

Voluntary Action-Leeds



Annual Report 2006/07

Welcome

Chair's report

In VA-L's last Annual Report, Rhona Davidson concluded her piece with the words "...here's to the future!". How exactly Rhona envisaged the future she was 'toasting' is not clear, but it is unlikely she was referring to her own departure for pastures new.



Thus whilst this report would normally reflect the Chair's general view on VA-L's progress over the past twelve months, I feel it is only just to use this opportunity to pay tribute to Rhona and her work during the last nine years.

Taking the reins at VA-L 2002, Rhona set about changing the culture of the organisation. She has a vision, an ethos and a genuine belief in the worth of VA-L's work which, under her leadership, helped to ensure VA-L became a healthier, more transparent organisation and one with a focus to better serve the voluntary and community sector of Leeds.

For me, Rhona showed that fairness, honesty, openness and, above all, integrity are values worth hanging on to – even (or perhaps especially) in the cynical world in which we operate. This is her legacy to VA-L, and long may it live. She will be sorely missed, but I'm sure everyone who knows or has worked with Rhona will join me in wishing her the very, very best in life.

A big 'thank you', as always, must go to the staff at VA-L for all their hard work, dedication and commitment over the past year. Many thanks too, to my fellow trustees who, similarly, have worked hard to try to ensure VA-L is best able to go forward and meet the challenges it faces.

Finally, that just leaves me to wish all those associated with VA-L the very best for the future. I genuinely hope VA-L prospers, stays true to its purpose and, above all, continues to serve and provide leadership, high quality services and support to the voluntary, community and faith sector throughout Leeds.

Gary Headland, Chair of Trustees

"VA-L have made membership free to smaller organisations, but we are happy to pay the £20 membership fee to support VA-L and the vital work they do helping voluntary organisations."

Norma Grubb, Organiser and Treasurer, Leeds Asthma Swimming Club

General Manager's report

We must first say a big thanks to Rhona Davidson, VA-L's General Manager, who departed in October 2007. So as Acting General Manager, it's my pleasure to outline some changes in the year, and highlight significant external challenges ahead – which without Rhona's commitment and leadership over the past years, would be more daunting.



We've always known that VA-L's services are a value-for-money high quality resource for the sector, but during the year we've tightened up our monitoring processes – becoming much more output focused. A positive experience, reminding staff and informing funders of the significant impact of our work. This means we can move forward with confidence, knowing that our services are much needed.

Externally, things couldn't be more different. Changes to European funding priorities and the ending of several Big Lottery programmes, could potentially see many projects facing significant cutbacks as cuts really start to bite in March 08. Whilst VA-L cannot reverse such changes, we must ensure that the importance of the sector in contributing to the wider community and local economy is heard at all levels, whilst recognising the increasing constraints on funders and commissioners.

We've been working hard to revive the debate around the overall value provided by the VCS to Leeds and work with partners to find ways of tackling these issues. This cannot be done alone and VA-L has made a conscious decision to become more involved in strategic decision-making. We feel the best way to do this is in partnership with other infrastructure agencies through the, now widely recognised, Leeds Infrastructure Consortium (LIC).

Finally, thanks to our partners, funders and all those we support and here's to the future and the hope that Leeds continues to have a vibrant and sustainable sector.

**Richard Jackson, Partnerships Manager
(Acting General Manager)**

Summarised Accounts

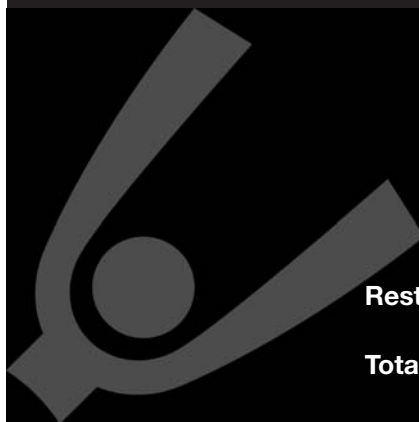
Consolidated statement of Financial Activities (Including Income and Expenditure Account) for the year ended 31st March 2007.

