Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions


Mission

“To promote, develop and support, through partnership, a dynamic and diverse voluntary and community sector”

Company registration number: 6743623. Charity registration number: 1127626
(A company limited by guarantee)

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Our work 2018.
Supporting voluntary and community action.
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Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions

Reference and Administrative details:

- **Registered name of the Charity** – Lancaster District Community & Voluntary Solutions
- **Other names for Charity** – Lancaster CVS or LDCVS
- **Charity Registration Number** – 1127626
- **Company Registration Number** – 6743623
- **Registered Office** – The Cornerstone, Sulyard Street, Lancaster, LA1 1PX.

LDCVS is a charitable company limited by guarantee, founded in 1972 as the National Council of Voluntary Services. It was established under a memorandum of association, which defines its objects and powers, and is governed by its articles of association. In addition, there are detailed regulations made under the articles. Full membership of LDCVS is open to voluntary organisations that comply with the criteria for membership. In addition, there are affiliate categories of membership for public sector and corporate bodies. LDCVS trustee board is responsible for managing the business of LDCVS as outlined in the articles of association.

- **Names of all Directors on the date this report was approved** –
  
  Alan Chesters (Chair and Treasurer)
  Harsha Shukla
  Samantha Riches
  Christopher Hart
  Kenneth Dunn
  Mary Lawrenson
  Jill Anderson

- **Additional CVS Board Members** –

  Lancashire County Council and Lancaster City Council each nominate an individual to join the Board as a non-voting observer / advisor; during the year these were:

  Lancashire County Councillor, Charles Edwards
  Lancaster City Councillor, Jean Parr
Foreword.

Chair’s report

Welcome to Lancaster Districts CVS annual report for 2017/18.

As in recent years LDCVS has been instrumental in developing partnerships between voluntary and statutory organisations to reflect a growing confidence and interest by potential funders to identify service delivery partners from within the sector. However, in such challenging financial times, with continuing austerity and the added uncertainty of how Brexit will impact on services, the voluntary sector needs to make its voices heard by government to ensure that the vision of a ‘shared society’ includes the voluntary sector.

It follows that the voluntary sector occupies a pivotal position in future service delivery and LDCVS, by bringing different partners together, is working to build strength and resilience in the sector. It can be seen from our activities over the past year that we organised a number of workshops and conferences to foster methods in which working together can flourish and highlighting the benefits and opportunities that such co-operation can bring.

There is still much to do. We need to have those discussions with funders which emphasise the need for funds which provide stability and effectiveness as an alternative to constant innovation. Voluntary sector organisations, with our support where necessary also need to be able to step up to meet the rigorous demands of working with statutory organisation. I have no doubt of the continuing resilience of the sector, but future survival should not be taken for granted.

Finally, I would like to thank the many volunteers, some of whom have been recognised at our annual Volunteers Awards for their valuable contributions, our partners and stakeholders for their support and for trusting us to deliver. My sincere gratitude also goes to the staff and volunteers at Lancaster District CVS for their invaluable work and for the support and dedication of my fellow Trustees.

Alan Chesters, Acting Chair

From the Chief Executive.

This last year for Lancaster District CVS has been anything but dull. There have been so many opportunities to consider, such a range of issues to confront and all sorts of practical challenges. This year has been different, slightly more secure but not without surprises. The political environment, nationally, locally and in our sector, has not been stable either. The shock and impact of the Brexit decision is being worked through; public expenditure continues to reduce whilst demand rises for support and services, however provided; our sector reacts, shifts emphasis and reorganises itself, in new and different ways which, for some, are challenging and need time to settle. We continued working to help ensure charities continue to be seen positively. Alongside our everyday work promoting and defending charities and volunteering in the district, we launched a new weekly article in the Lancaster Guardian to give people information about the amazing work charities do locally. We continued to champion the rights of voluntary community faith social enterprise organisations to campaign and we worked with our members to ensure their voices were heard. We do this so that voluntary organisations are more confident speaking truth to power.

Partners from across the county and the city acknowledge that Lancaster District needs a thriving third sector that is able to rise to current challenges and opportunities and work alongside all partners to deliver the best it can for communities and residents. To enable this to happen, Lancaster District needs a culture that is creative and brave enough to embrace further new ways of doing business with the third sector. The success of the District and the wellbeing of all of its citizens is dependent on having thriving private, public and third sectors, each independently successful but working effectively in partnership. Our ambition is to have a sustainable, diverse third sector economy, with organisations from the smallest self-help group through to larger, local and national service providers. The District needs a third sector that is enterprising, responsive, sustainable, resilient, professional and civic minded, diverse in its activities and the size, type and governance of its organisations. Moreover, we need a sector that is inclusive, with extensive participation and broad reach into all neighbourhoods and communities and that is confident in developing a strong and mutually beneficial relationship with the public and private sector. This needs to be driven by the needs and priorities of people and communities in the District, led by local people and that we are able to champion and advocate for citizens, communities and causes supported by quality outcomes and impact data.

Finally, we will need vibrant and active communities and self-help sector operating at the grassroots level in local neighbourhoods and across communities of interest supported by effective third sector support and development infrastructure that can help to grow the third sector that the District requires. Going forward, we
will help organisations to evaluate and communicate their impact and will work to help communicate the collective impact of the sector. We want to help our members to be as effective as possible, so we will review our advice and support offer to ensure it is coherent and accessible, taking particular care to make sure small and local members feel they have all the help they need from us.

