

VOLUNTARY ACTION NORTH EAST LINCOLNSHIRE

TRUSTEES REPORT (INCLUDING DIRECTORS' REPORT)

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 March 2021

The trustees hereby present their report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the accounting policies set out in note 1 to the accounts and comply with the charity's governing document, the Companies Act 2006 and "Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (As amended for accounting periods commencing from 1 January 2016).

Objectives and Activities

Aims

The charity works within the core activities of: representation, liaison, enabling, developing and working in partnership with and on behalf of the local voluntary and community sector. Projects managed by the charity fit within these core activities and add to the strategy of building capacity within the voluntary and community sector primarily in North East Lincolnshire.

The charity has continued to deliver a number of successful grant funded projects, as detailed in the notes which also contribute to the core activities outlined above.

Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire (VANEL) provides volunteer centre services, organisational health checks and group diagnostic work, administrative support for its members and friends including: a payroll service, a disclosure and barring checking service (DBS), a small equipment hire service, IT technical support, web development, training, advocacy, access to fundraising and income generation opportunities, electronic information briefings and promotion of members' and volunteers activities and services plus strategic representation on some local, regional and national partnerships.

The trustees have paid due regard to guidance issued by the Charity Commission in deciding what activities the charity should undertake.

Achievements and Performance

Charitable activities

The charity was successful in securing ongoing funding via the National Lottery Community Fund, Heritage Lottery and other sources to develop its volunteer brokerage and volunteering development services. A small management fee was earned from this work. Other monies dispersed to projects have had a measurable impact on the organisation's success in securing additional financial support and attracting matched funding from further new sources of finance.

Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire continues to play an active role as a representative of voluntary and community sector perspectives on some strategic partnerships in the local area, where relevant, including the Community Safety Partnership, Youth Partnership, Involving Lincs and Voluntary Sector Forum plus VCSE regional and national emergency partnerships.

Activities for the year compared to the objectives are as follows:

1. Increase the capacity of local VCS groups to perform effectively:

1.1 Via our information technology support service due to continued demand from VCS groups for affordable, understandable IT related support that groups can manage independently once our service has assisted with technical problems to enable groups to operate more effectively.

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1.2 By offering organisational developmental support thanks to the National Lottery, Heritage Lottery and other funded projects for the benefit of VCS groups and to enable them to 'lever-in' additional funding via joint working between groups and other local partners.

1.3 Through training and support: encouraged and celebrated volunteering with groups via the volunteer centre and the volunteer managers' network; promoted financial accountability within VCS organisations; provided training in preparing funding bids and grant applications; delivered SCAM awareness sessions; improved safeguarding knowledge; raised awareness of PREVENT & cyber-crime agendas; promoted achievement of quality assurance accreditations amongst VCS groups and; assisted VCS groups in obtaining and maintaining capital assets.

1.4 Via our specialist task groups we supported victims of anti-social behaviour and hate crime; neighbourhood watch group members; Big Local North Cleethorpes committee members; and using various funds assisted with hardship grant distribution and we supported groups to apply for and deliver themed projects for their beneficiaries using lots of different local funding pots.

2. Provide free/affordable services relevant to local VCS groups' needs:

2.1 Provided regular e-bulletins including governance information as part of the membership service.

2.2 Provided direct tailor-made help to groups to find funds and supported with bid development.

2.3 Provided monthly payroll/pensions' service at affordable rates per employee for small groups.

2.4 Provided small equipment hire service for members for a small fee plus 'written off' items free.

2.5 Provided free signposting service for the benefit of member organisations and their clients to public/private and other voluntary sector services.

2.6 Identified and promoted new/different types of funding sources to benefit local VCS groups.

2.7 Provided Disclosure and Baring checking service at affordable rates for all VCS groups and other clients across North East Lincolnshire.

2.8 Provided volunteer interview and referral service for member groups via Volunteer Centre.

2.9 Provided support with small website development and ongoing maintenance for a small fee.

2.10 Provided IT trouble-shooting service for a small fee arising from member group demand.

2.11 Offered marketing/PR service for a small fee and promotion on websites for our members.

3. Provide VCS representation within and for the wider community:

3.1 Promoted and represented VCS interests locally via various North East Lincolnshire community partnerships, including the North East Lincolnshire Community Safety Partnership and its communication task group; Voluntary Sector Working Group; Youth Partnership; Neighbourhood Network; Heritage Lottery area of focus group; VCSE Forum; Big Local North Cleethorpes; Green Influencers; Hardship Forum; Volunteering Development Forum; IT services development forum.

