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Nurturing
Terrific
Enthusiastic
Energetic
Ready
Special

Annual Report
2014

Together we can
make a real difference



Volunteer Centre
Sandwell

Making a difference in difficult times

Volunteering is now more important than ever. It has been shown to improve the lives of individuals who have gone through hard times, and given to those who volunteer a sense of worth and achievement.

FOR 36 years *Volunteer Centre Sandwell* has supported, inspired and assisted those who wish to give something back, by giving their time to help the community. This help has been as varied as working in food banks and soup kitchens, which have shown a 26% increase on 2012 figures; to supporting Sandwell's youth through volunteering and sport opportunities.

The support, assistance and funding given to *VCS* has allowed us to undertake new projects, to offer training and to make sure volunteers are placed in a safer working environment. This is entirely down to our Funders and Partners who have continued to support us and we would like to offer them a heart-felt thank you. In the coming year, we appeal for this support to continue through our *'Stronger together, better together'* programme, which will help communities become active and local residents pro-active, across the borough. Research shows that for every public pound invested in the Centre the return is an additional £9 pounds.

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The 3 most frequent keywords VCS has heard during 2014

1. VOLUNTEERING

An increasing number of organisations are recruiting new volunteers, such as Agewell, Kaleidoscope and Murray Hall Community Trust. They are seeking individuals who feel empowered and have a high sense of well being to support vulnerable residents, whilst combating social isolation. For over 36 years Volunteer Centre Sandwell has been the generator of new and exciting projects. We see our role to be responsive, efficient, effective and champions of good practise.

2. COMMUNITY ACTIVITY

Communities realise that when individuals work together on activities it leads to more successful events. An example of this was this year's Sandwell Big Spring Clean. Volunteers across Sandwell schools, community groups, residents, places of worship, council staff and local businesses have picked litter, planted and painted to make the borough beautiful. Local parks, community buildings and more importantly neighbourhoods have all benefited from the campaign. The ability to develop new volunteering opportunities is a core function of the centre. This year we have been able to increase the number of new activities available to a diverse range of individuals.

3. UNEMPLOYED

Over the summer months VCS worked in partnership with Sandwell Council, West Midlands Police plus 30 key local partners with the Passport to Success Roadshows. The main purpose of these events was to increase resident's engagement and promote knowledge of volunteering and training opportunities. VCS actively seeks to increase the pool of volunteers and help build capacity within the community. Much of the dialogue from individuals that are looking for paid employment shared that they have a lack of employability skills or experience; they still have issues in fitting voluntary work with childcare arrangements and busy schedules with children.

Chairman's Report

At the heart of the *Volunteer Centre Sandwell* is the concept of equal opportunities and diversity in volunteering. There is a sense in which it has to be, given the number and variety of organisations to whom we have provided volunteers through our brokerage service over the past 36 years. However some potential volunteers are disadvantaged because of their age, disabilities and lack of self confidence. Hence we are always seeking to supplement our core work with special projects to provide specific support to these groups.



Peter Smith – Chairman

AT the present we have *Project Lift* working with young people, especially those not in employment, education or training, together with the *Hands on Project* that is continuing to develop our work with people with disabilities and mental health issues. We are very fortunate to have experienced workers leading on this together with the support of our Chief Executive and Administrator and our loyal team of volunteers. On behalf of the Board I would like to thank them all for the invaluable work they do together with our gratitude to our funders who make this all possible.

Make a Difference Day

Thank you Jean,
It was an fantastic event and I feel privileged to have been a part of it. You have a wonderful bunch of people at the volunteer centre (staff and volunteers) who all worked incredibly hard to make yesterday a success. I sometimes think we don't realise how lucky we are to have such amazing people in Sandwell.

I made a number of useful contacts and I'm sure I'm going to be inundated with requests for employee volunteers as a result.

Kind Regards

Richard Alonzo

Volunteering Support and Development Officer
Sandwell MFC

Our present Board

Chairman: Peter Smith

Chief Executive: Jean Taylor

Board Members: Edna Barker
Kacey Akpoteni
David Hassell

and a warm welcome to two new members:

Dave Berrey
John Simmonds

Chief Executive's Reflections

It has been an exceptional time of change, not just for us but also for many Sandwell organisations we work with to meet our goals. I am confident that we have laid the necessary foundations and next year there will be even greater achievements delivered with pace.

