

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

England & Wales · Charity number 1197827

Details

Other names VSSN

Status Registered

Legal form CIO

Registered 2022-02-08

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

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Activities

Objects: THE OBJECTS OF THE CIO ARE THE ADVANCEMENT OF PUBLIC EDUCATION CONCERNING THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR:(1) BY THE PROMOTION AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE; AND(2) BY THE PUBLICATION OF RESEARCH; AND(3) BY THE ENCOURAGEMENT OF CONTACT BETWEEN WORKERS IN RELEVANT FIELDS OF ENQUIRY; AND(4) BY UNDERTAKING SUCH OTHER ACTIVITIES (BEING CHARITABLE IN LAW) AS SHALL BE CONDUCIVE TO THE ATTAINMENT OF THESE OBJECTS.

Activities: Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body

Classification

- **How:** Makes Grants To Individuals, Makes Grants To Organisations, Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Sponsors Or Undertakes Research, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** Education/training
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- Throughout England And Wales

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-07-31	£17,638	£15,652	-	-
2024-07-31	£21,547	£16,939	-	-
2023-07-31	£17,619	£14,035	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
Bethany Anne Sikes		2024-11-26
Caitlin McMullin		2025-04-01
Clare Harewood		2026-01-06
Daniel Haslam		2023-11-01
Dr Amy Frances Sanders		2022-11-18
Dr Ellen Bennett		2023-11-01
Dr Jurgen Ludwig Grotz		2019-02-08
Dr Vita Terry		2019-02-08
Joanne Vincett		2023-11-01
Kate Burns		2026-01-06
Peter Horner		2026-01-06
Petra Buresova		2024-11-26
Professor James Edward Rees		2024-11-26
Stephen Mark Craker		2022-11-18

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1197827

Accounts



VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

Annual Report and Accounts

1 August 2024 - 31 July 2025

Registered charity:

England and Wales 1197827 (previously 1114742)

Scotland SC052647

ANNUAL REPORT

Legal and Constitutional Details

Name of organisation:	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
Legal form:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by Constitution
Charitable status:	Registered charity: England & Wales: number 1197827 (previously 1114742) Scotland: number SC052647
Correspondent:	Meg Wright Ver House, Park Estate, Frogmore St Albans AL2 2DR
Central e-mail:	execofficer@vssn.org.uk
Website:	www.vssn.org.uk
Objects:	The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom by: (1) the promotion and diffusion of knowledge; and (2) the publication of research; and (3) encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and (4) undertaking such other activities (being charitable in law) as shall be conducive to the attainment of these objects.

Trustees and Other Key Roles

During the year, the Trustees revised the sub-committees acting under the authority of the Board of Trustees. Under the scheme of delegation, each group has Terms of Reference outlining their purpose, delegated responsibilities and membership which have been approved by the Board with a review every two years. The Communications and Membership subcommittee merged:

- Office Bearers (OfficeBearers@vssn.org.uk)
- Communications and membership (Membercommunications@vssn.org.uk)
- Conference (Conference@vssn.org.uk)
- Events (Events@vssn.org.uk)
- Grants (Grants@vssn.org.uk)
- New Researchers (NewResearchers@vssn.org.uk)

Affiliations are given for information only; all Trustee Board members serve as individuals.

Co Chairs	Vita Terry, Black Mountains College Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
Vice Chair	James Rees, University of Wolverhampton
Treasurer	Karin Biermann, University of Klagenfurt
Secretary	Heather Fulford
Conference Group	Ellen Bennett, Sheffield Hallam University Daniel Haslam, The Open University Angela Ellis Paine, City St George's, University of London (non-trustee)
Events and Day Conferences Group	Jurgen Grotz, IVR, University of East Anglia Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University Bethany Sikes, Volunteer Scotland
Communications and Membership Group	Jo Vincett, Liverpool John Moores University Stephen Craker, Communities 1st Ellen Bennett, Sheffield Hallam University Vita Terry, Black Mountains College Meg Wright, Executive Officer (non-trustee) Petra Buresova, Brunel University Daniel Haslam, The Open University
New Researchers Group	Daniel Haslam, The Open University Petra Buresova, Brunel University Helen Abnett, University of Birmingham (non-trustee)

	Chelle Coulton (non-trustee) Olu Adeyemo (non-trustee) Pat Danahey Janin (non-trustee)
Voluntary Sector Review	Caitin McMullin, Roskilde University Heather Fulford (Representing VSSN trustees on editorial management board until May 2025)
Small Grants Group	Heather Fulford James Rees, University of Wolverhampton

Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are recruited from the VSSN membership and may serve for a maximum of nine consecutive years. A third of trustees must retire on a rolling basis each year. A member of the Editorial Management Board of Voluntary Sector Review serves as the VSR representative on the board. VSSN can have a maximum of 15 trustees, inclusive of the EMB representative.

Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the *Voluntary Sector Review*

A sub-committee is elected to act as the Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. With direction from the Trustee Board, the EMB is responsible for the oversight of the journal and the appointment of the Editorial Team, including the Editor(s), in consultation with the publisher, The Policy Press.

Appointment of EMB

VSSN members elect six members of the EMB on a three-year cycle, using the same rules as for the election of Trustees Board members as set out in the amended constitution. One member of the EMB is appointed to the Trustee Board.

The EMB is responsible for assembling the International Advisory Board.

Chair: Angela Ellis Paine, City St George's, University of London

Heather Fulford (VSSN representative on VSR EMB until May 2025)

Cari Bottois, University of Cardiff / University of Exeter

Jo Crotty, Edge Hill University

Liz Bailey, University of York

Caitlin McMullin, Roskilde University, Denmark (VSR representative on VSSN Board)

David Wallace-Hare, University of Exeter (until November 2024)

Policy Press/Publisher's representative: Sarah Bird (until May 2025), Sharon Harris (from May 2025)

Main Editors: James Rees (Managing Editor, until December 2024), Daiga Kamerāde (until December 2024), Lili Wang (Managing Editor), Lindsay Findlay-King (from January 2025), Oto Potluka (from January 2025)

Editorial Assistant: Jenna Essex

Policy and Practice editors: Ali Body, Iwona Nowakowska

Book review editor: Eddy Hogg

Regional Associate Editors: Georg von Schnurbein

Consulting Editor: Carl Milofsky

Trustee Board Report: activities undertaken for public benefit by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) during the year ending 31 July 2024

1. Co-Chairs' Report by Amy Sanders and Vita Terry

We know this period has been an unsettling time for some voluntary sector researchers with the state of flux currently in the world, including the level of precarity in higher education, and because of this, we believe that spaces to come together are ever more important: to pause, reflect, and connect with one another. Reassuringly, VSSN is going strong and 2024-25 was a fantastic year for bringing together those who undertake or are interested in voluntary sector research. The VSVR annual conference was hosted for the first time by the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School in September 2024, welcoming over 120 people. The conference theme explored “Voice of the people? Democracy, representation, and involvement in and through the voluntary sector and volunteering”. We are incredibly grateful to the team at Bayes Business School for their hard work and warm welcome. In partnership with the Centre for Charity Effectiveness, the conference was jointly organised by Voluntary Sector Studies Network, the National Council for Voluntary Organisations and Voluntary Action Islington.

This year the board was delighted to be joined by Petra Buresova, Bethany Sykes, James Rees and Caitlin McMullan and welcomed back Jo Vincett to the trustee board. They joined our other incredibly committed trustees, Jurgen Grotz, Daniel Haslam, Ellen Bennett, Stephen Craker, Heather Fulford and Karin Biermann. As new co-chairs, we found the support and confidence of fellow trustees invaluable as we took the helm. We said a fond farewell to Carol Jacklin-Jarvis in November 2024, who had served as chair and vice-chair and Pat Armstrong and Daiga Kamerāde who had served as trustees. We thank all three of them for their dedication and wisdom in collaboratively steering the VSSN ship. The board work hard for the VSSN membership behind the scenes to make VSSN the success it is today, so we are very grateful to all the trustees who served this year, juggling this voluntary role on top of their busy careers. Collegiality and mutual support really is at the centre of the research community that our trustees, volunteers and members help to foster.

Alongside the trustees, we have had some fantastic volunteers working to support the development of early career researchers. Daniel Haslam and Petra Buresova were the trustees leading the New Researchers group over the year, keeping the board abreast of the exceptional contributions from key volunteers including the sustained commitment from Helen Abnett, alongside Olu Adeyemo, Chelle Coulton, and Pat Danahey-Janin. At the VSVR 2024 conference, the dedicated and subsidised days were facilitated by Daniel Haslam and Helen Abnett. Together they have coordinated a series of online peer support events and seminars from experienced VSSN members, and facilitated networking through the discussion lists. Our wider membership (academics, researchers and practitioners) have also had plenty of opportunities for networking and knowledge sharing including through events and our communications. This has included the *Perspectives of Scotland's Voluntary Sector's Impact* conference hosted by Glasgow University and the [Voluntary Sector Archives Summer School in July 2025](#) hosted by City University of London. We especially want to highlight the dedication of Jurgen Grotz, Bethany Sykes and Angela Ellis Paine who worked with us and our partners to make these events possible. This year also saw the launch of the VSSN Newsletter, led by Petra Buresova and a huge thanks to Pat Danahey Janin who has been instrumental in managing and sustaining the VSSN discussion list. Another facet of VSSN has been led by Heather Fulford who has managed the VSSN's Small Grants scheme, which supports members to deliver projects of interest to the whole community and she has been joined by James Rees in this sub-committee.

