



Voluntary Action
Arun & Chichester

Promoting and supporting charities, community groups
and social enterprises throughout Arun and Chichester

ANNUAL REPORT

2018-2019



Chair of Trustees' Report – Tony Sneller

As I look back at my reports from previous years, one theme seems to emerge - change. A key theme of 2018-19 has been preparing for change. We were fortunate to know well in advance of Hilary Spencer's wish to step down from her role as Chief Executive in March 2019, so we had more than a year to succession plan and prepare to appoint a successor.



The many well-wishers who attended Hilary's farewell 'do' at the end of March was a tribute to her impact on the voluntary and community sector in the area over many years and the respect she had earned. I have enjoyed my 7 years working alongside Hilary in the Chair/Chief Executive roles and I pay tribute to her professionalism and humanity in the way she led and managed the staff team at VAAC. She has combined vision with attention to detail that has served the communities in the Arun and Chichester districts well – as you will see from the information provided in the rest of this report. We wish Hilary and Gregg well in their less busy future.

With Hilary's departure the Trustees are pleased to welcome Hilda Sherwood as our new Chief Executive and I look forward to working alongside her as she makes the role her own. The staff and Trustees met for an away-day together at the beginning of May to shape our business plan for the coming 3 years. It was helpful to reflect on the past and to be able to put what we aim to achieve into new words so that we have a fresh expression of our aims and vision.

The other area of preparing for change was working with the members of the WS CVS Network to form the West Sussex Voluntary & Community Sector Alliance that was launched on 1st April 2019. We are grateful for the positive engagement of WSCC, and Districts and Borough Councils in this process. The Alliance is a continuation of the relationships built over the 10 years since the Network was formed. Alliance members are: Crawley CVS, Community Works who cover Adur & Worthing, Mid Sussex VA and VAAC. We are jointly funded by WSCC with a 3 year grant which is supplemented at a local level by Districts and Boroughs. As the Alliance is not a legal entity VAAC is acting as the Administrative Lead and receives the WS funding and distributes it to the other members. The Alliance is governed by a Steering Group made up of Chairs and Chief Executives from the 4 members - this is chaired by one of the non VAAC committee members on a one-year rotation. We believe that the Alliance retains the focus and connectedness at the local level as well as providing the opportunity to work together and share expertise. This will benefit the many voluntary and community groups and organisations that we work with across the county.

Change within, and indeed around, an organisation is never easy and can be unsettling for all concerned. It is a tribute to all our staff and volunteers that we have continued to deliver our services and respond to the needs and requests of our members. So my thanks has to go to Hilary for steering us through her final year and departure and to Hilda for giving herself wholeheartedly to her new role and taking us forward into what is, with the Alliance, new territory. Thanks also has to go to Sharon Westcott for her continued hard work as office and communications manager with the extra duties that our Alliance role brings. We are fortunate to have such a wonderful and dedicated team so thanks go to Lucie Maldoom, Nina Ghibaldan, Jenny Holmes, Chris Caspari, Simon Ritson and Sandie Divers. We must also thank our volunteers: David Field, Sue Muskett and Marina Hicks.

I am so fortunate to have support from my fellow Trustees: Sue Holmes, Chris Dawe, Clare de Bathe, David Ribbens, Joanne Kondabeka and Miranda Litchfield. It was with sadness that we say goodbye to Marjorie Graham but we are pleased to welcome Nik Demetriades.

Lastly, I wish to thank all our members who it is such a privilege to support in the valuable work that they do in our communities across the Arun and Chichester districts.

Chief Executive's Report - Hilda Sherwood

This is really Hilary Spencer's annual report, as she was CEO during April 2018 – March 2019 when she resigned from office to take up a well-deserved, slower pace of life after 23 years of leading voluntary action in the Arun and later Chichester districts. The information, statistics and success stories found in this report reflect her strong leadership.



During the uncertainties of management changes, our staff and volunteers have been committed, professional and outward facing giving an excellent service to our members. There was only one change to staff, that being Jenny Rowley, who resigned after her maternity leave ended. She still pops in to see us with her lovely daughter.