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3.2 Promoted and represented VCS interest sub regionally in the Humber and Lincolnshire areas via the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner for Humberside, Humberside Police; Humberside Fire Rescue Service; Involving Lincs (Lincolnshire County); Safer Lincolnshire Partnership; Lincolnshire Building Better Opportunities (MOVE) Partnership; Greater Lincolnshire Local Enterprise Partnership; Lincolnshire Building Better Opportunities (Steps Forward) Partnership; Humber European Structural Investment Funds Partnership; Humber Nature Partnership; Humber CVS Partners; Lincolnshire Youth Association; Humber Local Resilience Forum; Humber Watch; Humber Health Group; VCSE Emergencies Partnership (Northern Cell);

3.3 Promoted and represented VCS interests nationally via the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA); the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO); UK Youth; Local Trust; Social Enterprise UK; VCSE Emergencies Partnership (national forum);

3.4 Helped develop the Big Local North Cleethorpes (BLNC) programme; commissioned as the Local Trusted Organisation (LTO);

3.5 Helped develop the Grimsby Retailers in Partnership (GRIP) CIC and commissioned to provide secretarial and treasurer services for the partnership.

4. Ensure the sustainability for VANEL as an organisation with appropriate staffing and adequately resourced operating structure:

4.1 Maintained charity membership fees at £25 per annum to contribute to staff admin time costs and provide minimum level of membership services. Continued membership package offers to add value for members seeking volunteering support and to increase sustainability options;

4.2 Successfully secured funds to deliver removing barriers to work/youth working links schemes funded by European Social Investment Funds to help 18-30 year olds get back into work/learning which enabled us to retain appropriately qualified & experienced staff members during lockdown;

4.3 Successfully supported the delivery of the North East Lincolnshire Neighbourhood Watch Network funded by the COVID19 emergency support funding and secured small amounts of match funding to continue this work in Cleethorpes and the East Marsh until the year-end.

4.4 Successfully secured and delivered a fourth year of two Building Better Opportunities (MOVE and Steps Forward) funded projects to support long term unemployed people across Greater Lincolnshire to engage with local community life via volunteering and personal development with a view to finding suitable work. We were offered and accepted enhanced and extended contracts as a result of successful track record in micro networking and small group support networks;

4.5 Actively taken all necessary measures to manage and reduce where possible any organisational indirect costs in order to retain the skills needed to deliver our outcomes as flexibly and cost effectively as possible whilst coping with the impact of COVID19 on operational delivery;

4.6 Following experimental projects delivered during lockdown to support local residents where they live, we successfully developed a neighbourhood networking programme. This enabled us to retain and further develop existing staff members and volunteers to assist with the longer term sustainability of our organisation and the local community members who support us and need our services. By focussing back on our fundamental operating structure we secured our sustainability.

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4.7 Proactively identified and secured new funding sources to enable VANEL team to focus on supporting groups to assist individual clients during the pandemic. We secured various small pots of funding to help alleviate hardship during national lockdowns assisting with food purchase; utility bills; access to IT equipment and connectivity. We supported volunteers to help with food shopping and collection/delivery of medication plus provision of face masks in the Cleethorpes area.

4.8 As a result of the national lockdown we were eligible to receive government grants which greatly assisted us to support our staff to work from home; to adapt our services and support our member organisations in new and different ways during an extremely difficult financial year for all.

5. Achieve wider recognition of VANEL as a provider of high quality, professional services for the local VCS:

5.1 Ongoing bespoke support, training and information provided throughout the year on demand and/or subject to funding available to deliver services on a tailor-made basis to local VCS groups and volunteers online using new technology as far as practical;

5.2 Maintained development staff to provide a range of organisational development support work including a series of briefing and training events promoting our wide range of development services across the area. Much of this was delivered online due to national lockdown situation;

5.3 Participated in member organisations' and partners' promotional events and workshops to raise VANEL profile across the local area to support our groups with their work and share our skills and knowledge. Made much use of websites; social media and community TV in lockdown;

5.4 Maintained development of a Volunteering Developing Service linked to Volunteer Managers' Network to enable managers to share best practice, learn from each other and benefit from professional support as and when needed and organise joint celebration of annual national volunteer week event with members using social media and online meetings due to lockdown;

5.5 Maintained our UK Youth Quality Award and our NVCO Volunteer Centre Quality Award to demonstrate openness to scrutiny and value of national recognition of services provided; NAVCA are currently reviewing their quality award process and structure and a new offer will emerge soon.

