

Sharing our Strength 2016

Voluntary & Community Sector one-day conference

Organised by the county's Voluntary & Community Sector for the sector - a vital opportunity for volunteers, trustees and key officers to come together and think about how we can work effectively in rapidly changing times.

FUILL REPORT

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Chairman's Introduction

Our conference was entitled Sharing Our Strength and drew on the national, county-wide and local voluntary sector itself, including, of course all who participated in the day.

We were challenged by the rate of change of the world around us, but, rather than being daunted by the traditional complaints of funding cuts, we set out to look at ourselves, our values, traditions and agendas to ask if we are "fit for purpose". Despite some assertions at the conference to the contrary the picture of Britain is one of a nation committed to mutual care and to volunteering, so if we have lost the plot there will be waste and inefficiencies in our organisations, reducing our effectiveness for those we aim to serve.

In the course of the day there was much frankness and heart searching, but also the encouragement and hard work of the type on which our nation's culture is built. We needed to take stock; this was not a conference to provide answers as some would have liked; it was a time for resetting and recommitting and we were much encouraged by people's obvious enthusiasm albeit alongside their trepidation at the task.

If you were not able to be there I hope you will find this material gives you something of the flavour – enough at least for you to talk to others who were or to reflect and continue to "watch this space" attentively as we try to take forward the strands of work proposed at the end of this report. But please do not just sit on the side lineswe are all involved in leadership, in our organisations and communities, that lead is needed, yet none of us can do it alone, and very rarely in the way the last generation has done. We need to be engaged with the most vibrant and effective parts of our sector, alert to change and ready to learn.

So please read on. ...and look for encouragement and stimulationthen phone someone up and talk about it.

If you were there, you will recall that we each committed ourselves to do something to address the challenges we had shared. The conclusions of this report show what the Reference Group has set itself to do. We hope you will comment and support...and also share your thoughts since and talk to us about them. Initially this will be by the traditional methods of email and the bulletin so please feed in. Over the next few months we hope there will be other channels opening up for you to report your news and tell your stories of success in the Voluntary Sector of Worcestershire.

Worcestershire Voices - Sharing Our Strength Conference - 7th December

A review of the conference material main themes and messages arising from the discussions

Conference Objective

Organised by the county's Voluntary & Community Sector for the sector - a vital opportunity for volunteers, trustees and key officers to come together and think about how we can work effectively in rapidly changing times.

The sector's lasting strength and influence is driven by concerns for our communities and the needs of our neighbours. Needs and inequalities are growing and we need to grow too. But how can we build from where we are and marshal the other resources we need?

Key objective for the day: Thinking together about the leadership we can offer our communities and how to release the huge energies and drive, which we know are available when people get together to make a difference.

Conference Feedback: Morning Session

Theme 1 - A Dramatically Changing State - Our Key Note address by Sir Stuart Etherington CX of NCVO is in the Appendix along with the summary of the Q&A session that followed it.

The following is a summary of the morning discussion session

Where are we now?

- Struggling with culture change
- Urban vs. rural challenges
- Issues within society self interested society, ageing population, poor awareness and unrealistic expectations
- Demand increasing
- Throw away culture
- Dysfunctional self-perpetuating models, not wanting to collaborate
- Some wanting collaboration others wanting to remain in comfort zone
- Declining public trust
- Aggressive fundraising is a problem
- Challenged by integration and technology
- Leadership needs to be improved
- Traditional Volunteers reducing and many new opportunities being underexploited
- Statutory funding down less money, reduced budgets
- Higher levels of sceptical media attention
- Need innovation & vision on access and use of funds

Questions for further reflection and debate

• Is being labelled 'voluntary sector' helpful? Is there a viable alternative?

- How connected is the sector?
- Is it time to redefine the sector?
- The feedback paints a fairly negative position was it the general conclusion of the group that change is vitally needed?

