



*Supporting Voluntary Action across
Eastbourne, Lewes District and Wealden*



2018-2019 Annual Report





We are here to support organisations of all shapes and sizes and people in the community who want to do things to improve the lives of those in their neighbourhoods.

**Supporting
voluntary action
Eastbourne,
Lewes District
and Wealden**

Welcome

3VA's purpose is to support and develop our local community organisations and communities across the areas of Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes in East Sussex.

As a voluntary action, our work is informed by the four 'standards' of the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA), our national body, namely: development, support, collaboration and influence. We use these standards as a framework to define and focus our services. However, it is not the delivery of a prescribed set of services that gives our organisation its vibrancy, but the people who work for us and with us and the projects we deliver which complement and enrich our core services.

Being active across three districts gives our work a richness as we can draw from the experience of one group in one district to help the learning of another. So, for example, we were able to help with connections when the Seaford Community Network wanted to work on intergenerational projects. As well as inviting an existing local project to come and talk about what they did, we were able to bring in a group from Wealden District which had done extensive work helping different generations connect better with one another through a life stories project. We also make an increasing number of connections through social media, such as on Facebook and Twitter.

Another key element contributing to the richness of our work in 2018-19 was our training programme, which saw an impressive 47% increase in uptake. The higher demand for 3VA courses suggests that local groups value high quality, low cost and relevant learning opportunities that 3VA's training programme offers and which supports their personal and professional development. Alongside this, we have also seen an increase in the number of groups seeking out our support and participating in networking opportunities.

The projects which we run, such as Chances4change, are relevant to our mission and have helped us to better understand - and apply - different ways of delivering community development such as asset-based approaches. In addition, our strong links with local councils and strategic partnerships have enabled us to communicate better the needs and aspirations of our sector to policy-makers.

Above all, this year at 3VA has been about people, ideas and connections and putting all those together to make change happen.



Adam Chugg, CEO



About us

Our vision

Communities that value all their people and enable them to achieve for themselves and others.

Our mission

Supporting community groups, voluntary organisations and individuals to improve the quality of life.

Our values

The voluntary sector is driven by its values to work for social good. It can provide space, opportunities and freedom to join with others to take action and make change.

Where we work

We work directly in Eastbourne, Lewes and Wealden to support local voluntary action, strengthen volunteering and community development.

We work across East Sussex - in partnership - to enhance volunteering, the voice of the voluntary sector and the strategic role of the voluntary sector.

Funders



Structure, governance and management

The charity is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. The trustees, who are also the directors for the purpose of company law, and who served during the year were:

Gary Walsh (Chair)
Peter Dupont (appointed March 2019)
Andrew Holter
Priscilla Kendall
Byron Stevens (resigned August 2018)
Chris Strutt
John Trainor
Alan Wenham
Rachael Wood

NAVCA Quality Award

We proudly hold the NAVCA Quality Award, a vigorously assessed national quality mark for Councils of Voluntary Services awarded by our national body NAVCA.



Membership

3VA is a membership organisation with over 400 members across Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes. During the year we reviewed our membership offer to ensure that it is relevant and of value to members and potential members. In particular, we decided to change the membership criteria to allow unconstituted groups to become provisional members so they can access a number of benefits more easily.



3VA



We cover four areas of work:

1) Development

Looking at provision of services in the community, finding areas of unmet need and helping to initiate projects to satisfy those needs.

2) Support

Supporting local voluntary organisations through information, advice and guidance, training, and volunteer development.

3) Collaboration

Establishing effective partnerships between voluntary and community groups, statutory agencies and the private sector.

4) Influence

Helping voluntary organisations to get their views heard by policy-makers.

Development

The needs of communities across the districts are changing as the population and services change. In 2018-19 we again saw a large number of local people with passions, professional skills and ideas they wanted to use to help bring benefits to their community through starting a new project. During the year we supported 82 new groups across the three districts.

