15 Years of Empowering Communities

Annual Report
2016/2017
Greetings to all our members, it is a pleasure to welcome you to another Annual Report, and to tell you a little about the year that is now behind us.

As you know, High Peak CVS has been working with a reduced number of staff members, following the decision of the Board to restructure, so that we are better able to continue to provide a service to you, within our smaller income. This is a sign of the times, unfortunately, and we note with sadness how some other infrastructure organisations in the country have closed, thus reducing the availability of support to their community.

I understand our newsletter is read quite widely; we would be very happy to report on your activities in the newsletter, as shared experiences are most useful, especially in the early days of small group development.

I want to thank the staff who work so hard, under the excellent leadership of Nigel Caldwell, and who support the board of trustees in what are sometimes tough decisions.

As the leaves fall and the nights lengthen, we press on with offering help to the community we serve.

Message from the Chair, Joy Brown

especially to voluntary groups in their areas. It is our passion that we continue to provide the service familiar to you all, albeit on a smaller scale, and I sincerely hope that the benefits have been felt throughout the High Peak.

It is so good to hear from you, as you succeed with the development of your own voluntary groups, with support from HPCVS development workers, who show such enthusiasm for the work that we do. I hope you will continue to find the time to get in touch, it makes everything worthwhile.

High Peak CVS Staff

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High Peak CVS’s primary focus as an infrastructure agency is to build the capacity of the voluntary sector in High Peak and represent their views in strategic and policy forums. This year was marked by hard work and constant commitment by both Board Trustees and paid staff to these fundamental aims. There were many achievements in our projects and successes in supporting the development of voluntary and community groups and small charities. Throughout this report you will see illustrations of that success.

Our small staff team has worked with 128 voluntary and community groups providing support and direction on matters such as initial setting up of new groups, constitutional and governance issues, fundraising, forward planning and group dynamics. This year 48 people attended our main course training programme covering topics like First Aid, Food hygiene, Fundraising skills and Governance and many more benefitted from informal training in our normal contact with groups. As a result of development input and training, group members have developed skills and experience that have helped them achieve their aims and maximise their effectiveness to benefit their community.

We are grateful for the continuation of statutory sector support from Derbyshire County Council, High Peak Borough Council and the two CCG’s that cover our area. We have also secured funding for small projects like Big Energy Savings Network (BESN) supporting vulnerable consumers and VSPA (Voluntary Sector Single Point of Access) which allows health and social care professionals to access the support from community groups and voluntary sector services. By February we were finalising our partnership agreement with the Bureau, to deliver community development as part of the new Social Prescribing Plus contract in Glossopdale funded through ICFT (Integrated Care Foundation Trust).

However in this tougher financial climate the value of infrastructure is often overlooked in funding, in preference to front line delivery of services. With the prospect of further public sector cuts it was time to take a hard look at High Peak CVS sustainability. In May 2016 the Board met and proposed 2 sub-groups to look to future proof the work of the CVS. One group was to explore the possible future shape of our CVS including whether collaboration with neighbouring agencies was the way forward. The other looked at making efficiencies and reducing overheads. The result was a restructure that saw one development post made redundant and other staff hours reduced. The print service closed and we downsized our accommodation to further lower our overheads.

Restructuring is inevitably difficult but it has left High Peak CVS in a better position to continue to provide our services for the future. We want to register our appreciation of Esther’s substantial contribution over the years. Of course, thanks go to the valuable efforts and continued commitment of Board members and staff to deliver the best service possible to the voluntary sector in High Peak.
How we help groups

In 2002 High Peak CVS was set up by a consortium of voluntary groups as a response to the lack of a local development agency for the voluntary sector. Today High Peak CVS staff continue to deliver that high quality support to voluntary and community groups across the High Peak, providing information, advice, development support and training, as well as practical services like printing, room and equipment hire. This year the team worked with 128 groups and 48 attended our main training programme alongside informal training in the course of normal development work. This support is open to the whole voluntary sector whether they are members of CVS or not. Membership, which currently stands at 349, not only attracts discounts, but importantly gives groups influence over the type of service provided, as High Peak CVS remains accountable to its membership as a central tenet of our Articles of Association.