Examples of success Organisations & Groups referred to as successful

- Dines Green Café
- Carers Consortium
- Age UK
- Malvern Community Awards
- Warndon 'Bags of Love"
- Bishampton village pub/shop
- Worcester Bosch charitable organisations
- Cadbury Trusts
- John Martins Charity
- U3A increasing membership
- Private Sector links Women In Worcestershire, Rotary, Round Table, Ambassadors
- Inclusive groups like PHAB
- Federal links Age UK
- Partnerships to reduce back office costs shared spaces
- Changing Futures Funding and Volunteers into work

Ideas for further development

- Apprentices could be used more
- New Types of funding i.e. community lead (Kempsey Flood Defence), Crowd Funding, Social Media, Rise of philanthropy
- Maximise local media support
- LA understanding their role in the new world –again realism and honesty needed
- CSR and employee volunteering
- Community Organiser approaches

Questions for further reflection and debate

- What is it about these groups that set them apart as being successful?
- How could this be replicated?
- What lessons could be learnt and shared?
- Are there examples of where apprenticeships have worked particularly well?

Conference feedback: Afternoon Session

Theme 2 - Leading Changing Communities Doug Chaplin introduced and facilitated presentations of leadership style by Mark Jackson of St Richard's Hospice and Mel Akers of Maggs Day Centre

- 1. What sort of styles of leadership work / not work and why?
- 2. In what ways does, or could, your organisation help lead society? Have you thought of your work as giving societal leadership?

The following is a summary of the discussion session

What works		What doesn't work
 Sharing, Collaboration 	 Bringing people together 	Heroic individuals
 Support network 	 Listening 	• Not understanding the local picture
 Diversity 	 Visionary 	Need to be more sophisticated
• Equality	 Insight & knowledge 	• Lack of overall leadership of the
 Engagement 	Councillor involvement	sector
 Strategic 	• Public	• Sector is widespread - lots of small
 Consultative 	interest/communication	organisations, larger charities also
 Trusted 	• Open plan	impacted by smaller funding pots
• Sincere	• Inclusive	Risk averse
 Connected 	 Time spent on the front 	Preaching
 Inspiring 	line	Confused vision
Respectful	 Supporting other's ideas 	Lack of shared values
Realistic	 Promoting sector and 	• Need higher profile role for trustees
 Supportive 	localism	as leaders
Challenging		Focus on funding
		Old boys networks

Questions for further reflection and debate

- What about the why? Why do certain leadership styles work and others not work?
- How can you use this information to make a difference?
- Shared training labs? Communities of interest? Geographic communities'? Bring people together, create support groups, how can this be made to work with such varying needs and groups?

Theme 3 - Serving Our Community - a Changing Sector. Roger Britton's slide show including his key points is attached:

The following is a summary of the final discussion session

Ways to Progress

- Address cultural change
- Relationships
- Partnerships
- Talking & training
- Sharing best practice good and bad
- Engage with change
- Seek opportunities
- Harness innovation
- Use new media and technology
- Agree a Worcestershire wide set of agreed social values

Volunteering

- Investment in recruitment
- Training
- Changing the 'who'
- Private sector commitment
- Promotion of volunteering health benefits, invest time in it, needs to be more actively promoted across county, promote localism

What Can We Do? - Key words/themes:

- Change
- Collaborate one voice shared skills, resources, people & volunteers
- Co-design
- Raise productivity
- Joint training
- Partnership joint work together
- Build relationships

Questions for further reflection and debate

- How are you going to achieve change?
- What if any action points were agreed?
- What is direction and vision?
- Who will take responsibility to manage the change?
- How will you effectively increase productivity?
- Collaboration, co-design, joint training and partnering all require action? What, when, how, who?
- Next steps?

Summing Up - Concluding comments by Nathan Travis, Chief Fire Officer, Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service.

Nathan listened to the presentations and the debates during the day and he summarised by comparing the VCS to the recent experience of the Fire Service.

The Fire Service has significantly reduced the number of fires it now attends. The firefighters are therefore increasingly able to focus their efforts on broadening out their prevention role. Their experience of visiting elderly and vulnerable people in their homes means that they are well placed to act as 'eyes and ears' for colleagues and to raise concerns with, for example, social services when something comes to their notice. In this way the Fire and Rescue Service has developed a wider partnership role in supporting people and communities.

Nathan was encouraged by the discussions during the conference and felt that the VCS has both the opportunity and the keenness to work with partners in all sectors for the benefit of the people and communities it supports.

THE WAY FORWARD: The Reference Group met in the New Year following the conference and reviewed the material we are presenting in the appendices.

