



Volunteer Centre

Bath & North East Somerset

Annual Report

2007 – 2008

Connecting People Through Volunteering



Quality Accredited Member

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The Volunteer Centre Bath and North East Somerset is supported by:



1. Chair's Report

I took over as Chair of Trustees in April 2008 and inherited an organisation with masses of potential and talent but still recovering from a period of considerable challenge. During 2007/08 the centre lost its Manager, Helen Morrison, to motherhood and relocation and its Chair of Trustees, Helen Timbrell, to work pressure and other commitments. They are both much missed and I would like to take this opportunity to thank them for their commitment and hard work over what was clearly a difficult period for the Centre. Thanks also go to Sally Rimmer for her excellent work as interim manager.

During the year the Centre has continued to work with the Council for Voluntary Service and Bath and North East Somerset Council to promote and support volunteering, with training events, taster sessions, volunteering fairs and employee challenges. Some of this activity has been delivered through the new Local Area Agreement contract. Over the year there has been a steady growth in both volunteer enquiries and volunteer opportunities on our register. We have also extended the range and type of volunteer opportunities on offer. Thanks to the hard work, dedication and commitment of our small staff team we have kept the show on the road despite the various management gaps.

During March 2008 there was a major recruitment drive for new Board Members including Chair, Treasurer Elect and an additional non office-holding Trustee. This brings the Board to full strength with eight Trustees with a wide range of relevant experience and skills.

And so the future: In January 2008 The Commission on the Future of Volunteering published its Manifesto for Change. We share its vision to make volunteering “part of the DNA of our society... integral to the way we think of ourselves and live our lives” and hope over the coming year to work with our members, stakeholders and communities to begin to make that vision a reality here in Bath and North East Somerset.

Marion Cooper
Chair

2. Reference and Administrative Information

Company Number 2948107
 Charity Registration Number 1042007
 Registered Office South Vaults
 Green Park Station
 Bath
 BA1 1JB

Trustees / Company Directors

Helen Timbrell	Chair	Retired 08.01.2008
Bren Abercrombie	Vice-Chair	
Derek De Val	Treasurer	
Maya Bahra	Board Member	Retired 09.11.2007
Roger Brimblecombe	Board Member	Appointed 13.09.2007
Jim Cronin	Board Member	
Jan Westrope	Board Member	Appointed 31.10.2007

Company Secretary

Helen Morrison	Retired 25.07.2007
Sally Rimmer	Appointed 12.07.2007

Staff and Volunteers

Helen Morrison	Manager (Full-time)	
Sally Rimmer	Manager (Maternity Cover)	
Phil Birch	Development Officer (21 hours/week)	Appointed 29.01.2008
Jane Brimble	Volunteering Advisor (6 hours/week)	
Hazel Newman	Volunteering Advisor (6 hours/week)	
Zoe Smith	Administrator (7 hours/week)	
Jill Ponsford	Administrative Assistant (4 hours/week)	
Liz Clark	Volunteer Administrative Assistant	Left 12.12.2007
Mike Searl	Volunteer Web Designer	

Bookkeeping Hannah Leach

Auditors Moore Stephens, Chartered Accountants

3. Structure, Governance and Management

Volunteer Centre Bath and North East Somerset is a registered charity and a company limited by guarantee, governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association. It changed its name from Bath and North East Somerset Voluntary Service (Voluntary First) at its Annual General Meeting on 29 November 2005.

The charity is governed by Trustees who are also Directors of the company. The Board makes decisions on the annual budget, formulates policy and considers strategic issues which affect the organisation. The Board employs staff to manage and deliver services. Board decisions are generally taken by consensus, where necessary moving to a vote with the Chair holding a casting vote. Members can submit resolutions to be considered at the Annual General Meeting.

Trustees are recruited through advertising in local and national papers, through local networks and through our volunteering brokerage service. This year we also recruited a Trustee through a one-off “Interested in Becoming a Trustee?” event which we jointly ran with our local Council for Voluntary Service.

All new Trustees are provided with an induction pack outlining their role and responsibilities as a Trustee, the vision, objectives and activities of the Volunteer Centre and background information about the Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure in Bath and North East Somerset.

Risk assessment is built into all our operational and strategic processes, where we consider risk under the following headings:

- People
- Property
- Income
- Reputation
- Liability

During 2007/08 we identified particular risks in relation to:

- Income – we are currently drawing down from our capital reserves to cover the majority of operating costs.

