VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales · Charity number 1049663

Details

Other names	STOKE-ON-TRENT COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE LIMITED, VAST SERVICES, VOLUNTARY ACTION STOKE-ON-TRENT, VOLUNTARY ACTION STOKE ON TRENT
Status	Registered
Legal form	Charitable company
Company number	02000818
Registered	1995-10-05
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Vast The Dudson Centre Hope Street Stoke-On-Trent
Phone	01782 683030
Email	info@vast.org.uk
Website	www.vast.org.uk

Activities

Objects: To promote any charitable purposes for the public benefit of the community within Staffordshire, the West Midlands and surrounding areas with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent; and in particular the advancement of education, the advancement of heritage, the advancement of health, the advancement of citizenship or community development and the prevention or relief of poverty.

Activities: Development and support services for local voluntary and community organisations.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Education/training, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Children/young People, Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies

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Geography

- **Area of benefit:** COMMUNITY WITHIN STAFFORDSHIRE AND THE WEST MIDLANDS WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO STOKE-ON-TRENT.
- Staffordshire

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£1,727,896	£1,698,809	£506,649	30
2024-03-31	£1,289,088	£1,279,904	£477,562	30
2023-03-31	£1,374,638	£1,412,995	£468,378	31
2022-03-31	£1,326,767	£1,188,367	£506,735	29
2021-03-31	£1,131,214	£980,794	£368,335	28

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
NEIL DAWSON	Chair	
Catherine Jones		2023-09-13
Clifford John Hathaway MBE		2023-09-13
Hayley Currie		2024-09-11
John Farrar		2023-09-13
Joseph Varley-Martin		2023-09-13
Melanie Jane Dunn		2024-09-11
Michael Robert Stubbs		2024-09-11
Pooja Batta		2023-09-13
Robert Craddock		2024-09-11
Simon Harris		2024-09-11
Sophie Louise Barber		2026-03-18
Timothy Edwards		2022-06-30

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VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales - Charity number 1049663

Accounts

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31st March 2025

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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers, and Advisors

Trustees

Neil Dawson	Chair to December 2024	
Tim Edwards	Chair from December 2024	
John Farrar	Treasurer	
Joe Martin	Vice Chair	
Simon Harris	Vice Chair	Appointed 11th September 2024
Pooja Batta		
Cliff Hathaway		
Cathy Jones		
Rob Craddock		Appointed 11th September 2024
Hayley Currie		Appointed 11th September 2024
Melanie Dunn		Appointed 11th September 2024
Suzanne Roberts		Appointed 11th September 2024
Bruno Orenlas		Appointed 11th September 2024
		Resigned 11th June 2025
Lee West		Resigned 2nd September 2024

Auditors

Geens,
Graphic House,
City Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST4 2PH

Bankers

Unity Bank, Plc,
Nine Brindley Place,
Birmingham,
B1 2HP

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings
Chief Executive and Finance Director

Charlotte Bennett
Strategic Projects Manager

Debra Hefferon
Finance Manager

Jackie Wheeler
Facilities Manager

Registered Address

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword

I am pleased to introduce the latest annual report for VAST. As the recently appointed Chair I would first like to give my gratitude to my predecessor Neil Dawson, who steered the organisation with such distinction, and the support provided by my fellow Board Trustees in supporting the work of the Board. We are fortunate to have a strong, diverse and skilled Board who support VAST's vision and values.

I'm delighted that through the hard work and prudent decisions taken, VAST has again delivered more during the year than anticipated, reflected in increased revenue and a financial outcome better than planned. The report reflects the range and depth of the work undertaken by VAST on the sector's behalf.

Our strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System, among others, are growing from strength to strength, giving us the platform to strategically influence and engage in wider decision-making processes on the sectors behalf. At an operational level, partnerships with organisations such as Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce facilitate resource sharing, skill development, and information exchange. These collaborative efforts are crucial for co-designing solutions that meet the needs of our communities.

Our Board of Trustees, together with the Executive Team, recently took time out to reflect on the impact and direction of VAST in the evolving policy agenda. We remain committed to our core purpose of delivering the four core functions of infrastructure i.e. leadership and advocacy, partnerships and collaboration, capacity building, and support for volunteering, which will shape our future direction and priorities. We were delighted during the year to be awarded both The Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation and the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation, from NAVCA in recognition of the quality of our work.

The report is a testament to the work of VAST colleagues in supporting and helping maintain a strong and resilient voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the area. Despite this, the sector still faces challenges in terms of certainty of funding and regrettably, we saw a small number of important charities close as a result of these pressures this year. We remain at the sector's disposal to help and support organisations to adapt and wherever possible to maintain the important services that the sector provides.

Our team continues to support the development and growth of the sector through our capacity building work and provision of core services such as accounts and payroll. This development work is core to our purpose in helping VCSE organisations to develop and thrive, creating greater strength and diversity within the sector.

Through our regular newsletters and the VAST Vault, we have maintained a steady flow of vital information and resources to our members. We also committed to engage with and listen to the voice of the sector locally, which helps shape our priorities and to advocate on your behalf. Our conference this year was a spectacular success and drew over 200 people from across the VCSE and public sectors to consider how the sector can support asset-based approaches to community development.

I am proud to have the opportunity to lead an organisation that has social impact at its heart and am inspired to hear the stories of how the sector is leading positive change. Thank you to my fellow trustees, the VAST team, our partners and volunteers in achieving so much on the sector's behalf.

Tim Edwards, Chair

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2025 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

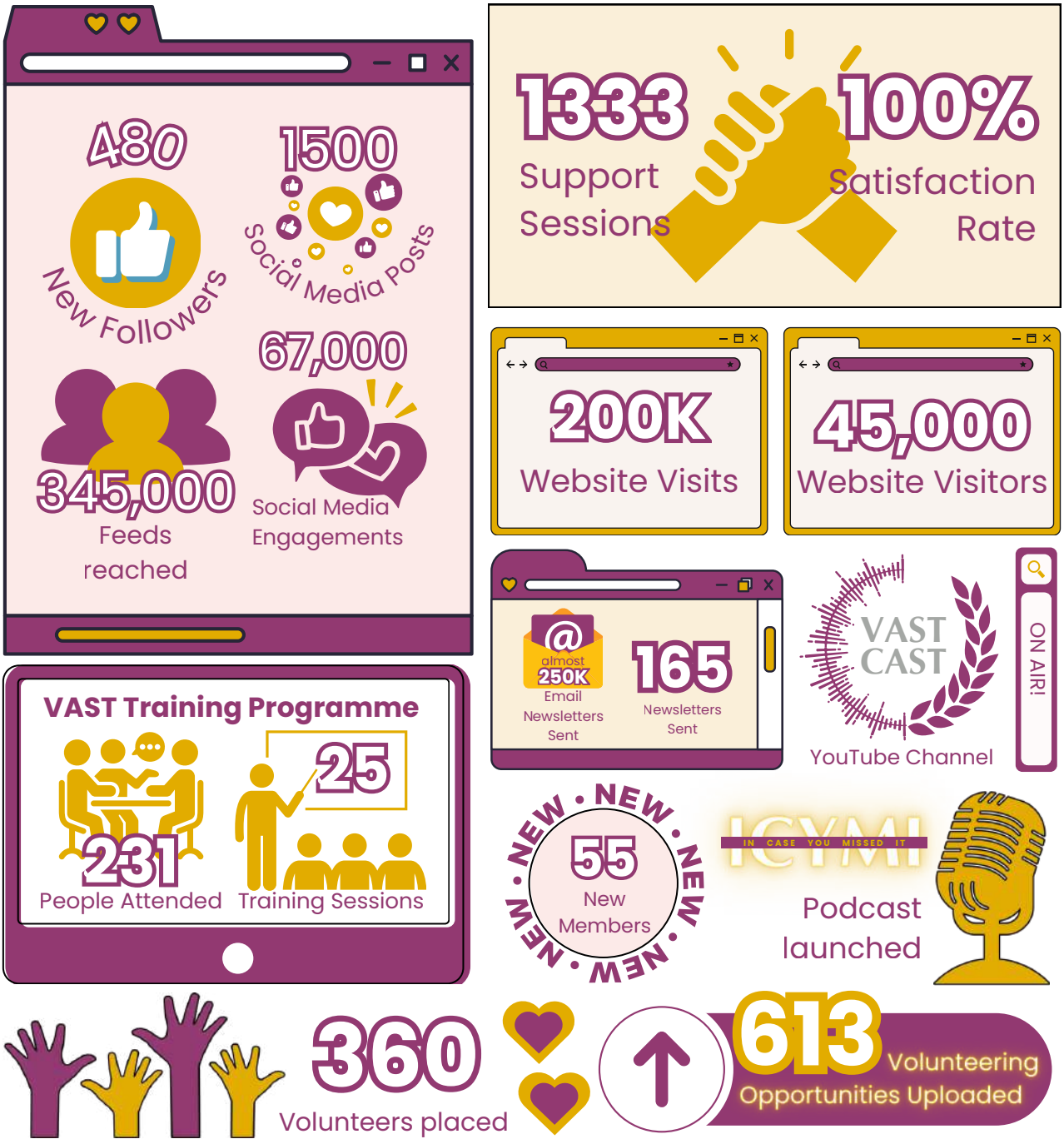
VAST is well established as the recognised Local Infrastructure Organisation in Stoke-on-Trent and is in the fortunate position of having secured funding for a five-year collaborative working agreement as Strategic Partners with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, which commenced in April 2024, as well as funding from The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund and an enhanced funding agreement to continue to co-facilitate the Healthy Communities Alliance as the link between the VCSE sector and the Integrated Care System in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This funding, supplemented by the many other grants that fund specific projects, has meant that we have been able to continue to develop and embed the Four Functions of Infrastructure; Leadership & Advocacy, Partnerships and Collaboration, Capacity Building, and Volunteering; enhancing our sector support offer with an improved training programme, additional inclusive volunteering projects and a number of new networks and forums.

We have also continued to work closely with Support Staffordshire to deliver a varied range of collaborative projects across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

We are still operating in an uncertain environment, affected by rising costs and short-term funding. Stoke-on-Trent City Council was close to receiving a Section 114 notice before additional funding was allocated by Central Government, and still faces huge financial pressures, whilst Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board also faced huge challenges in balancing its budget. These financial stresses on local statutory providers inevitably impact on security of funding for VCSE organisations. Through our work over recent years, we have placed ourselves clearly back in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy, and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering their aims for their beneficiaries.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team and the continuing support of funders, we continue to move forward together, for the benefit of our communities, and are well-positioned to face the inevitable challenges of the future.

Achievements and Performance

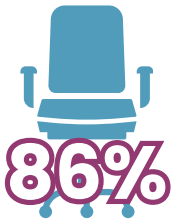


Key Objectives from our Strategic Plan

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.
- To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

The lasting impact of the cost-of-living crisis following so closely behind the pandemic means that there is still less appetite for the purchase of non-essential services and budgets are being tightly managed even for essential services.

Chargeable Services



Dudson Centre Occupancy

income from chargeable services

Dudson Centre Meetings

What we said we would do

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seek new tenants for The Dudson Centre.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar Local Infrastructure provision.

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

How successful we were

Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely.

Pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our clients and ourselves in recent years has meant it has been difficult to expand our services

Our training and events offer has been extremely successful, and we received many excellent reviews and pieces of participant feedback.

What we did

Although we have not specifically carried out targeted advertising, we have continued to grow and develop our range of networks and forums and reviewed and refocused our newsletters to ensure more targeted messaging and information is reaching those that need it. Our social media presence has also continued to grow.

The ever-growing presence of our projects team across the city has also helped contribute to a continued growth in membership numbers.

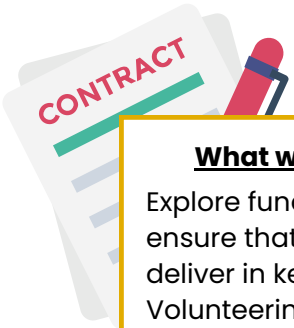
Our accountancy and payroll services continue to attract clients from a wide geographical area, and demand for meeting rooms is continuing to grow.

Income from our business support service, café and refreshment income, and income from rentals was £335,059 in the year.

We have continued virtual or hybrid delivery for most of our training packages and now have a comprehensive annual training offer as well as holding successful volunteering and funding fayres both virtually and in person.

We have continued to focus our efforts on Stoke-on-Trent and have not attempted to enter our wider geographic market.

We are continually looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services.



Grants and Contracts

What we said we would do

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

What we did

We have successfully secured project funding in the year to continue to expand our core services and to embed inclusive volunteering within our volunteering offer. We also continued to develop our work in enabling community-based organisations to participate in health research through the Research Engagement Network project.

We also secured funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to support community activity in the wake of rioting on the summer of 2024 to promote community cohesion.

How successful we were

Our five-year, strategic partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council officially commenced in April 2024, and this, alongside ongoing funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, enabled us to fully deliver the Four Functions of infrastructure. We also secured additional investment into the Healthy Communities Alliance to fund facilitation of relationships between the VCSE sector and the local Integrated Care System and continued to increase the number of additional projects delivered to complement our core work.

Advocacy and Voice

What we said we would do

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

How successful we were

We are well recognised by both the VCSE sector and statutory partners as the representatives of the sector; however, constant staff changes and interim posts across statutory bodies continue to make it difficult to retain relationships.

What we did

Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and in continuing to grow the Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together more effectively and improved relationships with statutory bodies. Through the Healthy Communities Alliance we have also facilitated, alongside our partners Support Staffordshire, the appointment of VCSE representative to all Portfolio Boards across the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board.

We have continued to create new forums, including the highly successful Connections for Connectors Forum, as well as growing our existing forums.

Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area and to meet regularly with senior-level employees of both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and supporting activities have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally.

Both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care System are facing significant financial pressures which will inevitably flow through into less funding for the VCSE sector, with further uncertainty brought by the requirements of the changes required by the Devolution White Paper, and proposed NHS reforms. At the same time, organisations still have depleted reserves and are facing huge increases in their running costs while there is still a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

There is a growing desire from local statutory partners to engage with the sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and Support Staffordshire. We are still having encouraging conversations, and there has been tangible progress made with the launch of the Stoke-on-Trent City Alliance between Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the VCSE sector in December 2024, and subsequent work between sector representatives and the City Council's commissioning team to enable more effective commissioning, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long-term, benefits for the sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that, as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE sector, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset-Based Community Development, Community Wealth Building, and locality working as key strategies to develop and to achieve. This requires greater co-production with the VCSE sector and the communities we serve.

These positive discussions and relationships are still yet to impact upon local commissioning and, while reviews of contracts with the VCSE sector have been carried out across the Integrated Care System, there has seen very little new contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods.

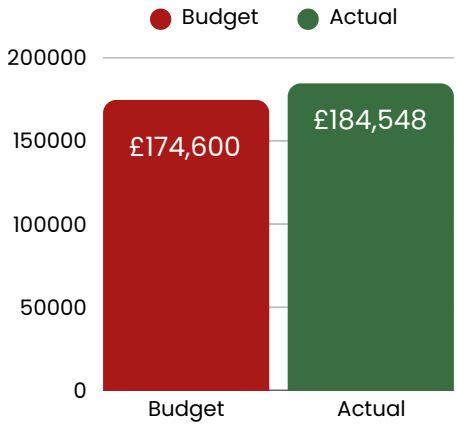
Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

Income against budget for chargeable services:

Our accounts and payroll services continue to be successful and once again exceeded budget expectations.

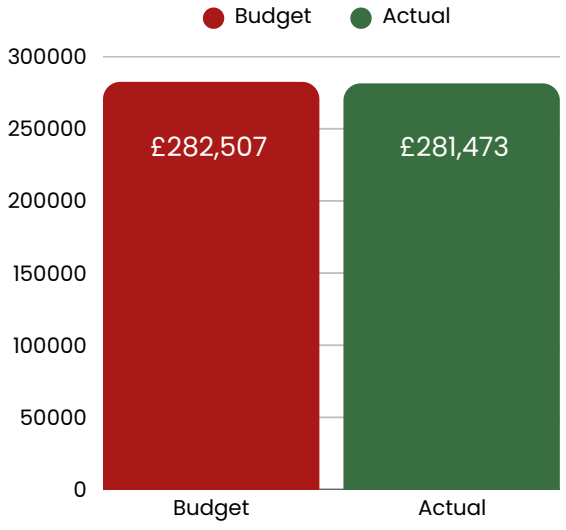


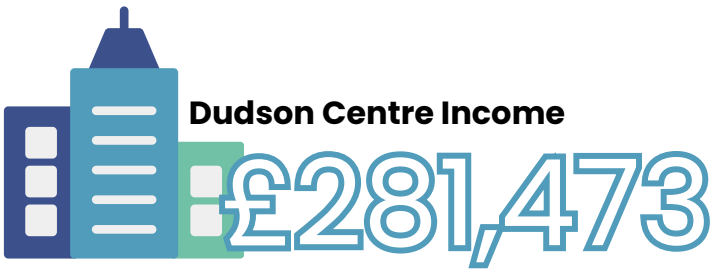
Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre:

For the year to March 2025, based on income received against total possible income, the Dudson Centre was 89% occupied.

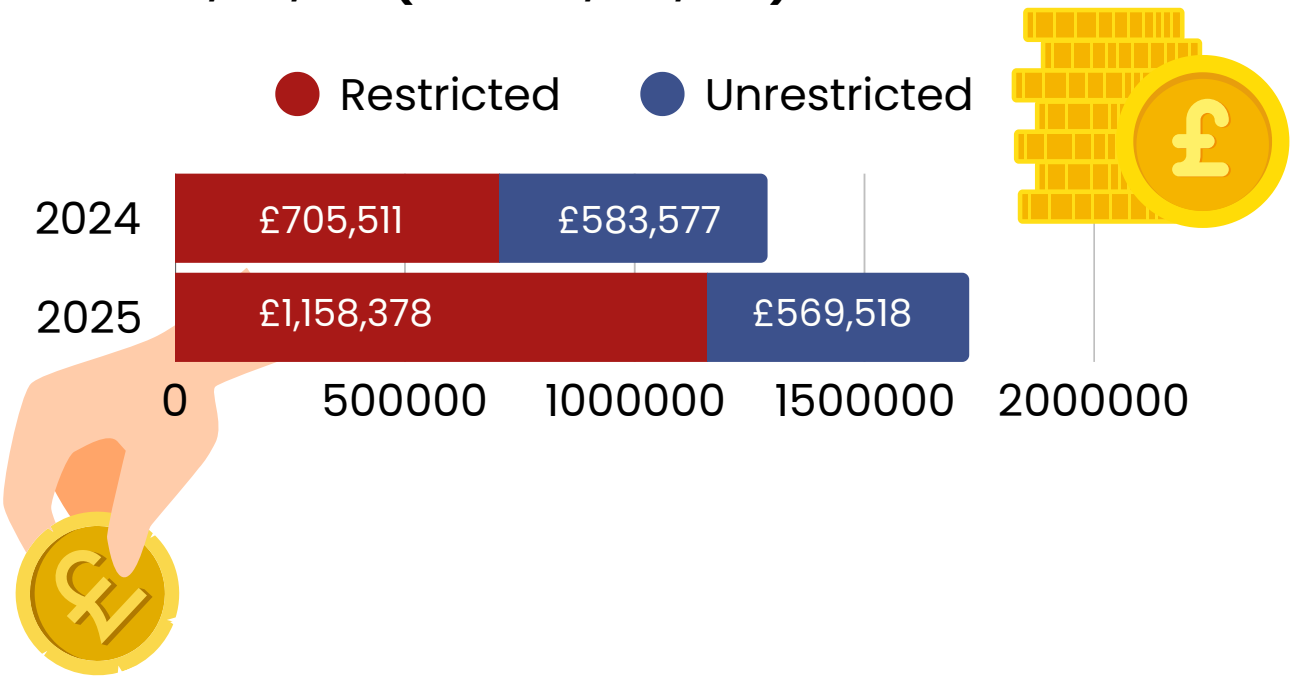
Following a good year in 2023/24, occupancy levels for The Dudson Centre dropped in 2024/25, with The Dove Service, a major tenant since the opening of the Centre, making the decision to leave their offices in the Autumn of 2024 to relocate to smaller premises.



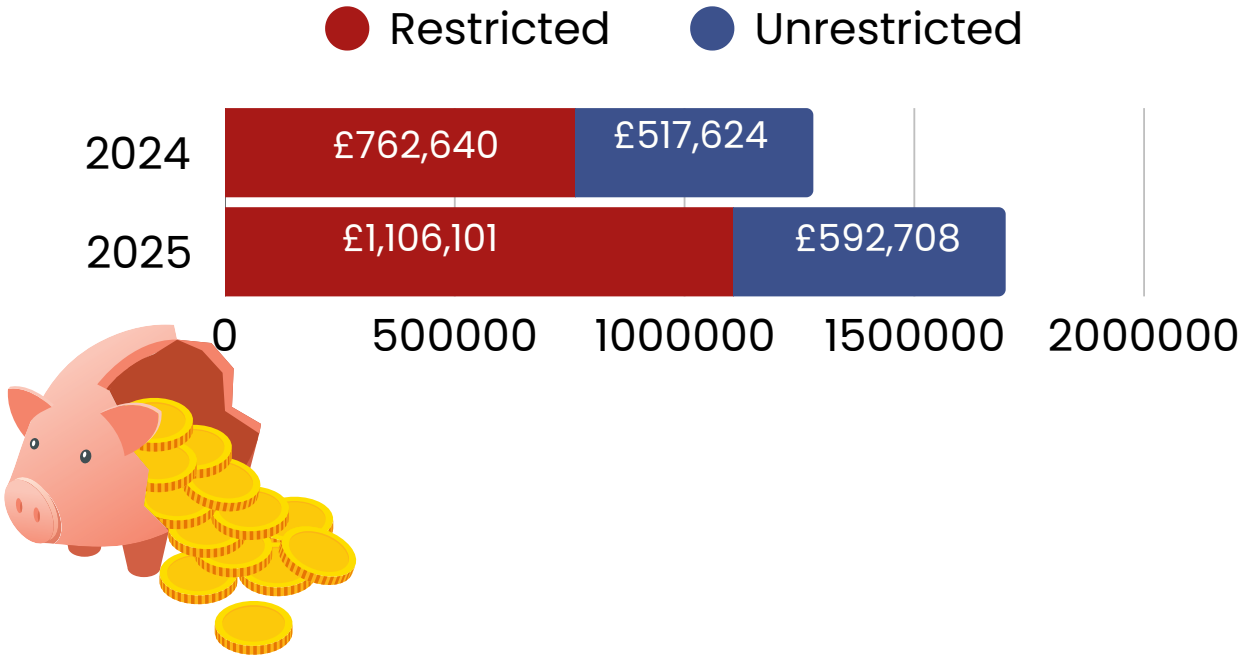


Financial Review

Income: £1,727,896 (2024: £1,289,088)



Expenditure: £1,698,809 (2024: £1,279,904)



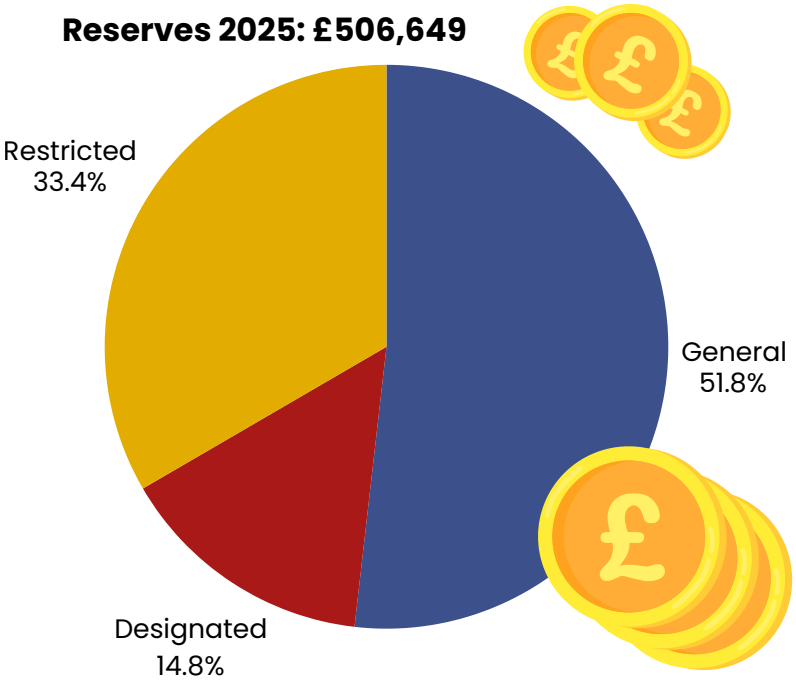
Reserves

Of the **designated reserves, £50,000** is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre and **£25,000 is set aside** for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

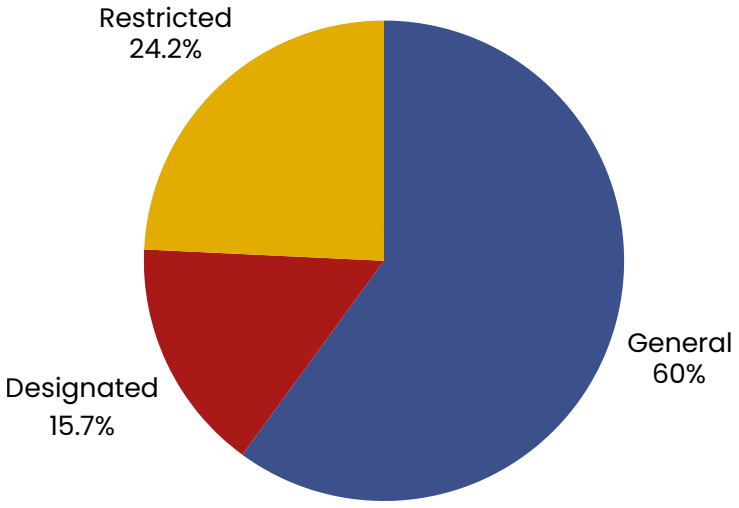
VAST's principal funding sources for 2024/25 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who funded our work with the local VCSE sector, , Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent integrated Care Board who funded our work with the Staffordshire NHS VCSE Alliance and the Community Health Champions project, and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2024/25 accounted for 19% of income (59% of unrestricted income).

Reserves 2025: £506,649



Reserves 2024: £477,562



Principal Funders for 2024/25

City of Stoke-on-Trent

NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

COMMUNITY FUND

Agent over Cash Held

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not-for-profit organisations:

Trentham Pre-School	RSPCA North Staffs Branch	Stoke-on-Trent Food Bank	Breakthru' Support Services	Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
Haregate Community Centre	ASHA North Staffs	RubyGirl UK	Staffordshire Sight Loss Association	Stone Community Hub
NSAAA	Disability Solutions West Midlands	Uttoxeter Gateway	North Staffordshire Medical Institute	TWOCO
Packmoor Community Association	Expert Citizens UK CIC	Staffordshire Parish Council Association	St. Andrews with St. Peters Pre-School	Open Door Stoke-on-Trent
North Staffs Carers Association	Willoughbridge Garden Trust	Biddulph Methodist Church	Voice of Hope	Lea Road Community Church
Abbey Hulton Sports & Social Club	Green Door Hub	Headway North Staffs	Number 11 CIC	Silverdale Parish Council
Smallthorne Social Society	Association of Dogs and Cats Homes	Rehoboth Well CIC	Sage (Staffs)	Keele Parish Council
Redeemed Christian Church of God	Peter Pan Nursery	Restoration Shack CIC	Age UK South Staffordshire	Stoke Creates CIC
Windmills CIC	Silvertree Cleaning	Rachel Wilson (DP)	Newcastle Community Transport	Tri-Services Veteran Support
Affordable Food Stoke	Whitmore Parish Council	Deaflinks Staffordshire	Kidsgrove Sports Centre	Uttoxeter Heritage Trust
Madeley Community Association	The Teapot Training Cafe	Beth Johnson Fundation	St John's Community Church	

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

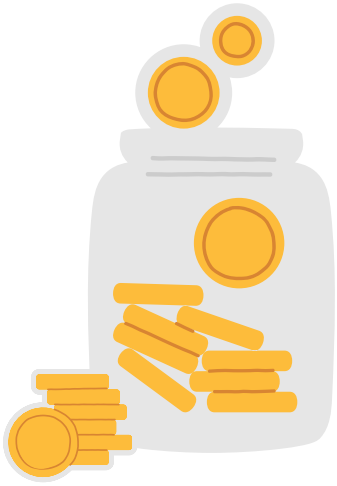
These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year-end financial statements.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed-term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.



The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £343,000 to £1,100,000.

Currently, we hold £241,615 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £506,649, of which £337,507 is unrestricted, and of this £75,000 is designated.

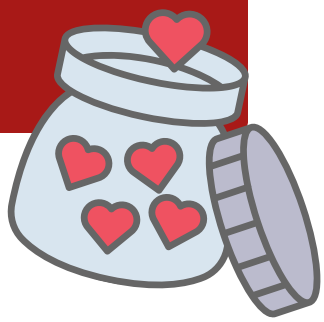
The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future periods

VAST's strategy and business plan were fully reviewed in 2023 and will next be reviewed in 2025/26.

Our Aim

Our overall aim is to support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.



Key Objectives

To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.

To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.

Activites Planned to Achieve Objectives

We will achieve our key objectives by implementing the following activities:

Chargeable Services

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seek new tenants for The Dudson Centre.

Grants and Contracts

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

Advocacy and Voice

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, meaning that VAST cannot continue to exist as an infrastructure organisation. However, sources of income have been diversified over recent years, and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable services to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

Other risks considered to be high are damage to reputation, loss of influence, and loss of key staff.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Quarterly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standard awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 17th September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:

Tim Edwards, Chair

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report

Incorporating the Directors' Report

Our Purpose

The objects for which the charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands, with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent. These are the prevention or relief of poverty, the advancement of education, heritage and health, and citizenship or community development.

In furtherance of the purposes below, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

- Promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above.
- Procure and provide information.
- Procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents.
- Promote, encourage or undertake experimental work.
- Assist any body or bodies financially or otherwise.
- Obtain, collect and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful methods, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not).
- Arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes.
- Operate a museum and heritage centre.

Our Role

VAST is a Local Infrastructure Organisation that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities.

VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders and encourages and facilitates partnerships and collaboration.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE sector to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

Support
through capacity building support and volunteer brokerage services.

Inform
through capacity building support.

Connect
by facilitating partnerships and collaboration

Advocate
by providing leadership and advocacy

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following values:

Authentic **Proactive** **Innovative** **Responsive**

All delivered with integrity and underpinned by these behaviours...

As the umbrella body for Local Infrastructure Organisation across England we work closely with the VCS support structures at place – organisations like VAST.

We see every day the vital role they play to support communities to be resilient, and enable people to take action on the things that matter most to them. That resilience is pivotal to a thriving civil society, where people can live their best life.

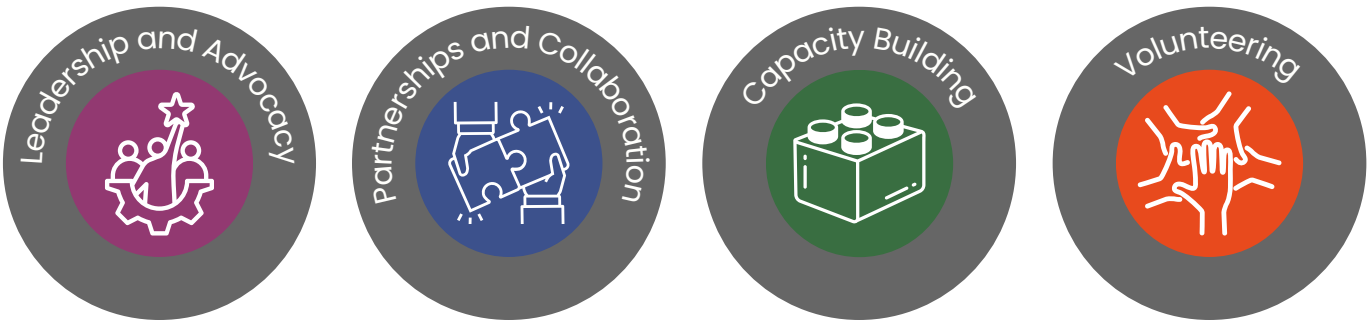
VAST is a pivotal part of the network, bringing insights and perspectives from Stoke. That shapes our thinking and influencing work, to bring the voice of communities to national policy and decision making. VAST clearly draw on a wealth of community knowledge to enable us to do that, as well as being a strategic partner to both the Local Authority and Health system, ensuring the VCSE sector and voice of communities is fully considered and included in planning, development, and setting of priorities.

It is testament to VAST's insights, knowledge and energy that they have achieved both the Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation (LIQA) and Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) this year. This marks them as one of our leading members with the assessment pointing to their strengths in convening the VCSE and connecting with the statutory sector with authority and insight.

Maddy Desforges, CEO
NAVCA

Our Work

The Four Functions of Local Infrastructure



Gathering the thoughts, needs, and experiences of the sector and local communities, bringing them to the attention of policy and decision makers; influencing conversations at a strategic level; representing and advocating for the local voluntary sector organisations, diverse groups, and marginalised or hard to reach communities.

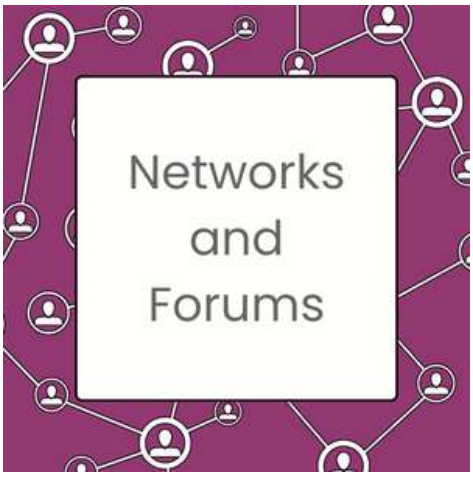
How we do it:

Leadership: We lead and facilitate groups, networks and forums to gather our members' thoughts, needs, and experiences, and those of the communities they work in. Knowing what the problem is and what our members and their communities need is part of the solution.

We also facilitate one-off workshops and engagement events. Bringing people together across sectors to make sure VCSE organisations can be involved in shaping decisions and solutions at the earliest opportunity.

Advocacy: We sit on and chair different boards, and we attend all sorts of consultation events to advocate for our member organisations, for their communities, and for the sector as a whole. We share our members' thoughts and experiences to partners like The City Council, Public Health, Health Authorities, and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.
Our sector does amazing things all the time, and everyone should know about it!

Our Leadership and Advocacy Services



Networks and Forums

VAST facilitates a range of peer support networks for key VCSE sector roles.

Our networks and forums create much-needed opportunities to share best practice, and exchange ideas, skills, and knowledge, together with collaboratively addressing challenges and focussing on key issues.

Thematic forums enable organisations to come together around shared areas of work or common agendas. They are often run in partnership with other key local organisations. Membership is often cross-sector, enabling our sector to be fully integrated into local thinking on important issues.

VSCOG

The Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) is a network for VCSE sector leaders in Stoke-on-Trent.

VCSE Finance Forum

Staff members and volunteers who are responsible for any VCSE finance functions are invited to join the VCSE Finance Forum.

Share Network

Community Share Networks focus on sharing resources, information, and advice around a chosen theme.

SEND Forum

A networking opportunity for organisations providing support to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent.

Communications and Events Engagement Network (CEEN)

A space for those responsible for comms, marketing, and/or events.

Volunteer Voices Forum

A peer support space to give volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to provide valuable insight, share ideas and improve volunteering in the local area.

Funding Network

This network is an opportunity to talk all things funding.

Volunteer Managers Network

This network gives people working with volunteers an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.

Food Partnership Network

Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership is a network of like-minded organisations who want to ensure that Stoke-on-Trent has an equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable food network that supports the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities.

Connections For Connectors

A supportive sharing session for anyone working in a social prescribing, care navigating, or community connecting type role in Stoke-on-Trent.

Hyper-Local Support Network

A peer networking opportunity for hyper-local organisations, like community hubs and Welcoming Spaces, working in and around Stoke-on-Trent to support people their neighbourhoods.

Healthy Communities Forum

Hosted by the Healthy Communities Alliance, this forum enables cross-sector collaboration with health and care system partners. This forum covers Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffs as part of a series.

Find out more about our networks and forums

What we did:

Case Study on VCSE City Alliance

In 2024, VAST worked with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Stoke-on-Trent Voluntary Sector Chief Officers' Group to co-design a new agreement – the VCSE City Alliance – that will guide our work together in the years to come, as we collaborate to better support our communities.

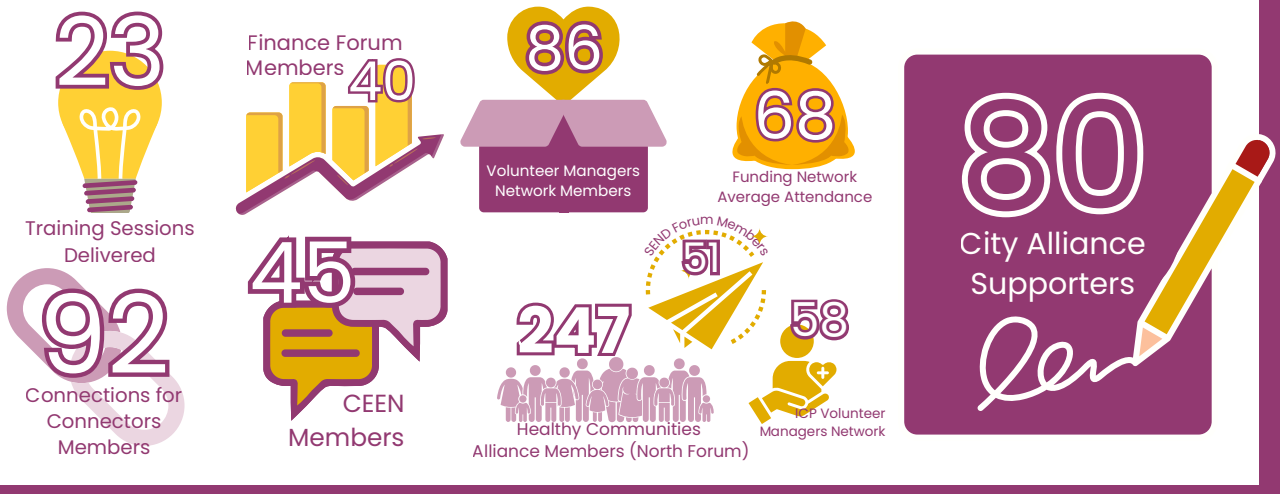
The agreement was launched by Jon Rouse, Chief Executive of the City Council, Jane Ashworth OBE, Council Leader, Lisa Healings, VAST Chief Executive, and Neil Dawson, VAST's Chair, in December 2024. Over 80 organisations have since confirmed their support, committing their energies and vision to the development and exploration of four key priorities – volunteering, prevention, communications, and commissioning.

A successful collaboration has seen many of the Alliance's members engage with City Council colleagues in a series of workshops to explore the future of commissioning and procurement, our sector's past experiences, the achievement of clarity for all partners through a codesigned grants policy, exploration of the potential for more equitable approaches, and training to reduce the barriers to take-up of existing commissioning opportunities.

Shelley Brough, Director of All Age Commissioning at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, said: 'It is an absolute pleasure to work with VAST and the VCSE sector in developing the series of workshops supporting the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent City Alliance. I'm really excited about the opportunities that will flourish through being open and working more closely in partnership, lots to do, but I know we can do it together. A huge thank you to all involved!'

Our Impact

Leadership and Advocacy



Community Health Champions Network and Reach across the Stoke-on-Trent

Creating accessible and inclusive opportunities and driving effective collaborative working through the building of networks and partnerships between local organisations and strategic partners.

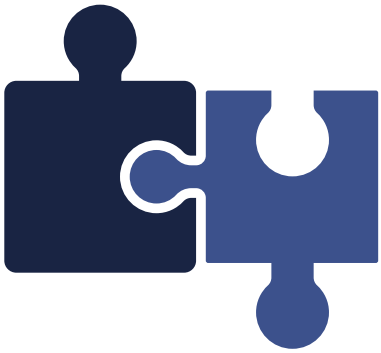
How we do it:

Partnerships: We have a number of partnerships at both strategic and operational level. These include:

Strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Integrated Care System which enable active strategic engagement and provide a flow of information to and from the VCSE sector.

Operational project-based partnerships with many others including Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, and Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust to enable shared resources and skills and information exchange.

Collaboration: We enable collaboration both within the VCSE sector and across sectors by enabling networks and forums for people to come together and build relationships and identify synergies and facilitating engagement events and sessions to co-design and co-produce solutions to address the needs of our communities.



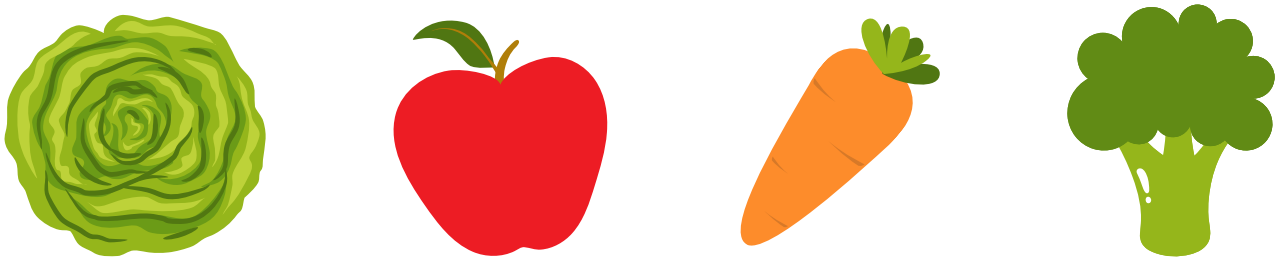
Our Projects and Partnerships

What we did:

Case Study on the Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership

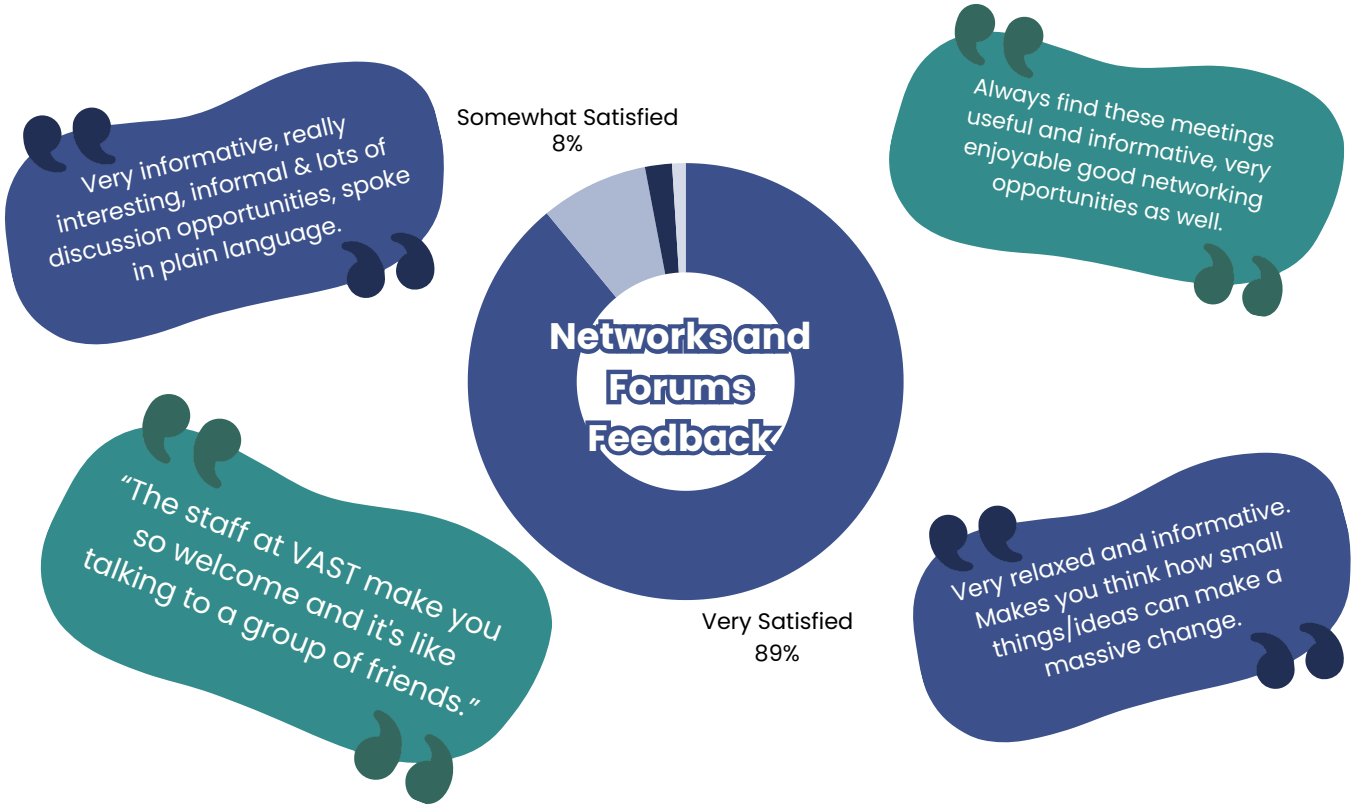
Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership began in 2023 as an ambition arising from citywide conversations about hardship and poverty.
During 2024, VAST partnered with YMCA North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to convene and facilitate a series of conversations exploring the potential for a partnership approach to food issues in Stoke-on-Trent, drawing together the strengths and ideas of both VCSEs and statutory partners across the city.
Towards the end of 2024, the Partnership's members elected an eight-strong steering group, with two co-chairs and an ambassador. All are from different organisations and services, and all have equal influence regardless of organisation size, an approach that is enabling the Partnership's emergent leadership to mobilise the qualities and diverse skills and knowledge of the network.
Building on deepening consensus within the wider network, VAST has responded by supporting the development of a shared, diffuse leadership approach. This now enables a range of VCSE organisations to influence the development of the Partnership's work in the most equitable possible way going forward.
Flowing from this approach, a series of thematic working groups has begun to drive forward a range of work.

In early 2025, six VCSE members of the Partnership led a series of collaborative community cooking sessions based on foodbank or community pantry ingredients; a data and mapping working group is preparing a collaborative City Food Survey to strengthen the Partnership's evidence base and support the efforts of all Partnership members;
and a Health working group is harnessing the skills of NHS and Public Health professionals to develop the Partnership's approach to enhancing our work from this vital perspective.
The partnership continues to grow, having recently surpassed 75 members, and has become integrated in the city's wider Family Matters and Cost of Living partnerships.



Our Impact:

Partnerships and Collaboration
39
Forums and Networks Held
4
Healthy Communities Alliance Forums
1
NEW
Hyper-Local Support Network
Community Share Networks
2
4
VSCOGs
7
Connections for Connectors Sessions
2
Finance Forums
4
Volunteer Managers Networks
3
Communications and Events Engagement Networks (CEENs)


Very informative, really interesting, informal & lots of discussion opportunities, spoke in plain language.
Somewhat Satisfied 8%
Always find these meetings useful and informative, very enjoyable good networking opportunities as well.
Networks and Forums Feedback
"The staff at VAST make you so welcome and it's like talking to a group of friends."
Very Satisfied 89%
Very relaxed and informative. Makes you think how small things/ideas can make a massive change.

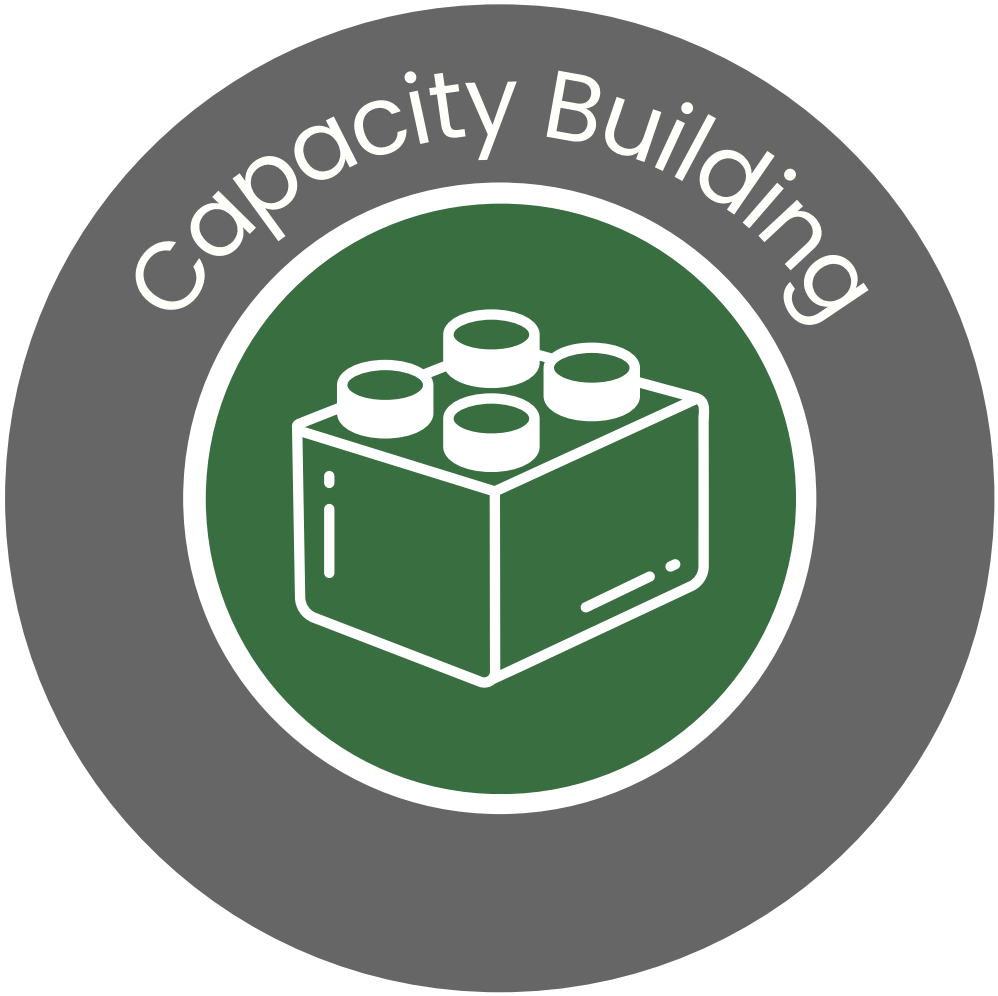
Totally Stoked Conference: communities know communities best

Following the resounding success of 2024's Totally Stoke Awards ceremony, the Totally Stoked Conference: Communities Know Communities Best took place in February 2025 and brought together over 150 attendees from across the VCSE sector and statutory partners.

