

Hart Voluntary Action is the Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) for Hart delivering a range of support services to voluntary and community groups. We offer a "one-stop-shop" for support, advice and information. We also provide a link between the voluntary sector and local authorities.

We promote and increase the profile of volunteering through a brokerage service between organisations looking for volunteers and individuals seeking volunteer opportunities. **For information on volunteering contact sue@hartvolaction.org.uk**

We work collectively with our members to increase the impact of the voluntary sector across Hart. Membership is free and open to any voluntary or community group operating in Hart. **To become a member, contact membership@hartvolaction.org.uk .**

Whilst located within the Civic Offices and part funded by Hart District Council HVA is an independent registered charity.

We are one of 11 district level CVS' in Hampshire who form the Hampshire CVS Network, which provides the voluntary sector with a collective voice enabling engagement on a range of issues county-wide. We are also a member of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) an umbrella organisation for CVS' across England, providing a platform for influencing national and local government policy and strengthening local voluntary and community action.

Whilst the principal focus of our work is to support voluntary and community groups, HVA also manage a number of community based services. See page 3 for more information on some of these services.



Hart Voluntary Action

Annual Report 2010/2011

HVA and its projects are funded by:



Ecominds



Over the past 12 months, HVA has conducted two surveys of our members who tell us that their top four requirements are; help with funding; help with volunteer recruitment; information sharing; and networking opportunities. Forums, Newsletters and e-bulletins were the favoured vehicles for information sharing and networking.

Over 80% of respondents felt that HVA had helped their organisation achieve their aims whilst over 60% felt our services had been tailored to their needs. 100% wanted to see HVA continue to deliver support services to the voluntary sector in Hart but 80% felt that we should work more closely with other charities delivering similar services in Hampshire.

"HVA provide superb support to our organisation in many ways, from telephone contacts, through 1-2-1 meetings and providing a forum for local organisations to meet regularly. I believe they provide a vital service."

In these stringent times we cannot afford to be complacent and we are using this information to reshape our services and focus our delivery to better meet the needs of the voluntary sector in Hart more cost effectively. How we are doing this is reflected elsewhere in this report.

We are also working as part of the network and with other partners to find ways in which we can work more collaboratively in order to provide frontline organisations with a wider range of high quality support, networking and volunteering brokerage opportunities more efficiently and effectively.

OUR YEAR AT A GLANCE

- HVA currently have 204 active members.
- We continue to choose themes for the quarterly Voluntary Sector Forum relevant to the needs of our members. Our first meeting of 2011, focusing on Health and Social Care and the over 55's, attracted an audience of over 50. These events provide members with the opportunity to seek support for their activities.

Case Study: SeeAbility provides residential and rehabilitation services to adults with visual impairment. One of their volunteers attended a Forum where a speaker from the Zurich Community Trust described the insurance company's corporate giving and staff community involvement programmes. Through this initial contact, SeeAbility was encouraged to submit a grant bid of £4,500 for a wooden cabin to use as a "social club". Not only was the bid successful but Zurich followed it up with a Staff Challenge Day digging out the footings for the new cabin and donating a barbecue. The link continues with more funding for additional recreational facilities in the pipeline.

- We disseminate and share information through Hart Matters and e-newsletters. With the help of a volunteer we have refreshed the look and increased the capacity of our e-newsletters, replacing one edition of Hart Matters with an e-newsletter without reduction in the quality of information reaching our members.

"Hart Matters – a really great way to learn about what's happening locally for the voluntary sector and for sharing information and ideas."

- Signposting members to local grants and supporting their funding applications remains a core function. We have supported a number of organisations in obtaining Grassroots grants via the Hampshire and IOW Community Foundation and grants from County Councillor developed budgets. We have successfully helped local groups raise just under £42,000 through this one-to-one support.

"HVA have been fantastic at helping Voluntary Groups link up with each other and helping support grant applications."

- Responding to the needs of members, we have increased delivery of training and information events working in partnership with other CVS's, particularly Rushmoor Voluntary Services. Training delivered included: Personal Safety and Lone Working, Charity Law – The Basics, and Volunteering and the Law.
- Promoting members' activities and work remain a key area of support. With the help of a 6-month youth work placement under the Future Jobs Fund, we have improved the information about our individual members on our web-site. We have also improved our capacity for advertising and promoting upcoming events and initiatives.

Case Study: Community Technical Support sought support in starting up their organisation which aims to provide practical IT support for the socially isolated or housebound. They were also interested in providing IT support to local voluntary groups. Another member, Hart Community Outreach had, for some time, been trying to set up a mobile IT training facility but lacked the technical know-how. Being aware of both requirements HVA linked both organisations together as a result of which they have established a long term joint project, "Hart IT". A number of laptops are now networked and programmed for use anywhere as a mobile IT resource for local voluntary groups.