Yak Patel, Chief Executive

Organisational structure of the charity

Lancaster District Community Voluntary Service (LDCVS) is a registered charity, number 1127626, which has been at the heart of the voluntary sector in the district, working to promote local voluntary and community activity since it was originally formed in 1972. LDCVS exists to promote and support a strong, effective and independent voluntary and community sector in the Lancaster District. The organisation actively assists voluntary bodies through the provision of advice and information, the development of new charitable initiatives and joint work with statutory bodies. LDCVS' membership covers most of the voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the district.

The Team

Yakub Patel  Chief Officer
Kevin Goodall  Voluntary Sector Development Coordinator
Mark Waddington  Volunteer Centre and Strengthening Communities Coordinator
Ruth Corrigan  Refugee Resettlement Officer
Janet Cherry  Finance Officer
Sarah Rogan  Reach IT Coordinator
Annette Marsden  Admin, Finance and membership volunteer
Anu Kamath  Finance volunteer
Sean Ansbro  Finance volunteer
Ian Lawrie  Grant and Admin volunteer

Governance

LDCVS became a charitable company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 7th November 2008 October 2003 and registered as a charity in December 2009. The company was established under a memorandum and articles of association which described the objects and powers of the charitable company, and is governed under its Articles of Association. The Trustees are appointed in accordance with the Articles of Association. The members elect persons to be Trustees at the Annual General Meeting.

Purpose and aims

Lancaster District CVS's Memorandum & Articles states its purpose as follows:

- To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community with particular reference to the local government district of Lancaster (hereinafter called "the area of benefit") and, in particular, the advancement of education, the protection of health and the relief of poverty, distress and sickness;

- To promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the above purposes and to that end to bring together in council representatives of the voluntary organisations and statutory authorities within the area of benefit.

Our chief activities were:

- Identifying local need, working with others to develop appropriate action and working strategically to benefit the local voluntary and community sector.

- Helping to maintain links with a wide range of voluntary and community organisations and promoting cross sector relationships.

- Enabling the local voluntary and community sector to present its views to statutory and public sector bodies through consultation, networking, forums, seminars and workshops.

- Providing services - Funding information and advice, training, legal, financial, management and constitutional advice and information, meeting space, newsletters and mailings.
- Strategic Partnership - Working with local strategic partnerships, helping to develop the voluntary sector, participating in strategic level discussions.

- Volunteering and social action – providing a range of services to encourage and support volunteer action and to promote the volunteering contributions of individuals.

Public benefits

LDCVS is an umbrella organisation that exists to support and develop the community and voluntary sector in Lancaster District. The Public Benefits of CVS are responsive to the changing need of our beneficiaries and to the third sector, with the overall objective to support and strengthen the sustainability, independence and ability of the Voluntary Community and Faith sector to deliver services and activities that support individuals and communities in Lancaster District. We also provide a public benefit by offering a range of different services and activities to individuals, ensuring that any new project is supportive of our charitable purposes. Often new activities are targeted at those most in need and where other Voluntary organisations that we support cannot address the need.

The trustees of LDCVS believe they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the public benefit guidance published by the Charity Commission.
Introduction - Ensuring our work delivers our objectives

LDCVS continued to champion and strengthen volunteering and civil society, with over 500 members ranging from the largest charities to the smallest community organisations. There are hundreds of voluntary organisations in the district. There are thousands of volunteers. Every day, people across the district give their time, energy and money. For over 40 years, LDCVS has brought the voluntary sector’s people together to solve problems, address root causes and inspire each other. We know the power of the voluntary sector and volunteering. No one organisation can solve society’s challenges alone, but collectively we’re all vital for sustaining society in times of challenge and change. That’s why – inspired and empowered by our members – we support and celebrate volunteering in all its diversity and champion and strengthen the voluntary sector by making sure that it can continue to do what it does best and that national and local government knows its true value. In March 2016, LDCVS launched a three-year strategy, which set out our priorities for the next three years, under four strategic aims.

1. To ensure the sector is well supported to deliver the best outcomes and the expertise of the sector is valued and maximised.

We will:

- Champion the role of the VCSE in making a difference for local people and communities.
- Develop projects which address community needs where there are gaps in local service provision, utilising expertise in local organisations and networks.
- Support the sector to develop evidence based approaches that demonstrate impact and measure effectiveness.
- Work with local commissioners and decision makers to ensure the social and economic value of the VCSE is maximised.
- Support organisations to deliver quality services to the highest standard by offering learning and development opportunities which meet recognised criteria and qualification requirements.

2. We will work with our partners to shape local services which best meets the needs of local people.

We will:

- Act as a bridge between the VCSE and local government to ensure partnership approaches to local needs.
- Support the local VCSE to co-produce strategies with the public sector which address the needs of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged people of Lancaster / North Lancashire.
- Support community representatives and involve local VCSE organisations to influence local policies and strategies through local forums such as the VCSE and Morecambe Interagency group.
- Facilitate the gathering of information which provides an accurate picture of the needs of local communities, particularly those that are vulnerable or disadvantaged.
- Support the sector to understand the rapidly changing policy landscape so that it is fit for purpose and able to respond to local needs in the context of poverty and increasing inequality.
3. Bringing organisations together to build relationships, share, support and learn from each other.

We will:

- LDCVS will arrange events and opportunities to inform, challenge and connect like-minded organisations and individuals in ways that are relevant to their work and ambitions including.
- Bringing third sector organisations together in conference.
- Developing communities of third sector organisations and people to promote the sharing of best practice and a culture of support.
- Bringing third sector organisations closer to authorities, funders and policy makers.