Our partners are key to helping us make a success of our work and I would like to thank *Mark and Alex Spofforth*, who give their time and expertise to train and advice trustees through training events. We have now introduced a trustee email forum, which keeps trustees up to date with changes in charity law and governance.

The Social Enterprise Hothouse Programme with the University of Chichester ended in March 2019 after 18 months of jointly training and mentoring new businesses. We have appreciated working with *Gareth Sear*, Business Manager, on this funded project and delighted to have trained 22 emerging social enterprises, and held 35 one-to-one support sessions.

During the year, as far as possible, we engaged with the 4 Local Community Networks in our area, run by the *Coastal Clinical Commissioning* group. Our place on the boards mean that we offer a voluntary sector perspective and particularly represent the smaller groups in our membership that have no capacity to attend these meetings. I am pleased to say that we are currently recruiting for a Partnership Officer to work with the LCN's to connect groups across the voluntary, public and private sectors to ensure residents receive a cohesive, integrated health service.

We continue to offer desk space to the administrative assistant, Sandie Divers from the *West Sussex Pathfinder Alliance* and we continue to work with the Alliance to achieve their shared priorities.



Part of our work during the year was spent on the creation and development of the *West Sussex Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure Alliance*. We are committed to partnership working and sharing best practice. The 'Alliance' intends to continue its support to local VCS members, whilst working more effectively, making best use of our shared skills and expertise.

We are especially proud of our members who work tirelessly to better the lives of local residents, conserve, protect and enhance our environment and treat animals with kindness and expert care. At 31st March 2019, we had 403 members, 78% having an annual income of less than £100,000. Their details are listed on our website. My thanks goes out to each group for their feedback through surveys and evaluation forms, which gives direction to our strategic business plan and helps us to offer the most appropriate support and training.

Finally, I want to highlight the vital contribution made by our committed trustees throughout the year; their knowledge and expertise in areas such as governance, finance, HR, and managing risk has been invaluable – thank you for your continued support, time and energy.

Our Vision, Mission, Values (2016-19)

Our vision

Enabling individuals and organisations to support, inspire and empower communities

Our mission

MISSION:

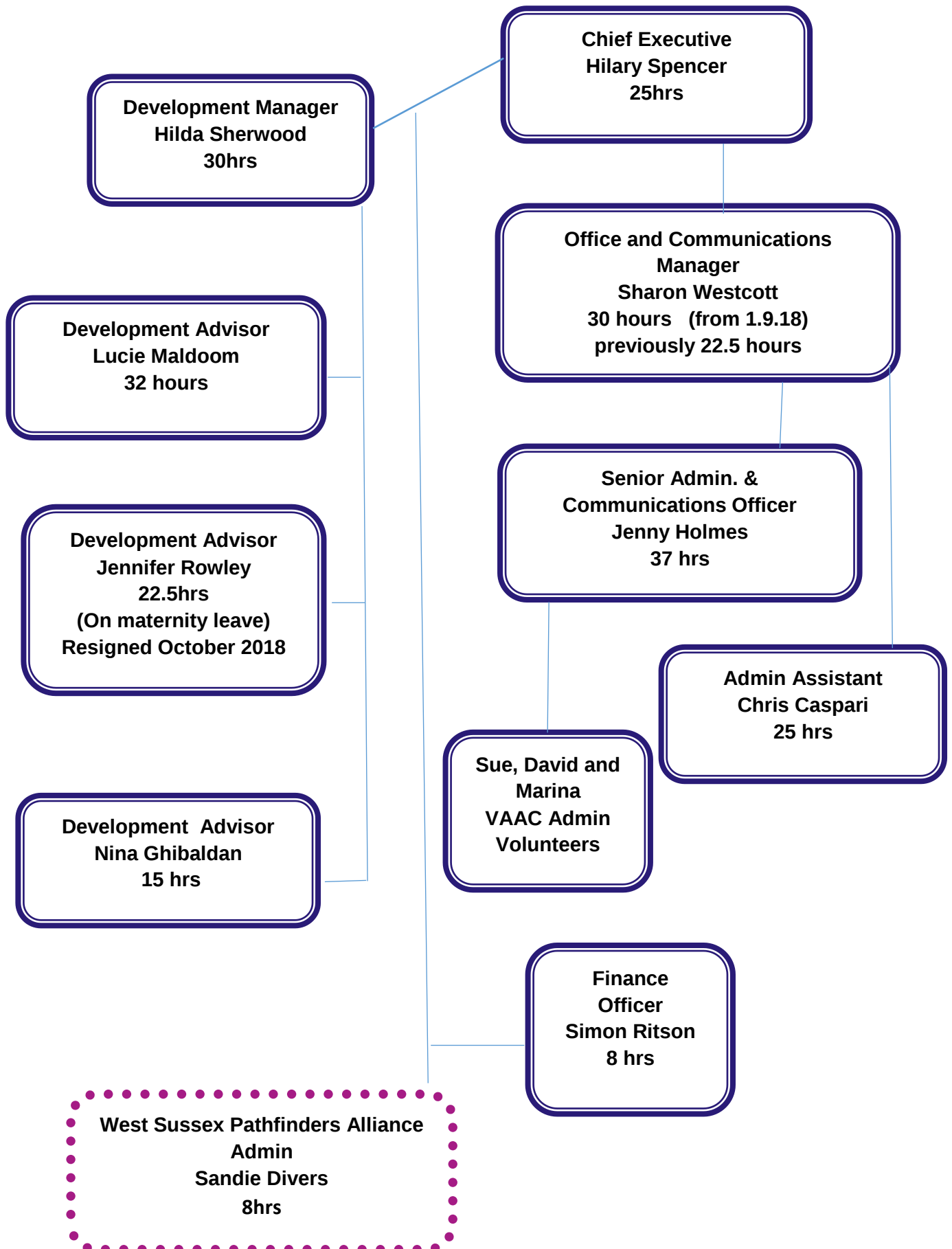
- To work across the Arun & Chichester Districts to build capacity and enhance Voluntary and Community organisations by providing them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to their communities to the best of their ability
- To promote, collaborate, organise and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between voluntary, statutory and other relevant bodies for the benefit of these communities
- To build confidence, skills and capacity which allow communities to find their own voices

Our values

VALUES

- In all activities treat each other with fairness, honesty, openness and respect
- People matter, people first
- Represent the views of the voluntary sector, value partnerships and partners
- Act in a professional matter whilst retaining the unique identity of the voluntary and community sector
- Inspire a can do attitude and retain a no blame culture
- Never forget what and whom we are here for

VAAC Staff Chart 2018-2019



VAAC Achievements in 2018-2019

Development Team Report

One to one support



150 groups received 1-1 support for start ups, governance, project development, policy updates, funding health checks, and change of legal status

Here are a few examples:

LARC is a small community group that set up in 2018 to support members through their recovery from addictions. They formed as there was no local group that fitted their needs. The aim of the group is to offer a recovery group which is not abstinence based or focused and which embraces all modes of recovery. The focus is on people improving their quality of life and dealing with daily situations which they may find difficult.

Two members of the group who had no knowledge of how to set up or run a community group contacted VAAC for support and advice.

The initial meetings centred on **how to constitute a new community group**, committee formation and which **policies and procedures** should be in place. Following meetings looked at business planning and budget setting, which the committee all took on board. In December the group discussed their funding needs at a VAAC Funding Surgery and found grants that they could apply for.

We are delighted that 2019 has seen successful funding bids for the project, but the real beneficiaries are not only the group who support each other in recovery but also their family and friends and local community who have seen positive outcomes

Midhurst Green Volunteers were established in April 2018 - their aim is to improve their surroundings and maintain pride in their beautiful town. Training is given in the use of various equipment (either supplied by WSCC, the association or by the volunteers themselves) and tasks are planned, managed and carried out.