The challenge facing us was to take what we have, the energy, aspirations and anxieties expressed in the conference and consider what **Worcestershire Voices** can and should do to assist the sector to progress.

Possible Action Items

- VCS to educate public / statutory sector to represent VCS as well as own organisation
- 'Champion' VCS as well as own organisation
- Share resources and skills
- Declare conflict between what government wants and charity needs
- Co-ordinate (e.g. Fusion a good example of working together for a common purpose, work together, avoid competition and bid better for funding
- Link every business with a charity to share skills e.g. marketing.
- Matching websites....is there one?
- Fit people for jobs psychometrics
- Volunteer Passport for Worcestershire
- TOP Landing pages when surfing in Worcestershire
- Create an up to data list of charities and opportunities in Worcestershire
- Link small and large VCS
- Assess impact of sector
- Agree a shared set of Social Values

(Items in **Bold** are the top items highlighted at end of conference)

We noted the limits of our resources:

- Our Voluntary Chairman, Michael Hunter, continuing to be our "Voice" in the various Public Authority structures.
- The Reference Group of willing volunteers mostly with full time roles in the sector.
- Our recently commissioned Communications Officer
- The abilities and energies of any and all across the sector who can support what we do for the benefit of all.
- Specifically commissioned ad hoc research of key issues affecting the sector

...... and asked ourselves which of the above *Possible* Actions can we realistically make progress on.

Worcestershire Voices primary function is to facilitate networking, conversations and the amplification and focusing of your voices and listening where that will assist us all in our work. We are not, nor could we be a traditional infrastructure body and several groups do offer those services, locally as CVSs or across the county through Community First or various more specialised groupings.

We therefore agreed to focus in four areas:

- To continue its strategic role through the Chairman, Reference Group members and others who have the opportunity to engage at county wide level on key topics.
- Present our values, effectiveness, and independence in terms of mission and funding to affect the quality of life in Worcestershire. We would progress this through research on the success stories (including those highlighted during the conference), critical appraisal of the basis of their success and lessons which could be passed on to others
- Stimulate networking through dissemination of that research, other messages from the conference, smaller workshops, our web-site and other communications. It is hoped that people will be encouraged and enabled to find new ways to collaborate for learning, development, and their specific operations across the county.
- Look into working with the University to support our activities and encourage student volunteering.

Keynote address: A Dramatically Changing State

Sir Stuart Etherington Chief Executive, National Council for Voluntary Organisations

BIOGRAPHICAL DETAILS

Sir Stuart Etherington was appointed Chief Executive of NCVO in 1994. NCVO is a membership organisation that represents the interests of charities and voluntary bodies. It has over 11,000 member organisations. Previously he was Chief Executive of the Royal National Institute for Deaf People, a major UK charity.

Throughout his career he has been involved in the leadership of voluntary organisations and policies surrounding them. As such he has become a leading commentator, both through his writing and his media profile.

Stuart is a member of the Economic and Social Committee of the European Union

and the Chair of London United. He is Chair of the Trustees of the Patron's Fund and Chaired a cross party review looking at the structure of the regulation of fundraising. He is also an IES Honorary Fellow. He has been a trustee of Business in the Community, the Chair of the BBC Appeals Advisory Committee, a member of the Community and Social Affairs Committee of Barclays Bank, former Chair of Guidestar UK, Chair of CIVICUS Europe, Treasurer of CIVICUS, a global civil society organisation Council Member of the Institute of Employment Studies, an Advisory Group member for the Policy Centre at the British Academy and for the Lord Mayor's Trust Initiative.

Stuart was knighted in 2010 for services to the voluntary sector.

State of the sector

There are more than 160,000 organisations that make up the sector which are incredibly diverse and represent a range of sizes, aims and activities.

- The value of the UK voluntary sector to the wider economy its Gross Value Added (GVA), or the value of output was estimated at \pm 12.2bn in 2013/14.
- To give some idea of the scale of the sector's contribution, voluntary sector GVA is comparable to the nominal GDP of Iceland.
- The sector also employs some 827,000 people more than two and a half times the number Tesco employs, and over half the number working for the NHS.
- People's goodwill and generosity remains the lifeblood of the sector. During 2014/15, 14.2 million people in the UK reported having volunteered at least once a month, which is 27% of the population.

