

# VASL

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## TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2012 TO 31 MARCH 2013

### SECTION A

### Reference and Administration details

**Charity Name** Voluntary Action South Leicestershire  
**Other names charity is known by** VASL  
**Registered Charity Number** 1141274

**Charity's Principal Address** The Settling Rooms, St Mary's Place  
Market Harborough, Leicestershire  
LE16 7DR

### Names of the charity trustees who manage the charity

Trustee Name	Office (if any)	Dates acted if not for whole year	Name of person (or body) entitled to appoint trustee (if any)
Linda Jones	Chair		
Gail Lamb	Treasurer		
Gillian Wood	Secretary		
Carol Birch			
Ann Charlton			
Diana Cook			
Michael Herbert			
James Lindsay			

Type of Adviser	Name	
<b>Auditor</b>	Ask! Audit and Accountancy Ltd	154 Rothley Road, Mountsorrel, Leicestershire LE12 7JX
<b>Bankers</b>	CAF Bank Ltd	25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ
<b>HR Advisors</b>	Peninsula Business Services Ltd	Riverside, New Bailey Street, Manchester M3 5PB

### Name of Chief Executive or Names of Senior Staff Members

Maureen O'Malley, Senior Manager  
Jan Meredith, Business Development Manager

**SECTION B****Structure, Governance and Management****Description of the Charity's Trusts**

Type of Governing Document	Memorandum and Articles of Association
How the Charity is Constituted	Company Limited by Guarantee
Trustee Selection Methods	Trustees above are persons notified to Companies House as first Directors of the Charity. Further appointments are in accordance with Paragraphs 16-20 inclusive of the Articles of Association.

**SECTION C****Objectives and Activities****Aims and Objectives**

The Trustees of VASL have regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

**Aims**

- to serve as a community hub, encouraging and supporting community development and enabling people to engage in democratic processes.

**Objectives**

- build the strengths and independence of community groups, organisations and networks
- build equity, inclusiveness, participation and cohesion amongst people and their groups and organisations
- empower people and organisations to influence and help transform public policies and services and other factors affecting the conditions of their lives
- advise and inform public authorities on community needs, viewpoints and processes and assist them to strengthen communities.

These objectives were achieved by inspiring and supporting individuals to contribute their own time and skills on a voluntary basis; by helping them organise and by supporting the organisations which they create; and by supporting local and other statutory authorities in developing and implementing their own strategies for the voluntary and community sector.

**In practice, the work involved**

- recruiting, assessing and placing volunteers into our in house projects
- delivering project based activities
- providing information, advice, training and support to community and voluntary organisations in partnership with VAL and through our own in house Funds and Figures Project
- facilitating the Harborough District Voluntary Sector Forum

## **Projects**

### **1. Volunteering**

VASL continued to support volunteering brokerage in the district by dealing with enquiries and referring on to Voluntary Action Leicestershire.

### **2. Representation and Engagement**

In partnership with VAL, VASL delivered four district Voluntary and Community Sector Forums throughout the year, bringing groups together to discuss topics of interest and share good practice. They were well attended and gave opportunities for Harborough District Council and Leicestershire County Council to engage at a local level. Topics covered included 'Supporting Leicestershire Families', 'Older People' and 'The vulnerable in our Community'

### **3. Support for Carers Leicestershire**

VASL was successful in tendering for a countywide contract to deliver 'Support for Carers' across the whole of Leicestershire commencing on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2011. This developed VASL's previous, local service to reach countywide. 1300 carers chose to be transferred into the new service from across the county. VASL continued to receive referrals from many different sources such as GP practices, statutory services, from within the voluntary sector and self-referrals. The number of carers who are registering with the service is increasing on a weekly basis, with 1929 carers registered to the end of March 2013. The service is developing new ways to identify and support carers through the website, carer support groups, telephone befriending service, newsletters and working in partnership with voluntary and statutory services. VASL has also set up carers' drop-ins at various libraries around the county. VASL has held 3 successful forums with guest speakers, bringing carers together with decision makers and service providers. The team has attended many partners' support groups and been involved in consultations with the NHS and Leicestershire County Council.

