

**Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions
(Company Limited by Guarantee)**

Trustees Annual Report for the Year ended 30th June 2021

Mission

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

Company registration number: 6743623.

Charity registration number: 1127626

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Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions
Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the year ending 30th June 2021

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.

Names of all Directors on the date this report was approved -

Harsha Shukla
Dr Samantha Jane Riches
Kenneth Dunn
Jill Anderson
Professor Keith Adrian Percy
Claire Louise Chapman

Company Secretary: Kenneth Dunn

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, Vacancy
Lancaster City Councillor, Alistair Sinclair

Names of other persons who served as trustees in the financial period –

None

Chief Officer

Yakub Patel

Bankers -

CAF BANK Ltd
PO Box 289, Kings Mill,
West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TA

Independent Examiner – Coates & Co. 2 Fairhope Avenue, Bare, Morecambe, LA4 6JZ

Structure, Governance and Management:

Nature of the Governing Document - Memorandum and Articles

How the Charity is constituted - Incorporated

Date of Governing Document - 7th November 2008

Governance

LDCVS was founded in 1972 as the Lancaster & District Council of Voluntary Service, an unincorporated charity. It became a charitable company limited by guarantee (incorporated) on 7th November 2008. It was established under a Memorandum and Articles of Association which describe the objects and powers of the charitable company, and is governed under its Articles of Association. The Trustees are appointed in accordance with those Articles of Association.

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. The trustee board of LDCVS is responsible for managing the business of LDCVS as outlined in the Articles of Association.

Method of recruitment and appointment of trustees: LDCVS is a membership organisation, the membership being predominantly drawn from other local voluntary organisations, from which the Directors (Board of Trustees) are elected, either at the AGM or through an open and transparent selection and interview process. The paid staff of LDCVS are accountable to this Board. No funders are currently represented on the Board.

Policy & Procedures adopted for the induction and training of trustees: New Trustees are inducted in a timely fashion into the workings of LDCVS, including its policies and procedures, so as to fully understand their responsibilities.

Our Purpose, Aims and Activities for the Year 2020-21.

Lancaster District Community and Voluntary Solutions (LDCVS) is an infrastructure organisation that exists to support community, voluntary and faith and social enterprise organisations in Lancaster District. It aims to strengthen their ability to deliver services to individuals and communities, and to enhance their independence and sustainability.

Currently we have over 500 local organisations as members of LDCVS and also a number of public sector and corporate bodies that are associate members. In addition we offer support, through our Volunteer Centre, to individuals who wish to volunteer their time. Our Objects, which are contained in our governing document (Memorandum and Articles) are:

- 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.

The aims of our charity are to:

- ensure that our members are well-supported to deliver the best outcomes, and that their expertise is valued and maximised;
- work with our members to shape local services to best meet local needs;
- help our members to access the resources, funding and support they need; and
- bring organisations together to build relationships, share support and learn from each other.

Our aims fully reflect the purposes (objects) that the charity was set up to further, and we review them, together with our objectives and activities, each year to assess the success of each key activity and the benefits they have brought to our beneficiaries. This review also helps us to ensure that our aims, objectives and activities are focused on our stated purposes and to demonstrate how planned activities contribute to the aims and objectives set by the Trustee Board. In considering these, 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.

The focus of our Work

Lancaster District Community Voluntary Service 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. Our overall mission has been, and remains: to promote, develop and support, through partnership, a dynamic and diverse voluntary and community sector. In setting out our aims and objectives we have also defined the outcomes that will demonstrate whether we have met them and whether our activities have brought about benefits to those organisations and individuals we work with. Our business plan further details these activities and the associated indicators.