The theme of the conference – Communities Know Communities Best – encompassed the core concept of the event: Asset Based Community Development.

Through a series of workshops, a panel of expert speakers, and an opportunity for peer networking across the sector, attendees were invited to consider the strengths of their communities, and how these can be utilised to create a resilient, inclusive, engaged, and empowered city.

> I simply cannot name one best thing about the event, that's how great it was! I loved how varied and interactive it was, large presence from various organisations, variety of speakers on each session and how easy to understand the agenda was.



Providing practical support, guidance, information, advice, training, and essential business services to VCSE groups to enable them to become more resilient and efficient, to achieve their goals, improve lives and help communities to thrive.

How we do it:

Capacity building is a huge part of our work; to ensure that our members and their communities are as resilient and empowered as possible, it is important that we help them build their skills, knowledge, and networks.

We do this through:

Training

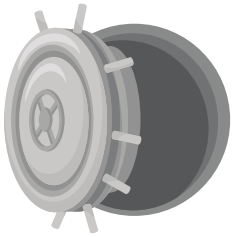
VAST provides a full training programme, covering a range of topics - from essential governance, to volunteer management, and event planning. We also work with expert organisations to provide training around themes like Hate Crime Awareness, Business Continuity, and Health Literacy.

One-to-One Support

Our support team provide free one-on-one support to our member organisations, with tailored support available from the beginning of their organisation or project. We have supported organisations with funding, governance, organisation start-up, volunteering and more.

Information and Resources

Through our regular newsletters, targeted support, and resources available on the VAST Vault, we ensure that our member organisations have ongoing access to important information, resources and learning.



Guides and Resources from the VAST Vault

What we did:

Case Study on Pink Sisters and Misters

Established in 2015 by founder Jackie Mackenzie, Pink Sisters and Misters is a self-help support group dedicated to assisting individuals diagnosed with various types of cancer, along with their families and friends.

Based in Stoke-on-Trent the organisation provides a safe space for those affected by cancer to share experiences, seek advice, and connect with others facing similar challenges.

The group holds monthly meetings in various locations, offering face-to-face support to the community. Additionally, they maintain a private online forum for family members and partners, recognising that a cancer diagnosis impacts not only the individual but also their loved ones.

Through these initiatives, Pink Sisters and Misters aims to ensure that no one faces cancer alone, embodying their belief that **"together we are stronger."**

To further their mission, The Pinks began attending The Funding Network, a partnership between VAST and The Hub Foundation. Having never applied for a large grant before, the process initially felt daunting and overwhelming. However, they were determined to secure funding for two eight-seater vehicles, which would allow them to transport individuals to workshops, events, retreats, and medical appointments. Many of those undergoing cancer treatment, particularly chemotherapy, struggle with transportation, and these vehicles would make a huge difference—enabling them to attend support activities and enjoy a much-needed break at the charity's caravan.

Determined to make this vision a reality, Janet Stanway began attending training sessions with VAST, learning about the importance of a business plan and how to write successful funding applications. Janet found the sessions invaluable, realising that, with proper preparation, the process was far less intimidating than she had initially thought. She then worked closely with Kelly, a Senior Project Officer, to apply for an Awards for All grant through the National Lottery Community Fund. With Kelly's guidance, Janet was able to clearly articulate her project and structure the application to align with the funders' priorities.

After refining the proposal and ensuring it met all the requirements, Janet submitted her first funding application—an experience that felt both exciting and nerve-wracking. When she received the news that The Pinks had been awarded £19,800, she was overwhelmed with joy. This funding allowed them to purchase the two vehicles, making a transformative impact on the lives of those they support.

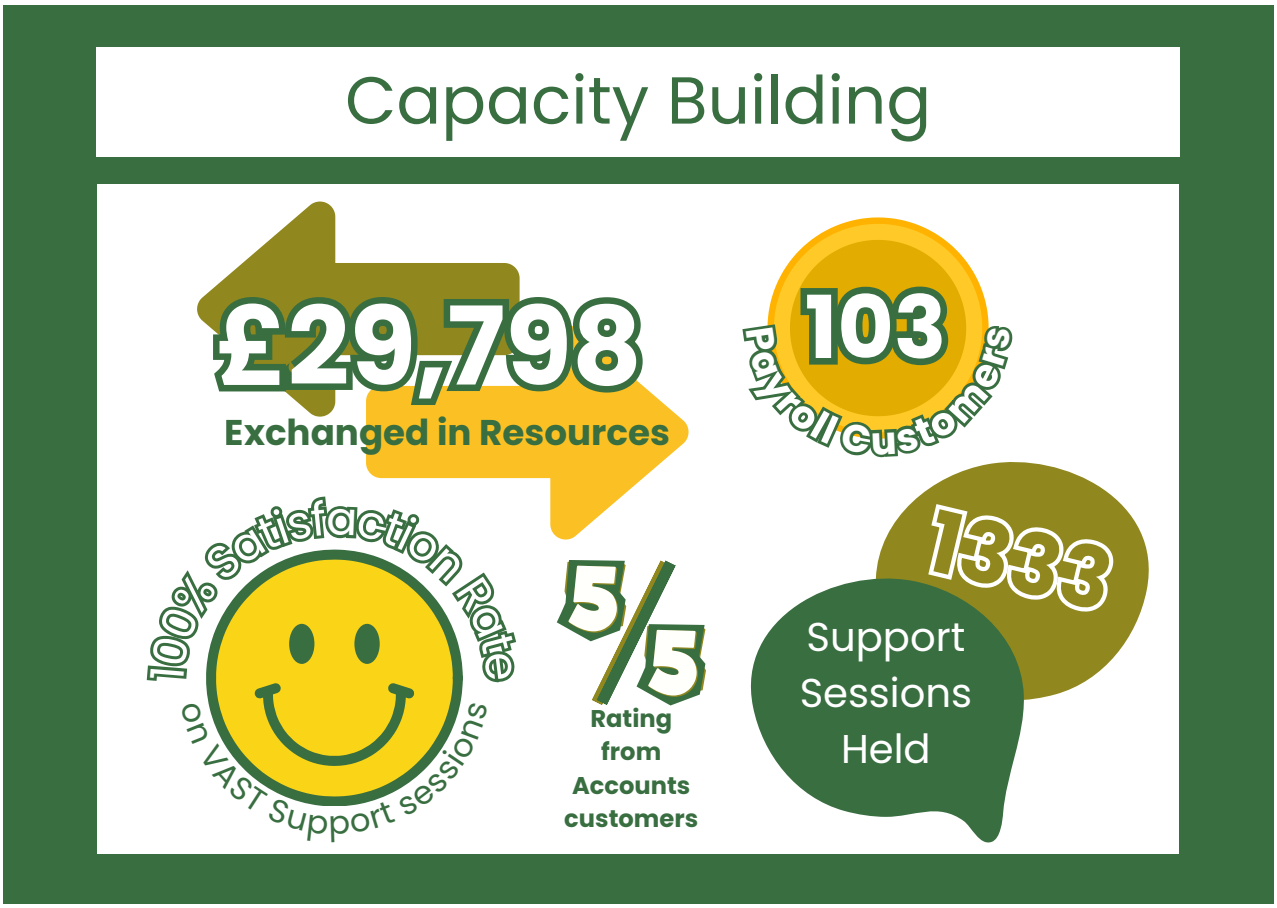
"I felt absolutely brilliant when I heard the news—shocked and absolutely amazed! Thanks to this funding, we can now take people to the retreat, to chemotherapy appointments, and to workshops. Those who previously couldn't get out can now be taken where they need to go. We're also starting Nordic walking sessions and will be able to travel around Staffordshire."

The £19,800 funding for two eight-seater vehicles will make a huge difference—not just for transport but also for moving equipment and organising day trips in the summer."

Janet Stanway, Pink Sisters and Misters

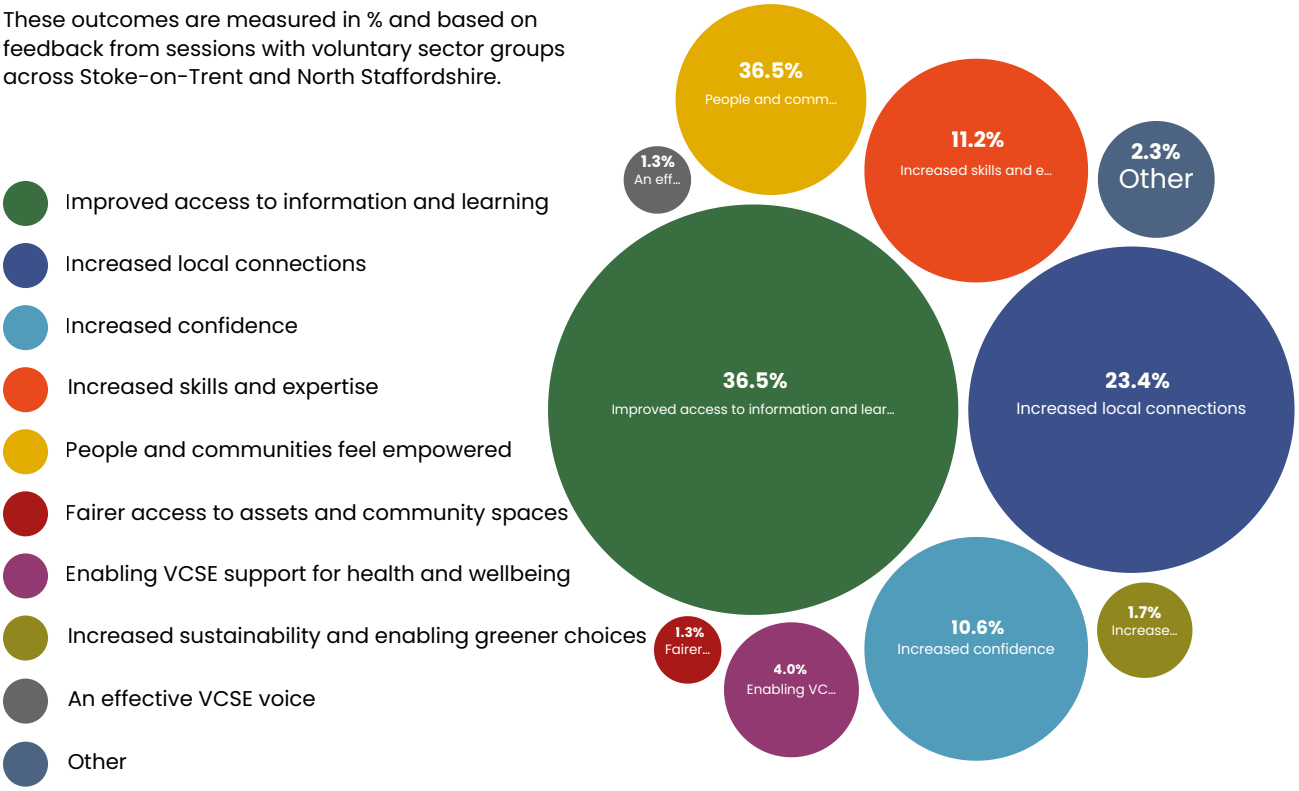
Our Impact

Capacity Building



Session Outcomes

These outcomes are measured in % and based on feedback from sessions with voluntary sector groups across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.



"Your input has been invaluable. From the inception of our idea to support our local communities, through the initial CIC setup and very generous equipment donation, you have always been there for us, giving your precious time and sharing your knowledge in an area new to us. We have so much more to do, and I look forward to growing a team of local 'tech-minded' and 'community-driven' volunteers to help us reduce digital poverty and provide essential equipment to those in need."

Adam Whitehouse, Director of RE-boot IT

"You gave me essential feedback, allowing me to reflect and refine my application. I knew what I wanted to do, and what my heart wanted to say, but you helped me to be heard. I hope we continue to build upon this success for the benefit of all those in need."

Simon Ward, As One CIC

"Our charity commission application was successful thanks to the help of VAST. A massive thanks for helping with the application process."

Araya Tecle, Eritrean Community

"I wouldn't have been able to complete a successful funding application without VAST. I've always been scared of applying for funding, but this has been a massive turning point. Now, we feel empowered to apply for other funding opportunities.

For years, I was too afraid to apply, unsure about how to include beneficiaries and explain the impact properly. But through training, the Funding Network, and eventually submitting this application, I've gained so much confidence. This means we can now help the pinks even more.

Since this experience, I've started referring more people to VAST, explaining how supportive they've been."

Janet Stanway, Pink Sisters and Misters

"I don't know what we would do without the amazing staff at VAST."

Voice of Hope

Tailored volunteering support to voluntary sector groups including training, guidance, and best practice; encouraging and nurturing high-quality, accessible, and inclusive volunteering opportunities; and a personalised volunteer matching service.

How we do it:

Last year, we had a statement around our Vision for Volunteering.

Our 'Vision for Volunteering'

Our vision for volunteering is to create a community where everyone comes together to make a positive impact. We believe that together we can create meaningful connections, foster empathy, and create a real sense of unity. Putting the 'unity' in community, our mission is to inspire others to join in and help make the world a better place for all.

We have spent extensive time since our last report researching into developing a local Stoke-on-Trent Vision for Volunteering. We have consulted with our Volunteer Managers Network and Volunteer Voices Forum and plan to launch this Vision during Volunteers Week 2025.

At VAST we're passionate about Volunteering. We know that volunteering is a great way to improve your health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference in your local community. Our volunteer service benefits both volunteers and the organisations they volunteer with.

Brokerage Service

Supporting organisations to find the volunteers they need, and volunteers to find the role that's right for them.

Inclusive Volunteering

Supporting those who may need a little extra support to get into volunteering, and helping organisations ensure they're prepared to work with them.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Creating connections between private companies/corporate businesses and the VCSE sector for Corporate Social Responsibility.

Volunteer Managers Network

Giving people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.

Training

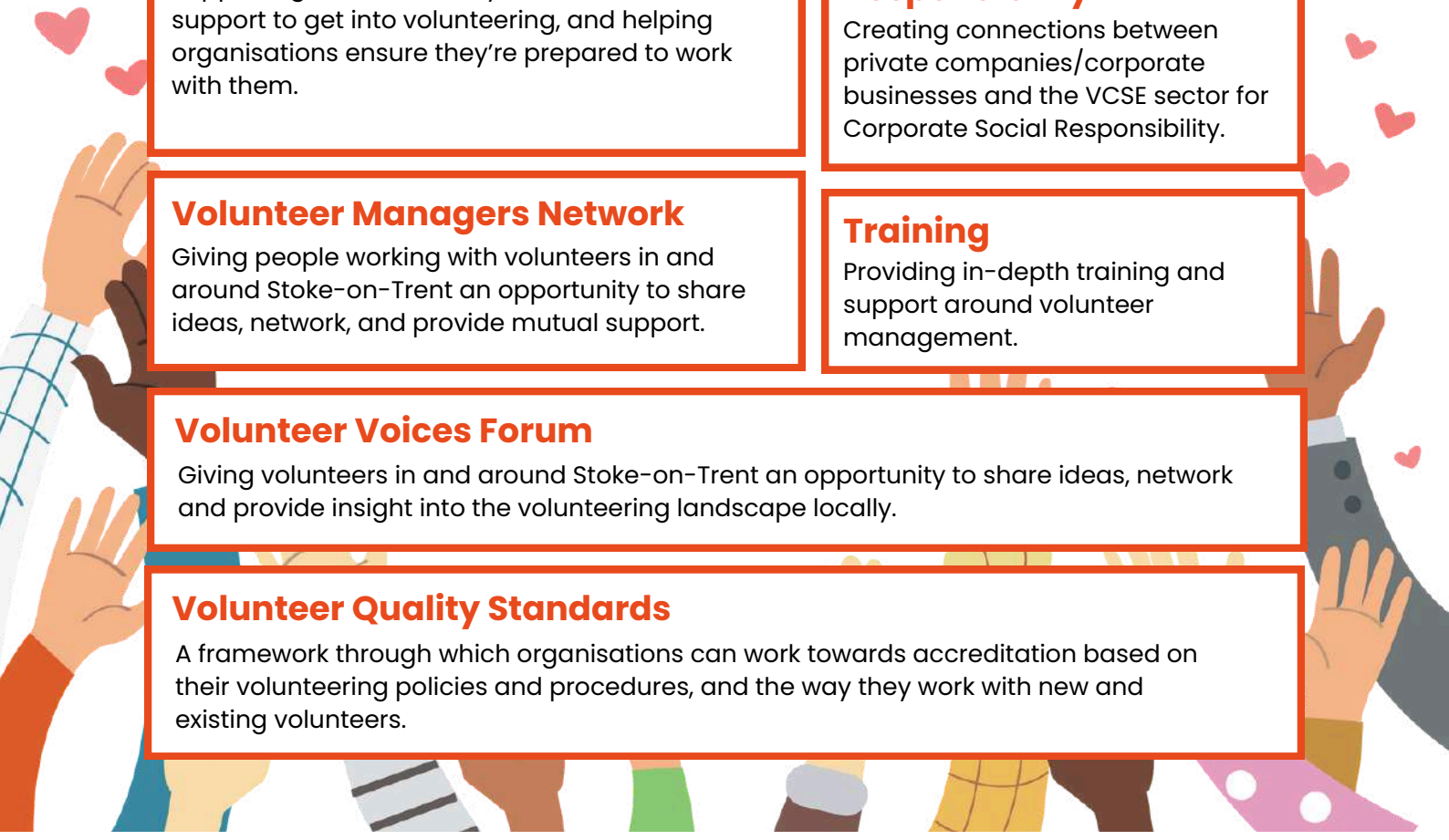
Providing in-depth training and support around volunteer management.

Volunteer Voices Forum

Giving volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide insight into the volunteering landscape locally.

Volunteer Quality Standards

A framework through which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.



What we did: Case Studies

Father Hudson's Caritas

The Young at Heart Project has been running since 2013, and was created to combat loneliness, and give people aged 55 and over a place to socialise and make new friends. They are all about providing a safe and welcoming environment for people who might otherwise feel isolated.

They currently run 14 groups across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire ranging from social groups, singing groups, guitar groups, local history groups and even a ukelele group! The Young at Heart Project relies on volunteers for it to be a success, and they currently have a team of over 70 volunteers.

Alex, Project Manager, is an active part of our **Volunteer Managers Network**. She had heard about our Quality Standards Scheme but was concerned on how she would find the time to complete the scheme around the other parts of her job.

After hearing from other organisations that had completed the scheme, and how achievable it was, Alex was keen to see if she could make it work for Father Hudson's Caritas. Sian, Senior Projects Officer, was able to explain that the scheme is a great opportunity to improve an existing service.

Alex then jumped at the opportunity to take part. Alex was sent the self-assessment and made a start to collate her evidence.

Sian and Alex arranged to meet over a nice cup of tea and discussed their evidence and if anything was outstanding. This was a great opportunity for Alex to gain feedback on the new documentation she was hoping to implement as a result of the scheme and to assess what changes she had already made.

It was clear through the evidence provided that Father Hudson's Caritas provide a rich and welcoming experience for their volunteers and beneficiaries.

"At first I thought that the accreditation meant hard work that in my busy work schedule I hadn't got the time for. The next time it was suggested it was put across as a way of improving the service that we already provide, this had me sold. The advice given and the suggestions that we took on board enabled us to provide a much better service to our volunteers. This award has meant that we now have the recognition from others that we are doing a good job which in this line of work can never be a bad thing.

Here at Father Hudson's Young at Heart project we run a volunteer led model, so we solely rely on volunteers to run our 14 groups across the city, it is imperative that we have the correct procedures and policies in place to effectively run this project. We currently have over 70 volunteers, most of which have come through VAST, so to have a gold award with them will only enhance our relationship. The initial document sent out clearly informed us on what would be expected and with Sian on board, individual meetings made the process very easy. She would set tasks and give advice along the way to ensure that the process was as pain free as possible.

I would recommend this to anyone (and I have) who wishes to improve the service that they are already providing to their valuable volunteers."

Alexandra Baines, Young at Heart Project manager,
Older Peoples Lead for Father Hudson's Caritas

Adekunle and Citizen's Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent

Adekunle is one of the amazing volunteers that supports Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent as a Welcome Advice Community Volunteer.

Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent (CASNS) is one of the country's largest advice agencies with a national reputation for exciting and innovate work. They are an independent local charity, led by a Trustee Board of local volunteers. CASNS operates across North Staffordshire, each year they give 20,000 local people the advice they need to solve 55,000 brand new problems, alongside supporting 30,000 victims of crime, and answering 130,000 calls on their national consumer helpline. Wow what a fantastic charity!

Gloria, our Inclusive Volunteering Project Officer, initially met with Adekunle in July 2024 and spent time getting to know Adekunle and gaining insight into Adekunle's skills and abilities.

Adekunle previously worked as a media aide and personal assistant and volunteered in environmental and climate change. Adekunle also had experience of working as a project assistant, and photographer.

Adekunle identified that the Welcome Advice Community Volunteer role would be a great role for him to utilise his own experiences and develop new skills. CASNS were looking for individuals with specific skills and abilities:

- Due to the specifics of the project, they were looking for individuals with lived experience with the UK's Immigration and Asylum system.
- Flexible and open to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants from diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to speak English as well as other languages desirable.

And these skills matched Adekunle exactly, so this was a great start!

Adekunle was excited to start volunteering and when asked why Adekunle wanted to volunteer, he said: **"I wanted to make an impact on my community, improve my skills and interact with others."**

Adekunle's roles and responsibilities are varied and includes some of the following tasks:

- Assist in empowering members of the local refugee, asylum, and migrant communities with the guidance of CASNS.
- Support CASNS during events and workshops for those communities.
- Serve as a mediator by translating information to members of the local refugee, asylum and migrant communities who have limited knowledge of English.
- Support CASNS by providing first line advice to local people seeking advice and assistance.

Moving forwards, I am sure that you will agree Adekunle has a very bright future ahead of him as he continues to improve his skills, impact his community and support the community in Stoke-on-Trent.

> **"I get to know about my community in Stoke-on-Trent, I meet people, it helps to support my mental health, and I enjoy learning new things. Volunteering also helps to keep me busy and helps with boredom."**
>
> Adekunle

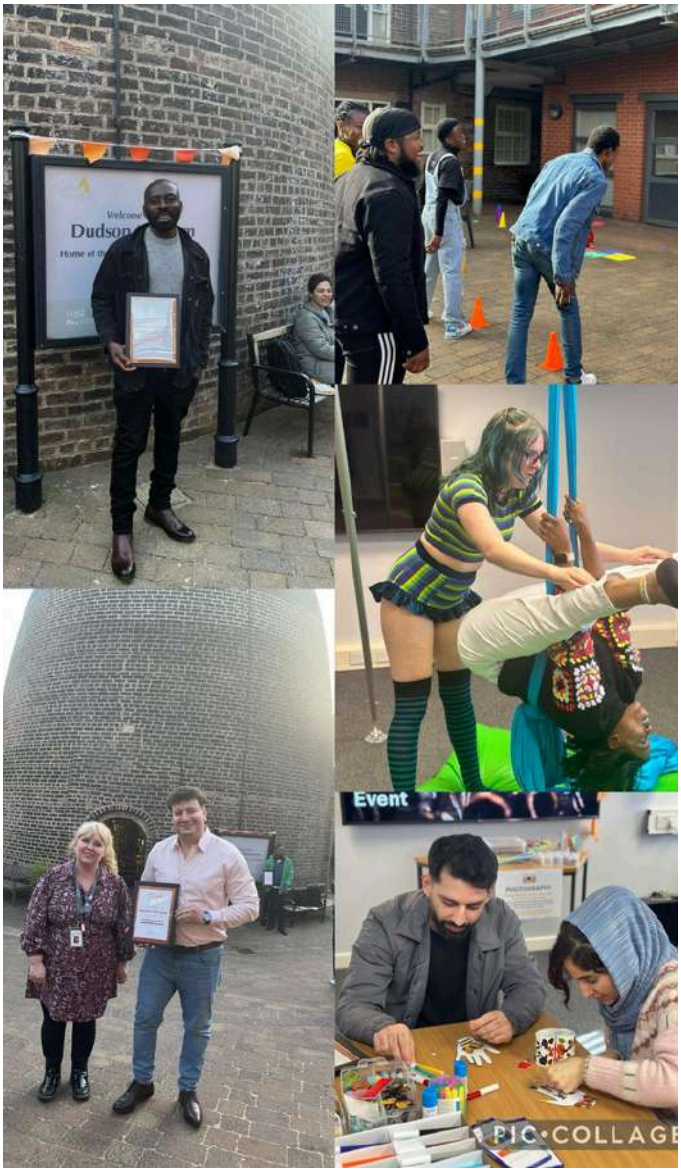
Spirit of Giving Event

To recognise and celebrate the remarkable contributions of asylum seekers and refugees throughout the project we came together for a family friendly afternoon of appreciation and connection.

Johura, VAST's Inclusive Volunteer Buddy, provided invaluable cultural insights, advice, and guidance on the Ramadan festival, including appropriate foods and activities. Given that the event coincided with Ramadan, we ensured that everyone was catered for. For those wishing to break their fast with us, we offered a delightful vegetarian grazing buffet and provided takeaway bags for everyone.

During the celebration, asylum seekers and refugees who had volunteered through the project were presented with certificates recognising their achievements across seven key themes: resilience and determination, community impact and contribution, compassion and empathy, leadership and initiative, collaboration, and teamwork, learning and growth, and dedication and commitment.

The event featured a variety of activities for all to enjoy, including circus skills, crafts, soft play, and children's activities. Additionally, The Community Cast conducted interviews with individuals to capture their perspectives on how volunteering had helped them connect with their communities and the benefits they had experienced.



To capture the spirit of the day and the fun had by everyone who attended, we worked with The Community Cast to create **this short film**.

Click or scan to Watch the Video

Our Impact

Volunteering

Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA)

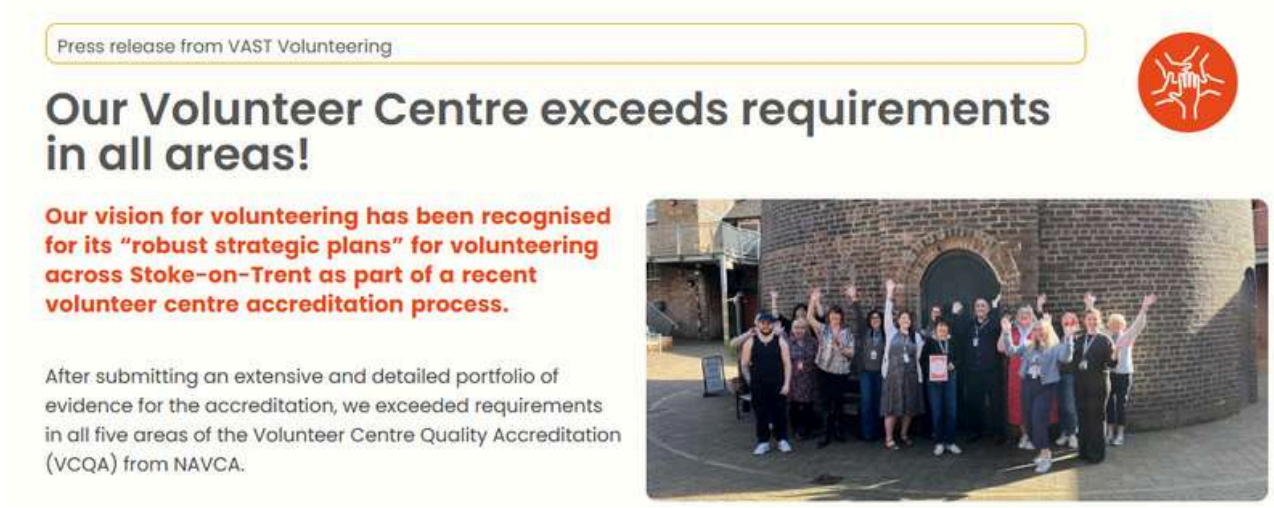
After submitting an extensive and detailed portfolio of evidence for the accreditation, we exceeded requirements in all five areas of the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) from NAVCA. VCQA is designed to assess the quality of volunteering services provided to their local communities by Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) like VAST.

Applications for the award are independently assessed against NAVCA's Five Functions of Volunteer Centres:

- Strategic development of volunteering.
- Good practice development.
- Developing volunteering opportunities.
- Brokerage.
- Voice of volunteering.

The evidence we submitted in our application portfolio, which generally takes around six months to prepare, included strategies, and policies and procedures, as well as service delivery and local impact evidence, including case studies showcasing our work. In her final report, assessor Sue Dunmore said that our **"integrated approach to delivering work means that there is a seamless delivery of services. [As an organisation VAST] is now seen as the vital organisation to deliver Infrastructure support.**
"All the interviews with external bodies stressed how easy it was to work with VAST and nothing was ever too much trouble and staff were always ready to support. It responds to enquiries through social media, phone, website as well as in person visits."

We were also praised for innovation; the development of our local Volunteering Quality Standards programme with the assessor saying it is an area of work that, **"has received very positive feedback from organisations,"** taking part.



Read our press release **here**.

What our clients say

"The dedication and commitment shown by our asylum seeker and refugee volunteers has been truly invaluable to our community garden. Their diverse skills, enthusiasm, and willingness to contribute have transformed the space and strengthened our organisation.
The garden wouldn't be what it is today without their consistent efforts. We're especially grateful to VAST for their exceptional staffing support, thorough processes, and attention to detail in connecting us with these talented individuals. We're proud to provide opportunities for integration while benefiting from their tremendous talents. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and building on these meaningful relationships."

Maurice Thaw, CEO, Collab Training Academy CIC

"Volunteering in Stoke on Trent Libraries is relatively new concept and thanks to the vital support we received from VAST and their dedicated staff we have been able to develop a successful volunteering programme.

VAST has demonstrated an uplifting approach to collaboration and there is always something new, creative and inspiring to take away from Volunteer Management Meetings, wide range of trainings, and individual consultations. Stoke on Trent Libraries are looking forward to our future collaboration with VAST. We are excited to welcome more volunteers from VAST, broaden the scope of our initiative and deepen impact we are having on our communities."

We have been able to refine our volunteering offer into a meaningful and impactful experience that empowers individuals, strengthen communities and improves peoples' wellbeing. VAST are always ready to provide swift guidance, resources, and share best practice. We have received dedicated time and expertise that helped us to identify areas for improvement, streamline our processes while ensuring all we do is volunteer friendly. Now, we are proud to have robust onboarding processes, clear role descriptions, and pathways to support and keep in touch with our volunteers.

Mariana, Volunteer Coordinator, Stoke Libraries

"I attended the training that VAST have delivered around the Volunteer Management.
This went into great detail about the advantages of volunteering for an organisation, as well as incorporating the laws that are in place, so that there is clear understanding and support. It was delivered in a way that made it very easy to understand with systematic steps. This made it clear of the managerial responsibilities which assisted me in how volunteers can be incorporated into the organisation.

After completing the training, it was reassuring to know that I could go back to have documentation checked to make sure it was robust. Sian was really supportive of this, so I knew we could move forwards with volunteering as a service."

Heather, SENDIASS Team Lead

Governance

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of no less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day-to-day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has finance & general purpose, board recruitment and succession planning, and remuneration sub-committees. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required, and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Sub-Committee Membership

Tim Edwards, Chair
Sub-committees: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Board Recruitment, Risk

Joe Martin, Vice Chair
Sub-committees: Finance and General Purpose, Board Recruitment, Museum

Simon Harris, Vice Chair
Sub-committee: Finance and General Purpose

John Farrar, Treasurer
Sub-committee: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Board Recruitment, and Risk

Cathy Jones
Sub-committee: Board Recruitment

Pooja Batta
Sub-committee: Board Recruitment, and Risk

Neil Dawson
Sub committees: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Museum

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and, hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

In so far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team are recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships, including VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) Stoke-on-Trent Collaborative Network & The Healthy Communities Alliance.

Related or Connected Charities

The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors

Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 17th September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Tim Edwards, Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or,
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or,
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or,
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or,
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- We enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP. FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- We considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- Using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- Identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- Reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- Assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- Assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- Obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- Documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- Reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non- compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Geens Limited

Geens Limited (Statutory Auditor)

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Date: 23 September 2025

VAST Services (1920)

Financial Statements

Statements of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

VAST Services (1920)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	495,757	1,158,378	1,654,135
Other trading activities	4	53,145	-	53,145
Investment income	5	20,616	-	20,616
Total income		569,518	1,158,378	1,727,896
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(63,839)	(1,106,101)	(63,839)
Charitable activities	7	(528,869)		(1,634,970)
Total expenditure		(592,708)	(1,106,101)	(1,698,809)
Net (expenditure)/income		(23,190)	52,277	29,087
Transfers between funds		(1,058)	1,058	-
Net movement in funds		(24,248)	53,335	29,087
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		361,755	115,807	477,562
Total funds carried forward	21	337,507	169,142	506,649

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period.

The notes on pages 58 to 79 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	527,244	705,511	1,232,755
Other trading activities	4	41,173	-	41,173
Investment income	5	15,160	-	15,160
Total income		583,577	705,511	1,289,088
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(60,218)	-	(60,218)
Charitable activities	7	(457,046)	(762,640)	(1,219,686)
Total expenditure		(517,264)	(762,640)	(1,279,904)
Net income/(expenditure)		66,313	(57,129)	9,184
Transfers between funds		1,488	(1,488)	-
Net movement in funds		67,801	(58,617)	9,184
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		293,954	174,424	468,378
Total funds carried forward	21	361,755	115,807	477,562

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period.

The notes on pages 58 to 79 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)
(Registration number: 02000818)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	20,892	31,419
Current assets			
Stocks	16	1,503	996
Debtors	17	148,652	257,344
Cash at bank and in hand		610,145	566,858
		760,300	825,198
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	(274,543)	(356,555)
Net current assets		485,757	468,643
Total assets less current liabilities		506,649	500,062
Provisions	19	-	(22,500)
Net assets		506,649	477,562
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	169,142	115,807
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		337,507	361,755
	21	506,649	477,562
Total funds			

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommendend Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 54 to 79 were approved by the board, and authorised for issue on 17 September 2025 and signed on behalf by:

.....
John Farrar Trustee

VAST Services (1920)

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income		29,087	9,184
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6	10,527	10,673
Investment income	5	(20,616)	(15,160)
		18,998	4,697
Working capital adjustments			
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	16	(507)	365
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	17	108,692	(74,189)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	18	26,878	(54,704)
Decrease in provisions	19	(22,500)	(22,500)
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income		(108,890)	117,009
Net cash flows from operating activities		22,671	(29,322)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	20,616	15,160
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		43,287	(14,162)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		566,858	581,020
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		610,145	566,858

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818), and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:
The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting Policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants Receivable

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund Structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.
c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either

(i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or
(ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Grants & Contracts	17,250	1,158,378	1,175,628
Bursary	5,360	-	5,360
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	473,147	-	473,147
	495,757	1,158,378	1,654,135

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Grants & Contracts	4,000	693,011	697,011
Bursary	11,247	-	11,247
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	511,997	12,500	524,497
	527,244	705,511	1,232,755

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Trading income; Cafe income	53,145	-	53,145
	53,145	-	53,145

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Trading income; Cafe income	41,173	_	41,173
	41,173	_	41,173

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Interest receivable and similar income; Interest receivable on bank deposits	20,616	-	20,616
	20,616	-	20,616

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable and similar income; Interest receivable on bank deposits	15,160	-	15,160
	15,160	-	15,160

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Staff Costs	31,560	-	31,560
Cafe supplies	20,545	-	20,545
Office costs	1,995	-	1,995
Legal fees	1,358	-	1,358
Marketing and publicity	15	-	15
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	354	-	354
Support Costs (note 8)	8,012	-	8,012
	63,839	-	63,839

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	28,674	-	28,674
Cafe supplies	19,589	-	19,589
Office costs	1,737	-	1,737
Legal fees	1,164	-	1,164
Marketing and publicity	54	-	54
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	193	-	193
Support Costs (note 8)	8,807	-	8,807
	60,218	-	60,218

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Heritage £	Total 2025 £
Staff Costs	103,996	131,256	102,007	366,471	462,625	18,942	765,297
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	179	271	7,681	3,313	180	884	12,505
Training	-	545	100	1,506	-	-	2,151
Office Costs	17,743	5,938	1,908	44,043	900	1,984	72,516
Legal & Professional	6,169	21,702	723	7,434	1,613	391	38,032
Advertising & Publicity	1,272	-	-	3,553	5,000	-	9,825
Premises Costs	188,210	-	5,218	-	-	1	193,429
Insurance	7,796	610	305	-	-	102	8,813
Sundry	1,227	-	-	832	-	4,445	6,504
Depreciation	164	-	-	-	-	10,363	10,527
Bursary	-	5,360	-	-	-	-	5,360
Partner Payments	-	-	25,250	31,725	20,620	-	77,595
Events	-	170	-	15,864	14,810	1,183	32,027
Grants	-	-	-	250,000	10,350	-	260,350
Support Costs (note 8)	16,023	28,042	16,023	48,071	-	4,005	112,164
Reps Allowance	-	-	27,875	-	-	-	27,875
	342,776	193,894	187,090	772,812	96,098	42,300	1,634,970

7 Expenditure on charitable activities (continued)

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Heritage £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	110,386	138,642	55,998	337,295	20,094	52,089	714,504
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	186	128	-	8,370	6,846	509	16,039
Training	337	962	-	998	-	-	2,297
Office Costs	25,888	10,732	91	838	(1,707)	266	36,108
Legal & Professional	2,681	37,052	20	4,950	5,464	6,303	56,470
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	4,885	-	704	5,589
Premises Costs	129,138	-	-	18,291	1,218	-	148,647
Insurance	7,689	866	173	-	-	-	8,728
Sundry	-	-	-	495	-	2,533	3,028
Depreciation	165	-	-	-	-	10,362	10,527
Bursary	-	11,247	-	-	-	-	11,247
Partner Payments	-	-	-	46,282	24,400	-	70,682
Events	1,238	164	162	21,206	4,269	3,072	30,111
Grants	-	-	-	26,450	-	-	26,450
Support Costs (note 8)	177,613	23,484	5,871	17,613	2,936	11,742	79,259
	295,321	223,277	62,315	487,673	63,520	87,580	1,219,686

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds

	Cafe £	Total 2025 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	**2**	
Staff Costs	1,302	1,302
Staff Training	199	199
Travel	18	18
Premises Costs	1,006	1,006
Legal & Professional	386	386
Insurance	75	75
Advertising & Publicity	60	60
Events	326	326
Office Costs	1,651	1,651
Sundry	2,522	2,522
Governance Costs	467	467
	8,012	8,012

	Cafe £	Total 2024 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	**3**	
Staff Costs	1,170	1,170
Staff Training	157	157
Travel	90	90
Premises Costs	250	250
Depreciation	15	15
Legal & Professional	1,103	1,103
Insurance	49	49
Advertising & Publicity	75	75
Events	304	304
Office Costs	1,708	1,708
Sundry	3,166	3,166
Partner payments	720	720
	8,807	8,807

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Heritage £	Total 2025 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	**4**	**7**	**3**	**12**	**1**	
Staff Costs	2,605	4,558	2,605	7,814	651	18,233
Staff Training	398	696	398	1,193	99	2,784
Travel Costs	35	62	35	106	9	247
Premises Costs	2,011	3,520	2,011	6,034	503	14,079
Legal & Professional	772	1,351	772	2,315	193	5,403
Insurance	149	261	149	447	37	1,043
Advertising & Publicity	121	212	121	363	30	847
Events	652	1,141	652	1,956	163	4,564
Office Costs	3,302	5,779	3,302	9,907	826	23,116
Sundry	5,045	8,829	5,045	15,136	1,261	35,316
Partner Payments	-	-	933	2,800	233	3,966
Governance Costs	933	1,633	-	-	-	2,566
	16,023	28,042	16,023	48,071	4,005	112,164

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Support & Volunteering		Heritage	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Allocated by no. of staff:	**10**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**4**	
Staff Costs	2,339	3,119	780	390	2,339	1,560	10,527
Staff Training	314	418	105	52	314	209	1,412
Travel Costs	180	240	60	30	180	120	810
Premises Costs	501	668	167	83	501	334	2,254
Depreciation	29	39	10	5	29	19	131
Legal & Professional	2,206	2,941	735	368	2,206	1,471	9,927
Insurance	98	131	33	16	98	65	441
Advertising & Publicity	150	200	50	25	150	100	675
Events	608	810	203	101	608	405	2,735
Office Costs	3,415	4,553	1,138	569	3,415	2,277	15,367
Sundry	6,333	8,445	2,110	1,057	6,333	4,222	28,500
Governance Costs	1,440	1,920	480	240	1,440	960	6,480
	17,613	23,484	5,871	2,936	17,613	11,742	79,259

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

	Grants to institutions	
	2025	2024
Analysis	**£**	**£**
Community Health Champion Grants	10,000	21,551
VAST Bursary	5,360	11,247
Cadent	10,350	-
Community Cohesion	240,000	-
	265,710	32,798

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2024 - £Nil).
No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year include:

	2025	2024
	£	**£**
Operating leases - other assets	7,892	7,892
Audit fees	7,500	7,200
Depreciation of fixed assets	10,527	10,673

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

Staff costs during the year were:	2025 £	2024 £
Wages and salaries	683,139	644,357
Social security costs	53,532	47,382
Pension costs	60,918	55,610
	797,589	747,349

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2025 No	2024 No
Direct charitable activities	19	18
Generating funds	7	8
Management and administration	4	4
	30	30

During the year, the charity made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £2,611 (2024 - £1,102).

Pension costs are split between restricted and unrestricted expenditure in line with the associated staff salary costs.

The number of employees whose emoluments fell within the following bands was:

	2025 No	2024 No
£60,001-£70,000	1	-

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £203,018 (2024 - £196,951).

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

During the year the charity made the following transactions with trustee:

£105 (2024: £Nil) of expenses were reimbursed to one trustee during the year.

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £60,918 (2024 - £55,610).

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2024	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
At 31 March 2025	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2024	293,896	168,805	1,832	96,941	561,474
Charge for the year					
At 31 March 2025	165	10,362	-	-	10,527
	294,061	179,167	1,832	96,941	572,001
Net book value					
At 31 March 2025	168	20,724	-	-	20,89
At 31 march 2024	333	31,086	-	-	31,419

16 Stock

	2025 £	2024 £
Stocks	1,503	996

17 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	69,668	250,419
Prepayments and accrued income	75,706	6,925
VAT recoverable	3,278	-
	148,652	257,344

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade creditors	29,177	11,163
Other taxation and social security	13,811	29,226
Other creditors	27,721	29,773
Accruals	82,043	55,712
Deferred income	121,791	230,681
	274,543	356,555

	2025 £	2024 £
Deferred income at 1 April 2024 Resources	230,681	113,672
deferred in the period	121,791	230,681
Amounts released from previous periods	(230,681)	(113,672)
Deferred income at year end	121,791	230,681

19 Provisions

	Other provisions £	Total £
At 1 April 2024	(22,500)	(22,500)
Utilised during the period	22,500	22,500
At 31 March 2025	-	-

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

During the year ended 31 March 2025 payment of £22,500 was made to Staffordshire County Council.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	168	20,724	-	20,892
Current assets	490,091	270,203	6	760,300
Current liabilities	(152,752)	(121,791)	-	(274,543)
Total net assets	337,507	169,136	6	506,649

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	31,419	-	-	31,419
Current assets	483,547	341,645	6	825,198
Current liabilities	(130,717)	(225,838)	-	(356,555)
Provisions	(22,500)	-	-	(22,500)
Total net assets	361,749	115,807	6	477,562

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	286,755	569,518	(533,938)	(59,828)	262,507
Designated					
Dudson Centre contingency	25,000	-	(25,000)	50,000	50,000
Museum contingency	50,000	-	(33,770)	8,770	25,000
	75,000	-	(58,770)	58,770	75,000
Total unrestricted funds	361,755	569,518	(592,708)	(1,058)	337,507
Restricted funds					
Health	23,387	265,160	(189,494)	-	99,053
Support and Volunteering	3,735	175,163	(178,889)	(9)	-
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	1,410	462,500	(463,793)	464	581
Community Health Champions	55,694	100,000	(107,949)	-	47,745
Other	130	148,955	(148,051)	3	1,037
Heritage	31,445	6,600	(17,925)	600	20,720
Capital Funds	6	-		-	6
Total restricted funds	115,807	1,158,378	(1,106,101)	1,058	169,142
Total funds	477,562	1,727,896	(1,698,809)	-	506,649

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	172,837	583,577	(440,930)	(28,729)	286,755
Designated					
Dudson Centre contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub contingency	46,117	-	(40,036)	(6,081)	-
Museum contingency	50,000	-	(36,298)	36,298	50,000
	121,117	-	(76,334)	30,217	75,000
	293,954	583,577	(517,264)	1,488	361,755
Total unrestricted funds					
Restricted					
Health	23,260	50,000	(49,873)	-	23,387
Support and Volunteering	36,372	177,715	(208,875)	(1,477)	3,735
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	18,123	193,023	(209,736)	-	1,410
Community Health Champions	57,144	102,500	(103,950)	-	55,694
Other	1,400	128,819	(130,078)	(11)	130
Heritage	38,119	53,454	(60,128)	-	31,445
Capital Funds	6	-	-	-	6
Total restricted funds	174,424	705,511	(762,640)	(1,488)	115,807
Total funds	468,378	1,289,088	(1,279,04)	-	477,562

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of Restricted Funds:

Health related projects are funds from the CCG's PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

Suppport and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Heritage funds include funds received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other small grants and donations for the running of The Dudson Museum.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025 £	2024 £
Land and buildings		
Within one year	4,200	3,756
Between one and five years	12,600	12,000
After five years	50,400	39,000
	67,200	54,756
Other		
Within one year	7,892	7,892
Between one and five years	22,700	14,781
	30,592	22,673

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2025 £	2024 £
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	69,668	250,419
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(29,177)	(11,163)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £92,457 (2024 £81,445). Receipts of £5,874,112 (2024 £5,407,753) were received during the year and payments of £5,880,663 (2024 £5,396,741) were made leaving a year end balance of £85,906 (2024 £92,457).

28 Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund - Totally Stoked & Door2Door £174,786 (2024 £213,689)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Collaborative Working Agreement £206,000 (2024 £nil)
Heritage Lottery Fund - various projects £6,600 (2024 £43,454)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Community Health Champions £nil (2024 £100,000)
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board - Community Health Champions £100,000 (2024 £nil)
Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent integrated Care Board - VCSE Alliance £123,000 (2024 £nil)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Strategic Development Officer £nil (2024 £30,282)
DCMS (via the Community Foundation for Staffordshire) - Know Your Neighbourhood £69,475 (2024 £48,551)
NHS England - Volunteering for Health £89,160 (2024 £nil)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Community Cohesion £240,000 (£2024 £nil)

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £1,009,021 (2024 - £435,976).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.

VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales - Charity number 1049663

Accounts

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31st March 2024

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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers, and Advisors

Trustees

Neil Dawson	Chair	
John Farrar	Treasurer	Appointed 13th September 2023
Tim Edwards		
Pooja Batta		Appointed 13th September 2023
Joe Martin		Appointed 13th September 2023
Cliff Hathaway		Appointed 13th September 2023
Cathy Jones		Appointed 13th September 2023
Mark Barnish	Treasurer	Resigned 31st March 2024
John Beech		Resigned 31st March 2024
Lesley Morrey		Resigned 31st March 2024
Victoria Hardie		Resigned 31st March 2024
Susan Meredith		Resigned 12th August 2023
Nick Maslen		Resigned 14th May 2023
Lee West		Resigned 2nd September 2024

Auditors

Geens,
Graphic House,
City Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST4 2PH

Bankers

Unity Bank, Plc,
Nine Brindley Place,
Birmingham,
B1 2HP

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings
Chief Executive and Finance Director

Charlotte Bennett
Strategic Projects Manager

Debra Hefferon
Finance Manager

Jackie Wheeler
Facilities Manager

Registered Address

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreward

I am delighted to once again present VAST's annual report and accounts which are a testament to the team's commitment and impact over the past year. At the heart of our work lies a steadfast dedication to supporting the local VCSE sector.

Once again VAST's work has been carried out against a backdrop of uncertainty, but our leadership is rooted in gathering the thoughts, needs, and experiences of our sector and local communities. By bringing these insights to the attention of policymakers and decision-makers, we can influence strategic conversations and advocate effectively for our members.

Our strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System, among others, enabled us to actively engage with and inform the VCSE sector, while at an operational level, partnerships with organisations such as Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce facilitate resource sharing, skill development, and information exchange. These collaborative efforts are crucial for co-designing solutions that meet the needs of our communities.