NEXT year will see further change. It is clear that we must all take an active part in delivering the changes that are needed to achieve the best quality of service with the available resources. My thanks to our dedicated trustees, hardworking staff and volunteers.

I invite you to read on and if you are interested in what we do then please join us in making a difference. Whether you have an hour a week or a day a month and want to give back to our local communities, we have a role for you. Please contact us!

The times are changing

Social media is now becoming more and more important in the field of social and community action; just witness the success of the ice bucket challenge. It seems this is the way forward for people who wish to see what opportunities are available and where/when they can be found. Because of the immediacy of online media like Facebook and Twitter, information can be passed among volunteers faster and have a much further reach. In fact, we have already used Twitter to promote our *'Make a Difference Day'* at the start of October. However, this appetite for instant information is something we must give careful consideration to.

Sandwell, like other areas in the UK, have seen a disturbing growth in the need for food banks and soup kitchens in the last 2 years. This need has been recognised from both the community and retailers, pulling together, with volunteers and funding from faith and non-faith groups to provide this emergency help. Volunteers have also been on hand at many of



Jean Taylor – Chief Executive

these outlets to offer advice and guidance on subjects as varied as welfare, housing benefits, immigration status and debt. One of the positive outcomes of all this activity is that some of our volunteers have gone on to be trained via the Sandwell CAB to help and assist future users of the service. Other key activities have included the securing of two new projects and a Recruitment Fair. Our support and training activities are continuing to advocate good practice, which underpins the fundamental principles of volunteering.

Even in these hard times and continual social cutbacks, people in Sandwell are embracing volunteering, bringing inspiration, commitment, passion and energy in order to give something back to the community.

Breakdown of volunteering services in Sandwell

780

Volunteers referred to organisations

27

New organisations registered with VCS

66

New volunteering opportunities

Our focus and core activities

Volunteer Centre Sandwell has spent 36 years acting as a brokerage service, between those who are looking for volunteering opportunities and organisations/communities within the borough of Sandwell. Today, more than ever, many people particularly the young, are being badly affected by the lack of employment opportunities.

Volunteering has proven to be the ideal vehicle to maintain self-respect and keep the work ethic alive. Through volunteering, people not only benefit themselves, but also their communities.

Big Spring Clean 2014

I would like to thank everyone that took part in this years Bsc campaign, your efforts have not gone unnoticed and Sandwell is a lot cleaner now due to your efforts. So lets continue to take pride in the borough and continue cleaning our streets until the Bsc rolls around again next year. The campaign has reached new heights this year and I hope it will go that extra mile during the next campaign. For anyone who would like to continue their events please get in touch with the

Tipton Litter watch team on 0121-569-3916
or email tiptonlitter@aol.com

Thank you all once again for supporting me in this role and helping me make the Bsc 2014 a huge success.

Kind Regards

Shane Allen

Project Manager - Big Spring Clean 2014

Our mission

To promote, access and develop high quality support for volunteering in Sandwell, in order to benefit the lives of the volunteers, the organisations they serve and the wider community.

Our core functions

As well as offering support, training and encouragement, we also promote an environment of good practice within the volunteering sector, with an infrastructure and commitment based upon these five core functions:

- *Developing new opportunities*
- *Good practice development*
- *Policy response and campaigning*
- *Strategic development of volunteering*
- *Brokerage*



If you or anybody you know has an hour a week or a day a month and want to give back to your local community call us now on 0121 544 8326

Making a difference during the year

VCS are committed to ensuring that voluntary action can make a positive difference for all and throughout the year we have undertaken a number of activities in both the public and private sectors, including:

Youth's speed match in February

JUST like speed dating, 16 to 25 year olds spent five minutes with local companies, to find out what volunteering opportunities were available and whether they were suited. Held at Sandwell Council House chambers, the event was a first for VCS and attracted 25 young people and 12 organisations. 97% of attendees agreed it was an excellent fun and informal way to find out about volunteering opportunities in Sandwell.