We are incredibly grateful to the Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the hard work in delivering the Voluntary Sector Review. Particular thanks goes to Angela Ellis Paine, who chairs this board, and the co-editors in chief, including Lindsey Findlay-King, Lili Wang and Oto Potluka, alongside the wider editorial board. They have overseen the publication of Volume 15 Issue 3 and Volume 16 Issues 1 and 2 over the course of

the 2024-2025 financial year. Under their stewardship, we have made the exciting move away from printed copies to digital access of all the volumes for our membership. Particular thanks goes to Caitlin McMullin for being a vital link between the EMB and the trustee board.

In addition to the above achievements, VSSN trustees have been striving to govern our organisation in an exemplary way in accordance with the 5Ss of good governance: Support, Stretch, Stewardship, Scrutiny and Strategy, as described by Julia Unwin. We hold ourselves accountable to our strategic plan through six-monthly reviews with the board, and updates in our Annual Report and at our AGM. Ensuring our strategic aims are embedded in decision-making, this year we have also invested time in developing new mechanisms to strengthen the trustee board sub-committees. Especially important to VSSN is making sure our work and actions fulfil our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy](#), and its principles are central to all of our work.

We are enormously appreciative of the expertise and hard work of Meg Wright Consultancy to inform these developments. We have been fortunate to draw on the support and expertise of both Meg Wright and Dez Innocent this year. Thank you to Heather Fulford for working in partnership with Meg in carving out the secretary role and considering due processes. Furthermore, in addition to her Treasurer duties, Karin Biermann has not only led in developing our use of the Google Space platform for better and safer communication systems but has also instigated a risk auditing process. We have also introduced a policy review process. Thanks, should also be given to David Kane for his ongoing IT support.

VSSN is proud to continue to act as a hub through which to communicate voluntary sector research and to offer a space for new partnerships to be forged. We also want to highlight the friendship and support that we have gained from each other through the course of the year, including when we have faced our own life and work crunch points. We very much appreciate and enjoy working together to jointly deliver the chairing role. Finally, we would like to say one final thank you to the Trustee Board, the Editorial Management Board, our volunteers, our partner organisations and our membership for their energy and enthusiasm during the year, which has been a true inspiration. It's an honour to stand alongside you all.

We also want to reiterate a wider message to the network. VSSN aspires to be a network that is welcoming and supportive. At a time when things can feel dispersed, we hope the voluntary sector and volunteering researchers can continue to find a nurturing space within the network. Inclusion is important to us. VSSN prides itself in the journey that our members take from their initial experiences at one of our many events, to becoming regular contributors and friends in our research community. We look forward to even more of this in the years that follow.

2. VSSN's Journal, Voluntary Sector Review

In 2024-25, VSSN's international interdisciplinary journal, Voluntary Sector Review (VSR), published by Policy Press, continued into its sixteenth year, with three issues per annum. The journal is designed to appeal to a wide readership, and each issue traditionally contains over 100 pages of Research Articles, Policy and Practice Papers, as well as Book Reviews, Debates and Research Notes. The decision was made by the board in May 2025 to transition from offering all VSSN members print copies of each issue to enabling online access, thus increasing the accessibility of the Journal content whilst also reducing its environmental footprint.

The journal continues to attract a wide readership and submissions from across the globe. While overall submissions declined in 2024 compared to previous years (46 submissions, down from 68 in 2023), the first half of 2025 has seen 29 submissions, suggesting a potential reversal of this trend. The acceptance rate remains steady at around 50%. The March 2025 issue featured a range of research articles and policy papers, and work is underway on a special issue entitled "Unravelling Smaller Organisations: Building a Research-Based Understanding of a Critical Part of the Voluntary Sector", guest edited by Katy Adams and Ellen Bennett (from Hull University and Sheffield Hallam University, UK, respectively), scheduled for March 2026. Planning has also begun for a future special issue on "Evaluations for Better Philanthropy" and a virtual special issue on voluntary action in health care.

During the year, three of our long-standing editors came to the end of their terms of office, triggering a recruitment process for new editors. We are incredibly grateful to James Rees (co-editor, University of Wolverhampton, UK), Daiga Kamerāde (co-editor, University of Salford, UK) and Eddy Hogg (book review editor, University of Kent) for all their years of service. Lindsay Findlay-King (University of Northumbria) and Oto Potluka (Basel University) join Lili Wang (Arizona State University) as our new co-editorial team; whilst Alison Body (University of Kent, UK), and Iwona Nowakowska (Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, Poland) continue as policy and practice editors, Carl Milofsky (Bucknell University, USA) as Consulting Editor, and Georg von Schnurbein (Universität Basel, Switzerland) as Regional Associate Editor. Ala Bakir Hamoudi joined us as book review editor. We are incredibly grateful to the whole team for all their efforts.

All VSSN members are strongly encouraged to persuade their institutions to take out (and continue) subscriptions to ensure the financial sustainability of the journal. Free online trial subscriptions for institutions are available from Voluntary Sector Review, Policy Press. We continue to invite submissions to the Research articles, Comment and Debate, Research Notes, Policy and Practice and Book Review sections of the journal.

VSSN is hugely grateful to The Policy Press for the expertise, enthusiasm and continued practical support it has brought to the journal, and the resources it is

devoting to making it a success. Particular thanks go to Sarah Bird who played a significant role in the development of VSR before taking redundancy from Policy Press during the year, and to Sharon Harris who has stepped into the role as VSR's main point of contact within Policy Press. The day-to-day activities of the journal are supported by an editorial assistant - Jenna Essex, to whom we are incredibly grateful for all the excellent support that she provides. The post is jointly funded by The Policy Press and VSSN to support the editorial work underpinning the journal, including screening submissions and liaising with editors.

VSR Editorial Management Board

The journal is overseen by an Editorial Management Board (EMB), which meets twice each year – a January gathering to review the journal's development and consider editorial strategy, followed by a mid-year meeting to review progress. The EMB is a sub-committee of the VSSN Trustee Board; it is made up of members elected by VSSN, representatives of The Policy Press, and the Editorial Team. Current EMB elected members include Angela Ellis Paine (Chair, City St George's, University of London), Elizabeth Cookingham Bailey (University of York), Jo Crotty (University of Sunderland), Cari Bottois (Cardiff University), and Caitlin McMullin (Roskilde University, Denmark). Also members during the year were David Wallace-Hare (University of Exeter) and Heather Fulford (as the VSSN trustee representative on the EMB until May 2025). We are very grateful to each of them for their significant contributions to VSR. The Journal also benefits from the support of our International Advisory Group (IAG) members, who join the mid-year EMB meeting to feed into the development of our strategy.

This year the main points of discussion for the EMB included the recruitment of the new editorial team, overall strategy for enhancing the quality and reputation of the journal, including building its international reach, and more generally how to keep building VSR's submissions pipeline, its pool of reviewers, and subscribers. We are grateful to the editorial team for all the work that has gone into producing the Journal, to Policy Press for its ongoing support, the EMB and IAG members, and to all our authors and reviewers whose contributions are essential.

3. VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Annual Conference, September 2024

The annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference was held for the first time at Bayes Business School in London, on the 11th and 12th September 2024. The conference was hosted in partnership with NCVO and Voluntary Action

Islington and we were pleased to continue these important partnerships. The conference was preceded by a successful day for new researchers (which is reported on below), offering a supportive environment for new scholars to present their work and receive detailed feedback.

The conference theme explored ‘Voice of the people? Democracy, representation, and involvement in and through the voluntary sector and volunteering’. Over sixty papers were delivered, plus workshops, panel and plenary sessions, with over 120 attendees in total from across the UK and beyond. Plenary speakers included Prof Clare Saunders (University of Exeter), with Sarah Elliott (NCVO); Lela Kogbara (Place Matters); Will McCallum (Greenpeace); and Polly Neate (Shelter). A panel of local organisations provided insight on democracy, representation and involvement

We are thankful to the organising committee, especially Angela Ellis Paine and the Bayes Business School team for a successful conference. We were also pleased that the conference generated a significant surplus which contributes to VSSN's capacity to deliver events during the year at no or limited cost.

4. Day Conferences and Other Events

Perspectives on Scotland's Third Sector Impact, June 2025, Glasgow

The Day Events sub-committee held a day conference in June 2025 in Glasgow in partnership with the University of Glasgow and the Third Sector Research Forum. The event was titled, ‘Perspectives on Scotland's Third Sector Impact’. VSSN led the organisation of the event and were supported by a committed steering group, with representatives from the Scottish Third Sector Research Forum, YouthLink Scotland, Volunteer Scotland, the Scottish Council for Voluntary Organisations, Evaluation Support Scotland and the University of Glasgow. Over 70 people from practitioner and academic backgrounds came together to explore the impact of volunteering and the third sector and the role and impact of researchers in the sector.

Adam Lang (Carnegie UK) examined the role of civil society in helping address shared challenges across the UK in the event's keynote speech. The morning session focused on the benefits and challenges of measuring impact in the third sector, with presentations from Bethany Sikes (Volunteer Scotland), Professor Alasdair Rutherford (University of Stirling) and Gary Walsh (Evaluation Support Scotland), which were followed by table discussions among attendees. The afternoon session of ‘Meet the sector, meet the researcher’ gave attendees the opportunity to interact with researchers working in the Scottish third sector, with a carousel of eight stations. The final session was facilitated by Lewis Hou (Science Ceilidh) with short lightning talks from Andrew Paterson (Scottish Community Development Centre) and Emma

Davidson (University of Edinburgh) which reflected on our role as researchers, the place of communities and the politics of evidence.

Overall, the event was a great success, with positive feedback from many attendees who enjoyed the interactive nature of the conference and the opportunity to discuss third sector research with practitioners and academics. You can read more about the event [here](#).