Providing practical support, guidance, information, and training for our members is central to our mission. Throughout the year we have continued to develop our comprehensive training programme covering essential topics such as governance, volunteer management, and event planning, whilst our one-on-one support has continued to ensure tailored assistance for our member organisations from inception to growth, addressing funding, governance, and volunteering needs.

Through our regular newsletters and the VAST Vault, we have also maintained a steady flow of vital information and resources to our members.

As I reflect on our achievements, I am inspired by the stories of impact we hear from our members. Whether it's supporting a new Community Interest Company (CIC), providing tools for effective monitoring, or celebrating organisations achieving Gold in our Volunteering Quality Standards, these successes drive VAST forward.

I am immensely grateful for the dedication and passion of the VAST team, our partners, and our volunteers. Together, we continue to build resilient and thriving communities, ensuring that everyone has the opportunity to contribute and benefit.

Neil Dawson, Chair

11th September 2024

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2024 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

VAST continued to cement its position as the recognised Local Infrastructure Organisation for voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) organisations across Stoke-on-Trent during the year. Building on the strong foundations laid down during previous years, we are now a reliable "go to" organisation for the voluntary sector, and a trusted partner to both Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board (SSOT ICB).

During the year we have redefined our offer alongside NAVCA's Four Functions of Infrastructure; Leadership & Advocacy, Partnerships and Collaboration, Capacity Building and Volunteering; enhancing our sector support offer with an improved training programme, additional inclusive volunteering projects and a number of new networks and forums.

We have also continued to work closely with Support Staffordshire to create a strong VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board enabling VCSE organisations to have a voice into the Integrated Care System locally.

It has not all been plain sailing. The cost-of-living crisis has not gone away, and we continue to be key partners in Stoke-on-Trent City Council's cost of living partnership and a newly convened Food Partnership as well as providing ongoing support to the network of welcoming spaces - hosted by VCSE organisations - across the city.

The end of the financial year saw a number of projects come to an end, however we are pleased to say that continuation funding has been provided by The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund for our Totally Stoked project. Our Community Health Champions work has received ongoing funding from SSoT ICB and from April 2024 a new five year collaborative working agreement has been agreed with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to enable us to continue to be an independent Local Infrastructure Organisation for the VCSE sector.

We are still operating in an uncertain environment, affected by rising costs and short-term funding. However, we have placed ourselves clearly back in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector and continue to be there to support our local VCSE sector, to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering on their aims for their beneficiaries.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team and the continuing support of funders, we continue to move forward together, for the benefit of our communities, and are well positioned to face the inevitable challenges of the future.

Achievements and Performance

In the Media...

The group from Asha during their visit to the Dudson Museum.

EDUCATION AND TRAINING / LIFESTYLE & LEISURE / NEWS

Voluntary sector partnership between VAST and Asha helps local refugees build skills and realise potential

by Ron Quenby · 9 October 2023 · 1 min read

Staffordshire Chambers and VAST join forces to empower local charities with Quest support services

Staffordshire Chambers is pleased to announce a new partnership with VAST, a charity dedicated to developing the voluntary sector in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, that will give VAST members access to the Chambers' Quest support services.

The Quest business support services include a range of benefits designed to support organisations and their teams, including HR support, health & safety guidance as well as legal and tax advice.

Chris Plant, Deputy CEO of Staffordshire Chambers, said: "The Chamber is renowned for its commitment to fostering business growth and prosperity in the region.

Through this partnership, we will extend their expertise and resources of Quest to VAST, ensuring that the vital work carried out by voluntary and community organisations is bolstered with essential tools and resources."

Key Objectives from our Strategic Plan

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.
- To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis following so closely behind the pandemic means that there is still less appetite for the purchase of non-essential services and budgets are being tightly managed even for essential services.

Chargeable Services

What we said we would do

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seeking new tenants for The Dudson Centre.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

How successful we were

Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely.

Pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our clients and ourselves by the COVID pandemic and then the cost-of-living crisis has meant it has been difficult to expand our services

Our training and events offer has been extremely successful, and we receive many excellent reviews and pieces of participant feedback.

SSOT ICB has increased the level of funding for the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance.

What we did

We have not advertised widely; however, we have developed our member bulletins and continue to enhance our social media presence. Word of mouth and the growing presence of our project staff has meant that both our membership number and clients of our chargeable services have continued to grow. Our accountancy and payroll services continue to attract clients from a wide geographical area and demand for meeting rooms is continuing to grow and is slowly reverting to pre pandemic levels.

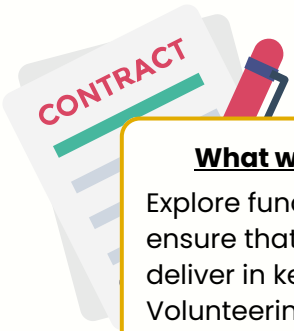
Our chargeable income covering our business support service, creative services, café and refreshment income and income from rentals was £458,302 in the year.

The development of packaged support offer is on hold as we have not found there to be a demand for them, however we will revisit this if we find that demand increases in the future.

We have continued virtual or hybrid delivery for most of our training packages and now have a comprehensive annual training offer as well as holding successful volunteering and funding fayres both virtually and in person.

We have continued to focus our efforts on Stoke-on-Trent and have not attempted to enter our wider geographic market.

We are continually looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services.



Grants and Contracts

What we said we would do

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

What we did

We have successfully developed and delivered two Inclusive Volunteering projects during the year.

We have worked alongside statutory partners and Support Staffordshire to enable VCSE sector organisations to participate in Health Research.

How successful we were

We secured funding to continue to enhance our core infrastructure services and also to fund inclusive volunteering and health research projects.

Advocacy and Voice

What we said we would do

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

How successful we were

We are better recognised by the VCSE sector as their representative than we have been in the recent past, however constant staff changes and interim posts across statutory bodies can make it difficult to retain relationships.

What we did

Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and in establishing new Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together more closely and with statutory bodies and enabled VAST to be seen as the route to those bodies.

We have created new forums for Finance and Communications and Engagement staff within VCSE sector organisations as well as growing our volunteer managers network and creating a new NHS volunteer managers network.

Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area and to meet regularly with senior level employees of both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board.

We have facilitated the process of appointing VCSE sector representatives onto all portfolio boards of SSoT ICB.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and supporting activities have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally. Sector funding is likely to reduce drastically as the country gets to grips with the aftermath of a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine, and a cost-of-living crisis.

Both the Local Authority and Integrated Care System are facing significant financial pressures. Stoke-on-Trent City Council received financial assistance to balance 2023/24 and will need to make large budget savings in future years. This will inevitably flow through into less funding for the VCSE sector. At the same time, organisations still have depleted reserves and are facing huge increases in their running costs. However, there is still a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

There is a growing desire from local statutory partners to engage with the sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and Support Staffordshire. We are still having encouraging conversations, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long-term, benefits for the sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that, as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE sector, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset-Based Community Development, Community Wealth Building, and locality working as key strategies to develop and to achieve. This requires greater co- production with the VCSE sector and the communities we serve.

The Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board has continued to develop its strategies and priorities as well as creating a series of portfolios through which they will be delivered. We have continued to work through the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance to ensure that the VCSE sector is fairly represented and engaged in co-production.

These positive discussions and relationships are still yet to impact upon local commissioning and this year, once again, has seen very little contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods.

During the year we also made the difficult decision to close our premises at The Hub in Stafford and to focus our efforts in Stoke-on-Trent.

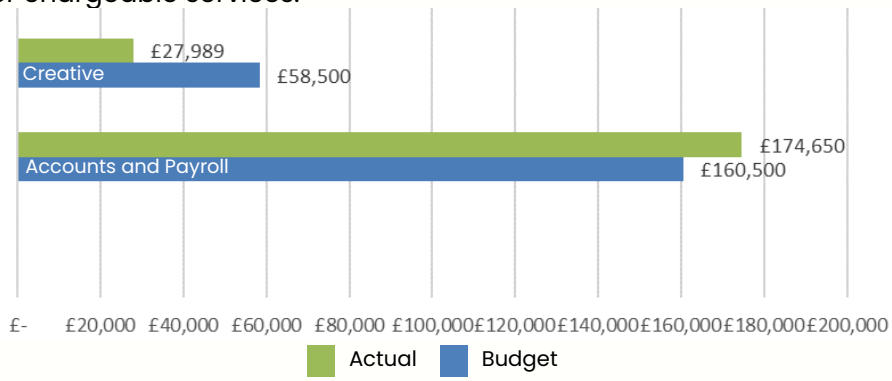
Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

Income against budget for chargeable services:

Whilst we have successfully returned to and exceeded pre-pandemic levels for accounts and payroll we have struggled to recover for creative services and as a result ceased to provide those services in January 2024.

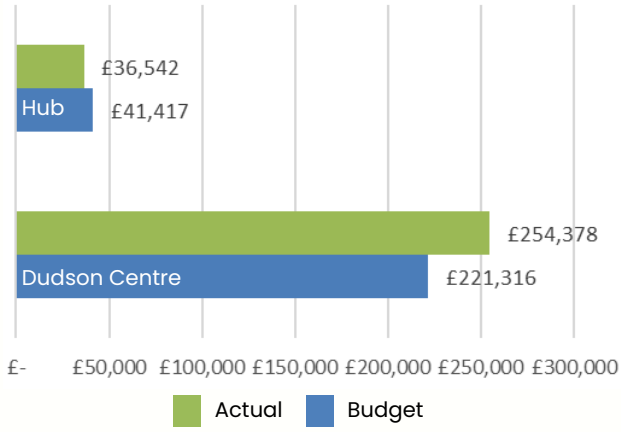


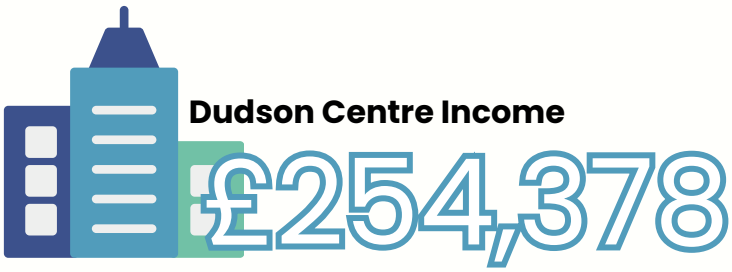
Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre and The Hub:

For the year to March 2024 based on income received against total possible income the Hub was 42% occupied while it operated, and The Dudson Centre was 77% occupied.

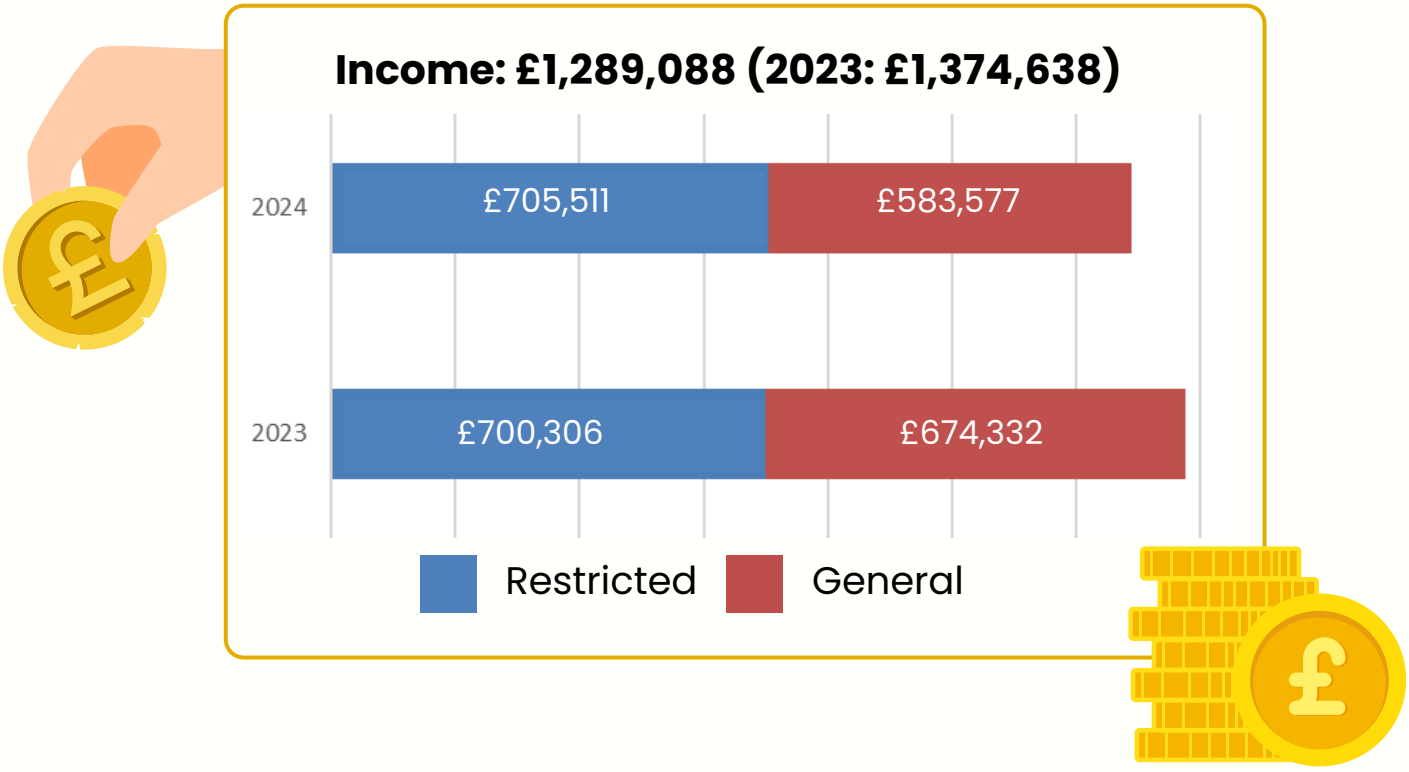
Occupancy levels remained good throughout the year at The Dudson Centre, however the decision was made to close the Hub on 30 September 2023 as it was no longer viable.

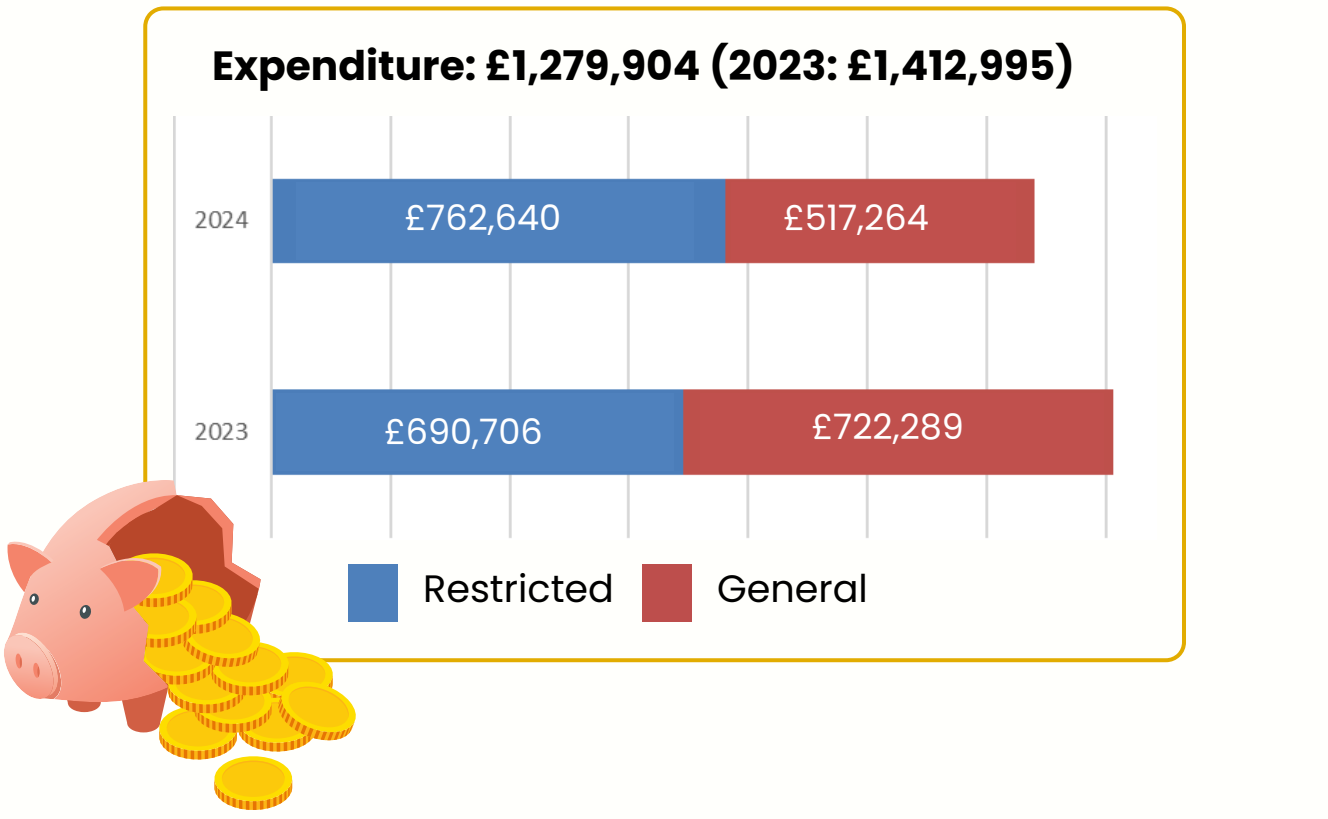




Financial Review

Overall, our income has fallen slightly to £1.3m.



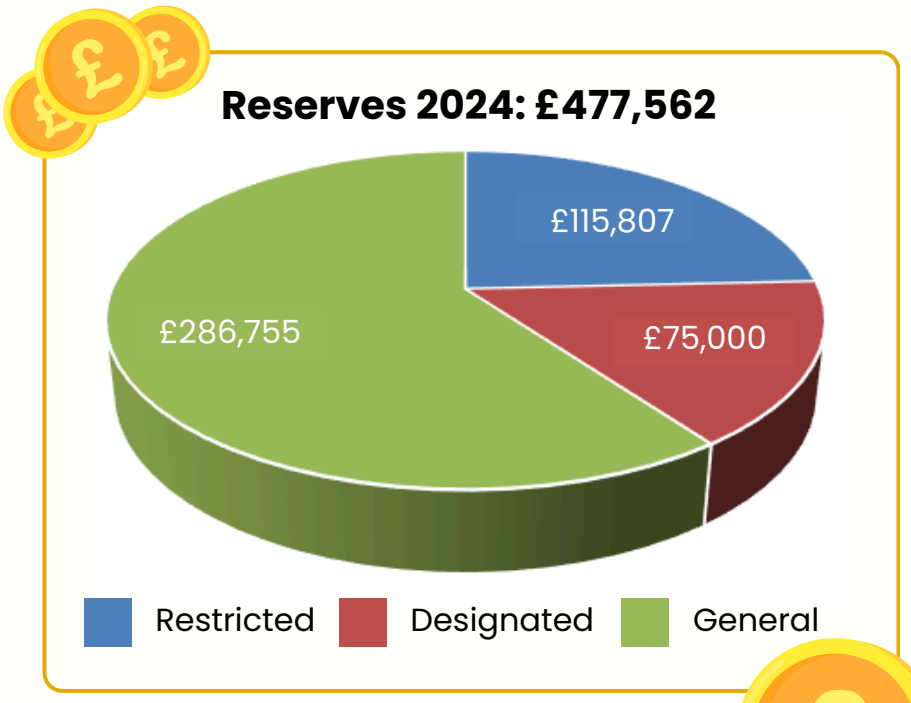


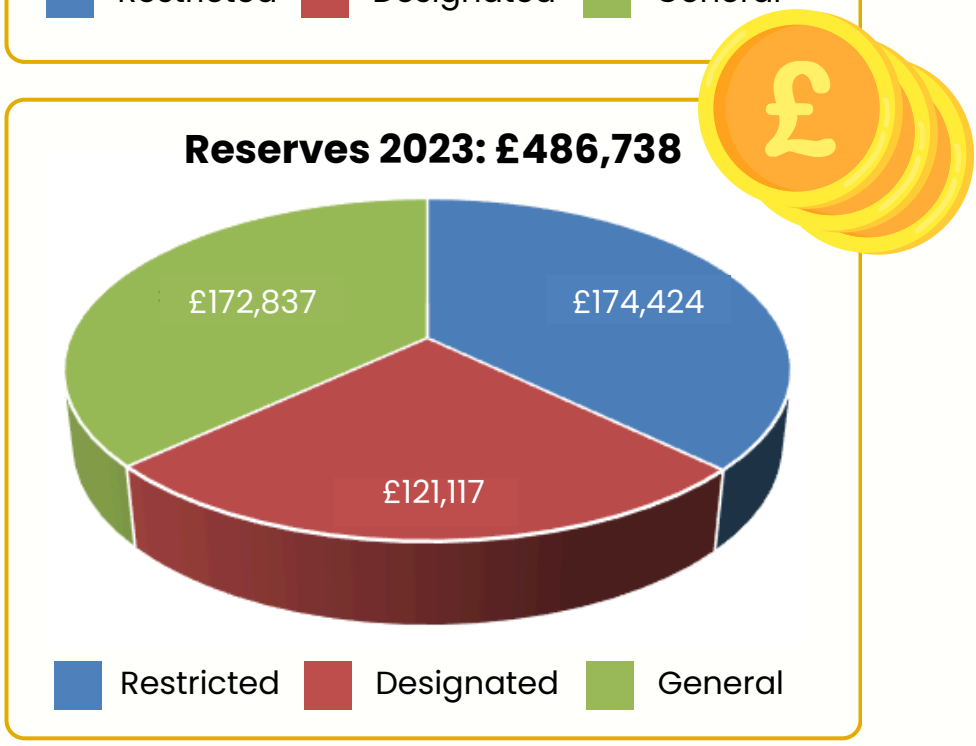
Reserves

Of the designated reserves £25,000 is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre and £50,000 is set aside for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

VAST's principal funding sources for 2023/24 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who funded our work with the local VCSE sector and the Community Health Champions project, Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent integrated Care Board who funded our work with the Staffordshire NHS VCSE Alliance and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2023/24 accounted for 39% of income (88% of unrestricted income).





Principal Funders for 2023/24

City of Stoke-on-Trent

NHS Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

COMMUNITY FUND

Agent over Cash Held

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not-for-profit organisations:

Trentham Pre-School	RSPCA North Staffs Branch	Stoke-on-Trent Food Bank	Breakthru' Support Services	Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
Haregate Community Centre	ASHA North Staffs	RubyGirl UK	Staffordshire Sight Loss Association	Stone Community Hub
NSAAA	Disability Solutions West Midlands	Uttoxeter Gateway	North Staffordshire Medical Institute	TWOCO
Packmoor Community Association	Expert Citizens UK CIC	Staffordshire Parish Council Association	St. Andrews with St. Peters Pre-School	Open Door Stoke-on-Trent
North Staffs Carers Association	Willoughbridge Garden Trust	Biddulph Methodist Church	Voice of Hope	Lea Road Community Church
Abbey Hulton Sports & Social Club	Green Door Hub	Headway North Staffs	Number 11 CIC	Silverdale Parish Council
Smallthorne Social Society	Association of Dogs and Cats Homes	Rehoboth Well CIC	Sage (Staffs)	Keele Parish Council
Redeemed Christian Church of God	Peter Pan Nursery	Restoration Shack CIC	Age UK South Staffordshire	Stoke Creates CIC
Windmills CIC	Silvertree Cleaning	Rachel Wilson (DP)	Newcastle Community Transport	Tri-Services Veteran Support
Affordable Food Stoke	Whitmore Parish Council	Deaflinks Staffordshire	Kidsgrove Sports Centre	Uttoxeter Heritage Trust
Madeley Community Association				

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

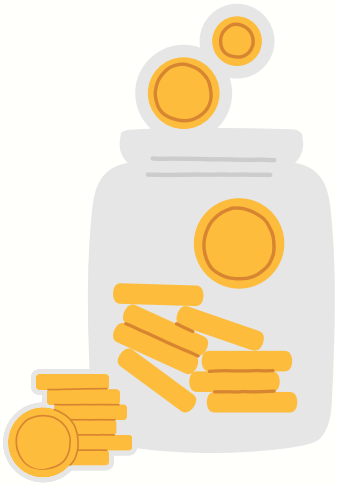
These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year-end financial statements.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed-term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.



The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £898,000 to £1,500,000.

Currently, we hold £255,336 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £477,562 of which £361,755 is unrestricted, and of this £75,000 is designated.

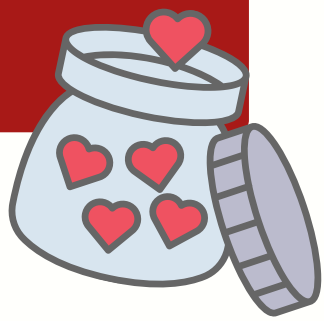
The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future periods

VAST's strategy and business plan were fully reviewed in 2023.

Our Aim

Our overall aim is to support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.



Key Objectives

To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.

To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.

Activites Planned to Achieve Objectives

We will achieve our key objectives by implementing the following activities:

Chargeable Services

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seeking new tenants for The Dudson Centre.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

Grants and Contracts

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

Advocacy and Voice

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, meaning that VAST cannot continue to exist as an infrastructure organisation. However, sources of income have been diversified over recent years and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable services to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

Other risks considered to be high are damage to reputation, loss of influence, and loss of key staff.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub- committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Quarterly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standard awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 11th September 2024 and signed on its behalf by:

Neil Dawson, Chair

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report

Incorporating the Director's Report

Our Purpose

The objects for which the charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands, with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent. These are the prevention or relief of poverty, the advancement of education, heritage and health, and citizenship or community development.

In furtherance of the above purposes, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

- Promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above.
- Procure and provide information.
- Procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents.
- Promote, encourage or undertake experimental work.
- Assist any body or bodies financially or otherwise.
- Obtain, collect and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful methods, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not).
- Arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes.
- Operate a museum and heritage centre.

Our Role

VAST is a Local Infrastructure Organisation that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities.

VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders and encourages and facilitates partnerships and collaboration.

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE sector to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

Aims

Support
through capacity building support and volunteer brokerage services.

Inform
through capacity building support.

Connect
by facilitating partnerships and collaboration

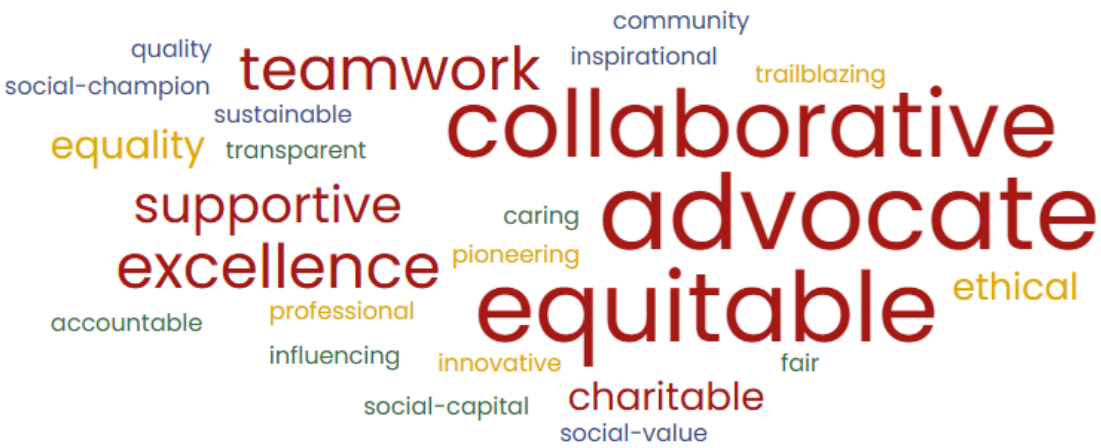
Advocate
by providing leadership and advocacy

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following values:

Authentic **Proactive** **Innovative** **Responsive**

All delivered with integrity and underpinned by these behaviours...



Our colleagues at VAST continue to play a pivotal role in supporting a community-focussed approach to improving the heath and wellbeing of residents across Stoke-on-Trent. Building on existing relationships and championing the local VCSE sector, they are recognised as a strong and equal partner of the local integrated care system and a valued asset.

Supported by a Memorandum of Understanding, VAST and the VCSE Alliance provide an invaluable link between the Integrated Care Board (ICB) and the VCSE sector enabling the ICB to have a greater understanding of the different organisations across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent and the contributions they can make. Through their dedicated team, they help to facilitate access to funding for groups and organisations, which in turn strengthens their position and, more importantly, the role that they can play.

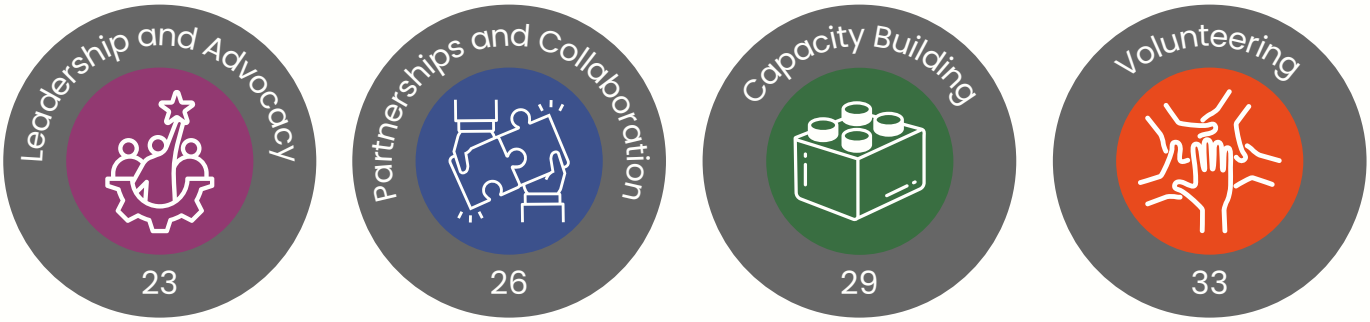
Links with the VCSE sector have been further strengthened this year with VCSE Representatives now appointed to each of the ICB portfolio boards. Healthy Community forums in north, south and east Staffordshire are meeting regularly with good attendance and active engagement from a wide range of community and statutory partners. VAST also continues to support the ICB in reaching out and involving seldom-heard groups and we were delighted to commission the continuation of their Community Health Champions in Stoke-on-Trent to tailor communications and engagement more effectively with communities that are often not reached through traditional approaches.

As we shift to a more targeted, localised approach to improving health and wellbeing outcomes, that is sensitive to the diverse populations we serve, VAST and the VCSE Alliance will continue to play a key role in working more closely with communities to find tailored solutions to the challenges they face. I look forward to continuing to work alongside VAST, building on the work that we have already started, and believe that together we can drive real and positive change for our communities and succeed in our joint desire to improve health and wellbeing outcomes and tackle inequalities across Stoke-on-Trent.

David Pearson MBE, Non-Executive Chair
Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board

Our Work

The Four Functions of Local Infrastructure



Gathering the thoughts, needs, and experiences of the sector and local communities, bringing them to the attention of policy and decision makers; influencing conversations at a strategic level; representing and advocating for the local voluntary sector organisations, diverse groups, and marginalised or hard to reach communities.

How we do it:

Leadership: We lead and facilitate groups, networks and forums to gather our members' thoughts, needs, and experiences, and those of the communities they work in. Knowing what the problem is and what our members and their communities need is part of the solution.

We also facilitate one-off workshops and engagement events. Bringing people together across sectors to make sure VCSE organisations can be involved in shaping decisions and solutions at the earliest opportunity.

Networks and Forums

VAST facilitates a range of peer support networks for key VCSE sector roles.

Our networks and forums create much-needed opportunities to share best practice, and exchange ideas, skills, and knowledge, together with collaboratively addressing challenges and focussing on key issues.

Thematic forums enable organisations to come together around shared areas of work or common agendas. They are often run in partnership with other key local organisations. Membership is often cross-sector, enabling our sector to be fully integrated into local thinking on important issues.

VSCOG

The Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) is a network for VCSE sector leaders in Stoke-on-Trent.

Funding Network

In partnership with The Hubb Foundation, this network is an opportunity to come together to talk all things funding.

Share Network

Community Share Networks focus on sharing resources, information, and advice around a chosen theme.

Volunteer Managers Network

This network gives people working with volunteers an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.

VCSE Finance Forum

Staff members and volunteers who are responsible for any VCSE finance functions are invited to join the VCSE Finance Forum.

Healthy Communities Forum

Hosted by the Healthy Communities Alliance, this forum enables cross-sector collaboration with health and care system partners.

SEND Forum

A networking opportunity for organisations providing support to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent.

Communications and Events Engagement Network

A space for members of staff and volunteers responsible for their organisations communications or events.

Advocacy: We sit on and chair different boards, and we attend all sorts of consultation events to advocate for our member organisations, for their communities, and for the sector as a whole. We share our members' thoughts and experiences to partners like The City Council, Public Health, Health Authorities, and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

Our sector does amazing things all the time, and everyone should know about it!

What we did:

Case Study on Commissioning

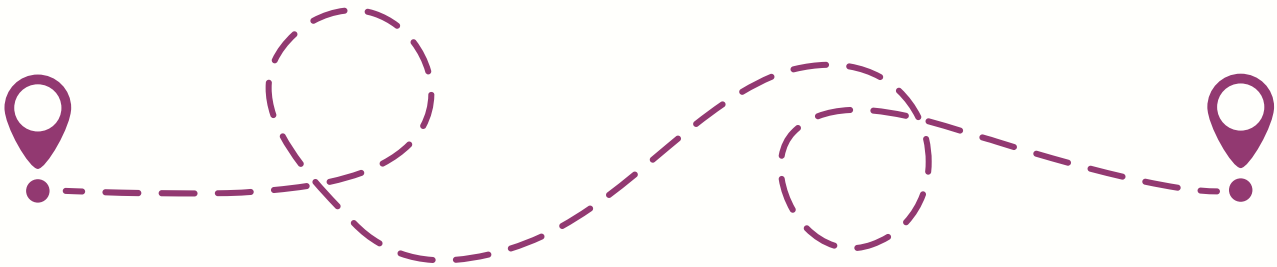
Our members often tell us that the commissioning landscape is hard to navigate and difficult to access and this is particularly the case for small, grass roots organisations. In recent years this has become even more pronounced with statutory commissioning as tighter budgets and fewer commissioning and procurement staff have led to small contracts being combined into one larger contract, leading to competition from large national providers coming into the area with skilled teams able to write persuasive bids, but failing to deliver once awarded. In the meantime, the local organisations who lost out have shrunk or disappeared and aren't around to pick up the pieces.

In 2021, VAST's Chief Executive, Lisa Healings, together with other sector leaders formed a small working group to investigate the problem and to identify solutions.

Using meetings with the Integrated Care System as a foundation, commissioning was identified as one of the key priorities of the emerging VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance, which is jointly coordinated by VAST and Support Staffordshire and this was written into the Memorandum of Understanding between the ICS and the VCSE sector.

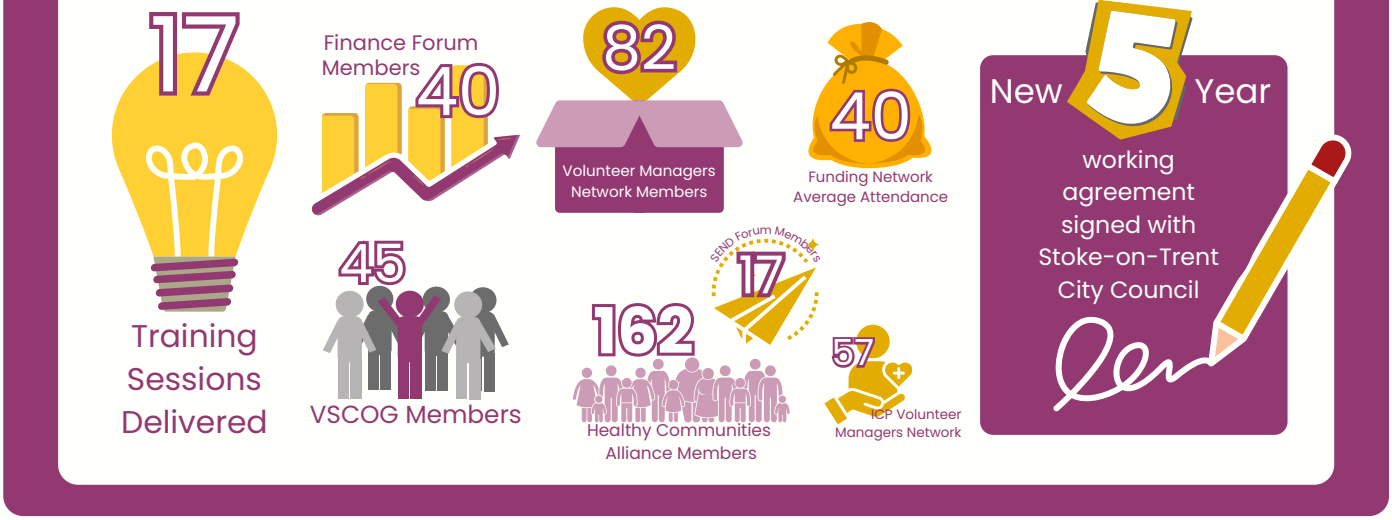
This priority has continued to be an agenda topic at the regular Assurance Group meetings. These conversations led to VAST securing the opportunity for VAST and Support Staffordshire to jointly present to the Integrated Care System Finance & Performance Committee in January 2024 to explain the importance of the VCSE sector to the Health System and the implications of poor or inaccessible commissioning and contract management. As a direct result of this presentation all VCSE grants and contracts were immediately moved to a payment in advance basis to recognise the impact of delayed and late payment on small VCSE organisations.

Alongside working with the Integrated Care System VAST has continued to advocate for better commissioning of VCSE organisations with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. This has been more difficult as there has been very little commissioning activity since the COVID pandemic. However. we have ensured that, for opportunities that have come up, we have advocated for and facilitated engagement sessions for our members to ensure there was an opportunity to help shape the contract.

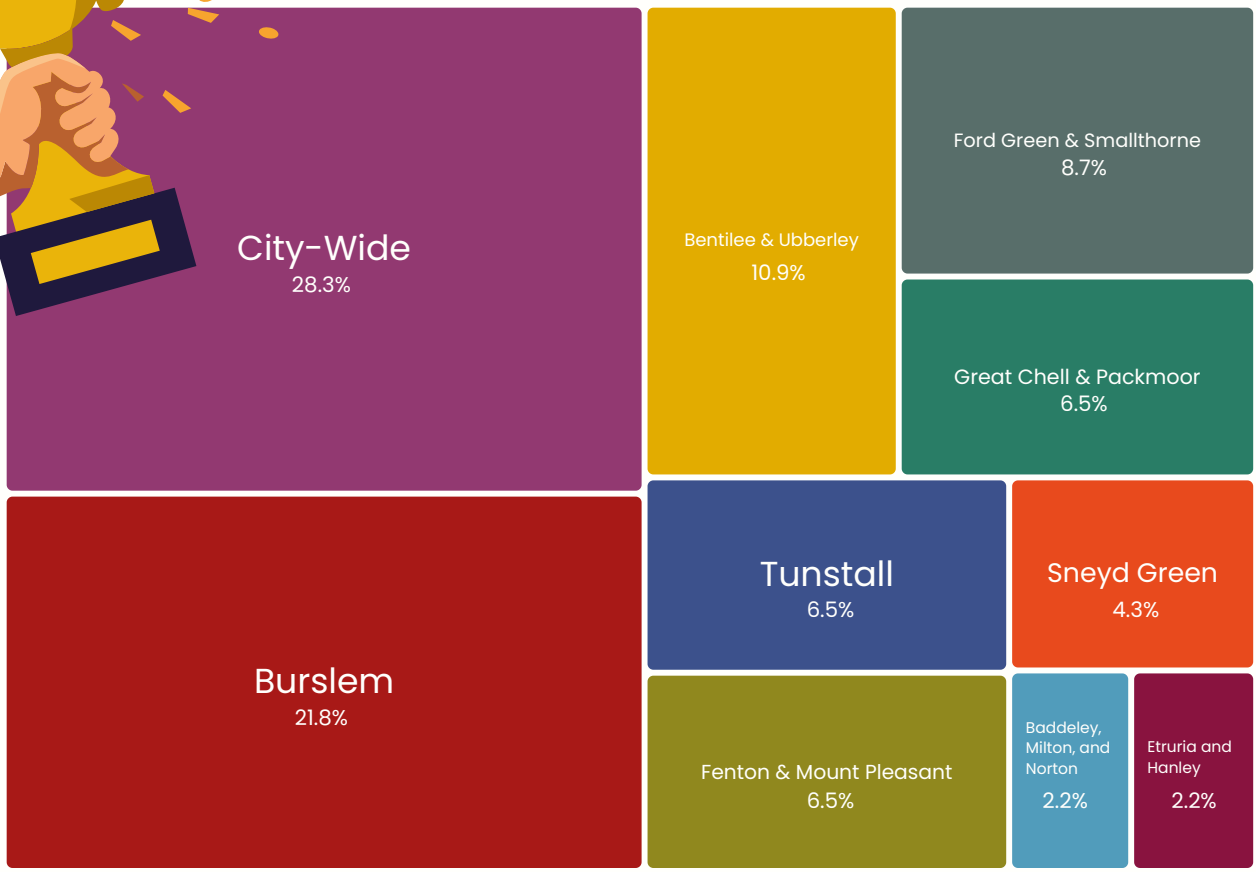


Our Impact

Leadership and Advocacy



Community Health Champions Network and Reach across the Stoke-on-Trent



Creating accessible and inclusive opportunities and driving effective collaborative working through the building of networks and partnerships between local organisations and strategic partners.

How we do it:

Partnerships: We have a number of partnerships at both strategic and operational level. These include:

Strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Integrated Care System which enable active strategic engagement and provide a flow of information to and from the VCSE sector.

Operational project-based partnerships with many others including Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce to enable shared resources and skills and information exchange.

Collaboration: We enable collaboration both within the VCSE sector and across sectors by enabling networks and forums for people to come together and build relationships and identify synergies and facilitating engagement events and sessions to co-design and co-produce solutions to address the needs of our communities.

What we did:

Case Study on the Healthy Communities Alliance

VAST's engagement with the local Health System is well established, with a well-regarded Strategic Liaison function in place. This role had evolved as the needs of both the System and the VCSE sector changed. However, it had, for many years been a crucial link between the sectors in terms of consultation, engagement, facilitation of co-production as well as mobilising the sector quickly in the face of winter pressures and other crises.

Healthy Communities VCSE Alliance Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent

Working alongside Support Staffordshire and taking the learning from the NHS England-led national support programme we worked collaboratively with members of our pre-existing health engagement forums to evolve these into a new and more robust Alliance structure providing a comprehensive series of thematic and place-based forums to engage cross sector partners.

Mental Health Forum

Children and Families Forum

Social Prescribing Advisory Group

SNS

Stoke-on-Trent & North Staffordshire Forum

SES

Southeast Staffordshire Forum

SWS

Southwest Staffordshire Forum

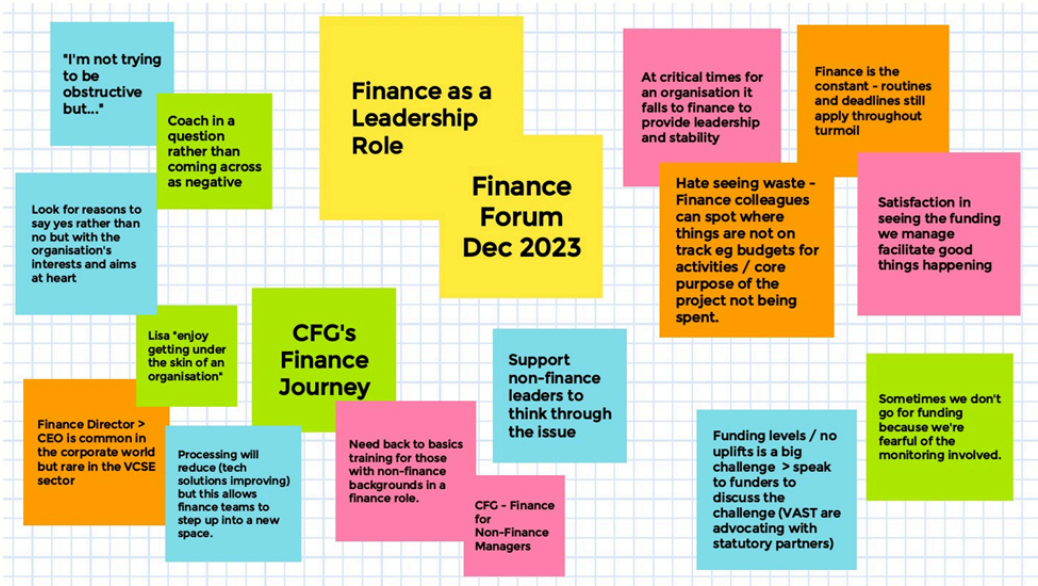
VAST is a core member of both the Coordination Group, leading on the development of the Alliance and identifying key issues across the forums, and the Assurance Group, meeting regularly with key ICS leads, providing oversight of the Alliance governance arrangements and embedding this within ICS governance.

VAST chairs the Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Healthy Communities Forum, which held its initial meeting in January 2022 and which has now grown to have over 160 members. During this time the meetings have been used for VCSE sector members to provide updates and discuss topical issues as well as to receive updates from system partners on system developments, projects and consultation opportunities.

Our Impact:

VCSE Finance Forum

> **"I have to say I really enjoyed the forum session on Thursday and got a lot out of it."**
> Kate Hampton, Home-Start Newcastle Borough



Totally Stoked Awards 2024

> **"What a wonderful night, attending the Totally Stoked awards event in partnership with VAST, a night of celebrating the unity in the voluntary sector, organisations and community, who work tirelessly for the good of Stoke-on-Trent. Well done to all the worthy winners and nominees, for your outstanding work and dedication."**
> Mother's Mind Staffordshire

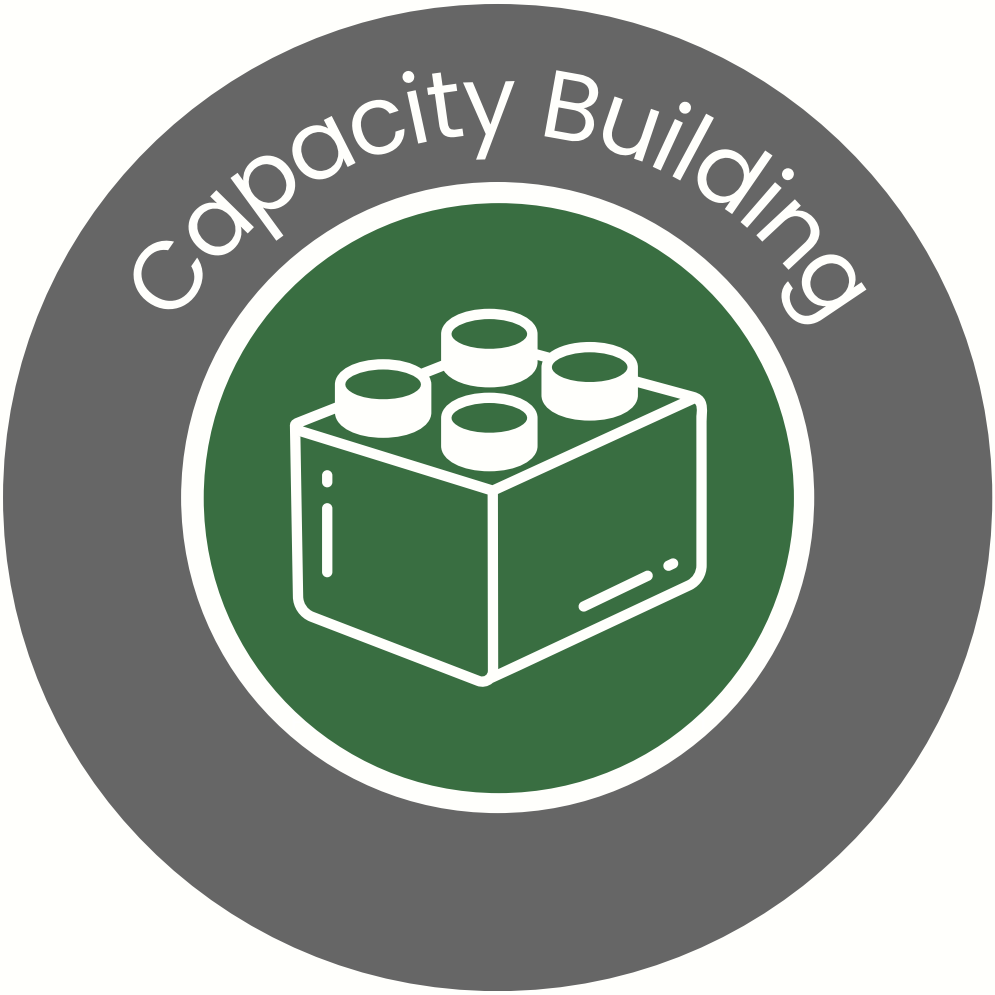
James Biddulph is with **Kirst Brindley Biddulph** and **4 others**.
3 h ·

Totally Stoked VAST
Guess who won community champion ??
Only our very own Nunu xxx

Nunu says "a room full of 200 people who all do amazing things helping others. A very good night but I am tired now, well done everyone"

The Community Cast
1 h ·

And that's a wrap, what a wonderful night hosting the #TotallyStokedAwards from Totally Stoked with the awesome Tom Pine and organisesd by VAST at the bet365 Stadium . Celebrating the meaningful work done by fantastic organisations the people behind them. #communityvoices #communitystories



Providing practical support, guidance, information, advice, training, and essential business services to VCSE groups to enable them to become more resilient and efficient, to achieve their goals, improve lives and help communities to thrive.

