

Annual Report

2010-2011



Staffordshire Moorlands
Community & Voluntary Services
is a member of the Staffordshire
& Stoke-on-Trent Consortium
of Infrastructure Organisations

... working across the Staffordshire Moorlands

Introduction

Cover photos

Top left: Volunteer driver, Margaret Wood, in the snow.

Top right: Big Society workshop (Dec 2010).

Bottom left: Pauline, Julie and Ellen of Biddulph East Community Association celebrate their successful Big Lottery Fund application.

Bottom right: Walk North Staffs canal shot at Stockton Brook.

Welcome to the new look annual report!

In the interests of readability and economy we have produced a more compact document with highlights of our work over the last year.

We hope it gives you an insight into what we did, what went well and what did not. The report does not detail all our work but for more information or a copy of our audited accounts for 2010/11 please give us a call on **01538 381356**.

2010/11 was a challenging year with great changes in the environment in which the CVS operated. The year started with a new contract with Staffordshire County Council on behalf of SCIO¹ on a project called Connections to Opportunities. Initially worth £1.2 Million and creating 15 new posts in the CVS to work across the county over 3 years, it was a casualty of the new Government and the abolition of Advantage West Midlands. It still went ahead but on a reduced basis and for one year only.

¹ SCIO = Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Consortium of Infrastructure Organisations made up of umbrella organisations like CVSs whose prime purpose is to advise and support other voluntary and community groups.

Funding generally became much tighter and not all anticipated contracts materialised. However, the CVS Future Jobs Fund contract continued to be delivered so successfully that Stoke City Council funded additional places for young people to work in voluntary organisations. The Working Neighbourhoods Fund contract for volunteering in Stoke entered a new phase with the CVS taking a lead contract for the year in a consortium with Changes and Groundwork and by the autumn European funding was approved for delivering volunteering support to the unemployed in Stoke, Newcastle and Moorlands.

Meanwhile the CVS continued to deliver some well established services that met local needs such as the voluntary car scheme, grants advice to voluntary and community groups, and help to set up new groups. The CRB² Disclosure Service entered its fifth year with high demand and some new ideas about how to make it self-financing. Unfortunately these did not work. We also had to close our Call Centre project during the year with the loss of a part time job.

² CRB = Criminal Records Bureau, the body which administers the disclosure process that is required for those who work with children or vulnerable adults.

Making the best use of the SCIO database for recording work with voluntary and community groups also proved challenging and led to difficulties in evidencing the depth of our work, for example, for our service level agreement with Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. However, an enormous amount of positive work was achieved and this report gives a flavour of those achievements.

Responding to the changes and anticipating those yet to come, a full staffing review took place in spring 2011 leading to a structure with two teams - Community and Organisation Development under Carol Rodgers and Volunteering and Access under Jo Phillips. The new structure had fewer posts and, unfortunately, the CVS had to lose staff, some of whom had given great service over many years. It involved 9 voluntary redundancies, 2 compulsory redundancies and ending 13 short term contracts, reducing staff numbers from 49 to 25. The new look CVS is focusing on delivering high quality services needed by our local voluntary and community groups; on exploring new avenues for income; and on developing collaborative approaches, particularly with our SCIO colleagues.



Message from the Chair: Harry Edwards

Brevity is a virtue when it comes to formal documents and our annual report should be no exception. However, in leaving out the names of our staff, our trustees and our member organisations, not to mention our key supporters and partners, I am not ignoring the vital role every one has played in helping to make CVS the success that it is.

I should like to record my thanks to the Chief Officer, the managers and all the staff for their efforts, in particular after the very difficult and taxing restructuring, and the positive way in which they all embraced the challenges involved.

And of course, including our trustees, we have an amazing band of over 70 volunteers who give us so much of their time, energy, enthusiasm, knowledge and skills as drivers and receptionists as well as other roles such as transforming our web site. I give you my sincere thanks and appreciation for all your help and support.



Harry Edwards
Chairman

Call Centre

The operator provided telephone booking for Border Car (Shropshire/ Staffordshire border) transport services supported by Staffordshire County Council as well as for the CVS voluntary and community transport services. Due to lack of funding, the Call Centre lost its staffing in October and remaining services are delivered through voluntary and community transport. The Call Centre and the transport booking line dealt with 3,935 calls during the year.

Coalfields Regeneration Trust Volunteering Project

This CRT³ funded project organised volunteering Taster Days targeted at specific wards in Stoke, Newcastle and the Moorlands and ran for just 12 months from April to March. Taster Days were seen as an accessible stepping stone into long term volunteering which could lead to employment. 91 residents of CRT targeted wards attended Taster Days during the year with 40 continuing into regular volunteering.