Voluntary Sector Archive Summer School, July 2025, London

This interdisciplinary summer school was aimed for doctoral and early career researchers at University College London on 15 and 16 July 2025. It was supported by the British Academy Research Project (ARP) 'Archiving the Mixed Economy of Welfare' and led by Georgina Brewis and Angela Ellis Paine. It was co-organised in partnership with Helen Abnett from VSSN and Marta Starostina from Voluntary Action History Society (VAHS).

The two-day summer school featured a series of workshops and panel sessions on different aspects of documentary and archival research, thanks to Helen Abnett, Jayne Lacny, Ellie Munro, and Kathryn Hannan. Peter Grant led an insightful historical walking talk around Bloomsbury. Participants were able to present their own research, with a focus on sharing and working through the delights and dilemmas of documentary and archival research whilst also receiving feedback from established academics. Key topics included issues of accessing the private records of charities; how to navigate gaps in archives; working in partnership with archive owners; questions of voice and power; ethics; and experiences of integrating social theory and history through archival research. The aim was to build a community of researchers working in this area to enable ongoing peer support and development and attendees reported that the sense of the community was palpable as a result.

5. New Researchers

A new researchers coordinating group oversees the strategy for supporting new researchers and organises support sessions. VSSN trustees Daniel Haslam and Petra Buresova sit on the New Researchers sub-group.

Our online support sessions continued in 2024-25 providing an informal space for new researchers to engage with others, develop and maintain relationships, and share the ups and downs of the research process. These were primarily facilitated by Chelle Coulton and Olu Adeyemo with support from Helen Abnett. We have also used these sessions to provide more structured support and information, such as the development of research skills and we extend our thanks to all of the presenters:

- Angela Ellis Paine

- Rob Macmillan
- Ellen Bennet

To enable new researchers to participate fully in the VSSN research community, this year's New Researchers stream took place on the day before the main conference. This separate New Researchers Day was well attended and involved two sessions of paper presentations and a workshop on 'building impact' delivered by Alex Skailes and Justin Davis-Smith from the Centre for Charity Effectiveness at Bayes Business School. Helen Abnett and Daniel Haslam facilitated the 2024 New Researchers Day.

Feedback from the New Researchers Day was largely positive and our intention is to continue this way of supporting new researchers at the conference for the 2025 iteration.

Our discussion list designed specifically for new researchers (VOL-SECTOR-NEW-RESEARCHERS) continues to provide a forum for information sharing, networking and support and currently has over 100 subscribers.

The work with new researchers provides a route for emerging scholars and practitioners in the field to share their work in a supportive environment, develop a network of peers, and engage fully with the annual conference. For suggestions on our support of early career researchers or to get involved, please email NewResearchers@vssn.org.uk.

Many thanks to Petra Buresova, Daniel Haslam, Helen Abnett, Chelle Coulton, Olu Adeyemo, and Pat Danahey-Janin for their contributions over the past year.

6. Membership

At the end of the financial year, we had 111 individual members of those 28 are new members. We had four organisation members. Most members are based in the UK, but there are also memberships from Austria, France, Portugal and Spain.

7. Small Grants Scheme

Through the annual call for Small Grant proposals, VSSN funds projects which support the development of an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK. Typically, the grants are used to fund seminars, workshops, roundtables, webinars, or the production of a podcast, animation or short film.

The funded projects are proving to be an important vehicle for bringing together researchers, practitioners and/or policymakers to open-up a dialogue on a voluntary sector or volunteering-related issue. These dialogues can lead to fruitful longer-term collaborations and discussions that help to advance thinking and understanding in

voluntary sector studies. Some projects funded through the VSSN Small Grant Scheme have also led to project partners securing further funding from other organisations, enabling them to extend their work beyond the VSSN project.

During the current reporting period, the two projects that were awarded funding in the 2023-2024 call were successfully completed:

- John Picton (University of Manchester) and Tilly Clough (Queens University Belfast) explored the legal framework surrounding charitable campaigning which can hinder Third Sector organisations fulfilling their campaigning missions. A workshop was held to bring together Third-Sector practitioners, academics and legal professionals to share experiences relating to regulatory compliance, navigating campaign neutrality and managing financial reporting requirements.
- Jennifer Raschbauer (Derbyshire Voluntary Action) worked with Amelia Woodward (University of Derby) to explore new ways of demonstrating and managing social impact in voluntary and community organisations. Findings from the project were presented at the VSVR Conference in 2024. Plans were put in place to develop the collaboration further beyond the VSSN project, with the intention to develop a digital tool to support impact management and evaluation.

Three projects were funded in the 2024-2025 call:

- Helen Abnett (University of Hertfordshire) is working on a project to scope the potential for a research network for music education & the voluntary sector.
- Katy Adams (University of Hull) is working on a project designed to encourage and enable conversations about smaller voluntary organisations.
- Kris Southby (Leeds Beckett University) and Nicky Lines (Leeds City Council) are collaborating on a project exploring learning disabilities, digital exclusion and the role of the voluntary sector with the intention of establishing priorities and co-developing a research agenda with local and national stakeholders.

It is particularly heartening to see that these latter projects support new collaborative research by early career researchers in our community.

The Board's adoption of Google workspace in 2024 has proved an extremely useful tool for enabling the Small Grants Sub-Group to process applications, keep track of the funded projects, and communicate with grant holders.

8. Communications and Information Technology

The website is an important element of how we communicate with members. VSSN includes videos, blogs and reports of day events, the conference and the new

researchers' meetings. The website offers the ability to join VSSN online, apply for development grants and submit abstracts.

VSSN uses Linked In with good effect and is now using the Blue Sky platform to communicate messages.

VSSN has produced a newsletter to keep members informed. The intention is to produce a newsletter twice a year and we thank Petra Buresova for leading on this work and producing a high quality and informative newsletter. Huge thanks to Pat Danahey Janin who has been fundamental in keeping the VSSN discussion list going over the past year. (vol-sector-studies-network@jiscmail.ac.uk).

Google Workspace is in place which allows an efficient and secure method of information sharing, communicating and storing data in line with GDPR regulations.

Across all these initiatives, the contribution by way of hands-on support and expert advice made by David Kane is greatly appreciated.

9. The Organisation and Management of VSSN

Trustee Board Meetings

The full Trustee Board meets six times during the year. Our early-year strategic planning meeting was held online which involved reviewing VSSN's strategic plan and discussing future priorities; training on equality, diversity and inclusion and what this means for VSSN's approach and practice. Meeting online is beneficial as a mechanism for enabling participation in the midst of busy lives and to accommodate a geographically diverse board. However, it was noted by the board that although the online format was practical it missed informal interactions to build rapport and strong communications between board members. Suggestion was made to alternate between in-person and online formats for future meetings.

The Trustee Board works through a number of sub-groups and we have clarified the terms of responsibility for sub-groups and related policy documents, in part as a way of managing board turn-over, as well as ensuring we fulfil board responsibilities. We have continued to work to the strategy developed in 2023, with a 6 monthly review process, and particularly endeavoured to align our activities with VSSN's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy. These EDI principles are central to all our work. EDI work is never complete, and so we are continually reviewing issues of access to VSSN's activities at all tiers of engagement and assessing access for new researchers, practitioner organisations and from representatives from across the four nations, as well as for people across the intersectional spectrum of protected characteristics. This year our trustees have undertaken some thought-provoking EDI

training session led by [Gamiel from Diversity Market Place](#) and, for the first time, we have conducted a Diversity Audit to assess representation in senior roles of VSSN, which sat alongside a skills audit.

Public Benefit

One of the Trustee Board's main responsibilities is to ensure that VSSN pursues its stated aim as a charity of advancing education and research concerning the voluntary sector, in ways that provide a benefit to the wider public. All VSSN events are widely publicised and open to all, with either modest or no fees to attend. Similarly, our online discussion lists are open to all. Furthermore, the *Voluntary Sector Review* is an integral part of the VSSN's work and is an important vehicle in enabling research work on the voluntary sector to reach as many people as possible. Policy and Practice papers in the journal, many of which are written by practitioners and seek to advance practice-based knowledge, are now Open Access and free to view by anyone. We continued to offer Small Grants, encouraging and enabling members to develop proposals to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK.

Executive Office

The Executive Officer plays a key role in the smooth running of the Network, particularly membership services and governance support. We would like to express our gratitude to Meg Wright and Dez Innocent of Meg Wright Consultancy which runs back-office functions, working with members, and getting involved in all aspects of VSSN's work, including providing guidance from her expertise in governance. We have found Meg and Dez's support invaluable and would like to share our huge gratitude to them for their work over the past year.

Financial Report and Accounts

The Trustees have prepared the accounts using a receipts and payments basis permitted by the Charities Act 2011 and following the recommendations issued by the Charity Commission to present accounts.

The income of VSSN is insufficient to require an audit or independent examination of the accounts by the Charity Commission of England and Wales. However, since registering with the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), the Board is required to arrange for an independent examination by a person with requisite skills. The examiner's report is attached to the accounts.

Receipts and Payments

Membership subscriptions totaled £7,005 for individuals and £840 for organisations. VSSN's membership year previously commenced on 1 November. The trial of using members' anniversary date of joining VSSN as the renewal date was successful. It achieved the aims of better reflecting how members make their payments, reduces confusion between financial, anniversary, and membership years, and spreads the administrative workload.

Membership benefits include VSSN's journal, Voluntary Sector Review (VSR), a preferential registration rate for day and annual conferences, and the ability to apply for a funding grant. Applicants (the lead applicant must be a VSSN member) for a Small Grant may receive up to £750 for projects that support or develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK. Three Grants were awarded in February 2025, but projects were incomplete at balance date (see Note7).

The VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference was held in September 2024 in London, generating a surplus of £8,743 including the costs of the associated conference dinner. Sponsorship of the Best Paper Prizes was paid directly to winners with VSSN's contribution totaling £250.

VSSN contributes to the publication of VSR according to the number and income banding of members. The amount paid was £2,850 including the minimum contribution of £2,600.

No trustee receives remuneration or benefits from VSSN. In this financial year, the following trustee expenses were paid or reimbursed:

Number of Trustees Paid or Reimbursed: 0

Total Amount Paid or Reimbursed: 0

Nature of the Expenses Paid or Reimbursed: n/a

Current and Future Assets and Liabilities

The cash surplus in 2024-25 is £1,986 (2023-24 £4,608) resulting in accumulated cash funds of £30,371 held with Unity Trust Bank. There remains £280 in restricted funds. Further details are in notes 2 to the accounts.

The net asset balance at 31.07.2024 is £13,840 (31.07.2023 £16,419) after taking future obligations and reserves of £16,531 (2022-23 £9,758) into account.

Future Obligations and Reserves Policy

The Trustees reviewed and revised VSSN's reserves policy for the 2024-25 financial year on 14 October 2025.

A summary of the resulting provisions included in the financial accounts (see Note 8) are:

Purpose	Calculation	Amount
Operations		
Executive Officer's contract	Minimum notice of Contract termination: 3 months	£1,458
EO reimbursable expenses	Known or contingent amount	£200
Registered Office	Annual payment to Communities 1 st for hosting VSSN's registered mailing address	£30
Website Costs	Annual Hosting fees: currently £240 annually +VAT	£274
	Anticipated Changes to Add-on Fees and Email hosting pa, say	£100
Evalon Financial Services DAC	Direct debit processing fee: cancellable anytime	£2
	one month's fee, say	
Opayo Credit Card Services	Credit card processing fee:	£2
	one month's fee, say	
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank fee £6 pm: say, 6 months	£36

Small Grants

Yearly Round of Calls for Applications	Three grants were awarded in February 2025. At balance date, the projects were incomplete and the awards outstanding.	£1979
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Conference and Other Events

Annual Conference	To reflect purchase orders/contracts issued after allowing for cancellation clauses.	
	Bayes, City University 2025 Conference: say 50%	£2,000
	Up to 90 days prior to the Event, no charge; 90 – 31 days prior to the Event, 50% cancellation fee; 30 –15 days prior to the Event, 75% cancellation fee; 14 days or fewer prior to the Event, 100% cancellation fee.	£500
	Other catering and venue services, say	

Voluntary Sector Review

VSR Editorial Fees	Annual renewal unless terminated: 12 months = (100% to cover the contingency of default/delayed reimbursement of 50% by Policy Press)	£2,200
VSR Publication Agreement	The agreement expired on 31.07.2025. With no successive agreement in place at balance date, the previous terms form the basis for the provision. 01.08.2025 to 31.07.2030 minimum payment of £2,600 pa. With the current accumulated cash funds, a contingency of 50% of (£2600 x 5 =) £13,000 is sufficient to cover the obligation.	£6,500
VSR Printing Contribution	Estimation: number and banding of members less the minimum contribution; calculated at 30.06.2025 (basis for VSR fees)	£250

Voluntary Sector Review

VSR Editorial Fees	Annual renewal unless terminated: 12 months =	£2,200
	(100% to cover the contingency of default/delayed reimbursement of 50% by Policy Press)	

Future Outlook

The accumulated cash funds increased over the past three years largely due to better than expected returns from the annual conference. This situation is not expected or planned to continue. Future year's operations will breakeven or incur deficits as the funds become invested in day events, small grants, new researcher and practitioner-partnership initiatives. Further, the inaugural Risk Assessment and Management review currently being undertaken by the Board has identified areas for improvement and potential expense, such as trustee resources and training, technical services and insurance.

Approval

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for keeping proper accounting records for the charity, safeguarding the charity's funds from loss and preparing an Annual Report and Annual Accounts to comply with the Charities Act 2011. This Annual Report is prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities.

The trustees approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts on 14 October 2025, which are signed on their behalf by:

Secretary

Heather Fulford

Co-Chair

Amy Sanders

VSSN Annual Accounts 2024 - 2025

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES as at 31 July 2025 [Note 1]

	2024-25	2023-24
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Monetary assets		
Unity Trust Bank current account [Note 1]	30,370.96	28,384.99
Total monetary assets	30,370.96	28,384.99
<i>Represented by monetary funds</i>		
Unrestricted funds	30,090.96	28,104.99
Restricted funds [Note 2]	280.00	280.00
Total monetary funds [Note 3]	30,370.96	28,384.99
 Non-monetary assets and liabilities		
Physical Assets [Note 4]		
Receivables [Note 5, 6]	0.00	0.00
Total monetary and non-monetary assets	0.00	0.00
 CURRENT LIABILITIES		
<i>Miscellaneous creditors and liabilities at year-end</i>		
Sundry Creditors and Executive Officer services [Note 7]	0.00	2,207.50
Total miscellaneous creditors	0.00	2,207.50
 OTHER BINDING COMMITMENTS AT YEAR END [Note 8]		
Executive Office contract	1,458.00	1,458.00
Office and other executive officer expenses contingency	230.00	230.00
Web expenditure contingency	374.00	250.00
Bank and Financial Services contingency	40.00	40.00
Conference contingency	2,500.00	2,500.00
VSR Editorial Assistant services [Note 6]	2,200.00	2,000.00
Minimum VSR obligation	6,500.00	2,600.00
Additional VSR obligation	250.00	680.00
Small Grants	1,979.00	0.00
Total other commitments	15,531.00	9,758.00
 Total current liabilities and provisions	15,531.00	11,965.50
 NET MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY ASSETS	14,839.96	16,419.49

STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS AND EXPENSES for the period 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024 [Note 1]

	2024-25	2023-24
	£	£
RECEIPTS		
Conference surplus	8,743.05	13,572.40
Member subscriptions	7,005.50	6,520.00
Organisational member subscriptions	840.00	840.00
Contrib. VSR Editorial assistance (50%)	1,050.00	1,000.00
Sponsorship - Best Paper Prize/s	0.00	400.00
TOTAL RECEIPTS	17,638.05	22,332.40
PAYMENTS		
Conference costs	0.00	4,036.33
Best Paper Awards	250.00	546.00
VSSN event expenses - Scotland	165.50	2,110.33
Publications expenses (VSR for members)	250.00	680.00
Publications supplement (minimum fee)	2600.00	2,600.00
VSR Editorial assistant services	2100.00	1,500.00
Board Expenses	175.00	602.17
Executive officer - fees	8063.50	4,260.00
Office and other executive officer expenses	399.91	30.00
Development Grants	967.30	750.00
Website dev/hosting & database/software	474.14	412.70
Credit Card Fees	129.33	124.69
Other Bank Fees	77.40	72.00
TOTAL PAYMENTS	15,652.08	17,724.22
SURPLUS (DEFICIT)	1,985.97	4,608.18
Balance b/fwd from previous year	28,384.99	23,776.81
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD TO NEXT YEAR	30,370.96	28,384.99

NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. These accounts show revenue and expenses on a cash basis, recognised at the time of receipt and payment. Non-monetary assets and liabilities are shown at estimated values at year end. No cash is kept on hand: VSSN does not accept cash receipts nor make cheque payments. All receipts and payments are processed through the bank account.

Bank Reconciliation 2024-25	£	
Opening Balance at 1 August 2024		28,384.99
Add Receipts		17,638.05
Less Payments		15,652.08
Balance Per Ledger		30,370.96
Less Receipts not Banked	n/a	
Add Unpresented Payments	n/a	
Unity Trust Bank Balance at 31 July 2025		30,370.96

a.

2. VSSN holds restricted funds for furthering the activities of New Researchers £280 (£280 in 2023-24). These funds are from a prior NCVO grant and specifically relate to VSVR Conference support for new researchers. VSSN funded the New Researchers' Prize awarded at the annual conference but did not draw down the restricted funds.
3. Apart from the new researchers' fund (Note 2), VSSN's funds are unrestricted.
4. VSSN has some fixed assets in the form of banner stands and table stands, but these are personalised to VSSN and, therefore, do not have any disposal value to show on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
5. Prior year receivable was an amount owing by The Policy Press. No receipts are outstanding in the current year.
6. The contract with The Policy Press for publishing and printing Voluntary Sector Review includes providing Editorial Assistance Fees. The fees are shared equally, from February 2022, £2,000 pa and from February 2025, £2,200 pa (paid quarterly) with the accounts disclosing VSSN's commitment and reimbursement for the coming 12 months.
7. The liability are amounts incurred but not settled at balance date. Three Small Grants have been awarded but they are incomplete and therefore, reported as a contingent binding commitment.
8. The Other Binding Commitments at Year End line items reflect the Reserves Policy and calculations at the balance date agreed upon by Trustees noted in the preceding

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1197827

Accounts

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

Registered charity:

England and Wales 1197827 (previously 1114742)

Scotland SC052647

Annual Report and Accounts
1 August 2023 - 31 July 2024



Address for official correspondence:

Executive Officer, Voluntary Sector Studies Network
Vers House, Park Estate, Frogmore, Hertfordshire, EL2 3WH

www.vssn.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT

Legal and Constitutional Details

Name of organisation:	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
Legal form:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by Constitution CIO -Association
Charitable status:	Registered charity: England & Wales: number 1197827 (previously 1114742) Scotland: number SC052647
Correspondent:	Meg Wright Vers House, Park Estate, Frogmore Hertfordshire EL2 3WH
Central e-mail:	execofficer@vssn.org.uk
Website:	www.vssn.org.uk
Objects:	The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom by: (1) the promotion and diffusion of knowledge; and (2) the publication of research; and (3) encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and (4) undertaking such other activities (being charitable in law) as shall be conducive to the attainment of these objects.

