', to inform decision making. In January 2024 I started to form an idea for a project working with local wards and communities to increase 'voice' and understanding, helping individuals become part of the solution, creating a sense of ownership and pride in communities and put together a 'theory of change.'

In March 2024, I invited a group of stakeholders together to share these ideas under the project title of 'People Like Me', with a plan to develop networks within local communities that will employ people that live locally, provide them with training, and then develop networks of locally living volunteers. This model fits in with the Bath & North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire, Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) model of working together to improve health and wellbeing and reduce inequalities and Swindon Borough Council's vision to 'empower all people in Swindon to live longer, healthier, fulfilling lives, supported by thriving and connected communities' and VAS' charitable purposes to address health inequalities. This idea gained support from stakeholders and I began the search for funding.

Terry Johnson, our new Equality, Collaboration and Community Development Manager, joined us in April, replacing Jol. The plan is for him to lead on this project with leveraged funding once secured.

Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

Carol Willis

Downing Street Visit

As Bob said in his reported, it was a delight and honour to be invited to 10 Downing Street for a celebration of Veteran Services in September 2023. It was interesting to be shown round Downing Street and see all the rooms where all the big decisions are made. The number of times I went for my phone to take a picture! For security reasons, all electronic devices are placed in a secure box at the entrance of No. 10. I am old enough to remember when Downing Street was bombed, and from this event there was an increase in security. I did have an enormous sense of history and awe standing on the steps of No. 10 where the likes of Mahatma Gandhi, Nelson Mandela and of course Larry the cat have also stood!

Nominated for Charity of the Year!

It was also an honour to be shortlisted for Charity of the Year by The Great British Business Awards. In February, Alana and I went along to the event at the Double Tree Hilton in Swindon and had an enjoyable evening. Unfortunately we didn't win, this time!



Café Mobility

It was with a heavy heart that the Board had to make the difficult decision, at the end of the financial year to close Café Mobility. Unfortunately this did mean having to make Karen, our excellent Café Mobility Leader redundant. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Karen for her excellent service during her time with VAS and wish her all the best for the future.

Safer Streets

Following on from our work with SBC's Community Safety Partnership in 2022, for which we produced two surveys, as part of the Violence Against Woman and Girls (VAWG) agenda. This year we were asked to carry out two further surveys, one in July 2023 speaking to specific Community Groups in Swindon and one in December 2023 finding out people's experiences of Anti Social Behaviour in their communities. All surveys are available to read on VAS' website.

Chief Executive Officer's Report Cont.

Carol Willis

Thanks to the National Lottery, we have been able to employ Lily as our Business Admin Apprentice. Lily joined us in February and filled the gap that Rachel left when she was promoted. One of VAS' objectives is to champion apprenticeships within the sector, and I don't feel we can do this without employing apprentices ourselves. It has proved to be successful at VAS with two excellent apprentice recruitments. Lily has already proved to be an asset, and has taken over responsibility of producing VAS id, our weekly e-newsletter that goes out to the sector on a Friday.

We also have plans to recruit another apprentice in the next financial year, funding permitting. This would be to offer support at Shopmobility, and expand our offer of servicing into care homes. Unfortunately, due to ill health, Jonathan had to leave his role as Shopmobility Supervisor during this year. Taking on an apprentice will give the team more support and be able to increase the Shopmobility offer.

The challenges that the voluntary sector are currently facing, follows years of austerity, COVID and a cost of living crises, resulting in financial difficulties in the statutory sector. The voluntary sector are finding that we are seeing increasing demands to plug these gaps. These challenges are set to continue, and VAS will be there to support the sector as best it can.

My thanks goes to the Board, Staff and Volunteers for all their hard work during the 2023/24 financial year. I look forward to working with you all in the coming year and facing the challenges and opportunities it will undoubtedly bring.

Carol

Collaboration and Sector Voice

Over the past year we have been representing the voice of the voluntary sector at a number of networks.

