



TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT

FOR THE PERIOD 1 APRIL 2016 TO 31 MARCH 2017

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 1st Floor Torch House, Torch Way
 Market Harborough, Leicestershire
 LE16 9HL

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		
Ann Charlton			
Michael Herbert			
James Lindsay			
Kate Godber			
Linda Freer	Secretary		
Peter Van-Herewege			

Type of Adviser

Name

Auditor	E.T. Pierson	21 The Point, Market Harborough, Leicestershire LE16 7NU
Bankers	CAF Bank Ltd	25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent ME19 4JQ
HR Advisors	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

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.

Our Aims

To develop services which enhance the wellbeing of people who are in particular need of support

To use and value the important contribution of volunteers in all our services

To be proactive and reactive to local needs

To encourage and promote social inclusion

To continually learn, improve and innovate as an organisation

Strategic Objectives

Meeting community needs

Sustainable growth

Organisational excellence

Priorities for VASL 2016/17

1. Find suitable accommodation at a reasonable price to replace The Settling Rooms
2. Achieve the Investing in Volunteers Award
3. Achieve re-accreditation for the PQASSO standard level 2
4. Ensure high quality performance and readiness for the re-tendering of the Health and Wellbeing and Support for Carers Contracts
5. Consider submitting tenders for new contracts, including LCC Mental Health Carers and Carers ' Assessments
6. Enhance our provision of transport to reduce rural isolation in Harborough District
7. Produce and begin to implement a new Fundraising Strategy
8. Fund and pilot the new Community Champions Project, with a view to putting in a bid to the Big Lottery Fund for 2017/2020
9. Increase and maintain our external marketing and communication to continue to raise the profile of VASL and achieve required funding
10. Maximise the skills, knowledge and experience of VASL's new Trustees, recruit to fill skills gaps (as necessary) and further develop the governance of the organisation
11. Commission a review of VASL's core funding, including the staff posts, to ensure maximum effectiveness and efficiency, and reduce the risk of operating at a deficit

Senior Manager Overview of 2016/17

2016/17 will be remembered for the year that VASL moved to a new home.

With uncertainty around where we could locate to and how much rent we could afford, it was truly a relief for everyone when another local charity, Torch Trust, put some office space up for rent. VASL successfully secured the let from Torch for a period of three years.

The mechanics of the move took some planning and a lot of de cluttering. We finally moved on October 7th 2016 and settled in very quickly. Our new landlords are proving to be a joy to work with.

As the premises issue unfolded, the day to day work of VASL continued without interruption.

VASL continued to provide highly effective services for family carers through Support for Carers, Carers Health and Wellbeing Service, Carers Choir, Carers Therapy Service and the addition of Carers DigiPal Project.

Young Carers continued to be provide a fortnightly group and numerous activities and days out, all ably managed by Hannah Currington.

VASL Transport continues to provide a much needed lifeline for residents in the District.

Community Champions launched in 2016/17 taking on a new Project Lead, Rohini Corfield.

Successes

For me, the successes for 2016-17 have been many.

Starting the year in **April**, VASL staff team were nominated and won the Care in the Community award at Pride in Harborough.

May saw the launch of the Community Champions Pilot Project. The positive feedback and number of volunteers coming forward to join the project has been tremendous. There has been a great deal of activity, bringing together volunteers and clients at community gatherings. There has also been lots of one to one visits and support for clients to help them integrate back into their own community's, this may be a geographical community or a community of interest. The scope of this project is very varied and innovative. Such has been the success of the pilot that an application for the Reaching Communities Big Lottery Fund successfully flew through stage 1 with very encouraging feedback. We submitted our stage 2 application in February 2017. We were informed in June that we have successfully secured 5 years' of funding.

May also saw the first ever Staff Conference held at The Angel Hotel. This proved to be a success in getting all the staff and trustees together to carry out some forward planning and visioning.

June saw the completion of a well written and thought through Fundraising Strategy for VASL. Becky Nixon and Ann Gilbert were commissioned by VASL, with funding from the Lloyds Foundation. It produces a number of very interesting ideas and actions to take forward. A number of quick wins have been already implemented.

In **July**, we applied for the Investors in Volunteers Accreditation and were externally assessed later in the year. Although quite a long process, we were finally awarded full accreditation in January 2017. Our report from the assessor and the awarding body was excellent and confirms VASL's commitment to volunteers and providing quality volunteer opportunities within the organisation.

In **August**, we reapplied for the Pqasso accreditation and are were again externally assessed on the 20th and 21st February 2017. We passed with no improvements required and now have Pqasso level 2 in place for a further 3 years.

During the summer months we saw an influx of groups, societies and churches raising funds for VASL. The key theme for all the donors is that they want funds raised locally to stay local.

In **October** our relocation was a huge success.

VASL continues to have strong relationships with Harborough District and Leicestershire County Council.