Rural areas

We also gathered evidence which demonstrated that connecting communities remains a big issue for many people in rural areas such as Wealden. This was particularly noticeable for some young people who are unable to attend activities after school and at weekends because they have no transport.

Intergenerational activities

We worked with groups to support their desire to improve contacts between young and old and we have given support to several developing groups including Young at Heart in Heathfield, Polegate Community Centre's gardening project and Mayfield Computer Buddies.

Eastbourne Food Partnership

We supported an emerging partnership of dedicated groups in Eastbourne who want to work together tackle food poverty and address the lack of cohesive plan to address food chain issues for local communities. We have been supporting them in coming together, linking with others and developing new vision and activities.

Health and wellbeing

Additionally, we supported numerous active arts and cultural groups in Eastbourne, where there are skilled local people who identified that they are well placed to support community wellbeing. We supported them with developing business plans and fundraising to start local projects. In addition there was a lot of activity around developing more support for disabled people to take part in sport.

Social isolation

In Lewes, loneliness and social isolation was identified as a big issue and groups are looking at how they can develop more support through the Lewes and the Havens Community Network.

Volunteering

Encouraging volunteering and providing some structure for the recruitment of volunteers in Seaford was identified as a priority at the Seaford Community Network and again, groups are looking at what they can do to achieve this in partnership.



Highlights across the 3 districts:

- 82 new groups supported.
- 144 total groups provided with support on governance issues.
- 62 total groups provided with volunteering support.
- 214 total groups provided with funding advice.



Support

Most of the support we offer to voluntary and community groups is free, thanks to funding from East Sussex County Council and the three districts and boroughs we work in. Increasingly we have been offering training for free or at a low cost so that even the smallest, least resourced groups can access important learning opportunities.

Sharing information

Getting accurate, useful information out to voluntary and community groups is one of the most important functions of a voluntary action. Each week throughout the year, we sent out an e-newsletter to nearly 2,000 contacts to keep them in touch with local and national developments. In conjunction with our website and, increasingly, social media (Facebook and Twitter), this is one of the most important ways we share information.

One-to-one sessions

We supported 416 groups in one-to-one sessions. For some groups it is simply a matter of providing them with a template, guide or relevant contact. For others, support needs to be more detailed and we



may meet them several times over the course of months. Funding, management of volunteers and governance continue to be priorities, although an increasing number identified that they need to communicate more effectively with their service users and to better promote their services.

Training

Another important way of delivering support is through our evidence-based training programme. Over the year we ran 25 courses that were attended by 243 participants representing 128 organisations. From our perspective training is a useful way of delivering services because it means we can reach more groups using fewer resources, but for participants it enables them to exchange and share their own knowledge with others resulting in a far richer learning experience.

The primary focus of training this year was to fine-tune existing courses, including both the content and delivery. We achieved this by upskilling our own staff to deliver even better in-house training and attracting and developing strong relationships with some of the best external training providers. The content of some courses was also revised to reflect the changing needs of the community and voluntary groups we support. As a result, overall satisfaction with 3VA training reached 92%.

Collaboration

We always try to connect groups (both in support sessions and via social media) with others whose work could complement theirs or where, if they collaborated, they could potentially achieve more together. Collaboration on a bigger scale takes place through the community networks we organise, which in the last year were coordinated jointly with East Sussex County Council. The community networks are spaces for all voluntary and community groups - as well as public and private organisations - working in the local community to share experiences, learn from each other and explore ways of working together.

With our colleagues at East Sussex County Council, we organised 20 networks in 2018/19 covering Seaford, Lewes and the Havens, Hailsham and Polegate, High Weald and Eastbourne. Each network has its own characteristics which we try to shape according to the wishes of the local community. Over the year, **380 people attended them**, frequently more than once.

Highlights from across the networks were:

- Ongoing support for networking and collaboration, including hands on focus to connection-making.
- Bringing together projects working with outdoor spaces and wellbeing.
- Support around funding and collaboration leading to a new partnership funding group around community space.
- Developing training and workshops around mental health.
- Helping develop guidance around young people and volunteering.
- Influencing local plans for children and young people health and wellbeing.
- Developing a new intergenerational project around care homes.