Staff

Yakub Patel	Chief Officer
Nick Smith	Senior Administration Officer
<i>Kevin Goodall</i>	<i>Connecting Communities Voluntary Sector Development Officer</i>
<i>Lisa Shrimpton</i>	<i>Connecting Communities Voluntary Sector Development Officer</i>
Mark Waddington	Connecting Communities Volunteer Centre Officer
<i>Louise Munro</i>	<i>Connecting Communities Volunteer Centre Officer</i>
Shweta Pankhadiwala	Finance Officer
Tobi Ogunpehin	Communications and Partnerships Officer
Annette Marsden	Admin, Finance and membership volunteer
Ian Lawrie	Grant and Admin volunteer
Nilesh Patel	IT volunteer

Our Mission

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

Our Values

Independence

- We are an independent voice for the Voluntary, Community, Faith and Social Enterprise sector, championing its vital role in Lancaster District

Collaboration

- We believe in partnership, in the sharing of knowledge, expertise and resources, and the importance of building trust across geographical, organisational, cultural and sectoral boundaries

Social Justice

- We value the diversity of the sector and work to promote equality, diversity and inclusion.

Empowerment

- We seek to enable communities, organisations and networks to become strong, independent and self-sustaining.

Learning

- We believe that all of us can grow, learn and develop throughout our lives but often need help to do so.

Participation

- We champion the principle of voluntary action, believing strongly in the benefits it brings to individuals and communities in our District.

Quality

- We put quality at the heart of all our activities.

Message from our Interim Chair - Claire Louise Chapman.

I am delighted to introduce our Annual Report for 2020-21 which demonstrates the profound impact our work has had on the local voluntary sector and on the local community, during an unprecedentedly challenging year.

LDCVS has worked hard, this past year, to ensure that vital information has flowed outwards to you, our members and partners, to understand your needs and to represent your interests to local government, health bodies and other partners. That would not have been possible without our members' active support in engaging with us, through attending meetings, completing surveys and in numerous other ways.

Like many organisations, across the sector, LDCVS has had to make significant changes to our ways of working over this past year. That we have been able to continue to thrive and develop has been in no small part due to the steady leadership of our Chair Alan Chesters, who retired in the early part of 2021. Everyone at LDCVS wishes Alan all the best for the future and thanks him for an incredible 14 years as Chair of LDCVS.

Thank you to LDCVS members and partners for the remarkable work that you have continued to do, in the face of – and in response to – formidable challenges. And a special thank you to our funders, our staff and volunteers – including my fellow trustees – who continue to make our own work possible.

Claire Louise Chapman

Message from our Chief Officer – Yak Patel

This is my seventh year of presenting our Annual Report and I continue to respect working for LDCVS as a privilege, and to represent and support the work of volunteers and the voluntary sector across Lancaster District.

And so, a year that no one ever expected to live through has drawn to a close and this year perhaps more than any other, I am so proud of the staff and volunteers at Lancaster District CVS, the voluntary community faith sector, our partners and our communities.

Our staff, while continuing to balance homeworking with their own lives have worked tirelessly to help the voluntary sector, our partners and those in need of support. Our original plans, with all the projects and services we had been expecting to deliver, continued to be put on hold as we all focused on one task – responding to the Covid pandemic. The world we lived in continued to challenge us all. However – in spite of the challenges Covid-19 has thrown into the path of the voluntary sector and our communities, the response of volunteers and the voluntary, community and faith sector has been astonishing. I know our sector will have a key and continuing role in helping our society re-build for the future and that, together, we will all help people, in the months ahead, to re-connect with one another and to build stronger communities.

I'm not afraid to admit that it's been another challenging, difficult and emotional 12 months. Responding to this crisis has been our greatest challenge as an organisation. We have seen how Covid-19 has impacted our communities, creating anxiety and isolation, shining the light on poverty and inequalities. As a team, we have been running at a fast pace, increasing our capacity to deal with the demand, doing our best to respond to the pandemic whilst developing and delivering on our new strategy. The next 12 months will be equally as challenging as we concentrate on our core services while still supporting those affected by the pandemic. We know there will be an increase in demand for our services. Discussions will be ongoing with existing and potential funders, to help us to manage that.

I would like to take this opportunity to say thank you to all the incredible volunteers, to all our colleagues in the voluntary community faith sector, emergency services, key workers, and everyone else that have worked together to support our most vulnerable citizens. Lancaster District really does have a phenomenal community spirit. We are proud to be part of that, and I cannot praise our own team enough for the commitment and flexibility that they have all shown in extremely difficult circumstances and they should be proud of themselves for the difference they have made.