- Several reports suggest a fall in volunteering across England. This is not the case in Hart; the Volunteer Centre placed 218 volunteers an increase of 37% on last year.



Case Study: Budding actor and student, James sought a volunteering opportunity in a role that would complement his media and drama course and keep him busy over the long summer holidays. Our Volunteer Manager initially suggested a role at the Harlington as a 'crew volunteer' to which James readily agreed. The Volunteer Manager felt however that James was more suited to 'centre stage' than 'back stage' and a more appropriate role was needed! With more than a little ingenuity the Volunteer Manager negotiated an audition with local theatre company, Starburst. The only difficulty; James lacked transport. Undaunted she successfully negotiated with Hart District Council's Community Safety Partnership Team who provided a bicycle, helmet, lights and a bicycle lock to get James on the move.

The outcome - James has a starring role, principal vocalist in the Christmas pantomime, a new set of friends and a chance to join the theatre company he only could dream about. Let's hope when he's Hollywood 'A' listed he spreads the word that it can all begin with a little volunteering!

OUR KEY PROJECTS



The Mental Health User Development Service (MHUDS) has had 3,694 service user attendances and delivered 8,877 therapeutic hours but the real story comes from the service users themselves:

"To view me from afar, you would see a young professional with a good career, her own home, a fabulous family and great friends. Shoes and handbags are an affordable passion, as is the gym, volunteering with the vulnerable and my church. The image is rosy. Yet it is just that; an image, or at least it is an image for some of the time. I live with Bi-Polar disorder and am what is called 'high functioning'. I have an excellent degree from a top university and have always held down a good job. I don't smoke or take drugs (apart from those prescribed!) and drink rarely. The majority of the time, I manage my condition, my condition does not manage me.

This changed about 18 months ago. Too many hours at work (I loved my job) and two bereavements left me in a very dark place, which involved crying, duvet hugging and a wish to fall asleep and not wake up. Despite the support of my doctor and a support network, very little changed; to use a well worn metaphor, "the cloud refused to lift".

One organisation has however helped me break through - MHUDS. The services MHUDS provide in the form of support groups tailored to meet individual needs were the leg-up I needed. The MHUDS team are quite incredible people; they don't judge and go above and beyond!! They are true professionals.

MHUDS gave me back my ability to make my own choices, the power to pull myself out of the depths. They don't offer to take the burden from you. No one can do that. Instead they empower you to lift the burden, carry it and above all manage it. I continued to work through my episode. I engaged with family and friends more than I have ever done before in my dark place. This was and is due to the services that MHUDS provide. I owe them more than I can ever express.

MHUDS provide results or, in business speak, clear tangible 'outcomes'. They prevent people from being admitted to hospital, which, at the cost of around £400 per bed per night, is a serious cost saving. They are flexible and run their groups in a variety of venues. They can react immediately to a cry for help, something that the NHS is increasingly unable to do.

Thanks to MHUDS, I carried on working. I paid taxes, I didn't claim benefits and I contributed."

Minding the Garden has worked in over 75 gardens of the elderly and disabled and 8 Community sites throughout Hart in this, its second year. Over 50 volunteers experiencing mental health issues have benefited from the ecotherapy experience with many moving into paid employment, education or other volunteering roles.

"I felt I benefited more from the experience of working on the project than from the NHS treatments I had received. There can be long waiting lists for talking therapies which can be frustrating and take a long time with no guarantee of a positive outcome. I really like the combination of working outdoors and helping other people and found "ecotherapy" to be an effective alternative to anti-depressant medication, which didn't really work for me".



Focussing on the future 'Minding the Garden' is planning to become a Social Enterprise providing a garden service to any resident of Hart at a competitive rate.



Grow with Hart brings together older members of the community no longer able to manage their garden, with volunteers who want to 'grow their own' but lack the space to do so.

Growers 'borrow' part of the older persons land, create their own vegetable patch and help maintain the rest of the garden. The project provides training on growing food locally and promotes healthy eating and exercise. Local school students and members of the community experiencing mental health issues or learning difficulties also have the opportunity to enjoy the benefits of creating vegetable gardens and growing their own.

Since the start of the project in Sep 10, ten garden shares have been established with another 38 potential 'growers' awaiting a garden. We have worked with 3 of the local schools and a number of 'stakeholder' groups linked to both mental health and restorative justice volunteering.