Trustees and Other Key Roles

The following people served as trustees or in other key VSSN roles between August 2023 - July 2024.

During the year, the Trustees formalised the operation of sub-committees or groups acting under the authority of the Board of Trustees. Under the scheme of delegation, each group has Terms of Reference outlining their purpose, delegated responsibilities and membership which have been approved by the Board with a review every two years. The groups are:

- Office Bearers (OfficeBearers@vssn.org.uk)
- Conference (Conference@vssn.org.uk)
- Communications (Communications@vssn.org.uk)
- Events (Events@vssn.org.uk)
- Grants (Grants@vssn.org.uk)
- Membership (Members@vssn.org.uk)
- New Researchers (NewResearchers@vssn.org.uk)

Affiliations are given for information only; all Trustee Board members serve as individuals.

Chair	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University (until Nov 2023) Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, The Open University (from Nov 2023)
Co-Vice Chairs	Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, The Open University (until Nov 2023) Vita Terry, IVAR (until Nov 2023) Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University (from Nov 2023)
Treasurer	Karin Biermann, University of Klagenfurt
Secretary	Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
Conference Group	Ellen Bennett, Sheffield Hallam University Daniel Haslam, The Open University Angela Ellis Paine, City University of London (non-trustee)
Events and Day Conferences Group	Jurgen Grotz, IVR, University of East Anglia Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
Communications Group	Jo Vincett, Liverpool John Moores University Stephen Craker, Communities 1st Meg Wright, Executive Officer (non-trustee)
Membership Group	Pat Armstrong (chair) Meg Wright, Executive Officer (non-trustee) Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, The Open University
New Researchers Group	Daniel Haslam, The Open University Helen Abnett, University of Birmingham (non-trustee)
Voluntary Sector Review	Daiga Kamerāde, University of Salford (Representing VSR editors) Heather Fulford (Representing VSSN trustees on editorial management board)
Small Grants Group	Heather Fulford

Chair	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University (until Nov 2023) Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, The Open University (from Nov 2023)
Co-Vice Chairs	Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, The Open University (until Nov 2023) Vita Terry, IVAR (until Nov 2023) Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University (from Nov 2023)
Treasurer	Karin Biermann, University of Klagenfurt
Secretary	Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
	Sophie Wilson, BVSC (until April 2024)

Appointment of Trustees

VSSN members elect up to 15 trustees to serve a three-year term of office on a rolling basis. A member of the Editorial Management Board of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as the VSR representative on the trustee board. Trustees may serve for a maximum of nine consecutive years. The initial terms of office are set according to the results of the Single Transferable Vote on the annual cycle of three members to be elected each year.

Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the *Voluntary Sector Review*

A sub-committee is elected to act as the Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. With direction from the Trustee Board, the EMB is responsible for the oversight of the journal and the appointment of the Editorial Team, including the Editor(s), in consultation with the publisher, The Policy Press.

Appointment of EMB

VSSN members elect six members of the EMB on a three-year cycle, using the same rules as for the election of Trustees Board members as set out in the amended constitution. One member of the EMB is appointed ex-officio to the Trustee Board

The EMB is responsible for assembling the International Advisory Board.

Chair: Angela Ellis Paine, City, University of London

Diarmuid McDonnell, University of the West of Scotland (VSSN representative until January 2024).

Heather Fulford (VSSN representative from January 2024)

Cari Bottois, University of Cardiff / University of Exeter

Jo Crotty, Edge Hill University

Liz Bailey, University of York

Caitlin McMullin, Roskilde University, Denmark

David Wallace-Hare, University of Exeter

Publisher's representative: Edwina Thorn, The Policy Press

Main Editors: James Rees (Managing Editor), Daiga Kamerāde, Lili Wang

Editorial Assistant: Jenna Essex

Policy and Practice editors: Ali Body, Iwona Nowakowska,

Book review editor: Eddy Hogg

For Policy Press: Edwina Thorn (Journals Executive), Sarah Bird (Senior Journals Development Executive)

Regional Associate Editors: Georg von Schnurbein

Trustee Board Report: activities undertaken for public benefit by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) during the year ending 31 July 2024

1. Chairs' Report

The year 2023-24 was another successful year for VSSN. The annual conference was again held at Sheffield Hallam University in September 2023, hosting over 100 people, and we are incredibly grateful to the team at Sheffield Hallam for their support over two successive conferences. In November, we welcomed new people onto the Trustee Board who joined existing trustees to serve the membership, often in tasks that are behind the scenes. We said farewell to Jon Dean, who over a number of years had served as chair, co-chair and conference lead and to Chris Damm and Diarmuid McDonnell and later in the year to Sophie Wilson. Their enthusiasm, insights and expertise are greatly missed, even as we have welcomed new colleagues. We are grateful to all who have served with such commitment and energy over this period.

The trustee board continued to align its work over 2023-24 with VSSN's strategic aims:

- Supporting the career development of researchers looking at the voluntary sector and volunteering research.
- Facilitating knowledge exchange across research, policy, and practice.
- Enhancing opportunities for inclusive networking, peer support and collaboration.
- Encouraging research on the voluntary sector & volunteering across disciplinary & geographical boundaries.
- Strengthening the links, communication and collaborations between researchers, voluntary sector practitioners and policy actors.

In line with these objectives, we continued VSSN's Small Grants programme, supporting members to deliver projects of interest to the whole community. We supported the development of early career researchers through a dedicated and subsidised stream at the annual conference, a writing retreat, a series of online peer support events and facilitated networking through the discussion list. We have

continued to provide opportunities for networking between academics, researchers and practitioners, through events, the website and two discussion lists. We are conscious there is always more that could be done, but VSSN is proud to continue to act as a hub through which to communicate voluntary sector research and to offer a space for new partnerships to be forged. We will hold ourselves accountable to our strategic plan through six-monthly reviews with the board, and updates in our Annual Report and at our AGM.

Especially important to VSSN is making sure our work and actions fulfil our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy](#), and its principles are central to all of our work. This work is never complete, but amongst other things means that we are continually reviewing issues of access to VSSN's activities including access from practitioner organisations and from the four nations. We were therefore pleased to continue this year with our series of symposia based in the different nations of the UK, setting up research conversations across participants from higher education and practitioner-focused organisations.

With considerable board turnover, we have spent time this year embedding processes and clarifying responsibilities of the Exec Officer and sub-groups of the trustee board, to ensure we continue to take collective responsibility for forwarding VSSN's agenda, whilst also retaining the community spirit that we all value. We hope this work will help with continuity through the inevitable changes of key personnel. To help with this, retain institutional knowledge and increase capacity, in March 2023 we held a Special General Meeting at which members voted to increase the maximum number of trustees to 15 and to allow for trustees to stand for a third 3 year term, if they wish.

We would like to thank the Trustee Board and the Editorial Management Board for their energetic and hard work during the year. We would also like to thank Policy Press for their ongoing support of the journal, and of course the editorial team of *Voluntary Sector Review* over this period: Angela Ellis-Paine (EMB chair), James Rees, Lili Wang and Daiga Kamerāde, Ali Body, Iwona Nowakowska, Eddy Hogg, and consulting editor Carl Milofsky. Thanks also to David Kane for his ongoing support for the website.

2.VSSN's Journal, Voluntary Sector Review

In 2023-24, VSSN's international interdisciplinary journal, *Voluntary Sector Review* (VSR), published by Policy Press, continued into its fifteenth year, with three issues per annum. The journal is designed to appeal to a wide readership and each issue traditionally contains over 100 pages of Research Articles, Policy and Practice Papers, as well as Book Reviews, Debates and Research Notes. A print copy of each issue is a VSSN membership benefit.

The increasing quantity and, it seems, quality of papers submitted to the journal allows us to publish a greater number of research articles, and since 2021 we have been publishing six research papers per issue as the norm to have a healthy number of papers in pipeline for upcoming issues. The March 2024 issue included a themed section entitled "Adapting to survive or thrive: civil society, the third sector and social movement in 'post-Soviet' spaces".

We continue to invite submissions to the 'Comment and Debate', 'Research Notes' and 'policy and Practice' sections of the journal. The book review section has continued to receive valuable contributions thanks to Eddy Hogg's first-rate efforts.

The editorial team continues to consist of Managing Editor, James Rees (University of Wolverhampton, UK), Lili Wang (Arizona State University, USA), and Daiga Kamerāde (University of Salford, UK). Policy and Practice Co-Editor continue to be Alison Body (University of Kent, UK), and

Iwona Nowakowska (Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, Poland). Eddy Hogg (University of Kent, UK) is our book review editor, Carl Milofsky (Bucknell University, USA) is Consulting Editor, and Georg von Schnurbein (Universität Basel, Switzerland) our Regional Associate Editor. We are incredibly grateful to the whole team for all their efforts. At the time of reporting, we are in the process of recruiting several new editors as Daiga, James and Eddy will all come to the end of their terms of office this year. We look forward to welcoming the new team in due course.

All VSSN members are strongly encouraged to persuade their institutions to take out (and continue) subscriptions to ensure the financial sustainability of the journal. Free online trial subscriptions for institutions are available from [Voluntary Sector Review | Bristol University Press](#).