³ CRT = Coalfields Regeneration Trust which funds activities in former coalfield areas.



Canals Clean Team

4 Taster Days were held with British Waterways involving ongoing environmental improvements.

Towpaths are quite often a dumping ground for litter which can include dangerous objects and the Taster Days aimed to make them a safer and cleaner environment for the local community.

(Pictured left) One of the "Canals Clean" Taster Days organised with British Waterways.

Sandra (Volunteer)



Sandra saw one of our Volunteer Officers in April 2010. She was unemployed and looking for work. She did a Taster Day in retail at Biddulph's Age UK shop in May 2010. She continued to volunteer afterwards, learning how to deal with customers and use the till, increasing her confidence and skill base while looking at other work opportunities.

In November, Sandra put the skills she had learnt while volunteering to good use and secured a paid, full time job working in Sainsburys, Biddulph.

CRT Volunteering Project

91 residents of CRT targeted wards attended Taster Days during the year with **40** continuing into regular volunteering.

Community Development

The community development service worked with communities across the Moorlands undertaking consultation, identifying opportunities for community-led initiatives and providing practical support to them. It was largely supported by Staffordshire Moorlands District Council. During the year a great deal of support was offered to the resident associations across Biddulph resulting in the Big Biddulph Survey, a questionnaire sent to all households across Biddulph asking questions about local services, activities, and issues. This proved hugely successful with 1,107 questionnaires returned. The results of the survey have subsequently been presented to Biddulph Town Council and the resident associations with ongoing work during 2011/12.

A number of local community groups were supported through the process of investigating, planning and applying for funding for play areas during the year. An example of a group supported was in Werrington, where a new play area for the local children was opened (pictured below).



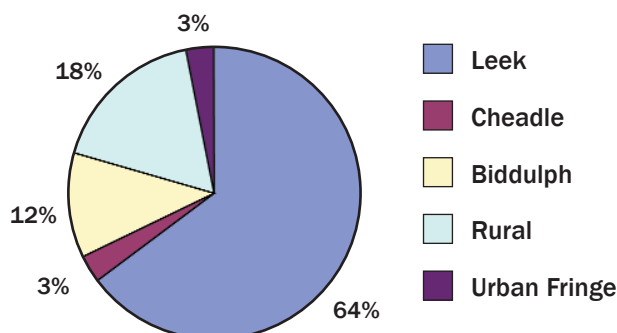
Community Transport

Last year the four Community Transport minibuses were used by 34 voluntary or community groups, travelling 17,233 miles whilst providing 10,970 single passenger journeys.

Severe weather conditions during December 2010 meant that many journeys were cancelled.

As a result of advertising campaigns in the local press, 3 new regular volunteer drivers joined the service allowing the CVS to offer more flexibility with both our regular and one-off journeys.

Location of groups using community transport in 2010/2011



Compact Development

The relationship between the statutory sector and the voluntary sector is key to effective partnership working. The Staffordshire County Compact has been adopted by the statutory partners locally. More importantly, during this year of significant changes, the Compact Implementation Group continued to meet to keep each other updated about the changes and their implications.

Connections to Opportunities

The CVS delivered this across the county under contract to Staffordshire County Council on behalf of SCIO with funding from Advantage West Midlands.

It employed 13 Community Buddies helping those living in targeted neighbourhoods who had been claiming Incapacity Benefit for more than 2 years move towards employment. The project only operated for the year and finished in March 2010.

Diane (Volunteer)

case study

Diane suffered greatly with her nerves and anxiety but with the help of a Buddy her confidence flourished, her ambitions grew and she developed a more positive attitude towards life.

Volunteering for her local Citizens Advice Bureau helped her to rediscover her people skills and develop new skills. Subsequently, Diane was offered a part time job by her previous employer, boosting her confidence even further. In time, she is keen to increase her volunteering and working hours and aims to be in full time employment.

TESTIMONIAL ...

The County Council has had a very positive working relationship with SMCVS over many years. Its ability to mobilise efficiently and engage at grass roots level with key responses to community and economic development challenges has proved invaluable. Many of these responses have become symbols of best practise for community development activities. The team's engagement, in often complex policy and political agendas, is key to delivering vital services and lasting outcomes for some of the more isolated and vulnerable communities. The County Council looks forward to continuing this effective partnership for many years to come.

Nigel Senior, Group Manager - Economic Development, Staffordshire County Council.

