



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

Annual Report 2019-2020



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.



A big thank you to our trustee, Peter Dupont, for snapping most of the photos in our annual report.



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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.

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:

Mr G Walsh (Chair), Mr P G Dupont, Mr A Holter, Ms P Kendall, Mr C Strutt, Mr J Trainor, Mr A Wenham, Miss R E Wood and Miss I Wardle-Jones.

Membership

3VA is a membership organisation with over 400 members across Wealden, Eastbourne and Lewes.

Our funders

Thank you to our funders:

East Sussex County Council, Eastbourne Borough Council, Lewes District Council, Wealden District Council, Sussex Community Foundation and the Co-op Foundation.



Development

We look at provision of services in the community, find areas of unmet need and help to initiate projects to satisfy those needs.

As ever, the needs of communities across the districts are changing as the population and services change. There has been a huge range of community activity in all three areas, meeting existing and emerging needs.

Loneliness and social isolation

There have been a number of new projects to tackle loneliness and social isolation among older people, including intergenerational work to bring young and old people together in projects such as community gardens, creating memories, arts-based activities, befriending and life stories. There have also been new projects to support the mental health needs of adults and young people.

As the pandemic unfolded in the UK in the spring, these groups proved vital to supporting people living in isolation as they pivoted to delivering their services remotely, often by phone or online. This was a real struggle for many as they needed to not only support distressed service users, but also change their whole delivery models virtually overnight. In addition to existing groups, Covid-19 support groups were set up all over the districts and they all played a vital role in keeping people supplied with food, essential supplies and human contact.

Intergenerational activities

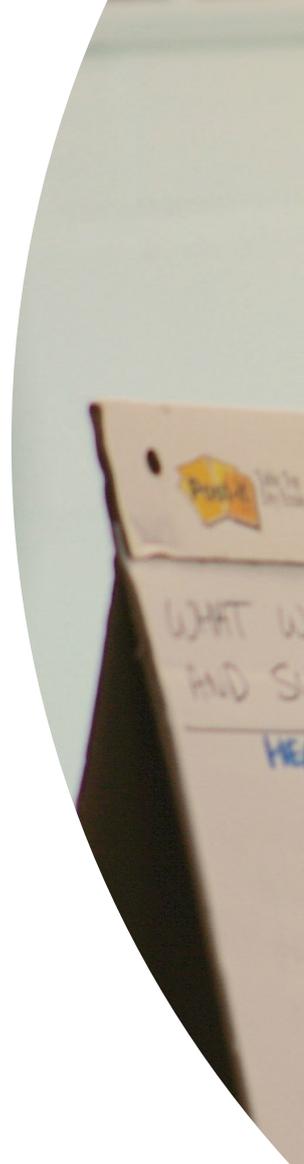
The rural nature of Wealden and the distance of some parishes and villages from services has resulted in many initiatives to combat social isolation and loneliness. Interest in intergenerational activities was high during the year, with several groups seeking to replicate the project 'Bridging Ages', where young people interview older members of the community about their lives and the interview is published as a booklet. A Village Buddies project was also being looked at as a result of discussions at a community network meeting. The aim of the project is to take an asset-based approach to helping communities support people with mental health/ isolation issues.

Self-help groups

In Eastbourne, there was a notable growth in the number of self-help groups being set up, particularly around mental health for adults and young people. These emerging groups served to emphasise the importance of small locally-based self help and peer support groups, which became particularly evident once the pandemic struck.

Food and the environment

During the year there was also a surge of interest in food and the environment, with the developing of the Eastbourne Food Partnership. 3VA has been supporting the partnership to develop a constitution, set priorities and engage with local groups and partners. Now formally constituted and firmly linked to developments concerned with improving the environment, the partnership's activities are making access to quality food a defining characteristic of Eastbourne and the surrounding area.





Highlights

222 groups provided with signposting, information or referral support

182 groups received between 30 minutes and 5 hours of advice

18 groups received 5 to 10 hours of guidance



Highlights

364 total groups supported

36 tools and resources made available on our website

49 weekly e-Newsletters sent to 1,000 people

91% average satisfaction rate by attendees on our training courses

Support

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

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

We shared information about events, training, publications, consultations and other items of interest to the local sector through our weekly e-Newsletter, website and social media channels. These include voluntary and community groups, but also businesses, individuals and statutory partners.

This year there was a steady increase in the number of people accessing information via our website, but when the pandemic struck the UK in March 2020, traffic to our website increased by 48% over the previous month as groups looked for guidance and information about how they could adapt their services.

One-to-one sessions

During the year we provided support and advice on a 1:1 basis to over 350 groups on governance, collaboration opportunities, fundraising, managing volunteers and business planning.