Below is a list of some of the networks and meetings we have attended to represent the sector:

- Health and Wellbeing Board
- Swindon Safeguarding Partnership Board
- Swindon Trustee Network
- Swindon Fundraisers Network
- Swindon & Wiltshire Counter Terrorism Independent Advisory Group
- Safeguarding partnership meetings
- Learning and Development Group for safeguarding meetings
- Wiltshire Community Foundation steering group
- Bi-monthly youth sector meetings

Swindon Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Leadership Alliance

VAS has continued to lead the Swindon VCSE Leadership Alliance network, made up of over 60 leaders from VCSE groups in Swindon.

Seven virtual meetings took place during the year sharing:

- GWH expansion plans for Urgent and Emergency Care.
- Introduction of new VCSE leaders and key stakeholders.
- VCSE input to the BSW Primary and Community Care Delivery Plan.
- Voluntary Sector Survey and Insight Report.
- Health Inequalities Funding.
- Integrated Neighbourhood Teams.
- Community Base Care.
- Planning for Winter Pressures.
- Commissioning Challenges within the sector.
- Health and Wellbeing Strategy.
- Adult Social Care Strategy.

Volunteering Swindon

Rachel Hobbs

Volunteering

In April 2023, the Volunteer Centre Swindon closed down. VAS secured legacy funding from the Volunteer Centre to continue some aspects of their role.

Volunteering Swindon was developed, due to a gap in provision, and Rachel became our Volunteer & Digital Marketing Coordinator.



Volunteering Swindon acts as a brokerage service, allowing organisations to advertise their volunteer vacancies through us, and we support individuals who are looking to volunteer into these roles.

A webpage was created for the service on the VAS website under the community development banner. This page hosts key information about the service, how to get in touch and hosts a list of the current volunteer vacancies in the Swindon area.



In June 2023, Rachel and James attended a volunteer recruitment event held at the Central Swindon Library, which was organised by Swindon Borough Council. The event was used to

promote the new service to members of the public and to connect with other organisations in attendance.

Key Stats for the year include;

- Supported 47 individuals who wanted to get involved in volunteering.
- Provided volunteer related support to 38 organisations.
- Advertised 37 volunteer roles on behalf of other organisations.
- Worked with 15 corporate organisations and provided opportunities to staff, which resulted in 14 corporate volunteer days being held for voluntary groups in Swindon.

Equality and Inclusion

Jol Rose (now Terry Johnson)

VAS are committed to fostering a diverse, inclusive, and equitable environment where everyone feels valued and respected. We believe that embracing a wide range of perspectives and backgrounds enhances our creativity, decision-making, and overall success.

We will create opportunities for organisations to increase their awareness and develop practice to further the equality, inclusion and diversity (EDI) agenda.

Fairwell to valued staff member

This year we said goodbye to Jol Rose who was the Inclusion and Collaboration Development Manager.

Jol had been with VAS since 2020 and has helped develop a myriad of initiatives to help support the sector. Jol was also instrumental in securing funding for the ongoing Youth Voice project. We wish him well in all his future endeavours.



Swindon Diversity Summit

In February 2024 VAS hosted Swindon Diversity summit which brought together people around the issues of diversity and inclusion. The event had over 50 attendees and a host of inspirational speakers.



Wednesday 14 February, 9.00AM-12.30PM

From this the **Inclusion Network Swindon** was launched to bring together organisations and representatives that want to champion and develop the inclusion agenda.

Equality and Inclusion

Jol Rose (now Terry Johnson)

Focus of the of Inclusion Network:

- **Diversity:** work across the sector to look at the demographic characteristics of people accessing groups and identify who we are not serving.
- **Equality:** identifying and eliminate barriers that have prevented the full participation of people within organisations working in Swindon
- **Inclusion:** Creating environments in which any individual or group can be and feel welcomed, respected, supported, and valued to fully participate.
- **Belonging:** Cultivating a culture where individuals feel a sense of belonging and acceptance within the community of Swindon .

EDI online session

In October VAS hosted a dedicated EDI session for organisations wishing to increase their understanding and compliance to issues relating to peoples protected characteristics.

Time to Talk Day



In February many Swindon charities came together to mark national Time to Talk Day. The day was themed around creating supportive communities by having conversations with family, friends, or colleagues about mental health. People across Swindon were encouraged to talk openly with one

another about their mental health and wellbeing.