4. Help the sector to access the resources, funding and support it needs.

We will:

- Provide opportunities for VCSE organisations to form partnerships and bid for contracts and funding opportunities as robust, evidence-based consortia.
- Help to source funding, manage finances and report on financial information.
- Help to achieve effective governance, including recruitment and training and development of Trustees.
- Support recruitment, training and development of a high quality volunteer campaign, workforce, including volunteer.
- Increase the number, range and quality of local volunteering opportunities within the areas we work.

It describes the values and vision that will govern our work.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Values</th>
<th>Commitments</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Making a difference through</td>
<td>Passion: Passionate about the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Champion</td>
<td>Sustainable, well-run, responsive and accessible organisation committed to our mission and values.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Equality</td>
<td>Recognising the diversity of the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise Sector that are responsive to the varying needs on the spectrum of small to large organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Independence</td>
<td>Championing the needs and values of the sector, particularly small frontline organisations working with communities with multiple disadvantages</td>
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<tr>
<td>Excellence</td>
<td>Quality at the heart of all our activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Empowerment</td>
<td>Committed to operating transparently-our goal is to empower the sector and to support organisations and networks to become strong and independent in their own right</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collaboration</td>
<td>Believe in sharing knowledge and resources and building and maintaining robust relationships across organisational and sectorial boundaries</td>
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<tr>
<td>Learning</td>
<td>Believe all people are capable of growing, learning and developing throughout their lives</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voluntarism</td>
<td>Championing the principle of voluntary contributions to life in North Lancashire</td>
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Strategic partnership working

During the year LDCVS attended and contributed to 127 strategic partnership meetings in Lancaster District and 47 across the county – a total of 174 to prep for, attend, contribute to and report back on – with the aim of ensuring the VCSE sector is heard by our partners and influences a variety of agendas.

A Collaborative approach – leadership and partnership.

During 2017/18 LDCVS organised 20 different VCSE Forums for voice and influence (Children, Young People and Families; Morecambe Inter Agency Group, Community Action Network, Art of Hosting and 4 Volunteer Coordinators’ Forums. These were attended by 342 individuals from our sector.

Lancaster CVS is committed to ensuring that the voluntary and community sector is visible, valued and has a strong voice. Throughout the year Lancaster District CVS brought together representatives of the voluntary sector, Lancaster City Council, Lancashire County Council, Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning group to address local priorities and facilitate voluntary sector representation and participation. Lancaster District CVS continued to champion the wonderful work the sector does and listened to their support needs and future aspirations.

Managing, administering these networks continued to be a key part of our strategy for working and learning together to build stronger communities. A central theme is our concern to see partners targeting their support more upon disadvantaged individuals, groups and communities, and those who are at risk of becoming disadvantaged. We also want to see community learning and development playing a more central role in supporting the involvement of communities, including young people, in the community planning process.

342 People given a voice at our forums
People make Communities Conference 2018.

In June 2018, we convened and facilitated the annual Health event in partnership with Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group. This annual event had been organised to build stronger networks, improve better understanding and feedback on partnership working between Bay Health and Care Partners and the local invaluable voluntary sector organisations that span across the Morecambe Bay. Organisations across the voluntary sector, local authorities and CCGs are working in new ways to deliver more integrated services and to meet the challenges of the future. Integrated Care Systems formerly Sustainability and Transformation Partnerships, the development of new Integrated Care Partnerships formerly Local Delivery Partnerships, and alliances between local providers are some of the examples of health and care system re-design that emerged this year. As such, voluntary, community, social enterprise and faith sector organisations and their input was vital to this conference and key to the success of Bay Health and Care Partners. 267 people attended this whole day event to listen to key incredible speakers such as Dr Andrew Knox - Director for Health and Wellbeing, Jacqui Thompson - Senior Manager Health and Wellbeing and Dr Jeoff Jollie from Morecambe Bay CCG, voluntary sector organisations such as Lancaster Youth Challenge, Neuro Drop In, The Well, The Growing Club, Age Concern. Throughout the day, participants had the opportunity to make new connections and significantly contribute to the health and wellbeing strategy for the district. The feedback exceeded our expectations with overwhelming support and comments with many saying that this should be an annual gathering. We set out to ensure that the VCSE had the opportunity to be able to have their voices heard and input their ideas right at the heart of the partnership, by being connected alongside other partners such as local authority, NHS and other organisations.

Next steps 2018-19.

The need for the VCSE sector to be formally and consistently represented within the strategic planning and delivery of the health and social care transformation work will remain at the heart of the Health & Wellbeing Partnership board. The ‘bridge’ between the VCSE sector and health and social care will act to ensure that the sector has voice, representation and influence in strategic planning and delivery.

The focus of the work for 2018/19 will be:

- Identify, enable and facilitate opportunities for collaboration
- Link VCSE organisations into health and social care initiatives
- Provide the best services and support for the people in the District
- Co-design these services
- Maximise the talent, reach and social value of VCSE sector activity for the benefit of the people in the District
- Prevention, early help and intervention
- Person-centred services
- Co-creating
- Doing with, not for
- Asset-based approaches to supporting people
- Self-care
A Thriving Third sector - Support for groups and organisational development.

This area of work involves the development of the voluntary community faith and social enterprise sector through increasing the skills, confidence and efficiency in voluntary organisations, charities and social enterprises. It also involves the development of a coordinated operational approach to local services, seeking to embed best practice to deliver outcomes for local communities.