Training

Our training programme for the voluntary and community sector continues to expand, with an increasing number of groups attending.

We regularly review the content of our tried and tested courses. During the year we delivered training around governance, funding, child protection, social media (Facebook and Twitter), volunteer management and Mental Health First Aid for Adults. In response to requests from groups, we also developed sessions on setting up a community group and budgeting. The biggest challenge we face is making training accessible to all parts of the three districts in which we work and this is something we will continue to work on.

Volunteering

Hailsham has now established a volunteer hub through Hailsham Foodbank and Hailsham Community Forum. 3VA provided the hub with seed money and will continue to help them grow: they have already recruited a volunteer co-ordinator and are placing local people in volunteering.

In Lewes District, 3VA's discussions with local groups throughout the year identified some opportunities for supporting volunteering, including the emergence of the Havens Community Hub. However, groups remain overstretched in terms of their capacity and there are few resources to take this initiative forward. Nevertheless, 3VA will continue to seek out opportunities to support volunteering within Lewes District.

Collaboration

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

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 networks covering Seaford, Lewes and the Havens, Hailsham and Polegate, High Weald and Eastbourne. Each network had its own characteristics, which we try to shape according to the wishes of the local community.

A range of topics were covered at these networks including: the NHS long term plan, services for children and young people, mental health and using an asset based approach, co-operation between private care homes and community arts projects, social prescribing and local neighbourhood projects.

Highlights

12 community networks run in 5 localities

28 community groups provided with meeting/networking space

2 organisations provided with permanent office space



Influence

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

As a membership organisation, we are uniquely placed to represent and amplify the voice of voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) groups and organisations in Eastbourne, Lewes District and Wealden.

We empower, encourage and champion local voluntary action to be inclusive, diverse and resilient by ensuring the voluntary and community sector has a voice and can influence policies, plans and practices. Much of this work is done strategically with statutory partners.

Social value

We worked with Orbis to promote the new Social Value Marketplace and Portal. As a direct result of this work, 16 VCSE organisations signed up as 'early adopters' for the marketplace, ahead of its full implementation.

Wealden Strategic Partnership

We continued to chair the Wealden Strategic Partnership and have been able to facilitate input from local groups, including focusing on young people and volunteering, preparations for Brexit, focusing on local initiatives around young people in the district.

Youth Voice in the Voluntary Sector

Through our successful secondment arrangement with East Sussex County Council Children's Services, we supported youth voice and empowerment work in the VCSE in a number of ways, including:

- presenting the Young People and Volunteering Guide at SpeakUp's Big Event, the Youth Infrastructure Forum, Eastbourne and Wealden strategic partnerships and the Youth Voice Practitioner Network.
- leading discussions at the Youth Infrastructure Forum on developing funder-ready project work for youth voice work in the VCSE.
- electing a youth trustee to the 3VA board to inform our practice supporting youth empowerment in the VCSE.
- chairing the Youth Voice Practitioner Network that brings all sectors together to support and develop good practice in youth voice work.

Sussex Health and Care Partnership's Integrated Volunteering Programme (SIVP)

In partnership with Rother Voluntary Action and Hastings Voluntary Action, we led on a short project to carry out research with the local charity sector and health agencies to better understand the benefits, value and impact that volunteering approaches can bring to health and care services and to collaborative working with the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector across East Sussex.





Alliance Development Group

3VA has continued to organise meetings for, and support the development of the VCSE Alliance Development Group. The group has continued to jointly develop plans to transition towards a VCSE Leadership Group for East Sussex that will enable stronger cross-sector strategic working and developments in East Sussex.

SpeakUp Forum

We coordinated the countywide SpeakUp Forum, giving voice to the sector at a strategic level.

Members of SpeakUp represented 26 voluntary and community organisations, most of which operated Sussex-wide. SpeakUp continued to send representatives to 17 partnerships and develop the Alliance Development Group, intended to provide a forum for co-operation and partnership working around procurement.

Towards the middle of the year, East Sussex County Council decided that funding the forum in its current format was no longer appropriate for the current climate. A series of meetings, under the title Partnership Plus, took place between East Sussex County Council and VCSE partners over a period of six months.

These discussions looked at the ending of the forum and what might replace it and longer term cooperation between the VCSE and public sectors. SpeakUp members contributed a proposal for the future of VCSE representation at county level. Discussions were ongoing as the year came to an end.

Projects

Through our activities, we aim to make a real difference in our communities.

Eastbourne EU Citizens Group

We were instrumental in setting up a cross sector group with the aim of planning joined up action by local services and communities to help ensure that vulnerable EU citizens could access advice and support in the run up to and after the UK had left the European Union.