People Like Me

March saw the official unveiling of the People Like Me project to stakeholders in Swindon. The project aims to work with people in local communities to research and kick start community activity and projects.

People Like Me is a project that would develop teams of locally based people who would like to have influence on how people in the community access, help to shape services and deal with local issues. The project would give stakeholders insight into issues that are affecting communities and a way of reaching communities quickly and easily for input and feedback.

Integrated Care System

Pam Webb



Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire Together



BSW VCSE Alliance

Voice for the Voluntary Sector in the Integrated Care System

VAS, along with most of the other Councils for Voluntary Service's (CVS's) across England, has been heavily involved in the developing Integrated Care Systems, specifically for Swindon, with the Bath and North East Somerset (BaNES), Swindon and Wiltshire (BSW) Integrated Care Board (ICB). We have continued to be part of the BSW Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) Leadership Alliance at system level with CVS colleagues from BaNES and Wiltshire as well as in Swindon as a member of the Swindon Integrated Care Alliance (ICA) and the Development Executive Group.

We also worked regionally with other CVS colleagues involved in the Integrated Care Systems in the South West and nationally with our umbrella organisation NAVCA to ensure that the VCSE is a valued partner in integrated care.

Voice at Integrated Care Meetings

At system level the VAS lead for Integrated Care is the VCSE partner member on the BSW ICB Board. Other system level meetings attended include the Integrated Care Partnership, the Children and Young People Board, the Population Health Board and regular meetings between the system VCSE Leadership Alliance and a representative from the BSW Executive team.

ICB 2023/2024 Health Inequalities Funding

In partnership with the Swindon Borough Council Director of Public Health and the ICB Swindon Place Director, we supported a bidding process for £493,000 of the Swindon allocation of this funding. 57 bids were received from across the Council, Hospital, GP's and VCSE and there were three out of the nine successful bids from the Swindon VCSE amounting to just short of £156,000. This funding will provide therapeutic mentors for disadvantaged young people; support to asylum seekers experiencing mental health challenges and more funding for essential furniture and white goods to people in Swindon experiencing extreme poverty. Most of this funding will now be made available from the ICB in the 2024/2025 financial year with a small amount released in late 2023/2024.

Kennet Furniture Project (KFR) Swindon Crisis Fund

The KFR Swindon Crisis Fund, funded by an ICB Health Inequalities grant, is working in partnership with VAS, Citizens Advice and Swindon Borough Council Live Well



Hub and continues to provide a vital service for those experiencing extreme poverty and related health challenges in Swindon. Since the launch in April 2023, it has responded to 184 referrals from residents with 58% living in the most 10% deprived Local Super Output Areas (LSOA's) nationally and 72% in the 6 most deprived LSOA's in Swindon.

ICS Community Health Research Project

We worked with the lead in the BSW Academy to support a bid to NHSE for stage two funding which was successful with BSW ICB being awarded £100k



to develop Community Health Research Champions. A VAS project manager delivered a final report on barriers to engagement of two specific groups: manual workers with English as a second language and the travelling community. Research Champions are patients, carers, and members of the public, who are passionate about developing better health care and treatment. They help spread the word about research. They also help health and care staff understand patients' experience of research.

Volunteering for Health

During January and February 2024 VAS led a consortium bid with the BSW Hospital Charities and the three CVS's to seek capacity funding for additional volunteer brokerage and to maximise the volunteering profile and footfall in the hospital atriums. Unfortunately we heard later in 2024 that we were not one of the 15 shortlisted bids for the programme.

BSW VCSE Alliance

The four members of the Alliance have worked hard on behalf of the sector and ensured VCSE input on a range of strategies and initiatives including the ICB Deliver Plan; the ICB Mental Health Strategy; the Primary and Community Care Delivery Plan; the planned re-procurement of Community Health Services and we've started at each place to assess, using the NHSE VCSE Quality Development tool, how well the VCSE is integrated into BSW work.

Swindon Youth Voice

Lisa Gibbons

Voluntary Action Swindon is the lead organisation for Swindon Youth Voice, partnered with SMASH, Prime theatre, Mind and Mike Read Associates.