Volunteer Centre & Ideal for All Award Ceremony in June

A celebration of volunteering was held at West Bromwich Town Hall, where 75 volunteers received Recognition Certificates for their community work. The event was organised by VCS and Ideal for All, with Deputy Chief Executive of Sandwell Council, John Garrett giving the opening address, backed by keynote speaker Dave Heeley. The Mayor, Councillor Linda Horton was on hand to present the award certificates.

Make a Difference Day in October



ON Wednesday 1st October, *Volunteer Centre Sandwell* with 35 Volunteer organisations came together at West Bromwich Town Hall to celebrate *Make a difference day*.

This volunteer recruitment fair was based upon the success of the *Project LIFT* programme and it was open to all ages. *Make a Difference Day* invited the public to find out about the work undertaken by volunteer organisations in Sandwell and to explore what local volunteering opportunities were available. 35 organisations were there to show what kind of roles are available and how volunteers can enhance their services and in turn gain valuable work experience. These organisations were able to demonstrate that



there is a real need for volunteers to help enhance their business service delivery and overall reach.

It was well attended, over 200 people explored volunteering options and all organisations were interested in supporting future events of this nature.

Volunteers recruited to support the event came from HSBC, Sandwell Council, Ideal for All and the Volunteer Centre.

Jean Taylor, Chief Executive of the *Volunteer Centre Sandwell* commented *"We wanted to extend an open invitation to the public to make a difference in Sandwell through volunteering. I thank everyone and every organisation for their efforts"*.

SVON Quarterly Forum

HELD in March, June, September, with the last one in 2014 scheduled for December, the *Sandwell Volunteer Organisers Network* meet to share ideas and discuss issues concerning volunteers and volunteering. Open mic sessions introduce new initiatives and training ideas to share with the wider network. Regular agenda subjects include, *Volunteer Code of Practice*, which investigates ways to encourage organisations to adapt, aspire and reach out to interested parties – and *Volunteering in General*, where the importance of working with other voluntary and private organisations is discussed.

The main purpose of the September meeting was to look at the *Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation*, the £2,500 cost associated with

gaining the Accreditation and to provide evidence of the centre's five core functions to back this up.

Amanda Turner, *Beanstalk* Manager commented that *VCS* is a very accessible bureau who they feel that they can have productive discussions with and that *VCS* is very proactive *"Keep doing what you are doing"*

Ian McGarry, Health Watch Community Engagement Officer said he was more than happy to give *VCS* 5 out of 5 for the contact and services he had received from *VCS* as they had given him an insight into the Borough of Sandwell which he did not have much knowledge of when he started his role 9 months ago.

Richard Alonzo, Sandwell Council Volunteer Support and Development Officer said *"VCS* have excellent resources like role descriptions."

And reports submitted to Sandwell Council and the project funders (Big Lottery and ESF) will also make up part of the evidence required for the accreditation.

“ If it isn't broken don't fix it. Keep doing what you are doing. ”
Amanda Turner (Beanstalk Manager)

Jean Taylor, Chief Executive Officer of *Volunteer Centre Sandwell* suggested that it would be a great idea to have a bi-annual conference where all volunteering organisations could come together and share knowledge. Amanda Turner seconded this type of resource exchange and Richard Alonzo advised that he was setting up employee volunteering within the council and would soon have a bank of volunteers who could share their skills with voluntary organisations.

The conclusion of the meeting was VCS was doing a great job.



New projects and funding



Project LIFT

Project LIFT is a dynamic youth volunteering project specifically for young people between the ages of 16 to 25, who live in or are educated within the Sandwell borough and it aims to match these volunteers with local voluntary organisations and groups. This three-year funded project by Big Lottery commenced in November 2013 and within the first year the project had 86 referrals, with 98% matched into volunteering positions. *Project LIFT* aims to maximise youth talent and to give them valuable work experience, which will enhance their CVs, build confidence and self-esteem, while at the same time, contributing to the local community.

“We are promoting Project Lift V through various means, local press, radio, website and have set up Facebook & Twitter links.”



Hands On Project

Following last year's *Moving On* project success, we have now secured funding from the EU Social Fund for twelve months, commencing August 2014 for the *Hands On Project*.

The aim of the *Hands On Project* is to build and develop person centred, supported volunteering opportunities for people with mental health conditions and those with physical and learning difficulties, leading to improved physical and mental wellbeing through the delivery of education and training opportunities.