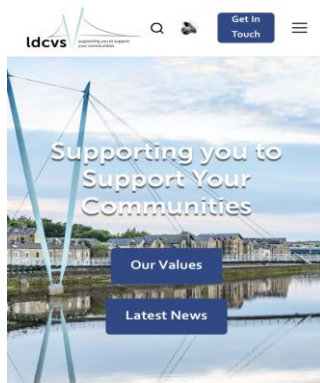
So, in delivering on the objectives set out in our new business plan, we will continue to work closely with colleagues in health, local authorities, education and local business to identify the needs of the community, develop our services to you and continue to advocate for the incredible voluntary sector we have in this District.

Thank you all for your continued support and please take some time to read in more detail about our work in our annual report.

Yak Patel, CEO

Communications and Partnerships.

Communications are a key part of our offer for Lancaster District voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations. Our relationships and trust with advice organisations enable us to provide reliable source of quality information, helping to connect the sector to available support, resources and opportunities.



During the pandemic, communications became more vital than ever. We worked hard to be a trusted source of accurate, manageable and relevant information for our members, partners and the community. As Covid-19 changed the daily lives of people, it also changed the way how we communicated and how people could be reached. During the year, we created and shared a weekly [Covid information bulletin](#), reflecting the speed with which updates were being issued and to prioritise Covid-19 resources and information. Our weekly bulletin was shared directly to over 2000 people and thousands more via our weekly Guardian column

and social media. Our priorities were to disseminate important information around funding, safeguarding, safety, legislation, HR, vaccinations, policies and so much more, helping organisations save time so that they can concentrate on delivering their work

Our brand [new website](#), designed by SQ Digital, has enabled us significantly to extend our reach. A complete revamp, with a new logo, has brought a big increase in visitors to our site. Time spent on the site has increased too, with access to pages offering support and guidance, new online tools, funding advice, volunteering information and resources. As digital communications become an ever more vital way of keeping in contact with the voluntary sector, we will review our current channels, explore other ways of sharing information and continue to optimise our website.

We took the opportunity this year to harness storytelling and surveys to capture the incredible work of the sector and the challenges our members and leaders face. We have put together case studies, along with findings from three surveys and have shared them with our members, our partners and funders. We have also involved organisations in campaigns and community conversations enabling a wider public audience to learn about the fantastic work that happens across our communities. It has been a privilege to share your journeys and as a result of this work, and our increased social media and website capacity, our reach continues to increase.

Partnership working.

Supporting the sector by...creating strategic relationships and partnerships

We remain committed to ensuring that the voluntary and community sector is visible, valued and has a strong voice and influence. In an unprecedented and challenging year for the VCFSE sector, we were a key partner in the strategic response to the crisis, working actively with local government and the health sector, and as committed members of the Lancashire Resilience forum. At the height of the pandemic, that forum met weekly, collaborating with others on key campaigns and ensuring vital support got out to people. This partnership working forged links between and across sectors, notably with Lancashire County Council, District Community Hubs, Bay Health and Care Partners and key Covid-19 strategic groups/boards. It created a safe place where peer support and advice could be accessed.

Importantly, Lancaster District VCFSE Sector Leader's group continued to meet throughout the pandemic to address issues arising from Covid-19 and plan for the future. Activities included formulation of our [Covid-19 Impact Surveys](#), information sharing regarding Government funding for our sector, and presentations from colleagues in health, local authorities, local economic partners and from group members themselves.

We worked closely with the Voluntary Sector Emergency Partnership Local Intelligence Network. We knew that a local response is best in times of emergency, we also knew that a lack of coordination and support across the sector can mean people going without the help they need during a crisis.