After a meeting at a local community event, Midhurst Green Volunteers Group contacted VAAC for one to one support and advice. It was agreed that **an organisational health check** be carried out and this highlighted that some policy areas needed to be reviewed and updated and VAAC was able to provide policy templates to help with this.

After making sure the group is compliant and risk aware, Midhurst Green Volunteers continue to improve their surroundings as well as giving opportunities for residents to meet as a community, volunteer and boost their physical and mental wellbeing.

'VAAC has really helped me get to grips with the ins and outs of setting up a community group. It's great to know there is somewhere I can go when I'm confused'.

Dramatis

Volunteer Co-ordinators' Network



80 participants attended 4 networking events, resulting in improved management and supervision of volunteers

There were four Volunteer Co-ordinators' meetings in 2018/19 hosted by member organisations across the districts and my thanks goes to them for kindly donating rooms for free.

Now in its fourth year, the Volunteer Co-ordinators' Network continues to thrive with a variety of topics being presented and some lively conversations ensuing. It has been an opportunity for all participants to learn or refresh themselves on what is good volunteer management as well as sharing their own experiences with each other.

'Staff and Trustees from the Apuldram Centre attend and benefit from regular networking and training sessions facilitated by VAAC. VAAC is a valuable resource to our charity'.
Apuldram Centre, Chichester

The network meetings attracted over 80 participants from across the two districts and some from further afield giving the opportunity not only to learn about volunteering, but also the chance to forge new relationships and partnerships that is of benefit to all organisations.

In April 2018, we were welcomed at Tuppenny Barn, Southbourne where we held a session on 'How to write a role description and get the volunteer you need'. On a very hot day in July 2018, Arundel Lido hosted the second meeting of the year. The topic was 'How to motivate your volunteers' and feedback included 'excellent event, very helpful and



insightful'. The November 2018 Volunteer Co-ordinators' meeting was held at the Arun Leisure Centre. This was a split session with the first part looking at 'What makes a good volunteer fundraiser' and the second half was given over to 'speed networking' where organisations found out more of what works and doesn't work from each other. The positive responses included 'an invaluable event'. The Weald and Downland Living Museum hosted our final meeting in January 2019 in the Gridshell classroom. The theme was 'How to support volunteers with

better budgets'. The feedback on the session was positive and several commented that it is important to understand the real value of volunteers in skills, time and money.

The Volunteer Co-ordinators' Network is continuing to develop and the participants' feedback has shaped the sessions. In one of our surveys to groups during the year, we asked for the top three topics that groups would like to cover. The results were: 'Supporting and managing volunteers', 'Volunteers and the law', and 'Volunteer recruitment and retention'. I'm really pleased to say that we were able to include all these topics in our sessions this year. We have also changed our days of meetings to accommodate more group participation and this in turn has seen an increase in attendance.

Lucie Maldoom

Fundraising Events



240 attendees at fundraising events learning and sharing good practice, resulting in groups obtaining funds to continue their essential work.

VAAC's Fundraiser Network Meetings held regularly at Bersted Green Learning Centre, Bognor are still proving popular with members. Each session has a different fundraising theme with guest speakers invited along to share their expertise and experiences. The sessions are always lively and continue to throw up an interesting mix of questions and answers.

The topics for 2018/19 included:

- May How to read and interpret a set of accounts
- June How to write a compelling story about your organisation
- June Meet the Big Lottery Fund
- June All about West Sussex Crowd – Crowdfunding with WSCC
- July Meet BBC Children in Need and VAAC funding surgery
- Sept West Sussex County Council's new funding stream for community projects
- November How to develop your donor universe
- December VAAC funding surgery
- February VAAC funding surgery

Here is some feedback from the evaluations telling us what our members think..