How we do it:

Capacity building is a huge part of our work; to ensure that our members and their communities are as resilient and empowered as possible, it is important that we help them build their skills, knowledge, and networks.

We do this through:

Training

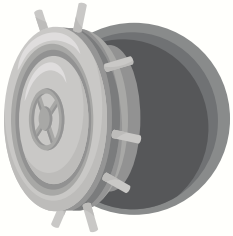
VAST provides a full training programme, covering a range of topics - from essential governance, to volunteer management, and event planning. We also work with expert organisations to provide training around themes like HR management, business continuity, and environmental sustainability. The majority of this training is free for members to access.

One-to-One Support

Our support team provide free one-on-one support to our member organisations, with tailored support available from the beginning of their organisation or project. We have supported organisations with funding, governance, organisation start-up, volunteering and more.

Information and Resources

Through our regular newsletters, targeted support, and resources available on the VAST Vault, we ensure that our member organisations have ongoing access to important information, resources and learning.



Guides and Resources from the VAST Vault

What we did:

Case Study on The Hub Fenton

VAST Project Officer Kez met with The Hub Fenton in December, to discuss the possibility of the Hub opening as a Welcoming Space.

To help them get set up, Kez provided a list of potential funding opportunities. She visited the Hub to provide some training to their volunteers on using VAST's Community Directory and the Stoke-on-Trent together site to make sure the team were prepared for any energy or finance-based questions. Kez also sent some capital funding options, as the Hub were looking to install energy-saving measures in their building.

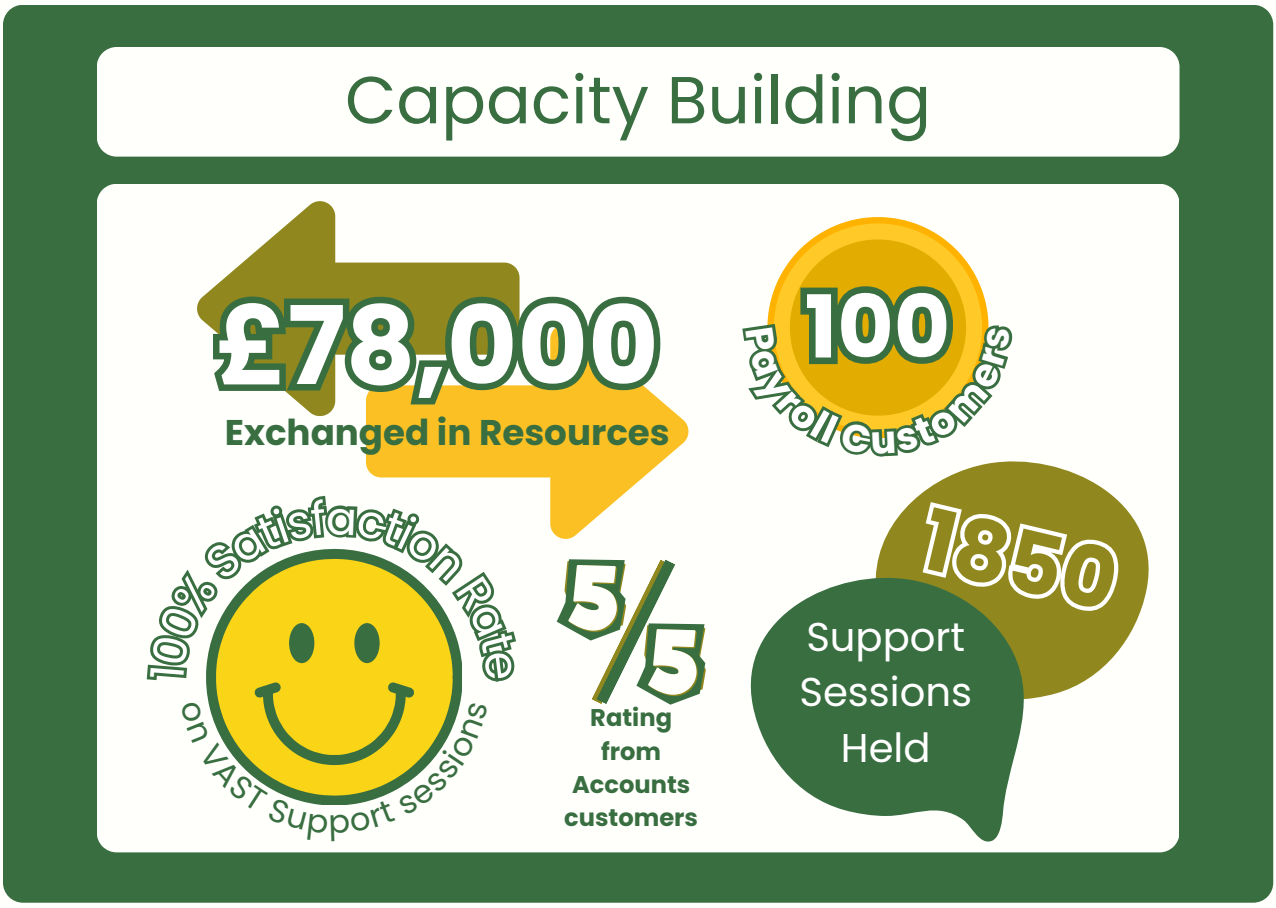
Carole, Manager of The Hub, expressed that she wanted to have visitors from other organisations at the Welcoming Space to provide additional services, so VAST were able to use connections with the "Mo the Bus" vaccination team to arrange a vaccine clinic at the Hub on 1st March 2023.

Since signing up as a Welcoming Space, the Hub have also been given access to additional activities and resources - they will be used as a centre for Together Active/Nuffield Health to complete some gentle activity sessions and distribute resistance band activity packs.

The Hub Fenton's welcoming space is a warm, friendly, and welcoming environment, with activities from arts and crafts through to digital skills support from volunteers and has been hugely beneficial to attendees - supporting people with their finances, reducing isolation, and providing a safe space to Fenton residents.

> **"The attendance at our Welcome Place increased by 50% in one week. We are delighted that people are coming along and enjoying a range of activities. Our first week had a focus on flower making using china clay. The second week saw some people choosing to develop their IT skills. For those who prefer to people watch, it's a warm, no pressure space with tea and coffee for everyone The support from VAST staff is invaluable for sharing ideas and information... When Kez say she'll do something, she does it"**
> Carole Kind, The Hub Fenton

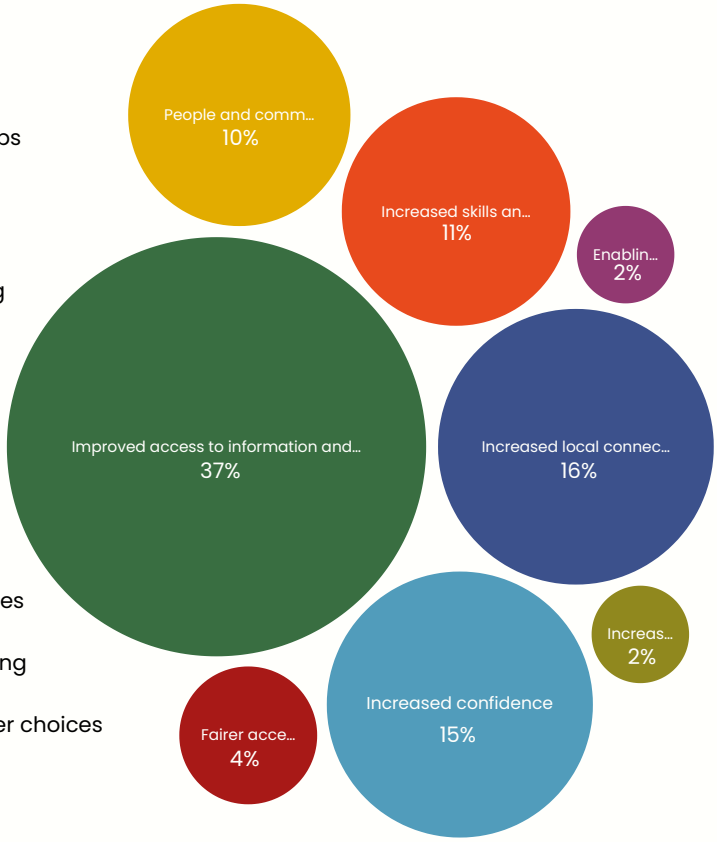
Our Impact



Session Outcomes

These outcomes are measured in % and based on feedback from sessions with voluntary sector groups across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

- Improved access to information and learning
- Increased local connections
- Increased confidence
- Increased skills and expertise
- People and communities feel empowered
- Fairer access to assets and community spaces
- Enabling VCSE support for health and wellbeing
- Increased sustainability and enabling greener choices



Thank you for the support I have received for help with monitoring. The tools that Kelly created for me have been great for me to track important information for our reports. The training for monitoring and evaluation has really helped to further my skills and understanding on the subject as well. I have since introduced Kelly to our trustees and look forward to help from VAST to help our board understand their responsibilities more.
Deborah, Director of TWOCO

VAST have been brilliant with providing support, training, volunteers and CSR over the past few years. I've learned such a lot and to be able to access support for free has been amazing. I'm looking forward to working with Kelly to strengthen my monitoring skills over the next year so enable me to better capture data and case studies for the lottery reports.
Teri Elder, Walk Talk Action

VAST payroll provides an invaluable service for our charity.
Beat The Cold

A fantastic service. Highly professional, helpful, accurate, timely, always goes that extra mile. I am reassured by the high quality of service and the staff excellence. Thank you.
Mandy Rollins, Disability Solutions West Midlands

**I approached VAST at a time of great uncertainty and trepidation.
Whilst I had lots of experience working with people, the idea of establishing a CIC was daunting and quite frankly I wasn't sure I could do it!**

VAST offered me a pathway which made it all seem possible. They offered me advice on legal status, helping me on how to complete registration documents, they directed us to funding opportunities and looked over our very first funding bid. They have been on hand along the way for help and advice – simple things like best community banks accounts and insurance suggestions. We approached them to help us prepare and advertise for volunteers and they have pointed new funding pots in our direction.

Cassie has always been approachable, friendly with a real desire to help. Through the struggles of getting established, it's like someone is cheering you on to succeed. I would recommend them, and I often do, to anyone who wants to help their community and improve the lives of others.
Georgina Salt, Reaching CIC

Tailored volunteering support to voluntary sector groups including training, guidance, and best practice; encouraging and nurturing high-quality, accessible, and inclusive volunteering opportunities; and a personalised volunteer matching service.

How we do it:

Our 'Vision for Volunteering'

Our vision for volunteering is to create a community where everyone comes together to make a positive impact. We believe that together we can create meaningful connections, foster empathy, and create a real sense of unity.

Putting the 'unity' in community, our mission is to inspire others to join in and help make the world a better place for all.

At VAST we're passionate about Volunteering. We know that volunteering is a great way to improve your health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference in your local community. Our volunteer service benefits both volunteers and the organisations they volunteer with. Brokerage service: supporting organisations to find the volunteers they need, and volunteers to find the role that's right for them.

Inclusive Volunteering

Supporting those who may need a little extra support to get into volunteering, and helping organisations ensure they're prepared to work with them.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Creating connections between private companies/corporate businesses and the VCSE sector for Corporate Social Responsibility.

Volunteer Managers Network

Giving people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.

Training

Providing in-depth training and support around volunteer management.

Volunteer Quality Standards

A framework through which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.

What we did:

Case Study on Staffordshire Sight Loss Association

Staffordshire Sight Loss (SSLA) provide many different services. They aim to empower blind and partially sighted people in North Staffordshire to lead independent and fulfilling lives. They do this through providing high quality, accessible services including information, advice and support, peer support and social opportunities.

SSLA have been increasing their volunteer opportunities to cope with demands on their services. They are able to offer many different types of volunteer opportunities, ranging from marketing, social group volunteer, administration, braille class, retail and much more.

SSLA decided to take part in the Quality Standard scheme to give them the opportunity to review every element of their volunteering offer.

By 'going back to basics', it gives organisations the chance to review their current policies and procedures and update them. Under the scheme, Jess was able to review and renew SSLA's policies around volunteering and create a more transparent and suitable onboarding process for new volunteers.

> **The decision to complete the quality standards was easy, especially when I realised most of the criteria were already things that we were doing. Having the silver quality standard assures volunteers that we have everything in place to provide any support that they need."**
> Jess Ball (Volunteer Coordinator)

VAST Volunteer: Vanessa

Vanessa's volunteer role with Door2Door Community Transport has helped Vanessa to recognise that she still has a lovely ability to communicate with other people and has also re-found her love of IT.

"I enjoy communicating with the public and love supporting people on the telephone".

Case study on a Micro-Volunteering Day with ASHA North Staffordshire

As part of VAST's commitment to support individuals from marginalised groups whilst also supporting with local grass roots projects VAST supported a 'micro' volunteering opportunity with individuals from Asha, who actively promotes social inclusion for asylum seekers and refugees.

The aim of the day was to support individuals to build skills, increase wellbeing and social networks, and to also give individuals a valuable insight and experience of volunteering and to also support the #LoveSOT campaign at the same time.
18 individuals from Asha attended the event alongside volunteers from VASTs Projects Team. The group were split between different activities and then rotated to ensure everyone had an experience in all areas from litter picking to planting hanging baskets and sanding benches in preparation for staining finished off with a tour around the Dudson Museum.

> **The VAST volunteering day at the Dudson Centre was definitely worthwhile and I really feel you could see that service users were enjoying getting into the activities and being a part of something different. I think the day was well arranged by those in charge, special mention to Gloria as I know she played a big part in organising the day. Thank you. The day gave our service users the opportunity to see more and recognise not only their potential but to understand there are options out there specifically catered towards them. I think this is a day that could be a re-run in the future and if that becomes the case, I am sure ASHA staff, volunteers, and service users will be looking forward to it! Big thanks again to all those involved!**

Our Impact

We were thrilled to be awarded the Gold Standard for our volunteers. Middleport Pottery is highly dependent on volunteers for their support. I was really pleased when VAST began to offer the chance to earn an award for the volunteering sector. I found the application relatively easy to complete as we already had a comprehensive Volunteer's Handbook in place. The team at VAST were very supportive when I was compiling the evidence by providing guidance as regards to what was needed."

Lynne, Learning Officer and Volunteer Co-Ordinator: Re-Form Heritage

"We are really pleased to have achieved the Gold Volunteering Standard for Middleport Matters. We have worked hard over the years to offer voluntary opportunities that meet the needs of individuals as well as make a difference in the local area, so this recognition is lovely. The standards created by VAST are useful to identify areas of good practice, and continually look at ways to improve."

Vicki, Operations Manager: Middleport Matters

Governance

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of no less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day-to-day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has finance audit and risk, board recruitment and succession planning, and remuneration sub-committees. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Neil Dawson, Chair
Sub committees: Finance & Remuneration

John Farrar, Treasurer
Sub-committee: Finance & Remuneration

Tim Edwards, Vice Chair
Sub-committees Finance & Remuneration

Pooja Batta
Sub-committee: Board recruitment and Succession Planning

Joe Martin
Sub-committees: Finance, Remuneration, and Board recruitment and Succession Planning

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

In so far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team are recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships including VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) The North Staffordshire Collaborative Network & Team Staffordshire.

Related or Connected Charities

The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2024 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors

Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 11th September 2024 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Dawson, Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2024 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2024 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or,
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or,
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or,
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or,
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- We enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP. FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- We considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- Using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- Identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- Reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- Assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- Assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- Obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- Documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- Reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non- compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Karen Staley FCA BSc (Hons) (Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Geens Limited, Statutory Auditor
Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Date:

VAST Services (1920)

Financial Statements

to year end March 2024

VAST Services (1920)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	527,244	705,511	1,232,755
Other trading activities	4	41,173	-	41,173
Investment income	5	15,160	-	15,160
Total income		583,577	705,511	1,289,088
Expenditure on: Raising funds				
Charitable activities	6	(60,218)	-	(60,218)
Total expenditure	7	(457,046)	(762,640)	(1,219,686)
Net income/(expenditure)		(517,264)	(762,640)	(1,279,904)
Transfers between funds		66,313	(57,129)	9,184
Net movement in funds		1,488	(1,488)	-
Reconciliation of funds		67,801	(58,617)	9,184
Total funds brought forward				
Total funds carried forward		293,954	174,424	468,378
	21	361,755	115,807	477,562

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period.

The notes on pages 54 to 74 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2024 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from: Charitable activities	3	628,863	700,306	1,329,169
Other trading activities	4	36,379	-	36,379
Investment income	5	9,090	-	9,090
Total income		674,332	700,306	1,374,638
Expenditure on: Raising funds				
Charitable activities	6	(53,254)	-	(53,254)
Total expenditure	7	(669,035)	(690,706)	(1,359,741)
Net (expenditure)/income		(722,289)	(690,706)	(1,412,995)
Net movement in funds		(47,957)	9,600	(38,357)
Reconciliation of funds		(47,957)	9,600	(38,357)
Total funds brought forward				
Total funds carried forward		341,911	164,824	506,735
	21	293,954	174,424	468,378

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period.

The notes on pages 54 to 74 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)
(Registration number: 02000818)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Fixed assets Tangible assets	15	31,419	42,092
Current assets			
Stocks			
Debtors	16	996	1,361
Cash at bank and in hand	17	257,344	183,155
		566,858	581,020
		825,198	765,536
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	(356,555)	(294,250)
Net current assets		468,643	471,286
Total assets less current liabilities		500,062	513,378
Provisions	19	(22,500)	(45,000)
Net assets		477,562	468,378
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	115,807	174,424
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		361,755	293,954
Total funds	21	477,562	468,378

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommendend Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 50 to 74 were approved by the board, and authorised for issue on 11th September 2024 and signed on behalf by:

John Farrar
John Farrar (Sep 19, 2024 14:56 GMT+1)
John Farrar
Trustee

John Farrar (Sep 19, 2024 14:56 GMT+1)

VAST Services (1920)
Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Note	2024 £	2023 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income/(expenditure)		9,184	(38,357)
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6	10,673	86,110
Investment income	5	(15,160)	(9,090)
		4,697	38,663
Working capital adjustments			
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	16	365	(176)
Increase in debtors	17	(74,189)	(34,345)
(Decrease)/increase in creditors	18	(54,704)	39,792
Decrease in provisions	19	(22,500)	-
Increase/(decrease) in deferred income		117,009	(258,129)
Net cash flows from operating activities		(29,322)	(214,195)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	15,160	9,090
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	15	-	(41,449)
Net cash flows from investing activities		15,160	(32,359)
Net decrease in cash and cash equivalents		(14,162)	(246,554)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		581,020	827,574
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		566,858	581,020

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818), and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:
The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates
The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention
The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern
The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments
Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants receivable
Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.
c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Cash and cash equivalents
Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors
Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions
Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments
The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits
Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either (i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or (ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Grants & Contracts Bursary Facilities	4,000	693,011	697,011
Management & Rechargeable Services	11,247	-	11,247
	511,997	12,500	524,497
	527,244	705,511	1,232,755

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Grants & Contracts	-	699,947	699,947
Bursary	17,019	-	17,019
Museum	4,015	359	4,374
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	607,829	-	607,829
	628,863	700,306	1,329,169

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Trading income; Cafe income	41,173	-	41,173
	41,173	-	41,173

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Trading income; Cafe income	36,379	-	36,379
	36,379	-	36,379

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable and similar income; Interest receivable on bank deposits	15,160	-	15,160
	15,160	-	15,160

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income; Interest receivable on bank deposits	9,090	-	9,090
	9,090	-	9,090

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	28,674	-	28,674
Cafe supplies	19,589	-	19,589
Office costs	1,737	-	1,737
Legal fees	1,164	-	1,164
Marketing and publicity	54	-	54
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	193	-	193
Support Costs (note 8)	8,807	-	8,807
	60,218	-	60,218

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Staff Costs	25,416	-	25,416
Cafe supplies	16,405	-	16,405
Office costs	837	-	837
Premises costs	4,866	-	4,866
Legal fees	567	-	567
Marketing and publicity	77	-	77
Depreciation	99	-	99
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	40	-	40
Support Costs (note 8)	4,947	-	4,947
	53,254	-	53,254

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management £	Chargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Heritage £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	110,386	138,642	55,998	337,295	20,094	52,089	714,504
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	186	128	-	8,370	6,846	509	16,039
Training	337	962	-	998	-	-	2,297
Office Costs	25,888	10,732	91	838	(1,707)	266	36,108
Legal & Professional	2,681	37,052	20	4,950	5,464	6,303	56,470
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	4,885	-	704	5,589
Premises Costs	129,138	-	-	18,291	1,218	-	148,647
Insurance	7,689	866	173	-	-	-	8,728
Management Costs	-	-	-	495	-	2,533	3,028
Depreciation	165	-	-	-	-	10,362	10,527
Bursary	-	11,247	-	-	-	-	11,247
Partner Payments	-	-	-	46,282	24,400	-	70,682
Events	1,238	164	162	21,206	4,269	3,072	30,111
Grants	-	-	-	26,450	-	-	26,450
Support Costs (note8)	17,613	23,484	5,871	17,613	2,936	11,742	79,259
	295,321	223,277	62,315	487,673	63,520	87,580	1,219,686

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

7 Expenditure on Charitable Activities (continued)

	Facilities Management £	Chargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Heritage £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	132,072	151,777	42,842	284,569	38,224	42,335	691,819
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	397	131	5,889	3,228	3	102	9,750
Training	533	2,533	60	2,416	-	80	5,622
Office Costs	43,469	4,114	617	31,938	1,819	3,993	85,950
Legal & Professional	5,348	29,025	723	60	-	10,745	45,901
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	2,644	5,865	165	8,674
Premises Costs	132,051	-	3,875	500	-	8,332	144,758
Insurance	7,656	1,222	350	524	-	524	10,276
Management Costs	-	-	-	3,857	3,847	-	7,704
Sundry	80	146	-	-	-	-	226
Depreciation	85,496	163	-	-	-	-	85,659
Bursary	-	17,019	-	-	-	-	17,019
Partner Payments	-	-	-	57,285	7,000	-	64,285
Events	2,427	161	-	8,120	4,316	12,670	27,694
Grants	-	-	-	58,652	-	-	58,652
Support Costs (note8)	8,245	9,894	8,000	46,132	13,751	9,730	95,752
	417,774	216,185	62,356	499,925	74,825	88,676	1,359,741

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds	Cafe £	Total 2024 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	**3**	
Staff Costs	1,170	1,170
Staff Training	157	157
Travel	90	90
Premises Costs	250	250
Depreciation	15	15
Legal & Professional	1,103	1,103
Insurance	49	49
Advertising & Publicity	75	75
Events	304	304
Office Costs	1,708	1,708
Sundry	3,166	3,166
Partner payments	720	720
	8,807	8,807

	Cafe £	Total 2023 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	**3**	
Staff Costs	1,381	1,381
Staff Training	75	75
Travel	43	43
Premises Costs	1,123	1,123
Depreciation	34	34
Legal & Professional	1,924	1,924
Insurance	51	51
Advertising & Publicity	202	202
Events	311	311
Office Costs	2,043	2,043
Sundry	1,402	1,402
Partner payments	479	479
Governance Costs	677	677
Reallocate management fees	(4,798)	(4,798)
	4,947	4,947

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Projects	Support & Volunteering Projects	Heritage Projects	Total 2024
Allocated by no. of staff:	£ 6	£ 8	£ 2	£ 1	£ 6	£ 4	£
Staff Costs	2,339	3,119	780	390	2,339	1,560	10,527
Staff Training	314	418	105	52	314	209	1,412
Travel Costs	180	240	60	30	180	120	810
Premises Costs	501	668	167	83	501	334	2,254
Depreciation	29	39	10	5	29	19	131
Legal & Professional	2,206	2,941	735	368	2,206	1,471	9,927
Insurance	98	131	33	16	98	65	441
Advertising & Publicity	150	200	50	25	150	100	675
Events	608	810	203	101	608	405	2,735
Office Costs	3,415	4,553	1,138	569	3,415	2,277	15,367
Sundry	6,333	8,445	2,110	1,057	6,333	4,222	28,500
Governance Costs	1,440	1,920	480	240	1,440	960	6,480
	17,613	23,484	5,871	2,936	17,613	11,742	79,259

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Projects	Support & Volunteering Projects	Heritage Projects	Total 2024
Allocated by no. of staff:	**£ 6**	**£ 8**	**£ 2**	**£ 1**	**£ 6**	**£ 4**	**£**
Staff Costs	2,302	2,763	921	921	4,144	1,842	12,893
Staff Training	124	149	50	50	224	99	696
Travel Costs	71	85	28	28	128	57	397
Premises Costs	1,871	2,245	748	748	3,368	1,497	10,477
Depreciation	57	68	23	23	102	45	318
Legal & Professional	3,207	3,849	1,283	1,283	5,773	2,56	17,961
Insurance	85	101	34	34	152	6 68	474
Advertising & Publicity	337	404	135	135	606	270	1,887
Events	519	622	207	207	933	415	2,903
Office Costs	3,405	4,087	1,362	1,362	6,130	2,724	19,070
Sundry	2,337	2,804	935	935	4,206	1,868	13,085
Partner Payments	798	958	319	319	1,437	639	4,470
Governance Costs	1,129	1,355	452	452	2,032	903	6,323
Reallocate Management Fees	(7,997)	(9,596)	1,503	7,254	16,897	(3,263)	4,798
	8,245	9,894	8,000	13,751	46,132	9,730	95,752

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

	Grants to institutions	
	2024	2023
Analysis	**£**	**£**
Community Health Champion Grants	21,551	58,652
VAST Bursary	11,247	17,019
	32,798	75,671

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2023 - £Nil).
No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/(outgoing) resources for the year include:	2024 £	2023 £
Operating leases - other assets Audit fees	7,892	5,553
Depreciation of fixed assets	7,200	7,000
	10,673	86,110

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	644,357	619,963
Social security costs	47,382	46,473
Pension costs	55,610	50,345
	747,349	716,781

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2024 No	2023 No
Direct charitable activities	18	18
Generating funds	8	9
Management and administration	4	4
	30	31

During the year, the charity made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £1,102. (2023 - £Nil).

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £196,951 (2023 - £185,166).

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £55,610 (2023 - £50,345).

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2023	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
At 31 March 2024	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2023	293,731	158,297	1,832	96,941	550,801
Charge for the year	165	10,508	-	-	10,673
At 31 March 2024	293,896	168,805	1,832	96,941	561,474
Net book value					
At 31 March 2024	333	31,086	-	-	31,419
At 31 March 2023	498	41,594	-	-	42,092

16 Stock

	2024 £	2023 £
Stocks	996	1,361

17 Debtors

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade debtors	250,419	161,240
Prepayments and accrued income	6,925	21,915
	257,344	183,155

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2024 £	2023 £
Trade creditors	11,163	25,325
Other taxation and social security	29,226	40,800
Other creditors	29,773	20,862
Accruals	55,712	93,591
Deferred income	230,681	113,672
	356,555	294,250

	2024 £	2023 £
Deferred income at 1 April 2023	113,672	371,801
Resources deferred in the period	230,681	113,672
Amounts released from previous periods	(113,672)	(371,801)
Deferred income at year end	230,681	113,672

Creditors include £230,681 (2023: £113,672) of income deferred into the following year due to the timing of the charity's entitlement to the income after any performance conditions have been met. There are no unfulfilled conditions attached to this income at the balance sheet date. £225,838 of the closing balance at 31 March 2024 is held in restricted funds.

19 Provisions

	Other provisions £	Total £
At 1 April 2023	(45,000)	(45,000)
Utilised during the period	22,500	22,500
At 31 March 2024	(22,500)	(22,500)

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

During the year ended 31 March 2024 payment of £22,500 was made to Staffordshire County Council. There was no movement during the year ended 31 March 2023.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	31,419	-	-	31,419
Current assets	483,547	341,645	6	825,198
Current liabilities	(130,717)	(225,838)	-	(356,555)
Provisions	(22,500)	-	-	(22,500)
Total net assets	361,749	115,807	6	477,562

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	42,092	-	-	42,092
Current assets	591,112	174,418	6	765,536
Current liabilities	(294,250)	-	-	(294,250)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	293,954	174,418	6	468,378

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	172,837	583,577	(440,930)	(28,729)	286,755
Designated					
Dudson Centre	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Contingency	46,117	-	(40,036)	(6,081)	-
The Hub Contingency	50,000	-	(36,298)	36,298	50,000
Museum Contingency	121,117	-	(76,334)	30,217	75,000
Total unrestricted funds	293,954	583,577	(517,264)	1,488	361,755
Restricted funds					
Health	23,260	50,000	(49,873)	-	23,387
Support & Volunteering	36,372	177,715	(208,875)	(1,477)	3,735
SOT CC	18,123	193,023	(209,736)	-	1,410
Community Health Champions		102,500	(103,950)	-	55,694
Other	57,144	128,819	(130,078)	(11)	130
Capital funds	1,400 6	-	-	-	6
Heritage	38,119	53,454	(60,128)	-	31,445
Total restricted funds	174,424	705,511	(762,640)	(1,488)	115,807
Total funds	468,378	1,289,088	(1,279,904)	-	477,562

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	151,911	674,332	(650,406)	(3,000)	172,837
Designated					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	100,000	-	(53,883)	-	46,117
Museum Contingency	65,000	-	(18,000)	3,000	50,000
	190,000	-	(71,883)	3,000	121,117
Total unrestricted funds	341,911	674,332	(722,289)	-	293,954
Restricted					
Health	21,719	51,474	(49,933)	-	23,260
Support & Volunteering	22,685	152,000	(145,478)	-	29,207
SOT CC	30,834	204,341	(201,960)	-	33,215
Community Health Champions	92,487	100,000	(135,343)	-	57,144
Other	(2,907)	88,350	(91,970)	-	(6,527)
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
Heritage	-	104,142	(66,023)	-	38,119
Total restricted funds	164,824	700,307	(690,707)	-	174,424
Total funds	506,735	1,374,639	(1,412,996)	-	468,378

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at the Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of Restricted Funds:

The Health related projects are funds from the CCG's PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

The Support and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council relates to funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Heritage funds include funds received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other small grants and donations for the running of The Dudson Museum.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

Two small amounts were transferred from restricted to unrestricted funds during the year ended 31 March 2024. These relate to two projects which ended where there were no clawback provisions.

The opening balances on the restricted funds have been corrected. The restricted fund balance agreed in total at 31 March 2023 but there have been some historic mispostings between funds making up each heading in the statutory accounts.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments
There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2024 £	2023 £
Land and buildings		
Within one year	3,756	3,000
Between one and five years	12,000	12,000
After five years	39,000	42,000
	54,756	57,000
Other		
Within one year	7,892	8,061
Between one and five years	14,781	22,673
	22,673	30,734

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2024

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2024 £	2023 £
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	250,419	161,240
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(11,163)	(25,325)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £81,445 (2023 £54,197).
Receipts of £5,407,753 (2023 £3,446,912) were received during the year and payments of £5,396,741 (2023 £3,419,664) were made leaving a year end balance of £92,457 (2023 £81,445).

28 Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund £213,689 (2023 £151,830)

Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Community Health Champions £100,000 (2023 £100,000)

Heritage Lottery Fund £43,454 (2023 £56,216)

DCMA (via the Community Foundation for Staffordshire) £48,551

Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Strategic Development Officer £30,282

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £435,976 (2023 - £308,046).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.

VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales - Charity number 1049663

Accounts

vast

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2023

Registered as a Charity No: 1049663. Company Registration No: 2000818

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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers & Advisors

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2020.

Company No. 2000818 | Charity No. 1049663

Trustees

Neil Dawson *Chair*

Mark Barnish *Treasurer*

John Beech

Lesley Morrey

Victoria Hardie

Susan Meredith *(resigned 12 August 2023)*

Nick Maslen *(resigned 14 May 2023)*

Tim Edwards *(appointed 30 June 2022)*

Lee West *(appointed 14 December 2022)*

Pooja Batta *(appointed 13 September 2023)*

John Farrar *(appointed 13 September 2023)*

Joe Martin *(appointed 13 September 2023)*

Cliff Hathaway *(appointed 13 September 2023)*

Cathy Jones *(appointed 13 September 2023)*

Auditors

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd,
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Bankers

Unity Bank Plc, Nine Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HB

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings FCCA - Chief Executive & Finance Director

Charlotte Bennett - Strategic Projects Manager

Debra Hefferon - Finance Manager

Jackie Wheeler - Facilities Manager

Registered Office

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword

VAST continues to be a local infrastructure support organisation dedicated to the betterment of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. Its core objectives remain to support development of the local VCSE sector, utilising all available opportunities to best achieve this. When faced with challenges during the year, we have once again reacted swiftly to allow our organisation to meet the needs of our members. As a result, the year has seen the enthusiastic and imaginative VAST staff provide an amazing level of support for the many VCSE sector groups and individuals across our area. Alongside this, VAST, through Lisa Healings, and our small but very effective Senior Management Team, has once again increased engagement with local and national Statutory Bodies.

We have continued to focus on supporting our many members and the communities where they operate through providing the widely recognised pillars of infrastructure support of capacity building, volunteering, advocacy and voice, partnerships and collaboration, and have ourselves focused on our partnership working with other local organisations and continued our close working relationship with Support Staffordshire. Like other organisations in the sector, managing our finances continues to be difficult with the ever rising cost-of-living meaning an increased demand for our support at a time when our finances are already stretched.

The Trustees embarked on a new strategic plan to best position VAST for the future during this year as well as carrying out a review of Board Governance and a Board skills audit ready to embark on a recruitment process to further diversify the Board in the coming year.

It has been exciting, but challenging, to have overseen changes in the operation of the Dudson Museum and promote the heritage of the whole Dudson Centre to ensure that the legacy of the site, which is our home, is preserved for future generations.

We continue to be innovative and seek to develop solutions to emerging issues and I am confident that we can continue to deliver our passion for the VCSE sector and maintain and grow VAST's position as a key provider of advice, support and services to the sector.

I would like to thank VAST's members for their continued involvement, my fellow trustees and particularly all the staff at VAST for their commitment, hard work and dedication and look forward to VAST continuing its invaluable work into the future.

Neil Dawson
Chair
13th December 2023

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2023 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

Following the COVID pandemic VAST has found itself in a strong position in the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. During the pandemic we proved ourselves to be the reliable "go-to" organisation for both sector-based organisations and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, securing a position as strategic partner and enabling us to continue our role as The Local Infrastructure Organisation for the VCSE sector locally.

We have developed a strong projects team, delivering relevant support services, enhanced by the offer of our community accounts and creative services. We have grown and developed our volunteering offer, delivering a quality brokerage service, volunteer management training and growing our successful Volunteer Manager network alongside working to develop a Stoke based volunteering quality standard which will launch later in 2023.

We have also continued to work closely with Support Staffordshire to create a strong VCSE Alliance with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board including chairing the North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Healthy Communities Forum enabling VCSE organisations to have a voice into the Integrated Care System locally.

It has not all been plain sailing, however, the cost-of-living crisis continued to hit hard, with soaring energy costs alongside the rises in food and other essentials meaning demand on the VCSE sector was growing whilst the finances of individual organisations were stretched. During the pandemic, the Stoke-on-Trent Together website became the hub for all cost-of-living support information and the place to go to find local support. We were central to Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Stronger Together Through Winter work to ensure no individual was left without support and the team worked hard to ensure that the growing network of Welcoming Spaces in the City - places where residents could go to get keep warm, meet others, have a warm drink and get advice and support - which were all hosted by VCSE organisations, were well supported themselves and had the capacity and funding they needed to deliver their services safely and effectively.

We are still operating in an uncertain environment, ourselves affected by rising costs and short-term funding, however we have placed ourselves clearly back in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector and continued to be there to support our local VCSE sector to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering on their aims for their beneficiaries.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team, and the continuing support of funders we have been able to move forward and are well positioned to face the inevitable challenges of the future.

Achievements and Performance

How we performed against our plans:

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis following so closely behind the pandemic means that there is still less appetite for the purchase of non essential services and budgets are being tightly managed even for essential services.

What we said we would do	What we did	How successful we were
Chargeable Services Grow our payroll bureau provision. Advertise more widely outside membership base. Develop a provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations. Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision. Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs for example start up package etc. Explore additional geographical areas.	We have not advertised widely, however, word of mouth and the growing presence of our project staff has meant that clients of our chargeable services have continued to grow. Our accountancy and payroll services continue to attract clients from a wide geographical area and demand for meeting rooms is continuing to grow and is slowly reverting to pre pandemic levels. Our chargeable income covering our business support service, creative services, café and refreshment income and income from rentals was £597,821 in the year. The development of packaged support offer is on hold as we have not found there to be a demand for them, however we will revisit this if we find that demand increases in the future. We have continued virtual or hybrid delivery for most of our training packages and now have a comprehensive annual training offer as well as holding successful volunteering and funding fayres both virtually and in person. We have continued to focus our efforts on Stoke-on-Trent and have not attempted to enter our wider geographic market.	Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely. Pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our client and ourselves by the COVID pandemic and then the cost-of-living crisis has meant it is difficult to expand our services as rapidly as originally anticipated.

Grants and Contracts Explore funding opportunities to ensure we can continue to deliver in key areas such as volunteering and VCSE developmental support. Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority. Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.	We continued looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services. We secured additional funding in the year to expand our strategic liaison work and to continue the Community Health Champions project as well as our core support, volunteering and advocacy and voice roles. In addition, we were also able to secure specific funding for support of a Ukrainian refugee network in Staffordshire and the work of both ourselves and the local sector for the provision of Welcoming spaces in Stoke-on-Trent. We have started to develop projects in the areas of Inclusive Volunteering and successfully secured pilot funding for consultation work during this year.	We have funding in place until March 2024 for our core work and we continue to apply for appropriate funding to ensure our key service offer can continue into the future.

Advocacy & Voice Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector. Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need. Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.	Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and in establishing new Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together more closely and with statutory bodies and enabled VAST to be seen as the route to those bodies. Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area and to meet regularly with senior level employees of both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board.	We are better recognised by the VCSE sector as their representative than we have been in the recent past, however constant staff changes and interim posts across statutory bodies can make it difficult to retain relationships.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and supporting activities have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally. Sector funding is likely to reduce drastically as the country gets to grips with the aftermath of a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine and a cost-of-living crisis.

Both the Local Authority and Integrated Care System have budget constraints and will need to make large budget savings in future years, and this will inevitably flow through into funding for the VCSE sector, while organisations still have depleted reserves and are facing huge increases in their running costs. There is still however a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

There is still a desire from local statutory partners to engage with the sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from VSCOG. We are still having encouraging conversations, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long-term, benefits for the Sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, that they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE sector, and as such are re- evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset-Based Community Development and locality working as a key strategy to develop moving forward, to achieve which requires greater co- production with the VCSE sector and the communities we serve.

The Staffordshire Integrated Care Board has been in the process of developing its strategy and priorities as well as creating a series of portfolios through which they will be delivered. This process has meant that for much of the period it remained internally focused, however as a VCSE Alliance we are ready to engage when they are and a robust Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and adopted.

These positive discussions and relationships are yet to impact upon local commissioning and this year, once again, has seen very little contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods.

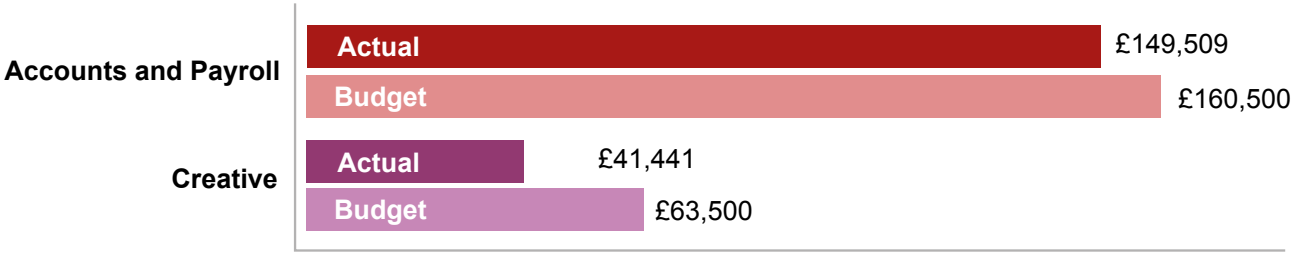
During the year we continued to struggle with occupancy at our premises at The Hub in Stafford. This was exacerbated when long-term work commenced on the Staffordshire Archives and William Salt Library next door, which restricted access to the premises and caused a lot of noise. We therefore have taken the difficult decision to close the premises in Stafford and to focus our efforts in Stoke-on-Trent.

Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

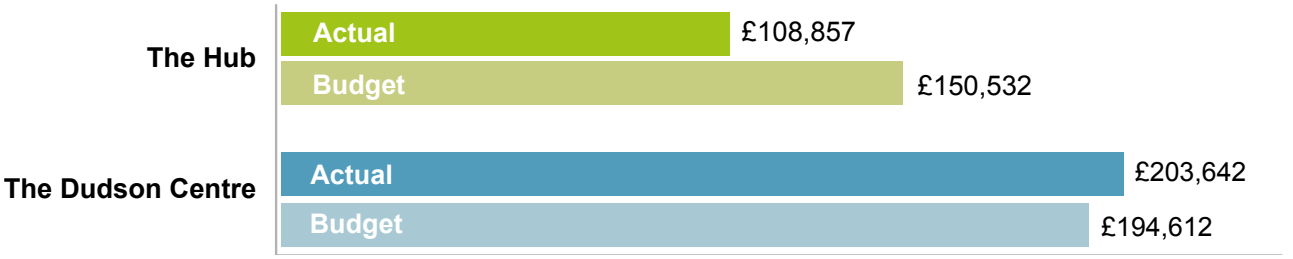
Income against budget for chargeable services:



The budgets set were challenging and we are still struggling to return to pre-pandemic levels of income. Internal work on our own website and CRM system also meant that there was less time available for client work.

Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre and The Hub:

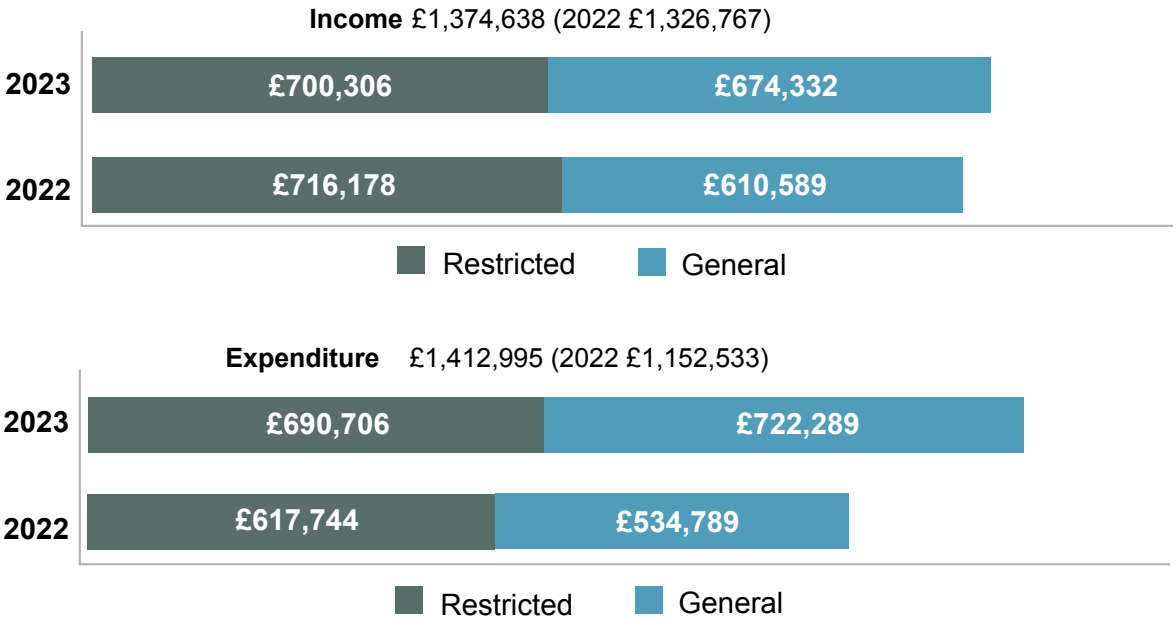


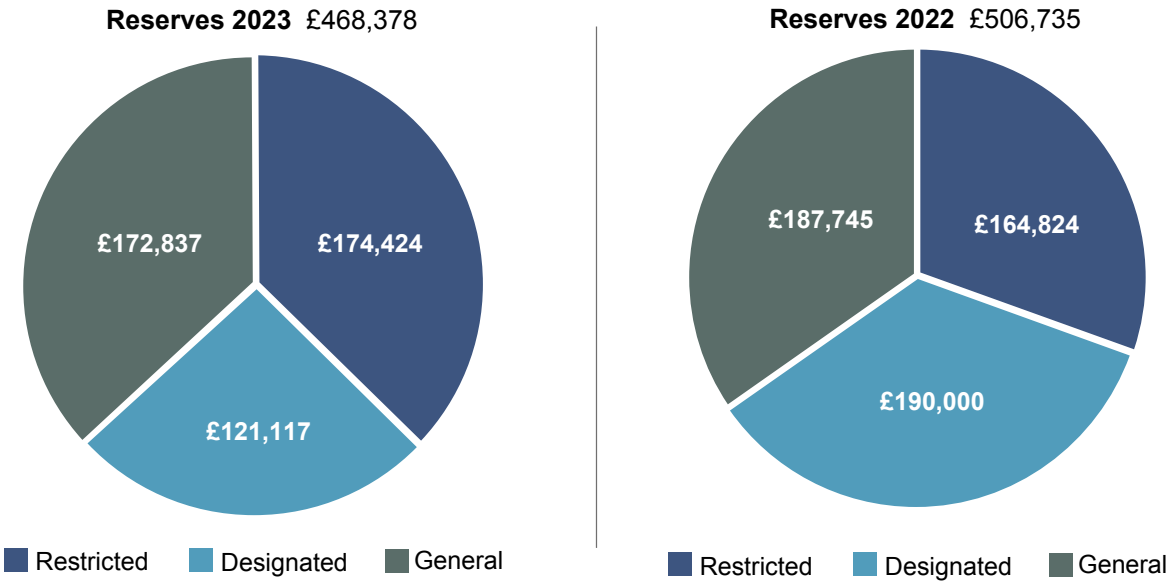
For the year to March 2023 based on income received against total possible income the Hub was 49% occupied and The Dudson Centre was 95% occupied.

Occupancy levels remained good throughout the year at The Dudson Centre, however we have been unable to increase occupancy levels at The Hub due to competition locally and the adjacent building work.

Financial Review

Overall our income has increased slightly from £1.3m to £1.4m.





Of the designated reserves £25,000 is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre, £46,117 is set aside for final expenditure in the lead up to the closure of The Hub and £50,000 is set aside for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

Financial Review

VAST's principal funding sources for 2022/23 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who fund our work with the local VCSE sector and the Community Health Champions project, Staffordshire integrated Care Board who fund our work with the Staffordshire NHSE VCSE Alliance and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2022/23 accounted for 43% of income (89% of unrestricted income).

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not for profit organisations:

- RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) North Staffs Branch
- Trentham Pre School
- Stoke on Trent Foodbank
- Haregate Community Centre
- ASHA
- RubyGirl UK
- NSAAA
- Disability Solutions West Midlands
- Blurton Community Hub
- St Johns Community Church
- Uttoxeter Gateway
- Packmoor Community Association
- Expert Citizens UK CIC
- Staffordshire Parish Council Association
- North Staffordshire Carers Association
- Willoughbridge Garden Trust
- Biddulph Methodist Church
- Abbey Hulton Sports and Social Club
- Green Door Hub
- Multiple Abilities Club
- Headway North Staffs
- Smallthorne Social Society
- Silvertree Cleaning
- Rachel Wilson (DP)
- Breakthru' Support Services
- Voice of Hope
- St Andrews with St Peters Pre School
- Sunflower Families Support Group
- North Staffordshire Medical Institute
- Staffordshire Sight Loss Association
- Number 11 CIC
- Sage (Staffs)
- Age UK South Staffordshire
- Newcastle Community Transport
- Affordable Food Stoke
- Werrington Young Persons Support Group
- Whitmore Parish Council
- Deaflinks Staffordshire
- Kidsgrove Sports Centre
- Madeley Community Association
- Stoke Creates CIC
- Tri Services
- Uttoxeter Heritage Trust
- Silverdale Parish Council
- Keele Parish Council
- Open Door Stoke-on-Trent
- Lea Road Community Church
- Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
- Stone Community Hub
- TWOCO

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year-end financial statements.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed-term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.

The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £138,000 to £383,000.

Currently, we hold £130,745 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £468,378 of which £293,954 is unrestricted, and of this £121,117 is designated.

The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future Periods

VAST's strategy and business plan were fully reviewed in 2022.

Aims and Key objectives

To support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Key objectives

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.
- To be a first-choice provider of services and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

Activities Planned to Achieve Aims

We will achieve the above by implementing the following activities:

Chargeable Services

- Growing payroll bureau provision and actively seeking new tenants for The Dudson Centre.
- Advertising more widely outside membership base.
- Developing provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.
- Exploring the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.
- Developing a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

Grants and Contracts

- Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.
- Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.
- Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

Advocacy & Voice

- Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.
- Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.
- Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, meaning that VAST cannot continue to exist as an infrastructure organisation, however, sources of income have been diversified over recent years and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable services to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Monthly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

Other risks considered to be high are damage to reputation, loss of influence and loss of key staff. The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standard awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 13th December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:

Neil Dawson
Chair

Trustees' Report

(incorporating the Directors' Report)

Our Purpose

The Objects for which the Charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent, and in particular, the advancement of education, the advancement of heritage, the advancement of health, the advancement of citizenship or community development and the prevention or relief of poverty.