Lancaster District CVS is probably best known for our support to voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations. We exist to champion the rights of voluntary organisations to campaign and we work with our members to ensure their voices are heard. We do this so that voluntary organisations are more confident speaking truth to power.

Over the year, across Lancaster and Preston, this service provided support to established groups as well as to local people looking to set new projects and groups. We saw an increase in local authorities, recovery partners and health services signposting people to our support team seeking advice on setting up their own community projects. High quality support and training was available on a wide range of issues including governance, charity registration, charity law, effective leadership, business support, trustee support, training and partnership working. The work of local groups is far reaching and varied and helps to improve the quality of life for individuals in the district. Their work impacts on people's mental and physical health through provision of support, self-help, sporting and leisure opportunities, advice and information, culture, health and social care services and much more and Lancaster CVS provided flexible support for groups to meet their aims. Moreover, we supported grassroots social action and community-led service by delivery by helping local people to set up and develop robust projects, groups and social enterprises.

Key achievements:

- Our funding team enabled local community groups to secure over £714,000, an increase off £89,000.
- We provided direct 1:1 support to 315 local voluntary and community groups, charities and social enterprises with a range of issues and over 2550 hours of group support. Over 120 people attended the annual funding fair to meet 18 different funders.
- 115 organisations benefitted from quality low cost training, helping organisations to grow, be compliant and provide groups with skills and knowledge to frontline staff. We enabled 267 through district training programmes including, first aid, social media training, managing and supervising volunteers, mental health awareness, drug and alcohol training and asset based development work, GDPR. 80 organisations received specially tailored training in Governance, business support, strategic planning and compliance.
- We supported groups with diversification and ‘trading options for charities, funding advice, funding information and access to funding.
- 195 e-bulletins and sector opportunities were disseminated to over 1120 organisations connecting groups to essential funding information and services. Of these, our e-bulletin was distributed to over 800 voluntary and community groups. The remaining are a mixture of local authority, health and sole traders, all wishing to keep abreast of activities taking place locally. Information included local events, training and forums; health sector information; job vacancies; funding information; policy updates, consultations and campaigning and news from local voluntary and community groups.
- We sat on the grant awarding/assessment panels for the Early Intervention Panel, The Walney Extension Trust, the Children Trusts Youth Strategy forum and the Lancaster Community Fund. We also promoted, administered and supported groups to apply for 3 local small grant funds: The Galbraith Trust, Nat Merriman Trust, Eric Wright Trust and the Lancaster Community fund helping to distribute over £100,000 in small grants.
- Over 300 organisations from all sectors attended the children, young people multi agency forum and the Morecambe Inter agency group to bring together practitioners working across the district through sharing projects and coordinating support for people needing help, advice and guidance.
Community Action Network (CAN)

We know that in the Lancaster District, we face some tough health and equality challenges. What if we brought everyone together to talk about what it means to be healthy and well in our communities? What if everyone got inspired to work together to get to grips with our challenges and create the future we would love to see. In May 2018, we invited partners that work specifically in the North Lancaster area to join us to create a new gathering called Community Action Network. The aim of this gathering was to catalyse a social movement around health and wellbeing in the area and to come together in conversations around some of the tough questions we face in getting to grips with community health challenges and to learn some tools and practices for how to take this conversation out into our community. Furthermore, this network was designed to provide opportunities for partners to learn some practical skills and tools for bringing people together in ways that help us move from just having nice conversations about health and wellbeing in our community, to understanding what to do and how to build momentum for the kind of change in society we would really love to see. Collectively, we learnt how to create the sorts of meeting spaces where many different perspectives and voices can be heard, that might not always be comfortable but will be real. We were delighted to provide opportunities to bring all their questions, their ideas and explore together the potential for a social movement around health and wellbeing in North Lancaster area. We were joined by partners from health and wellbeing services, local authority and police services, voluntary and community groups, local primary schools, City Council estate managers, Lancashire County Council Communities Team, the Skills for Care team to come together to be involved in conversations that matter. Since this first meeting, the CAN has gone onto meet several more times, building the vision in how we listen to the experiences of local people and how together with the local community can be empowered to find practical solutions in their local community and create real lasting change on the ground.

Next Steps.

Working with Lancaster University and Lancaster City Council, we will work together on a program called Community Research and Engagement Network (CoReN). CoReN is designed to engage and train residents as Champions. They will be supported to be involved in a range of activities, supporting the development and evaluation of interventions aimed at improving health and social care services and the economic, environmental and social conditions that affect people’s health. This will include contributing to the design, conduct and dissemination of applied research and helping to organise and run events to engage the wider community.
Supporting refugees and asylum seekers – Lancashire Refugee Resettlement Programme.

Over the past year, we were delighted to be supporting refugees and asylum seekers living the District. Working in partnership with Lancashire County Council, Al Hayat, Rising Stars Nursery, Global Link and Lancashire Association for CVS’s, we were able to provide support and accessible relevant ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learning opportunities for adults, supporting integration, employability and personal development. Refugees and Asylum seekers can be some of the most vulnerable people in society, many of whom have escaped war, torture, persecution or imprisonment. All have left their home countries, friends, family and support systems. As a partnership, it has been a pleasure to have met firstly met these families and to be able to part of a coordinated program that support these learners in improve language skills and confidence with English, helping to increase participation in vocational ESOL training to improve work performance, reduce barriers to employment, training and educational opportunities and engage better with public and voluntary sector agencies. We now look forward to working together in providing life skill projects that take them to the next level in their English (lovely visits to local parks, museums, Castles etc) and supporting them further with tailored support through our Strengthening Communities project and REACH IT program.