'It was nice to consolidate my knowledge and feel empowered to push on with some ideas'

'Good to spend time with other fundraisers'

'Clear speaking - interesting concise powerpoints - right length'

'Very professional advice'



Arun and Chichester Funding Fair at the University of Chichester, October 2018

Over 80 delegates had the opportunity to meet a range of local and national funders including the Big Lottery, Arts Council, Heritage Lottery Fund, Sussex Community Foundation and Chichester District Council. Delegates also heard Anne Strachan of CrowdfundUK discuss how to organise and run a successful crowdfunding campaign.



Our members told us:

"Congratulations to the team for organising the event. It has been informative, useful and hopefully valuable".

"This was well organised - easy to find your way around. Not too busy and the exhibitors were really useful contacts to make - some I had not thought of as potential funders".



In January 2019 we welcomed **The FSI (Foundation for Social Improvement)** to Littlehampton Town Council's Millennium Chamber to deliver three mini workshops on: Fundraising from Trusts & Foundations, Community & Events Fundraising, Demonstrating your Impact. These were all well-received and we look forward to working with them again.

"A great session covering all the necessary basics plus insight and tips for elevating Trust & Foundation fundraising".

"Excellent speaker. Will definitely attend FSI events".

"Great session. Reinvigorated my enthusiasm for community and events fundraising!"

Funding Focus

VAAC compiles 12 editions of Funding Focus every year, issued free to members straight to their inbox on the 1st of every month. It's packed with all the latest funding deadlines and each month has a different funding focus. Topics included in 2018/19 were: Philanthropic Groups, Arts and Culture, Mental Wellbeing, Shops that Give, Sports and the Environment.

If you haven't yet received your copy, please contact nina.ghibaldan@vaac.org.uk to be added to the distribution list



During the year we gave funding advice to small groups which enabled them to successfully raise a total of £52,389

Nina Ghibaldan

Training Events



122 people attended our training events, building on skills and knowledge to run a thriving voluntary and community group

The training sessions for 2018/19 included:

- July GDPR training
- July First Aid
- November Trustee training
- February 'Make every contact count' Public Health
- March 'Resilience' University of Chichester



'Absolutely fabulous – very motivated and inspired'

'Very good event – with good explanations of a trustee's responsibilities and new charities regulations'.

'Excellent First Aid trainer'

'Thank you, so grateful to be able to access this type of event. Helping to demystify GDPR now know what some of the terms mean'

Communications Team Report

Website

It has been an interesting and challenging year for the VAAC communications team.

In September we launched our new website, designed and developed by Kingfisher Design and Streets Ahead. The website was brought up to date providing the interaction we wanted with our members. The new site highlights the work we do and the groups we support. There is a members' only section which has valuable resources and up to date news that our members find useful.

We are always looking to improve our communications and one important feature is to showcase our members' news, so please keep sending in those success stories so that we can share it with all our members.



Database

Our database is vital to how we work within the organisation. This is the tool we use on a daily basis, which holds relevant information, enabling us to communicate with our members, partners and colleagues. We realised that our current access database had run its course and we needed to think hard about buying a new one, one that could do everything for us, from searching for information to providing the reports we are required to produce for our funders. We were fortunate to receive a grant from the Sussex Community Foundation and The Boltini Trust to work with Pipe Media to design Co-Impact for us. The building of the database began in January, going live in April. It is still a work in progress, but as a team we are gradually finding our way around the new system with Pipe Media providing the support we need. The database is compliant with GDPR, General Data Protection Regulations.

E-Bulletins

Our weekly e-bulletins continue to be an essential part of how we communicate with all the latest news, events, funding, training and jobs available across our area and West Sussex. It is not only for you but also 'by' you. Send us your updates and we will publicise your events, share your ideas or surveys and inform the local community about your group for free. We regularly send specialised bulletins to plan our events and training, helping to increase bookings which is encouraging.

We continue to monitor our communications to make sure we are being effective and efficient. Promotion is key to our success so going forward we are looking at all our publicity, designing new leaflets and banners. We want to make sure VAAC is consistent in its branding and marketing.