[The Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership](#) (VCS EP) was formed in 2018 to improve the connection between local and national responses, particularly during times of crisis. While our focus during 2020-21 was on responding to the evolving Covid-19 crisis, our long-term goal was to strengthen connections across the sector and to put in place sustainable ways of working that would support the sector to deliver a coordinated and effective response in times of future emergency. The VCS EP aimed to add value to the emergency response delivered by the eco-system of national and local voluntary and community sector organisations working together. Working with the Department for Culture Media and Sport, we undertook 24 weekly Pulse Surveys to inform the VCS EP of local gaps and needs. We worked with the VCS EP in four key areas:

1. A national platform to gather intelligence dynamically on unmet and emergent needs. These insights were shared with the Lancashire Resilience Forum to help our response and allocation of resources, with a focus on those who were most vulnerable.
2. Request for a service to enable local organisations to seek additional support from the VCS EP for needs which could not be met through existing local networks
3. Worked with the North multi-agency cell to help members of the VCS EP connect and pool resources in response to requests for support and emerging unmet need
4. One national volunteering cell to maintain an overview of capacity across the voluntary and community sector and provide a single point of contact for the government and statutory agencies to engage volunteers for large-scale national requests

Further to this partnership, we have continued to manage, administer and/or engage in the following [partnerships and networks](#), leading to demonstrable change for the sector and communities in the district:

1. **Bay Health and Health Partners (Morecambe Bay Integrated Care Partnership):** An ICP is a collaboration of planners and providers across health, Local Authority, the voluntary sector and the wider community who take collective responsibility for improving the health and wellbeing of residents within a place. Our Chief Executive represents the Lancaster District VCFSE leadership forum on this group, articulating our ask and offer, and members of our team attend the Integrated Care Community meetings across the district.
2. **Population Health Strategic Group (PHSG):** PHSG is part of the Morecambe Bay Integrated Care Partnership governance structure. Its purpose is to oversee the implementation of an agreed approach to population health across the Morecambe

Bay health and care system and the communities we serve, thus narrowing the gap in health inequalities. Our Chief Executive represents the Lancaster District VCFSE leadership forum on this group, articulating our ask and offer.

3. **Health and Wellbeing Partnership Board:** Chaired by our Chief Executive, this board connects to the PHSG and acts as an operational board for the PHSG group. We represent the VCFSE on this multi-agency strategic health board both locally and regionally, working together to design health related projects. Members include Police, Fire, Health, Local Authority, mental health trust and VCFSE colleagues.
4. **Children and Young People Forum and Working Together with Families:** Our Chief Executive is vice chair of the forum and helps partners coordinate support for families in need. This forum facilitates voluntary sector representation, enabling the sector to meet the needs and priorities identified locally and nationally. An average of 65 organisations attend this bi-monthly meeting.
5. **Morecambe Interagency Group (MIG):** An informal, bi-monthly gathering of representatives (paid and unpaid) from voluntary and statutory organisations, and self-help groups in Morecambe that deliver services to the community. With an average of 40 organisations attending, MIG provides a platform for information sharing and joined up working.
6. **Volunteer Coordinators Network:** We coordinate the only volunteer coordinators' network meeting, bringing community practitioners together to share ideas, look for support and debate good practice.
7. **Community Learning Network:** The Community Learning Network is a group of education providers and community development organisations that are passionate about developing the skills of people living and working in our local communities. Through this partnership, our aim is to provide educational pathways through the offer of a wide range of community led and community-based courses that could lead people to gain new skills that are valuable in all areas of life and work.

Lancaster District Volunteer Centre

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 in order to fulfil their mission and help the people and communities

Our Volunteer Centre is the key local volunteering development organisation within the district. Our centre continued, through its links with local, regional and national agencies, to develop and disseminate policy and practice relating to volunteering. In addition, like many other organisations across the sector, Lancaster District Volunteer Centre actively supported the community response to the pandemic. In the first week of lockdown back in March 2020, over a thousand people responded to our call for volunteers. Working in partnership with Bay Volunteers – a partnership between Lancaster City Council, Hope Church and Bay Health Care partners - we helped co-ordinate hundreds of volunteers into Covid-response roles: as drivers, stewards for vaccination centres, medical and food assistants, befrienders and many more.

We have continued our volunteer centre support to the sector as more and more groups have increased their services or lost volunteers during the pandemic. We have redesigned the [volunteer page](#) on our website, making it easier to advertise for and recruit new volunteers.