Strategy to manage this risk: we have prioritised securing sustainable funding and are identifying potential sources of funding for key activities.

- Property – our current premises are inadequate in terms of visibility and accessibility for clients and although fully compliant with all health and safety requirements, do not fulfil our ambitions to be an exemplary employer.

Strategy to manage this risk: we are working with the local Council for Voluntary Service and other partners to consider options for new premises.

4. Objectives and Activities

The principal objective of the Volunteer Centre is to improve the quality of life of the citizens of Bath and North East Somerset by encouraging, promoting, supporting and developing the work of volunteers within voluntary organisations and community groups in the area, and helping these organisations and groups to be as effective and as sustainable as possible.

Our activities focus around the six core functions as outlined in the Volunteering England “Building On Success Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure 2004-2014”, namely:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development

5. Achievements and Performance

Key 2007/08 Achievements

- Developed 2008-2011 Business Plan.
- Strengthened and enlarged Board of Trustees, including recruitment of new Chair.
- Secured Service Level Agreement with Bath and North East Somerset Council to support delivery of Local Area Agreement target to increase volunteering.
- Recruited Development Officer.
- Launched Volunteer Fair Programme.
- Piloted three employee volunteering initiatives.
- Built strategic links with Public and Voluntary and Community Sector partners including membership of Compact Board.
- Launched a Trustee Information and Recruitment Programme in conjunction with Bath and North East Somerset Council for Voluntary Service.
- Participated in the Communities Group of the Local Strategic Partnership.

Brokerage

- During 2007/08 we handled a total of 1,242 enquiries about volunteering opportunities – an increase of almost 25% on the previous year (see Figure 1).
- April to June 2007 saw substantial increases in enquiries when compared to the previous year. However, August, September, February and March saw slight decreases on 2006/07 (see Figure 2).

“I think the service is excellent and would recommend anyone looking for something to do to pay the Centre a visit.”

Volunteer Centre Visitor

- We continued to follow up our brokerage service by contacting volunteers at set intervals following their registration. We followed up 568 potential volunteers, receiving 195 responses.
- A total of 121 volunteers were confirmed as placed during the year – a decrease of 13% on the previous year (see Figure 3).

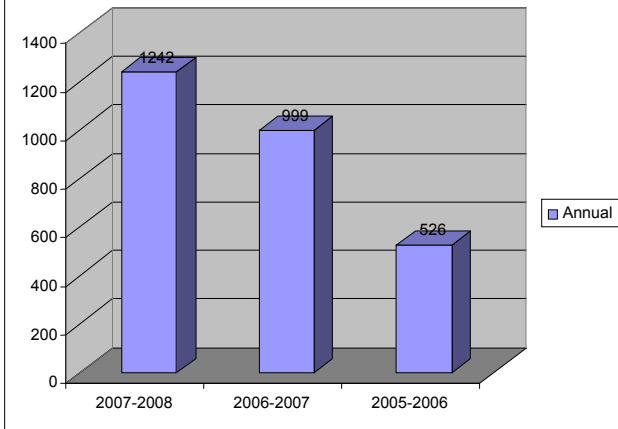
Marketing Volunteering

- In March 2008 we launched our Volunteering Fair Programme with the first Fair taking place in Keynsham. Twelve volunteer-involving organisations took up the opportunity to promote their volunteering opportunities and feedback from all concerned was extremely positive.
- Supported by a volunteer, Mike Searl, we continued to develop our website and had almost 3,500 visitors to the site during the year.
- We continued to promote volunteering, with regular items appearing in the local press and Voluntary and Community Sector newsletters and websites.
- We gave talks and participated in local events and networks to promote volunteering and the work of the Volunteer Centre – both to general audiences, and also to specific groups including the South West Forum, St. John’s Trust and The Big Issue Foundation.

“The Keynsham Volunteer Recruitment Fair was a great help to The British Heart Foundation. We recruited three volunteers who are still at the Keynsham Shop now.”