The journal has a twitter account: @vsrjournal, with a growing constituency of over 900 followers (with thanks to EMB member David Wallace-Hare for managing our VSVR social media presence). This is used to keep people informed about forthcoming content, and the availability of free access articles.

VSSN is hugely grateful to The Policy Press for the expertise, enthusiasm and continued practical support it has brought to the journal, and the resources it is devoting to making it a success. The day-to-day activities of the journal are supported by an editorial assistant. Many thanks to Jenna Essex for the excellent support that she is providing in this role. The post is jointly funded by The Policy Press and VSSN to support the editorial work underpinning the journal, including screening submissions and liaising with editors.

VSR Editorial Management Board

The journal is overseen by an Editorial Management Board (EMB), which meets twice each year – a January gathering to review the journal’s development and consider editorial strategy, followed by a mid-year meeting to review progress. The EMB is a sub-committee of the VSSN Trustee Board; it is made up of members elected by VSSN, representatives of The Policy Press, and the Editorial Team. Current EMB elected members include Angela Ellis Paine (Chair, City, University of London), Elizabeth Cookingham Bailey (Uni of York), Jo Crotty (Uni of Sunderland), Cari Bottois (Cardiff Uni), Caitlin McMullin (Roskilde University, Denmark); David Wallace-Hare (University of Exeter); with Heather Fulford as the VSSN trustee representative on the EMB. We are very grateful to each of them for their significant contributions to VSR. The Journal also benefits from the support of our International Advisory Group (IAG) members, who join the mid-year EMB meeting to feed into the development of our strategy.

This year the main points of discussion for the EMB included the overall strategy for developing the journal, including enhancing its international reach and reputation, and more generally how to keep building VSR’s submissions pipeline, its pool of reviewers, and to continue to drive up quality. We are particularly grateful to the editorial team for all the work that has gone into strengthening the Journal, to Policy Press for its ongoing support, the EMB and IAG members, and to all our authors and reviewers whose contributions are essential.

3.VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Annual Conference, September 2023

The annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference was again held at Sheffield Hallam University, on the 12th and 13th September 2023. As in 2022, it was hosted in partnership with NCVO and Voluntary Action Sheffield (VAS) and we were pleased to continue these important partnerships. The conference was preceded by a successful day for new researchers (which is reported on below), offering a supportive environment for new scholars to present their work and

receive detailed feedback, and including a workshop on academic publishing. This was followed by an opportunity to join Professor Chris Dayson's thought-provoking inaugural lecture on the value of voluntary action, which led us well into the theme of the conference, 'Action, Difference, and Change in Local Civil Society'.

Over sixty papers were delivered, plus workshops, panel and plenary sessions, with over 100 attendees in total. Plenary speakers included Dr Caitlin McMullin (Aalborg University, Denmark) and Maddy Desforges (NAVCA). A panel of local organisations provided insight into the role of the voluntary sector in Sheffield's refugee and asylum seeker movement.

The conference dinner was again hosted at VAS and supplied by Blend Kitchen, a local social enterprise, and we were delighted to engage with the local sector in this way.

We are thankful to the organising committee, especially Jon Dean, and the Sheffield Hallam team for another successful conference. We were also pleased that the conference generated a significant surplus which contributes to VSSN's capacity to deliver events during the year at no or limited cost.

4. Day Conferences and Other Events

The events sub-committee worked with our partner organisations to deliver two day events as part of the VSSN event series 'Forging Voluntary Sector Studies Research Involvement Networks within and across the four nations of the UK'. Below is a short overview, and for further details of these and previous VSSN events, see <https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/>

Voluntary Action Paradigms in Wales and Northern Ireland , 16 November 2023

This online day event considered the way the Welsh and Northern Irish Voluntary Sectors are discussed and researched, and whether that differed in comparison to the rest of the UK. The panellists included Dr Nick Acheson, Denise Hayward - Volunteer Now, Celine McStravick - NICVA, Carl Milofsky - Bucknell University, Dr Amy Sanders - Aberystwyth University and the Wales Institute of Social & Economic Research, Data & Methods (WISERD), Dirk Schubotz - Queen's University Belfast. Christala Sophocleous - Swansea University was unable to join the panel due to unforeseen circumstances. The video has been made available on youtube to extend its reach.

Closing the Gaps: Collaborating on voluntary and community sector research in Northern Ireland, Belfast, 25 June 2024

The Voluntary Sector Studies Network, Volunteer Now, NICVA, ARK, Queen's University Belfast and Ulster University jointly hosted a symposium in Belfast to explore pathways to collaborating on voluntary and community sector research in Northern Ireland. It was hosted in the NICVA conference centre. John Smith, the Deputy Secretary of Community, Places and Local Government Group at the Department for Communities, Northern Ireland, delivered the first keynote and Jill Cornforth from The Ideas Fund gave the second keynote speech. Carl Milofsky, Bucknell University chaired the first Session with panel members Wendy Osborne, Nick Acheson and Feilim O Hadhmaill. Denise Hayward from Volunteer Now led the world cafe session where participants visited stations with speakers such as Claire Dorris from the National Children's Bureau; Martin McMullan from Youth Action and Linda McKendry from Compass Advocacy Network (CAN). Jurgan Grotz chaired the third session with panellists Dirk Schubotz from Queen's University Belfast (QUB), Kate Clifford from Rural Community

Network and Eileen Martin from the Science Shop in QUB. The day closed with a participative discussion looking to the future of collaborative research on the voluntary sector in Northern Ireland.

5. New Researchers

A new researchers coordinating group oversees the strategy for supporting new researchers and organises support sessions. VSSN trustees Daniel Haslam and Ellen Bennet sit on the New Researchers Subgroup and the sessions are primarily facilitated by Daniel Haslam and Helen Abnett. David Bomark supported the online sessions for some of this period.

Our online support sessions continued in 2023-24 providing an informal space for new researchers to engage with others, develop and maintain relationships, and share the ups and downs of the research process. We have also used these sessions to provide more structured support and information, such as an overview of the conference and developing a short research 'pitch'.

To enable new researchers to participate fully in the VSSN research community, this year's New Researchers stream took place on the day before the main conference. This separate New Researchers Day was well attended and involved two sessions of paper presentations and a workshop delivered by Daiga Kamerade which focussed on writing for journal publication. The workshop was very well received and our thanks go to Daiga for her expertise and support. Thanks also to our paper discussants Chris Damm, Ellen Bennett and Jon Dean.

Feedback from the New Researchers Day was largely positive and our intention is to continue this way of supporting new researchers at the conference for the 2024 iteration.

A writing retreat was organised by Jon Dean with a full uptake of 10 places in February 2024. This was well received due to the excellent input and support from 5 experienced writers and reviewers. The learning with supportive peers built confidence and encouraged progression in the writing and submission journey. Many of the participants left with an aim to complete and submit the articles to the Voluntary Sector Review that they had worked on at the retreat during the year ahead.

Our discussion list designed specifically for new researchers (VOL-SECTOR-NEW-RESEARCHERS) continues to provide a forum for information sharing, networking and support and currently has over 100 subscribers.

The work with new researchers provides a route for emerging scholars and practitioners in the field to share their work in a supportive environment, develop a network of peers, and engage fully with the annual conference. For suggestions on our support of early career researchers or to get involved, please email NewResearchers@vssn.org.uk.

Many thanks to Daniel Haslam, Helen Abnett, Jon Dean, Ellen Bennet, and David Bomark for their leadership with new researchers over the past year.

6.Membership

We have reviewed membership administration and communications and will continue to refresh these over the forthcoming year. We amended the timing of membership renewals to ensure that members enjoy a whole year of membership prior to renewal.

At the end of the financial year, we had 118 individual members, of those 30 are new members. We had 6 organisational members. Most members are based in the UK, but there are also memberships from Austria, Australia, USA, Canada, Denmark, Eire, Portugal, France. New Zealand, and Spain.

7.Small Grants Scheme

Through the annual call for Small Grant proposals, VSSN funds projects which support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK. Typically, the grants are used to fund seminars, workshops, roundtables, webinars, or the production of a podcast, animation or short film.

The funded projects are proving to be an important vehicle for bringing together researchers, practitioners and/or policymakers to open-up a dialogue on a voluntary sector or a volunteering-related issue. These dialogues can lead to fruitful longer-term collaborations and discussions that help to advance thinking and understanding in voluntary sector studies. Some projects funded through the VSSN Small Grant Scheme have also led to project partners securing further funding from other organisations, enabling them to extend their work beyond the VSSN project.

During the current reporting period, the two projects from the 2022-2023 funding call were successfully completed:

- The development of a series of “Women in Philanthropy” podcasts;
- The establishment of a research network focused on women and girls’ cricket in Scotland.

Two further projects were funded in the 2023-2024 call:

- A focus group to explore new ways of demonstrating and managing social impact in voluntary and community organisations.
- A one-day “listening” workshop on charities, campaigning and the law, leading to the development of an enabling campaigning toolkit for Third Sector organisations.

In April 2024, Sophie Wilson stepped down from her role on the VSSN Small Grants Subgroup. We are grateful to Sophie for her work on, and support of, the Small Grants Scheme.

8.Communications and Information Technology

The website has been updated to make it easier to navigate and reduce the complexity involved in the underlying website design. The website no longer contains a database of members and members are not required to log-in to access any material. VSSN is now on Linked In and we aim to grow our profile on this platform and use it as our main social media platform.