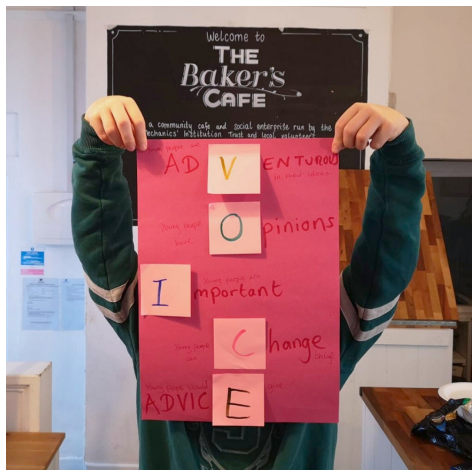
The Lisa, the new Project Manager started in early October 2023 and there was then a few months of development. Weekly workshops delivered with SMASH and Prime started in January 2024. There is also now one to one support with Mind delivered for any child experiencing anxiety who would benefit with support attending the sessions.

We are aiming to raise the profile of youth voice for those working with young people in Swindon, and are providing a forum and space to all focus as professionals on what children and young people are saying together, at least every other month.

We have already had positive feedback around the connections made with the face to face steering group meetings, and the way the conversations went. We have noticed a common theme around safety for children and young people, and the barrier that is presenting to them accessing all services.

We have been visiting schools and youth groups, talking to children and young people about youth voice and what they feel is important to them. Alongside regular outreach and meetings with charities and individuals working with young people.

Create Studios are doing our website, which will be created based on mood boards completed with the children referred into the project. It is hoped the website, once live, will support with engaging children and young people into the project.



We have been attempting to meet with diverse communities to ensure children and young people in all communities are aware of the opportunities with youth voice. We continues to seek new contacts to try and do this.

We have met with Out of the Can (OOTC) to discuss how we can engage the children and young people who access their groups. We will continue to liaise with the youth leaders in the group. We had a stall at Pride and a Speaker's Corner for youth, which we made sure OOTC were aware of.



The referrals we have received that seem the most appropriate in terms of our criteria and the voices we would like to reach, have taken a lot of engaging just to get them to the point of feeling able to access the workshops. A lot of them are not in education or work, so we have been visiting them at home to gain feedback on what we can do to support them with attending, and to try and make them feel comfortable with coming.

The children and young people involved all seem excited about the sessions, and the difference they are making to how they feel about themselves. One child said she has so many opinions based on everything she has experienced in her life, but she is not used to being listened to. Another child said she has not felt able to go to school for two years, but coming to this project for two hours a week feels like a hopeful way to try and get some of her confidence back from all of the time away.

At 6 weekly reviews young people who attend have been reporting they feel more confident, have made new friends, believe in themselves more, have developed their communication skills and that their general wellbeing has improved.

One 14 year old participant said "normally everyone looks at things as the end goal. But with this the beginning, middle and end is just as important."

The plan for the next year is to develop the project for 17-25 year olds, and to start the Youth Forum. We are also looking forward to some of the children and young people completing their arts awards, which Prime are supporting children with in the sessions. This is because children fed back that they would like the process of exploring their voices to be creative.