CRB Disclosure Service

The service provided Criminal Record Bureau checks for CVS members and other voluntary and community organisations in Staffordshire and offer advice and training. More than 700 disclosures were processed during the year and clearly there was a big demand for its high quality of service.

However, attempts to raise additional income through organising CRB workshops failed when only a few people booked to attend and the continuing burden of staffing costs on CVS budgets forced us to close the service in March.



Kingfisher Pre-School Playgroup

case study

Kingfisher Pre-school playgroup based at St. Werburgh's School in Kingsley secured funding that would allow a valuable service to families in a rural area to proceed subject to appropriate CRB Disclosure for staff and trustees.

The group became CVS members and its 12 disclosure applications were promptly processed.

Early Detection Cancer Project

Towards the end of 2010, the CVS was contracted by NHS North Staffordshire to set up a project aiming to improve the awareness of breast, bowel and lung cancers in target communities of the Moorlands and Newcastle with the emphasis being on the quality of information offered rather than the numbers spoken to. However, by the end of the year 106 contacts had been made and 345 information leaflets and promotional items issued.

(Pictured above) Shaun Stanley, Project coordinator, with the Early Detection Cancer Project promotional banners.

Future Jobs Fund

The CVS linked unemployed young people with voluntary sector employers across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent on behalf of SCIO under a contract with Stoke-on-Trent City Council as part of the Government's Future Jobs Fund. It started in October 2009 and final placements were made in March 2011. By then 82 unemployed young people had been placed with 26 different voluntary organisations in Stoke and Staffordshire.



Fred (21)

case study

Fred gained work through a friend's family building business but due to the recession had been made redundant. After twelve months of unemployment Fred was offered a six month placement under the Future Jobs Fund Scheme with The Saltbox Chaplaincy Project involving property maintenance which allowed Fred to use his building skills.

Chris James, Supervisor said: "Fred has been a very hard working and reliable employee with a calm approach to the type of clients we have to deal with. I am pleased we have been able to offer Fred a permanent position with our organisation."

Grants Support

Advice and support was given to voluntary and community groups across the Moorlands on funding. The team also administered the Robbie Williams' Give It Sum Community Chest for North Staffordshire under contract to Comic Relief.

£ 284,083

was gained by
voluntary and
community groups
as a result of
CVS support.

Endon Community Choir

case
study

Endon Community Choir succeeded in getting £920 from the Robbie Williams' Give it Sum Community Chest for funding towards room hire and musical direction. Chair, Sue Shipman, said: "I have always found everyone at the CVS very courteous and helpful. Whatever my query, the staff are extremely helpful, checking out information, finding relevant documentation and sending it on to me, giving me contact details and calling me back when they say they will."

Development Work

Local voluntary and community organisations continued to be offered support and advice to start and develop.

During this year over 70 organisations were helped on issues relating to funding and finance, governance and personalisation.



Health Link

This brought together statutory organisations (primarily NHS North Staffordshire) and the voluntary sector involved in the provision of health and social care with the aim of improving communication and liaison between the sectors and developing policies and services within the fields of health and social care. The service was run jointly with Newcastle CVS which held the contract with the PCT.⁴

During the year this project has been particularly important in keeping abreast of the changes happening within health and informing the voluntary sector about them and possible implications. A Health Engagement Event was held in March 2011 with the aim of encouraging better understanding and new links between the voluntary sector and GP practices. Unfortunately, despite good participation by voluntary groups, only a few GPs took part.

⁴ PCT = Primary Care Trust which is called NHS North Staffordshire in this area.

TESTIMONIAL ...

In the current climate of rapid change and restructuring, the Health Link post has been crucial in helping lots of voluntary sector organisations, such as ourselves, keep abreast of changes, to make sure we understand the current agenda and what contribution we can make as well as ensuring that the voices of both the voluntary sector and our users are heard.

Louise Walker, Senior Organiser, Home Start Staffordshire Moorlands.

Neighbourhood Forums

This budget initially supported the facilitation and clerking of a series of neighbourhood consultations but the contract with NHS North Staffordshire was adjusted during the year so that the last months were spent encouraging community involvement in the new Patient Participation Groups.

North Staffordshire Volunteering

The Volunteer Centres recruit, support and place volunteers with voluntary and community organisations and support volunteer involving organisations by promoting their opportunities and advising them on good practice in managing volunteers. The CVS continued to run all 3 Volunteer Centres in North Staffordshire, Stoke, Newcastle and Moorlands, under the branding of Volunteer Centres North Staffordshire.



