

Volunteer Action Annual Statement

Registered charity no. 1161080

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

Mission

Volunteer Action's mission is "Volunteering to improve the lives of local people in need".

Strategy

This mission is fulfilled by running a Community Car Scheme and Befriending Service.

Operational Activity

Demand for our services

Throughout the restrictions, introduced for the pandemic, we maintained our volunteer driver service taking members to medical appointments. These were much reduced and many drivers chose to stand down, as they themselves were over 70 and advised they were at high risk from the virus. Miles driven fell to 48,000 (previous year 125,000), fulfilling 5,000 (12,500) trips. We continued to sign up new members, some of whom were referred to us through the county support scheme. Over 100 (200) new people joined the scheme, which still operates with no membership fee. We introduced a shopping service, where we shopped and delivered, and a prescription delivery service. These are barely used now (June 2021) but were a lifeline for many during the pandemic. From December 2020 we were taking people for Covid vaccinations and used our own funds to subsidise the cost of these to passengers.

The face-to-face befriending scheme was suspended for most of the year but almost all our volunteers and members stayed in touch on the phone. We phoned all our car scheme members (around 800) to ask them if they would like a telephone befriender through the lockdown. Almost 160 people said yes and we asked all our volunteers who were unable to drive to help us out. Together with some new recruits we eventually had around 110 volunteers working to support this scheme. Numbers have dropped away but a survey conducted in December 2020 found an ongoing demand for a phone befriending service and this is now a permanent part of our offer.

Supported by

Running the services

It would be impossible for VA to deliver its services without its volunteers. These number about 135.

Administration and management

VA runs a small administration operation close to the centre of Oundle. It was staffed by four part-time employees (FTE 2) and a loyal group of volunteers who usually work on a one-day a week basis. Apart from the normal activities of a small charity, the main workload is the weekly task of receiving calls for drives and then matching them with drivers. In addition, we are fortunate to have one volunteer who administers the befriending scheme and another who does the at-home assessments of new members. Covid-19 guidelines resulted in us introducing opportunities for staff to work from home, but we managed for a large part of the year without volunteers.

Community car scheme

Recruiting drivers for the Community Car Scheme was surprisingly successful during the pandemic, benefitting from volunteering having such a high national profile. During the year we used over 40 different drivers at some point. In April we used just 15 different drivers but this had risen to 30 by the year end. We pay our drivers 40 pence a mile for their mileage, including home to pick-up point. Our passengers pay the same rate, but only for the passenger return mileage. We provide training for our drivers on subjects such as manual handling, lone working and safeguarding. Drivers are able to claim modest out of pocket expenses if they are required to wait for an extended time or during meal times.

Both passengers and drivers generally thoroughly enjoy the opportunity for conversation, which we consider to be a small way to contribute towards reducing loneliness and social isolation, over and above getting the member out of their house.

Befriending

With befriending moving to a phone based service and the sudden increase in demand, we suspended our usual efforts to 'match' volunteers and members. Many of the relationships formed on the phone have endured but there were some which did not work out. We are currently (June 2021) supporting over 75 people on the phone and almost 40 with the now-restored face-to-face scheme.

Risk Assessment

The charity maintains a wide range of risk assessments in relation to both the services we provide to our members and to our administrative operations. These are reviewed on an annual basis.

Financial matters

Income and expenditure

VA receives its income from a range of sources - Local Authorities, NHS, donations, fundraising and contracts. Salaries is the largest expense but there are office costs including rent and we continue to fund the cost of mileage to get drivers to members' pick-up points. In a large rural area, this is a key consideration.

During the year income exceeded expenditure by £3.4k. Although a deficit had originally been budgeted for the year, a number of "windfall" grants and donations were received in the year, together with the availability of coronavirus funding, which resulted in the small surplus.

Supported by



Registered Charity: 1161080

Reserves

In the Trustees' view, the reserves should provide the charity with adequate financial stability and the means for it to meet its charitable objectives for the foreseeable future.

A number of significant risk factors for the future have been identified, including: uncertainty over future statutory funding from local government and the NHS; the continuing uncertainty over the level of voluntary donor funding; and general unforeseen day-to-day operational costs.

Taking these factors into account, the trustees have determined to maintain the charity's reserves at a minimum level of £70,000, which is equivalent to a year's operational expenditure, plus the costs of winding up the organisation in the event that it became unviable.

However, the actual reserves at the end of the year were well in excess of this minimum level. This was partly due to careful management of the Charity's resources over many years, but also due to good fortune in receiving unexpected legacies, donations and grants (including c. £16,000 in 2020/21 alone).

The Trustees are considering how best to reduce the level of reserves over a number of years without it being detrimental to financial stability. This will be achieved partly through the annual budget process, and partly through the strategic review of new services which might be offered on a permanent basis. For example, a staffed 'friend on a phone' scheme for isolated or lonely members has been introduced in 2021-22, the costs of which can only be covered out of our reserves.

In addition, as rural bus services have declined sharply in recent years, we have experienced strong growth in demand, and core costs have increased as a result. It is important that services are maintained in the long term to meet that growing demand and it is anticipated that this will be increasingly expensive. Our reserves will help ensure that we have a long-term future.

Public Benefits

The trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 4 of the Charities Act 2006 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit.