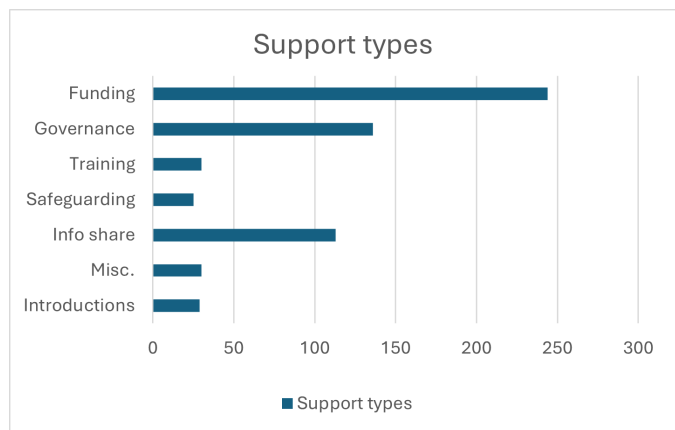
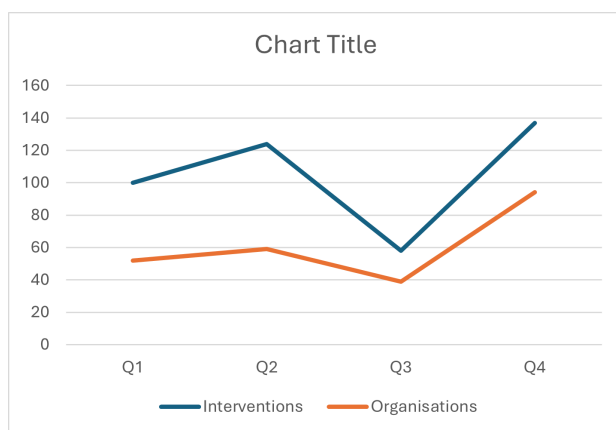
Funding and Governance Support

Alana Fiorelli

VAS supported a total of **291 organisations** during the period March 2022 - March 2023, with a total of **445 funding, governance and advice interventions**.

The total number of interventions is higher than the previous year due to an increase in networking to the sector and sharing of funding 'blanket e-mails' to contacts. The aim was to have a wider reach into the sector and the funding opportunities available. These blanket emails range from 400-500+ per quarter, which has increased since the previous report.

These charts indicate the number of organisations we support with the number of interventions per quarter.



Governance

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

The GAP Swindon – community garden project. Matthew has now established a committee structure and policies to continue building on this project. The GAP works closely with Alternative Angels, to ensure there is no wasted produce, donating fruit and vegetables to feed the homeless.

Swindon Sisters Alliance - Continued supporting Emma with governance and funding needs. SSA advisory board is ensuring best practices with the delivery of their services to the community at their 3 locations. Developing links across local government and wider networks to encourage policy changes against domestic violence.

We've helped others looking to set up and talked over the different forms of organisations and helped them make the right decisions.

Funding and Governance Support

Alana Fiorelli

New organisations we have supported are:

- **WAY** – Youth charity.
- **Ask Danny** – charity to support adults with learning disabilities.
- **You Are Not Alone CIC** – Mental health support network.

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:

- **Swindon Sisters Alliance** - successfully secured £5,000 from Wiltshire Community Foundation to put toward emergency housing and DV support.
- **Gorse Hill Baptist Church** – Received £59,320.33 from The National Lottery Cost of Living support fund (CCLF), to continue support for the Community Fridge food bank and Boxes of Hope food parcels in Swindon.
- **Swindon Dance** – successfully received 2 grants, one from Jack Lane Charitable Trust to support a professional workshop for their inclusive programme. They have also been awarded a £5k grant from Wiltshire Community Foundation for the next 3 years, to support their Salto programme. (£15,000 total).

Swindon Trustee Network:

Swindon Meet the Funder event for the VCSE was held on 12th March 2024 – Aimed at Trustee Network and funders network across Swindon.

The event was successful with 60 attendees from various organisations in Swindon. We hosted 5 local and National funders who presented their funding programme and held one to one sessions in the afternoon to talk directly with groups.

The day consisted of round table discussions involving funders and guests, giving comments on funding barriers and difficulties faced. Data has been shared with the funders for noting in future planning and engagement to Swindon and Wiltshire based organisations.

Other funders at the event included The National Benevolent Charity, The Arts Council and Sovereign Network Group.

Veterans Support

Katie Linstead

The past year has been pivotal for Voluntary Action Swindon and its Veteran Support initiative. Our commitment to supporting the 9,500 Veterans in Swindon has continued through various projects, a successful drop-in service and a significant two-year funding award from The Veterans Foundation that will sustain our mission of improving Veterans Wellbeing.

The Drop-in service has seen improvement over the last year and has supported many veterans in Swindon. The drop-in service allows veterans to address immediate needs and provides support to those struggling with their mental health, housing or welfare needs just to name a few.