	2007 Total Funds (£)	2006 Total Funds (£)
Incoming resources		
Incoming resources from generated funds:		
Voluntary income:		
Grants and core funding receivable	198,971	237,400
Other voluntary income	12,218	10,306
Activities for generating funds:		
Commercial trading operations	84,535	81,096
Rental income	-	20,872
Interest receivable	37,760	31,909
Grants and similar income	253,579	513,993
Stringer House rental income	19,376	-
Other income	58,891	74,134
Total incoming resources	<u>665,330</u>	<u>969,710</u>
Resources expended		
Costs of generating funds:		
Commercial trading operation	69,144	67,820
Charitable activities:	673,002	804,855
Governance costs:	14,885	11,399
Total resources expended	<u>757,031</u>	<u>884,074</u>
Net incoming resources for the year	(91,701)	85,636
Unrealised gains		
Revaluation of tangible fixed assets	-	115,000
Revaluation of fixed asset investments	(2,820)	6,659
Net movement in funds	(94,521)	207,295
Reconciliation of funds		
Total funds at 1st April 2006	941,660	734,365
Total funds at 31st March 2007	<u>847,139</u>	<u>941,660</u>

The trustees confirm that these summarised financial statements are a summary of information extracted from the full annual accounts, which were approved on 18 September 2007 by the Board of Trustees. These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to allow for a full understanding of the financial affairs of the charity. For further information the full annual accounts, the auditors report on those accounts and the Trustees' Annual Report should be consulted; copies of these can be obtained from Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2QW.

Balance sheet at 31st March 2007

	Group		Charity	
	2007 (£)	2006 (£)	2007 (£)	2006 (£)
Fixed assets				
Tangible fixed assets	499,854	508,799	499,854	508,799
Investment - quoted	80,413	83,233	80,413	83,233
Investment in subsidiary	-	-	2	2
	<u>580,267</u>	<u>592,032</u>	<u>580,269</u>	<u>592,034</u>
Current assets				
Debtors	50,677	97,537	43,599	70,498
Cash at bank and in hand	562,283	378,691	186,669	246,391
	<u>612,960</u>	<u>476,228</u>	<u>230,268</u>	<u>316,889</u>
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	346,088	126,600	55,876	59,741
	<u>266,872</u>	<u>349,628</u>	<u>174,392</u>	<u>257,148</u>
Net current assets	266,872	349,628	174,392	257,148
Net assets	847,139	941,660	754,661	849,182
Unrestricted funds				
Free charitable reserves	75,125	126,941	75,125	126,941
Fixed assets reserve	499,854	508,799	499,854	508,799
Designated funds				
- Capacity project	-	26,309	-	26,309
- Funding shortfall (07/08,06/07)	55,000	52,000	55,000	52,000
- Redundancy & legal costs	50,000	-	50,000	-
- Website development	1,000	-	1,000	-
Non-charitable trading funds	92,480	92,480	2	2
Restricted funds	73,680	135,131	73,680	135,131
Total funds	847,139	941,660	754,661	849,182



Projects & Services

Training

High quality and relevant training is still one of the most vital services which our members and the sector need and appreciate.

In 2006/07 over 650 people attended one of the 100 courses on offer – a significant increase.



Our regular training programme 'Training Matters', covers a core range of skills and key areas of interest. The funding and finance courses are delivered in partnership with fit4funding and WYCAS, and the volunteer management programme is delivered by VA-L's Volunteer Team. In terms of general skills, courses like Minute Taking and Child Protection are always full every term. Some notable additions during the year included: A-Z of Questionnaire Design, Creative Groupwork and Moving into Management (a 2-day course).

Our tailor made training programme was also busy. Three tailor made workshops on Representation Skills in Meetings, Listening Skills and Assertiveness, organised for the PSI Network proved to be a success and our Management Committee Skills course, comprising of five workshops, was run at West Leeds Healthy Living Network and Resourcing the Community.

“A VA-L training day helped us to gain grants from the National Lottery and Children In Need, allowing us to become more than a Swimming Club. It enabled us to provide respite holidays for young people disadvantaged by asthma.”

David Grubb, Chairman, Leeds Asthma Swimming Club



Small Groups Development

The most effective community work often comes from local grass roots organisations, with few or no paid staff and these are the groups that our Small Groups Development Worker is in constant contact with.

Demand has increased for the service in during the year and the development worker was employed full-time – up from 25 hours per week the previous year. In total we responded to 369 requests for information and support, and out of this total 198 community, voluntary and faith organisations accessed this service for the first time, up from last year.

The top issues for all enquiries that have been dealt with were: funding (108 enquiries), governance (70), new groups/start-ups (30) and child protection (30)

Early in the year we highlighted the lack of small groups support in outlining rural areas of Leeds, and we focused some of our time in supporting groups in Otley. This resulted in 8% of all new groups seen in the year coming from the area – in the coming year we will be focusing more of our work in the Outer wedges of Leeds to meet this clearly identified need.

Inner North West Funding Project

Providing support and advice to groups in Headingley, Kirkstall, Weetwood, Hyde Park and Woodhouse – the funding project aims to enable organisations supported to become more self-sufficient by enabling them to target and generate funds more effectively.

During the year 47 groups received individual support on funding applications and business planning and of these 47% had no paid worker. Over £161,000 has been brought into the area as a result of the project's support and advice.

Three newsletters were produced and distributed to over 250 groups and 67 people attended training sessions. The project also set up a monthly email funding update.