Organisations are invited to consider volunteers who have these difficulties and take advantage of the mutual benefits available to both parties. These benefits can give organisations an insight into mental health issues, as well as increasing capacity with extra helping hands. For volunteers, it allows them to increase self-esteem and confidence, connect with the community and develop skills, which can bring them closer to the jobs market.

Within the first month, 15 volunteers were matched to organisations, so we are well on our way of achieving our target of 60 for the year.

Organisations that offer volunteering opportunities to our volunteers include: *BUDS, Sandwell Libraries, Ideal for All, Charity shops, Victim Support, Beanstalk, Human Resource Library, Sandwell Advocacy* and the *Hands on Project*.

Our code of practice

An important part of the relationship between the voluntary and community sectors and their statutory partners in Sandwell, is the **Sandwell Compact Volunteering Code of Practice**. This code sets out the agreed framework on good practice, with undertakings to promote and value the contributions made by volunteers. This has been a regular discussion item on the **SVON** quarterly forum and ways to encourage organisations to adapt and aspire to this have been investigated.

THERE are four fundamental principles to volunteering:

1

Choice

VOLUNTEERING must be a choice, freely made by each individual. Any encouragement to become involved in volunteering should not be the result of coercion or compulsion.



2

Diversity

DIVERSITY must always be recognised, respected and valued. Volunteering should be open to all, no matter what the volunteer's background, age, ethnicity, sexual orientation, religion, belief, gender or disability.



3

Mutual Benefit

VOLUNTEERING should be a reciprocal and mutual relationship. Although a volunteer is not paid for their efforts they should feel a sense of achievement and give them the chance to gain useful skills, experience and to make valuable contacts. Volunteers should be complementary to and not a replacement for paid staff.



4

Recognition

THE value of volunteers to organisations, the community, the social economy and the wider social objectives is fundamental to a fair relationship between the volunteers, public organisations and third party sectors.



By following the principals of the code the organisation employing the volunteer and the individual know what is expected of them and have mutual respect for each other.

Sandwell Volunteer Bureau

Statement of Financial Activities
for the year ended 31 March 2014

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2014 Total Funds £	2013 Total Funds £
INCOMING RESOURCES				
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds				
Activities for Generating Funds	15,530	–	15,530	14,350
Investment Income	28	–	28	33
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities				
Grants Receivable	63,781	67,775	131,556	111,620
Total Incoming Resources	79,339	67,775	147,114	126,003
RESOURCES EXPENDED				
Charitable Activities				
Charitable Activities	78,621	23,062	101,683	91,634
Support Costs	5,481	30,905	36,386	39,538
Governance Costs	2,498	9,108	11,606	11,599
Total Resources Expended	86,600	63,075	149,675	142,771
NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES				
Before Transfers	(7,261)	4,700	(2,561)	(16,768)
Gross Transfers Between Funds	(17,289)	17,289	–	–
Net Incoming/(Outgoing) Resources	(24,550)	21,989	(2,561)	(16,768)
RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS				
Total Funds Brought Forward	76,530	(24,429)	52,101	68,869
TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD	51,980	(2,440)	49,540	52,101

Our challenge for the future

The need to offer support and to manage volunteering is now more important than ever, with wages still continuing to fall behind the cost of living index and central government planning to make further benefit cuts, in a new austerity drive. Whilst there has been some improvement in unemployment figures, this is still a real problem in the Sandwell area, particularly among the young.

AT VCS we are developing our strategy to cope with these growing needs and are continuing to seize new opportunities as they present themselves, in this way we can enhance and grow activities that will help sustain the centre and the local community.

Other activities VCS are focusing upon are:

- *'Sandwell for Good' a project designed to help organisations with surplus materials or unwanted items and distribute them to charities via community groups.*
- *Continue to embrace technology in order to enhance our service; a good example is the introduction of a donate button on our website, to enable visitors to donate to the cause of their choice, quickly and easily.*
- *We are continuing to write funding bids for worthwhile causes; in fact, at this moment, we are producing a funding bid for a five-year project aimed at assisting individuals with learning difficulties.*
- *Producing a package to help local businesses to take up and embrace CSR (Corporate Social Responsibilities).*

These are just a few of the many plans and activities we are focused upon within the next twelve months.