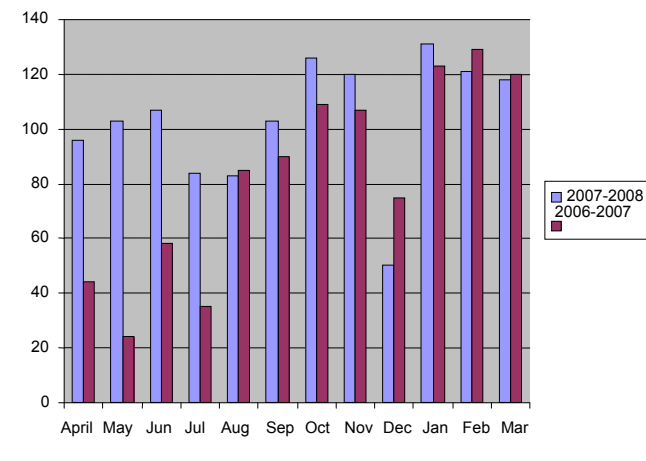
Jolene Roberts, Shop Manager

Figure 1. Annual Volunteer Enquiries 2005-2008



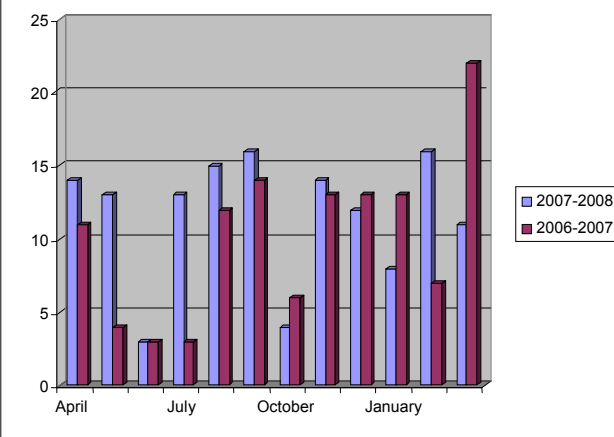
Volunteer Centre enquiries rise 25% during 2007/08.

Figure 2. Monthly Volunteer Enquiries 2006-2008



Interest in volunteering is consistently high throughout the year (except nobody wants to volunteer in December!)

Figure 3. Volunteer Placements Confirmed 2006-2008



Tracking our volunteers is still a challenge.

Good Practice Development

- At the close of the year, 291 volunteer-involving organisations were registered with the Volunteer Centre; an increase of over 14% on the previous year (see Figure 4).
- In Spring 2008 we worked with Bath and North East Somerset Council for Voluntary Service to hold an event to promote volunteering as a Trustee.
- A good practice consultancy service for volunteer-involving organisations was launched by our Development Officer, Phil Birch, in March 2008. Phil has answered many enquiries about volunteer recruitment and management.

Developing Volunteering Opportunities

- New volunteering opportunities registered with the Volunteer Centre increased by 30% over the year and in March 2008 stood at almost 600 (see Figure 5). Opportunities from a huge range of activities are now available, from social care to conservation, administration to sport.

“The Volunteer Centre is an excellent starting point for anyone looking to volunteer - consider yourselves recommended!”

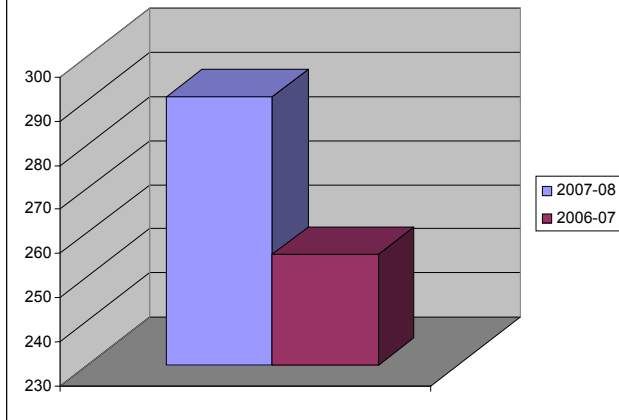
Volunteer Centre Visitor

- During the year we supported employee volunteering programmes with the Ministry of Defence and Somer Housing Trust to undertake improvements to the St. Marks Community Centre in Bath. We also supported Bath and North East Somerset Council in piloting its first employee volunteering event, working with staff and residents of Greenhill House in Timsbury, a Leonard Cheshire Home, and at First Steps, a Children’s Centre in Twerton.