“The project helped with several Lottery bids, giving us an insight into how the programmes work. When you are close to a project it is invaluable to have dispassionate criticism of how you are presenting it. Sadly in the ultra competitive Lottery we were not successful, but the assistance with the bid will help next time.” John Preston, Manager, BTCV

We wanted to change the constitution of the organisation, which is complicated, but it wasn't difficult once Kathy from VA-L explained it to me. VA-L is a very good source of support. She made it simple, explaining the stages we had to go through to make the changes.

Rose Simkins, Director, Stop Hate UK

Volunteering

The Volunteer Bureau at the Central Library is busier than ever, and we have expanded capacity to meet demand by offering a drop-in service, rather than taking appointments. We now see around 20 people a week, up from eight.

We continue to be agents for Volunteering England, part of this involves the maintaining of the national online volunteer database www.do-it.org.uk. In total we handled 1,600 do-it enquiries in the year, which was on top of the 900 phone and email enquiries handled.

Last year we matched 619 volunteers to the hundreds opportunities available.

VA-L once again organised the Big Summer Bowl event to thank the city's volunteers for their valued time and commitment that they give throughout the year.



InVOLve relaunched, which is a series of free workshops run in partnership with Multiple Choice that introduces the value of volunteering to individuals and community groups. We are also now running these in schools and colleges with excellent feedback, Anne Croft, tutor at Thomas Danby College wrote, "the students' thoroughly enjoyed the session and enthusiastically described what they had done. They said it was brilliant."

"The Volunteer Centre has been a valuable resource, it has enabled us to recruit and retain volunteers as well as supporting us to develop our volunteer program."

Daisy Davey, Volunteer Manager, Multiple Choice

Keeping the sector informed

In October we launched a monthly email newsletter to keep the sector up-to-date with the latest local and national news – this compliments the ever-popular printed newsletter. The response has been fantastic with over 400 people subscribing in the first six months.

A new service, Communication Workshops was introduced in June. These one-to-one sessions provide practical advice and support to help groups improve their Marketing. Fifteen organisations benefited, receiving advice on strategic marketing, press relations, websites and producing promotional materials.

"A big thanks for advertising our event, we've taken over 80 bookings which is really good and no doubt a result of your help."

Ed Thornton, NCVO



Payroll Services

Running a project or service can be challenging enough as it is, and the payroll service allows organisations to focus on what they do best – delivering services, and not worrying about P60's, P45's, pension contributions, sick pay, union subscriptions, annual returns and dealing with the Inland Revenue.

The service also allows you work out exactly what your payroll costs are for employing staff – helping if you are implementing full cost recovery systems.

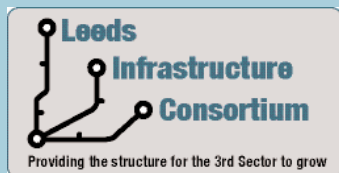
Again, the cost of the service remained unchanged – providing excellent value for money.

139 organisations use the service with nearly 800 employees on the payroll

Library and Funding Point

Carrying around 100 periodicals and nearly 2,000 books, the library is a valuable resource for local groups. Last year we dealt with 180 enquiries – ranging from simple queries to complicated problems – the library also acts as a one-stop information centre.

On average five groups a month visit the library to use the Funder Finder online database to locate grants, receiving one-to-one training on using the system.



Leeds Infrastructure Consortium

The Leeds Infrastructure Consortium (LIC), a consortium of infrastructure support agencies facilitated by VA-L, took some big steps in the year. These included; the formalisation of its membership and processes, management of a grant focused on providing support to VCS organisations, the publishing of an Infrastructure Directory detailing infrastructure support in Leeds and the launch of its website (www.leeds-ic.org.uk). LIC also became a major player in the strategic development of the VCS and has developed key partnerships and contacts in other sectors and continues to grow.

The capacITy project

Having your computer systems running, backed-up, secure and online, is now a key part of any project and this is where capacITy really benefits the organisations it supports. Now in its ninth year, our experienced IT professionals provide training, site visits and phone support to its subscribers – this gives organisations the peace of mind, knowing that help is only a call away if their computer crashes or data is lost.

During the year the team assisted 51 groups through 148 phone support calls, 198 site visits and 148 training sessions.

During the year the team added remote desktop support to the service, and now they can log into your desktop computer from their offices, see the problem and solve IT issues instantly. Also, the team now offer Microsoft server support in addition to the variety of made to measure support packages on offer.

“VA-L provides an extraordinary service to people like me, who do not work full-time in the world of fundraising, but come across it every now and then. The support and information they always have to hand makes our job so much more bearable!”