As part of our continual improvement, we will be moving to Google Workspace (a commercially-orientated, pay-for-service package) which Google offers to registered charities at no cost. The aim is threefold: To have a more efficient and secure system for storing information that complies with data storage regulations and to improve internal communications, for example, through the Chat and Meet options and centralised calendars and invitations. Second, it gives VSSN

trustees, representatives and VSR team members both personal and functional @vssn.org.uk email addresses. This strengthens recognition of VSSN's communications compared to sending/receiving emails from seemingly unrelated institutional or private email addresses. Third, the use of @vssn.org.uk emails helps preserve institutional knowledge (as does the use of shared storage drives) as the functional email addresses remain in the Google Workspace for the subsequent trustee or representative to use.

Across all these initiatives, the contribution by way of hands-on support and expert advice made by David Kane is greatly appreciated.

9.The Organisation and Management of VSSN

Trustee Board Meetings

The full Trustee Board meets six times during the year. Our early-year strategic planning meeting was again held in a hybrid format, in Birmingham and online, and again we are grateful to BVSC for hosting this session. Meeting online continues to prove beneficial as a mechanism for enabling participation in the midst of busy lives.

The Trustee Board works through a number of sub-groups and this year we have clarified the terms of responsibility for sub-groups and related policy documents, in part as a way of managing board turn-over, as well as ensuring we fulfil board responsibilities. We have continued to work to the strategy developed in 2023, and particularly endeavoured to align our activities with VSSN's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Public Benefit

One of the Trustee Board's main responsibilities is to ensure that VSSN pursues its stated aim as a charity of advancing education and research concerning the voluntary sector, in ways that provide a benefit to the wider public. All VSSN events are widely publicised and open to all, with either modest or no fees to attend. Similarly, our online discussion lists are open to all. Furthermore, the *Voluntary Sector Review* is an integral part of the VSSN's work and is an important vehicle in enabling research work on the voluntary sector to reach as many people as possible. Policy and Practice papers in the journal, many of which are written by practitioners and seek to advance practice-based knowledge, are now Open Access and free to view by anyone. We continued to offer Small Grants, encouraging and enabling members to develop proposals to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK.

Executive Office

The Executive Officer plays a key role in the smooth running of the Network, particularly membership services. We would like to express our gratitude to Meg Wright of Meg Wright Consultancy who runs back-office functions, working with members, and getting involved in all aspects of VSSN's work, including providing guidance from her expertise in governance. We are grateful to Meg for her work over the past year. With our Exec Officer now located in Scotland, VSSN is now registered with both the Charity Commission and the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR). We have now updated our registered address in England to VSSN, Vers House, Park Estate, Frogmore, Hertfordshire, EL2 3WH.

Financial Report and Accounts

The Trustees have prepared the accounts using a receipts and payments basis permitted by the Charities Act 2011 and following the recommendations issued by the Charity Commission to present accounts.

The income of VSSN is insufficient to require an audit or independent examination of the accounts. However, before approving the accounts, the Trustees reviewed and discussed the figures.

Receipts and Payments

Membership subscriptions totalled £6,520 for individuals and £840 for organisations. VSSN's membership year previously commenced on 1 November; in this year, using the members' anniversary date of joining VSSN as the renewal date was trialled. As noted in the previous year's report, the aim is to better reflect how members make their payments, reduce confusion between financial, anniversary, and membership years, and spread the administrative workload. An evaluation of the trial will be undertaken in early 2025.

Membership benefits include VSSN's journal, Voluntary Sector Review (VSR), a preferential registration rate for day and annual conferences, and the ability to apply for a small grant. Applicants (the lead applicant must be a VSSN member) for a Small Grant may receive up to £750 for projects that support or develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK.

The VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference was held in September 2023 in Sheffield, generating a surplus of £12,787 which exceeded the costs of the associated conference dinner and other expenses (£3,251). Sponsorship of the Best Paper Prizes brought in was £400 with awards totalling £546 paid out.

VSSN contributes to the publication of VSR according to the number of members. The amount paid was £3,280 including the minimum contribution of £2,600.

Current and Future Assets and Liabilities

The cash surplus in 2023-24 is £4,608 (2022-23 £3,584) resulting in accumulated cash funds of £28,385 held with Unity Trust Bank. There remains £280 in restricted funds. Further details are in the notes to the accounts.

Liabilities of £2,208 comprise an approved but unpaid Small Grant and the executive officer fees for the last quarter (invoiced and paid in August 2024).

The net asset balance at 31.07.2024 was £16,419 (31.07.2023 £13,034) after taking future obligations and reserves of £9,758 (2022-23 £11,738) into account.

Future Obligations and Reserves Policy

The Trustees reviewed and revised VSSN's reserves' policy for the 2023-24 financial year on 8 October 2024. The Trustees aim to ensure VSSN's solvency by meeting its contractual outflows/obligations as and when they fall due. Accordingly, VSSN's policy is to keep 'unrestricted reserves' sufficient funds to meet known and contingent commitments involving an assessment of risk calculated at the balance date (31 July).

A summary of the resulting provisions included in the financial accounts (see Note 8) are:

Purpose	Calculation	Amount
Operations		
Executive Officer's contract	Minimum notice of Contract termination: 3 months	£1,458
EO reimbursable expenses	Known or contingent amount, say, £200; Registered Office hosting fee	£200 £30
Website Costs	Annual WordPress Forms Add-on fees: currently £75 pa Monthly Hosting fees: currently £28.80pm; 6 months, say	£75 + £175
Evalon Financial Services DAC	Direct debit processing fee: cancellable anytime one month's fee, say	£2
Opayo Credit Card Services	Credit card processing fee: one month's fee, say	£2
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank fee £18 pm: say, 2 months	£36
Conference and Other Events		
Annual Conference	To reflect purchase orders/contracts issued after allowing for cancellation clauses. Bayes Business School 2024 Conference: say 50% Other catering and venue services, say	£2,000 £500
Voluntary Sector Review		
VSR Editorial Fees	Annual renewal unless terminated: 12 months	£2,000
VSR Publication Agreement	Minimum contribution 01.08.2020 to 31.07.2025* £2,600pa at 31.07.2024 means 1 years remaining =	£2,600
VSR Printing Contribution	Estimation: number and banding of members less the minimum contribution; calculated at 30.06.2024 (basis for VSR fees)	£680

VSSN's ongoing success depends upon retaining existing and attracting new members, attendees at the annual conference and other events, and sponsors to support VSSN's objectives. Notwithstanding, the current financial outlook appears secure, leading to Trustees considering new programs and initiatives, such as the writing retreat held in February 2024 (costing £2,110), and proposed trustee training, for example, in equity, diversity and inclusion to underpin VSSN's vision for its membership.

Approval

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for keeping proper accounting records for the charity, safeguarding the charity's funds from loss and preparing an Annual Report and Annual Accounts to comply with the Charities Act 2011. This Annual Report is prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities.

The trustees approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts on 8 October 2024, which are signed on their behalf by:



Signature

Amy Sanders, Secretary



Signature

Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, Chair

VSSN Annual Accounts 1 August 2023 to 31 July 2024

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES [Note 1]	2023-24	2022-23
	£	£
CURRENT ASSETS		
Monetary assets		
Unity Trust Bank current account	28,384.99	23,776.81
Total monetary assets	28,384.99	23,776.81
<i>Represented by monetary funds</i>		
Unrestricted funds	28,104.99	23,496.81
Restricted funds [Note 2]	280.00	280.00
Total monetary funds [Note 3]	28,384.99	23,776.81
Non-monetary assets and liabilities		
Physical Assets [Note 4]		-
Receivables [Note 5, 6]	0	1,000.00
Total monetary and non-monetary assets	0	24,776.81
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
<i>Miscellaneous creditors and liabilities at year-end</i>		
Sundry Creditors and Executive Officer services [Note 7]	2207.50	-
Total miscellaneous creditors	2207.50	-
OTHER BINDING COMMITMENTS AT YEAR END [Note 8]		
Executive Office contract	1,458.00	1,458.00
Executive Officer contingency	230.00	200.00
Web expenditure contingency	250.00	250.00
Bank and Financial Services contingency	40.00	40.00

Conference contingency	2,500.00	2,500.00
VSR Editorial Assistant services [Note 6]	2,000.00	1,500.00
Minimum VSR obligation	2,600.00	5,200.00
Additional VSR obligation	680.00	90.00
Small Grants (previously Development Grants)		-
Total other commitments	9,758.00	11,238.00
 Total current liabilities and provisions	 11,965.50	 11,238.00
 NET MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY ASSETS	 16,419.49	 13,538.81

Notes to the Accounts

1. These accounts show revenue and expenses on a cash basis, recognised at the time of receipt and payment. Included in revenue is any surplus received from a conference/event hosting institution; that is, the receipts (predominantly from ticket sales) less the related organising costs (e.g., room hire and catering). Non-monetary assets and liabilities are shown at estimated values at year end.
2. VSSN holds restricted funds for furthering the activities of New Researchers £280 (£280 in 2022-23). These funds are from a prior NCVO grant and specifically relate to VSVR Conference support for new researchers. VSSN funded the New Researchers' Prize awarded at the annual conference but did not draw down the restricted funds.
3. Apart from the new researchers' fund (Note 2), VSSN's funds are unrestricted.
4. VSSN has some fixed assets in the form of banner stands and table stands, but these are personalised to VSSN and, therefore, do not have any disposal value to show on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
5. Prior year receivable was an amount owing by The Policy Press. No receipts are outstanding in the current year.
6. The contract with The Policy Press for publishing and printing Voluntary Sector Review includes providing Editorial Assistance Fees. From February 2022, VSSN and The Policy Press share equally the fees of £2,000 pa (paid quarterly) with the accounts disclosing VSSN's commitment and reimbursement for the coming 12 months.
7. The liability are amounts incurred but not settled at balance date: £750 for a Small Grant and £1457.50 to Meg Wright and Associates.
8. The Other Binding Commitments at Year End line items reflect the Reserves Policy and calculations at the balance date agreed upon by Trustees noted in the preceding section.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

England & Wales - Charity number 1197827

Accounts

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

Registered charity:

England and Wales 1114742

Scotland SC052647

Annual Report and Accounts

1 August 2022 - 31 July 2023



Address for official correspondence:

Executive Officer, Voluntary Sector Studies Network

VSSN Office, Foil Cottage, Aberfoyle, FK8 3XF

www.vssn.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT

Legal and constitutional details

Name of organisation:	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
Legal form:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by Constitution
Charitable status:	Registered charity: England & Wales: number 1114742 Scotland: number SC052647
Correspondent:	Meg Wright Executive Officer VSSN Office Foil Cottage Aberfoyle FK8 3XF
Central e-mail:	execofficer@vssn.org.uk
Website:	www.vssn.org.uk
Objects:	The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom by: (1) the promotion and diffusion of knowledge; and (2) the publication of research; and (3) encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and (4) undertaking such other activities (being charitable in law) as shall be conducive to the attainment of these objects.