In furtherance of the above purposes, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

i. promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above;

ii. assist any body or bodies financially or otherwise;

iii. obtain, collect and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful methods, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not);

iv. procure and provide information;

v. procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents;

vi. arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes;

vii. promote, encourage or undertake experimental work;

viii. operate a museum and heritage centre.

Role

VAST is a social enterprise that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities and civil society. VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

[1] Voluntary and Community & Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) - charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises, faith organisations, community interest companies, housing associations and mutuals and co-operatives.

[2] The Geographical entity of Staffordshire which includes Stoke-on-Trent

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE sector to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

- Support
- Inform
- Connect
- Advocate

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following behaviours;

- Authentic
- Pro-active
- Innovative
- Responsive

All delivered with integrity and underpinned by these values…

"As the Member of Parliament representing Stoke-on-Trent Central, I consistently find it immensely rewarding to engage with the dedicated team at VAST and delve into their remarkable work. Their pivotal role in facilitating access to crucial grant funding for local charities and social enterprises is truly commendable. The active involvement of the VAST team in my bi-monthly charity roundtable sessions, where their insightful advice and unwavering support benefit organisations across the city, is both noteworthy and deeply appreciated. I take genuine pride in having such a valuable service operating within our great city, making a positive and lasting impact."

Jo Gideon MP

Support

Enhancing and improving the sustainability of VAST through selling of back office services to Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Registered Charities in Staffordshire (VCSE) has a twofold advantage. Firstly, it generates income for VAST, thus reducing our grant dependency, secondly, and more importantly, it provides high quality services which are delivered by qualified professionals. Our services are extremely competitive compared to private sector organisations providing a similar service, with the added advantage of our staff being experts in the requirements of the sector.

In addition, through funded contracts we support and develop the local VCSE sector through advice and guidance as well as with practical support.

Accounts and Payroll

Service Summary

Our fully qualified accountancy team are experts in the charity and not-for-profit sector and offer a range of affordable services in a friendly and professional manner. During the year we have worked with 225 community groups, charities and social enterprises and we are always keen to talk to new organisations about how we can help them.

Our Services

Future aims

Increase the number of organisations we support with year-end accounts and independent examinations to ensure as many local small charities and social enterprises as possible have access to quality, accurate information to provide to beneficiaries, regulators and to support funding applications.

To work with an increased number of local not-for-profit organisations to give them access to quality training (classroom-based or virtually) and provide bespoke support.

Accounts and Payroll feedback

"We find Deb and the rest of the team always work in a very professional manner, answering any questions quickly and efficiently. Nothing is ever too much trouble, we would highly recommend them to anyone."

"Very happy with service provided. We know monthly salaries are dealt with on time and in a professional manner."

"We are more than satisfied with the service we receive. Most professional. Queries dealt with quickly."

Digital Services

Service Summary

VAST's Digital and Creative department offers a full range of services for charities and the voluntary sector. We work with many types of organisations, but our main aim is to provide high-quality creative and digital services for the voluntary sector at a price they can afford. We have worked with many third sector organisations on a variety of projects providing support from full re-brands and websites, to simple print management.

Our Services

Future aims

We will focus on expanding our client base through marketing our services to improve income generation.

Continued development of the VAST CRM.

We aim to continue to develop skills and processes to grow income generation.

We will continue to focus on new technology and digital developments.

Digital Services feedback

"GOING THE EXTRA MILE

For well over ten years, we have taken advantage of the creative service provided by VAST which has included the production of an acclaimed community magazine, special signage for those with learning difficulties, visual designs for our Garden Therapy Lodges, monthly schedule layouts and posters to name but a few. The service has always been efficient and professional and has greatly helps us to develop and in so doing win a "Health and Wellbeing National Award" 2023 on top of the Queens Golden Jubilee Award in 2018. We would be lost without them."

Facilities

The Dudson Centre & The Hub

During the year our managed centres have continued to return to more usual levels of activity with meeting rooms occupied and The Dudson Café playing host to coffee mornings and drop-in sessions for service users of our tenants. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that The Hub is not financially sustainable long term, and the decision has been made to close the site in September 2023.

Our services

- Serviced Office space for VCSE organisations at The Dudson Centre, Stoke-on-Trent and The Hub, Stafford.
- Meeting room hire.
- Zoom Rooms functionality for hybrid meetings.
- The Dudson Café .

Future Aims

- To continue to promote office space at the Dudson Centre and maintain high occupancy levels.
- To promote the availability of meeting room hire.
- To encourage more tenants and users of the centre to hold social events and informal meetings in The Dudson Café.
- To promote external buffets in the local area.

Feedback

"Having an office in the Dudson Centre, has for us as a charity, been the best place. Not only do we have very pleasant working conditions in our first floor office supported by VAST, we also have easy access to a number of other charities in neighbouring offices, with whom we can collaborate and share information and support for our client groups. This creates for us, an ideal environment of like minded organisations working together for the good of the individual who needs support. We hope that getting together and networking regularly will become a part of the Dudson Centre culture going forward.

In addition, the all round support of having our internet service provided and supported, a reception desk staffed by Jannette and Claire, to vet visitors and provide a waiting area for them plus that sense that we are all working together to provide the best environment for our client groups is something that I value immensely.

We have been very appreciative, during the latter stages of opening up from lockdown, of the very accommodating response that we have received from VAST to getting back to work, and in particular, the opening of the café for our participants to run our Café Social Hub on site. That has transformed our service very quickly, and we, and our clients have appreciated the way that a new safe "normal" has been established for them to meet in a covid safe way on the site every week. Thank you to Jackie, Jo and of course Jon our caretaker who has gone above and beyond to help us open up safely. The provision of the Zoom Rooms facility has been a boon to us as we have clients meeting in groups but some join us virtually through Zoom and others meet face to face in the room. Thank you VAST for applying the latest technology using Zoom Rooms client software and recognising that we need to be flexible in this new world and use that technology to meet the varying needs of our clients."

Development and Governance Support

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Supporting the VCSE Sector is central to everything we do at VAST. We want to empower local organisations to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them. It is our mission to develop and promote a thriving local voluntary sector and, by linking closely with other VAST services such as volunteering, accountancy, and our digital team as well as our serviced resource centres at The Dudson Centre and The Hub, we can provide a holistic package to make this a reality.

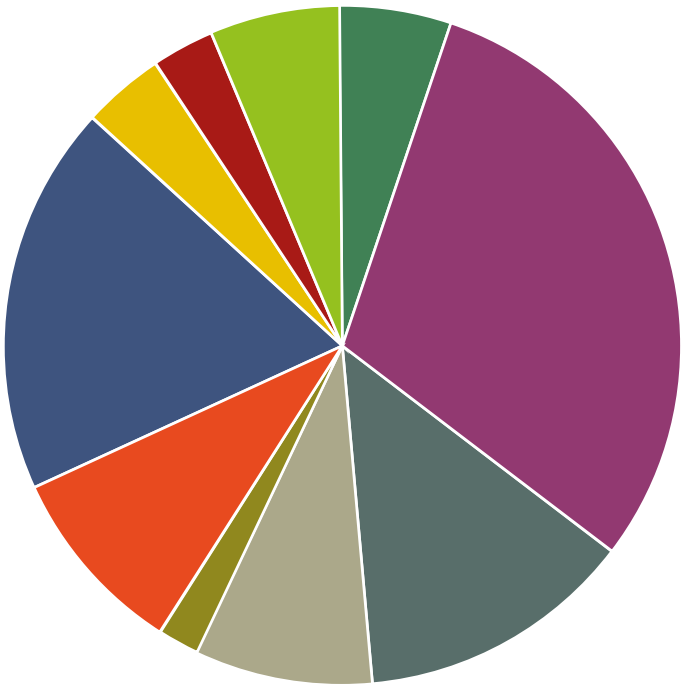
Our support is often free of charge, thanks to funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and The National Lottery Community Fund, and, where we do need to charge, we keep this as affordable as possible to ensure it is fully accessible to those who need it.

During the year we have reviewed and relaunched a comprehensive training offer and also focused on developing our range of networks and forums to ensure we provide holistic support across our membership.

During 2022/23 we have supported:

1122 Sessions

256 Organisations



- 5% Fairer access to assets and community spaces
- 30% Improved access to information and learning
- 13% Increased confidence
- 9% Increased skills and expertise
- 2% Increased sustainability
- 9% Enabling VCSE to support health and wellbeing
- 19% Increased local connections
- 5% Other
- 2% An effective VCSE voice
- 6% People and communities empowered to take control of their lives

Case Study

VAST has the privilege of working alongside local organisations supporting them as they grow and develop. One example of this was some recent work supporting an organisation with business planning and funding.

Their Awards for All grant was due to end shortly and they approached us looking for support around the management of the organisation including securing funding to pay for dedicated management staff.

VAST's teams were able to support them to develop a strong and well thought out funding application having explored the activities and services they would like to accomplish in the short, medium and long term, the more strategic role they now need to have capacity to undertake, and their organisational structure and the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the team to deliver these.

Our role is to support organisations in their thinking. In this instance we enabled them to think differently about their organisational needs and secure the right funding to take their organisation to the next level and better support their community.

The development of an organisation and the outcomes of business planning can take many months to prove fruitful, but the advice and support provided along the way, alongside the availability of VAST's support staff at the end of an email or phone line, is very much appreciated.

The VAST Bursary Fund

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Since its inception in 2015, the VAST Bursary Fund has awarded more than £75,000 to more than 160 voluntary sector organisations throughout Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, an average of almost £10,000 per year. The fund awards grants of up to £500 towards eligible VAST business services.

During the period from April 2022 and March 2023 a total of 28 applications were received and subsequently awarded by the panel. The total awarded for this period was £14,000. Ten applications were for accountancy services and the remaining for website design.

The VAST Vault

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The VAST Vault is an online resource for Staffordshire's VCSE sector. The Vault is a source of information and advice on all aspects of running a VCSE organisation and working with local communities. Containing links to trusted, reliable sources of information and advice, it is a one-stop-shop to get accurate advice.

Future Developments

The Vault continues to be updated to add new links as they become available to make sure VCSE organisations can always have the most current information and guidance at their fingertips.

Door2Door Transport

Summary, Achievements & Impact

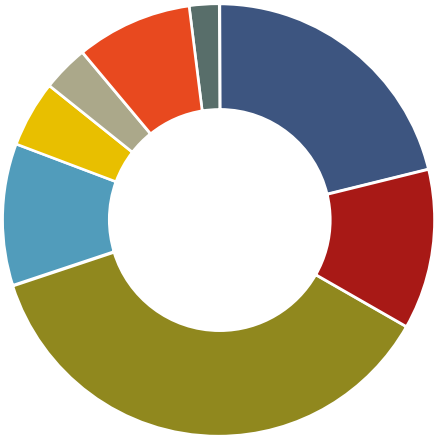
From being an essential service for many as we emerged from the coronavirus pandemic, Door2Door transport has continued to rebuild itself to once again be a fully encompassing service.

Many of the service users would not be able to leave the house without the support of the service and it is crucial to reducing loneliness and isolation for service users and volunteer drivers alike, with real bonds and friendships formed. The main challenge during the year was to recruit enough drivers to fulfil the demand for journeys as a number of our drivers had retired from volunteer driving.

The Community Foundation for Staffordshire provided funding for 12 months to ensure the service could continue to provide it's essential support throughout this period, and we carried out a stakeholder survey with both users of the service and those who referred people to it to help us shape a partnership bid, alongside Newcastle Community Transport, to The National Lottery Community Fund for longer term funding.

Future Developments

Our Lottery Funded partnership with Newcastle Community Transport commences in April 2023 and we will be working closely with them to develop and align the two services to ensure the best possible transport solution for vulnerable residents in Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-Under-Lyme.



Door2Door Feedback

I had a traumatic time at the hospital and had to deal with it alone as I have no family. I struggled to attend the first hospital appointment via taxi and was rushed and not helped at all and likewise on the return journey. I have always been a confident person but this made me feel vulnerable. When I was referred to Door2Door that changed, I felt someone cared and was there to support me. All the drivers and office staff I have had contact with have been friendly and helpful. I feel Door2Door fills an essential gap for people who don't have family or friends to step in and help.

Door2Door client

Donate IT

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Life is becoming increasingly digital and many services need to be accessed online. Whether it's for home learning, banking, shopping, applying for jobs or looking after your health, most of us need to own a digital device. The digital world has also become increasingly important in the fight against loneliness and isolation, but there are still many people in our community that do not have digital access.

To combat this VAST teamed up with The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local IT partners, to set up a digital equipment recycling scheme so we can ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community in Stoke-on-Trent can get connected.

During the year we have received 123 donated pieces of equipment including laptops, desktop computers, keyboards, mice and monitors. We have allocated 16 sets of equipment to local community groups and a further 13 sets to individuals in need in our communities.

Future Developments

In a world which is becoming ever more digital we will continue to source unwanted digital equipment to recondition and pass on to those most at risk from becoming disadvantaged due to digital exclusion.

Case Study

Birches Head Get Growing received a donation of IT equipment that enabled the group to help individuals in their local community access the internet, apply for jobs, help write C.Vs and support with form-filling and accessing information.

Based at the Bridge Centre in Birches Head, the group was originally created to provide food for the local community. As it has grown, they have become heavily reliant on volunteers and donations to run their Potter and Natter, and Swap Shop sessions. All the activities and sessions they run are free of charge at the point of use for local people, with their "kindness is our currency" motto at the heart of everything they do. In a bid to improve the sessions, Get Growing hope to support more people by creating a reading corner and a learning zone, complete with the right equipment for getting connected and accessing online services.

The donated laptops enabled the group to make some important connections with Stoke Reads and Read Easy to help support residents with developing and improving literacy skills. Another enormous benefit to receiving these computers is that Get Growing can improve their administration processes and now they can share and promote their services too by managing marketing platforms, creating their logo, and designing leaflets to distribute within the local community. All their activities are free and as accessible as possible, so they hope to extend their support to the wider community through this advertising avenue.

Feedback from Birches Head Get Growing: *"The laptops have enabled us to design our logo for our community group and to publicise events for the benefit of the whole community," said Paula Rowcliffe from Birches Head Get Growing.*

"We also use the laptops to search for online courses and information for individuals as well as ourselves. It's so much easier to view on a larger screen as I only had a mobile phone."

Discover Digital

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Discover Digital was a partnership of organisations funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund. The project was set up to help people in Stoke-on-Trent to discover the things they need if they want to use digital and online services and to combat digital exclusion. We want to make sure that everyone can find and use the digital services they need so the project offered grant funding both to community-based organisations who had a great idea to combat digital exclusion, and also to individuals who needed digital equipment. This was complemented by bespoke community-based training and underpinned by community consultation and enquiry to ensure we captured the relevant evidence to develop future projects and to lobby for real change. The project even opened a pop-up shop in the heart of The Potteries Shopping Centre to deliver support to residents where they were and where they felt comfortable.

Resources developed during the project, findings of community consultation and enquiry work and the formal evaluation report on the project are all available on the Discover Digital website discover-digital.org.uk

Future Developments

The Discover Digital project ended in December 2022, when Community Renewal Funding ceased. The partnership has since developed a continuation proposal which has been submitted to Stoke-on-Trent City Council as part of their call for projects for The UK Shared Prosperity Fund.

A COLLABORATION OF **25** VCSE ORGANISATIONS
WORKING WITH **1218** INDIVIDUALS

Inform

To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

Marketing and Communication

Service Summary

Under the Creative Services banner, the main marketing objective is to promote the services we offer, increase our customer base and generate income. To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

VAST use multiple social media, email and website communication channels for the different projects.

Social media followers based on averages during the period April 1st 2022 and March 31st 2023

Community Health Champions

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Community Health Champions are local volunteers who help improve the health and wellbeing of people in Stoke-on-Trent. They are people central to, and embedded in, their communities. People who are trusted and listened to by their peers.

The project, funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, aims to help people better understand health issues and to share clear and accurate health information in their communities in a way that resonates with local people.

We take important health and wellbeing information from national and local sources and develop resources to ensure our network of Community Health Champions are kept well informed. Through regular newsletters, training opportunities, one-to-one support and networking opportunities, Champions are able to get the information they need and importantly, they also provide feedback about what the health and wellbeing issues are in their community.

In addition, the project has provided grant funding to grassroots organisations who are embedded in local communities to enable them to engage in the project and support messaging in their communities.

199 Community Health Champions and
75 Organisations involved in the network

The project supports health practitioners across the local system to engage local communities that they otherwise find hard to reach. For example in February we supported women from the Sudanese Community to meet with health colleagues, with the support of an interpreter, to discuss the importance of breast care.

We facilitated the session in a community setting where they felt comfortable and familiar and provided practical resources including a projector and translated materials to enable the best engagement possible in the session.

We had the opportunity to present the Stoke-on-Trent Community Health Champions model at the Health Education England event, 'How can we bring health services closer to underserved communities?' Examples of different approaches across the region were presented enabling us to share the Community Health Champions project as an example of best practice developed in Stoke-on-Trent.

Future Developments

We are currently exploring alternative funding sources to secure the future of the work beyond March 2024.

Community Health Champions in Action

This year we have been thrilled to work with local creative companies to develop some bespoke resources for the project. TPD Digital produced film content talking with some of our Champions as well as local stakeholders about their role in the project. Carse & Waterman Productions supported us to develop a series of animations which include a range of characters living on the affectionately named Stokie Street. These characters chat about various health and wellbeing topics such a vaccines and boosters, accessing healthcare, mental health and keeping active & enjoying local green spaces. The animations have a very different feel to NHS campaigns on these topics as they are voiced by our champions but they link to important local and national information and resources to support people to manage their health and wellbeing.

Stokie Street

In partnership with Carse & Waterman Productions, Community Health Champions created a series of Stoke-on-Trent based health and wellbeing animations. These were centred around a number of themes including immunisations, accessing healthcare and the benefits of fresh air and exercise.

The Dudson Museum

Summary, Achievements & Impact

We have continued to develop the Museum's offer throughout the year. We secured funding from The Heritage Lottery to deliver activities with local schools. Commencing in September 2022, this work attracted many schools who had not visited before.

We were delighted to achieve eligibility to work towards becoming an accredited museum during this year and continue to attract a diverse range of visitors with our holiday activities for children frequently sold out.

We were grateful to receive funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Community Investment Fund for new cabinets. The Museum was closed in December and January 2022 while these were fitted and the museum displays were updated.

TOTAL NUMBER OF VISITORS

APRIL	MAY	JUNE	JULY
145	139	98	125
AUGUST	**SEPTEMBER**	**OCTOBER**	**NOVEMBER**
225	51	218	583
DECEMBER	**JANUARY**	**FEBRUARY**	**MARCH**
2	0	256	277

TOTAL 2,119

10 Primary schools and 1 college visited The Museum

6 Brilliant volunteers supported the project

A total of 521 pupils and students visited The Museum

Future Aims

- Continue to promote and grow the number of school visits.
- Develop activities and events for wider age groups.
- Expand displays into the wider Dudson Centre to create a heritage centre experience.

Connect

Our meeting spaces, events and networks enable VCSE organisations to work together and collaborate amongst themselves and with the wider local community.

VAST Volunteering

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST is passionate about volunteering and strongly believe that it can improve health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference to local communities. Through our volunteer bureau we help people find volunteering roles local to them that ideally match their skills and interests. Our popular online volunteer noticeboard advertises opportunities in the local VCSE sector for those who just want to browse for themselves and we produce a regular newsletter showcasing the opportunities available or our knowledgeable and supportive staff will work with people to ensure they find the right opportunity and will even attend with them to give them the confidence to give it a go.

We also support VCSE organisations who want to recruit volunteers to ensure they have the right policies and procedures in place and can provide a safe and supportive environment for their volunteers.

Our volunteer management training remains popular and we are continuing to grow our volunteer managers network which meets regularly and gives people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support. We have also run volunteer fayres, both virtually and online, to help local organisations recruit the volunteers they need to deliver their services.

At the end of the year we were lucky enough to secure funding through the department for Culture, Media and Sport's Know Your Neighbourhood funding to carry out consultation work around barriers to volunteering and we will be using the evidence of this to develop future inclusive volunteering projects.

Future Developments

Going forward we are looking to grow the reach of our volunteering opportunities and are making links with local schools to ensure that volunteering opportunities are available to young people. We will also be developing inclusive volunteering projects to ensure that barriers to volunteering are broken down both for organisations utilising volunteers and individuals who could benefit from volunteering opportunities.

VAST Volunteering Case Study

Jodie knew she wanted to volunteer as she had just moved into the area and wasn't working. She had tried to volunteer elsewhere but was struggling to get through the application process.

Jodie was told about VAST from Stoke Recovery Service, and she popped in to visit Sian at The Dudson Centre.

Jodie and Sian discussed her background, previous experience and, most importantly – what she would like to do. Various options were discussed, and Jodie knew she wanted to do something either outdoors or with older people. She definitely did not want to be stuck behind a desk, which was her worst nightmare! Father Hudson's Allotment Project seemed like a perfect fit, so Jodie applied there. Jodie says the whole process was simple to sign up for, and Sian was able to help her complete the application form.

Within two weeks, Jodie started at the allotment and got stuck straight in, getting her hands dirty! Sian visited Jodie early on at the allotment, and recently visited again and the difference is just incredible. Jodie says she has learnt so many skills and met a lot of different people. Her favourite part of being at the allotment has been seeing the difference each day. Jodie's volunteering at the allotment is fully flexible, allowing her the freedom to pick exactly when she volunteers.

As Jodie settled into the allotment and learnt more about what happens with the produce grown in the allotment, she found out about the Luncheon Club. Jodie was encouraged to visit the Luncheon Club, and the rest is history! Jodie now helps out every Monday, and really enjoys the social, yet relaxed, atmosphere and feels part of the team there.

Jodie loves being able to give back to her community in two different ways and says "it doesn't matter what mood you're in, you can't help but smile when you're there. My anxiety disappears when I walk through the door."

Jodie has advice for anyone considering volunteering; "People should volunteer because even if you can only spare 1-2 hours a week, why not spend them helping others? When you volunteer, you can literally do anything."

Totally Stoked

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Totally Stoked is Stoke-on-Trent's answer to developing the VCSE sector in the most sustainable way. We believe everyone has something to give, and by sharing our resources we can add value to the wealth of activity already under way in our local communities, strengthening and enabling local organisations and community groups.

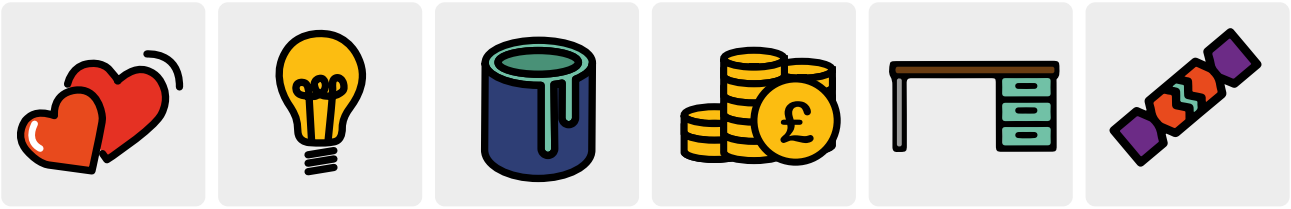
Totally Stoked encourages people and organisations to share their time, skills and know-how as well as equipment and resources to support VCSE organisations in the city and its surrounding areas.

Totally Stoked also provides a link to support for our extensive VCSE sector, to empower them to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them.

Thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund we are able to work with local communities in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands, both geographical and communities of interest, to identify gaps in VCSE provision and to help them fill those gaps. Through community reference panels we work intensively to understand what is most important to them and what they would like to see develop, and our project officers can then support them to form the community groups and organisations that will help deliver what they need. Our share networks are the ideal space for people to come together and share both practical resources and know-how and information, as well as to build networks and friendships.

Totally Stoked also helps local businesses to give something back to their communities through brokering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) opportunities. It doesn't matter who makes the approach, it could be a VCSE organisation with a need to get something done or a local company that wants a volunteering project for their staff, we are well placed to find the answer and create the links to get the job done.

If people prefer to donate money, we have linked with the Community Foundation for Staffordshire to promote their We Love Stoke Fund to make sure donations can remain local.



Facilitated the exchange of over £66,000 in resources, from office furniture to Christmas crackers

Feedback

"On behalf of Voice of Hope, we want to say thank you for your support this year, when we have queries with regards the day to day running of the charity, as this helps us to achieve as much as we can together in combatting and raising awareness for Modern Slavery and County Lines"

Mel & Ann.

Case Study

Some cracking news! Totally Stoked were able to donate an incredible 825 crackers thanks to a kind donation from The Three Crowns Pub in Stone.

The 825 crackers were split between 13 different community organisations across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, ranging from disability support groups, hospices, supported accommodation schemes, children's and maternal mental health support and many others.

The Christmas crackers were used in a variety of different ways including to compliment free Christmas meals provided in local communities, at Christmas parties to celebrate volunteers or clients and also within care packages to add a smile to people's face during winter.

Concrete used their 150 crackers when providing a warm Christmas meal to their tenants over the festive period. The festive period can be a traumatic and triggering time for many of their customers, most of whom would not have had access to a warm Christmas meal. They also provided their customers with a winter warm essentials pack, along with additional support over the festive period.

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice used their 50 crackers within their children's ward for any families visiting over the festive period, and the Stoke-on-Trent Helping Ukrainians Group used them when provided a free Christmas meal for their clients and children.

Stoke-on-Trent Together

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Stoke-on-Trent Together has come a long way since it was established at the start of the COVID pandemic. It has developed into a strategic partnership between VAST and Stoke-on-Trent City Council that will ensure that the statutory and VCSE sectors work together for the best outcomes for our communities. Together we have responded to critical incidents being declared across health and social care settings and in our hospital, as well as providing support and co-ordination for the VCSE organisations supporting, first Afghan and then Ukrainian, refugees arriving in the city, as well as supporting VCSE organisations as they responded to the cost-of-living crisis. From providing grants and guides to Welcoming Spaces for attending strategic response meetings with the City Council, we were there to ensure the best outcomes for communities in our city.

Future Developments

Whatever the emergency or crisis faced, Stoke-on-Trent Together will ensure that we pull together to ensure that the VCSE sector can support the solution.

Stoke-on-Trent Together Case Study

VAST Project Officer Kez met with The Hub Fenton in December, to discuss the possibility of the Hub opening as a Welcoming Space.

To help them get set up, Kez provided a list of potential funding opportunities, and visited the Hub to provide some training to their volunteers on using VAST's Community Directory and the Stoke-on-Trent Together site to signpost, to make sure the team were prepared for any energy or finance based questions. Kez also sent some capital funding options, as the Hub were looking to install some energy-saving measures in their building.

Carole expressed that she wanted to have visitors from other organisations at the Welcoming Space to provide additional services, so VAST were able to use connections with the "Mo the Bus" vaccination team to arrange a vaccine clinic at the Hub on 1st March 2023.

Since signing up as a Welcoming Space, the Hub have also been given access to additional activities and resources - they will be used as a centre for Together Active/Nuffield Health to complete some gentle activity sessions and distribute resistance band activity packs.

The Hub Fenton's welcoming space is a warm, friendly, and welcoming environment, with activities from arts and crafts through to digital skills support from volunteers, and has been hugely beneficial to attendees - supporting people with their finances, reducing isolation, and providing a safe space to Fenton residents.

Carole said:

"The attendance at our Welcome Place increased by 50% in one week. We are delighted that people are coming along and enjoying a range of activities. Our first week had a focus on flower making using china clay. The second week saw some people choosing to develop their IT skills. For those who prefer to people watch, it's a warm, no pressure space with tea and coffee for everyone The support from VAST staff is invaluable for sharing ideas and information... When Kez say she'll do something, she does it"

Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory

STOKE-ON-TRENT COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory is an online platform which offers easy access to information about VCSE sector services available to people in the city. The Directory was originally built by VAST Services (1920) in 2019 and has been managed by VAST since its launch. This year it was redeveloped and redesigned to truly be a whole age directory of the VCSE services available to local communities with more streamlined search and navigation functions.

It currently has almost 500 listings, for services from counselling and training services to sporting activities and social groups, and helps people find the services they need to improve their health and wellbeing and avoid social isolation. Funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council we want to continue to grow this valuable resource so that everyone can easily access VCSE services.

Future Developments

To date the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory has been promoted through VAST channels and networks to build up the content. We will be working with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and partners to arrange a public launch to raise the profile of this valuable resource for people across the city.

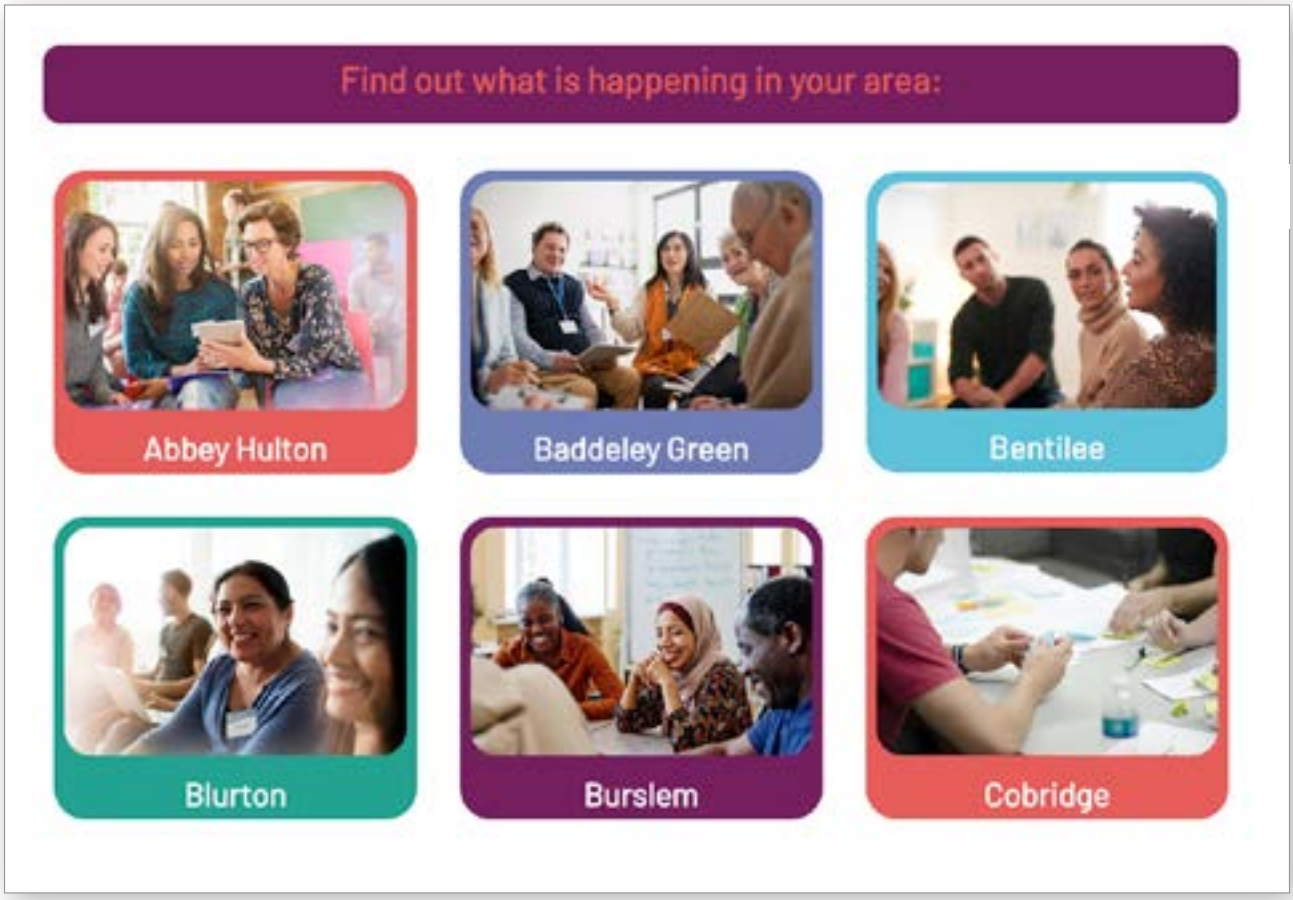
Communities Together

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST are proud to support the Communities Together programme in Stoke-on-Trent. Communities Together is a programme being delivered in Stoke-on-Trent as part of the National Community Led Support programme. In the city this is led by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is focussed on delivering social care services that people need in their local community. Utilising cross-sector innovation teams to identify local need and the best locations for provision, the programme has so far developed community lounges in Burslem ,Blurton and Bentilee, Baddeley Green, Meir, Fegg Hayes, Abbey Hulton and Hanley where local residents can access the support and advice they need at the same time as taking part in community activities to combat loneliness and isolation. Services available include mental health support, debt and benefit advice, and support with housing related issues and are tailored to the needs of the specific community, allowing professionals to work together to provide a one-stop solution for individuals.

Future Developments

The programme has already identified many other areas of the city where community lounges can be rolled out to ensure that relevant services can be delivered in the best way for residents in their communities.



Advocate

Our strategic presence and national connections allow us to be a voice for the grassroots VCSE community who could otherwise go unheard.

VAST Strategic Representation and Liaison

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST is an advocate for the VCSE sector and facilitates the strategic engagement of the sector with a range of statutory partners. The aim of this engagement between the VCSE sector and statutory bodies is to promote mutual understanding between the two sectors and enable them to work better together in partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population. VAST's strategic liaison role, funded by Staffordshire Integrated Care system (formerly Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups) and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, acts as a channel to achieve this.

We know that the VCSE sector is well placed to play an active role in improving health and wellbeing for our local population, so we amplify the voice of the sector and people with lived experience giving a stronger voice at a timely point to ensure that local VCSE organisations can contribute to discussion and influence decisions.

We know that the VCSE sector is best placed to understand it's local community and so can help deliver the best quality services for local people. We support a two-way flow of information between VCSE sector organisations and strategic partners and establish positive working relationships with stakeholders. Cross sector working has never been more needed to support our communities. We act at this strategic interface, establishing the links between workstreams and representing the VCSE sector at strategic meetings. We support the VCSE sector to understand and respond to the challenges and strategic priorities of our statutory partners. By working together we achieve more than we can individually. These links enable better partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population and coproduce solutions to improve health and wellbeing in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

As the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System has emerged and developed VAST has been instrumental, alongside Support Staffordshire, in developing the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance. This provides a vital engagement mechanism to enable cross-sector working which has been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding between the VCSE sector alliance and the Integrated Care System.

Through our strategic liaison function we share information and act as a communication link. We keep the local VCSE sector informed on the local landscape and national policy developments that may impact on commissioning, tendering and contracts, or otherwise have a relevance to their organisation.

We remain active members of the Voluntary Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) allowing us to feed in issues, concerns and intelligence as well as sharing best practice and expertise at both a local and a national level. We have also continued our links with NAVCA to ensure we are linked in on national issues that matter to the sector.

Future Developments

We will continue to ensure that we can provide advocacy and voice for the VCSE sector with statutory bodies and provide structures through which partnership and collaborative working can be facilitated.

Networks and Forums

Summary, Achievements & Impact

We know that creating opportunities for our members to come together around common issues or themes is a crucial part of our role. We continue to build on the success of established forums whilst developing new networks based on the needs identified by our members.

VSCOG

Recognising that it can be lonely at the top the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) provides a network for VCSE sector leaders in Stoke-on-Trent. Meetings unapologetically have no formal agenda instead providing a relaxed atmosphere, a fantastic opportunity to network, build relationships, and share challenges and successes with peers.

VSCOG members have common aims, which encompass:

- Promoting the role and value of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector;
- Securing the local VCSE sector's sustainability and prosperity;
- Improving the quality of life for all through the VCSE sector;
- Maximising the potential of the VCSE sector;
- Helping the local public sector to maximise efficiency.

VAST facilitates the VSCOG network and has continued to shape the quarterly meetings to provide a relevant and supportive space for its members.

Finance Forum

Based on the feedback from VSCOG members who valued the opportunity to meet with peers and wanted a similar opportunity for their finance leads, and modelled on our successful Volunteer Managers Network, VAST launched a Finance Forum in November 2022.

The Finance Forum provides an opportunity for those in a finance role within the voluntary sector in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to share ideas and best practice, network, and provide mutual support. We have created a friendly and informal peer network for anyone whose role includes responsibility for any finance functions within their organisation.

The Finance Forum aims to:

- Explore new or challenging charity finance issues,
- Share tips, resources, and best practice, and
- Provide an effective peer support network for those in a finance role.

The Finance Forum achieves these aims through a combination of workshops, presentations, activities, and discussions led by members to share collective knowledge, experience, and skills and is led by the membership to identify key topics.

The Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Healthy Communities Forum

Health systems are in a period of transition with new Integrated Care Boards (ICB) established across the country from 1 July 2022. This is an ideal opportunity for the VCSE sector to strengthen it's links to health systems and to ensure that there is a way for them to be involved in and influence decision making across the system.

As part of the development of the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance work, we have led the development of the Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Healthy Communities Forum. This is one of the three place-based forums which form part of the alliance. There has been great interest in this new forum and the membership continues to grow. This offers a space for VCSE sector organisations interested in working more closely with the local health and care system and for NHS and social care colleagues keen to work with local organisations to come together and better understand one another.

Members of the Alliance will have an opportunity to represent the VCSE sector on the ICS's key portfolio boards through an election process and this will enable the system to think differently about the roles the sector can play in supporting our communities' health and wellbeing across all their thematic areas of work.

Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Parent Carer Forums are part of the SEND code of practice which states "Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families".

VAST is facilitating the development of the Stoke Parent Carer Forum, now known as Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change, and are working with regional and national organisations Contact a Family and NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums) to help us achieve this.

Establishing a new forum was difficult during the pandemic however, through the steering group we have started to really embed our consortium model, made up of key local VCSE sector organisations.

Through PEGiS, the city's well established SEND parent engagement group, we have been able to lead on new areas of work with NHS, Council and Education partners such as the Autism in Schools agenda.

The new look website and CRM we have launched and we are excited to be planning our first large event: Together We Thrive, including a SEND marketplace bringing together the wealth of cross-sector support available to families under one roof in June.

Future Developments

We shall build on the momentum generated from our Together We Thrive event to increase the membership of the forum and to enable us to focus on particular areas of concern which have been identified including supporting families experiencing additional barriers such as language barriers preventing them form accessing the support they need.

Governance

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of no less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:-

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day-to-day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has finance audit and risk, board recruitment and succession planning and remuneration sub-committees. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Neil Dawson

Chair

Sub committees Finance & Remuneration

Mark Barnish

Treasurer

Sub-committee Finance

John Beech

Sub-committees Finance & Remuneration

Lesley Morrey

Sub-committees Finance, Remuneration & Board recruitment and Succession Planning

Tim Edwards

Sub-committee Finance

Lee West

Sub-committee Board recruitment and Succession Planning

Pooja Batta

Victoria Hardie

Sub-committee Board recruitmentand Succession Planning

John Farrar

Joe Martin

Cliff Hathaway

Cathy Jones

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

In so far as the Trustees are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team are recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships including VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) The North Staffordshire Collaborative Network & Team Staffordshire.

Related or connected charities:-
The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors
Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 13th December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Dawson

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- we enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- we obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP. FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- we considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Karen Staley FCA BSc (Hons)
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Geens Limited, Statutory Auditor

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd,
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Date: 18/12/2023

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	628,863	700,306	1,329,169
Other trading activities	4	36,379	-	36,379
Investment income	5	9,090	-	9,090
Total income		674,332	700,306	1,374,638
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(53,254)	-	(53,254)
Charitable activities	7	(669,035)	(690,706)	(1,359,741)
Total expenditure		(722,289)	(690,706)	(1,412,995)
Net (expenditure)/income		(47,957)	9,600	(38,357)
Net movement in funds		(47,957)	9,600	(38,357)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		341,911	164,824	506,735
Total funds carried forward	21	293,954	174,424	468,378

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 55 to 75 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

Comparitive Information

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	583,175	716,178	1,299,353
Other trading activities	4	26,316	-	26,316
Investment income	5	1,098	-	1,098
Total income		610,589	716,178	1,326,767
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(40,594)	-	(40,594)
Charitable activities	7	(530,029)	(617,744)	(1,147,773)
Total expenditure		(570,623)	(617,744)	(1,188,367)
Net income		39,966	98,434	138,400
Transfers between funds		(4,188)	4,188	-
Net movement in funds		35,778	102,622	138,400
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		306,133	62,202	368,335
Total funds carried forward	21	341,911	164,824	506,735

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 55 to 75 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	42,092	86,753
Current assets			
Stocks	16	1,361	1,185
Debtors	17	183,155	148,810
Cash at bank and in hand		581,020	827,574
		765,536	977,569
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	(294,250)	(512,587)
Net current assets		471,286	464,982
Total assets less current liabilities		513,378	551,735
Provisions	19	(45,000)	(45,000)
Net assets		468,378	506,735
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	174,424	164,824
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		293,954	341,911
Total funds	21	468,378	506,735

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommendend Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 51 to 75 were approved by the , and authorised for issue on

13th December 2023 and signed on behalf by:

Mark Barnish
Trustee

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (expenditure)/income		(38,357)	138,400
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6,7 & 8	86,110	68,942
Investment income	5	(9,090)	(1,098)
		38,663	206,244
Working capital adjustments			
Increase in stocks	16	(176)	(1,185)
Increase in debtors	17	(34,345)	(43,171)
Increase in creditors	18	39,792	47,347
Decrease in deferred income		(258,129)	(101,591)
Net cash flows from operating activities		(214,195)	107,644
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	9,090	1,098
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	15	(41,449)	-
Net cash flows from investing activities		(32,359)	1,098
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(246,554)	108,742
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		827,574	718,832
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		581,020	827,574

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818), and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:

The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants receivable

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	**Depreciation method and rate**
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.

b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.

c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either:
(i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or
(ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.
Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3a Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Grants & Contracts	-	699,947	699,947
Bursary	17,019	-	17,019
Museum	4,015	359	4,374
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	607,829	-	607,829
	628,863	700,306	1,329,169

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Grants & Contracts	-	660,830	660,830
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	583,175	55,348	638,523
	583,175	716,178	1,299,353

3b Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund £151,830 (2022 £153,415)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Health Champions £100,000 (2022 £288,000)
Heritage Lottery Fund £56,216 (2022 £nil)
Stoke on Trent City Council Closed Grant £nil (2022 £18,000)
HMRC (CJRS grant) £nil (2022 £9,106)

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £308,046 (2022 - £468,521).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	36,379	-	36,379
	36,379	-	36,379

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	26,316	-	26,316
	26,316	-	26,316

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	9,090	-	9,090
	9,090	-	9,090

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,098	-	1,098
	1,098	-	1,098

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Staff Costs	25,416	-	25,416
Cafe supplies	16,405	-	16,405
Office costs	837	-	837
Premises costs	4,866	-	4,866
Legal fees	567	-	567
Marketing and publicity	77	-	77
Depreciation	99	-	99
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	40	-	40
Support Costs	4,947	-	4,947
	53,254	-	53,254

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	17,266	-	17,266
Cafe supplies	7,114	-	7,114
Office costs	1,201	-	1,201
Premises costs	5,499	-	5,499
Legal fees	460	-	460
Marketing and publicity	122	-	122
Depreciation	238	-	238
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	140	-	140
Support Costs	8,554	-	8,554
	40,594	-	40,594

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Heritage £	Total 2023 £
Staff Costs	132,072	151,777	42,842	284,569	38,224	42,335	691,819
Travel Costs	397	131	5,889	3,228	3	102	9,750
Training	533	2,533	60	2,416	-	80	5,622
Office Costs	43,469	4,114	617	31,938	1,819	3,993	85,950
Legal & Professional	5,348	29,025	723	60	-	10,745	45,901
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	2,644	5,865	165	8,674
Premises Costs	132,051	-	3,875	500	-	8,332	144,758
Insurance	7,656	1,222	350	524	-	524	10,276
Management Costs	-	-	-	3,857	3,847	-	7,704
Sundry	80	146	-	-	-	-	226
Depreciation	85,496	163	-	-	-	-	85,659
Bursary	-	17,019	-	-	-	-	17,019
Partner Payments	-	-	-	57,285	7,000	-	64,285
Events	2,427	161	-	8,120	4,316	12,670	27,694
Grants	-	-	-	58,652	-	-	58,652
Support Costs	8,245	9,894	8,000	46,132	13,751	9,730	95,752
	417,774	216,185	62,356	499,925	74,825	88,676	1,359,741

7 Expenditure on charitable activities (comparative)

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	104,085	134,915	38,979	217,715	68,885	564,579
Travel Costs	780	156	3,224	145	235	4,540
Training	880	1,106	-	2,814	-	4,800
Office Costs	48,376	11,286	1,776	33,393	6,582	101,413
Legal & Professional	6,350	15,817	3,621	12,371	1,837	39,996
Advertising & Publicity	162	110	3,435	1,225	3,070	8,002
Premises Costs	102,856	-	-	5,686	8,286	116,828
Insurance	7,400	979	326	-	-	8,705
Management Costs	-	-	-	1	2,534	2,535
Sundry	1,728	-	-	1	1	1,730
Depreciation	68,059	278	-	-	-	68,337
Bursary	-	3,854	-	-	-	3,854
Partner Payments	-	-	-	52,060	-	52,060
Events	1,881	3	42	10,806	4,184	16,916
Grants	-	-	-	79,347	-	79,347
Support Costs	28,512	17,107	5,702	14,256	8,554	74,131
	371,069	185,611	57,105	429,820	104,168	1,147,773

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds

Allocated by no. of staff:	**Cafe 2023 3 £**	**Cafe 2022 £**
Staff Costs	1,381	3,939
Staff Training	75	64
Travel	43	26
Premises Costs	1,123	85
Depreciation	34	38
Legal & Professional	1,924	940
Insurance	51	-
Advertising & Publicity	202	143
Events	311	-
Office Costs	2,043	659
Sundry	1,402	1,814
Partner payments	479	-
Governance Costs	677	688
Reallocate management fees	(4,798)	-
	4,947	8,554

8 Analysis of support costs (continued)

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Projects	Support & Volunteering	Heritage	Total 2023
Allocated by no. of staff:	**10**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**5**	**4**	
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Staff Costs	2,302	2,763	921	921	4,144	1,842	12,893
Staff Training	124	149	50	50	224	99	696
Travel Costs	71	85	28	28	128	57	397
Premises Costs	1,871	2,245	748	748	3,368	1,497	10,477
Depreciation	57	68	23	23	102	45	318
Legal & Professional	3,207	3,849	1,283	1,283	5,773	2,566	17,961
Insurance	85	101	34	34	152	68	474
Advertising & Publicity	337	404	135	135	606	270	1,887
Events	519	622	207	207	933	415	2,903
Office Costs	3,405	4,087	1,362	1,362	6,130	2,724	19,070
Sundry	2,337	2,804	935	935	4,206	1,868	13,085
Partner Payments	798	958	319	319	1,437	639	4,470
Governance Costs	1,129	1,355	452	452	2,032	903	6,323
Reallocate Management Fees	(7,997)	(9,596)	1,503	7,254	16,897	(3,263)	4,798
	8,245	9,894	8,000	13,751	46,132	9,730	95,752

8 Analysis of support costs (comtinued)

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health projects	Other	Support & Volunteering	Total 2022
Allocated by no. of staff:	**9**	**9**	**2**	**2**	**4**	
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Staff Costs	13,129	7,878	2,626	3,939	6,565	34,137
Staff Training	213	128	43	64	107	555
Travel Costs	85	51	17	26	43	222
Premises Costs	284	170	57	85	142	738
Depreciation	127	76	25	38	63	329
Legal & Professional	3,132	1,879	626	940	1,566	8,143
Advertising & Publicity	475	286	95	143	238	1,237
Events	527	316	105	158	263	1,369
Office Costs	2,198	1,319	440	659	1,099	5,715
Sundry	6,049	3,628	1,209	1,814	3,023	15,723
Governance Costs	2,293	1,376	459	688	1,147	5,963
	28,512	17,107	5,702	8,554	14,256	74,131

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

	Grants to institutions	
	2023	2022
	£	£
Analysis		
Community Health Champion Grants	58,652	79,347
VAST Bursary	17,019	3,854
	75,671	83,201

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2022 - £Nil).

No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2023	2022
Operating leases - other assets Audit	£	£
fees	5,553	6,006
Depreciation of fixed assets	7,000	7,000
	86,110	68,942

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	619,963	537,926
Social security costs	46,473	37,754
Pension costs	50,345	44,240
	716,781	619,920

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Direct charitable activities	18	17
Generating funds	9	8
Management and administration	4	4
	31	29

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £185,166 (2022 - £173,156).

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents.

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2022	294,229	158,442	1,832	96,941	551,444
Additions	-	41,449	-	-	41,449
At 31 March 2023	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	220,332	157,847	1,519	84,993	464,691
Charge for the year	73,399	450	313	11,948	86,110
At 31 March 2023	293,731	158,297	1,832	96,941	550,801
Net book value					
At 31 March 2023	498	41,594	-	-	42,092
At 31 March 2022	73,897	595	313	11,948	86,753

16 Stock

	2023 £	2022 £
Stocks	1,361	1,185

17 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	161,240	136,268
Prepayments and accrued income	21,915	12,542
	183,155	148,810

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade creditors	25,325	29,161
Other taxation and social security	40,800	47,854
Other creditors	20,862	13,995
Accruals	93,591	49,776
Deferred income	113,672	371,801
	294,250	512,587

	2023 £	2022 £
Deferred income at 1 April 2022	371,801	473,392
Resources deferred in the period	113,672	371,801
Amounts released from previous periods	(371,801)	(473,392)
Deferred income at year end	113,672	371,801

Creditors include £113,672 (2022: 371,801) of income deferred into the following year due to the timing of the charity's entitlement to the income after any performance conditions have been met. There are no unfulfilled conditions attached to this income at the balance sheet date. The closing balance of £113,672 is all held in restricted funds.