Big Local – West End Million Partnership.

For the past 4 years, it has been a pleasure to have worked with the West End Million Partnership - a community led partnership that has £1m to spend over the next ten years in Morecambe, West End. Every Big Local Partnership works with a Local Trusted Organisation (LTO) and the LTO provides a range of functions for the partnership. Examples include assistance with financial management, partnership working, training, grant administration, advice, insurance and public liability. We were delighted to be chosen as the LTO for this partnership back in February 2018. There is so much to admire about the West End Million Partnership and what they have achieved over past four years. Having helped them to complete the Community Profile and Action plan in 2016, it has been incredible to see this resident-led partnership focus on making lasting positive change in their community. Some have been pessimistic about what can be achieved at local level, citing controlling cultures but this partnership has proved through research and community engagement that they can bring people together to improve their local neighbourhood. And this has been demonstrated through their grit and determination over the past few years. We have been amazed how this partnership have brought people together to collectively discuss strengths and issues in the community and come up with jointly produced solutions. Furthermore, we have much respect for the partnership testing new ideas and activities and taking certain risks when they have needed to. It would also be remiss of us not to mention the structure and support provided by Local Trust and the Big Local programme to help this partnership get started and maintain momentum. We are delighted to be appointed as the LTO and we are very much looking forward to working with the partnership as they embark on their new vision.

Morecambe Bay Poverty Truth Commission - Nothing about us, without us, is for us

What if people living in poverty could take the lead on challenging a region’s leaders to work with them on tackling poverty? Would it make a difference to the decisions that are being made? Would new solutions to poverty be discovered? Would people listen and, if they did, would they better understand the challenges that poverty brings? Drawing upon the experiences of other Poverty Truth Commissions, we joined the Start-Up Group in 2017 with the aim of ensuring that people who have experienced poverty first-hand are at the heart of how the region thinks and acts in tackling poverty and inequality.
Championing the role of volunteering – Making a difference.

Lancaster CVS Volunteer Centre supports volunteers, provides training, and the organisations that recruit volunteers, by providing a brokerage service that matches local people to organisations and volunteering opportunities.

Our Volunteer Centre remained as the key local volunteering development organisation within the district. The centre has links with local, regional and national agencies in policy and practice relating to volunteering. We saw our project engage with a wide range of people including those recovering from issues such as mental health, alcohol and drug addiction, criminal justice and those long terms unemployed. Whilst we recognise that volunteering can bring enormous amounts of benefits to individuals and organisations (life experiences), it also required a great deal of partnership working to ensure people are supported into volunteering. A large percentage of people seeking opportunities had come from difficult backgrounds and were looking to rebuild their lives through volunteering. These were the very reasons for co-designing programmes that helped build resilience amongst families, individuals and communities – thus building social action and developing local leadership. Creating pathways into volunteering for young people through to older people, those with disabilities amongst other community groups remained a focus for our team. Promoting volunteering in communities affected by unemployment as a means of building work skills, confidence and addressing community need also remained as a key component of our work. Regular ‘drop in’ sessions were held in job centres, town centres, festivals, community events, community centres and in places and times that were more accessible for local people.

Lancaster District Volunteer Achievement Awards 2017.

Our prestigious annual ceremony to celebrate volunteering and voluntary action, took place on Thursday 7th June 2018 as part of National Volunteer week. The awards provide an opportunity to thank the 548 voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises and their volunteers who make such a difference in the District, 365 days a year. 150 guests attended the awards ceremony at the Trimpell sports club to pay tribute to the fantastic achievements of volunteers and voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations in the District. It was truly an inspirational evening hosted by our very own Volunteer Coordinator, Mark Waddington. All nominees received a certificate of recognition and winners were presented by the Mayor of Lancaster. Gifts and prizes were donated by local businesses which we very grateful for. We were delighted to have organised this event in partnership with Lancaster City Council and was sponsored by Cumberland Building Society.

Award categories

- Volunteer of the Year (aged 25 or over)
- Young Volunteer of the Year (aged 24 or under)
- Trustee of the Year
- Lifetime Achievement Award
- Fundraiser of the Year
- Community Inspiration of the Year
Strengthening Communities project

The contribution of volunteers to the voluntary and community sector, public services and to society as a whole is invaluable. We know volunteering can increase volunteers’ longevity, improve their mental health, keep them fitter, and enable them to cope better with illness when it occurs. Volunteering also has a positive impact on a range of factors affecting health service users including their self-esteem, depression, adoption of healthy behaviours and relationships with the wider society. Our plans for the 2017-18 will see a new project called Strengthening Communities that is person centred, flexible triage approach and continuity of follow-through by an assigned worker. The aim of this project will be to use volunteering as a way of re-entering employment and improving overall wellbeing for those facing multiple barriers in life. As we described on page 14, the Volunteering Training Academy will continue to provide training and mentoring and we will set up a new service in the heart of Morecambe bringing this service closer to people living in this community.

REACH IT project

Earlier this year, we secured funding from the European social fund and Big Lottery to launch the REACH IT project. Reach IT is a digital inclusion project aiming to ensure that no-one in Lancashire gets left behind by the shift towards the need for digital skills. By providing targeted, personalised digital skills training we aimed to improve employability, health & wellbeing, and provide the digital skills necessary to empower those in disadvantaged communities throughout Lancashire.