Equally, income from individuals remains the largest source of income for the sector — in 2013/14 it amounted to £ 19.4bn, a figure that continues to grow. 2013/14 saw a rise in the income of the sector as a whole, to £43.8bn, which was mainly driven by the increase in income from individuals.

Income from government also rose slightly, to \pm 15.0bn, although this is still lower than its peak in 2008/09 and the longer-term trend is downwards. Levels of government grants to the sector — \pm 2.8bn — are less than half the level they were ten years ago but have not declined further.

Most of the recent rise in government income is accounted for by the largest charities. We have seen the emergence of so-called 'super-major charities' (organisations with an annual income over £ 100m). They make up only 0.02% of all charities by number, but have 18.4% of the total income of the sector, and between 2012/13 and 2013/14 saw their income rise by £ 1.7bn.

So the data available gives us some good reasons to be optimistic: it shows

- **O** a steady rise in income from individuals
- **O** continued high levels of volunteering
- **O** and the sheer depth and breadth of services that are provided by charities.



But it also reflects important changes in the relationship between charities and the state: there is a continuing shift in the way charities generate their income, with earned income (from providing goods and services) being higher than income from donations and grants.

Autumn Statement

In one sense, the trajectory of public spending has not changed significantly over the last year. In economic terms, charities can expect much the same over the next five years as they have experienced over the previous five in terms of spending cuts and further devolution.

But we should recognise that this does not mean many charities will be able to continue as they have to date. The growth we were expecting in the coming years has been severely downgraded by the OBR, wages will continue to stagnate, and disposable incomes are due to grow just 0.1% in 2017, compared to 3% last year.

For organisations have been managing as best they can, waiting for wider economic conditions to improve, now may be the time for a rethink their approach.

While we may have seen an immediate response to the referendum in terms of the value of the pound, the real economic impact of the decision to leave the EU will only begin to feed through in 2017 - we have not yet started to feel the bite.

Operating environment

The operating environment for the sector has changed substantially, and shows that this is no time for complacency.

Charities now find themselves sharing a stage with others that see themselves as focusing on 'social good': this space that was traditionally filled by charities is now opening up to a range of actors (CICs, social enterprises, hybrids of government, business and social activity are emerging).

The lines that define the sector are no longer as clear as they once were.

Public trust and confidence

We also know that trust and confidence in charities is declining - the most substantive study in this area is undertaken by the Charity Commission and this year it identified a 10% drop in the overall level of trust and confidence in charities. Amongst those who say their trust and confidence has decreased, a third attribute this to general media stories about a charity or charities and a further third cite media coverage about how charities spend donations.

NCVO's underlying analysis is that the public concern is very real, and the media will continue to reflect that until both are convinced charities have changed their ways.

We know that some of our fundraising methods make people feel uncomfortable, people feel we spend too much on ourselves and not enough on the frontline and there is a general lack of understanding of how charities are run and managed.

We also know that it is charity supporters who are the angriest and the most concerned about some of the ways charities are run. They rightly have high expectations of how their money should be used.

In response, NCVO has been very clear that any attempts to restore trust and confidence must be based on substantive commitments from charities — to responsible fundraising, to clearer communications on how we raise and spend the public's money (including total transparency on salaries, a real sticking point for many people), and more open and effective governance.

Trust in charities is a complex, shifting and multidimensional problem and no single message or action will 'solve' it. We are very clear the things that break trust are not the same things that make trust. Putting our own house in order is not enough.

We have to be transparent, to explain clearly about the way work and the decisions we take. But we must also be more present and be prouder and louder about the benefit our organisations bring to society.

Even a cursory glance at academic research on trust will tell you that the number one driver of trust is familiarity. It is clear we need to work harder to ensure the public know and value our work. We need the public to understand that charities are well managed and that a reasonable proportion of donations makes it to the end cause.

Scrutiny of charities

Some of the drop in public trust is a result of the fact that, once considered beyond reproach, the charity sector has been facing an unprecedented amount of scrutiny.