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Other provisions £	Total £
At 1 April 2022	45,000	45,000
At 31 March 2023	45,000	45,000

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

There was no movement during the year ended 31 March 2023.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	42,093	-	-	42,093
Current assets	591,111	174,418	6	765,535
Current liabilities	(294,250)	-	-	(294,250)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	293,954	174,418	6	468,378

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	86,753	-	-	86,753
Current assets	812,745	164,818	6	977,569
Current liabilities	(512,587)	-	-	(512,587)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	341,911	164,818	6	506,735

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	151,911	674,332	(650,406)	(3,000)	172,837
Designated					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	100,000	-	(53,883)	-	46,117
Museum Contingency	65,000	-	(18,000)	3,000	50,000
	190,000	-	(71,883)	3,000	121,117
Total unrestricted funds	341,911	674,332	(722,289)	-	293,954
Restricted funds					
Health	21,719	51,474	(49,933)	-	23,260
Support & Volunteering	22,685	152,000	(145,478)	-	29,207
SOT CC	30,834	204,341	(201,960)	-	33,215
Community Health Champions	92,487	100,000	(135,343)	-	57,144
Other	(2,907)	88,350	(91,970)	-	(6,527)
Heritage	-	104,142	(66,023)	-	38,119
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
Total restricted funds	164,824	700,307	(690,707)	-	174,424
Total funds	506,735	1,374,639	(1,412,996)	-	468,378

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	181,133	610,589	(516,704)	(123,107)	151,911
Designated					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	50,000	-	(42,631)	92,631	100,000
Museum Contingency	50,000	-	(11,288)	26,288	65,000
	125,000	-	(53,919)	118,919	190,000
Total unrestricted funds	306,133	610,589	(570,623)	(4,188)	341,911
Restricted					
Health	21,206	59,402	(61,254)	2,365	21,719
Support & Volunteering	22,334	153,415	(153,064)	-	22,685
SOT CC	14,306	131,177	(116,120)	1,471	30,834
Community Health Champions	-	289,250	(196,763)	-	92,487
Culture Recover Fund	-	49,218	(49,218)	-	-
Other	4,350	33,716	(41,325)	352	(2,907)
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
Total restricted funds	62,202	716,178	(617,744)	4,188	164,824
Total funds	368,335	1,326,767	(1,188,367)	-	506,735

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at the Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of restricted funds:

The Health related projects are funds from the CCG's PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

The Support and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council relates to funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Heritage funds include funds received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other small grants and donations for the running of The Dudson Museum.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

The total value of future minimum lease payments was as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Within one year	8,061	6,006
In two to five years	22,673	26,022
	30,734	32,028

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Land and buildings		
Within one year	3,000	3,000
Between one and five years	12,000	12,000
After five years	42,000	45,000
	57,000	60,000
Other		
Within one year	8,061	6,006
Between one and five years	22,673	26,022
	30,734	32,028

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2023 £	2022 £
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	161,240	136,268
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(25,325)	(29,161)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £54,197 (2022 £68,858). Receipts of £3,446,912 (2022 £2,520,726) were received during the year and payments of £3,419,664 (2022 £2,493,094) were made leaving a year end balance of £81,445 (2022 £54,197).

VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales - Charity number 1049663

Accounts

vast

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2022

Registered as a Charity No: 1049663. Company Registration No: 2000818

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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers & Advisors

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2020.

Company No. 2000818 | Charity No. 1049663

Trustees

Neil Dawson *Chair*

Mark Barnish *Treasurer*

John Beech

David Holton (resigned 8 December 2021)

Tim Edwards (resigned 28 July 2021 appointed 30 June 2022)

Dawn Wickham (resigned 8 December 2021)

Susan Meredith

Lesley Morrey

Nick Maslen

Victoria Hardie (appointed 9 March 2022)

Auditors

Geens, 68 Liverpool Road,
Stoke on Trent, ST4 1BG

Bankers

Unity Bank Plc, Nine Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HB

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings FCCA - Chief Executive & Finance Director

Charlotte Bennet - Strategic Projects Manager

Debra Hefferon - Finance Manager

Jackie Wheeler - Facilities Manager

Registered Office

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD

Stafford Office

The Hub, 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford, ST16 2LZ

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword

We are all still concerned with the impact of COVID-19 on society, and particularly on the voluntary sector. The lasting effects continue to have repercussions for our sector and unfortunately have become the new normal.

This year has seen the staff at VAST provide an amazing level of support for many groups and individuals across our area which has been achieved with a change to more hybrid working practices to allow flexibility, something which we are seeing mirrored across many of our member organisations.

VAST, through Lisa Healings, and our small but very effective Senior Management Team, has increased engagement with local Statutory Bodies, The National Lottery Community Fund and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire.

We have also encouraged partnership working among other local organisations and VAST has continued its close working arrangements with Support Staffordshire. As a development support organisation VAST has a critical role to play in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's best and most attractive assets -Voluntary and Community Organisations.

We have continued to focus on supporting our many members and the communities where they operate through the provision of our services alongside advocacy and representation. Obtaining finance for our sector has always been difficult, but this year there has been increased demand for our services and although it has not yet hit there are statutory budget cuts looming which have a knock-on effect. VAST is an organisation dedicated to the betterment of the voluntary and community sectors locally and its core objectives remain to support the development of the local VCSE sector, utilising all available opportunities to best achieve this. We have once again reacted swiftly to allow our organisation to meet our members needs.

During this year the Trustees have continued to explore and enact a long-term strategy to best position VAST for the future. Lisa Healings CEO and Finance Director with her senior leadership team, have revised the staffing structure across many of our services to ensure as strong a position as possible. Two of our long serving Trustees, Dawn Wickham and David Holton retired from the Board at the last AGM and we wish them well in their next challenges. This led to us revisiting the Board succession plans and commencing a Board recruitment process which has already led to the appointment of Vicki Hardie, from the Chamber of Commerce, as a trustee.

Our two managed centres, The Dudson Centre in Stoke-on- Trent, and The Hub in Stafford, have continued to maintain reasonable occupancy rates and offer an excellent service to the tenants and room users. The Trustees also continue to support VAST managing The Dudson Museum within the Dudson Centre, which is well worth a visit and is on the Heritage Trail for Stoke. Work has commenced to obtain accreditation for the Museum and a Memorandum of Understanding has been enacted between VAST, The Dudson Centre and The Dudson Heritage Trust who own the collection.

VAST ensures quality by continuously examining the value and impact of our work and this has been recognised by externally moderated awards in the past. As the public sector continues to struggle financially due to austerity measures, we are building more effective relationships and partnerships with all sectors. To ensure that we are on target to achieve our ambitions, the Board of Trustees regularly reviews our strategic approach and has recommitted to being an entrepreneurial service which will develop and create more value for the VCSE sector. We will also continue to develop joint projects with like-minded partners to create more funding opportunities for our VCSE sector.

We have always been innovative and looked at developing solutions to emerging issues. I am confident that we can continue to deliver our passion for the VCSE sector and maintain VAST's position as a key provider of services to the sector.

I would like to thank VAST's members for their continued involvement, my fellow trustees and particularly all the staff at VAST for their commitment, hard work and dedication and look forward to VAST continuing its invaluable work for the VCSE sector into the future.

Thank you,

Neil Dawson
Chair
14th December 2022

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2022 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

This financial year has been one of recovery and consolidation for VAST. The COVID pandemic hit for longer and harder than anyone could have imagined and the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector (VCSE) proved itself to be the invaluable, flexible and responsive sector that we always knew it to be. When others shut down the VCSE sector responded and delivered, and we are pleased to see that despite fears the large majority of organisations have survived and thrived. However, we are still not out of the woods and financially things are going to get harder as the cost-of-living crisis continues and funding becomes more scarce.

VAST continued to be there to support our local VCSE sector and have reviewed our services and operations to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering on their aims for their beneficiaries.

We have continued to build strong strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local health services as well as with key funders. We are heavily involved in the creation of a local NHSE VCSE alliance, in the form of new Healthy Communities Forums, between the new local Integrated Care System and have worked to re-invigorate the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers' Group to become a valuable peer support network.

We have continued to develop our support services, community development work and volunteer brokerage thanks to funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and The National Lottery Fund and our two managed centres in Stoke-on-Trent and Stafford are slowly re-opening and tentatively returning to the vibrant social hubs that we knew previously.

Thanks to our funders and the hard work of our dedicated team of staff and volunteers we have had a financially successful year which is enabling us to rebuild our reserves, That had been hit hard by several tough years and will stand us in good stead to go forward into still uncertain times.

Achievements and Performance

How we performed against our plans:

What we said we would do	What we did	How successful we were
Chargeable Services Advertise more widely outside the membership base Develop provision to social enterprises and other types of not for profit Explore the market in surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision Develop a range of packages of support Deliver training packages around relevant thematic areas Develop governance support and project evaluation services	Restrictions on social contact and guidance to work from home continued to impact on our ability to network and meet with new clients, but word of mouth continued to mean we were still able to recruit new clients for our services and we made full use of online platforms such as Teams and Zoom. We did find however, that there were still lower levels of demand for non-essential services. In particular demand for meeting rooms for face-to-face meetings and footfall in the café was slow to recover. By the end of the year we were seeing an increase in bookings for meetings and the café was once again becoming a thriving meeting space. Our chargeable income covering our business support service, creative services, café and refreshment income and income from rentals was £528,874 in the year. We have continued to recruit a number of clients from outside of our local geographic area. We are still developing packaged support offers to launch when demand begins to increase again. We have switched to virtual delivery for most of our training packages and have focussed these around volunteering and governance support and have also held successful volunteering and funding fayres virtually. We are currently not focussing on project evaluation work due to staff capacity and the specialist nature of this work.	Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely. However pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our client and ourselves by the COVID pandemic has meant it is difficult to expand our services as rapidly as originally anticipated.

Grants and Contracts Explore funding opportunities to ensure we can continue to deliver in key areas such as volunteering and VCSE developmental support Continually develop our role of strategic liaison between the sector and public bodies Facilitate collaborative partnership working across the local sector	We are continually looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services. We have secured additional funding to expand our strategic liaison work and to continue the Community Health Champions projects as well as our core support, volunteering and advocacy and voice roles. Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group and in establishing new Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together and with statutory bodies. Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area.	We have funding in place for the next 12 months and we continue to apply for appropriate funding to ensure our key service offer can continue into the future.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and the activities derived thereof, have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally. Sector funding is likely to reduce drastically as the country gets to grips with the aftermath of a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine and a cost-of-living crisis.

We know that there will be cuts to local authority and health funding going froward which will have a knock-on effect to funding available for the sector and many funders spent their funds to alleviate pressures during COVID and simply do not have as much available now. There is still however a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

The Local Authority has had to make very difficult budget decisions and the transformation of the NHS with the creation of Integrated Care Systems, while welcome, is proving to be an incredibly protracted and complicated process, bringing with it enormous uncertainty, which makes planning during this difficult time quite precarious.

There is a desire from local statutory partners to want to engage with the Sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from VSCOG. We are having encouraging conversations, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long term, benefits for the Sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, that they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset Based Community Development and locality working as a key strategy to develop moving forward, to achieve which requires greater co- production with the VCSE and the communities we serve.

These positive discussions and relationships are yet to impact upon local commissioning, this year, once again, has seen very little contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods, however we are involved in early conversations with both Health and Local Authority about commissioning differently for the sector.

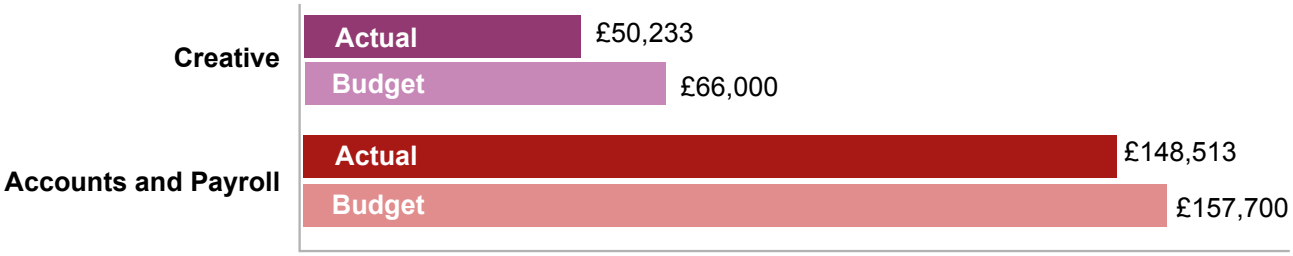
Hopefully, the above positive initiatives will lead to future, longer term, investment in the local sector.

Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

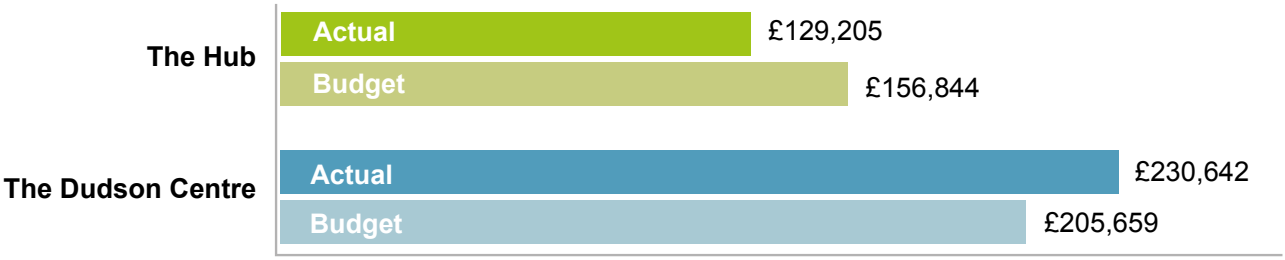
Income against budget for chargeable services:



The budgets set were challenging and recurring restrictions and lockdowns meant we were not able to return to normal levels of business during the year.

Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre and The Hub

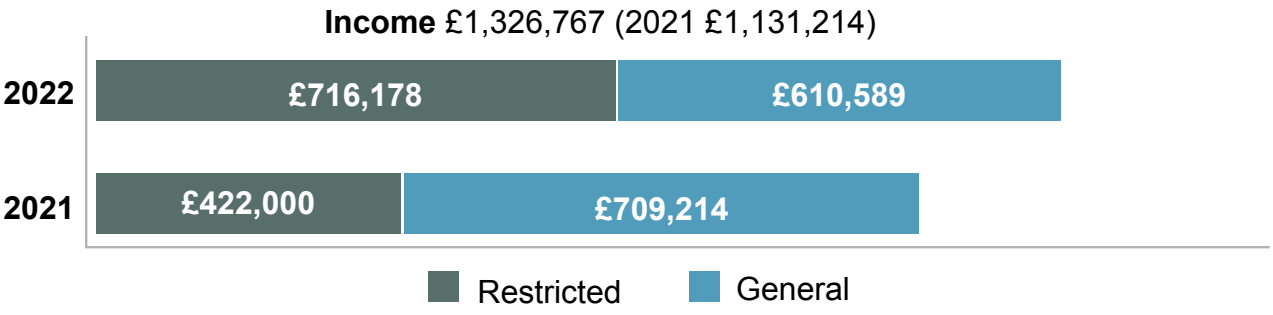


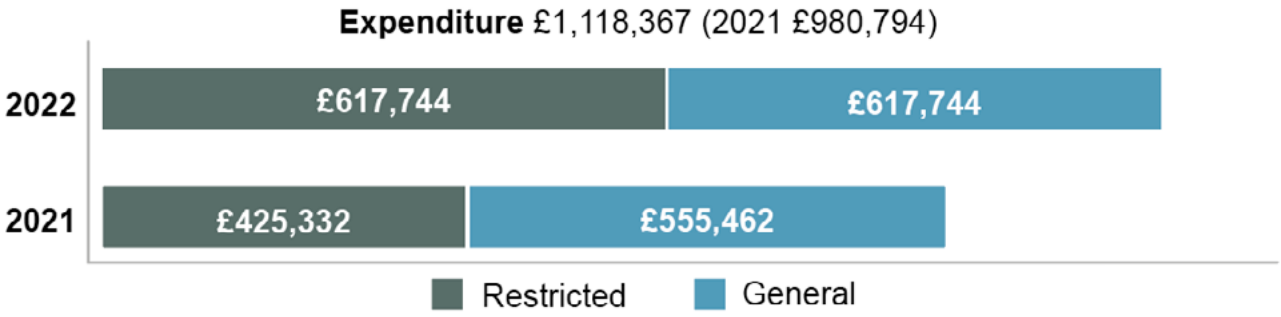
For the year to March 2022 based on income received against total possible income the Hub was 58% occupied and The Dudson Centre was 91% occupied.

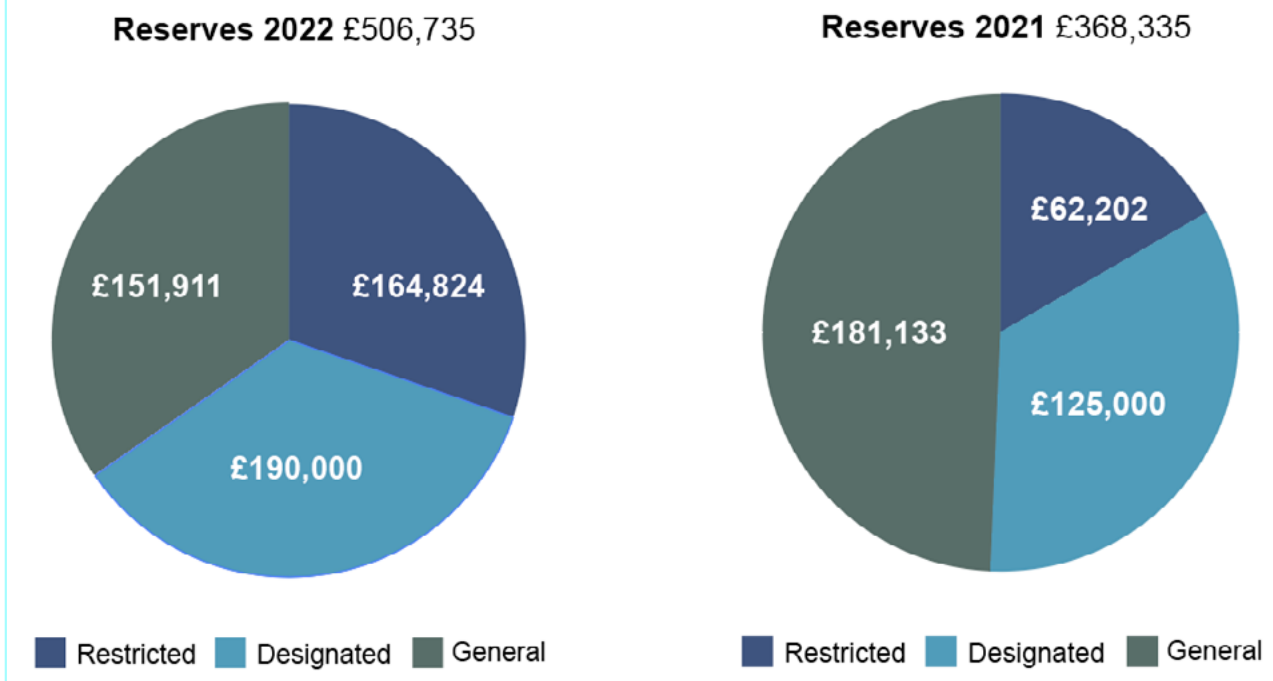
Occupancy levels remained good at The Dudson Centre, however we have seen occupancy levels at the Hub fall due to the large amount of competition from other office space providers in Stafford.

Financial Review

Overall our income has increased slightly from £1.1m to £1.3m.







Of the designated reserves £25,000 is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre, £100,000 is set aside for under-occupancy and unexpected expenditure at The Hub and £65,000 is set aside for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

Financial Review

VAST's principal funding sources for 2021/22 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who fund our work with the local VCSE sector and the Community Health Champions project, Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups who fund our Health Strategic Liaison post and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2021/22 accounted for 40% of income (87% of unrestricted income).

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not for profit organisations:

- RSPCA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
- Trentham Pre School
- Stoke on Trent Foodbank
- Haregate Community Centre.
- ASHA
- RubyGirl UK
- NSAAA
- Disability Solutions
- Blurton Community Hub
- St Johns Community Church
- Uttoxeter Gateway
- Packmoor Community Association
- Expert Citizens UK CIC
- Staffordshire Parish Council Association
- North Staffordshire Carers Association
- Audley Parish Council
- Willoughbridge Garden Trust
- Biddulph Valley Way
- Biddulph Methodist Church
- Stoke on Trent Age Friendly City Board
- Abbey Hulton Sports and Social Club
- Green Door Hub
- Multiple Abilities Club
- Headway North Staffs
- Smallthorne Social Society
- Silvertree Cleaning
- Rachel Wilson (DP)
- Breakthru' Support Services
- Voice of Hope
- St Andrews with St Peters Pre School
- Sunflower Families Support Group
- North Staffordshire Medical Institute
- Staffordshire Sight Loss Association
- Number 11 CIC
- SkinJase in the Community
- Silverdale Parish Council
- Keele Parish Council
- Open Door Stoke on Trent
- Lea Road Community Church
- Newcastle Community Transport
- Sage (Staffs)
- Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
- Stone Community Hub
- Chit Chat 4U
- TWOCO

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year end financial statements.

The overall objectives of VAST are to enhance the quality of life of local residents through the development of the social economy by developing the local community and voluntary sectors.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.

The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £54,000 to £354,000.

Currently we hold £65,158 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £506,735 of which £341,911 is unrestricted, and of this £190,000 is designated.

The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future Periods

Aims and Key objectives

To support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Key objectives

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography
- To be a first-choice provider of services and a centre for innovation
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector

Activities Planned to Achieve Aims

We will achieve the above by implementing the following activities;

Chargeable Services

- Growing payroll bureau provision
- Advertising more widely outside membership base
- Developing provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not for profit organisations
- Exploring the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision
- Developing a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs for example start up package etc.
- Exploring additional geographical areas

Grants and Contracts

- Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support
- Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.
- Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

Advocacy & Voice

- Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.
- Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.
- Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, however sources of income have been diversified over recent years and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable service to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Monthly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

Other risks considered to be high are risks associated with contracts, competition from similar organisations, provision of misleading advice, project failure and loss of key staff. The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standards awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on **14th December 2022** and signed on its behalf by:

Neil Dawson
Chair

Trustees' Report

(incorporating the Directors' Report)

Our Purpose

The Objects for which the Charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent; and in particular the advancement of education, the advancement of heritage, the advancement of health, the advancement of citizenship or community development and the prevention or relief of poverty.

In furtherance of the above purposes, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

i. promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together in Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above;

ii. assist anybody or bodies financially or otherwise;

iii. obtain, collect and receive moneys and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful method, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not);

iv. procure and provide information;

v. procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents;

vi. arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes;

vii. promote, encourage or undertake experimental work

viii. operate an museum and heritage centre

Role

VAST is a social enterprise that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke- on-Trent and Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities and civil society. VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders.

[1] Voluntary and Community & Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) - charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises, faith organisations, community interest companies, housing associations and mutuals and co-operatives.

[2] The Geographical entity of Staffordshire which includes Stoke on Trent

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

- Support
- Inform
- Connect
- Advocate

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following behaviours;

- Authentic
- Pro-active
- Innovative
- Responsive

All delivered with Integrity and underpinned by these values…

Support

Enhancing and improving the sustainability of VAST through selling of back office services to Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Registered Charities in Staffordshire (VCSE) has a twofold advantage. Firstly, it generates income for VAST, thus reducing our grant dependency, secondly, and more importantly, it provides high quality services which are delivered by qualified professionals. Our services are extremely competitive compared to private sector organisations providing a similar service, with the added advantage of our staff being experts in the requirements of the sector.

In addition, through funded contracts we support and develop the local VCSE sector through advice and guidance as well as with practical support.

Accounts and Payroll

Service Summary

Our fully qualified accountancy team are experts in the charity and not-for-profit sector and offer a range of affordable services in a friendly and professional manner. During the year we have worked with 145 community groups, charities and social enterprises and we are always keen to talk to new organisations about how we can help them.

Our Services

Future aims

Increase the number of organisations we support with year-end accounts and independent examinations to ensure as many local small charities and social enterprises as possible have access to quality, accurate information to provide to beneficiaries, regulators and to support funding applications.

To work with an increased number of local not-for-profit organisations to give them access to quality training (classroom-based or virtually) and provide bespoke support.

Accounts feedback

"Fabulous service, always very helpful and quick to respond to any questions or queries."

"Thank you for all your help and advice, it was a pleasure to deal with you."

"Really great service as usual. I have worked with Daryl on our accounts now for a number of years and have been very impressed with his professionalism and support."

Digital Services

Service Summary

VAST's Digital and Creative department offers a full range of services for charities and the voluntary sector. We work with many types of organisations, but our main aim is to provide high quality creative and digital services for the voluntary sector at a price they can afford. We have worked with many third sector organisations on a variety of projects providing support from full re-brands and websites, to simple print management.

Our Services

Future aims

We will focus on expanding our client base through marketing our services to improve income generation.

Continued development of the VAST CRM, new areas have been planned for the CRM.

We aim to continue to develop inhouse skills and processes to grow income generation. We will continue to focus on new technology and digital developments.

We will deliver bespoke online training via digital platforms including Teams and Zoom. The training will include website, database, and social media.

Digital Services feedback

VAST have provided an excellent service, supporting BJF to develop an exciting new website. VAST has been incredibly helpful (and patient!) and has always responded promptly to our queries and requests and they understands the particular needs of voluntary sector groups.

The website training was really useful and has helped us to be able to manage the information on the website ourselves. I would recommend VAST for any group wishing to create a new website; it is a great service and excellent value for money.

Hilary Stefanelli - Beth Jonson Foundation

Facilities

The Dudson Centre & The Hub

During the year our managed centres were able to start to re-open and they have gradually returned to more usual levels of activity with meeting rooms occupied and The Dudson Café playing host to coffee mornings and drop-in sessions for service users of our tenants.

Our services

- Serviced Office space for VCSE organisations at The Dudson Centre, Stoke-on-Trent and The Hub, Stafford
- Meeting room hire
- Zoom Rooms functionality for hybrid meetings
- The Dudson Cafe

Future Aims

- To continue to promote office space at both sites and increase occupancy levels
- To promote the availability of meeting room hire
- To encourage more tenants and users of the centre to hold social events and informal meetings in The Dudson Café
- To promote external buffets in the local area

Development and Governance Support

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Supporting the VCSE Sector is central to everything we do at VAST. We want to empower local organisations to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them. It is our mission to develop and promote a thriving local voluntary sector and, by linking closely with other VAST services such as volunteering, accountancy, and our digital team as well as our serviced resource centres at The Dudson Centre and The Hub, we can provide a holistic package to make this a reality.

Our support is often free of charge, thanks to funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and The National Lottery Community Fund, and, where we do need to charge, we keep this as affordable as possible to ensure it is fully accessible to those who need it.

Case Study

Support requested - VAST were approached to provide training to staff and Trustees around the roles and responsibilities of Trustees so that both parties could fully understand how the role fits within an organisation, the demands of the role as well as the duties and responsibilities that come with it.

Support given - VAST put together a package of training tailored to the organisation to particularly focus on some of the challenges they were facing like scheme of delegation and managing conflict of interest. The broader training was based on the Charity governance code as good governance is fundamental to a charity's success. It enables and supports a charity's compliance with the law and relevant regulations. It also promotes a culture in which everything works towards fulfilling the charity's vision. This also enabled us to break it down into clear digestible chunks;

- Organisation purpose,
- leadership,
- integrity,
- decisions making, risk and control,
- Board effectiveness,
- Equality diversity and inclusion,
- Openness and accountability.

Staff, trustees and volunteers attended the sessions and we were able to deliver the information and facilitate some really useful discussion around challenges the organisation had faced. It was also a safe space for people to ask questions to enable them to really understand why certain decisions sometimes have to be made or things done in a certain way.

The difference it made -By helping the organisation to develop high standards of governance this will support them to be resilient, keep public confidence and ensure a strong and robust organisation that is able to support its beneficiaries.

Future aims and plans - VAST will continue to work with the organisation to look at the skills mix of their current trustees and help to recruit new trustees. We will also support them to develop a trustee handbook and their other volunteering policies.

The VAST Bursary Fund

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Since its inception in 2015, the VAST Bursary Fund has awarded more than £66,000 to more than 129 voluntary sector organisations –throughout Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire - an average of almost £10,000 per year. The fund awards a grant up to £500 towards eligible VAST business services.

During the period from April 2021 and March 2022 a total of 6 applications were received and subsequently awarded by the panel. The total awarded for this period was £2,458.00. Three applications were for accountancy services and the remaining for website design.

Of these applications, four were from Stoke-on-Trent, one from Stafford and the other from East Staffordshire.

The VAST Vault

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The VAST Vault is an online resource for Staffordshire's VCSE sector. The Vault is a source of information and advice on all aspects of running a VCSE organisation and working with local communities. Containing links to trusted, reliable sources of information and advice, it is a one stop shop to get accurate advice.

Future Developments

The Vault continues to be updated to add new links as they become available to make sure VCSE organisations can always have the most current information and guidance at their fingertips.

Door2Door Transport

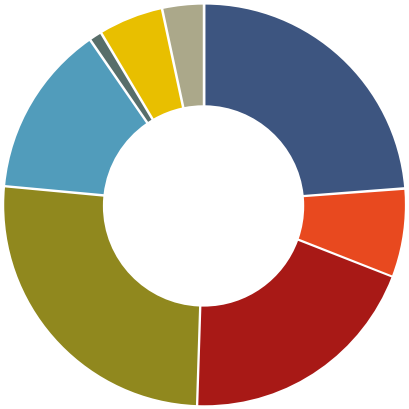
Summary, Achievements & Impact

As we emerged from the coronavirus pandemic Door 2 Door transport was needed more than ever. People needed to access their medical appointments and social activities started to re-open. Many of the service users would not be able to leave the house without the support of the service and it is crucial to reducing loneliness and isolation for service users and volunteer drivers alike, with real bonds and friendships formed. The main challenge during the year was to recruit enough drivers to fulfil the demand for journeys as a number of our drivers were themselves vulnerable and continued to isolate.

Funding from The Realise Foundation for the project ended in October 2021 and, as their priorities for funding had changed, we were not able to apply to them for continuation funding. We are, however, very grateful to The Community Foundation for Staffordshire who have provided 12 months funding to continue the service.

Future Developments

As we look to the future, we will be carrying out a survey with key stakeholders and service users to gather more information on the need for the service and are looking for longer term funding to ensure that the service can continue into the future.



- Hospital Appointments
- GP Practices
- Other Medical
- Social Groups and Activities
- Shopping / Banking / Hairdressing
- Visiting
- Day Centres
- Dentist

13 active drivers

160 service users

Door2Door Feedback

I have been using Door 2 Door for about 6 months now, to get backwards and forwards to cancer treatment. I am blind and unable to drive. They have been incredibly kind and caring and helpful when I come out of a chemo session, feeling unsteady and unfocussed, and made sure I get home safely. I am also a guide dog owner and have the reassurance that there will be no problem transporting her to and from the hospital.

I have had experience of three of their drivers, and it's always felt like having an extra worry lifted from my shoulders. Margaret even joined me when I rang the bell after completing chemo, which was lovely to have someone familiar around as friendly support. They always have clean and spacious vehicles, with plenty of accommodation for my dog, and always arrive a tiny bit ahead of my pick up time, and are more than happy to wait until I've got my stuff together without making me feel rushed.

My drivers have all worn masks during the journey, which I was pleased to see as I was immune compromised during treatment. They are easy to make a booking through, and even if I leave a message, one of the office staff will return my call the next day.

They've been such a wonderful find, and I will continue to use them in the future.

Door 2 Door client

Donate IT

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Life is becoming increasingly digital and many services need to be accessed online. Whether it's for home learning, banking, shopping, applying for jobs or looking after your health, most of us need to own a digital device. The digital world has also become increasingly important in the fight against loneliness and isolation, but there are still many people in our community that do not have digital access.

To combat this VAST have teamed up with The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local IT partners, to set up a digital equipment recycling scheme so we can ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community in Stoke-on-Trent can get connected.

During the year we have received 99 donated pieces of equipment including laptops, desktop computers, keyboards, mice and monitors. We have allocated 10 sets of equipment to local community groups and a further 12 sets to individuals in need in our communities.

Future Developments

In a world which is becoming ever more digital we will continue to source unwanted digital equipment to recondition and pass on to those most at risk from becoming disadvantaged due to digital exclusion.

Case Study

Burslem Jubilee Group approached VAST to discuss their need for a couple of laptops. These would be useful in the weekly sessions they hold for families across the city who are currently seeking asylum and trying to build a new life in Stoke-on-Trent.

VAST agreed that their application to the Donate IT scheme for some devices should be quite straightforward as the evidence of need seemed obvious.

Sheila said that the two laptops have been a great help are used every session that they run their project. Burslem Jubilee run two sessions a week with 15 -17 adult individuals attending every session.

The attendees are mostly asylum seekers who originate from different countries such as Sudan, Kurdistan, Turkey, South America, Eritrea, Pakistan and they often need to use the laptops with completing the applications for their asylum and ESOL (English as a Second Language) courses. The organisation's volunteers also use them for emails and following up applications, research and other information.

Sometimes children come along to the sessions with their families for a short period, this is because they don't have school placements yet. For the first few weeks that children arrive in the area they are waiting to find a place at a local school, so the laptops have been useful to help keep the children occupied whilst their parents are dealing with complicated and important paperwork and also help them to be distracted from the more stressful situations, they are finding themselves in.

Toddlers enjoy cartoons and fun games whilst some of the older ones can make use of the laptops for schooling and getting used to the language and new culture they find themselves living in.

Feedback from two children - *"We cannot go to school yet because we don't have a placement. We can use the laptops while our parents are in ESOL."*

Quote from Adult Attendee - "*We can ask for help at the project if we need to search for information. The volunteers are very helpful."*

Discover Digital

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Discover Digital is a partnership of organisations funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund. The project was set up to help people in Stoke on Trent to discover the things they need if they want to use digital and online services and to combat digital exclusion. We want to make sure that everyone can find and use the digital services they need so the project offers grant funding both to community-based organisations who have a great idea to combat digital exclusion and also to individuals who need digital equipment. This is complemented by bespoke community-based training and underpinned by community consultation and enquiry to ensure we capture the relevant evidence to develop future projects and to lobby for real change.

Future Developments

To further expand the reach of this project the partnership is opening a pop-up shop in The Potteries Shopping Centre during April 2022 to take the consultation work and information to those that need it most. People will be able to drop in to a friendly space and ask the questions they are too afraid to ask others as well as get information on keeping themselves safe online. They will have to opportunity to share their stories of the effects of digital exclusion on their lives.

Resources developed during the project, findings of community consultation and enquiry work and the formal evaluation report on the project will all be available on our website at the conclusion of the project to enable others to share in and benefit from the work of the project.

Grants

16 Get Connected grants were awarded with a value of: £9,464

5 Innovation grants were awarded with a value of: £18,741

Inform

To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

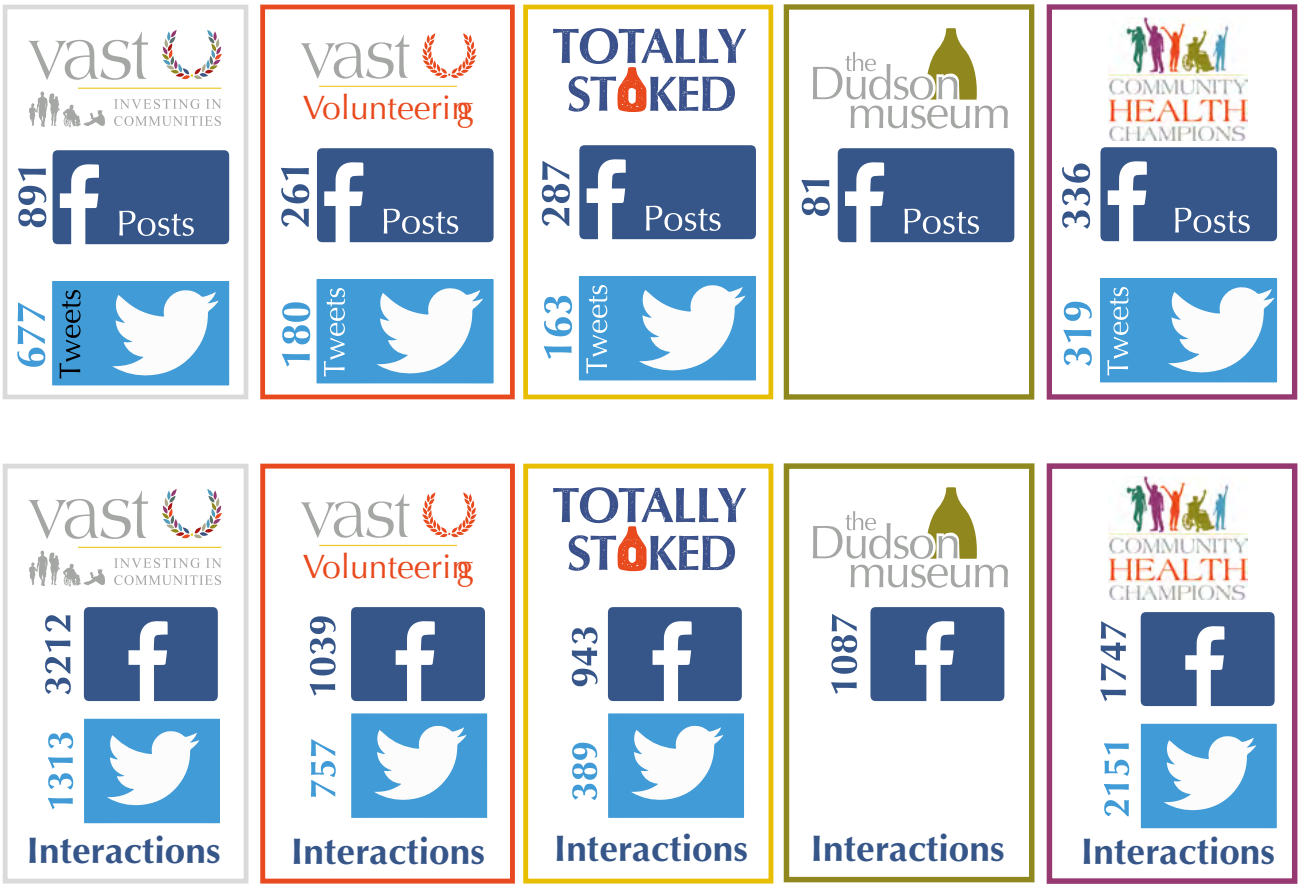
Marketing and Communication

vast Digital

Service Summary

Under the Creative Services banner, the main marketing objective is to promote the services we offer, increase our customer-base and generate income. To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

VAST use multipal social media, email and websites communication channels for the different projects.



Total emails sent: **151**
Average open rate: **32%**
Average click rate: **7.0%**

NEWS

Articles Posted
2021/22 - ***997****
2021/20 - ***585***

**Posted across all websites including VAST, Totally Stoked and Community Health Champions*

Community Health Champions

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The COVID-19 pandemic brought to the forefront the need for people to be getting clear and accurate health messages to help them make the right choices to look after their health and wellbeing. Unfortunately, messages from public sector bodies do not always reach those who need them the most as many people do not listen to, or cannot understand, organisations that they cannot relate to and, instead, take advice from their peers, even if this is not always accurate. Those most in need are often those hardest to reach so we recognised that there needed to be a different way to communicate with them.

Community Health Champions are local volunteers who help improve the health and wellbeing of people in Stoke-on-Trent. They are people central to and embedded in their communities. People who are trusted and listened to by their peers.

The project, funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, aims to help people better understand health issues and to share clear and accurate health information in their communities.

Our network of Community Health Champions are well informed. Through regular newsletters, training opportunities and question and answer sessions with professionals they are able to get the information they need and also provide feedback about what their communities want.

In addition, the project has provided grant funding to grassroots organisations who are embedded in local communities to help them be health champions for their communities.

Future Developments

We are in the process of producing a series of short, animated films, voiced by local champions, to reinforce key health messages in the community and are very excited that we will be able to launch these in 2022.

We will also be working on partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Staffordshire Integrated Care system on a complementary project to carry out a Citizens Enquiry into local health needs and to Help Community Health Champions and local grassroots organisations to develop innovative ideas to help fill gaps in provision.

Community Health Champions - Case Study

A case study illustrating the Community Health Champions project in action supporting a local organisation to assist their service user to access his Covid and Flu vaccinations.

VAST received a request by local voluntary organisation that is part of our Community Health Champion (CHC) team asking for help for one of their service users who was having difficulties accessing a covid booster and flu jab from home. Due to a decline in health the gentlemen, aged 84, had not been able to leave the house and had no friends or family to support.

The gentleman had contacted the GP to ask why he had not received an appointment to say when he would be visited at home to be given his third Covid booster and flu vaccine. He was informed by his GP practice that he was not eligible for a home visit and that their surgery was not part of the scheme doing the boosters. No information was provided by GP practice on how service user could go about making arrangements to have his vaccines.

As the gentleman is supported by a voluntary sector organisation via phone, his support worker had made numerous attempts to contact the GP practice without success, so they approached VAST for guidance. Due to our contacts through the CHC project we were able to share the concerns directly with the appropriate teams for support and fed back the advice.

However this didn't match his experience so, having sought permission to share the gentleman's details (D.O.B., Contact and practice details), we went back to our contact at the CCG to ask for guidance on how to move this forward. With their support and contacts we linked with NHS England to resolve the problem.

On follow up a few weeks later, we were able to get confirmation from CCG as well as the service user that this issue had been resolved and the gentleman had been visited at home and received his vaccines. He was very grateful to VAST for helping and told us that moving forward, he is now listed as being housebound at his surgery so should get his support via home visits.

The Dudson Museum

Summary, Achievements & Impact

We were very grateful that The Dudson Museum was able to secure funding from two additional rounds of the Culture Recovery Fund which enabled us to retain staff and get the museum ready for when it was able to re-open safely. Since re-opening the number of visitors has increased slowly and we held a very successful showcase event to promote the Museum to local schools.

As a result of this, and our marketing events, the numbers of schools visiting has started to grow. We have also been very successful in launching school holiday activities for children with very busy sessions held throughout the summer holidays, and half term breaks where children could take part in craft activities and quizzes and listen to a story told by our very own Mrs Potts.

We have continued to work on eligibility for accreditation for the Museum as this will open up more opportunities for us in the future.

Future Aims

- Continue to promote and grow the number of school visits
- Develop activities and events for wider age groups
- Expand displays into the wider Dudson Centre to create a heritage centre experience

Connect

Our meeting spaces, events and networks enable VCSE organisations to work together and collaborate amongst themselves and with the wider local community

VAST Volunteering

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST are passionate about volunteering and strongly believe that it can improve health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference to local communities. Through our volunteer bureau we help people find volunteering roles local to them that ideally match their skills and interests. Our popular online volunteer noticeboard advertises opportunities in the local VCSE sector for those who just want to browse for themselves and we produce a regular newsletter showcasing the opportunities available or our knowledgeable and supportive staff will work with people to ensure they find the right opportunity and will even attend with them to give them the confidence to give it a go.

We also support VCSE organisations who want to recruit volunteers to ensure they have the right policies and procedures in place and can provide a safe and supportive environment for their volunteers.

Our volunteer management training remains popular and we are continuing to grow our volunteer managers network which meets regularly and gives people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support. We have also run volunteer fayres both virtually and online to help local organisations recruit the volunteers the need to deliver their services.

Future Developments

Going forward we are looking to grow the reach of our volunteering opportunities and are making links with local schools to ensure that volunteering opportunities are available to young people.

309 volunteers placed

45 Members of volunteer managers' network

VAST Volunteering Case Study

Stoke-on-Trent Bid contacted VAST Volunteering to help recruit volunteers for the Better World Festival in August 2021. The events were to be held over the course of a whole weekend so many volunteers were needed, and these roles included marshalling, recycling, tidying up and helping set the sites up.

Natalie read the article about the festival in our Volunteering Newsletter and as she is in her second year of Business Management as a student at Staffordshire University, she had a strong interest in events. Due to her interest Natalie had already signed up to assist at other local events such as Staffs Fest and Just so Festival and was looking to gain an opportunity to assist at the Better World Festival.

Kelly caught up with Natalie after the events had taken place "Thank you for this opportunity, experience like these benefits me greatly. I met some lovely inspiring people from artists and entertainers to traders and charity personnel. Such a positive vibe and atmosphere in the town.

I am now looking for my next opportunity, although I have secured Just So Festival as an Area Manager (volunteer) this month, so I am looking ahead for the next few months."

April Jackson from Stoke-on-Trent Bid said "Natalie was instrumental in helping make Better World Festival a success. She volunteered over 3 days as a main point of contact for festival-goers and responded to each query politely and informatively so they could best enjoy the festival to its fullest extent.

Natalie is the gears, helping the machine run smoothly; her proactivity, coupled with her ability to work effectively on her own initiative, meant that the event management team were able to take the time to deal with issues behind the scenes, safe in the knowledge that Natalie was looking after attendees' needs.

Natalie's passion for the city centre, and her energy - evident from taking on multiple shifts across the weekend - are unparalleled. With a friendly, yet professional approach in speaking with festival-goers, Natalie was the perfect ambassador for the event and we would welcome to chance to work with her again."

Totally Stoked

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Totally Stoked is Stoke-on-Trent's answer to developing the VCSE sector in the most sustainable way. We believe everyone has something to give, and by sharing our resources we can add value to the wealth of activity already under way in our local communities, strengthening and enabling local organisations and community groups.

Totally Stoked encourages people and organisations to share their time, skills and knowhow as well as equipment and resources to support VCSE organisations in the city and its surrounding areas.

Totally Stoked also provides a link to support for our extensive VCSE sector, to empower them to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them.

Thanks to funding from the National Lottery Community Fund we are able to work with local communities in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands, both geographical and communities of interest, to identify gaps in VCSE provision and to help them fill those gaps. Through community reference panels we work intensively to understand what is most important to them and what they would like to see develop and our project officers can then support them to form the community groups and organisations that will help deliver what they need. Our share networks are the ideal space for people to come together and share both practical resources and know how and information as well as to build networks and friendships.

Totally Stoked also helps local businesses to give something back to their communities through brokering Corporate Social Responsibility and Employer Supported Volunteering opportunities. It doesn't matter who makes the approach, it could be a VCSE organisation with a need to get something done or a local company that wants a volunteering project for their staff we are well placed to find the answer and create the links to get the job done.

If people prefer to donate money, we have linked with the Community Foundation for Staffordshire to promote their We Love Stoke Fund to make sure donations can remain local.

Feedback

As a Community Interest Company, Veterans Connect has had an uphill struggle to achieve recognition and position within our specialism. Partner companies and supporting charities are a vital part of the growth required to achieve the industry acceptance and community acknowledgement to facilitate the development of our services. Vast is an organisation that not only supports, but advises and hand holds smaller, developing charitable organisations like ours.

Without the steadfast dedication of the team at Vast and their unwavering support, the struggle for many would be too much to overcome. We highly recommend Vast for their services and support and in particular we admire the community focus shown in everything they do.We look forward to an ever developing relationship as we endeavour to fulfill the needs of our vulnerable communities within the great city of Stoke on Trent.

Lee J West

Stoke-on-Trent Together

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Stoke-on-Trent Together came into being as a direct result of the COVID-19 pandemic. It was a cross sector solution to protecting the most vulnerable in our communities through lockdown, however it has become much more. It has developed into a strategic partnership between VAST and Stoke-on-Trent City Council that will ensure that statutory and VCSE sector works together for the best outcomes for our communities. Together we have responded to critical incidents being declared across health and Social Care settings and in our hospital as well as providing support and co-ordination for the VCSE organisations supporting first Afghan and then Ukrainian refugees arriving in the city.

Future Developments

Whatever the emergency or crisis faced by Stoke-on-Trent Together will ensure that we pull together to ensure that the VCSE sector can support the solution

Stoke-on-Trent Together Case Study

Support requested - In the middle of March we were approached by the Assistant Director for Wellbeing at Stoke City Council as they were beginning to look at the Council's response to Ukrainian refugees and welcoming them into the City. They asked for our support to map the available support to those who might be arriving into Stoke through family or sponsorship routes; or who are placed in the area by central government.

Support given - It was early days and guidance coming from central government was very limited, we had no idea of numbers and the level of response needed was really uncertain. We met with the Council to discuss many of the fantastic organisations delivering services across the City and how they may adapt to meet the needs of new arrivals. We also talked about existing refugee and asylum seeker organisations across the City who we knew were already geared up to support but may need further support from VAST if they had to quickly scale up their services to meet a large increase in demand. At the same time we were getting questions from local organisations about the lack of guidance and what they should be doing. We decided in agreement with the Assistant Director for Wellbeing that to pull together a network of organisations providing support to Ukrainians would be beneficial for both sides. We met at the Dudson Centre and organisations had the opportunity to ask questions of the Council and feedback concerns coming from the community and directly from families. The Council were also able to get a good picture of the support available and discuss with us any gaps or areas of concern. The groups were able to network with one another to avoid duplication and create as comprehensive offer as possible across the City, knowing no matter which point of contact people hit they would receive the same advice and guidance.