Rural isolation and loneliness are well known to be closely associated with mental well-being and we know that our service helps tackle this. Older people value independent living and we can help maintain that for longer by providing a reliable way to get to vital appointments or just getting the shopping. Bus services have been withdrawn entirely through most of our surrounding villages and are very limited in the 2 small market towns we support. These problems are also alleviated by our steadily growing befriending scheme.

In addition to the services provided, VA offers an opportunity for volunteers to engage with their communities and make a contribution towards the success of a highly regarded service. For many it provides the opportunity to be valued member of a team and maintain a more active retirement. Maintaining that reciprocity is a key ethos of our thinking.

Location

Our eligibility covers addresses in a largely rural area of approximately 340 square miles incorporating more than 50 villages and 2 small towns. We are fortunate to have drivers throughout most parts of this but matching members to local drivers or befrienders is a constant challenge and very much contributes to running costs.

Supported by



Registered Charity: 1161080

Governance

The charity has been a CIO since 2015.

Recent recruitment of trustees has been by invitation to people bringing skills needed to run the organisation. The 2020-21 board comprised:

Mr Stuart Anderson (Chair)

Mr David Bland

Mr Colin Brown

Mr Peter G Burrows

Mr Rupert Cadbury resigned January 2021

Mrs Diana Charles

Mrs Val Chesser

Ms Moira Froggatt

Mr Colin Pendrill resigned January 2021

Mr Charles Wallace

Mrs Maureen Weston

Supported by



Registered Charity: 1161080

RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

For the period from 1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021

	2020-21			2019-20
	Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£	£
RECEIPTS				
Drives & Shopping Services				
Organisations	3,191	-	3,191	15,797
Member payments	36,167	-	36,167	-
	39,358	-	39,358	15,797
Grants				
ENC	-	12,436	12,436	12,436
NCC	-	9,539	9,539	6,630
NHS	-	2,665	2,665	1,999
National Lottery	-	1,800	1,800	-
Thrapston Town Council	-	-	-	1,000
Others	13,000	-	13,000	9,625
	13,000	26,440	39,440	31,690
Donations				
General donations	11,280	-	11,280	13,567
Friends account	6,158	-	6,158	5,328
Gift Aid tax reclaimed	1,878	-	1,878	2,808
Legacy	2,491	-	2,491	21,500
	21,807	-	21,807	43,203
Other Income				
Software licence	650	-	650	660
Sundries	-	-	-	26
Bank interest	1,437	-	1,437	752
	2,087	-	2,087	1,438
Fundraising Income				
Sale of Jigsaw Puzzles	-	-	-	1,840
Quiz & Raffle	929	-	929	1,127
100 Club	5,305	-	5,305	4,155
Coffee morning	-	-	-	1,218
	6,234	-	6,234	8,340
Total Receipts	82,486	26,440	108,926	100,468
PAYMENTS				
Salary Costs				
Salaries	20,980	23,531	44,511	38,685
Payroll bureau costs	886	-	886	706
Pensions scheme (NEST)	1,550	-	1,550	1,534
	23,416	23,531	46,947	40,925
Drives & Shopping Payments				
Drivers	15,546	-	15,546	14,711
Shopping	24,334	-	24,334	-
	39,880	-	39,880	14,711
Property & Insurance Costs				
Rent	4,320	-	4,320	4,536
Insurance	749	-	749	694
	5,069	-	5,069	5,230
Marketing				
Advertising & publicity	-	-	-	389
Office Expenses				
Stationery & office supplies	2,358	-	2,358	1,771
Telephone	978	-	978	819
Telephone upgrade	-	-	-	624
Computers & equipment (incl. maintenance)	2,067	-	2,067	-
Computer system upgrade	17	2,909	2,926	6,797
I.T. costs for covid-secure working	1,434	-	1,434	-
Subscriptions	417	-	417	220
Management team expenses	182	-	182	296
Legal expenses	600	-	600	-
Petty cash	75	-	75	167
	8,128	2,909	11,037	10,694
Other Expenses				
Volunteer expenses	243	-	243	1,194
Volunteer lunch	-	-	-	219
Staff & trustee training	-	-	-	305
Staff expenses	69	-	69	420
August tea	-	-	-	659
Christmas dinner for members	-	-	-	184
Bank charges	491	-	491	65
	803	-	803	3,046
Fundraising Expenses				
100 Club prizes	1,750	-	1,750	375
	1,750	-	1,750	375
Total Payments	79,046	26,440	105,486	75,370
NET RECEIPTS	3,440	-	3,440	25,098

VOLUNTEER ACTION**Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period****As at 31st March 2021****CASH FUNDS**

Bank and Cash Balances

TOTAL ASSETS**UNRESTRICTED FUNDS**

At 1st April 2020

Net Receipts

At 31st March 2021

31.03.2021	31.03.2020
£	£
167,070	163,630
167,070	163,630
163,630	138,532
3,440	25,098
167,070	163,630

Signed on behalf of all the trustees:

Print Name:

S. Anderson

Date of approval:

16th September 2021



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

**Report to the trustees/
members of**

Volunteer Action

**On accounts for the year
ended**

31 March 2021

**Charity no
(if any)**

1161080

Set out on pages

Accounts 1-2, Trustees Report 1-4

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended **31 / 03 / 2021**.

**Responsibilities and
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

Date:

17 September 2021

Name:

Judie Woods

**Relevant professional
qualification(s) or body
(if any):**

ICAEW – FCA and DChA

Address:

90 South Road, Oundle

Peterborough PE8 4BP