Development Support

High Peak CVS offers generic support to all groups in High Peak. Esther Jones led on the work with larger groups and those seeking new ways to secure sustainability. She also developed specialist knowledge such as governance – helping groups to sift through the options of legal status such as Community Interest Companies (CIC’s), Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO) or Co-operatives. This proved valuable in advising Chapel Arts as they planned their future with greater protection of their individual liabilities through a form of incorporation.

Community Shares have become an increasingly popular way of funding community projects, so CVS supported Esther to train to be a Community Share Practitioner to advise groups on this opportunity. We regret that restricted income meant the loss of our longest serving development worker, Esther Jones, as unfortunately her post was made redundant in the restructuring process in late November. Esther stayed with us until January 2017 and we are glad to report that she secured a key post in our neighbouring CVS style organisation in Staffordshire Moorlands.

Small Groups Project

High Peak CVS has always focussed on small disadvantaged and marginalised groups and this is continued in the highly regarded Small Groups project led by our Co-ordinator Liz Fletcher.

New groups are helped to form with Liz’s guidance and advice on clarifying aims, constitutions, running effective committees, accessing tailored training and support to apply to appropriate funding sources. Often a group may only need small amounts and Liz's expertise in these types of grants has resulted in over 40 thousand pounds being successfully invested in this area mostly in small amounts of £1-2k. Much of the work has a positive health impact through self-help groups such as those for people with head injuries and stroke, visually impaired people or social support groups like luncheon clubs. However we are not solely focussed on health and social care and Liz has supported varied groups, such as the very successful Friends of Conduit Street in Tintwistle where the dilapidated community play space and park has been totally revamped by local efforts, creating a vital community resource in the village.

What is distinct about the High Peak CVS input is that we empower people to run the groups themselves. We do work with them, not for them. The control over their own affairs leads to greater commitment and ownership. In this way groups like the Men’s Gang succeed where many other efforts to run men’s groups, for them, fail. Much of the added value is giving close support and working at the groups own pace and then being ready to help them through occasional crises that threaten to knock them off track.
High Peak CVS receives funding from High Peak Borough Council to provide an arts development service to support a range of arts activities in the community, as well as to lend support to creative industries and community festival development.

We also gave specific support this year to Chapel Arts; an emerging voluntary community Arts initiative which is increasing the range and participation in arts events and performances in Chapel en le Frith. We worked with the group to design and facilitate a visioning day to help them define their future aims and action plans and offered guidance on the appropriate legal status and governance to accompany those aims.

The Arts development work also covers strategic input at county level through Arts Derbyshire and the national Arts Development UK network.

WRAP becomes vSPA

This service enables health and social care professionals to access voluntary sector services to enable vulnerable and mainly older people to live independently for longer. The WRAP Around Care project had its funding extended until the end of May 2016, during which period we continued to provide access to voluntary sector services for vulnerable people at risk of losing their capacity to live independently in their own community.

From June 2016 it became part of the new countywide proof of concept tender “vSPA”, in which it links with North Derbyshire partners NDVA and Derbyshire Dales CVS to test the possibility of rolling out a consistent service across North and South Derbyshire. The new tender unfortunately reduced the project’s funding to a third of what WRAP had received and opened up the service to a wider set of referrals from more referral agencies. Despite the restricted staff hours that the reduced funding imposed, we continued to deliver a valuable service to 115 people referred to the project, and found appropriate community services for them.

Representation and liaison

High Peak CVS maintains constructive dialogue with statutory bodies to facilitate representation of voluntary sector at strategic Forums. This year there was a specific need to highlight the voluntary sector’s contribution to communities in the face of proposed cuts in funding particular from County. CVS was affected but Local Volunteer Centres were most at risk and we supported them at their packed consultation meetings. Local people flocked to support their centres to demonstrate the real value they get from them and effectively headed off the proposed cuts.