There have been successful activities to attend throughout the year, which have helped with the wellbeing of veterans. The veterans have enjoyed attending **woodworking workshops with Renew Swindon CIC**, thanks to funding through the AFCFT.



The aim of this project was to tackle social isolation and encourage learning a practical skill.

In September 2023, Carol Willis CEO at Voluntary Action Swindon represented VAS at Number 10 Downing Street after receiving a nomination from Rt Hon Robert Buckland KC MP as 'veterans champion', for the work we have been doing for Veterans in Swindon.



EMPLOYER RECOGNITION SCHEME

BRONZE AWARD

Proudly supporting those who serve.



Remembering Robert Lane (Bob as many of us knew him)

The Veterans community want to appreciate Bob Lane, a volunteer for Voluntary Action Swindon who sadly passed away in December 2023 after a brief illness. Bob a veteran himself gave his time so generously for fellow veterans in need, friends and neighbours. We were honoured to work alongside him and to have him as a friend.

Free Services at VAS



Funding & Governance Advice

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

Alana@vas-swindon.org



Equality & Collaboration

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

Terry@vas-swindon.org



Volunteering Swindon

A service helping charities to recruit volunteers. We are also able to support volunteers in to roles.

VolunteeringSwindon@vas-swindon.org



Youth Voice Project

The project also aims to help bring together youth services in Swindon and to make sure that young people can access the help and support they need.

Lisa@vas-swindon.org



Veterans Support

A co-ordination of support services available to Veterans living in Swindon. We also host monthly drop in sessions for veterans.

Katie@vas-swindon.org



Directory

We host a directory of local support services which is FREE for organisations to register their details and to access.

Lily@vas-swindon.org

We also have a number of paid for services, more information about these can be found on page 26.

Sanford House

James Moss

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



We have continued to see an increase in the number of people accessing the rooms within the Sanford House building. We have also had a number of requests for office space within the building which we have had to turn down due to having no office space available. Further proof that the Sanford House is a building in demand and one that many charities both locally and nationally want to be based in.

6,910 room bookings held
(up 48.4% from 4,656)

20,353 hours of bookings
(up 27.7% from 15,943)

During the year we saw the end of regular bookings from the NHS to support families with children with ADHD and the regular COVID-19 vaccination clinics. These bookings were however replaced with bookings from Victim Support who are using the building weekly to offer their support to victims of crime in Swindon.

We were also pleased to support the unveiling of a plaque within the Sanford House building in honour of Brightwen Binyon who was the architect of the Sanford House building. The unveiling was attended by over 20 people including relatives of the architect as well as the friends and family of famous students of Sanford House.



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



Staff departures

During the year we unfortunately saw the departure of a long term member of the Shopmobility team. We also had to take the difficult decision to close Café Mobility during the year after 18 months due to lack of footfall.

We would like to thank to both Jonathan Harris and Karen Edmunds for all of their hard work during their time with us. Both were valued members of the team who are missed by both the staff and customers at both Shopmobility and Café Mobility.

Social Media

Lily Kendrick & Seniz Mutlu

VAS' social media currently includes Facebook, X previously known as Twitter and LinkedIn. We use our social media profiles to advertise our services to the local community. We also promote events for the voluntary sector and promote important dates to celebrate. Recently, we have added a Linktree to our social media accounts. This is a link that takes you to a page which has our website, VAS id sign up form, directory form and all our social media on it, making everything easy to find.

Our followers have continued to increase throughout the past year across our social media accounts.

We mainly post about:

- Low cost services from VAS
- Promotion for VAS id and our new charity directory
 - Events held by the voluntary sector
 - Important dates
- Volunteer and paid vacancies in the community
 - Upcoming courses
- Veterans Support and Youth Voice promotion



VAS id (information digest) is our weekly e-bulletin, keeping the public posted about local voluntary sector and community news. With around 800 subscribers, we provide a selection of updates including local news, upcoming events from VAS and the community, volunteering opportunities and vacancies, funding and governance advice and various training courses. We are currently seeking feedback for VAS id so we can continue improving and ensure our Swindon community benefit from information we are putting out.