We have improved our reach into the business community by attending a number of regular business gatherings, including the Market Harborough Chamber of Trade and Commerce.

Specsavers raised funds for a 2nd year for VASL. In January 2017, Specsavers decided to move on to raise funds for a different charity. However they have agreed to on-going continued support of VASL by dedicating one fundraising event a year to keep that local link

and support going. An excellent outcome that hopefully will be replicated with other business support in the future.

November was a personal success for me as I attended the first three days of a nine day course at The School for Social Enterprise. This was fully funded through the Lloyds Foundation. This has been a great experience with many new ideas and fabulous networking opportunities with other charity leaders from across the country.

At Christmas, VASL held its first Volunteering Gathering at the Angel Hotel. A lovely atmosphere and volunteers told us 'they felt spoilt'. It was at very little cost to VASL as The Angel Hotel are great supporters and provide the venue for free and refreshments at a very reasonable cost. Our thanks to them.

The final success is that we are ending the financial year stable, despite the financial cost of the move and increase in rent.

Challenges

The challenges again have been wide and varied this year.

A physical challenge has been the downsizing of the Transport Office and moving from the centre of town. It continues to be a challenge at times, although we are now trialling a weekly drop in at Louisa's Bar, and St Dionysius' Church has offered us space for a weekly drop in after Easter.

It was recognised that VASL core team has been under resourced for a while and, therefore, a review of core was commissioned by the Board of Trustees. The core review was a challenge, trying to define what the needs are for the organisation going forward. It took a little longer than first thought, however a new structure has been implemented for 2017/18. A new role of Business Support Manager was developed and sits directly under the Senior Manager, who has been given a new title of Charity Manager. The key change is that the external PR and relationship building is to be carried out by the Charity Manager and all office and infrastructure functions supported by the Business Support Manager.

We lost two key members of Support for Carers staff in November to move on to other voluntary sector organisations. That left the challenge of recruiting new staff with a limited time of confirmed funding to run.

In late January, we also received the news that the Better Care Together Fund did not intend funding the Carers Health and Wellbeing Service beyond the end of April 2017. This left five members of staff redundant and one redeployed to the Support for Carers Project.

Funding continues to be challenge with VASL still heavily reliant still on Local Authority Funding.

Summary

With a strong Board and supportive staff, VASL continues to rise to each new challenge and turn many of them into new opportunities.

Personally, I am really excited to be taking the Charity in a new direction, whilst ensuring the projects and services that we provide are still delivering a quality service and continuing to seek development opportunities on the back of our current areas of work and expertise.

Maureen O'Malley
Senior Manager

VASL Projects/Services

Support for Carers Leicestershire

VASL's Support for Carers Leicestershire project has continued to provide much needed support to family carers across the whole of Leicestershire again this year. 822 new carers were identified and registered with our service. This brings the total of carers on our database to 4512. Each registered carer receives an initial assessment and is signposted and supported to services to help them in their caring role. Carers then receive a newsletter twice a year from VASL and the opportunity to attend various carer's groups, including a regular Carers Choir. The project works very closely with the Health and Social Care services and specialist Voluntary Sector providers to provide a holistic approach to supporting carers. VASL delivered/supported 116 Carers' Groups and Forums throughout the year giving carers the opportunity to meet with other carers, service providers and decision makers and influence future planning. The Groups and Forums also enable Leicestershire County Council to carry out meaningful consultation with carers. During the year, VASL also received funding to provide Digital Support to Carers. We recruited 6 Digi Pal volunteers who supported 66 individual carers and 143 carers in group settings to get on line, using Smart Phone, Tablets and Laptops. VASL's Carers Website, www.supportforcarers.org continues to provide up to date, relevant information to Carers and Professionals across Leicestershire.

VASL continues to provide additional services for Carers, Wellbeing Therapies and a Carers Choir. We also provided specific groups for bereaved carers to support them through their transition period following a full time caring role.

Carers Health and Wellbeing

The Project commenced on the 1st April 2015. The Carers Health and Wellbeing Service aimed to identify family carers in a GP setting, offering them support and signposting, and encouraging them to complete a Leicestershire County Council Carers Assessment. The service aim was also to educate and inform GP's and Health Care Professionals to be carer aware, identify carers in the Primary Care setting of a GP surgery, and support them to get help early on in their caring role. VASL provided this service for two years. During 2016/17 964 Carers were referred to the service, totalling 3,918.15 hours of support. VASL was

informed in January 2017 that the service would cease at the end of April 2017. Although the project was extremely successful and a great support for GP services, the funding was through the Better Care Together Fund. The overall Better Carer Together funding was reduced and therefore all funding was diverted to more critical services, such as A & E and Emergency Care. VASL's Health and Wellbeing Contract has therefore, not been renewed.