VAAC website: www.vaac.org.uk

Contact: Sharon.westcott@vaac.org.uk

Social Media



We currently use three social media platforms: Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn, and we have separate Facebook pages/Twitter accounts for VAAC and Volunteer Now. They are all predominantly managed by Jenny, although everyone on the team has access to them and can post as required. We use Hootsuite as a management tool, which enables us to post to multiple platforms at once and schedule posts.

We use the VAAC Facebook and twitter accounts to promote what we are doing; upcoming events/training, vacancies that we have, photos from events we have attended etc.; as well as sharing photos and stories from our members and partner organisations, and information that we think is relevant/of interest to our members. The Volunteer Now accounts are used mainly to share new and current volunteer roles, as well as upcoming events and stories about volunteering.

Our social media audiences continue to grow, and are an important tool in our promotion and marketing. They are particularly useful during special times such as Volunteers' Week.

VAAC accounts:

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

https://twitter.com/VAAC_Community

Volunteer Now accounts:

<https://www.facebook.com/2volunteernow/>

<https://twitter.com/2VolunteerNow>

Our **General Networking Events** this year have continued to be popular. As always, we have tried to spread them geographically across our area with events in Chichester, Bognor Regis, Arundel and Midhurst, to allow as many of our groups to attend as possible. The Chichester and Midhurst events were particularly popular with approximately 25 attendees at each.

Feedback from the events show how useful our members find them. Comments from the Midhurst Networking event include: “A very good opportunity to find out what other organisations offer in the community and how we can all work together”, and “Very well organised and thoroughly useful”. Similar feedback was received after our Arundel networking event: “Really useful event”, “Well organised event with plenty of time to network and engage with other organisations”, and “Great opportunity to meet with others - much appreciated”. As the main purpose of our General Networking sessions is for our members to be able to get together, to share ideas and best practice, and find new ways to work together, these comments are really encouraging.

We hope that our networking events in 2019-20 are as popular, and have events planned in Littlehampton, Selsey, Climping and Petworth, as well as our AGM in Tangmere. As a team we also enjoy these events, and they are a great opportunity for us to meet new faces and catch up with groups we haven't seen for a while. We're looking forward to lots of networking (as well as lots of tea and biscuits) over the next year!

'I have found that the networking meetings provided by VAAC have been invaluable, and I have made contacts at them which have proved useful to my clients.'

Parkinson's UK



Volunteers – champions of the Voluntary and Community Sector!

Volunteer Promotion

There are so many rich benefits to volunteering, such as

1. It connects you to others
2. It is good for your mind and body
3. It can advance your career
4. It brings fun and fulfilment to your life



VAAC has this year promoted volunteering to targeted groups in order to widen opportunities to people who may not have thought of giving their time and skills to a community group.

11 talks were given, including to 330 class representatives at Chichester College Student Conference. Other events were held at the Department for Work and Pensions, helping to upskill those seeking employment and at the Chichester Centre increasing confidence to those who are recuperating from poor mental health. We also held promotion events at the Women's Institute, Parish Council meetings and Philanthropic groups.

Most of the community events to promote volunteering took place in the summer months or through partnership working within the West Sussex County Council and the Clinical Commissioning Group. These events were as diverse as well-being events, volunteer forums and community events. For example South Downs National Park has set up a volunteers' forum to promote volunteering and partnership working across their area which we supported.

We have a constant presence in libraries, shops, leisure centres and the University of Chichester with banners and leaflets.

Volunteer Plus

Earlier this year the decision was made to move away from the Do-it website and onto Volunteer Plus, enabling a volunteer search platform to be embedded in our own website. This decision was made because of a number of reasons, but mostly because we felt that Do-it no longer provided the service we needed. We had to use a separate CRM system (which had its own problems) alongside it to manage enquiries and reporting, whereas Volunteer Plus would do it all in one place.