- **O** Chief executive salaries
- **O** Fundraising
- **O** Corporate partnerships
- **O** Kids Company
- **O** Campaigning and lobbying

Important that we are open to scrutiny: we have to be able to respond to the public's expectations and demonstrate our transparency and accountability.

But lobbying by charities in particularly has been the object of much discussion, and unfortunately unjustified attack.

This has often showed a lack of understanding about the role of charities and what they do, what they have a right — indeed a duty to speak out about.

Anti-Advocacy clause

This was most evident when the Government announced earlier this year that a new clause would be inserted into all new and renewed grant agreements to make sure that taxpayer funds are spent on improving people's lives and good causes, rather than lobbying for new regulation or using taxpayers' money to lobby for more government funding.

Specifically the clause said that the following expenditure would not be permitted: 'activity intended to influence or attempt to influence Parliament, Government or political parties, or attempting to influence the awarding or renewal of contracts and grants, or attempting to influence legislative or regulatory action.'

We came out strongly against such a move. In our view the clause was unjust on points of principle: that charities must always be able to speak up for their beneficiaries, campaign within the law, irrespective of their funding arrangements.

It is for these reasons that we were relieved when government announced that it would pause implementation of the clause, and consult the sector on its plans.

Since then we have been in an ongoing dialogue with the government on this topic. These exchanges have at times been robust.

But I am pleased to say that the government has listened and acted to address the clear problems in the clause and previous guidance which were raised by NCVO and others.

Last week we welcomed the publication by the Cabinet Office of a set of 10 minimum grant-making standards for departments and arm's length bodies is a positive step. Among them are requirements that strong business cases be made, that grant-making is competitive by default, that grants include agreed outputs and longer-term objectives. They also prescribe proportionate due diligence and training for grant administrators. These are all common sense and features of existing good practice, and it will be very helpful to have them codified in this way.

Most importantly, the new guidance clearly recognises that, while no one would expect any government to agree with charities on every area of policy — indeed charities often have various views themselves — it is essential that we are able to honestly discuss policy and to constructively provide advice based on the sector's depth of expertise.

This change shows a welcome desire on behalf of the new prime minister and her administration to reset the relationship between government and the voluntary sector. This was an important first step.

What we want to see next is government signing up to the Compact.

By demonstrating its commitment to the Compact, government would be sending an important signal to our sector about our role and contribution in facing the many challenges ahead.

Stuart Etherington's responses to questions

Conference participants discussed the keynote presentation and handed in their questions and comments, these were collated and Stuart's responses were as follows:

Procurement, contracts and competition

We need to remember that we are considering competition not only from corporates but also from the larger charities.

The NCVO is working in this area seeking to get agreement and set out how organisations should behave towards each other with the aim of getting, particularly larger organisations to sign up to a sort of within sector Compact.

Media images

There is a perception that large nationals are causing the problem and that it is not of "our making", but we need to realise that the level of media interest at all levels is unprecedented.

We need to distinguish between media (and other) criticisms which either (a) have no actual basis in fact or (b) are partially or wholly true.

For example:

- The salary issue was a legitimate cause of concern and press interest largely to do with the lack of transparency. The sector needed reform!
- Government's attempts to curtain campaigning through grant clauses required a strong push-back which it got.
- The True and Fair (!) Foundation ran inaccurate stories about what charities were doing reported in the Telegraph they were told that they were wrong and published a retraction.
- Investigative journalists discovered inappropriate sharing of data this was wrong and there was a case to answer.

Why this interest? It is driven by the appetite of the 24/7 media and the trend for scrutiny where there are no "sacred cows".

How do you describe a sector with such a wide continuum?

Different descriptions are appropriate for different parts of the sector. In popular perception the sector is seen as the smaller local organisations rather than the big nationals. While this is correct in relation to the number, the financials are dominated by a few big organisations.

Leveraging funding

The question is where do you want to be on this matrix:



The sector has a high hidden assets base. For example; St John's Hospital, founded in 1174 had accumulated land in Bath. It had been ticking over until a new Chief Executive transformed the way those assets were used and massively increased the impact of the charity. Another example is the Henry Smith Charity which owns a large part of Kensington had failed to maximise that resource until recently. The sector needs to map and then exploit its assets.