Case Study: Following a referral from another voluntary group we arranged for volunteers, which included staff from local companies through 'Corporate Social Responsibility' days, restorative justice volunteers and Duke of Edinburgh students, we brought the overgrown garden of a disabled elderly couple in Church Crookham back 'from the jungle'. A garden share volunteer has now taken over the garden and is preparing vegetable plots for his own use, whilst at the same time assisting in keeping the rest of the garden under control. The elderly couple are benefiting from being able to enjoy their garden more, increased social contact and general feeling of improved safety (they believe their home is less at risk with a well maintained garden).

Sarah Wallis, Chairman of The Board of Trustees

In this years report we have tried to succinctly summarise our achievements over the past year in which HVA has operated against a backdrop of reduced funding. Our core funding has been cut and, as a result of reduced grant funding, we have lost our Travellers Project Officer and Innovations (Older Persons) Development Worker. We are very conscious however that the voluntary sector as a whole is suffering similar cuts and needs our support more than ever. We have therefore striven to deliver an uninterrupted and focused service to our members.

We greatly value feed back from our members which shows a high level of satisfaction with the support we provide. We have, however, responded to various comments and are providing greater outreach from both Membership Support and the Volunteer Centre to increase coverage across the District. We are also looking at delivering more evening events in order to include those who work during the day. Our Volunteer Centre has launched a campaign to recruit more volunteers from amongst the commuter community who cannot volunteer on a regular basis but may be available for one off events.

Our projects continue to thrive; the Mental Health User Development Service has increased its range of groups and is catering to more service users than ever before; our depression support groups are expanding (sadly a reflection of the times); and our gardening projects are continually adding to their services and reshaping themselves to become self sustaining. Sadly we have lost two projects, Travellers and Community Innovations, however we continue to provide support in these areas where we can and are actively looking for new funding opportunities.

We could not have achieved any of the above without the hard work and commitment of a very strong team of staff/ Trustees and volunteers and my thanks go out to all of them. I have no illusions that we face another difficult year but I do so confident in the knowledge that, through its people, HVA will continue to play a leading role in Hart District.

Financial Statement

	2010	2011
	£	£
Incoming resources		
Grants and donations	302,670	326,675
Management fees	23,580	30,104
Investment & other income	1,345	2,152
	<u>327,595</u>	<u>358,931</u>
Resources expended		
Cost of generating voluntary Income	23,122	32,529
Cost of charitable activities	297,268	332,783
Governance costs	19,870	19,948
Unused grants refunded	2,861	0
	<u>343,121</u>	<u>385,260</u>
Net incoming resources	-15,526	-26,329
Funds brought forward	235,735	220,209
Total Funds	<u>220,209</u>	<u>193,880</u>

Extract from Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2011

Net Assets		
General funds	17,537	5,789
Designated funds	110,000	110,000
Restricted funds	92,672	78,091
	<u>220,209</u>	<u>193,880</u>

The extracts shown are taken from the financial statement of Hart Voluntary Action Limited.

These extracts are not the statutory accounts but are a summary of information relating to both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet.

The Financial Statements were approved by the Board of Trustees on 19th July 2011 and are signed on their behalf by Sarah Wallis and John Wilkes.

The full audited financial statement can be obtained from Companies House or Hart Voluntary Action Limited's offices.

Trustees 2010 - 2011

Sarah Wallis (Chairman)
 John Evans
 John Wilkes
 Roddy Lister
 Dewi Thomas
 Alison Sellars
 Neil Rorie
 Jane Brooks
 Wyn Roberts
 Cllr Ken Crookes (Ex-Officio)

Thanks to our Volunteers

Gavyn Ablitt	Suzanne Jenkins
Don Anderson	Nicola Jung
Mark Babbage	Pat Kent
Ed Barker	Christopher Masterton
Pat Bedford	Krystal Matczak
Dick Brown	Joy Moss
Richard Connelly	Patrick Neville
Matthew Cox	Emma Newson
Paul Doughty	Martin O'Connor
Beth Edwards	Claire Pateman
Clare Ellis	David Penticost
Ian Farmer	Tristan Pomfret
Martha Ferrito	Jeanette Porter
Laura Franklyn	Richard Satchell
Lisa Fullick	Alison Scott
Andrew Gatford	Jeanette Scott
John Gribble	Seema Tailor
Angie Grubb	Andrew Tomkins
Kul Gurung	Sean Tomson
Julie Harvey	Sue Vanden Bon
Stuart Heather	Craig Ward
Corinne Henderson	Mark Webb
Lee Humphrey	Jonathan White
David Humphreys	Stephanie Wing