It was decided that Volunteer Plus would go live on the VAAC website on 1st April 2019 and we began transferring the data from Do-it onto the new webpages (hidden from the public until 1st April) from the end of February. Jenny was supported by David and Sue (volunteers) to copy over the data from Do-it onto the new site, focusing on any live and expired opportunities but leaving out any draft opportunities that were not being advertised at that time. This process was quite slow and had a few obstacles to overcome:

- Permission needed to be gained from all organisations to transfer their information over; when the replies came through, these needed to be monitored to make sure we didn't transfer any information that we hadn't received permission for
- We received no training on the new system so had to work out how it all worked ourselves (although there were some user guides provided)

- There were a few teething problems with the new system which meant that we were having to go through entries more than once to add additional information (i.e. regions for opportunities)

However, once all of the information had been transferred over and the teething problems ironed out, the system works very well. The processes involved for dealing with volunteer enquiries were much quicker, and it was easy for organisations to register so they could update their own adverts on the website rather than us having to do it. The system also has automatic processes such as sending out follow up emails after volunteer enquiries and reminding organisations when opportunities are due to expire. Overall it was felt that the system would be much simpler and quicker to use. It was encouraging that people seemed to be using the new system as well, with 33 volunteer enquiries received in the first month (April 2019).

Opportunities	TOTAL	Arun	Chichester	West Sussex
Total new opportunities	202	76	61	65
Live opportunities at year end	427	188	156	63
Volunteers				
Total new volunteers	449	163	121	168
Total monetary value	£365,629.68 (living wage)			

Bersted Green Learning Centre is a joint initiative between VAAC and Arun District Council that provides the opportunity for groups to hire a venue at very reasonable rates for training and learning events.

We have a number of groups who use the main hall regularly for a range of activities including flower arranging, art, armchair travel, Tai Chi, Tea & chat and Bingo. We also have had several new members using the centre for the first time this year. These include:

- A Lithuanian group who help families and children learn their mother tongue, culture and traditions whilst getting together, making friends and helping new families to integrate into the local community.
- Various community projects eg Staying Safe Youth & Community Group, Holiday Stay and Play which helps families with children with special needs meet up and play in a safe space and make new friends, and After School Stay and Play which enables children to continue meeting in between school holidays.

VAAC also uses the venue for networking meetings, funding surgeries and training events such as First Aid training.

The centre includes a fully equipped computer suite, which is currently used by Yet 2 Learn who provide a space for young adults where they can hone their IT skills by working on projects that benefit the community and local businesses. The suite has also been used this year by a group for a joint Back to Work IT course involving Arun District Council.

This year we have also hired out the small front office to a local organisation which supports vulnerable women experiencing a range of issues and women who may be having a difficult time in their lives. They offer practical, emotional, and therapeutic support to clients and support women to get their lives back on track through peer support, volunteering and professional support.

We still have some availability at the centre and are always happy to hear from groups who would like to consider making a booking. To check availability or arrange a visit please email admin@vaac.org.uk



Trustees, Advisors and Observers to the Board 2018/19

PRESIDENT: Marion Wilder

BOARD: Tony Sneller (Chairman)

Miranda Cormell (Vice Chair) (resigned 18/07/18)

Chris Dawe (Treasurer)

Marjorie Graham (resigned January 2019)

Clare de Bathe

David Ribbens

Sue Holmes

Joanne Kondabeka

Miranda Litchfield

FUNDING ADVISORS: Chloe Williams/David Hyland (Chichester District Council)

Robin Wickham/Russell Tooley (Arun District Council)

Tracey Light/Tom Weedon (West Sussex County Council)

Rosie Costan (Littlehampton Town Council)

OBSERVERS: Cllr Marian Ayres - Arun District Council

Cllr Mike Claydon – Arun District Council

VAAC VOLUNTEERS: Volunteer Now and Funding Focus – David Field and

Sue Muskett

VAAC Office—Marina Hicks



If you would like more information about Voluntary Action Arun and Chichester, or the West Sussex Voluntary & Community Sector Infrastructure Alliance, please contact us by telephone on 01243 840305 or by email at admin@vaac.org.uk or alliance@vaac.org.uk

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