The difference it made -The opportunity to come together and troubleshoot issues and come up with solutions made our response in the City strong. Organisations are better connected and everyone has a clearer understanding of what is going on and where to seek support.

Future aims and plans - We continue to support the network and organisations that have emerged through it. We keep them up to date with relevant funding opportunities to support their work and will bring the group together as required to discuss challenges and solutions.

'The network has been so valuable, I've made lots of connections and the opportunity to ask questions and work together to find solutions has been great. It was great having representation from the Council to make sure we were getting the most up to date guidance and sharing the right information'

Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory

STOKE-ON-TRENT COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory is an online platform which offers easy access to information about VCSE sector services available to people in the city. The Directory was originally built by VAST Services (1920) in 2019 and has been managed by VAST since its launch.

It currently has over 350 listings, for services from counselling and training services to sporting activities and social groups, and helps people find the services they need to improve their health and wellbeing and avoid social isolation. Funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council we want to continue to grow this valuable resource so that everyone can easily access VCSE services.

Future Developments

We will be redesigning the design of The Directory to ensure that it truly is a whole age directory of the VCSE services available to local communities with more streamlined search and navigation functions.

Communities Together

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST are proud to support The Communities Together programme in Stoke-on-Trent. Communities Together is a programme being delivered in Stoke as part of the National Community Led Support programme led by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is focussed on delivering social care services that people need in their local community. Utilising cross sector innovation teams to identify local need and the best locations for provision, the programme has so far developed community lounges in Burslem ,Blurton and Bentilee where local residents can access the support and advice they need at the same time as taking part in community activities to combat loneliness and isolation. Services available include, mental health support, debt and benefit advice and support with housing related issues and are tailored to the needs of the specific community, allowing professionals to work together to provide a one stop solution for individuals.

Future Developments

The programme has already identified many other areas of the city where community lounges can be rolled out to ensure that relevant services can be delivered in the best way for residents in their communities.

Advocate

Our strategic presence and national connections allow us to be a voice for the grassroots VCSE community who could otherwise go unheard

VAST Strategic Representation and Liaison

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST is an advocate for the VCSE sector and facilitates the strategic engagement of the sector with a range of statutory partners. The aim of this engagement between the VCSE sector and statutory bodies is to promote mutual understanding between the two sectors and enable them to work better together in partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population. VAST's strategic liaison role, funded by Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, acts as a channel to achieve this.

We know that the VCSE sector is well placed to play an active role in improving health and wellbeing for our local population, so we amplify the voice of the sector and people with lived experience giving a stronger voice at a timely point to ensure that local VCSE organisations can contribute to discussion and influence decisions.

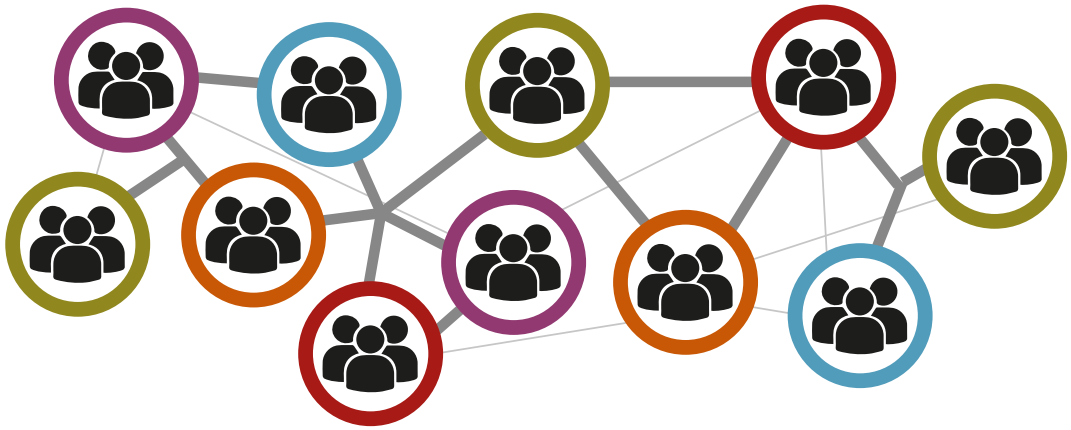
We know that the VCSE sector is best placed to understand it's local community and so can help deliver the best quality services for local people. We support a two-way flow of information between VCSE sector organisations and strategic partners and establish positive working relationships with stakeholders. Cross sector working has never been more needed to support our communities. We act at this strategic interface, establishing the links between workstreams and representing the VCSE sector at strategic meetings. We support the VCSE sector to understand and respond to the challenges and strategic priorities of our statutory partners. By working together we achieve more than we can individually. These links enable better partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population and coproduce solutions to improve health and wellbeing in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

Through our strategic liaison function we share information and act as a communication link. We keep the local VCSE sector informed on the local landscape and national policy developments that may impact on commissioning, tendering and contracts or otherwise have a relevance to their organisation.

We remain active members of the Voluntary Sector emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) allowing us to feed in issues, concerns and intelligence as well as sharing best practice and expertise at both a local and a national level. We have also continued our links with NAVCA to ensure we are linked in on National issues that matter to the sector.

Future Developments

We will continue to ensure that we can provide advocacy and voice for the VCSE sector with statutory bodies and provide structures through which partnership and collaborative working can be facilitated.



Volunary Sectors Chief Officers Group

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) is a network of Voluntary Sector Organisations in Stoke-on-Trent which seeks to provide a clearer, louder, and more unified VCSE voice to influence local agendas and create strategic partnerships with other sectors.

VSCOG members have common aims, which encompass:

- promoting the role and value of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector;
- securing the local VCSE sector's sustainability and prosperity;
- improving the quality of life for all through the VCSE sector;
- maximising the potential of the VCSE sector;
- helping the local public sector to maximise efficiency.

VAST facilitates the VSCOG network and is helping it to shape into a relevant supportive space for its members. We recognise that being the leader of a VCSE organisation can be lonely and we want to develop VSCOG to be a supportive peer network where members can get support, information and advice from those they trust. By building networks and relationships no one needs to be on their own. Through VSCOG we have developed a Peer to Peer Pledge that VSCOG Members are committed to sharing their skills and experience to:

- develop leadership capacity within Stoke on Trent's VCSE Sector, and
- facilitate a social-support system, trusting professional relationships, and a sense of inclusion and community for new VCSE leaders in Stoke on Trent.

Volunary Sectors Chief Officers Group Case Study

Dr Ann Ewens, The Gingerbread Centre

"I was due to start at the Gingerbread Centre in 2021 and was new to the Sector. I knew of and had met Danny Flynn (CEO at YMCANS) at Staffordshire University and at NHS meetings. Danny had left a lasting impression on me in how he spoke about the local community and its young people. I made a cheeky approach to ask if Danny would mentor me in my first months at Gingerbread. Danny replied positively and has generously given of his time, his knowledge and expertise. I have met monthly with Danny who has supported and guided me and he has offered a number of really helpful insights and suggestions. He has introduced me to the work of Hilary Cottam and Asset Based thinking which I have aimed to steer our approach towards."

"I feel it has been a privilege to have this expertise shared with me and I am grateful for the support it has provided me. I am sure others would value knowing someone is there to talk things through with."

VSCOG Members recognise that peer support has an important role to play in growing and strengthening the VCSE sector in Stoke on Trent. This has occurred in an ad hoc manner and has been personality rather than process driven to date. VAST are keen to provide support and brokerage to ensure all local VCSE sector leaders can benefit from this support.

Danny Flynn, YMCA North Staffordshire

"I had a call from Ann who told me she had been the successful candidate for CEO at Gingerbread and raised the possibility of me offering her some help. I don't think we used the word Mentoring or Coaching but we discussed expectations, values, capacity and what support might look like. We agreed to meet online every 6 weeks or so and Ann would bring issues and challenges she faced."

"We met online throughout Covid and we would spend an hour or so discussing and reflecting, unlocking, advising, laughing, lamenting, supporting each other. Issues included, personal stuff, organisational stuff, development stuff, business stuff, political and social policy stuff. We would start our conversations with a bit of an agenda setting our discussions."

"I guess the above may appear to look like I'm the expert and Ann the recipient, that's what didn't happen, rather it was two people with skills and experience and the impact was mutual, both parties having skills, talents and experience that were used for mutual benefit."

"It has been great and one of the best experiences I have had in my new role and it would be great if others were lucky enough to get have a similar mentor."

Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Parent Carer Forums are part of the SEND code of practice which states "Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families".

VAST is facilitating the development of the Stoke Parent Carer Forum, now known as Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change, and are working with regional and national organisations Contact a Family and NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums) to help us achieve this.

Establishing a new forum was difficult during the pandemic however, the steering group, made up of key local VCSE sector organisations, started to take shape and build momentum and are planning events now this is possible again.

Through our already established strategic work we are well placed to enable a strong new voice to provide a critical friend role to our local statutory services.

Future Developments

A new website and CRM are under development to enable the forum to further develop and recruit a wider membership to the forum in the coming year.

Healthy Communities Forum

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Health systems are in a period of transition with new integrated Care Systems (ICS) being established across the country from 1 July 2022. This is an ideal opportunity for the VCSE sector to strengthen it's links to health systems and to ensure that there is a way from them to be involved in and influence decision making across the system.

Alongside colleagues at Support Staffordshire and with support from NAVCA VAST have been involved in the development of the NHS VCSE Alliance for Staffordshire to set out the way Health Systems will work with the VCSE sector. As a result of this work, we have developed Healthy Communities Forums, aligned to the identified Places of the ICS where the VCSE sector can work alongside colleagues from the ICS and discuss the issues affecting the health and wellbeing of their communities.

The forums meet quarterly and are a recognised mechanism within the ICS.

Future Developments

We will be developing a terms of reference for the forums to firmly establish the membership and role of the forums and will be working with colleagues at the ICS to develop a memorandum of understanding between the sectors going forward.

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of not less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:-

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day to day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has a finance audit and risk sub-committee which also meets quarterly. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Neil Dawson

Chair

Sub committees Finance & Remuneration

Mark Barnish

Treasurer

Sub-committee Finance

John Beech

Sub-committee remuneration

Susan Meredith

Sub-committee remuneration

Tim Edwards

Lesley Morrey

Nick Maslen

Victoria Hardie

Sub-committee Finance

Governance

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the Trustees are aware:

There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships including –VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) The North Staffordshire Collaborative Network & Team Staffordshire.

Related or connected charities:-
The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2022 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors
Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 14th December 2022 and signed on their behalf by:

Neil Dawson

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2022 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2022 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- we enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- we obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP. FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- we considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Karen Staley FCA BSc (Hons)
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Geens Limited, Statutory Auditor

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

68 Liverpool Road
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 1BG

Date: 19.12.2022

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	583,175	716,178	1,299,353
Other trading activities	4	26,316	-	26,316
Investment income	5	1,098	-	1,098
Total income		610,589	716,178	1,326,767
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(40,594)	-	(40,594)
Charitable activities	7	(530,029)	(617,744)	(1,147,773)
Total expenditure		(570,623)	(617,744)	(1,188,367)
Net income		39,966	98,434	138,400
Transfers between funds		(4,188)	4,188	-
Net movement in funds		35,778	102,622	138,400
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		306,133	62,202	368,335
Total funds carried forward	21	341,911	164,824	506,735

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 53 to 74 form an integral part of these financial statements.

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	708,645	422,000	1,130,645
Other trading activities	4	486	-	486
Investment income	5	83	-	83
Total income		709,214	422,000	1,131,214
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(23,919)	-	(23,919)
Charitable activities	7	(531,543)	(425,332)	(956,875)
Total expenditure		(555,462)	(425,332)	(980,794)
Net income/(expenditure)		153,752	(3,332)	150,420
Transfers between funds		(138)	138	-
Net movement in funds		153,614	(3,194)	150,420
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		152,519	65,396	217,915
Total funds carried forward	21	306,133	62,202	368,335

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 53 to 74 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	86,753	155,695
Current assets			
Stocks	16	1,185	-
Debtors	17	148,810	105,639
Cash at bank and in hand		827,574	718,832
		977,569	824,471
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	(512,587)	(566,831)
Net current assets		464,982	257,640
Total assets less current liabilities		551,735	413,335
Provisions	19	(45,000)	(45,000)
Net assets		506,735	368,335
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	164,824	62,202
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		341,911	306,133
Total funds	21	506,735	368,335

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommendend Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 53 to 74 were approved by the Board, and authorised for issue on 14th December 2022 and signed on behalf by:

Mark Barnish
Trustee

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	Note	2022 £	2021 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income		138,400	150,420
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6	68,942	95,550
Investment income	5	(1,098)	(83)
		206,244	245,887
Working capital adjustments			
Increase in stocks	16	(1,185)	-
(Increase)/decrease in debtors	17	(43,171)	46,535
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	18	47,347	(110,131)
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income		(101,591)	473,392
Net cash flows from operating activities		107,644	655,683
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	1,098	83
Sale of tangible fixed assets		-	1,425
Net cash flows from investing activities		1,098	1,508
Net increase in cash and cash equivalents		108,742	657,191
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		718,832	61,641
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		827,574	718,832

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818) , and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:
The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants receivable

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.

Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
b) Funds being restricted for use in a futureperiod.
c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either
(i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or
(ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Grants & Contracts	-	660,830	660,830
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	583,175	55,348	638,523
	583,175	716,178	1,299,353

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2021 £
Grants & Contracts	292,928	419,831	712,759
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	415,717	2,169	417,886
	708,645	422,000	1,130,645

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2022 £
Trading income;		
Cafe income	26,316	26,316
	26,316	26,316

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2021 £
Trading income;		
Cafe income	486	486
	486	486

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable and similar income;		
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,098	1,098
	1,098	1,098

	Unrestricted funds General £	Total 2021 £
Interest receivable and similar income;		
Interest receivable on bank deposits	83	83
	83	83

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	17,266	17,266
Cafe supplies	7,114	7,114
Office costs	1,201	1,201
Premises costs	5,499	5,499
Legal fees	460	460
Marketing and publicity	122	122
Depreciation	238	238
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	140	140
Support Costs	8,554	8,554
	40,594	40,594

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Total 2021 £
Staff Costs	19,232	19,232
Cafe supplies	126	126
Office costs	729	729
Premises costs	756	756
Legal fees	259	259
Marketing and publicity	8	8
Depreciation	238	238
Support Costs	2,571	2,571
	23,919	23,919

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	104,085	134,915	38,979	217,715	68,885	564,579
Travel Costs	780	156	3,224	145	235	4,540
Training	880	1,106	-	2,814	-	4,800
Office Costs	48,376	11,286	1,776	33,393	6,582	101,413
Legal & Professional	6,350	15,817	3,621	12,371	1,837	39,996
Advertising & Publicity	162	110	3,435	1,225	3,070	8,002
Premises Costs	102,856	-	-	5,686	8,286	116,828
Insurance	7,400	979	326	-	-	8,705
Management Costs	-	-	-	1	2,534	2,535
Sundry	1,728	-	-	1	1	1,730
Depreciation	68,059	278	-	-	-	68,337
Bursary	-	3,854	-	-	-	3,854
Partner Engagement	-	-	-	52,060	-	52,060
Events	1,881	3	42	10,806	4,184	16,916
Grants	-	-	-	79,347	-	79,347
Support Costs	28,512	17,107	5,702	14,256	8,554	74,131
	371,069	185,611	57,105	429,820	104,168	1,147,773

7 Expenditure on Charitable Activities (continued)

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Total 2021 £
Staff Costs	112,787	109,878	26,518	144,337	81,664	475,184
Travel Costs	949	103	656	29	-	1,737
Training	-	348	115	271	-	734
Office Costs	50,569	3,768	25	21,296	6,746	82,404
Legal & Professional	2,437	14,159	2,857	1,990	3,309	24,752
Advertising & Publicity	1,257	-	-	9,561	2,925	13,743
Premises Costs	101,805	-	1,535	15,881	4,803	124,024
Insurance	6,231	875	250	300	-	7,656
Sundry	278	-	-	-	-	278
Depreciation	95,910	278	-	-	-	96,188
Bursary	-	6,091	-	-	-	6,091
Events	670	-	-	2,155	30	2,855
Support Costs	11,575	11,575	21,349	55,492	21,238	121,229
	384,468	147,075	53,305	251,312	120,715	956,875

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds

Allocated by no. of staff:	Cafe £ 3	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	3,939	3,939
Staff Training	64	64
Travel	26	26
Premises Costs	85	85
Depreciation	38	38
Legal & Professional	940	940
Advertising & Publicity	143	143
Events	158	158
Office Costs	659	659
Sundry	1,814	1,814
Governance Costs	688	688
	8,554	8,554

Allocated by no. of staff:	Cafe £ 2	Total 2021 £
Staff Costs	4,802	4,802
Staff Training	71	71
Travel	49	49
Depreciation	39	39
Legal & Professional	895	895
Insurance	16	16
Advertising & Publicity	114	114
Events	11	11
Office Costs	1,084	1,084
Sundry	1,330	1,330
Governance Costs	431	431
Reallocate management fees	(6,271)	(6,271)
	2,571	2,571

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Projects	Support & Volunteering	Total 2022
Allocated by	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
no. of staff:	**10**	**6**	**2**	**3**	**5**	
Staff Costs	13,129	7,878	2,626	3,939	6,565	34,137
Staff Training	213	128	43	64	107	555
Travel Costs	85	51	17	26	43	222
Premises Costs	284	170	57	85	142	738
Depreciation	127	76	25	38	63	329
Legal & Professional	3,132	1,879	626	940	1,566	8,143
Advertising & Publicity	475	286	95	143	238	1,237
Events	527	316	105	158	263	1,369
Office Costs	2,198	1,319	440	659	1,099	5,715
Sundry	6,049	3,628	1,209	1,814	3,023	15,723
Governance Costs	2,293	1,376	459	688	1,147	5,963
	28,512	17,107	5,702	8,554	14,256	74,131

Allocated by no. of staff:	Facilities Management £ 9	Rechargeable Services £ 9	Health projects £ 2	Other £ 2	Support & Volunteering £ 4	Total 2021 £
Staff Costs	21,611	21,611	4,802	4,802	9,604	62,430
Staff Training	321	321	71	71	144	928
Travel Costs	218	218	49	49	97	631
Depreciation	176	176	39	39	79	509
Legal & Professional	4,029	4,029	895	895	1,791	11,639
Insurance	74	74	16	16	33	213
Advertising & Publicity	512	512	114	114	228	1,480
Events	50	50	11	11	23	145
Office Costs	4,878	4,878	1,084	1,084	2,167	14,091
Sundry	5,986	5,986	1,330	1,330	2,659	17,291
Governance Costs	1,939	1,939	431	431	861	5,601
Reallocate Management Fees	(28,219)	(28,219)	12,507	12,396	37,806	6,271
	11,575	11,575	21,349	21,238	55,492	121,229

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

	Grants to institutions	
	2022	2021
	£	£
Analysis		
Community Health Champion Grants	79,347	-
VAST Bursary	3,854	-
	83,201	-

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2021 - £Nil).

No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming resources for the year include:

	2022	2021
	£	£
Operating leases - other assets	6,006	10,724
Audit fees	7,000	6,000
Depreciation of fixed assets	68,942	95,550

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	537,926	489,579
Social security costs	37,754	32,205
Pension costs	44,240	40,282
	619,920	562,066

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2022 No	2021 No
Direct charitable activities	17	16
Generating funds	8	9
Management and administration	4	3
	29	28

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £173,156 (2021 - £127,061).

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £44,240 (2021 - £40,282).

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2021	294,229	158,442	1,832	96,941	551,444
At 31 March 2022	294,229	158,442	1,832	96,941	551,444
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2021	160,051	157,258	1,061	77,379	395,749
Charge for the year	60,281	589	458	7,614	68,942
At 31 March 2022	220,332	157,847	1,519	84,993	464,691
Net book value					
At 31 March 2022	73,897	595	313	11,948	86,753
At 31 March 2021	134,178	1,184	771	19,562	155,695

16 Stock

	2022 £	2021 £
Stocks	1,185	-

17 Debtors

	2022 £	2021 £
Trade debtors	136,268	91,753
Prepayments and accrued income	12,542	13,886
	148,810	105,639

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2022	2021
	£	£
Trade creditors	29,161	34,880
Other taxation and social security	47,854	15,148
Other creditors	13,995	14,178
Accruals	49,776	29,233
Deferred income	371,801	473,392
	512,587	566,831

	2022	2021
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2021	473,392	51,312
Resources deferred in the period	371,801	473,392
Amounts released from previous periods	(473,392)	(51,312)
Deferred income at year end	371,801	473,392

Creditors include £371,801 (2021: £473,392) of income deferred into the following year due to the timing of the charity's entitlement to the income after any performance conditions have been met. There are no unfulfilled conditions attached to this income at the balance sheet date. This includes the following balances in respect of restricted funds:

Health Projects £ 71,939
Support & Volunteering Projects £249,486
Strategic Liaison £40,376

19 Provisions

	Other provision	Total
	£	£
At 31 March 2022	(45,000)	(45,000)

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

There was no movement during the year ended 31 March 2022.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	86,753	-	-	86,753
Current assets	812,745	164,818	6	977,569
Current liabilities	(512,587)	-	-	(512,587)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	341,911	164,818	6	506,735

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2021 £
Tangible fixed assets	155,695	-	-	155,695
Current assets	762,269	62,196	6	824,471
Current liabilities	(566,831)	-	-	(566,831)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	306,133	62,196	6	368,335

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	181,133	610,589	(516,704)	(123,107)	151,911
Designated					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	50,000	-	(42,631)	92,631	100,000
Museum Contingency	50,000	-	(11,288)	26,288	65,000
	125,000	-	(53,919)	118,919	190,000
Total unrestricted funds	306,133	610,589	(570,623)	(4,188)	341,911
Restricted funds					
Health	21,206	59,402	(61,254)	2,365	21,719
Support & Volunteering	22,334	153,415	(153,064)	-	22,685
SOT CC	14,306	131,177	(116,120)	1,471	30,834
Other	4,350	33,716	(41,325)	352	(2,907)
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
Community Health Champions	-	289,250	(196,763)	-	92,487
Culture Recover Fund	-	49,218	(49,218)	-	-
Total restricted funds	62,202	716,178	(617,744)	4,188	164,824
Total funds	368,335	1,326,767	(1,188,367)	-	506,735

	Balance at 1 April 2020 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2021 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	127,519	709,214	(555,462)	(100,138)	181,133
Designated					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Museum Contingency	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
	25,000	-	-	100,000	125,000
Total unrestricted funds	152,519	709,214	(555,462)	(138)	306,133
Restricted					
Health	16,299	42,624	(37,717)	-	21,206
Support & Volunteering	24,182	254,119	(255,967)	-	22,334
SOT CC	-	54,124	(39,818)	-	14,306
Other	24,909	71,133	(91,830)	138	4,350
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
Total restricted funds	65,396	422,000	(425,332)	138	62,202
Total funds	217,915	1,131,214	(980,794)	-	368,335

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at the Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of restricted funds:

The Health related projects are funds from the ICB 's (formerly CCG) PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

The Support and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council relates to funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

Transfers relate to unrestricted funding used to cover overspends on restricted grants and contracts or amounts remaining at the end of restricted contracts that are not required to be repaid.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

The total value of future minimum lease payments was as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Within one year	(8,007)	(12,154)
In two to five years	(26,022)	(17,217)
	(34,029)	(29,371)

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2022 £	2021 £
Land and buildings		
Within one year	3,000	3,000
Between one and five years	12,000	12,000
After five years	45,000	48,000
	60,000	63,000
Other		
Within one year	6,006	12,154
Between one and five years	26,022	17,217
	32,028	29,371

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2022 £	2021 £
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	136,268	91,753
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(29,161)	(34,880)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £68,858 (2021 £42,986). Receipts of £2,520,726 (2021 £2,065,874) were received during the year and payments of £2,493,094 (2021 £2,040,002) were made leaving a year end balance of £54,197 (2021 £68,858).

28 Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund £153,415
Stoke on Trent City Council Closed Grant £18,000
Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Health Champions £288,000
HMRC (CJRS grant) £9,106

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £468,521 (2021 - £400,535).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.

VAST SERVICES (1920)

England & Wales - Charity number 1049663

Accounts

vast

INVESTING IN COMMUNITIES

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements

Year Ended 31st March 2021

Registered as a Charity No: 1049663. Company Registration No: 2000818

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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers & Advisors

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its memorandum and articles of association, which were last amended in 2020.

Company No. 2000818

Charity No. 1049663

Trustees

Neil Dawson *Chair*

Mark Barnish *Treasurer*

John Beech

David Holton

Tim Edwards (resigned 28 July 2021)

Dawn Wickham

Susan Meredith

Lesley Morrey

Nick Maslen

Auditors

Geens, 68 Liverpool Road,
Stoke on Trent, ST4 1BG

Bankers

Unity Bank Plc, Nine Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HB

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings FCCA Chief Executive
& Finance Director

Registered Office

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 5DD

Stafford Office

The Hub, 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford,
ST16 2LZ

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword

At the end of the last Annual Accounting period, we were concerned with the impact of COVID-19 on all of society and particularly on the voluntary sector. Little did we expect to still be in a similar situation at the end of this present period. The last year has seen the staff at VAST provide an amazing level of support for many groups and individuals across our area. At the same time ensuring, where possible, that our properties in Hanley and Stafford were kept in a safe condition to accommodate ourselves and our tenants.

Over the year we have continued to focus on supporting our many members and the communities where they operate through the provision of our services. Finances for our sector have always been difficult, but this year has been extremely challenging for many in the face of increased demand for services. VAST is an organisation dedicated to the betterment of the voluntary and community sectors locally and its core objectives remain to support the development of the local VCSE sector, utilising all available opportunities to best achieve this. We have once again reacted swiftly to allow our organisation to redirect itself to meet our member's needs.

During this time the Trustees have worked hard to consider the long-term strategy to best position VAST for the future. Lisa Healings has moved from Acting CEO to permanent CEO, and the staffing structure has been revised to ensure we can emerge from the pandemic into the new normal in as strong a position as possible. To the credit of all involved, this new delivery model was successful and helped VAST to continue to support the local VCSE sector through unprecedented times.

VAST, through Lisa Healings, and our small but very effective Senior Management Team, has increased engagement with local Statutory Bodies, The National Lottery Community Fund and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire. We have also encouraged partnership working among other local organisations and VAST has expanded it's close working arrangements with Support Staffordshire. As a development support organisation VAST has a critical role to play in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire's best and most attractive assets -Voluntary and Community Organisations, and we are proud to have been instrumental in the development of a new Community Directory where access to community services can be found within our area.

Our two managed centres, The Dudson Centre in Stoke-on-Trent, and The Hub in Stafford, have continued to maintain reasonable occupancy rates and offer an excellent service to the tenants and room users. The Trustees also continue to support and manage The Dudson Museum within the Dudson Centre, which is well worth a visit and is now on the Heritage Trail. Work has commenced to obtain accreditation for the Museum and a new Memorandum of Understanding has been enacted between VAST, The Dudson Centre and The Dudson Heritage Trust who own the collection.

VAST ensures quality by continuously examining the value and impact of our work and this has been recognised by externally moderated awards in the past. As the public sector continues to shrink due to austerity measures, we are building more effective relationships and partnerships with all sectors. To ensure that we are on target to achieve our ambitions, the Board of Trustees regularly review our strategic approach and have recommitted to be an entrepreneurial service which will develop and create more value for the VCSE sector. We will also continue to develop joint projects with like-minded partners to create more funding opportunities for our VCSE sector.

We have always been innovative and looked at developing solutions to emerging issues. I am confident that we can continue to deliver our passion for the VCSE sector and maintain VAST's position as a key provider of services to the sector.

I would like to thank VAST's members for their continued involvement, my fellow trustees and particularly the staff at VAST for their commitment, hard work and dedication and look forward to VAST continuing its invaluable work for the VCSE sector into the future.

Thank you,

Neil Dawson
Chair
December 2021

Strategic Report

The trustees who are the directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2021 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

This financial year has probably been the most challanging ever for VAST and the rest of the VCSE sector. The lockdown we entered in late March 2020, which everyone assumed was for just a few weeks, endured for four months and was followed by periods of restrictions and further lockdowns which continue to impact as this report is written and will for many years to come.

Our managed centres were closed and we had to find new and different ways of working.

During that time, however VAST has been able to demonstrate that it really is there to support the local VCSE sector. We have forged new partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and were able to step forward quickly to first provide the Stoke-on-Trent together portal, to ensure the local sector and City Council could provide essential services to the most vulnerable residents of the city and later, to provide support to the VCSE organisations, who saw unprecedented demand on their services. We were also able to provide a cohesive volunteer brokerage system to ensure all those who wanted to volunteer could do so safely and that organisations who so desperately needed volunteers could continue to meet demand. All of this was enabled by the flexibility of our existing funders and the adaptability of our staff.

We are very grateful for the emergency funding we were able to secure from Stoke-on-Trent City Council, The National Lottery and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, which enabled us to change direction quickly and to utilise our staff to provide the services the sector so desperately needed. As a result, we ended the financial year in a stronger position as a result of the immense efforts of our whole team.

The landscape for the VCSE is more difficult than ever. However, VAST has continued to build key relationships with local authorities and health service bodies as well as other charities, to ensure that we can continue to support and advocate for the VCSE. This has been demonstrated with our strategic partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council during the COVID pandemic, which continues to strengthen as we emerge into the new landscape of a post pandemic world.

Achievements and Performance

How we performed against our plans:

What we said we would do	What we did	How successful we were
Chargeable Services • Advertise more widely outside the membership base • Develop provision to social enterprises and other types of not for profit • Explore a wider geographical market • Develop a range of packages of support • Deliver training packages around relevant thematic areas • Develop governance support and project evaluation services	Lockdown restrictions impacted on our ability to network and meet with new clients, but word of mouth continued to mean we were still able to recruit new clients for our services. We did find, however that there was much less demand for services that were not mandatory and for most of the year our meeting room facilities and café were closed. Our chargeable income covering our business support service, creative services, café and refreshment income and income from rentals was £425,105 in the year. We have continued to recruit a number of clients from outside of our local geographic area. We are still developing packaged support offers to launch when demand begins to increase again. We have switched to virtual delivery for our training packages and have focussed these around volunteering and governance support and have also held successful volunteering and funding fayres virtually. We have also been engaged to carry out some small project evaluation work but, staff capacity means we are not widely promoting this stream of work at the moment.	Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely, however pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our client and ourselves by the COVID pandemic has meant it is difficult to expand our services as rapidly as originally anticipated.

Grants and Contracts • Explore funding opportunities to ensure we can continue to deliver in key areas such as volunteering and Social Prescribing • Continually develop our role of strategic liaison between the sector and public bodies • Facilitate collaborative partnership working across the local sector	During the COVID-19 pandemic, we successfully secured a number of Emergency funding streams and agreed with existing funders that we could use the funding provided by them for emergency response. We have successfully secured funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to provide support and volunteering brokerage to the VCSE sector in Stoke and to enable a strategic partnership between ourselves and the city council. Our Vintage Volunteers project was not successful in obtaining continuation funding, however we are developing further bids based on the learning from this project. Following the success of the pilot place-based giving scheme, Totally Stoked, and the evolution of this to form The Stoke-on-Trent Together partnership we have also secured three years funding from The National Lottery to develop a Totally Stoked Support offer to the VCSE sector in North Staffordshire. During the pandemic we have worked closely with partners across the VCSE sector to and developed strong networks with us now playing an active role in the local collaborative network encompassing VCSE and statutory bodies and re-invigorating the Stoke-on-Trent Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group. Our Strategic Liaison Officer for Health and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area.	We were successful in securing emergency funding to enable us to react quickly during the pandemic and have built new, stronger partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. We continue to apply for appropriate funding to ensure our key service offer can continue into the future.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and the activities derived thereof, have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally. Sector funding is likely to reduce drastically as the country gets to grips with the aftermath of a global pandemic and there are ongoing reviews of commissioning within the statutory bodies invariably meaning fewer, larger contracts available. There has been an unprecedented demand for services provided by the VCSE this year, with fewer resources available to fund and develop them. the sector needed to be responsive and reactive with little time to plan.

The local political environment continues to be experiencing enormous amounts of continual change, upheaval and review, with many of our statutory partners across a range of thematic areas shrinking, reviewing key strategies and working towards greater co-production and co-commissioning.

The transformation agenda still sweeping across Staffordshire, while welcome, is proving to be an incredibly protracted and complicated process, bringing with it enormous uncertainty, which makes planning during this difficult time quite precarious.

There is a desire from local statutory partners to want to engage with the Sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from VSCOG. We are having some encouraging conversations, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible benefits for the Sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, that they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority have embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and have identified Asset Based Community Development as a key strategy to develop moving forward, to achieve which requires greater co- production with the VCSE and the communities we serve.

From the start of the COVID pandemic the statutory sector relied on the VCSE to support its work and it appears that this relationship will continue into the recovery phase. It is hoped that as these discussions continue that there become real tangible benefits and opportunities for the local VCSE to collaborate with statutory partners to deliver on ambitious initiatives.

These positive discussions are yet to impact upon local commissioning, this year has very little contracting above the emergency response with existing contracts rolled on for further periods. Hopefully, the above positive initiatives will lead to future investment in the local sector.

Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

Income against budget for chargeable services

The budgets were set before the COVID-19 Pandemic and when set were challenging. Due to additional assistance with furlough claims and the essential nature of our accountancy work we were able to surpass our budgets, however our digital services were impacted by the lack of print work needed as everything moved online, and, also by the fact that most VCSE organisations saw unprecedented demand for their services and had little time to focus on websites or other digital needs. As we emerge from the pandemic, we are continuing to look at ways to promote and expand our services.

Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre and The Hub

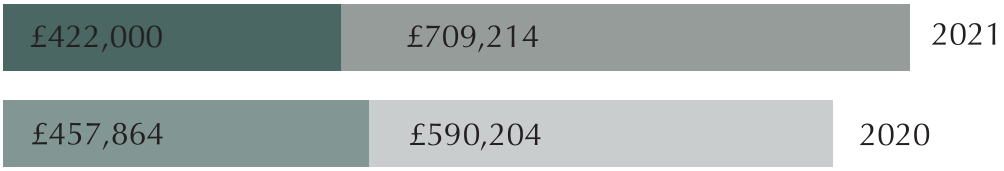
For the year to March 2021, as a result of the impact of the pandemic, based on income received against total possible income the Hub was 85% occupied and The Dudson Centre was 90% occupied.

Occupancy levels remained good across both sites despite concerns that we may lose tenants as the impacts of COVID-19 and lockdowns hit. However, the meeting rooms at both centres remained closed for most of the year and during the period they were able to open bookings were low and capacity in the rooms reduced due to social distancing requirements. We were able to access some grants from Stoke-on-Trent City Council for The Dudson Centre but were unsuccessful in applications to Stafford Borough Council in respect of the Hub.

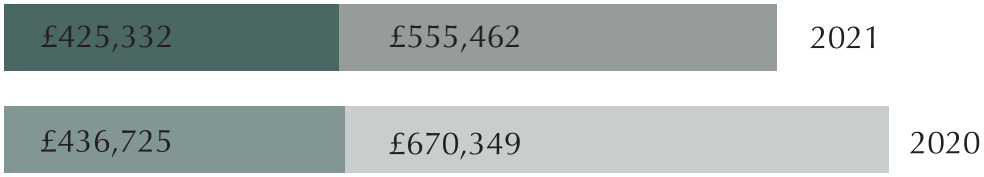
Financial Review

Overall our income has remained consistent with the previous year at approximately £1million.

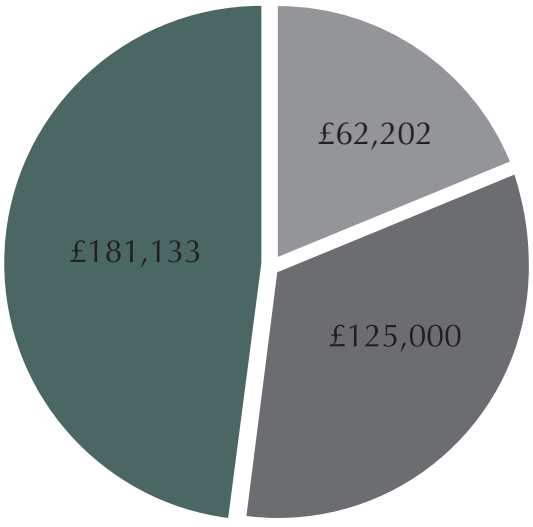
Income £1,131,214
(2020 £1,048,068)



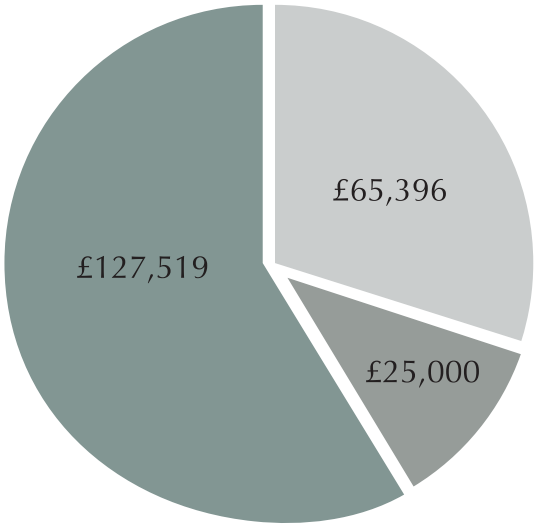
Expenditure £980,794
(2020) 1,107,074



Reserves 2021 £368,335



Reserves 2020 £217,915



Of the designated reserves £25,000 is set aside to allow for times of underoccupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre, £50,000 is set aside for underoccupancy and unexpected expenditure at The Hub and £50,000 is set aside for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

Financial Review

VAST's principle funding sources for 2020/21 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who fund our work with the local VCSE sector, Stoke on Trent and North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning groups who fund our Strategic Liaison post, The National Lottery Community Fund who funded the Vintage Volunteers project, provided us with Emergency Funding through the COVID pandemic and fund our new, Totally Stoked Support project and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire who provided much needed funding to enable our support to the VCSE during the pandemic.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2020/21 accounted for 37% of income (60% of unrestricted income).

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not for profit organisations:

- RSPCA – Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals.
- Trentham Pre School
- Stoke on Trent Foodbank
- Haregate Community Centre.
- ASHA
- RubyGirl UK
- NSAAA
- Disability Solutions
- Blurton Community Hub
- St Johns Community Church
- Uttoxeter Gateway
- Packmoor Community Association
- Expert Citizens UK CIC
- Staffordshire Parish Council Association
- North Staffordshire Carers Association
- Audley Parish Council
- Willoughbridge Garden Trust
- Biddulph Valley Way
- Biddulph Methodist Church
- Stoke on Trent Age Friendly City Board
- Abbey Hulton Sports and Social Club
- Green Door Hub
- Multiple Abilities Club
- Headway North Staffs
- Smallthorne Social Society
- Silvertree Cleaning
- Rachel Wilson (DP)
- Breakthru' Support Services
- Voice of Hope
- St Andrews with St Peters Pre School
- Werrington Parish Council
- Sunflower Families Support Group
- North Staffordshire Medical Institute
- Staffordshire Sight Loss Association
- Number 11 CIC
- SkinJase in the Community

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year end financial statements.

The overall objectives of VAST are to enhance the quality of life of local residents through the development of the social economy by developing the local community and voluntary sectors.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or higher interest deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.

The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £93,000 to £421,000.

Currently we hold £25,438 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £368,335 of which £306,133 is unrestricted, and of this £125,000 is designated.

The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future Periods

Aims and Key objectives

To grow VAST to be a thriving and sustainable organisation supporting and advocating for the VCSE sector in Staffordshire.

Activities Planned to Achieve Aims
We will achieve the above by implementing the following activities;

Chargeable Services

- Advertise more widely outside membership base
- Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not for profit organisations
- Explore the market in surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision
- Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and Social Enterprise
- Deliver training courses around relevant thematical areas
- Develop governance support and project evaluation services

Grants and Contracts

- Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support
- Continually develop our role of Strategic Liaison between the sector and public bodies
- Facilitate collaborative and partnership working across the local sector

Principle Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

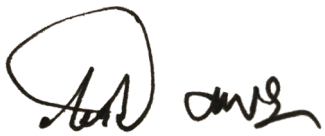
The principle risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, however sources of income have been diversified over recent years and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable service to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the impact of a number of year on year reductions to free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

The board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Monthly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board are able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

Other risks considered to be high are risks associated with contracts, competition from similar organisations, provision of misleading advice, project failure and loss of key staff. The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standards awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 8th December 2021 and signed on its behalf by:



Neil Dawson

Chair

Trustees' Report

(incorporating the Directors' Report)

Our Purpose

The Objects for which the Charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent; and in particular the advancement of education, the advancement of heritage, the advancement of health, the advancement of citizenship or community development and the prevention or relief of poverty.

In furtherance of the above purposes, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

i. promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together in Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above;

ii. assist anybody or bodies financially or otherwise;

iii. obtain, collect and receive moneys and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful method, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not);

iv. procure and provide information;

v. procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents;

vi. arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes;

vii. promote, encourage or undertake experimental work

viii. operate an museum and heritage centre

Role

VAST is a social enterprise that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities and civil society. VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders.

[1] Voluntary and Community & Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) - charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises, faith organisations, community interest companies, housing associations and mutuals and co-operatives.

[2] The Geographical entity of Staffordshire which includes Stoke on Trent

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

- Support
- Inform
- Connect
- Advocate

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following behaviours;

- Authentic
- Pro-active
- Innovative
- Responsive

All delivered with Integrity and underpinned by these values…

Support

Enhancing and improving the sustainability of VAST through selling of back office services to Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Registered Charities in Staffordshire (VCSE) has a twofold advantage. Firstly, it generates income for VAST, thus reducing our grant dependency, secondly, and more importantly, it provides high quality services which are professionally delivered by qualified professionals. Our services are extremely competitive compared to private sector organisations providing a similar service, with the added advantage of our staff being experts in the requirements of the sector.

In addition, through funded contracts we support and develop the local VCSE sector through advice and guidance as well as with practical support and advice.

Throughout the COVID-19 pandemic this support became a vital lifeline at a time of unprecedented demand.

Accounts and Payroll

Our fully qualified accountancy team are experts in the charity and not-for-profit sector and offer a range of affordable services in a friendly and professional manner. During the year we have worked with 122 community groups, charities and social enterprises and we are always keen to talk to new organisations about how we can help them.

End of year accounts and independent examination

A major part of our work is the preparation and, if required, the independent examination of accounts. Our team keeps up to date with the ever-changing regulations so trustees and directors can be safe in the knowledge they are fully compliant with all the relevant legislation.

Bookkeeping

We offer a full bookkeeping and management accounts service to ensure that decisions can be made based on accurate up to date information. We also provide training, support and advice to organisations who wish to maintain their own accounting records.

Payroll

We offer a fully managed payroll bureau service meaning that payroll is processed simply, quickly and reliably and ensuring that all HMRC and pension requirements are up to date. Our approachable staff are on hand to offer advice and support to take the headache out of paying staff. During COVID we have assisted over 40 clients to correctly process claims to the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme.

Corporation tax

Whether the organisation is a community interest company or a charity, HMRC can request a corporation tax return. We can help complete and submit any required returns and ensure that any tax due is correctly calculated. Many charities who have not been required to submit corporation tax returns in the past are now being requested to do so and this is a constantly growing area of our work.

We can also help organisations prepare and submit vat returns, even in complicated partial-exemption situations.

Training

We offer classroom based or one to one training on all aspects of bookkeeping, accounting and governance for new or established organisations. As QuickBooks certified pro-advisors, we also offer bespoke training to ensure that organisations are fully prepared to use QuickBooks' many features to their advantage

Future aims

- Increase the number of organisations we support with year-end accounts and independent examinations to ensure as many local small charities and social enterprises as possible have access to quality, accurate information to provide to beneficiaries, regulators and to support funding applications.
- To work with an increased number of local not-for-profit organisations to give them access to quality training (classroom-based or virtually) and provide bespoke support.

Accounts feedback

"Fabulous service, always very helpful and quick to respond to any questions or queries."

"Thank you for all your help and advice, it was a pleasure to deal with you."

"Really great service as usual. I have worked with Daryl on our accounts now for a number of years and have been very impressed with his professionalism and support."

Digital services

Database

VAST has a qualified Database Developer in house providing bespoke CRM databases to the VCSE sector, enabling them to easily and effectively manage their contacts, interactions, and to streamline their business processes and reporting mechanisms.

Our solutions enable VCSE groups to easily and effectively monitor their work and services and capture outcomes. We simplify the often-daunting process of reporting on key outcomes which saves our clients time and money.

Graphic design

Our comprehensive and highly professional Graphic Design service enables even the smallest VCSE group to portray a professional image through a one stop shop for all marketing requirements including the design and production of business stationary, leaflets, brochures, newsletters, posters, annual reports, exhibition stands and much more.

In the past year the graphic design department has maintained good links with existing customers ensuring repeat work and developing relationships with new customers.

Web design

VAST design and build bespoke websites for our clients and offer everything from a simple one-page website to more complex systems, including e-commerce sites. We provide solutions using a user-friendly CMS that allows our clients to edit and update their own websites themselves.

VAST website design portfolio has continued to expand over the past 12 months, we have completed a variety of bursary websites for SMEs along with larger websites including e-commerce, directory-based sites and news and information distribution sites.

Print

VAST offers a quality and cost-effective printing service. We print flyers, leaflets, brochures, letterheads, business cards, compliments slips, pull up banners, PVC vinyl banners, annual reports and more.

Our Achievements

Over the past 12 months we have had a large internal focus on updating our own websites to create more online brand consistency, improved modern functionality, and user experience. We have successfully updated the VAST and Dudson Centre website and created a new website for the Dudson Museum.

VAST Digital have fully developed a new bespoke internal CRM. The CRM offers portals for client details, Door2Door and Volunteering, alongside many useful staff tools such as online timesheets. The CRM has been integrated with Mailchimp to allow for targeted email marketing.

We have undertaken a full review of our hosting package and updated security in line with GDPR. VAST now have their own online servers that host all internal websites and CRMs alongside and number of client websites and CRMs.

During the Initial part of the COVID-19 Pandemic, VAST worked closely with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to develop a digital response to the community's needs. The City Council commissioned VAST to develop an online ticketing system placed on a public facing website where both organisations and individuals could request and offer support. Additionally, there was also an area developed for promoting the latest guidance and advice to the public. This build was undertaken on a very short timescale and although challenging, received a lot of positive feedback and had a lot of interactions.

The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory build had been completed this year and has begun population.

Future aims

We will focus on expanding our client base through marketing our services to improve income generation.

Continued development of the VAST CRM, new areas have been planned for the CRM.

We aim to continue to develop inhouse skills and processes to grow income generation. We will continue to focus on new technology and digital developments.

We will deliver bespoke online training via digital platforms including Teams and Zoom. The training will include website, database, and social media.

We will continue to focus on internal websites bringing the remaining few in line with the brand, while building a new website for Stoke Community Health Champions. A new user-friendly booking system will be developed for the Meeting rooms.

Facilities

Unfortunately, for most of the year both centres had to remain closed to external visitors due to COVID-19 restrictions meaning that the café and meeting rooms were able to generate very little income.

We have been fortunate that tenants have been able to retain their office space and utilise offices when they were allowed to do so.

The Hub – Stafford

At the end of March 2021 Wise Ability and the Social Hub left the Hub due to not being able to hold face to face meetings. These groups occupied 2 large offices on the ground floor. SSAFA and YMCA also gave notice, but YMCA asked to rent desk space in place of office space. Although most of the tenants continued to work from home during the lockdown, three tenants requested that they still be able to work from the Hub and, as they had access, they continued to use their office space.

The Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust, who had previously used the meeting room on the second floor, wanted to continue to use it during lockdown and signed a short-term licence and continued to use the room.

Due to COVID the meeting rooms were not used at all to the end of March, however bookings have started to come in from May 2021 onwards.

The Dudson Centre - Hanley

A lot of activity took place at the Dudson Centre during the year, two tenants gave notice, however three offices now have new tenants. Due to the lockdown most of the tenants continued to work from home. The Dudson Centre was closed to the public during lockdown periods, following government guidelines and re-opened in May 2021.

During the last three months of the year 3 enquiries were received regarding office space, the tenancies will be taken on in the new financial year. The occupancy levels have been consistent at around 82% increasing to 87% at the end of the year.

The meeting rooms have been closed for much of the year and have therefore generated very little income however, The Rose Price room and Audrey Dudson room have had improved technology installed to enable groups and organisations to have blended meetings between people who are physically present and others who want to attend virtually.

Towards the end of the year, after many months awaiting listed building permission, steel gates and fencing were installed at the front and the side of the Dudson Centre. This has secured the Centre and has reduced antisocial behaviour.

The café has remained closed for the whole 12 months and has therefore generated no income.

The Dudson Museum

When VAST took over the running of The Dudson Museum in late 2019 a series of events were planned for the year ahead, however, due to the COVID pandemic, it was not possible for these to take place.

For the majority of the year staff were furloughed, However, the Museum secured funding from the Culture Recovery Fund and The Community Foundation for Staffordshire to enable staff to return and make plans for re-opening. As a result of this funding, a new website has been developed with a combination of children's activities, stories, and other information. Reels in Motion visited the Dudson Centre in February 2021 and produced a video and photographs which can also be accessed from the website and a virtual tour was also produced by 360 pictures, enabling virtual visits while the Museum had to remain closed.

The Museum is working towards accreditation and is currently in the process of completing and finalising the eligibility criteria and the staff have worked on many different activities and presentations which will take place once the Museum is able to open to the public once again.