VASL administers the Carers' Support Grant on behalf of Leicestershire County Council; this is an annual payment which carers can apply for to give them a break. 456 carers accessed the grant in 2012-13. The website, [www.supportforcarers.org](http://www.supportforcarers.org), has effectively promoted events and services across the county to support carers, as well as keeping them updated with all relevant new information and legislation; it has received positive feedback for the quality and usefulness of the information provided.

### **4. Carers Mental Health Respite**

As part of the countywide carers tender, VASL was also successful in negotiating the delivery of the Carers Mental Health Respite service for the south of the county. VASL co-ordinates respite in Blaby, Oadby and Wigston as well as Harborough Districts. 24 carers of people with mental health difficulties have been able to access the scheme with up to 8 hours of

free respite in the home provided by Crossroads for Carers. This service is now under review by Leicestershire County Council as part of their review of all carer services.

#### **5. Complementary Therapy Service**

Over 40 Carers were provided with 290 individual therapy/pampering sessions by VASL in 2012-13. We seek to secure further funding to continue this much needed and valuable service for carers.

#### **6. Young Carers**

VASL Young Carers Project supported a total of 22 young carers between 2012-13. Three members left and ten new members started, raising the number who regularly attend from 12 to 19. This makes it by far the largest young carers group in Leicestershire.

#### **7. Good Companions Befriending Scheme**

The scheme which continues to be jointly funded by Market Harborough & The Bowdens Charity and Seven Locks Housing, supported over 50 isolated and older people during the year. 55 Volunteers gave 2505 volunteering hours throughout 2012-13. Most of the volunteers visited their clients regularly once a week.

#### **8. VASL Transport**

The Social Car Scheme continued to be well used, with a total of 6,690 journeys undertaken this year. An amazing 95,261 miles were clocked up by our 52 volunteer drivers and we have 1487 passengers registered to use the Social Car Scheme. To be eligible to use the Social Car Scheme the passengers are either elderly, disabled or there is no access to public transport in the geographical location where they live. VASL's seven seater multi-purpose vehicle continued to provide regular trips to popular shopping destinations.

#### **9. The Chill Out Bus**

The future of this mobile youth provision was considered by the Trustee Board after researching the cost, value and usage over the previous 3 year period. It was agreed that VASL could no longer sustain the project and therefore the Chill Out Bus was gifted to a youth charity based in the Harborough District, 'Harborough Children and Young People Charity'. Their intention is to continue to use the Chill Out Bus as a youth provision.

#### **10. Funds and Figures**

The aim of the Funds and Figures Project is to increase the sustainability of local voluntary groups, community groups and charities through improved fundraising and financial management skills and knowledge. This project entered its final year and with the Supporting Change Lottery Funding explored ways of sustaining the project post March 2013. The development of a new and much improved website will assist groups in accessing much needed funding and finance information. Time was also spent reviewing the project

to identify what support groups would most need in the future. The project was also extended by six months to allow more time to develop services going forward.

#### **11. Rural Youth Voice**

The Big Lottery Funded Rural Youth Voice Project is now in its 4th year, with another years funding remaining. The project continues to work to support the engagement of young people in local decision making and in the development of services and facilities for them. It also supports organisations and groups to improve their youth participation practices.

#### **12. Community Garden**

VASL community garden continues to be run and maintained by local volunteers and community groups. An official open day took place in May 2012, attended by members of the community and invited dignitaries.

#### **13. Mental Health Education Programme for Carers**

VASL successfully tendered for this Leicestershire County Council contract in October 2012. The programme specifically targets carers of people with a diagnosis of a severe mental illness e.g. schizophrenia, Bi Polar Disorder and Clinical Depression. The course was written and will be delivered by VASL's programme co-ordinator. The programme which is 8 modules and over 20 hours of content are in 2 and half hour sessions over a number of weeks. The courses delivered to date have been very well received with positive feedback from carers who have attended. This contract has been extended to 31st March 2014.