We worked with local community leaders, the chief executives of the Chamber of Commerce and the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and the leader of Eastbourne Borough Council to identify what support was available locally and what more could be done. We also helped to reach out to a number of community leaders, voluntary groups and charities providing support to EU migrants.

As a direct result of this work, the group secured pro-bono support from a national immigration law firm and hosted a large community information and advice event. This event raised some funds for the local CAB service.



Chances4Change and Making it Happen

We continued to lead work on asset-based community development in local areas, with specific projects in the east side of Eastbourne. In the last financial year, we completed the Chances4Change programme and developed a successful partnership of five agencies across East Sussex to secure a 5 1/2 year long contract with Public Health.

The new contract allows us to continue and grow our grassroots, strength-based community development, currently focusing on areas in Eastbourne: Shinewater, Hampden Park East and Willingdon Trees.

Making it Happen is about discovering, celebrating and building on the positive things in local neighbourhoods. Our Community Development Workers support communities to come together to make the most of the opportunities that exist to create positive change.



Spaces to Connect

This year we were successful in securing £9,415.23 in funding from the Co-op Foundation to continue working alongside the Friends of Shinewater Park and local community leaders in Eastbourne. Our aim was to engage with the public to develop ideas to increase the use of the park and other venues as 'spaces to connect' in an attempt to tackle social isolation.

We focused on promoting the park and emerging new ideas, so that local residents could see Shinewater Park as an active and inviting space. We particularly engaged in conversation and activities with primary school aged children, as well as their parents, grandparents and carers. We also ran intergenerational sessions at the local retirement housing block, in partnership with children from Shinewater Primary School.

We are proud to have helped a few local leaders establish Shinewater and Langney Community Partnership, now an active group with over 20 members, through regular meetings and a strong presence on WhatsApp and Facebook.

The connections we developed as part of the project meant that when Coronavirus pandemic began to unfold, we were well-placed to quickly understand what was needed locally and to communicate this to key decision-makers in Eastbourne and numerous agencies and organisations offering support. This resulted in targeted help reaching Shinewater more quickly than it otherwise would have and in ways that local people needed.

Devonshire West Big Local

Devonshire West Big Local is a resident run, lottery funded organisation which aims to make Devonshire West a better place to live and work. In 2012 the Big Lottery Fund provided Devonshire West Big Local with £1 million to spend over 10 years to better our community.

We continued to act as the Locally Trusted Organisation for Devonshire West Big Local, the Big Local in our area. We supported a resident-led partnership board in making investments through a robust community grants programme and developing the local area to make it a better place to live and work.

Volunteer Centre East Sussex (VCES)

This year saw the end of the dedicated VCES project. We have integrated many elements of the work into our main programme of support through Generic Infrastructure Support service. We continue to provide help to groups and organisations on matters volunteering through 1 to 1 advice and training. We liaise with and promote local volunteer hubs and capture good news stories around volunteering to share and inspire others.



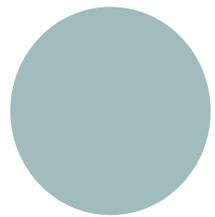
Foundation





We empower, support and develop social and voluntary action in East Sussex. We're also proud to be part of a national movement of social and voluntary action.





Congratulations, Cécile!

Cécile Stheeman, our longtime volunteer, celebrated her silver anniversary at 3VA. She was formally recognised at our staff meeting in July where Adam Chugg, our CEO, presented her with an engraved crystal vase.

Congratulations, Cécile, and thank you for making 3VA a better place for an amazing 25 years!

Statement of financial activities

Statement of financial activities including income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2020.

During the year under review our total incoming resources decreased by 20% to £552,347, 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.

Our direct charitable expenditure has also decreased to £543,377, reflecting the changes in projects. Our total incoming resources exceeded our expenditure by £8,970. There was a surplus on our general fund of £16,414, and a surplus on unrestricted designated funds of £318. The free reserves at 31 March 2020 stood at £155,047. 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	2019-20	2018-19
Activities for generating income	£ 0*	£ 24,794
Donations and legacies	£ 0	£ 80,915
Income investment	£ 1,461	£ 1,253
From charitable activities	£ 503,014	£ 584,588
Other	£ 47,872	£ 2,600
Total	£ 552,347	£ 694,150

Resources Expended	2019-20	2018-19
Direct charitable expenditure	£ 543,377	£ 593,028
Governance costs	£ 0	£ 67
Total	£ 543,377	£ 593,095

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.

**Our financial remit in 2019-20 was to maintain effective support for our member organisations, helping them to prosper and grow in the face of difficult economic conditions. To this end, we developed and extended our income-generating activities through statutory funding, which significantly reduced our reliance on fundraising.*



3VA

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

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