Small charities collaborating

The obvious answer is to share the back office – there is no need for a full merger. Charities need to just work together and much of this is about leadership – distributed leadership rather than heroic leadership and we have a generation of newer leaders who are attuned to this. We also need to see that funding arrangements are pushing us in this direction. Also, if we are to successfully lobby then we must collaborate, if businesses can do this, and they are in direct competition then we can.

Are "super-charities" a problem?

They are not a problem per se; indeed they can be a benefit to voluntary action. But we have to be aware of predatory behaviour – large organisations have to grow to stand still so they may well be absorbing the "business". There are some good examples of collaboration between larger and smaller charities and federal solutions eg. Age UK and CAB.

Procurement

We have to work to make sure that the level of difficulty in getting a grant is proportionate.

Capacity

Whatever the scale of taxation the needs of the population will always outstrip the capacity of the public sector. The need for the voluntary sector is increasing and will continue to increase. In recent times the government has moved to the private sector and seen the citizen as consumer. This is now changing as we see things like the social value of volunteering. Gus O'Donnell – not volunteering has the same impact on your health as smoking 10 cigarettes a day! Why is the value of volunteering not included in GDB (but drug dealing and prostitution are!)?

Our Presentation - Sharing Our Strength main slides



Sharing Our Strength

Voluntary and Community Sector's #STRONGWorcestershire WiFi Code: 3E3FF2A846

WorcesterWiFi

Theme 2 - Leading Changing Communities



Sharing Our Strength

Leading Changing Communities

What sort of styles of leadership work in your organisation? (What might work for you, not work for you and why?) In what ways does or could your organisation help lead society?

Theme 3 - Serving Our Community - a Changing Sector

Serving Our Society

A widening role for the sector – developing capacity in communities

- Explore the context
- Explore the questions
- · Contribute speak and really usten
- · Seek patterns and insights
- Share discoveries

When the whistle blows everyone apart from the facilitator moves to the next table and begins by hearing where the previous group had got to.

Funding / Smaller Government



The old order is going fast. What will take it's place?





So ... is civil society about to collapse?













Share examples of success people, organisations and communities that are making it happen.

- Explore the source:
 Teplore the questions
 Contribute speak and <u>mailing</u> listen
 Sate pattons and insights
 disper disportnes



What can we/should we do, collectively as VCS and individually to improve things?

Keplere the contact
 Keplere the questions
 Condribute - speak and <u>mattin</u> listen
 Sete parterna sout insights
 Siner sliseoveries

The challenge -MAKE THINGS HAPPEN!

"Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it's the only thing that ever has." Margaret Mede

Voices Conference Feedback Summary

A month after the conference a feedback questionnaire was circulated to all attendees and the results analysed. There were 13 responses from 51 attendees, a response rate of 25.5%. The scored questions sought responses to a five point Likert scale response to a neutral question with 1 being negative ("not at all") and 5 positive ("completely").



Question 6. If you think future events may be useful what subjects would you like to see included?

- How the sector can work more collaboratively and break down silo mentality
- Charities sharing resources
- Volunteering
- Recruitment of volunteers in shops
- The impact of changes to funding across the sector
- Funding
- Leadership
- Social value
- Developing your voice
- Developing business skills within the voluntary sector
- Action on topics not just discussion

Question 7. In what way do you think that Voices could enhance the success of your organisation?

- Encouraging collaboration
- Be clear that all organisations are included so that it is a one stop shop in reality
- Helped developed better understanding of the issues facing the sector and how other partner agencies may assist or work closer to voluntary sector
- Sharing good practice and difficulties and how they have been overcome across the sector in Worcestershire
- Bringing people together to learn best practice and work together

Question 8. If you have any other comments about the conference, the work of Voices or the sector in general please note them below

- Key moving forward is action
- Accountability
- Sorry to hear that it did not have much clout despite its aims and ambitions. Nothing about us without us all working together to benefit Worcestershire.
- Very useful introduction to the various voluntary sector groups working and providing support in Worcestershire.
- It was great to meet people from other organisations and discuss what works well for them

Attendance	List
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ALLEIIUA	IICE LISU		
Mel	Akers	akers918@btinternet.com	Maggs Day Centre
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Rob	Morris	RMorris2@worcestershire.gov.uk	WCC – Find it in Worcs
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