Policy Response and Campaigning

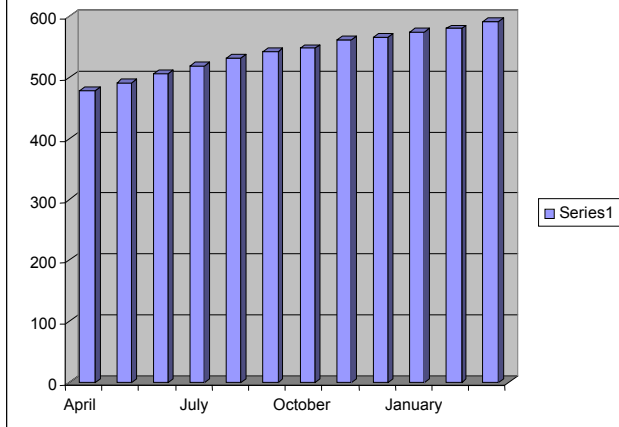
- Working with the local Council for Voluntary Service Forum, we continued to lobby for recognition of the value of the Voluntary and Community Sector in general and volunteering in particular, in all local strategic and operational developments.
- We continued to act as Champion for the local Compact Volunteering Code of Practice and to support the establishment of a Compact Board to take the work forward.

Figure 4. Organisations Registered with Volunteer Centre



The number of voluntary organisations registered with the Volunteer Centre increased by 14% in 2007/08.

Figure 5. Volunteer Opportunities - by month 2007/08



New volunteering opportunities registered with the Volunteer Centre increased by 30% during 2007/08.

Strategic Development of Volunteering

- During 2007/08 we reviewed and revised our Business Plan and developed key strategic objectives for the period 2008-2010.
- In November 2007 we secured a three-year Service Level Agreement with Bath and North East Somerset Council to support the Local Area Agreement volunteering target. From January 2008, the new volunteering Development Officer has been in post to deliver a range of new initiatives to promote and support volunteering across the whole area.
- We continued to meet with other Volunteer Centres within the sub-regional group (including Bristol, South Gloucestershire and Weston-Super-Mare) to share ideas, resources and best practice.
- The Manager continued to represent the Volunteer Centre at the South West Forum.
- Our seat on the Local Strategic Partnership Communities Group has enabled us to gain an insight into the needs and priorities of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Bath and North East Somerset as well as developments in the sector.
- We continued our regular contact with other volunteer-placing organisations and participated in the Youth Volunteering Network which includes Bath Spa University, University of Bath and the 'Involved Team'. The Network aims to ensure that all these agencies work collaboratively to identify and develop volunteering opportunities for 16 to 25 year olds.

"I found the service to be very good with a broad range of opportunities on offer. I would recommend the Volunteer Centre to friends."

*Meryl Williams, Volunteer,
The Building of Bath
Museum.*

6. Plans for Future Periods

With a strengthened Board in place and the appointment of a new Chief Executive underway, the Volunteer Centre is entering an exciting and intensive period of development. The 2008-2011 Business Plan sets a new vision for the Centre:

“to become positioned and publicly recognised as the focal point for volunteering development in Bath and North East Somerset. With sustainably-funded core operations in our central Bath premises, we will be offering a range of services across the district, which enhance and support the involvement of volunteers with all sectors.”

We are now committed to developing ambitious and focused plans to deliver this vision by enhancing and extending our services across all six core Volunteer Centre functions. In particular, during 2008/09 we will focus on:

- Strengthening our links with volunteer-using organisations to identify volunteering opportunities and share good practice.
- Extending our outreach to promote volunteering more widely across the Bath and North East Somerset area.
- Developing supported volunteering initiatives.
- Supporting the development of a vibrant and effective Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Securing a sustainable future for the Centre.



Volunteer Jill Ponsford helps at the Keynsham Volunteer Recruitment Fair organised by the Volunteer Centre

7. Treasurer's Report

General

The 2007/2008 financial year has been one of consolidation and some progress. The challenge of obtaining further funding to sustain the Volunteer Centre and to move towards relocation remains in the forefront of our financial planning. The funding provided under the Local Area Agreement with Bath and North East Somerset Council has been welcome, at the same time widening our financial responsibilities.

The Volunteer Centre has continued to concentrate on controlling its finances in an economical, efficient and effective way supported by written financial procedures.

Unrestricted Funds

Expenditure has increased in the year from £62,864 (06/07) to £65,526, due mainly to additional costs arising from the recruitment and salary of a new Manager. Governance costs have shown a slight decrease. The cost of the preparation of the 2007/2008 accounts by the independent accountants is a charge on the 2008/2009 Accounts.

Restricted Funds

These relate to expenditure and income arising from the Local Area Agreement which began on 1 December 2007. During this period it was not possible to match expenditure with the funding received from the Local Authority, and with their approval the surplus funding has been carried forward to the current financial year.

Acknowledgements

As retiring Honorary Treasurer, my thanks are due to the Trustees, Staff and our Bookkeeper for their co-operation and assistance during my time as Treasurer.