We also supported a partnership approach to meeting the mental health needs of children and young people in Seaford. As a result, a partnership funding application was submitted to the National Lottery with 3VA as the named lead bidder. If successful, we will then facilitate a project worker and support staff to work with local community organisations to develop a model of support for local young people, their family and carers.

We managed and maintained a small community hub in Eastbourne, offering meeting and office space to local community organisations. The building and outside space has continued to be maintained and developed, all on a miniscule budget and much through partnership with the National Probation Service and help from their clients.

Highlights across the 3 districts:

- 20 community networks run in 5 localities were attended by 380 people.
- 63 community groups provided with meeting/networking space.





Influence

We represented the sector on a number of strategic groups, 14 in all, including the East Sussex Better Together Community and Personal Resilience Planning Group, the Connecting4You Programme Board, the Seaford Locality and Planning Group and the Wealden and Eastbourne strategic partnerships. This means building strong leadership and operational and strategic visibility within each of the districts. This is done both within the voluntary and community sector and our local council and NHS partners, attending strategic meetings and ensuring that the interests of the sector are heard.

As a result of this work, during the year we developed a new strategic partnership with the Children's Services department at East Sussex County Council. This has resulted in them seconding a participation worker to 3VA for one day per week. Results achieved from this included:

- **Supporting the young people involved in the successful Your Town events in Eastbourne** - taking a community-led approach to identifying improvements for the town. This also included encouraging local organisations to work with young people in a mentoring capacity in order to develop their project ideas.
- **Working towards re-establishing the Youth Voice Practitioners' Network**, to bring together youth voice workers from across the county, where they can share information about local initiatives, funding, provide peer support and talk about their own practice.
- **Organising a 'Takeover Day' event** on 3 November, which saw more than 50 young people and 50 stakeholders come together to discuss young people's mental health and emotional wellbeing, as well as bringing input on mental health from the community network and other sources.
- Inviting members of the Eastbourne Community Network to **contribute to the development of Eastbourne Borough Council's youth strategy**.
- **Continuing to chair the Wealden Strategic Partnership** and to ensure that all sectors are represented. At one of the meetings during the year, we looked at how we could grow and develop more resilient communities which included presentations from a number of voluntary and community groups and an action plan is now being developed.

Finally, we have been actively involved in supporting the development of a social value marketplace and crowdfunding two initiatives developed in collaboration with East Sussex County Council.

Projects

Through **Chances4change**, we worked across 8 geographical communities in Eastbourne, including Hampden Park, Langney, Shinewater, Willingdon Trees and parts of Sovereign and Devonshire areas. We supported numerous community members and groups to establish new, resident run activities, which include community choir, kids' activities, writing club, physical activities and range of events in three local parks. We have further developed the programme of seedcorn funding for asset based, community led initiatives, allowing people to try things out and start things in their local neighbourhoods.



We supported development of a parks network for the town and continued supporting relationship established between a local primary school and an extra care scheme in Langney area of Eastbourne. This has resulted in continuation of the after-school club at the care home. We worked with programme partners across East Sussex, to share ideas and solutions.

Over the course of the year, Chances4change engaged with 39 local groups and 12 networks, reaching out to 285 participants.

We worked in partnership with other voluntary actions and East Sussex County Council to bring asset based community development training and practice to the county, starting to share the training with staff and volunteers across many local organisations. We trialled some of the tools we have learnt with the community through successful Ideas Fair and Ideas Walk in Shinewater and Langney, helping residents and leaders explore local assets and their own ideas for the future.

We continued our work as the 'Locally Trusted Organisation' for **Devonshire West Big Local** (DWBL), a resident led project working to revitalise the Devonshire West area of Eastbourne.

Good progress made in the year included two more successful rounds of community grants, with 24 projects funded, providing activities and services for the local residents, alongside a number of microgrant awards.