Financial Review

It is the policy of the charity that unrestricted/core funds, which have not been designated for a specific use, will be maintained at a minimum level equivalent to three and a maximum level equivalent to six month's expenditure. The trustees consider that reserves at these levels will ensure that, in the event of a significant drop in funding, they will be able to continue the charity's current activities while consideration is given to ways in which additional funds may be raised. The minimum level of reserves was maintained throughout the 2020/21 financial year.

Unrestricted reserves (excluding tangible fixed assets), amount to £177,494; restricted reserves being £31,800; and those funds held in trust: Big Local funds of £126,418, Crime Reduction Fund of £1,231, Neighbourhood Watch Network Fund of £4,352 and The Hardship Fund of £1,553, giving total funds of £342,848 at 31st March 2021. This level of unrestricted general funds and total funds is considered vital considering many of the charity's income sources are received in arrears. The company's reserves policy is set to ensure that there are sufficient funds available, after the company's redundancy commitment, to meet the anticipated expenditure requirements for a minimum of the following three months. The policy and level at which reserves are set is reviewed monthly by the Chair and the Chief Officer. All changes are endorsed by the Executive Committee.

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The surplus for the financial year ending 31st March 2021 amounts to £102,049: an increase in VANEL unrestricted funds of £72,262; a decrease of £1,083 in funds held in trust (Big Local, Crime Reduction Fund, Neighbourhood Watch Network Fund and The Hardship Fund) and an increase in other restricted funds of 30,870, dealt with as shown in the statement of financial activities. There are no related party transactions and all principal funding sources are shown in the financial activity notes.

Risk management

The National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) quality award and National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) Volunteer Centre Quality Award and the UK Youth Award, all of which VANEL has achieved, are specifically designed for use by infrastructure organisations, volunteer centres and youth development organisations. These enable the meeting of legal and financial obligations within a quality standard framework and provide a continuous scrutiny of the way the organisation operates to consistent and agreed quality standards, which mitigate the risks to which the charity may be exposed.

The trustees monitor the business risks quarterly, as set out in the organisation's annual action plan, plus any other emerging risks during the year linked to services and projects to which the charity is potentially exposed, at their quarterly committee meetings, to ensure that all risks are mitigated.

Responsibilities for Preparing the Financial Statements

Company and charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of the surplus or deficit of the charity for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees have:

- selected suitable accounting policies and then applied them consistently;
- made judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- stated whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures;
- disclosed and explained any issues in the financial statements; and
- prepared the financial statements on the basis of a going concern.

The Trustees have overall responsibility for ensuring that the charity has an appropriate system of controls, financial and otherwise. They are also responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose, with reasonable accuracy at any time, the financial position of the charity and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

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FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS

VANEL's key objectives (subject to lockdown easing), in support of its mission and key aims, are to:

1. Increase the capacity of local VCS groups and organisations to perform effectively.

Key activities:

- I. Development work with new and growing/changing voluntary and community groups including social enterprises and other newly emerging VCS structures. (via management team)
- II. Encouraging and celebrating volunteering, linking volunteers with groups and supporting the training and development of volunteers (via the Volunteering Development Service).
- III. Promoting financial accountability within VCS organisations through training for staff and trustees in managing their finances (via Finance and Contracts Manager and Chief Officer).
- IV. Providing training in preparing funding bids and contract applications (via Chief Officer, Contracts Manager and Development Manager).
- V. Promoting and supporting the achievement of quality assurance accreditation amongst VCS organisations (via management team).
- VI. Championing group and individual engagement with information technology (via Development Manager).
- VII. Assisting local VCS groups in obtaining, maintaining and sustaining capital assets (via Chief Officer, Community Development Worker and Development Manager).

2. Provide free/affordable services relevant to local VCS groups' needs.

Key activities:

- I. Developing and providing website bulletins (Development Manager).
- II. Offering financial services such as payroll plus DBS checking service (Finance Worker)
- III. Providing access to funding sources (Chief Officer and Contracts Manager).
- IV. Administering local grant schemes (Contracts Manager).
- V. Providing internet based information service with links to relevant local and national VCS organisations (Development Manager and Chief Officer).
- VI. Providing IT equipment for hire (Development Manager).
- VII. Providing training facilities (via member organisations/82 Grimsby Road, Cleethorpes).
- VIII. Identifying and developing volunteering placements (Volunteer Support Worker).