This project brings together the Workers’ Educational Association (WEA), with a track record of providing voluntary sector infrastructure, & LACVS, the Lancashire wide Association of Councils for Voluntary Service, with a network of local third sector infrastructure support bodies. Equality bodies Age UK, MIND, Disability Equality NW, Lancs Women’s Centres, BME Network, LGBT Network, Advice Lancashire form the remaining Board members, and then there are over 30 other VCSE bodies as local delivery partners across the county. All are high performing providers with grassroots reach & proven Digital Inclusion & volunteering support track records.

We’ll ensure that the most socially excluded throughout Lancashire can access Reach IT by channelling engagement & support resources through local communities and services. Participants will be equipped with improved digital skills leading to enhanced employability opportunities, better financial planning, reduced social isolation, as well as opening up access to online health services. The community will benefit from improved community cohesion (through reengagement of socially excluded people), as well as support for local businesses and the economy.

Our own Incredible Volunteers.

The quality of the service we offer speaks for itself and it is a matter of great pride for us all to be able to respond to unmet needs. We consider ourselves fortunate to have such a committed volunteer team as we attempt to further increase the staffing resources to alleviate exceptional workload. The Lancaster District CVS administration team has continued to deal with information enquiries, ensure our database and membership records are kept up to date and operate our photocopying and equipment hire services. Without the contribution of our volunteers, we wouldn’t be able to support the people and organisations we come into contact with. We would like to emphasise the significant contribution our volunteers make, and we hope that this continues to be recognised by our members and partners.
Grants and Investments

The year 2017/18 has been one of growth for Lancaster District CVS’ administered grants. Through the Galbraith Trust, the Trustees awarded over £143,000 to local groups enabling groups to provide services and activities across the District. The Trust’s ongoing support to the sector has been remarkable over the last 20 years providing grants to local groups, enabling them to continue making differences to people’s lives. We thank them on behalf of the sector for their generosity, support and understanding of the sector.

We were delighted to launch the first round of the Eric Wright Charitable Trust fund. This fund was launched at this year’s Lancaster District Funding Fair which was attended by over 130 people involved with voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations making a positive difference to the lives and wellbeing of communities across the area. There was a high level of interest in the programme, with a number of queries at the event resulting in an application form being submitted. Grants of up to £500 were made available to small organisations, those with an income under £25,000, serving the communities of the Lancaster district. It was felt that the funding opportunity should be for smaller organisations as these organisations make up over 80% of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector but receive less than 5% of its annual income (NCVO Civil Society Almanac 2018).

Lancaster District CVS Financial Services.

LDCVS Financial services have been supporting the charitable sector for 15 years. We are specialists in providing a range of quality and cost effective financial support services, and we understand the needs and support that the sector requires. We continued to provide a fundamental finance service to over 55 groups ensuring that we provided a cost efficient and effective support to help organisations implement and operate their own accounting and financial management systems to a high standard. We also acted as a custodian for the Galbraith trust; Net Merriman and the Eric Wright Trust. Recipients included small clubs and organisations to registered charities, charitable companies, CIC companies and social enterprises.

Our Services

Payroll - We offered a fully managed payroll bureau that provides an affordable, accurate and efficient service for organisations that do not have the capacity or expertise to deliver this in-house. Including monthly pay runs and submissions to HMRC, sick, holiday and pension requirements. We work closely with customers so that employers and employees are aware of what is happening with any changes in the law.

Accounts – We carry out independent examinations for charities with a turnover of up to £250,000. We support charities to prepare accounts to meet the requirements of the Charity Commission and other regulators.

Bookkeeping - This may not be everyone’s favourite job but every organisation must do it. Our bookkeeping service enabled members to manage their organisation more effectively. We can help set up bespoke bookkeeping systems supporting groups though this process. We maintain accounting records, produce financial reports which may involve more complex aspects of financial management including cash flow and budgeting we help support groups every step of the way.

“Having CVS help us with our payroll and someone who understands our charity and provides great advice is very reassuring.”

“The support regarding auto enrolment was invaluable. This, especially for small charitable employers, is a complex process to navigate.”
Health and Wellbeing.

*Lancaster District CVS coordinates and facilitates the response of the sector on the Health and Wellbeing Partnership board and also supports the sectors engagement with key partners and commissioners on developing solutions to health and wellbeing strategies across the district.*

During the year, we continued to play a strategic role with the North Lancashire Clinical Commissioning Group and the Health and Wellbeing Partnership board. During this period, we supported our partners to deliver a series of training events called the Art of Hosting. The Art of Hosting is an approach to leadership that scales up from the personal to the systemic using personal practice, dialogue, facilitation and the co-creation of innovation to address complex challenges. During the year, a group of people from Lancaster and Morecambe from health and wellbeing services, local authority and police services, local citizens and voluntary and community groups came together to train in the art of hosting and harvesting conversations that matter. The aim of this was to catalyse a social movement around health and wellbeing in the town. To come together in conversation around some of the tough questions Lancaster and Morecambe faces in getting to grips with its community health challenges and to learn some tools and practices for how to take this conversation out into communities. The 3 days training was an amazing and transforming few days together, allowing the time and opportunity to explore how we work with our communities to improve health and wellbeing. We recommend watching the following video and listen to the testimonies from people that attending. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onLAobg2jm4](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=onLAobg2jm4)

Information and communication

During 2018 we continued to focus on growing our audience across our communication channels and diversify our methods of communication. Our twitter audiences have grown, with an increase of over 1,400 followers and we make steady progress with our Facebook account. Subscribers to our monthly bulletins continued to be very popular with members and have consistently increased throughout the year. Moreover, we continued to support relevant local and national campaigns and we work with partners to deliver key messages to our audiences including reports and briefings to capture what is happening in the voluntary sector locally. What impact is the sector having? What challenges are organisations experiencing on the ground? During 2017/18 we issued a total of 170 electronic bulletins and included:

- Information on upcoming events, such as training, conferences and workshops;
- Available funding and awards and their key deadlines;
- Vacancies for jobs, volunteering and premises;
- A range of news items from local, regional and national sources;
- A section for member organisations to publicise their own services, events, news, etc.