In Glossop High Peak CVS worked jointly with Glossop Volunteer Centre to represent voluntary sector interests in dialogue with the Tameside and Glossop CCG. This was both by regular attendance at the Patient and Public Interest Committee (PPIC) and also by some specific funding to facilitate...
pre consultation engagement on plans to integrate Health and Social Care under the planned “Care Together” proposal. Towards the end of the year negotiations were being completed for a 3 year investment into the voluntary sector from the Integrated Care Foundation Trust into a joint High Peak CVS/Glossop Volunteer Centre Social Prescribing Plus initiative. This was to start April 2017 and include Social Prescribing, Volunteering in Primary Care settings and Asset Based Community Development (ABCD)

Training

Training is a vital component of the package of support that High Peak CVS offers to groups. We know from feedback evaluations that participants value the courses we run and gain confidence, skills and knowledge that help them in their work.
This year 48 groups attended our main training programme covering courses such as First Aid, Food Hygiene, Fundraising Skills and governance related courses such as Trustees Roles and Responsibilities and how to Chair meetings effectively.
Our courses are run in part by our own staff, but we also use external tutors for the more formal certificated courses like First Aid and Food Hygiene. Despite having no formal training budget we aim to keep the costs as low as possible, with reductions for underfunded groups so no groups are excluded by cost.

Information

Information is power they say and we believe in getting the right information to voluntary groups to help them with their work. We do this in a number of ways.
The most immediate and regular is our popular e bulletin which currently goes out to over 300 subscribers; subscription is free and available by supplying an email address. Contact us to add yourselves on. The e bulletin gives up to date information on funding, events, training and any other matters relevant to the sector.
It is geared up to go out fortnightly but often there is enough content for a weekly issue. All articles are available on the home page of our website. The e bulletin is supplemented by our regular Facebook page providing up to the minute news flashes and developments and publicising group’s events.
Our other major source of information and support is High Peak CVS’s interactive website. It hosts a wide range of information and guidance including a range of “How” guides on such topics as funding, policies constitution and asset transfer that provides a useful introduction to the subject and supplements our development team’s input.
We are indebted to the voluntary input from Peter Beardwood for the production of the ebulletin and the website maintenance.

Community Print

Our Community Print service operated this year from April through to December. It has always been a part of the services we offer and provided low cost but high quality printing for voluntary groups – printing newsletters, brochures, posters, tickets etc.
Groups benefitted by being able to email their content and collect printing which in a rural area saved transport and added convenience.
However the restructure review of our services identified that the use of the service had decreased, most likely due to the increase of online publicity and online publishing and the decision was taken that the service was no longer viable and should close. Thanks go to our hardworking print worker Jackie for her years of expertise, commitment and willingness to go the extra mile to help groups get the best quality result.
Finances
With the current economic uncertainty and the increasingly competitive funding climate, we try to ensure that we can still deliver the range of services required by High Peak voluntary and community groups, within our limited resources.
To secure our sustainability, a restructure was carried out to reduce staff costs, make efficiencies and downsize our accommodation to further reduce overheads with effect from December 2016. Alongside this talks were begun to explore how collaboration with other neighbouring voluntary agencies might strengthen our position, up to and including the potential benefit of merger. These discussions are continuing, as is our drive to secure additional income through grants, contracts and short term projects.

Main Funders
We are grateful to our top four funders who were High Peak Borough Council, Derbyshire County Council and the two Clinical Commissioning Groups that operate in High Peak – NHS North Derbyshire CCG and Tameside and Glossop CCG. Despite pressures on public expenditure all were able to maintain our grants at the same level as previous years which is a welcome endorsement of our work and the value of our strategic partnerships. We generated additional income from consultancy, one off commissioned work, charges for print, training and equipment hire as well as a grant to secure a bursary to support beneficiaries of our vSPA service. For the first time we have been commissioned to carry out financial administration for 2 other agencies short term projects.

Total Incoming Resources
£99,241
- Generated funds £14,439
- Charitable activities £84,802

Total Resources Spent
£159,686
- Development work £110,127
- Power house £45,126
- Governance Costs £4,433
Thank you to our funders!

Tameside and Glossop Clinical Commissioning Group

North Derbyshire Clinical Commissioning Group

THIS REPORT IS AVAILABLE IN LARGE PRINT AND IN BRAILLE: PLEASE CONTACT US FOR A COPY IN EITHER OF THESE FORMATS