During the last year:

51 editions of VAS id sent out

996 total articles included

116 job vacancies advertised

100 funding and governance advisories

145 volunteer vacancies advertised

104 training courses offered

268 events promoted

Reaching **791** subscribers



To subscribe and receive VAS id, please scan the QR code.



To fill out our feedback form, please scan the QR code.

Trusted Charity

Seniz Mutlu



The Trusted Standard is NCVOs quality mark for charities and voluntary organisations and is designed to help staff, volunteers and trustees get involved in assessing how well their organisation is doing. This framework has given VAS a consistent way of implementing and demonstrating quality in our organisation.

VAS are now working towards the Trusted Charity quality mark. VAS will need to demonstrate good practice of our systems and services. The Trusted Charity is a framework of 11 quality areas that help charities and voluntary organisations operate more effectively.

‘Accreditation is a sign of excellence for potential partners and funders’

The 11 quality areas are:

1. **Governance**
2. **Planning**
3. **Leadership and management**
4. **User-centred service**
5. **Managing people**
6. **Learning and development**
7. **Managing money**
8. **Managing resources**
9. **External communications**
10. **Working with others**
11. **Assessing outcomes and impact**

‘Quality is about trying to do better –

both in the services our organisation offers its users and in the way our organisation is run’

Partnerships and Income Generation

Seniz Mutlu



Office Hire for local Charity

This year VAS welcomed Swindon City of Sanctuary to our John Street premises, a charity we have seen develop from its fruition. This key organisation seeks to build a culture of welcome, inclusion and support for everyone in Swindon, with a focus on people who are seeking sanctuary from war and persecution.

Room Hire for Adult Community Learning

Over **100 FREE Wellbeing and Life Skills** courses have been delivered to Swindon residents by Swindon Borough Council at VAS, John Street premises. Courses included Function English skills, GOALS - Gaining Opportunities and Life Skills, and Sleep Well.



Adult Community Learning

Sponsorship for Swindon Shopmobility



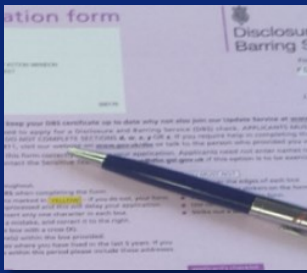
Colas UK has generously sponsored Swindon Shopmobility £3k, which will power 25 Mobility Scooters for a year. Colas, a leading infrastructure solutions provider, has joined forces with Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS) to make a positive impact on the lives of residents with limited mobility. Through this partnership, Colas is supporting the Swindon Shopmobility service, enabling individuals to navigate town centre shops and facilities independently.

Community Support A special Thanks to Swindon Tesco Express for generously donating food to Café Mobility twice weekly from day one of the Café opening. This allowed VAS to serve good food locally. Tesco now also support the VAS Swindon Veterans project, and the Swindon Youth Voice project too.



'The above community activity and partnerships will also generate income for VAS. This will allow us to continue strengthening the Swindon Community'

Paid For Services At VAS



DBS Checks

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

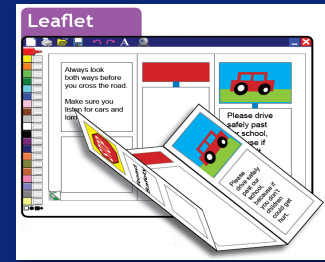
Info@vas-swindon.org



Room Hire

A range of meeting room facilities available from £15 per hour.

Info@vas-swindon.org



Printing and Copying

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

Info@vas-swindon.org



Swindon Shopmobility

A service for anyone with mobility issues, allowing them to independently access the town center for as little as £2 a day.

Info@vas-swindon.org



Job Vacancy Advertising

We can advertise your job vacancies across our website, social media and weekly newsletter for just £50 per advert.

VASid@vas-swindon.org



Training Courses

Throughout the year we arrange various training courses. If you have any training needs get in touch to see how we can help.

Info@vas-swindon.org

We also have a number of FREE to access services, more information about these can be found on page 19.