Our newsletter currently has over 1240 direct subscribers, with an estimated wider readership of over 3000.
### Some of our highlights....

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Icon</th>
<th>Text</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>£714,000</td>
<td>Funding secured for the sector, supported by Lancaster CVS. 120 people attending annual Funding Fair</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>720</td>
<td>Individuals accessing volunteering opportunities and receiving support and training.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>115</td>
<td>Organisations benefiting from training, helping to build knowledge and skills.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>195</td>
<td>E-bulletins &amp; sector news sent to over 1240 contacts sharing stories &amp; opportunities from across all sectors. Our new weekly column in the Lancaster Guardian column attracts 1000’s of readers every week.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1120</td>
<td>Records of VCSE sector services available on our database.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>315</td>
<td>Quality one to one advice to over 315 organisations</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>45</td>
<td>VCSE groups using the services of Lancaster CVS financial services.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>512</td>
<td>Connecting vulnerable and social isolated people into specialised services within our deprived communities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>255</td>
<td>Members participated in Children young people forum.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>342</td>
<td>Partners participating in our multi agency work of forum.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
People following the work of Lancaster CVS on social media.

New grassroot groups and social enterprises created with CVS support.

Organisations taken part in Art of Hosting. Using personal practice, dialogue, facilitation and the co-creation of innovation to address complex challenges.

Drop in sessions enabling 96 people to access low cost loans and savings scheme whilst accessing financial & advice.

CAN meetings tackling health inequalities. Supporting communities in developing their own vision of a healthy and sustainable community.

Partners attending this year’s People make Communities conference.

Community meetings with local people. Creating real, lasting change on the ground, people taking ownership of an issue where they live, work together to find practical solutions and become the agents of change in their local community.

Tackling the root causes of poverty, promoting social inclusion and driving local jobs and growth. Helping young people through to older people to access volunteering through the European Funded Building Better Opportunities program.
Looking ahead to 2019.

State of the Sector survey.

In the summer of 2017, Durham University researched regional and national studies to paint a broader picture of the sector across the North West. It reported that the voluntary sector in the North West is worth £2.2 billion and that it is estimated that there are 440,400 volunteers who deliver 31,709,800 hours of work. The replacement value of such work by employees would be between £228m (at national minimum wage) and £385m (at 80% of average wages). According to this Third Sector Trends study of voluntary organisations 83% of North West respondents said that without additional income they would use all their reserves up in less than 12 months. Reading this report, it acted as a reminder that the VCSE sector in the Lancaster District plays a crucially important role in the civic life of the city – working actively to ensure that the needs and aspirations of local citizens are at the forefront of their activities. However, understanding our sector is a challenging task. With several hundred organisations active across the District, making thousands of interventions with beneficiaries in the past year alone, the need to understand the size, scope, finances and the impact our sector makes across the District will be number one key priority in early 2019.

Community Connectors program – Social Prescribing.

Community Connector programs help people to live independently, get involved in their community and help improve their physical and mental wellbeing. Lancaster District CVS is a custodian to a vast database and also administers two successful forums that bring together voluntary, statutory and health services. We will aim to utilise our connections to help people connect with the right services through technology and human support. We will aim to develop this service that help people in the Lancaster district area and their families or carers, to access community-level services and activities that will help them maintain independent lives and which help prevent their circumstances deteriorating to a point where they might need higher level health or social care services. Over the past 12 months, we have, along with other partners helped co-design a place based directory that enables organisations to work together irrespective of organisational boundaries, enabling partners to effectively work in a place based approach, focusing on the individual. We intend to launch this service in early 2019.

Developing and supporting leadership in the sector.

What kind of provision for leadership development is there in the voluntary sector at a local level? What training opportunities or support groups are there for aspiring leaders in large and small charities, social enterprises and community groups?

The third sector is experiencing a radical shift in its political and economic environment. It is possible that it may be undergoing a significant transformation in its shape, its role and its relationship with governments. However, much of the third sector’s conversation appears to be focused on questions of organisational survival and resilience. There seems to be precious little overall discussion of the deeper question of what the sector is in the process of becoming, or what role it should play through and beyond the existing politics of austerity. There appears to be no sustained sector-wide conversation about the potential transformation underway or safe platforms for leaders to share their anxieties and struggles. We believe it is time to provide this platform and recognise that leaders need space, time and others to reflect on their practice.

Over the next year, we will take the leadership and provide dedicated time which will enable managers to develop themselves and their organisations. Based on the principle that people learn best from what they are doing and that they have an unlimited capacity to learn from experience but a limited capacity to learn from being taught. It is a process of learning and reflection, supported by likeminded leaders with the intention of moving issues forward. Individuals learn with and from each
other by working on their own particular situations and reflecting on their experience. Action Learning recognises that professional development comes from a combination of knowledge, skills and personal growth. People bring the whole of themselves to the process and have the freedom to explore as much as they feel comfortable doing, without making a firm boundary between work and non-work. Over time, participants build a deep understanding and trust of each other, which allows both a high degree of support and positive challenge. This helps people take an active approach to the pressures of life and work. The greatest value of the action learning process lies in its capacity for equipping individuals, teams and organisations to respond more effectively to change since it promotes fresh thinking and new ways of looking at and dealing with situations.