#### **14. Memory Lane**

This partnership project with Seven Locks Housing is funded by Leicestershire County Council Innovation Fund. The project funding was awarded in January 2013. The aim of the project is to provide 3 weekly reminiscence sessions in three Seven Locks Sheltered Housing Schemes in Market Harborough and Fleckney. The sessions will be delivered against the back drop of three memory pods 'RemPods', a 1950's living room, a shop and a pub. As the project progresses it is aimed to integrate seven locks housing residents with people from the wider community with memory loss and their carers. The project was delayed initially by the late delivery of the memory pods. A launch event is planned for April 2013.

#### **15. Generic Carers Training Programme**

This project is a continuation of funding from Santander Community fund to provide training courses for Carers. The previous funding was for Harborough District only, the further funding is to extend the courses to Carers throughout Leicestershire. Research is taking place to establish the types of training and where to run them in the County. IT training and practical first aid have been identified first as courses to put on and venues have been identified. The courses are to be delivered by 31st January 2014.

**SECTION D**

**Outcomes, Achievements and Performance**

The Table below summarises the difference VASL made in our Communities during 2011-12.

Community	Total Individuals	How Have They Benefited?
<b>Carers across Leicestershire</b>	1929 (1352)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carer helpline (M-F, 9 – 5)</li> <li>• Online support through website, Facebook, Twitter</li> <li>• 127 Support group sessions delivered to share experiences and enjoy social time</li> <li>• 3 forum events</li> <li>• 4 Newsletters provided information and contacts</li> <li>• 456 carer support grants issued</li> <li>• Telephone befriending (303 sessions, 75 users/ 9 volunteers)</li> <li>• 24 carers provided with mental health respite</li> <li>• 2 Carer first aid training courses delivered to a total 25 carers</li> <li>• 290 carer pampering therapy sessions delivered</li> <li>• 1 specialist mental health education programme developed and delivered to 11 carers of people with poor mental health</li> </ul>
<b>Young Carers</b>	22 (11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 17 support group sessions provided respite time and a chance to be with peers</li> <li>• One to one support where most needed</li> <li>• Email and Facebook support</li> <li>• 3 days out</li> <li>• Halloween disco</li> <li>• Kickboxing session</li> <li>• Christmas meal out</li> </ul>
<b>Isolated Older People</b>	54 (46) befriended 1487 (800+) used social car scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Social support – regular visits by volunteers through Good Companions Befriending (54 users, 2505 (2323) hrs of visits)</li> <li>• Used VASL social car scheme for health and social journeys</li> </ul>

<p><b>Young people, including young parents, young travellers, rurally isolated young people and those at risk of offending or being excluded from education</b></p>	<p>1940 (1400)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved confidence and skills</li> <li>• Enabled to make a difference in their communities</li> <li>• Greater understanding of the meaning and practice of youth participation</li> <li>• Youth cafés</li> <li>• Enable Youth website</li> <li>• 2 training sessions</li> </ul>
<p><b>Volunteers</b></p>	<p>9 VASL trustees  52 (44) drivers  55 (46) befrienders  9 (9) telephone befrienders  14 (4) young carer volunteers  3 Carer Support volunteers  1 VASL office volunteer  1 carer pampering volunteer  40 (40) Rural Youth Voice volunteers  TOTAL 184</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Volunteers enjoying their roles and gaining experience in supporting carers, befriending, providing community transport</li> <li>• Received training to develop knowledge and skills</li> <li>• Enable Youth won Pride of Harborough Young Achievers Award</li> </ul>
<p><b>Community Groups in Harborough and Melton Districts</b></p>	<p>Over 350 groups</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Received funding and finance advice at events, one to one and by telephone, through VASL's Funds and Figures project.</li> <li>• Attended training</li> <li>• Attended VCS support forums</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Business and Public Sectors</b></p>	<p>We worked with many different organisations including  Seven Locks Housing  Leicestershire County Council  Harborough District Council  NHS community mental health teams  LINK (now Healthwatch)  Vattenfall  Waitrose  Wilkinsons  Santander  Edward, Hands and Lewis  Plexus Media  Indigo Computing  Local schools, libraries, adult learning  30 GP practices across Leicestershire  11 Parish Councils</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked in partnership with VASL to support their customers and share knowledge and ideas</li> <li>• Raised their community profile</li> <li>• Received information to help them engage effectively with young people</li> </ul>
<p><b>Single Infrastructure Organisations</b></p>	<p>Voluntary Action LeicesterShire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Worked in partnership with VASL to support their aims for Harborough district</li> </ul>