The Future Challenges

- *Funding*
- *Maintaining common goals*
- *Valuing each other differences*
- *Keeping the eye on the prize!*
– *Making a Difference in a positive way!*

A Big Thank You!

I've hardly sat down since returning from your 'Make a Difference Day Volunteer Recruitment Fair' in Sandwell yesterday and want to take a moment to thank you for making it such a worthwhile experience me, my team and our company.

I know you spent many months planning the event—and it showed. The quality, number and range of organisations that exhibited and the volume of visitors were very impressive. I especially liked the statement you made that this is the very first event of its kind in the country. We were proud to participate in such an historic event - long may it continue and I trust others will follow your trail-blazing example. Please consider us if you plan to do this again next year.

Congratulations on both a successful and a memorable event. Superb Job, WELL DONE!

Regards
Bevil Williams
Managing Director, Repco Ltd

Thank you for your support

We acknowledge with thanks, the support, generosity and enthusiasm of ALL volunteers and voluntary and statutory organisations in the Sandwell community.

Accord Housing Association	Fixers	Remploy	SOVA (Safeguarding of Vulnerable Adults)
Acorns	Groundworks	REPC Limited	SPDC
Age UK Sandwell	Hadley Industries	Rights and Equality Sandwell	St. Albans Community Centre
Agewell Sandwell	Headway	RSPB	Summit House Support
Alzheimers Society	Healthwatch Sandwell	SAFSS	SWEDA
Bangladeshi Islamic Centre	HOST UK	Sandwell Advocacy	Tipton Litter Watch
Barnardos	HSBC	Sandwell African Caribbean Mental Health Foundation	The Change Consortium
Beacon Centre for the Blind	Ideal For All	Sandwell Adventure Play Association	The Children's Society
Beanstalk	James Bassan & Co	Sandwell CAB	The Kaleidoscope Plus Group (Human Resource Library)
BEAT	Juniper Training	Sandwell College	The Pockington Trust
Black Country Chamber of Commerce	Krunch	Sandwell Financial Services Hub	The Royal Voluntary Service
Black Country Living Museum	Loaves and Fishes	Sandwell Irish Centre	The Smart Network, Smart Choices Project
Black Country in Motion	Midlands Air Ambulance	Sandwell Libraries and Information Service	The Stroke Association
Birmingham Relate	Murray Hall Community Trust	Sandwell Women's Aid	Victim Support
Bridges Support Service	MS Society	Sandwell Young Carers	West Brom African Caribbean Resource Centre
Brushstrokes Community Project	North Smethwick Development Trust	SCCT	West Bromwich Football Club
BUDS	NACRO	SCIPS	West Bromwich Youth Theatre
Building Bridges	NAVCA	Scope	West Midlands Fire Service (Safeside)
Cares Sandwell	NCVO	SCVO	West Midlands Police
Centrepont Christian Church	Nova Training	SinglePoint – Christchurch Primary School	West Smethwick Enterprises
Changing our Lives	NSPCC	Smethwick Can	Yemeni Community Centre
Colas Limited	NYAS	Smethwick Heritage Museum	YMCA
Community Development Foundation	Open Spaces Volunteers	Soho and Victoria friends and Neighbours	3sixty Creative Marketing Solutions
Dawson & Babcock Limited	Options for Life		
Diabetics Uk	Oscar Sandwell		
Esther Community Resources	Paul Lacey Associates		
	POHWER Advocacy		

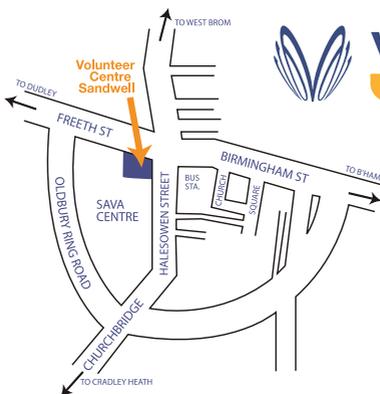
Funding Partners



LOTTERY FUNDED



VOLUNTEERS' WEEK
Time to say thank you.



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Sandwell

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We are open Monday to Friday 9am – 4pm

Charity No 1078380 Reg Charity Number 3827719