Tina Kelly, Extended Services Co-ordinator, ES North West Ralph Thoresby School



The PSINetwork

The Physical and Sensory Impairment (PSI) Network (Leeds) now has 42 member groups and the Development Group now meets every two months to plan the direction of the Network.

In December, to celebrate the International Day of Disabled People, the Network held an event about the Opportunities for Leisure, Recreation and Sport for Disabled People. It was well attended and was supported by an information pack.

In March they ran a pilot course – Communication and Contribution – which covered meeting skills, self-confidence in meetings, how to put your point across and feedback information. The response was very positive – ‘an extremely informative, thoroughly enjoyable three days’. Participants felt that they will be more confident to challenge issues in meetings, such as the inaccessibility of information, if they know that those organising the meetings ‘know’ what is needed.

A follow on from the course was that a leaflet ‘Making Meeting Accessible’ should be produced and this is in the final stages of production.

“Since joining our members have attended training courses and conferences gaining valuable information which they relayed to the rest of the group. We love the newsletters which have informed us from a social side i.e. concessions at Vue Cinemas as well as pointers for our group work.”

Adele Broughton, Leeds Federated Tenants Group

Leeds BME Network

It was planned for the facilitation of the Network to transfer over to Leeds Connecting Communities at the earliest opportunity, and this occurred in March 2007. Up to this point the network maintained its membership of 70 organisations and had been focusing on the development of its identify and the formation of clear development and work plans, development of a constitution and the appointment of officers. It had also gained representation on Strategic Partnerships in Leeds. The network continues to go from strength to strength.

Join VA-L

Membership free for smaller groups

By becoming a member of Voluntary Action-Leeds, voluntary and community organisations can take advantage of discounts on training, payroll services, room hire and advertising in the VA-L newsletter. Plus you will be sent a monthly VA-L newsletter full of essential local, national, fundraising and volunteering news.

Membership is free for groups with an income below £20,000 and starts from just £35 per year and is based on organisation turnover. For more information complete the form and sent to VA-L, Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street, Hunslet, Leeds LS10 2QW, call Maxine Woods on 0113 297 7925 or email maxine.woods@val.org.uk

Please send me more information

Everybody requesting information will receive a free copy of the VA-L newsletter.

Name _____

Organisation _____

Address _____

Tel _____ Email _____

Signed _____ Date _____

- Please tick if you would be happy to receive further mailings from VA-L
 Please tick to receive our monthly email newsletter

Please tick

- | | |
|--|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Becoming a member of VA-L | <input type="checkbox"/> Small Groups support |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Training | <input type="checkbox"/> Volunteering |
| <input type="checkbox"/> capacITy IT support services | <input type="checkbox"/> Please contact me |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Payroll service | <input type="checkbox"/> Leeds Infrastructure Consortium |

Thank you

VA-L would like to acknowledge the generous support of the following:

Sir George Martin Trust, Friendship House & Pontefract Lane Friends; Charles Brotherton Trust

We would like to acknowledge the importance of our partnerships with:

Leeds City Council (especially Neighbourhoods & Environment; Social Services; Leeds Library & Information Services; North West Area Management Committee and Team); The Commission for Patient & Public Involvement in Health; Leeds Mental Health Trust; Leeds Teaching Hospitals Trust, the Primary Care Trusts for Leeds (North West, North East, West, South and East); Leeds Initiative; WYLDA (West Yorkshire Local Development Agencies); members of Leeds Infrastructure Consortium, Leeds BME Network and Leeds PSINetwork; GOYH (Capacity Builders); NAVCA; Volunteering England; fit4funding; WYCAS... and all our friends and colleagues in the voluntary, community and faith sector.

VAL trustees

J Beaumont	S Murray <i>Appointed 5th February 2007</i>
N Bishop <i>Resigned 21st November 2006</i>	E O'Brien
J Daguere <i>Resigned 21st November 2006</i>	S Pepper
N Emery	R Peters
J Harpin	M Shields <i>Resigned 26th April 2006</i>
G Headland	A Spice <i>Appointed 21st November 2006</i>
R Heslop <i>Resigned 3rd August 2006</i>	C Wakeley
C Hollins	V Wyatt
S Howes	

Registered Auditors

Thomas Coombes & Son
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29 Clarendon Road
Leeds LS2 9PG

Bankers

Lloyds TSB Bank plc
6-7 Park Row
Leeds LS1 1NX

Registered Office

Stringer House
34 Lupton Street
Hunslet
Leeds LS10 2QW

Insurance Brokers

Bartletts & Co
Broadway Hall
Leeds LS18 4RS

Voluntary Action-Leeds

Voluntary Action-Leeds, Stringer House, 34 Lupton Street,
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Our annual report is also produced in
large print and audio format please
contact Voluntary Action-Leeds on
0113 297 7920 or email enquiries@val.org.uk

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