Volunteer awards 2021

We finished the year by thanking volunteers at our 2021 Volunteer awards. We were overwhelmed with over 100 nominations, our biggest year yet! We felt privileged to be able to read about all the amazing people and their work, and how it has impacted positively on so many across our district. We had nominations for teams, individuals, neighbours checking in on people, formal volunteers, people offering support far outside their usual activities, and we will be showcasing as many of them as we can on our brand-new website so that everyone else can be inspired too!

The sheer range and depth of activities was wonderful to see with diversity not only in how people participate, but also in how they think about volunteering; from the informal to the formal to the 'just being neighbourly'. The last year, despite its difficulties, really has brought out the very best in our communities. We had nominations from people who wanted to thank their volunteers, from people who wanted to thank other people's volunteers, and from people who simply wanted to thank individuals who had been a help to them during a difficult time.

We could never hope to thank every single volunteer because there are literally thousands across Lancaster. We are happy that we have been able to celebrate and thank at least a few, to share in their successes, and to let them know that they are appreciated- not just by us, but by those they help and so many others who see their work. We were inundated with positive feedback, especially from people who learned new things from the event about what is happening in our district. Once again, thank you to Jenny Kay from the Mayor's office at Lancaster City Council and Mark Greenall, the Mayor of Lancaster, and to all the partners that played their part in this year's awards.

Support for groups and organisational development.

As the voluntary sector membership body for Lancaster District, we offer free professional help and advice to our member voluntary and community groups. As part of our role as the infrastructure for local community organisations, we provide group development, support and training on a wide range of topics including start-up, governance, funding advice and guidance, business planning and general good practice

Supporting the sector has never been as vital as it has this year. Though many organisations have had to put their plans on hold as they fight for survival, our foundational support has not changed, though the method of delivery and prioritisation of need sometimes had to. We have continued to provide support, development and coordination to help voluntary and community organisations to meet the challenges they face. Increasingly digitally, we have provided business support, funding & financial resilience advice, training, networking opportunities, and face to face online guidance.

We have significantly increased the number of one-to-one support sessions we deliver, as compared with last year. In 2019-20, we supported **315 groups** compared to **356 groups** this year, a rise of 13%. Support with funding has remained the most frequent request and we

have helped the sector to raise over 2.1 million pounds in the past year. Other key support areas have included advice with:

Setting up a new group / organisation / social enterprise

- Incorporation of charities and social enterprises
- Proof-reading bids and governance documents
- DBS checks and advice
- Building management
- HR
- Safety
- Project planning
- Governance
- Safeguarding
- Policies and procedures

DBS Checks

We offered a Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS), providing information, advice and guidance to organisations wishing to obtain DBS checks for their staff and volunteers. We carried out **70 DBS checks** for VCFSE organisations and **89 advice sessions** around DBS checks.

Payroll Services.

We continued to provide a fundamental finance service to over 30 groups ensuring that we provided a cost efficient and effective support to help organisations implement and operate their accounting and financial management systems to a high standard. We dealt with a flurry of activity around the Government Job Retention Scheme, with many organisations asking for our help to understand and process furlough applications.

The other main strands of our financial services included:

- | | |
|------------------------------------|---|
| -Payroll services | -Book-keeping services |
| -Production of management accounts | -Independent examinations |
| -Financial health checks | -Help with statutory & funders' reporting |

Bay Foundation - Grants and Investments

The year 2020 / 21 was significant for our grants and investment programme. For nearly 50 years, supporting the sector and our communities has been a core feature of our organisation, and one which our team care deeply about. Recognising that the COVID-19 pandemic is at its core a human tragedy, we wanted to do more by working with our communities, the VCFSE sector and our partners to deliver help where it was most needed.

The Urgent Response Fund

The *Urgent Response Fund – Coronavirus* is a small grants fund for charities and community groups in need of resources to effectively deliver projects and activities which support the basic health and wellbeing needs of vulnerable members of the community in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. In March 2020 we launched this fund, and raised over £80,000.