Financial Report Summary

Shaz Qaddus

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 2024</u>			<u>VAS ACCOUNTS SUMMARY: YEAR TO</u> <u>31 MARCH 2024</u>		
	2023- 2024	2022- 2023		2023- 2024	2022- 2023
	£,000	£,000		£,000	£,000
INCOME			EXPENDITURE		
Rent	78	85	Staff Costs	-341	-283
Printing	2	2	Other Costs (4)	-217	-187
Training	0	2	Audit Fees	-2	-2
Interest	6	2	Total Expendi- ture	-560	-468
Other (1)	45	37	Net Deficit/ Surplus	-69	3
PROJECTS/FUNDING			BALANCE		
SBC - Community Sector Sup- port (2)	112	100	SHEET		
SBC - Sanford House	117	117		2023- 2024	2022- 2023
The Veterans Foundation	9	23		£,000	£,000
Wiltshire Community Founda- tion		5	Fixed Assets	87	95
National Lottery	57	1	Bank Accounts	455	446
Other Income (3)	65	97	Other Assets	11	39
Total income	491	471	Total	553	580
			Liabilities	-189	-147
			Net Funds	364	433

(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.

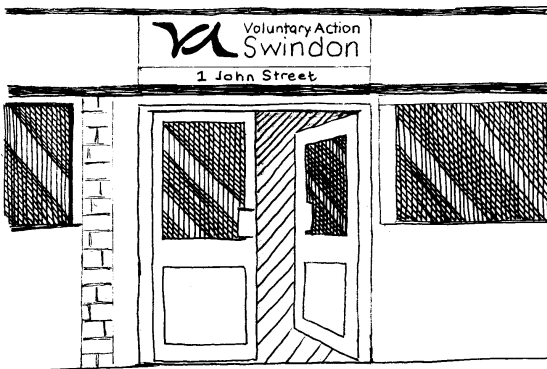
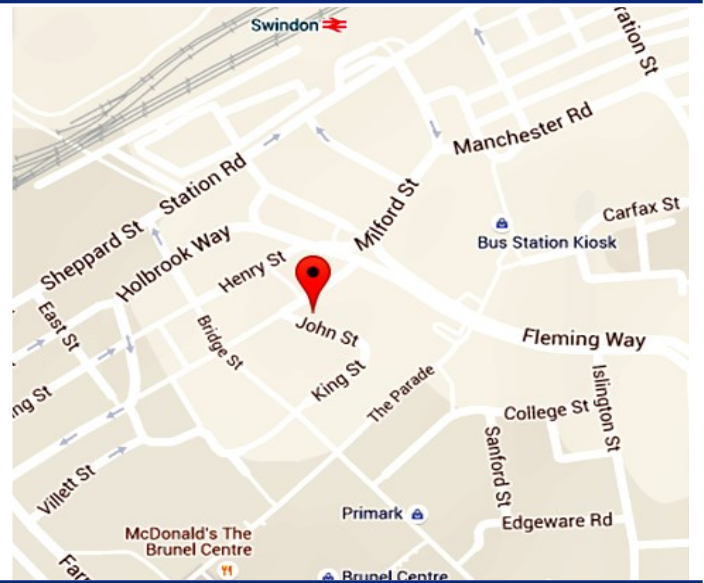
(3) Various grants for projects and participation grants.

(4) Costs include project spends, admin, premises expenses, community print and publications, governance costs and training costs.

How To Find Us

**Voluntary Action Swindon,
1 John Street, Swindon,
Wiltshire, SN1 1RT
Tel: 01793 538398**

**Email: info@vas-swindon.org
Web: <http://vas-swindon.org>**

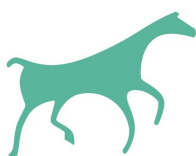


We are based in the town centre, a short walk from the bus and train stations. You can reach us by walking down Fleet Street and following the road to John Street. Our building is on the left. The cheapest car parks near to us are the Whalebridge (Islington Street, SN1 1TN) and Spring Gardens (SN1 2BF) car parks.

Special thanks to our funders throughout the year:



**Bath and North East Somerset,
Swindon and Wiltshire
Integrated Care Board**



**Wiltshire
Community
Foundation**