Derek De Val
Treasurer

8. Financial Review

Incoming Resources

- During the year the charity received restricted funding from the local council under the Local Area Agreement of £12,105. In addition we received donations of £1,250 (2007 £118) and bank interest of £12,838 (2007 £12,951).

Resources Expended

- Following the employment of additional staff, recruitment costs and the rental of additional space at Envolve, the charity's expenses have increased from £62,864 to £72,147.

Outcome for the Year

- As a result of the increased activities for the year there has been a deficit on unrestricted funds of £51,438. (2007 £48,407) which has been funded from accumulated unrestricted surpluses.

Designated Funds (Unrestricted)

- In October 2003 the charity received £475,000 from the sale of their original premises in Bath and after discharging an outstanding Bank loan was left with residual sale proceeds amounting to £370,000. The Trustees have set aside from the unrestricted general funds a sum of £200,000 as a reserve, mainly to meet the cost of an anticipated move to new premises. The Trustees have decided to reduce this figure to £100,000 in the current financial year to 31 March 2009

Designated Funds (Restricted)

- The Local Area Agreement grant from Bath & North East Somerset, totalling £70,000 is earmarked to promote volunteering initiatives by the Volunteer Centre over a period of three years. This is made available to the Volunteer Centre by quarterly advances.

Balances Carried Forward

- After setting aside £200,000 in designated funds there were unrestricted funds of £38,915 (2007 £90,353) to carry forward at 31 March 2008.

Reserves Policy

- The charity's reserves policy is based on its forecast of likely income in future years and its forecast of expenditure over the same period on the basis of planned activity.
- The charity needs reserves to cover a reasonable estimate of expenditure over a six month period and to cover outstanding debts should the organisation ever be wound up.

- The charity considers the present level of reserves is adequate but is subject to adjustment in future years in the light of its needs.
- The reserves policy is subject to monitoring and review each year.

Future Plans

- The possible move to new premises is affected by the proposed reduction to £100,000 in the reserve sum that can be set aside to meet the additional cost likely to arise from relocation of the Volunteer Centre.
- The Fundraising sub-committee will continue to explore all grant earning and other avenues to meet future expenditure so that a move to new premises is possible.

Case Study

**Liz Clark, Placement Co-ordinator, Volunteer Centre,
February 2007 – February 2008.**

“I was working part time and a housewife with children who were growing up and this meant I had more free time. I was looking for a way to use my admin skills in a productive way and saw that the Volunteer Centre had an opportunity for this sort of work.

I enjoyed volunteering at the Volunteer Centre because I was able to contribute to an enthusiastic and dedicated team who were able to help our community.

My work brought me into contact with both work colleagues and clients. I never realised quite how many voluntary opportunities are available.

It doesn't matter if you have a lot of time to give or just a little, even a small contribution can help to keep a whole organisation running.”

9. Summary Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2008

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2008

	Unrestricted Funds £	Designated Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2008 £	Total 2007 £
Incoming resources					
Investment income: bank interest	12,838	-	-	12,838	12,951
Grants	-	-	12,105	12,105	1,400
Donations and other income	1,250	-	-	1,250	118
Total incoming resources	14,088		12,105	26,193	14,469
Resources expended					
Direct charitable expenditure	62,419	-	6,556	68,975	58,782
Governance costs	3,107	-	65	3,172	4,082
Total resources expended	65,526	-	6,621	72,147	62,864
Net movement in funds	(51,438)	-	5,484	(45,954)	(48,395)
Fund balances brought forward	90,353	200,000	12	290,365	338,760
Fund balances carried forward	38,915	200,000	5,496	244,411	290,365

BALANCE SHEET AT 31 MARCH 2008

Fixed assets

Tangible fixed assets	664	1,857	2,521	735
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Current assets

Debtors - prepayments & accrued income	39	-	39	407
Cash at bank and in hand	239,988	3,639	243,627	294,690
	240,027	3,639	243,666	295,097

Creditors: falling due within one year

	(1,776)	-	(1,776)	(5,467)
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Net current assets

	238,251	3,639	241,890	289,630
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Net assets

	238,915	5,496	244,411	290,365
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Funded by

Unrestricted funds

General Fund	38,915	-	38,915	90,353
Premises Designated Fund	200,000	-	200,000	200,000

Restricted Funds

Restricted Funds	-	5,496	5,496	12
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	238,915	5,496	244,411	290,365
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