Working in partnership with NHS Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group, Francis C Scott Charitable Trust, Eric Wright Charitable Trust, NFU Mutual, West End Morecambe, Westminster Foundation and Lancaster City Council, by the end of June 2021, **87 projects** had been funded, with awards totalling over **£98,000**. You can read more about the impact of this fund [here](#).

Funds allocated
£98,000

Grants approved
87

THE URGENT RESPONSE FUND C O R O N A V I R U S



Lancaster Community Fund

Lancaster City Council and Lancaster District CVS invited local charities and community groups to apply to the Lancaster Community Fund. Grants of up to £1,000 were available to organisations in Lancaster District that needed help to deliver projects and activities for the benefit of local people. For example, a recipient of the Community fund delivered a summer programme for children and young people. The Summer Splash project offered many children & young people the opportunity to overcome their anxieties through conversation with youth workers and by engaging in a range of activities. From sports to cooking, arts and crafts, beach parties, dance, music and much more, the combination of activities and support helped young people with their welfare.

Here is a young person and youth worker speaking about their experiences:

"For the first time in years, I accessed the one-to-one sessions and finally opened up.... Simple goal setting and action plans has helped and makes you feel amazing after feeling like you've achieved nothing for so long, being able to return to the sessions and say you've completed your action plan is a great feeling..."

"We saw a massive change in the young people, and we feel that all young people came out positive and ready for their new term wherever that was going to be."

Eric Wright Community Fund

The Eric Wright Charitable Trust is a small grants programme for community groups within the Lancaster District. The programme is aimed at smaller local organisations - with an annual income of less than £50,000 – that provide activities which aim to make a positive difference to the lives and wellbeing of people of all ages. In total, 51 applications were made to the fund this year, which shows the scale of need and commitment of groups to support their communities. Thanks to the Eric Wright Trust, we have been able to support these groups at a very testing time.

Morecambe Bay Population Health Investment Fund.

The population health investment fund was created in September 2020 with the aim of encouraging community led responses to the inequalities in health we face across Morecambe Bay. This fund is the Morecambe Bay Clinical Commissioning Group's response to the request for investment in grass roots and community led interventions by the Population Health Strategic Group. Lancaster District CVS secured £35,000 investment, for local VCFSE organisations, from this fund. Projects funded reduced isolation and deprivation, through the provision of telephone services, online classes, counselling and mental health support and food initiatives. Support was provided for older people, families and those with long term conditions.

Activities for children and young people programme

The holiday activity programme funded children and young people organisations to provide positive activities. Over £17,000 was awarded to groups that provided support, particularly those from disadvantaged communities with a wide range of activities and healthy eating projects. Over 1,300 children and young people took part in the summer programme resulting in increased confidence, social connections and improved mental health.

Evaluating the Impact - Monitoring and evaluation of projects supported through grants and investments forms an integral part of Lancaster District CVS' grants management function.

West End Morecambe and Creative West End – Big Local

We continued to be the Locally Trusted Organisation (LTO) for [West End Morecambe](#) and [Creative West End](#). Our role on behalf of West End Morecambe and Creative West End included providing strategic and operational support, financial management, administration services, acting as banker for their Big Local investment and supporting their Partnership Board.

Community Action Networks

We continued to bring organisations and residents (young and old) together through conversations in communities with the greatest health and equality challenges. By bringing local people and local organisations together, we talked about what it means to be healthy and well in our communities and inspired people to work together to tackle the issues they face. We delivered practical skills and tools for bringing people together in ways that help us move from just having nice conversations about health to understanding what to do and how to build momentum for the kind of change in society we would really love to see.

Working with residents, local businesses and local organisations, we agreed on 5 key areas (as shown in the diagram) and developed an action plan for each area.

CAN participants

- Residents associations
- Lancaster City Council Housing Officers
- Health partners
- Primary Schools
- Neighborhood police
- Friends of Parks
- Lancashire County Council
- Lancashire Wellbeing Service
- Age UK Lancashire
- Healthwatch
- St. Chad's Hall
- Skerton Community Centre
- Skills for Care
- Lancaster Medical Practice
- Lancaster & Morecambe College
- Lancashire Adult Learning



The future for Lancaster District CVS

LDCVS has over 40 years of experience in helping our members to overcome critical challenges that the VCFSE Sector faces.