Facilities feedback

"I would like to say is that the HUB is such a special venue for us at A Child of Mine. We personally have been a tenant at the HUB for almost 7 years and have loved our time here. It is a central location offering both office and meeting room space if needed. Our service users find it convenient as we have a town centre location (although parking has always been a real negative) but we love the building, love the atmosphere and being with other charities to network with and support each other, it really is a community hub where we all work and support each other.

Covid really took a toll on the tenants over the past year however, the building has always remained available and accessible for those who needed it to carry on their work. Thank you VAST for giving us a place and a venue to continue our work and support our service users, that is so incredibly important."

"We moved in to the Dudson Centre in August last year. Our new office is bright and has a really lovely feel about it. The staff at VAST have been most welcoming and extremely helpful in helping us to settle in, even during the pandemic when some of their own staff were working from home or furloughed. We have now started to meet and work with other organisations who are part of the Dudson Centre which is a really positive thing for clients we are working with. The Café is a great place for our clients to meet for a cuppa, cake and a natter. Thank you to the staff at VAST for making us feel really welcome"

"We have been able to use the building during lockdowns which has meant that we have been able to continue to run the charity, serve our CCPA families without a break in services and to fundraise. Without access to our ebay office in particular that funding stream would have ceased losing us £1000's in much-needed income. I know it has been very difficult to manage so I would like to thank Jackie Wheeler, in particular, for enabling the opening of the building during a very difficult time.

the
Dudson
museum

Door2Door Transport

The coronavirus pandemic has meant Door2Door Transport faced it's most challenging year in over 30 years of service. Like many services, the transport element stopped running during the initial period of lockdown. But we have always known that the service is about so much more than transport and so we were able to adapt immediately, recognising the need to keep in regular contact with both our service users and our wonderful team of volunteers. From her home Margaret, our Service Coordinator, supported by Sheila, our Volunteer Administrator, made regular check in calls and became a vital lifeline and the friendly support that was so much needed in that incredibly uncertain time.

The service also diversified and became a "pharmacy partner" to a number of local pharmacies. The scheme linked VCSE sector organisations with pharmacies to help them meet the overwhelming demand for delivery of vital prescriptions to people's homes.

In July, with the support and advice from The Community Transport Association, we put new guidelines and processes in place, provided PPE and gradually re-started the transport provision. A number of our fabulous volunteer drivers came forward to start offering transport for vital medical appointments and essential trips.

The number of journeys was understandably low and we continued to provide the befriending calls alongside the journeys for many of our beneficiaries who remained at home shielding. This quieter period was put to good use as we designed and implemented a bespoke CRM system to manage our bookings alongside implementing a cashless service, taking payments at the time of booking to avoid drivers and service users handling cash.

As the vaccination roll out began Door2Door Transport played a vital role in supporting vulnerable people to access their vaccinations earning the nickname "Jabs Cabs" amongst our drivers and service users.

Through our links with the Social Prescribing Link Worker in Audley we have established a partnership with Audley Rural Parish Council who have provided funding and promotion to support people in the parish to access the service.

Door2Door in action

Leo has a number of long-term health conditions including Fibromyalgia and chronic pain. He walks with a cane and tires very quickly. In addition, he was diagnosed with Autism at 32 and is now 36. He finds it difficult to socialise and maintain small talk and feels paranoid around strangers. He has frequent hospital appointments and no means of transport.

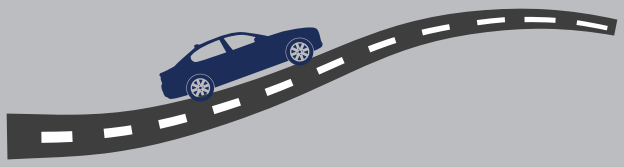
Leo describes the Door 2 Door Service as vital for both his health and his wellbeing. He has built familiar, trusting relationships with the volunteer drivers, who have an understanding of his condition and how best to help him. Leo says that many of the drivers go "above and beyond" the call of duty for him; if he has a routine hospital appointment, they will support him in the waiting room and wait until his appointment is finished to take him home.

In the past, Leo had his groceries delivered from a major supermarket. He says that over time, the delivery drivers became lazy and would leave his shopping at the foot of two flights of stairs, leaving him to struggle and become tired trying to carry it all up. A Door2Door driver helped Leo to change to a new supermarket and makes sure that his groceries are taken to his door. Leo says this is just another example of the way Door 2 Door go "above and beyond".

"I haven't been having my pain appointments because of lockdown so I'm in extreme pain now. But I know that when my appointments start again, Door2Door will be there for me, which means a lot"

Over 60 beneficiaries recorded wellbeing calls per month during lock down

96 journeys – 61% medical, 20% essential trips maintaining independence including shopping/banking/hairdressing



Supported By:

The VAST Bursary Fund

Since its inception in 2015, the VAST Bursary Fund has awarded more than £52,000 to more than 100 voluntary sector organisations throughout Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire. The fund awards a total of up to £500 towards eligible VAST business services.

Between April and September 2020, The Bursary Fund was paused for new applications due to the Coronavirus pandemic.

During the period from April 2020 and March 2021 a total of 9 applications were received and subsequently awarded by the panel. The total awarded for this period was £4500.00, each at £500. Five of these applications were for accountancy services and the remaining for website design.

Of these applications, two thirds were from Stoke-on-Trent. The remaining applications were from VCSE groups based in the East Staffordshire and Lichfield areas.

Inform

To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

Marketing and Communication

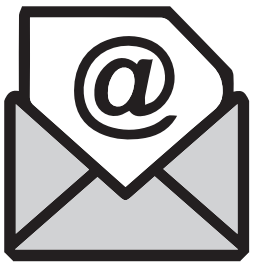
Under the Creative Services banner, the main marketing objective is to promote the services we offer, increase our customer-base and generate income. To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

VAST have multipal social and emailing communication channels for the diffent projects, during this period our focus was on the VAST Central, Totally Stoked and Volunteering comunications.

VAST marketing includes:

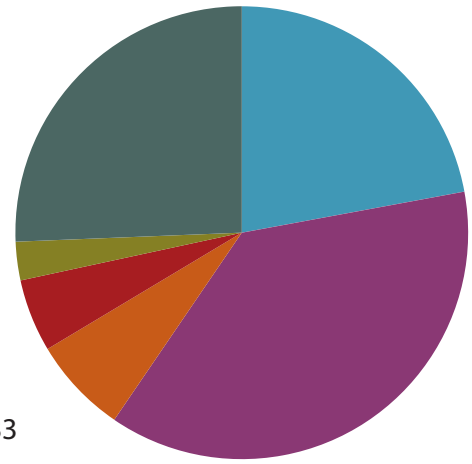
Email marketing – After the launch of #StokeonTrentTogether and the introduction of lockdown restrictions, we began to send out more frequent updates around COVID-19 to our mailing lists to ensure that they could access all the help, support, and resources they needed to better serve their beneficiaries during a time of crisis. The funding elements of these newsletters were, predictably, the most popular in terms of click-throughs to our website.

The recruitment of hundreds of volunteers in Stoke-on-Trent meant that regular volunteering updates were also sent out to the new COVID-19 Volunteers mailing list. These volunteering newsletters were very well received with initial open rates of more than 70%.



Total emails sent: **83**
COVID-19 emails sent: **27**
Average open rate: **23.50%**
Average click rate: **7.0%**

Our Audience



Total Subscribers **3019**

Social media marketing – The prime focus for VCSE groups – especially during the first part of the year – was emergency funding and we promoted these new funds, together with sector and government guidance with a heavy social media presence. The increase in activity on our social media channels was phenomenal; at one point we saw a 577% increase in engagements with our audiences.

As well as the local #StokeonTrentTogether message and the associated calls to action, VAST also took part in wider sector social media campaigns. Fronted by NAVCA and NCVO, the #EveryDayCounts campaign called on the government to provide sector-specific funding to support charities and community groups throughout the crisis. Once the VCSE funding was announced, #EveryDayCounts became #NeverMoreNeeded. This campaign was created purely to raise awareness of the importance of charities and the crucial role the voluntary sector will had in supporting local communities and vulnerable residents through COVID-19.

Our Followers

Website blog - During the beginning of this period, news stories were hitting inboxes at a ferocious rate. This is reflected in the sheer number of articles shared through the "Latest News" page on our website – a huge increase from the same period in 2019/20.

Articles Posted
2021/20 - ***585***
2020/19 - ***176***

Website Visits
2021/20 - ***57,395***
2020/19 - ***18,331***

Job Adverts
2021/20 - ***37***
2020/19 - ***60***

Connect

Our meeting spaces, events and networks enable VCSE organisations to work together and collaborate amongst themselves and with the wider local community

TOTALLY STOKED

Totally Stoked

Totally Stoked was a successful pilot scheme under the Place Based Giving agenda managed by VAST. Following a successful funding application in December 2018 to DCMS and CAF work began in July 2019 to form the management team, structure, partnership and strategic direction of the scheme.

The Totally Stoked ethos is that the people in Stoke-on-Trent need access to a rich variety of resilient VCSE groups and services to help them and their communities to thrive. For this to happen we believe it is vital to provide support to our local VCSE sector. Totally Stoked aims to ensure the sector has access to the support, funds, skills and resources it requires to enable it to give local people and communities what they need to live happy healthy lives.

Totally Stoked works across sectors to bring VCSE organisations, statutory partners and local businesses together to tackle the challenges in our City.

How it Works

Totally Stoked provides a mechanism so that organisations in the community can get access and request support in four key areas that are common to the practical, operational and development needs of community organisations:

We provide this mechanism by facilitating a 'Call and Response' system alongside a programme of co-produced and "share network" events that provide networking, training and connection opportunities for the VCSE sector and our community.

The 'Call and Response' system enables organisations to 'Request Support' directly into Totally Stoked. Totally Stoked will endeavour to find those who can 'Offer Support' in response to that call. Reversely, people and organisations can 'Offer Support' and we will find the places where that offer can have the most positive impact.

The Totally Stoked website launched in February 2020, unfortunately we were already entering a pandemic. The concept had already been noticed however, and as statutory bodies and the VCSE sector came together to work out how best to respond, the call and response mechanism of Totally Stoked was identified as the best means of reaching out and providing the support needed to the most vulnerable in our society. Within days Stoke-on-Trent Together was born.

The pilot funding ended in June 2020, but the concept of Totally Stoked lives on as the core principle behind the ways VAST supports the VCSE sector. The website is in the process of being updated, to remain a key place for the sharing of resources across the VCSE sector. The other support elements of the project have now been embedded in our ongoing support work, and our volunteer brokerage.

Totally Stoked in Action

During November 2020 a local Company approached us offering 5,000 masks to be made available to local VCSE organisations. Thanks to their donation we have been able to support 26 local organisations with the PPE they need to keep their frontline staff, volunteers and service users safe.

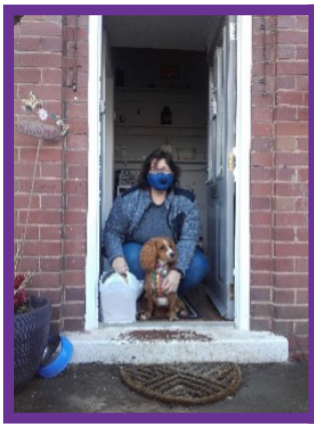
The organisations supported include:

- Several specialist voluntary organisations providing support to carers, adults, and children living with a disability, helping them to maintain independence, including; Crossroads, Disability Solutions, MHA Communities, Staffordshire Sight Loss Association, Caudwell Children, Our Space and Silvertree.
- Gingerbread- providing supported accommodation for homeless families and teenage parents,
- Door2Door Transport - supporting those who cannot access public transport and do not have their own vehicle. Recently they have been busy supporting people going to their vaccination appointments.
- And various other local groups that play a vital role in supporting vulnerable individuals that are isolated and have needed help. Their roles include food deliveries, collection and delivery of prescriptions and keeping up to date with information about specialist support available - for example the Veteran Support Centre, Packmoor Community Association, Addaction, Staffordshire Buddies, Middleport Matters, ASHA, Better Together, TWOCO and St Pauls Church

One local organisation approached us who had experienced a disruption to their supply, we managed to fill their immediate need and get our donation matched with 1,500 masks from the City Council.

We have also supported a number of these groups to access Children's activity packs from Staffordshire Wildlife.

We are thrilled that after telling the Company of all the great organisations their offer supported we received a further donation of 5,000 masks to distribute to local voluntary and community groups.



Stoke-on-Trent Together

#STOKEONTRENT TOGETHER

In late January 2020 it started to become clear that Coronavirus was something that wasn't just happening somewhere else. The situation quickly escalated and talk of a global pandemic led to the realisation that action was needed. As the government talked about potential restrictions being needed Stoke-on-Trent City Council called together a group of VCSE organisations to discuss how we, as a collective, could support and protect the most vulnerable members of our community. Stoke-on-Trent Together was born.

In the week prior to lockdown VAST developed and launched a web portal, in conjunction with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, where individuals or organisations requiring or offering support could register. Stoke-on-Trent City Council's staff responded to requests for support from individuals via the webportal and an associated telephone helpline whilst VAST staff worked with the organisations offering support to ensure their offer was fully understood and correctly advertised to the public and that they had the capacity to deliver the services needed. We also worked with organisations requesting support to ensure they had sufficient volunteers and to ensure that they were aware of any additional resources available to them. Our Vintage Volunteers and Totally Stoked teams worked tirelessly with all the individuals submitting offers of help to place them in appropriate volunteering roles as well as ensuring the website was constantly updated with the most current information, which often changed on a daily basis at the start of the pandemic.

We all thought that this would be a short-term problem, but as the weeks passed and the pandemic grew it became clear that we were not going to return to "normal" quickly.

VAST worked with VCSE organisations across Stoke-on-Trent to establish the effect that the pandemic was having on the sector both in terms of extra demand on capacity and also in lost financial resources either from chargeable services that had to stop or from fundraising that could no longer take place and campaigned both locally with the City Council and Nationally via NCVO, NAVCA and CFG to ensure the vital resource needed could be made available to the sector.

As the local infrastructure support organisation we saw that we were ideally placed to help and support the VCSE sector meet the inevitable increased demand on them once lockdown is over and our communities need to adapt to the new normal, facing whatever personal and economic hardships that may bring.

Through Stoke-on-Trent Together the VCSE sector and Statutory bodies in Stoke-on-Trent pulled together on the face of adversity, and the vital role of infrastructure support for the sector became clear. Funding has now been put in place by Stoke-on-Trent City Council to continue the strategic partnership formed during the pandemic into the future.

In September 2020 organisations seemed to be transitioning back from 'emergency response' and we started to see more of the usual requests for support we would expect. Organisations who had set up in response to the pandemic were also looking for support to formalise and other new groups were popping up, we were happy to be able to support these through our core support offers.

#stokeontrenttogether in Action

When face coverings become mandatory in certain situations, we heard about how those with a hearing impairment found this difficult to communicate with others, particularly if they rely heavily on lip reading.

When Mandy from Girlguiding, and leader of a Stoke-on-Trent Rainbows pack, got in touch with #StokeonTrentTogether, this was exactly the problem she faced.

"One of our leaders has a hearing problem and relies on lip reading" said Mandy, "as the girls are older, they need to wear masks, but the leader will not know what they are saying."

The best way forward for Mandy was to use clear visors in the Rainbows group so that communication between the girls and leaders wasn't impacted. But with the spring-summer lockdown and the group not being able to get together, money was tighter than normal, and the expense of visors wasn't something they could afford to shell out for. They couldn't afford to buy the visors, but without them, they couldn't meet. The only other way for them to meet would be for that particular leader to not attend – which wasn't even an option for the Rainbows.

After Mandy had contacted #StokeonTrentTogether, VAST's Natalie Shields matched Mandy with 3D Crowd, an organisation who had 3D printed visors for the sector earlier on in the pandemic, and Mandy was able to collect them the following day.

"The small groups like us struggle to get things donated, it usually comes out of the leader's pocket" continued Mandy, "I've bought additional things like the sanitiser and we are asking girls to bring pens felt tips with them to save sharing."

Once Rainbows had their own visors, they no longer needed to worry about communication, and no one was going to be left out. To help to reduce risk of Coronavirus transmission, Rainbows initially met outside in the rain, but they were able to meet which was the main thing, and thanks to 3D Crowd, and another donation from a very generous local 3D hobbyist, they could do that safely.

"Once again, I would like to say thank you for organising the visors, we really don't have the money to buy them. My husband took me to pick them up this morning. You acted so quickly, I only emailed yesterday and already have them."

"Thank you so much for organising the visors I cried when I knew I didn't need to buy."

Totally Stoked Digital

As a result of the Covid 19 pandemic, some many VCSE organisations found the switch from face-to-face to online activities difficult to manage. They struggled to remain in contact with their teams or service users for many reasons including lack of technical equipment, appropriate software, skills, inadequate support or lack of confidence with technology.

Many got in touch with us for help and we were able to secure Covid 19 emergency funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to help close the digital gap for these organisations.

Physical Digital Space

We have set up some well-equipped, physical spaces that are accessible to VCSE organisations at both The Dudson Centre and The Hub. These spaces provide hardware, software and connectivity for groups to run hybrid meetings and online activities and will enable organisations to meet the needs of a post pandemic world where not everyone wants to attend a meeting in person.

Training

We partnered with local organisations to provide training and training materials for VCSE groups in need of additional skills and education for digital technology to reach their members and service users online and remotely. These material include a collection of training videos will remain available as a legacy to the project on the VAST website.

Volunteer Tech Buddies

Through our work with the Stoke on Trent Together, we were aware of people who wanted to offer their time to support people with digital technology so we recruited and trained a number of volunteer tech buddies to work alongside people who needed technical support during the lockdown period. These were mainly individuals furloughed from their jobs and have since returned to work, but we are continuing to support organisations in need through our development and support work.

Totally Stoked Digital in action

CAFAG were due to hold their AGM but with Covid restrictions were not sure how to effectively do this. We talked about recent local examples like Foodbank using YouTube and others using platforms like Zoom. The technical skills amongst the Trustees were really varied and they felt that a supported Zoom session would be the most accessible for their members. We had a technical run through the week before and answered any questions they had. On the day we started the session early to ensure all Trustees could log on and were comfortable with the technology. The AGM ran smoothly and the treasurer who seemed the least confident did a fantastic and clear summary of the annual accounts to those in attendance. Voting went well and everyone was able to have their voice heard. The group's confidence grew and the AGM was completed on time. The group now hope to keep pushing their limits and boundaries regarding use of technology, particularly in the current climate.

"Thanks so much for all your help and support, we couldn't have done it without you" Linda- CAFAG

6 MONTHS OF STOKE-ON-TRENT COVID-19 SUPPORT NETWORK

760 INDIVIDUALS OFFERING SUPPORT

176 ORGANISATIONS OFFERING SUPPORT

26,250 PEOPLE HAVE VISITED THE WEBSITE

236 VOLUNTEERS PLACED WITH LOCAL ORGANISATIONS

4,744 FOOD PARCELS DELIVERED

THIS IS AN APPROXIMATE FIGURE BASED ON THE AVERAGE

3,694 REQUESTS FOR SUPPORT INCLUDING:

1,610 REQUESTS FOR FOOD AND SHOPPING

179 REQUESTS FOR GAS AND ELECTRICITY

2,552 REQUESTS FOR PRESCRIPTION COLLECTION

10,757 HELPLINE CALLS ANSWERED

76,467 WELFARE CALLS MADE TO RESIDENTS

Stoke-on-Trent together in Action

Journey Makers was a project that emerged following a directive from the Department of Transport around encouraging and supporting the public to use public transport once more. The effect of prolonged lockdown had left many feeling nervous, uncertain about the rules and uncomfortable, and so the project's aims were to recruit volunteers to reassure passengers, remind them about social distancing and face coverings and to offer a friendly face.

Hanley Bus Station had already been identified as a busy local site that would benefit from the scheme. Manager, Chris, explained that their busiest periods were the rush hour commute however those passengers didn't tend to need assistance. The passenger numbers he had noticed that remained low tended to be the daytime shoppers between around 10am – 3pm. We therefore recruited volunteers to operate in two shifts, 10am – 12pm and 2pm – 4pm.

Working in partnership with Douglas Macmillan Hospice, we identified and recruited 16 volunteers. Many had been volunteering in their charity shops but were unable to return to their roles yet and wanted something to do. We gave each an induction and training session either online or over the telephone.

Regular telephone and internet contact was maintained and all volunteers were aware of what to do in the event of a problem, which were thankfully few. The role proved to be enjoyable and well-received by both the volunteers and the passengers they were supporting. On a couple of occasions there was resistance to the reminder of face covering, which on one occasion became an argument, but this was swiftly resolved.

Feedback from the volunteers was that they enjoyed being out and about, meeting people and having friendly conversations with strangers. They reported that there were sometimes long stretches without anyone passing through, and so we tried to ensure there was always more than one volunteer per shift for company and support.

One of the successes of this role was its flexibility. Volunteers were able to drop in and drop out as it suited them, providing they were able to let the Volunteer Coordinator know within a reasonable timeframe. There was no obligation to commit to the same day or even more than once – although most volunteers did stick at it. One of the volunteers enjoyed it so much he continued beyond the end of the project and became a regular fixture at the bus station.

Journey Maker Tom told us:

"It has been the best experience of my life. Thank you so much for the opportunity"

Another reason for the success of the project was the idea that volunteers were doing 'their bit' in the fight against COVID. In the same way that the vaccination volunteer roles have proven popular, volunteers like to feel they are part of the 'National effort' and report a sense of pride.

Chris Salmon Manager of Hanley Bus Station told us:

The high point was seeing how enthusiastic the volunteers could be when faced with a situation which at best might be seen as menial, and at worst potentially confrontational. The low point was discovering how antagonistic certain members of the public could be when asked, politely, to comply – something particularly noticeable among a few of those people who claim exemption from the requirement to wear a face covering. It has freed up station staff to go about their normal daily tasks.

#StokeonTrentTogether a statement from Councilor Abby Brown

Councillor Abi Brown reflects on "colossal" support and the success of the #StokeonTrentTogether support network.

Back in March 2020, the country entered its first lockdown to try and stop the spread of COVID-19. Social distancing, isolation, and home-schooling became the new normal, as a nation and as a community we faced some enormous challenges, and people in our local communities were struggling.

To try to ensure that support was there – for communities as well as the voluntary organisations supporting them – we teamed up with Stoke-on-Trent City Council to establish the #StokeonTrentTogether COVID-19 Support Network: a consortium of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations.

This is what Councillor Brown had to say:

"Stoke-on-Trent is an area with high levels of deprivation, however it is also an area that is renowned for its friendly and caring population. At the start of the pandemic offers of support from the local community poured in to the Council. To harness this colossal goodwill, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, in partnership with VAST, developed a consortium of Voluntary and Community Sector organisations to setup the Stoke-on-Trent Together initiative and provide support to the most vulnerable people in the community during the COVID-19 pandemic.

"The Covid pandemic has resulted in one of the most challenging operating environments many organisations have ever, and will ever, face, however this is nothing compared to the individual struggles of residents across the city over the past 12 months. The partnership between the city council and VAST brought together a diverse range of skills, knowledge and expertise in order to provide a responsive and proactive approach to helping the people of Stoke-on-Trent. VAST have played a central role in developing, delivering and maintaining this programme by leading on developing the website, IT systems, supporting volunteers and collating information to ensure support is available across the city. More significantly they have provided leadership for the sector and effective coordination in order to ensure that organisations, of all sizes, received support to help them meet the challenges.

"The pandemic also led to ground-swell in volunteers offering support – with clear commentary that people want to give something back to those who have helped them during difficult times. VAST were critical in ensuring this goodwill was directed into the areas where it was most needed and keeping volunteers informed about opportunities. The success of this approach enabled us to successfully secure funding to develop Community Health Champions to maintain our community volunteers over the coming year.

"The long-term impact of the collective efforts of the team within the city council and VAST over this time cannot be overstated. The development of a single coordinated route to community-based support will continue beyond the pandemic, continuing to harness local energy to meet the needs of the city through the recovery. The close working relationship with the voluntary and community sector, with strategic leadership from VAST, will provide the foundation for our recovery from the effects of the pandemic."

VAST Volunteering

VAST are passionate about volunteering and believe it can improve health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference to local communities. We help people to find volunteering roles locally, matching their skills and interests, as we know this could be an opportunity that helps someone get back into work, assists with a college/university course or simply helps someone to meet new people.

VAST has supported people into volunteering via our projects and through the Stoke-on-Trent Together partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council. During the Covid-19 pandemic we had a surge of volunteers wishing to help out across the city with us placing over 350 people into the community in the past year. This partnership has strengthened our role within the sector as a volunteer brokerage service and we continue to see high numbers of volunteers signing up.

Our Volunteer Management Training is popular and receives excellent feedback.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed this workshop; it has given me lots of practical ideas/guidance to take away".

"Really enjoyed the training session. Covered everything I needed to know plus more".

"I enjoyed the training and look forward to networking with VAST in future".

The team help local organisations with a variety of training and support around volunteering. From helping create engaging role descriptions and advertising opportunities on our website through to support with volunteer policies, training and management.

Vintage Volunteers

After three fantastic years the funding for our Vintage Volunteers project concluded at the end of December 2020. Vintage Volunteers has made a real difference in the local community and influenced the way we view volunteering. All the experience and knowledge we have gained through this project is now embedded in the volunteering support we will continue to provide via VAST Volunteering. The Vintage Volunteers website will remain as a lasting legacy of the project, celebrating our learning, sharing our resources and some of the stories from our wonderful volunteers.

vintagevolunteers.vast.org.uk

VAST Volunteering in action

Simon contacted VAST via the Stoke-on-Trent Together portal after finding himself on furlough and realising how having nothing to do was impacting his wellbeing.

He was matched with Etruria Matters as a delivery driver where he delivered food parcels a few days a week to vulnerable residents in the community.

Simon expressed how much he enjoyed delivering the food parcels and the positive impact it had on himself as well as those he delivered to.

When speaking to Project Officer Kelly Smith, he said "Delivering the food parcels was like delivering flowers, everyone was so pleased to see me.

I regularly had a quick chat with the customers on their doorstep as often they hadn't spoken to anyone face to face for days.

I hope I brightened their days as I know they brightened mine."

Simon continued to volunteer for Etruria Matters until the food parcel service came to an end. This prompted simon to re-engage with VAST to ask for another volunteer role to keep him busy. He has since been matched with a The cog Pearl Academy where he fundraises for local foodbanks by selling donated items on eBay.

824 People offered to volunteer

318 Volunteers placed into opportunities

716 Subscribers to our Volunteer Newsletter

87 Active volunteer opportunities

Advocate

Our strategic presence and national connections allow us to be a voice for the grassroots VCSE community who could otherwise go unheard

Stoke Parent Carer Forum

Parent Carer Forums are part of the SEND code of practice which states "Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families".

VAST is facilitating the development of the Stoke Parent Carer Forum and are working with regional and national organisations Contact a Family and NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums) to help us achieve this.

Establishing a new forum was difficult during the height of the pandemic. However the steering group, made up of key local VCSE sector organisations, started to take shape and build momentum in the new year. Members of the steering group have jointly developed the governance structures to ensure this is locally owned and driven on behalf of local parent carers and are now busy planning some key areas of focus for 2021/22.

Through our already established Strategic work we are well placed to enable a strong new voice to provide a critical friend role to our local statutory services.

VAST Strategic

Strategic Engagement

VAST is an advocate for the VCSE sector and facilitates the strategic engagement of the sector with a range of statutory partners including the Clinical Commissioning Groups in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, the wider Together We're Better Partnership (shadow Integrated Care System) and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to support and enable the VCSE sector to play an active role in improving health and wellbeing for our local population.

The aim of this engagement between the VCSE sector and statutory bodies is to promote mutual understanding between the two sectors and enable them to work better together in partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population.

This year the role of the VCSE sector has come to the fore both nationally and locally. The vital role that organisations have played in supporting people in their communities has been widely recognised by our partners and has led to a renewed focus on them working better with the local VCSE sector and learning from the experiences of the pandemic.

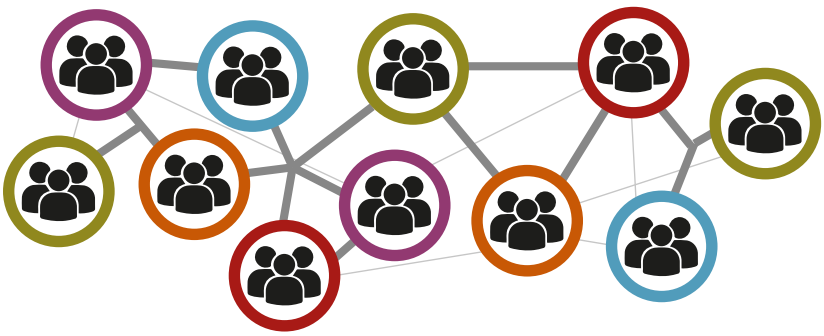
Many of the health and care system's pre-covid boards and steering groups were paused making way for emergency response coordination. VAST's strategic liaison role enabled sector representation at these whilst maintaining ongoing links with health colleagues to support recovery and transformation.

New relationships and collaborative working was built locally through the Staffordshire Civil Contingencies Unit and nationally through our work with NAVCA as part of the Voluntary and Community Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP). These allowed us to feed issues, concerns and intelligence, as well as sharing best practice and expertise, at both local and national levels.

VAST's strategic liaison role acted as system lead for the NHS Volunteer Responders scheme enabling us to support local NHS and Local Authority colleagues to better understand and utilise the resource as part of the emergency response. The NHS England led Embed and Evaluate programme allowed us to feed local intelligence back and enabled a route to share concerns about top-down volunteering approaches which cut across and undermine locally led provision.

VAST remained engaged with the strategic boards which remained operational via virtual meetings and fed into the development of the cities new Health and Wellbeing Strategy as a VCSE sector representative on the Health and Wellbeing Board.

VAST continues to support the development of the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and facilitated sessions with members over the autumn to shape the future direction of the network. The network now meets bi-monthly and has a renewed city focus which provides peer support for the city's VCSE sector leaders and a collective VCSE sector voice and engagement mechanism for statutory partners.



THE VCSE SECTOR WAS REPRESENTED AT 16 REGULAR STATUTORY BOARDS AND STEERING GROUPS THROUGH VAST'S STRATEGIC LIAISON ROLE

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of not less than three Trustees who are appointed by the board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:-

- Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.
- Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.
- Occasionally the trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day to day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has a finance audit and risk sub-committee which also meets quarterly. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Neil Dawson

Chair

Mark Barnish

Treasurer

Sub-committee Finance

John Beech

Susan Meredith

Sub-committee Finance

David Holton

Sub-committee Finance

Dawn Wickham

Sub-committee

Human Resources

Lesley Morrey

Nick Maslen

Governance

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its memorandum and articles of association, last amended in 2020.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Public Benefit

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The trustees (who are also directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to

prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law the trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company

and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are

also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking

reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

- There is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and
- The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The trustees consider that the board of trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 8 & 19 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and

partnerships including –VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) The North Staffordshire Collaborative Network & Team Staffordshire.

Related or connected charities:-

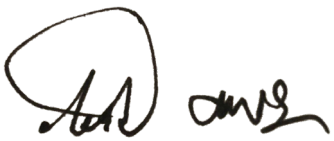
The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2021 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors
Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 8th December 2021 and signed on their behalf by:



Neil Dawson

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2021 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2021 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated. If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by the Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or returns adequate for our audit have not been received from branches not visited by us; or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement set out on page 44, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion. Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- we enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. the charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- we obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP. FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- we considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment Accordingly.
- using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements (continued)

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Karen Staley FCA BSc (Hons)
(Senior Statutory Auditor)
For and on behalf of Geens Limited, Statutory Auditor

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.
68 Liverpool Road
Stoke on Trent
Staffordshire
ST4 1BG

Date: 8/12/2021

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2021 £
Income and endowments from				
Other trading activities	2	486	-	486
Investments		83	-	83
Charitable activities				
-Chargeable services	3	415,717	2,169	417,886
-Grants & Contracts	3	292,928	419,831	712,759
Total		**709,214**	**422,000**	**1,131,214**
Expenditure on				
Raising funds	4	23,919	-	23,919
Charitable Activities	4	531,543	425,332	956,875
Total	4	**555,462**	**425,332**	**980,794**
Net income/ (expenditure)		153,752	(3,332)	150,420
Transfers between funds		(138)	138	-
Net Movement in Funds		153,614	(3,194)	150,420
Reconciliation of Funds				
Total funds brought forward	15-16	152,519	65,396	217,915
Total funds carried forward		**306,133**	**62,202**	**368,335**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing operations.

The notes on pages 54-69 form part of these financial statements.

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING THE INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total 2020 £
Income and endowments from				
Other trading activities	2	48,352	-	48,352
Investments		639	-	639
Charitable activities				
-Chargeable services	3	541,213	13,881	555,094
-Grants & Contracts	3	-	443,983	443,983
Total		**590,204**	**457,864**	**1,048,068**
Expenditure on				
Raising funds	4	57,723	-	57,723
Charitable Activities	4	612,626	436,725	1,049,351
Total	4	**670,349**	**436,725**	**1,107,074**
Net income/ (expenditure)		(80,145)	21,139	(59,006)
Transfers between funds		(3,398)	3,398	-
Net Movement in Funds		(83,543)	24,537	(59,006)
Reconciliation of Funds				
Total funds brought forward	15-16	236,062	40,859	276,921
Total funds carried forward		**152,519**	**65,396**	**217,915**

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing operations.

The notes on pages 54-69 form part of these financial statements.

BALANCE SHEETS AS AT 31ST MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Fixed Assets			
Tangible assets	10	155,695	252,670
		155,695	252,670
Current Assets			
Café Stock		-	-
Debtors	11	105,639	152,174
Cash at bank and in hand		718,832	61,641
Total Current Assets		824,471	213,815
Liabilities			
Creditors:			
Amounts falling due within one year	12	(566,831)	(203,570)
Net Current Assets		257,640	10,245
Total Assets less Current Liabilities		413,335	262,915
Provisions for Liabilities	13	(45,000)	(45,000)
Net Assets		368,335	217,915
The Funds of The Charity			
Capital funds		6	6
Unrestricted funds - General	15	181,133	127,519
Unrestricted funds - Designated	15	125,000	25,000
Restricted funds	16	62,196	65,390
		368,335	**217,915**

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice –Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies regime under the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 50-69 were approved by the Board on 8 December 2021 and signed on its behalf by

Mark Barnish
Treasurer

STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021 £	2020 £
Cash flows from operating activities:			
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	21	657,108	(17,524)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Dividends and interest from investments		83	639
Purchase of property, plant and equipment		-	(3,456)
Net cash provided by/ (used in) investing activities		83	(2,817)
Change in cash and cash equivalents in the year		657,191	(20,341)
Cash and cash equivalents at the beginning of the year		61,641	81,982
Cash and cash equivalents at the end of the year		718,832	61,641
Cash and Cash Equivalents Comprises:			
Cash at bank and in hand		718,832	61,641

NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

1. ACCOUNTING POLICIES

Summary of significant accounting policies and key estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

1.1 Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with Financial Reporting Standards in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) (effective January 2019) – (Charities SORP (FRS102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements were prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

In preparing the financial statements the Trustees have made a key judgement following a dispute with Staffordshire County Council (SCC) regarding the lease agreement for 17 Eastgate Street, Stafford and the issuance of recharge invoices going back over a number of years. The judgement is that the lease will continue to the original end date and a satisfactory financial settlement will be reached within the amounts provided for in the financial statements. The Trustees judgements are supported by negotiations nearing agreement with SCC post the balance sheet date. No other judgements have been made apart from those involving estimates in the process of applying the charity's accounting policies. No assumptions concerning the future have a significant risk of causing material adjustment to the carrying value of assets and liabilities within the next reporting period.

1.2 Going Concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

1.3 Income

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of vat, at the point at which the service is completed.

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

1.4 Fund accounting

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds.
Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes.

Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

1.5 Stock accounting

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

1.6 Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the category of resources expended for which it is incurred.

1.7 Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Computers	- 25% straight line
Office furniture and equipment	- 25% straight line
Telephone System	- 10% straight line
Leasehold Improvements	-over the term of the lease.

During the year the expected lease term of some leasehold improvements has been reduced to reflect a break clause in the lease agreement. In consequence of this the depreciation charge has increased so as to fully depreciate the assets by the break date.

1.8 Leasing

Rentals payable under operating leases are charged on a straight-line basis over the lease term to the statement of financial activities.

1.9 Pensions

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

1.10 Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.

c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

1.11 Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

1.12 Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

1.13 Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

1.14 Provisions for liabilities

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

1.15 Financial instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

1.16 Termination benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits.

The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either (i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or (ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

2. OTHER TRADING ACTIVITIES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 £	2020 £
Café income	486	-	486	48,352
Total Income	**486**	**-**	**486**	**48,352**
Total 2020	**48,352**	**-**		**48,352**

3. CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES

CHARGEABLE SERVICES

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 £	2020 £
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Sevices	415,717	2,169	417,886	555,094
Total Income	**415,717**	**2,169**	**417,886**	**555,094**
Total 2020	**541,213**	**13,881**		**555094**

GRANTS AND CONTRACTS

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	2021 £	2020 £
Health	21,000	42,624	63,624	216,691
The National Lottery Community Fund	-	238,529	238,529	102,707
Stoke on Trent City Council	73,078	54,124	127,202	-
Charitable Foundations	85,000	-	85,000	100,585
Culture Recovery Fund	-	47,700	47,700	-
Other	26,500	26,455	52,955	24,000
CJRS grants	87,350	10,399	97,749	-
Total Income	**292,928**	**419,831**	**712,759**	**443,983**
Total 2020	**-**	**443,983**		**443,983**

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED

Analysis of expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Support & Volunteering	Other	Total 2021	Total 2020
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	112,787	109,878	26,518	144,337	81,664	475,184	617,983
Travel Costs	949	103	656	29	-	1,737	12,572
Training	-	348	115	271	-	734	889
Office Costs	50,569	3,768	25	21,296	6,746	82,404	66,440
Legal and Professional	2,437	14,159	2,857	1990	3,309	24,752	17,027
Advertising & Publicity	1,257	-	-	9,561	2,925	13,743	897
Premises Costs	101,805	-	1,535	15,881	4,803	124,024	147,764
Insurance	6,231	875	250	300	-	7,656	8,139
Sundry	278	-	-	-	-	278	249
Depreciation	95,910	278	-	-	-	96,188	27,609
Bursary	-	6,091	-	-	-	6,091	-
Events	670	-	-	2,155	30	2,855	14,398
Support Costs	11,575	11,575	21,349	55,492	21,238	121,229	135,384
	384,468	**147,075**	**53,305**	**251,312**	**120,715**	**956,875**	**1,049,351**
Total 2020	426,194	186,432	254,462	84,577	97,686		**1,049,351**

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED (continued)

Analysis of expenditure on raising funds

	Café	2021 Total	2020 Total
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	19,232	19,232	30,512
Travel Costs	-	-	111
Training	-	-	24
Cafe Supplies	126	126	19,276
Office Costs	729	729	1,398
Legal and Professional	259	259	517
Advertising & Publicity	8	8	118
Premises Costs	756	756	623
Depreciation	238	238	238
Support Costs	2,571	2,571	4,906
	23,919	**23,919**	**57,723**

Support Costs are allocated on a per capita basis

Allocation of Support Costs in expenditure on Charitable Activities

	Facilites	Rechargeable	Health Projects	Other	Support & Volunteering	Total 2021	Total 2020
Number of Staff	9	9	2	2	4		
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	21,611	21,611	4,802	4,802	9,604	62,430	71,716
Staff Training	321	321	71	71	144	928	32
Travel Costs	218	218	49	49	97	631	3,287
Premises Costs	-	-	-	-	-	-	6,159
Depreciation	176	176	39	39	79	509	863
Legal & Professional	4,029	4,029	895	895	1,791	11,639	5,817
Insurance	74	74	16	16	33	213	537
Advertising & Publicity	512	512	114	114	228	1,480	553
Events	50	50	11	11	23	145	2,736
Office Costs	4,878	4,878	1,084	1,084	2,167	14,091	18,764
Sundry	5,986	5,986	1,330	1,330	2,659	17,291	15,025
Governance Costs	1,939	1,939	431	431	861	5,601	4,010
Reallocate Restricted Management Fees	(28,219)	(28,219)	12,507	12,396	37,806	6,271	5,885
	11,575	11,575	21,349	21,238	55,492	121,229	135,384

4. RESOURCES EXPENDED (continued)

Allocation of Support Costs in expenditure on Raising Funds

	Total	Café	Total 2020
Number of Staff		2	
	£	£	£
Staff Costs	4,802	4,802	5,976
Staff Training	71	71	3
Travel	49	49	274
Premises Costs	-	-	513
Depreciation	39	39	72
Legal & Professional	895	895	485
Insurance	16	16	45
Advertising & Publicity	114	114	46
Events	11	11	228
Office Costs	1,084	1,084	1,564
Sundry	1,330	1,330	1,252
Governance Costs	431	431	334
Reallocated agreed management fees	(6,271)	(6,271)	(5,886)
	2,571	2,571	4,906

5. NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources are stated after charging;		
Depreciation and other amounts written off tangible assets	95,550	28,781
Auditor's remuneration - Audit	6,000	5,500
Operating lease rentals - Land & buildings	3,000	3,000
- Other	7,724	11,586

6. EMPLOYEES

	2021 No	2020 No
The average monthly numbers of employees during the year were:		
Direct charitable activities	16	21
Generating Funds	9	8
Management and administration	3	1
	28	**30**

7. EMPLOYMENT COSTS

	2021 £	2020 £
Wages and Salaries	478,579	621,661
Social Security Costs	32,205	37,646
Pension Costs	40,282	43,052
Temporary and Seconded Staff	-	4,025
	551,066	**706,384**

No employee earned more than £60,000 per annum.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £127,061 (2020 £95,551)

8. TRUSTEES' EMOLUMENTS

Neither trustees nor any person connected with them has received or is due to receive any remuneration for the year directly or indirectly from the charity's funds. No trustee expenses were paid during the year. (2020 £nil).

9. PENSION COSTS

The charity contributes to defined contribution pension schemes. The assets of the schemes are held separately from those of the charity in independently administered funds. The pension charge contributions payable by the charity are £40,282 (2020: £43,052). Charity contributions totalling £nil (2020: £nil), including employees' contributions and amounts in respect of previous years were payable to funds at the end of the year and are included in creditors.

10. FIXED ASSETS

	Telephone System	Computers	Office Furniture & Equipment	Leasehold Improvements	Total
Cost	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
At 1 April 2020	96,941	2,765	158,442	295,553	553,701
Additions	-				-
Disposals	-	(933)	-	(1,324)	(2,257)
At 31 March 2021	**96,941**	**1,832**	**158,442**	**294,229**	**551,444**
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2020	69,764	856	156,822	73,589	301,031
Charge for the year	7,615	458	436	87,041	95,550
Eliminated on disposal	-	(253)	-	(579)	(832)
At 31 March 2021	**77,379**	**1,061**	**157,258**	**160,051**	**395,749**
Net book values					
At 31 March 2021	**19,562**	**771**	**1,184**	**134,178**	**155,695**
At 31 March 2020	27,177	1,909	1,620	221,964	252,670

11. DEBTORS

	2021	2020
	£	**£**
Trade debtors	91,753	138,590
Other debtors	-	88
Prepayments and accrued income	13,886	13,496
	105,639	**152,174**

12. CREDITORS: amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	**£**
Trade creditors	34,880	57,775
Other taxes and social security costs	15,148	35,664
Other creditors	14,178	20,396
Accruals	29,233	47,423
Deferred income	473,392	42,312
	566,831	**203,570**

Creditors include £473,392 (2020 £42,312) of income deferred into the following year due to the timing of the charity's entitlement to the income after any performance conditions have been met. There are no unfulfilled conditions attached to this income at the balance sheet date. This includes the following balances in respect of restricted funds:

-Health projects £66,600.

-Support & Volunteering projects £406,792.

Analysis of movement:

	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2020	51,312
Resources deferred during the year	473,392
Amounts released from previous years	(51,312)
Deferred income at 31 March 2021	**473,392**

13. PROVISION FOR LIABILITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Other provisions	45,000	45,000
	45,000	45,000

Analysis of movement:

	£
Balance at 1 April 2020	45,000
new provision in year	-
Released	-
Balance at 31 March 2021	**45,000**

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amounts provided.

14. ANALYSIS OF NET CURRENT (LIABILITIES)/ASSETS BETWEEN FUNDS

2020-21

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Capital Funds £	Total Funds £
Fund Balance at 31st March 2020	152,519	65,390	6	217,915
Net Movement in Funds	153,614	(3,194)	-	150,420
Fund Balance at 31st March 2021	306,133	62,196	6	368,335
as represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	155,695		-	155,695
Investments			-	-
Net current assets	195,438	62,196	6	257,640
Provisions for liablilites and charges	(45,000)		-	(45,000)
	306,133	**62,196**	**6**	**368,335**

2019-20

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Capital Funds £	Total Funds £
Fund Balance at 31st March 2019	236,062	40,853	6	276,921
Net Movement in Funds	(83,543)	24,537	-	(59,006)
Fund Balance at 31st March 2020	152,519	65,390	6	217,915
as represented by:				
Tangible fixed assets	252,670	-	-	252,670
Investments	-	-	-	-
Net current assets	(55,151)	65,390	6	10,245
Provision for laibilites and charges	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
	152,519	**65,390**	**6**	**217,915**

15. UNRESTRICTED FUNDS

2020-21	Fund Balances Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers & Gains £	Fund Balances Carried Forward £
General Fund	127,519	709,214	555,462	(100,138)	181,133
Designated Funds:					
Dudson Centre Contingeny	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
Museum Contingency	-	-	-	50,000	50,000
	152,519	**709,214**	**555,462**	(138)	**306,133**

2019-20	Fund Balances Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers & Gains £	Fund Balances Carried Forward £
General Fund	161,062	590,204	670,349	46,602	127,519
Designated Funds:					
Dudson Centre Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
Development & Sustainability Fund	50,000	-	-	(50,000)	-
	236,062	**590,204**	**670,349**	(3,398)	**152,519**

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at the Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

The Development & Sustainability Fund is a reserve designated to fund new sources of income and the development of services to replace areas of funding which are diminishing.

16. RESTRICTED FUNDS

2020-21	Fund Balances Brought Forward £	Income £	Expenditure £	Transfers £	Fund Balances Carried Forward £
Health	16,299	42,624	37,717	-	21,206
Support & Volunteering	24,182	254,119	255,967	-	22,334
SoTCC	-	54,124	39,818	-	14,306
Other	24,909	71,133	91,830	138	4,350
				-	
	65,390	**422,000**	**425,332**	138	**62,196**

17. RESTRICTED FUNDS (CONTINUED)

2019-20	Fund Balances Brought Forward	Income	Expenditure	Transfers	Fund Balances Carried Forward
	£	£	£	£	£
Health	34,800	231,972	254,462	3,989	16,299
Support & Volunteering	6,053	102,707	84,578	-	24,182
Other	-	123,185	97,685	(591)	24,909
	40,853	**457,864**	**436,725**	3,989	**65,390**

Purpose of restricted funds:

The Health related projects use money from the PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health the Door 2 Door transport service.

The Lottery Funds relate to restricted project funding from The National Lottery Community Fund. This includes the Vintage Volunteers project, the Totally Stoked Support project, the Totally Stoked Digital project and COVID Emergency funding received for our work during the COVID 19 pandemic.

Funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council relates to funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

Purpose of transfers:

Transfers relate to unrestricted funding used to cover overspends on restricted grants and contracts or amounts remaining at the end of restricted contracts that are not required to be repaid.

18. FINANCIAL COMMITMENTS

Capital Commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

Operating lease commitments

At 31 March 2021 the total of the charity's future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases as follows:

Group and charity

Land and Buildings	2021	2020
	£	£
Payable within one year	3,000	3,000
Payable between one and five years	12,000	-
	15,000	**3,000**
Other assets		
Payable within one year	12,154	12,154
Payable between one and five years	17,217	29,371
	29,371	**41,525**

19. RELATED PARTY TRANSACTIONS

There were no related party transactions that require disclosure during the year.

20. CONTROL RELATIONSHIP

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

21. RECONCILIATION OF NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS TO NET CASH FLOW FROM OPERATING ACTIVITIES

	2021	2020
	£	£
Net income/ (expenditure) for the year (as per the statement of financial activities)	150,420	(64,179)
Adjustments for:		
Depreciaton charges	95,550	28,781
Interest and dividends from investments	(83)	(639)
Loss/ (profit) on sale of fixed assets	1,425	-
Decrease/ (increase) in stock	-	602
Decrease/ (increase) in debtors	46,535	(8,193)
Increase/ (decrease) in creditors	363,261	26,104
Net cash provided by/ (used in) operating activities	657,108	(17,524)

22. FINANCIAL INSTRUMENTS

Group and Charity	2021	2020
	£	£
Financial Assets		
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	91,753	138,590
Financial Liabilities		
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	**(34,880)**	**(57,775)**

23. CHARITY STATUS

The charity is a private company limited by guarantee registered in England (registered number 02000818). The address of the registered office is The Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Stoke on Trent. ST1 5DD.

24. FUNDS HELD AS AGENT

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll purposes. These amounts have not been included in the results for the year or the balance sheet at the end of the year.

Movements in the year were:

	2021	2020
	£	£
Balance brought forward	42,986	37,666
Receipts	2,065,874	1,735,103
Payments	(2,040,002)	(1,729,783)
Balance carried forward	68,858	42,986

25. GOVERNMENT GRANTS

VAST received the following government grants during the period:

National Lottery Community Fund £238,529
Stoke on Trent City Council £70,087
HMRC (CJRS grant) £97,749

The amount of the grants recognised in the financial statements was £400,535 (2020 £102,407). There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.