Young Carers

VASL runs a Young Carers Activity Group for young people in Harborough District who are providing care and support to a loved one with long-term ill health, physical disability, mental health problems or substance misuse issues. At any one point, we will have 15-20 members. We have slightly extended our age range and will now take children from age 11 as long as they are at secondary school, up to the end of the term they turn 18. In term time we offer fortnightly evening sessions providing 2 hours of respite, including free transport to and from the group if necessary. In school holidays, we swap these for evening or day trips. This makes us unique among Young Carers groups in the county, most of which are not able to offer transport or trips. The group continues to be well supported financially by donations and grants.

Community Champions

VASL Community Champions Project was piloted from the 1st April 2016. It has proved to be a huge success with over 30 volunteers supporting 45 clients during the year. Volunteers have helped Older People reconnect with hobbies, form new friendships, attend community gatherings and learn how to connect digitally to the world of the internet. Skype/facetime and emails are proving to be the most popular areas to develop.

VASL Transport

The Social Car Scheme continued to be well used, with a total of 5,506 journeys undertaken this year. 81,810 miles were clocked up by our 51 volunteer drivers and we have 1817 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. Funding for the Social Car Scheme from Leicestershire County Council is secure until 2020, although tapers over the years. VASL's Seven Seater multi-purpose vehicle continued to provide regular trips to popular shopping destinations.

Volunteering

VASL continued to support volunteering brokerage in the District by dealing with enquiries and referring on to Voluntary Action Leicestershire. VASL has a significant number of voluntary opportunities within the organisation which are publicised and promoted on a regular basis.

Representation and Engagement

In partnership with VAL, VASL contributes to local voluntary and community sector forums and information sessions. VASL is a member of the Health and Wellbeing Partnership hosted by Harborough District Council and we attend the Annual Parish Liaison Meetings in Harborough District. VASL's staff also attend various forums, information sessions and community events across the County. This highlights our work and commitment to supporting the community.

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SECTION D

Outcomes, Achievements and Performance

The Table below summarises the difference VASL made in our Communities during 2016-17.

Community	Total Individuals	How Have They Benefited?
Carers across Leicestershire	4512	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Carer helpline (M-F, 9 – 5) • Online support through website, Facebook, Twitter • 95 Support group sessions delivered to share experiences and enjoy social time including a carers choir • 21 forum events • 2 Newsletters provided information and contacts • Telephone befriending (570 sessions, 115 users/22 volunteers) • 294 carer pampering therapy sessions delivered • 24 Members of Carers Choir, 5 performances. • Carers Digi Project 6 volunteers have supported and engaged with 143 carers
Young Carers	20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fortnightly support group sessions provided respite time and a chance to be with peers • One to one support where most needed • Email and Facebook support • 10 activity days/ extra outings.
Isolated Older People	45 1817 registered to use social car scheme	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Social support – Community Champions • Used VASL social car scheme for health and social journeys
Volunteers	8 VASL trustees 101 VAS Volunteers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting all VASL Projects
Community Groups in Harborough		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Groups encouraged to attend VCS/Community Networking events
The Business and Public Sectors	We worked with many different organisations including	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in partnership with VASL to support their

	<p>Specsavers Market Harborough Leicestershire County Council Harborough District Council NHS community mental health teams CCG's Healthwatch Waitrose Sainsbury's Plexus Media Indigo Computing Local schools, libraries, adult learning GP practices across Leicestershire Parish Councils Schools/Education Establishments</p>	<p>customers and share knowledge and ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Raised their community profile
Single Infrastructure Organisations	<p>Voluntary Action LeicesterShire</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Worked in partnership with VASL to support their aims for Harborough district
Charities/Third Sector/Grant Makers	<p>We worked with many different charities including Market Harborough Bowdens Charity Harborough FM LLR Community Foundation Women in Philanthropy Big Lottery Children In Need Age UK LAMP Harborough District Mind Turning Point Dementia Harborough Harborough Youth and Community Trust Befriending Network Community Transport Association Alzheimer's Society Sustainable Harborough</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Met their charitable aims by awarding grants to VASL for project activity • Took referrals for services from VASL staff • Attended VASL forums • Consulted on project development
The Wider Community		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support for Carers Leicestershire website provides information and support • VASL website provides information, support and access to services

1. Financial Performance

The financial period covered by the accounts and this report was a 12 month period from 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2016. The annual income was £598,586 and the total costs were £550,763. This resulted in a net surplus of £47,823. There was a £57,967 surplus in restricted funds. This was due to the start-up period for Health and Well Being meaning full costs were not incurred for a couple of months, and to the advance payment for the Community Champions project. There was a £10,144 shortfall in unrestricted funds. However, the restricted funds include a grant from LloydsTSB received at the end of the year and the majority of the costs (£10,698) were not incurred in the financial period covered by this report. This means the shortfall in unrestricted funds was actually £20,842. This shortfall has been made up from monies in the operational reserves. 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

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 3 interest-bearing instant access accounts to a maximum of £85000 in each (as per previous 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		
Position (e.g. Secretary, Chair etc.)		
Date		