Strong vibrant communities need equally strong vibrant organisations to support and deliver quality services to them. The primary objective of LDCVS is, and will continue to be, to promote and support a thriving voluntary community faith and social enterprise sector by building the capacity and effectiveness of the sector. The Voluntary Community Faith and Social Enterprise sector in Lancaster District is a strong and vibrant sector, however, the sector has and will continue to face significant challenges which it will need advice, support and guidance on to enable it to respond and thrive.

Over the past year, the Trustees and staff at LDCVS have refreshed our business plan, our core values and how we work as an organisation. We have drawn on recent surveys, our conversations with the sector and the needs of our stakeholders and considered the issues impacting on the VCFSE sector, such as COVID-19 and changes in public sector funding.

We are now more confident that we are doing the right things for the right reasons and in the right way. Our vision is for an independent, thriving, diverse, innovative and resilient VCFSE sector providing high quality support to communities across our district that makes a positive difference to peoples' lives. Our business plan sets out the role we will play, over the coming year, in achieving that. LDCVS has been in Lancaster District for almost 50 years and, with your support, we have our sights set on 100!

Our mission

LDCVS exists to support, connect and champion the voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise (VCFSE) sector in the Lancaster District.

Our strategic aims

support the sector: incubating, developing and sustaining voluntary and community organisations and enabling them, in turn, to support the communities that they care about

connect the sector: forging links between individuals, communities and groups, and between the sector as a whole and other partners

champion the sector: ensuring that both its achievements and its challenges are recognised

be a **sustainable** organisation, open to new learning

To achieve our four strategic aims, our staff, supported by our volunteers and trustees, we will:

Ensure that our members are well supported and resourced

Achievement of this aim is dependent on ensuring that funding for the sector is both accessible and directed to where it is most needed. We will help funders to develop their knowledge of our local communities and their needs, and of how best to target resources to address those. We will provide support to VCFSE organisations in turn: telling them what funding is available and aiding their success in applying for it. The VCFSE sector is dependent on the contribution of its volunteers. We will make local citizens aware both of specific volunteering opportunities and of the wider benefits of participation. We will support VCFSE organisations to attract, develop, support and retain those volunteers. We will continue to be centrally involved in promoting the professionalism of the sector, through training and capacity building – for both paid staff and volunteers, including trustees – across all areas, including new developments such as social prescribing.

Connect communities, the VCFSE sector and support agencies

As a district, we can only be successful in tackling entrenched problems, such as poverty, if we understand, and are able to work *together* to address, underlying inequalities. The VCFSE sector has a vital role to play. To achieve this aim we will continue to create and contribute to forums for the exploration and discussion of the complex challenges we face, ensuring that all voices – not just the loudest – can be heard. We will continue to facilitate the Voluntary Sector Leadership Forum and expand our involvement with Community Action Networks. We will also help to develop skills – amongst VCFSE sector staff and volunteers – in collaborative working and peer mentoring.

Champion the VCFSE sector

Championing the VCFSE sector means more than just publicising its achievements and its work. It means harnessing our sector's collective power and pushing for the best environment for its survival. As a VCFSE infrastructure body, we will continue to promote an understanding of the unique contribution that the sector makes to promoting community wellbeing and public health. We will work with our members to build stronger relationships with decision makers – ensuring that, in the formulation of all public policy, the VCFSE is recognised as a strategic partner. We aim to strengthen the sector's ability to effect change in the District; working with other infrastructure bodies (local, regional and national) to ensure that both its achievements and its challenges are recognised.

Be a sustainable organisation, open to new learning

Achievement of all of our aims is dependent on our development of a sustainable funding model for our own organisation. We will ensure the wellbeing of our own staff and volunteers through managing all aspects of our operations effectively and by rigorously maintaining an inclusive, fair, and open-minded culture in our workplace.