Continued support was provided for key provision of community spaces in the area, including local community hub, community run theatre, recreational ground and art space. This fits well with identified community need, DWBL Plan and an asset-based approach. We have supported the project with financial administration and scrutiny, employment of their workers and providing senior community development advice and support to their resident-led board and chair.



As well as locally based support, we work in partnership with the other voluntary actions in East Sussex - Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA) and Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) - as a Council for Voluntary Service (CVS) partnership. On behalf of this partnership, we manage two projects - Volunteer Centre East Sussex and SpeakUp Forum - supporting the voluntary sector across the county, supporting the sector to have a voice and to share and develop good practice in volunteering.

Through **Volunteer Centre East Sussex**, we brokered new relationship and financial support for three local hubs in our area - Eastbourne Volunteers, Heathfield & District Volunteer Centre and Hailsham Volunteer Hub. Together they supported a total of 105 people seeking volunteering, with between 60 to 70% of those enquiring engaging in volunteering roles as a result.



We worked in partnership with one of our members, Creative Force, to deliver tailored support to job seekers on volunteering, piloting innovative workshops. We developed new tools and provided support to organisations wanting to develop more volunteering opportunities and those already managing volunteers.

Our **Volunteer Coordinators' Networking Forums** supported 23 staff and volunteers, providing practical skills to develop new and better opportunities for local people.



SpeakUp Forum is a countywide network for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in East Sussex, with an ambitious and complex twofold mission: 1) to lead dialogue and connection within the VCS to support sector sustainability and development and 2) to work with the public sector to jointly develop a culture of, and systems for, collaboration and system leadership.

The VCS Alliance Development Group was initiated by SpeakUp Forum in February 2017 and has met regularly since. The group is building collaboration and collaborative approaches within the sector. By the end of the year, the group was at a point where members had built enough trust to have agreed to develop a more formal framework from which to work and SpeakUp Forum played a vital systems leadership role in enabling this to happen.

In addition to HVA and RVA, we also worked in partnership with the East Sussex Lord Lieutenantcy and Action in rural Sussex to develop **Charity Mentors East Sussex**, a project whereby a team of expert mentors provide focused leadership support to the directors of local community and voluntary organisations. The project continued to develop this year and we now have 15 mentors providing support to local voluntary, community and social enterprise groups, thereby supporting and strengthening leadership in the local sector.



Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities including income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2019.

During the year under review our total incoming resources decreased by 13% to £694,150, reflecting the progression of the Devonshire West Big Local initial grant funding programme. Our income for core functions remained broadly the same and this confirmed our stable financial structure that demonstrates our organisation's ability to adapt to the changing environment whilst continuing to deliver our core services. This year we also received a substantial legacy from a donor that cemented our available reserves.

Our direct charitable expenditure has also decreased to £593,095, reflecting the changes in projects. Our total incoming resources exceeded our expenditure by £101,055. There was a surplus on our general fund of £7,281, and a surplus on unrestricted designated funds of £88,124 which included the legacy donation. The free reserves at 31 March 2019 stood at £138,633.

Our major challenge continues to be to maintain effective support for our member organisations, helping them to prosper and grow in the face of difficult economic conditions, and to further develop and extend our income-generating activities to reduce our reliance on statutory funding.

Incoming Resources	2018-19	2017-18
Activities for generating income	£ 24,794	£ 30,601
Donations and legacies	£ 80,915	£ 0
Income investment	£ 1,253	£ 566
From charitable activities	£ 584,588	£ 761,994
Other	£ 2,600	£ 2,025
Total	£ 694,150	£ 795,186
Resources Expended	2018-19	2017-18
Direct charitable expenditure	£ 593,028	£ 740,111
Governance costs	£ 67	£ 7,737
Total	£ 593,095	£ 747,848

The summary financial information is not the statutory financial statements, but a summary relating to the income and expenditure, to give an overview of 3VA's finances.

The full financial statements have been audited and are available (alongside the trustees' annual report and auditors' report) at www.3va.org.uk.



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