Stoke Volunteer Centre (WMF)

40 unemployed Stoke residents went on to find employment after volunteering.

The Stoke Volunteer Centre was funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund which brought a partnership approach to volunteering across the City.

With the CVS taking the lead as the host of the Stoke-on-Trent Volunteer Centre, clients interested in volunteering as a way of gaining confidence, skills and training first had an interview with a Volunteer Officer and were supported through their volunteering by Groundwork West Midlands which helped individuals identify employability-based goals to be worked towards during volunteering. Any client with more extensive support needs due to mental ill health was supported by Changes - 12 Steps to Mental Health. The programme helped 192 unemployed Stoke residents to find volunteering opportunities during the year with 40 succeeding in getting jobs.

Dan (Volunteer)

Following a college course, Dan was unemployed for 5 months. He wanted to gain experience and learn to be a counsellor. Finding out about volunteering through his Connexions advisor, he contacted the Volunteer Centre which found him a volunteering opportunity with Changes where Dan completed the Changes Mental Health Co-ordination course and, through support from Groundwork, he was also able to gain a Future Jobs Fund position. Dan said: "Volunteering has helped give me more job satisfaction by way of helping people and made me more empathetic."



Stoke Volunteer Fair - A volunteering fair took place in Hanley city centre on Saturday 24th July 2010. Thanks to Take Part funding through Stoke City Council, the event benefited from publicity by Signal Radio and a leaflet campaign targeted at young people. 33 local volunteer involving organisations hosted stalls and 98 individuals were registered and placed with organisations as volunteers.

London 2012 Workshop - Tuesday 12th October 2010 saw organisations hoping to attract volunteers for Olympic-themed projects in 2012 attend a workshop organised by the Volunteer Centre, in conjunction with staff from national governing body, Volunteering England and volunteer database owners YouthNet. It attracted 46 local organisations and looked at how best to market current volunteering opportunities, how to create new, Olympic inspired opportunities, and how to encourage wider participation from people of all backgrounds.



North Staffordshire Volunteering (continued)

ERDF Volunteering

49 individuals engaged with the programme, significantly exceeding the target of 10.

From October new match funding was available to all three Volunteer Centres through the European Regional Development Fund to find volunteering placements for those who were out of work.

It has enabled targeted work across the Moorlands and Newcastle and dedicated officer time to work with those using volunteering as a stepping stone back into the labour market. 49 individuals engaged with the programme between October and March, significantly exceeding the target of 10.

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Staffordshire Moorlands Volunteer Centre

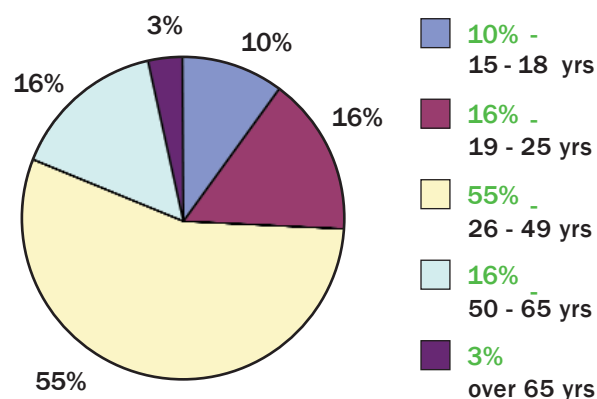
331 Staffordshire Moorlands residents used the Volunteer Centre during the year of which 71 went on to actively volunteer. There were new registrations by 8 Moorlands based organisations providing 71 new opportunities ranging from public relations officer to gardener.

Access to Volunteering Fund -

The Volunteer Centre received funding to launch new promotional material to attract people with disabilities into volunteering.

The project was launched at an open day staged at the new CVS premises at 9 High Street during the 2010 Volunteers' Week and has received national recognition.

Staffordshire Moorlands Volunteer Centre - age of new volunteers 2010-2011



Strengthening Community Groups Project

The project is part of the Staffordshire LEADER programme called 'Communities Mean Business' and supports community groups in the project area to develop their ideas and organisations and make funding applications.

The CVS has a contract with Staffordshire County Council and sub-contracts with the Community Council of Staffordshire for delivery in the Stafford Borough.

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Communities Mean Business

£211,400 of grant funding was allocated to 9 community groups by May 2011.