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3. Provide VCS representation within and for the wider community.

Key activities:

- I. Promoting and representing local VCS interests locally, regionally & nationally (Chief Officer).
- II. Removing barriers to VCS involvement in local, regional, national work (Chief Officer).
- III. Keeping the local VCS informed about relevant local, regional and national changes and developments (Chief Officer).
- IV. Responding to VCS needs and facilitating skills/information exchange between groups. (Team)
- V. Promoting partnership working within the VCS and between VCS and others as needed. (Team)
- VI. Participating in community safety partnership and related activities (Chief Officer)
- VII. Being a proactive member of local community forums as appropriate (team as needed).
- VIII. Being the Local Trusted Organisation for Big Local North Cleethorpes (Chief Officer)

4. Ensure the sustainability of VANEL with appropriate staffing and adequately resourced structure.

Key activities:

- I. Implementing full cost recovery within VANEL funding bids (as far as practical). (Chief Officer)
- II. Negotiating tailor-made charging structures with each of our members for extra support. (CO)
- III. Generating reserves adequate to enable us to develop new and existing services in response to local VCS needs and to maintain (at least) our minimum reserves policy (Chief Officer).
- IV. Encouraging VCS groups to make full use of VANEL's services, including supporting their income generation to enable them to take up VANEL's charged services. (Team)
- V. Managing VANEL's indirect costs consistent with retaining the skills needed to deliver the plan outcomes as flexibly and cost-effectively as possible. (Finance and Contracts Manager)

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5. Achieve wider recognition of VANEL as a provider of high quality, professional services for the local VCS.

Key activities:

- I. Maintaining/reviewing VANEL's policies and procedures annually with staff/trustees. (Development Manager)
- II. Implementing pro-active staff member, volunteer and trustee development through a staff/trustee development plan that supports the needs of this Business Plan. (Chief Officer)
- III. Maintaining our NCVO Volunteer Centre QA and UK Youth quality standards. (Chief Officer)
- IV. Working in partnership with other VCS organisations in Humber area and Lincolnshire County (Chief Officer)
- V. Representing VCS groups on the Humber Local Resilience Forum voluntary task group (Chief Officer).
- VI. Representing VCS groups on the VCSE Emergencies Partnership regionally (Chief Officer).
- VII. Fulfilling the Local Trusted Organisation role for the Big Local Partnership (Chief Officer).
- VIII. Offering Supporting Volunteers' Award (quality assurance) for member groups. (Development Manager)
- IX. Offering Volunteer Passport for individual people who choose to volunteer. (Volunteer Worker).

Structure, governance and management

Governing document

Voluntary Action North East Lincolnshire (VANEL) is a registered charity number 1002624 and a company limited by guarantee number 2593527.

The object of the charity, as stated in the Memorandum of Association, is to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community in the local government district of North East Lincolnshire and, in particular, the advancement of

The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year and up to the date of signature of the financial statements were:

Mr S Beasant
Mrs M Johnson
Mr A Jones
Miss V Russell
Mr M Czarnecki

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Organisation

Members of the Executive Committee of Trustees are elected annually in accordance with the regulations laid down in the Articles of Association. The Executive Committee meets six times per year and has overall responsibility for strategy, policy and employment of staff. Operational and staff management issues are delegated to the Chief Officer. There are currently a total of 9 staff members (5 full time and 4 part-time).

The minimum number of Trustees who may be appointed is 5 and the maximum is 15. The number is generally between 6 and 12, depending on the balance between retirees and new appointments. New trustees are recruited, based on the skills required, from within the senior managers and leaders of our member organisations. The Executive Committee meets every three months and calls additional meetings when special circumstances arise, for example during National Volunteers' Week and National Trustees' Week and for business planning.

Day to day operational matters, which include finance, HR/employment and delivery of services are delegated to the Chief Officer, Paula Grant.

Trustee induction and training

New Trustees undergo informal orientation sessions which include invitation to an Executive Committee meeting prior to becoming a Trustee, visiting the registered office of the company to familiarise themselves in the way the organisation carries out its day to day duties and implements decisions. Business planning, the Memorandum and Articles of Association and financial performance are also covered in the pre-meeting and an induction pack is provided together with a one-to-one briefing session with the Chief Officer.

Trustees are encouraged to attend external training events and internal briefings with staff which assist them in undertaking their role where and when relevant and as appropriate

The trustees report was approved by the Board of Trustees.

Mr Stephen Beasant

Trustee (Chairman)

Dated: 14th October 2021