Third Sector Manifesto

Being at the heart of creating a better and fairer Lancaster District: A strategy for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector

For the past year, we worked tirelessly with partners to describe the position and role of the VCSE sector in Lancaster District in terms of how it supports and benefits local people, delivers services and influences District-wide policy and strategy. We will work with our members to further develop a manifesto with the aim of achieving the following outcomes:

- A clear position and role for the VCSE sector in strategic partnerships;
- Recognition and agreement about how the sector supports and benefits local people, delivers services and influences policy and strategy;
- Shared understanding between the VCSE sector, Lancaster City Council and Morecambe Bay CCG of the relationship that the VCSE sector has with its key stakeholders, including beneficiaries / service users and clients (current and future), funders and donors, commissioners, delivery partners, and the wider public sector;
- Resources that are appropriate, accessible, and sustainable;
- A consistent approach to strategic and operational thinking;
- A VCSE sector which works in partnership with the City Council and the CCG for the benefit of the people of Lancaster District.

Sector Development

We will continue to provide quality group support, training for key staff and volunteers on topics to improve how the organisation functions along with funding advice with a focus on sustainability. This will include organisations being supported for 1-2-1 ongoing generic advice and support on all aspects of the organisation, annual workshops providing training, training in governance, and programme of social enterprise growth seminars

Volunteering

We will continue to focus on mobilising volunteering for Volunteering Involving Organisations to provide much needed community provision across the district and on utilising the power of volunteering to help unemployed and economically inactive residents to be active, build their confidence and self-esteem and make progress in terms of their employability skills and improving their health and wellbeing.
Lancaster District CVS’s Financial Services

We will continue to provide a professional accounts and payroll services aimed at voluntary and community groups offering help with financial management, payroll, and end of year accounts. Furthermore, we will help with setting up accountancy systems, bookkeeping, Year-end accounts, financial training and Independent annual examination of accounts.

Voluntary Sector Consortium

In 2016, Lancaster District CVS set up the North Lancashire Voluntary Sector Consortium as a new joint venture both of and for community based community voluntary and social enterprise sector organisations in the Lancaster District area.

The primary goal of North Lancashire Voluntary Sector Consortium was set up to:

“To unite Lancaster districts voluntary and social enterprise sector – through collaboration we create stronger communities”

Two years on, the consortia have made steady progress but there is much to do. The aim of bringing the voluntary, community faith sector and social enterprise (VCSE) sector across the district closer together is so that we can genuinely unite the many voices we have for a common purpose to help our communities grow stronger and to have a greater influence with public and private sector partners at a district, regional and even national level still remains a core focus. To continue having an influence, there was a need to unite the many voices and build a strong business case for the involvement of the VCSE sector. There has never been a greater interest in and focus on our role as providers, influencers and above all cultural changers. In order to meet the challenges we face and to access the opportunities ahead of us, we need a strong, focused and united Voluntary and Community Sector and therefore the consortia will grow from strength to strength.

We developed a hub and spoke model, adopted by North Lancashire Voluntary Sector Consortium, to provide a robust basis for creating efficiencies and economies of scale in terms of management and co-ordination by the Hub coupled with the front line delivery of services through members. Below is a diagram that outlines the initial five thematic areas.

We are pleased with the response for the sector and from strategic partners who see this model as a way of interacting with the VCSE sector and as a positive way forward to combine the various efforts of all partners. It will endeavour to open up new funding opportunities, promote joint working, share marketing intelligence and research findings, offer advice, conduct mutually beneficial internal
resource auditing and organise the delivery of joint training for trustees, managers, voluntary and paid workers. The consortium aims to build an 'internal market place' so whenever possible, member organisations will purchase and benefit from each other’s services, including 'back room' services or facilities in order to provide support to each other, increase efficiencies, and help drive down costs and demonstrate more effective combined value for money.

Kind Words

“The CVS funding training and advice was invaluable in helping me with funding, thank you” Peer Support.

“I think it is really good that Lancaster District CVS work to recognise and put in place support for volunteers, without the support from volunteers a lot of crucial work would most certainly not go ahead” WEA

“The voluntary sector provides services we need to provide ongoing support to our patients. Thank you for your help in signposting us to the right services” NHS Nurse

“Lancaster District CVS have given us full support in everything our organisation has done over the last 12 months. Thank you” Skerton Community Centre

“LDCVS has played an extremely important part of our running as a charity. We have been able to access a wide variety of help and support from printing through to finances! LDCVS are so approachable, easy to work with and very reliable. Lancashire Youth Challenge wants to take this opportunity to thank you for all your help and support and we look forward to this work continuing in the future” Amy Selant - Project Coordinator

“Thank you Lancaster CVS for the amazing work on our community profile and action plan. The level of detail and work has far exceeded our expectations and the plan will enable us to move forward with improving our community” Simon Das, Chair of West End Million Partnership

“The Funding Fair was invaluable! Meeting all the funders and having the opportunity to share our work face to face was so useful. The workshops were equally as helpful, thanks!”

“Kind Words”

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The Community Action Network events have been enlightening, we didn’t realise so much existed on in our neighbourhood. Looking forward to meeting the community and listening to what they have to say. CAN Network partners.