Strengthening Community Groups Project (continued)

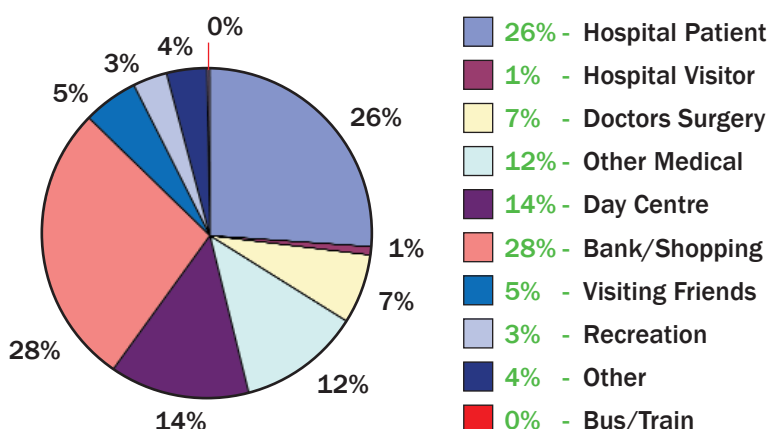
By the end of March 2011, 50 different community groups had been supported of which 27 were located in the Moorlands. Of these, 9 groups have been successful so far in their applications to Communities Mean Business with a total grant allocation of £211,400 (3 of the projects were approved in May 2011).



(Pictured right) Eddie Sims of Brown Edge Village Hall with CVS advisor Lesley Savage and Ian Jackson, CMB Programme Manager outside Brown Edge Village Hall, a successful CMB grant aided project.

Voluntary Transport

Voluntary Transport - Journey Purpose 2010/2011



This service provides transport for people who are unable to access public transport and relies on volunteers who provide their time and vehicles.

This year our volunteer drivers drove 73,855 miles whilst providing 8,711 single passenger journeys.

Volunteering for Health (V4H)

This project, working with GP practices to encourage those with health issues to consider volunteering as one way of improving health, finished at the end of September 2010.

Linda (V4H Project Volunteer)

Linda was an early volunteer onto the V4H project. She had recently been bereaved and had been referred by her GP. After several meetings, Linda showed interest in the Healthy Walks project run by the CVS and met the project coordinator.

She trained as a walk leader and regularly lead walks. When she completed her 13 week wellbeing review with her GP she registered an improvement in 'feeling cheerful' and 'feeling appreciated' as well as 'dealing with problems better' and 'feeling more confident'. Linda continues to volunteer and has completed 12 months with the Healthy Walks project.

case study

Walk North Staffordshire

Funded by NHS North Staffordshire, Walk North Staffordshire is a volunteer led walking programme and part of its preventive health strategy. During 2010/11 there were 245 walks amounting to over 617 hours and more than 10 walk leaders, trained through Natural England's Walking for Health programme.



72 walks took place in the Staffordshire Moorlands with over 279 hours walked. During the year 378 walk packs were loaned at libraries. They included a pedometer with quick start guide, a self led local walks pack and Walk North Staffordshire leaflets.

What Walk North Staffordshire walkers have said:

“More confident to walk on my own”

“I had a stroke two years ago but symptoms have all but gone”

“Walking has helped my recovery following knee operation”

“Helps to keep a positive mood”

“By doing these walks I find it easier to walk up banks and don't get out of breath as much”



Youth Volunteering Project 'V'

After 3 years the v project across Staffordshire closed in March 2011. Led by the Staffordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, a Moorlands and Newcastle worker was based in the Volunteer Centres promoting and supporting young people into voluntary opportunities and awarding them with nationally recognised certificates. By the end of the 3 years the young people had collectively amounted a staggering 1394 volunteering hours! A main factor in the success of the project in the Moorlands was the Youth Action Team (YAT) - a group of young people who promoted volunteering to their peers.



Craig Harris, v Youth Volunteer Adviser for the Staffordshire Moorlands and Newcastle, said: “The Youth Action Team has been brilliant over the past three years. Without their help the project wouldn't have been as successful as it was and they have developed skills and experiences that will help them in their future careers.”

(Pictured left): Moorlands YAT member John Evans receiving an award from Craig Harris, v Youth Volunteer Advisor and Jo Phillips, North Staffordshire Volunteer Centres Manager.



Top: (from left to right) CVS staff Michelle Reynolds and Rebecca Breakwell with Jean Fryer of the Werrington Parish Plan Steering Group and the Mayor of the City Of Stoke, Councillor Denver Tolley, at the 2010 Stoke Funding Fair.

Left: Community involvement at Longnor.

Right: Daniel McMillan, Future Jobs Fund employee at the BRIC café.

Staffordshire Moorlands Community & Voluntary Services

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