<p><b>Charities/Third Sector</b></p>	<p>We worked with many different charities including  Market Harborough Bowdens Charity  LLR Community Foundation (Comic Relief)  Big Lottery  Children In Need  Age UK  LAMP  Market Harborough and Welland Valley Rotarians  Harborough District Mind  Snowdrops  Swanswell  Dementia Café  Harborough Youth and Community Trust  Enable Youth  Room for Music</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Met their charitable aims by awarding grants to VASL for project activity</li> <li>• Took referrals for services from VASL staff</li> <li>• Attended VASL forums</li> </ul>
<p><b>The Wider Community</b></p>		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 1000 people attended Enable Youth's Rock on the Rec event</li> <li>• Enable Youth put on Speak Out competition</li> <li>• Supported by Rural Youth Voice to engage with young people</li> <li>• Enable Youth website provides information</li> <li>• Support for Carers Leicestershire website provides information and support</li> <li>• VASL website provides information, support and access to services</li> </ul>



### 1. Financial Performance

The financial period covered by the accounts and this report was a 12 month period from 1 April 2012 to 31 March 2013. The annual income was £559,015 and the total costs were £506,862. This resulted in a net surplus of £52,153. This was £9,373 of unrestricted monies and £42,780 of restricted monies. However, the unrestricted monies were offset by a deficit in 11/12 of £17,753 leaving a surplus of £25,027. The Finance Committee agreed that this restricted surplus would be invested into continuing projects. The unrestricted surplus had arisen through fund generating activities and investment income. VASL continue to operate in a period of considerable financial uncertainty in relation to core funding from statutory bodies and project funding from other agencies. In view of this the Trustees considered it prudent to leave the designated financial reserve at £100,000 to cover contingencies (see note d in point 4 below).

### 2. Policy on cost recovery

In undertaking a grant funded project, VASL aimed to apply the principles of Full Cost Recovery. That is, it recognised that each project undertaken by VASL was supported by a central organisation whose costs must be covered by the organisation as a whole. Each project had therefore to contribute its share of the central cost.

Accordingly, except where there was an explicit agreement with the funder on the amount of grant which was to be applied to central costs, an overheads charge was levied in proportion to the staff time devoted to the project. These charges were calculated as part of the annual budgeting process, and were applied in the accounts as inter-fund transfers.

### 3. Staffing

Staffing in the core remained stable in 2012/13 with a moderate increase in hours for the administration post to support the growing number of projects. Staff numbers increased overall as we recruited to fill project posts as they came on board throughout the financial year.

### 4. Policy on reserves

VASL's policy on reserves has been designed to protect it from uncertainties in funding from statutory and grant making bodies, and other financial risks. Its aim is to ensure that there are sufficient funds to meet all its contractual obligations and to continue in operation until there has been time to reorganise to meet the contingency.

The Trustees agreed that:

- a) The VASL Board would continue to designate a fund in its accounts to be its financial reserve.
- b) No expenditure of money from the financial reserve could be committed for any purpose except by explicit decision of the board. In so deciding, the board would consider whether, when and how the reserve could be replenished.
- c) The core fund operational reserves should be designated for business development costs to cover delivery of the strategic plan.

d) The financial reserves and business development reserves should be invested in 2 interest-bearing instant access accounts to a maximum of £85000 in each (as per current FSA guidelines re risk).

The VASL board reviewed its financial risks and decided not to increase or decrease its designated financial reserve. The financial reserve remains at £100,000, calculated thus:



3 months' core running costs	£50,000
negative cash flow in run down situation	£25,000
reserve for possible redundancy costs	£25,000

**SECTION F**

**Declaration**

The Trustees declare that they have approved the trustee's report above.

Signed on behalf of the Charity's trustees

Signature		
Full Name	LINDA JONES	GILLIAN ANNE WOOD
Position (e.g. Secretary, Chair etc.)	CHAIR	SECRETARY
Date	23.9.13	23.9.13.