Trustees

The following people served as trustees of VSSN between August 2022 and July 2023. Affiliations are given for information only; all Trustee Board members serve as individuals.

Chair	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Co-Vice Chairs	Carol Jacklin -Jarvis, The Open University Vita Terry, IVAR
Secretary	Chris Damm, Sheffield Hallam University
Treasurer	Karin Biermann, University of Klagenfurt
Membership and Marketing Officer	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Annual Conference Officers	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Day Conference Liaison Officers	Jurgen Grotz, IVR Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
Partnership Events	Vita Terry, IVAR
External Affairs & Journal Liaison Officer	Diarmuid McDonnell, University of the West of Scotland
New Researchers	Vita Terry, IVAR Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, Open University
Membership Working Group	Sophie Wilson, BVSC
Ex-officio (VSR)	Daiga Kamerāde, University of Salford
Web Officer	Chris Damm, Sheffield Hallam University
Small Grants	Vita Terry, IVAR Heather Fulford, Robert Gordon University Sophie Wilson, BVSC

Appointment of Trustees

VSSN members elect up to 11 trustees to serve a three-year term of office on a rolling basis. A member of the Editorial Management Board of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as an ex-officio member. The initial terms of office are set according to the results of the Single Transferable Vote. Trustees may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. A member of the Editorial Management Board of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as an ex-officio member. The initial terms of office are set according to the results of the Single Transferable Vote on the annual cycle of three members to be elected each year. Trustees may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years.

Sub-committee

Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the *Voluntary Sector Review*

As of 2nd December 2009, a sub-committee was elected to act as the Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. With direction from the Trustee Board, the EMB is responsible for the oversight of the journal and the appointment of the Editorial Team, including the Editor(s), in consultation with the publisher, The Policy Press.

Appointment of EMB

VSSN members elect six members of the EMB on a three-year cycle, using the same rules as for the election of Trustees Board members as set out in the amended constitution. A member of the EMB is appointed ex-officio to the Trustee Board

The EMB is responsible for assembling the International Advisory Board.

Chair: Angela Ellis Paine, City, University of London

Diarmuid McDonnell, University of the West of Scotland (VSSN representative)

Cari Bottois, University of Cardiff / University of Exeter

Jo Crotty, Edge Hill University

Liz Bailey, University of York

Publisher's representative: Edwina Thorn, The Policy Press

Main Editors: James Rees (Managing Editor), Daiga Kamerāde, Lili Wang

Editorial Assistant: Jenna Essex

Policy and Practice editors: Ali Body, Iwona Nowakowska, Francis Davis

Book review editor: Eddy Hogg

For Policy Press: Edwina Thorn (Journals Executive), Sara Bird (Journal Assistant)

Regional Associate Editors: Georg von Schnurbein

Trustee Board Report: activities undertaken for public benefit by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) during the year ending 31 July 2023

1. Co-Chairs' Report

The year 2022-23 has been a successful year for VSSN. Our annual conference was back to full size, hosting over 100 people at Sheffield Hallam University. We welcomed new people onto our Trustee Board who have served with passion and energy. We continued our Small Grants programme, supporting members to deliver projects of interest to the whole community. And we reworked our strategy. We supported the development of early careers researchers through a dedicated and subsidised stream at the annual conference, a series of online peer support events and facilitated networking through the discussion list. We have continued to provide opportunities for inclusive networking between academics, researchers and practitioners, alongside opportunities for peer support and collaboration, through our quarterly newsletters, website, and two discussion lists. VSSN is proud to continue to act as a hub through which to communicate all voluntary sector research and to offer a space for new partnerships to be forged.

We continue to build our social media presence and website, promoting voluntary sector research and VSSN to wider audiences. Through the Editorial Management Board, we have supported [Voluntary Sector Review's](#) editorial team to extend the international reach of the Journal.

We would like to thank the Trustee Board and the Editorial Management Board for their energetic and hard work during the year. We would also like to thank Policy Press for their ongoing support of the journal, and of course the editorial team: James Rees, Lili Wang and Daiga Kamerāde, and consulting editor Carl Milofsky. Thanks also to David Kane for his ongoing support for the website.

VSSN's Strategy

Every so often, the Voluntary Sector Studies Network's Trustee Board undertakes a review of our organisation's strategy. This includes going back to first principles: looking at our charitable objectives and assessing how best to meet them, to serve our members and the wider voluntary sector and associated research communities. At the start of 2023, with the election and appointment of a new leadership team, alongside our transition to a CIO, we decided it was worth renewing our strategic priorities, alongside codifying the VSSN's mission and values.

Following fruitful discussions, the trustee board have worked to develop the below values, strategy, and actions, as well as continuing to run our events and grants programmes. While this is an evolution of our work rather than a revolution, we are pleased to say we plan to focus on the following strategic aims in the forthcoming years:

- Supporting the career development of researchers looking at voluntary sector and volunteering research
- Facilitating knowledge exchange across research, policy, and practice
- Enhancing opportunities for inclusive networking, peer support and collaboration
- Encouraging research on the voluntary sector & volunteering across disciplinary & geographical boundaries
- Strengthening the links, communication and collaborations between researchers, voluntary sector practitioners and policy actors

Especially important to VSSN is making sure our work and actions fulfil our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy](#), and its principles are central to all of our work. While this work is never complete, we are pleased to present below an updated strategic document, that outlines the activities and

actions identified to deliver on these aims. Our teams of volunteers, within the VSSN trustee board, the VSR editorial management board, and our wider circle of volunteers, will work hard to make these happen. We will hold ourselves accountable to our strategic plan through six-monthly reviews, and updates in our Annual Report and at our AGM.

VSSN Values

The values of VSSN underpin the network's ways of working and how we want our people to behave and interact. These values include being **collaborative, inquisitive, supportive and inclusive**.

- **We are collaborative** – we look to build relationships by bringing together a wide range of individuals and strengthening collaborations across our stakeholders
- **We are inquisitive** – we are interested in promoting relevant and new insights from current research on the voluntary sector and volunteering
- **We are supportive** – we offer support that aims to enable and encourage individuals
- **We are inclusive** – we work in a way that is respectful, accessible and relational to facilitate individuals sharing their voice and encourage diversity



All this work exists because of the work of our members, supported by membership fees and the surplus we make from our events. It is because of our members and the hard work of volunteers that we can continue the work of VSSN. For this, as a supportive community of practice, we are very grateful. We look forward to discussing VSSN's role, mission, and strategy with members and non-members at upcoming events, particularly our conference in September.

2. VSSN's journal, *Voluntary Sector Review*

In 2022-23, VSSN's international interdisciplinary journal, *Voluntary Sector Review* (VSR), published by Policy Press, continued into its fourteenth year, with three issues per annum. The journal is designed to appeal to a wide readership and each issue traditionally contains over 100 pages of Research Articles, Policy and Practice Papers, as well as Book Reviews, Debates and Research Notes.

A print copy of each issue is a VSSN membership benefit. In November 2022, the journal published a special issue on Muslim Philanthropy guest edited by Shariq Ahmed Siddiqui and Lili Wang. Special issues appear to be one of the ways as to how to attract good quality submissions.

The increasing quantity and, it seems, quality of papers submitted to the journal allows us to publish a greater number of research articles, and since 2021 we have been publishing six research papers per issue as the norm to have a healthy number of papers in pipeline for upcoming issues. It certainly feels that the journal is becoming more international in flavour, and we published a wide range of papers including on relationships between nonprofit organisations and state auditors in the USA, integration and volunteering in Canada leadership training models in Sweden, amongst many others.

Although new sections devoted to 'Comment and Debate' and 'Research Notes' started promisingly in 2021, the demand from authors to publish Comment and Debate pieces perhaps isn't quite there, and we would encourage VSSN members to step up, submit pieces, and help spread the word. The book reviews 'pipeline' is also looking healthy thanks to Eddy Hogg's first-rate efforts.

The editorial team continues to consist of Managing Editor, James Rees (University of Wolverhampton, UK), Lili Wang (Arizona State University, USA), and Daiga Kamerāde (University of Salford, UK). Policy and Practice Co-Editor continue to be Alison Body (University of Kent, UK), Francis Davis (University of Oxford, UK) and Iwona Nowakowska (Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, Poland).

All VSSN members are strongly encouraged to persuade their institutions to take out (and continue) subscriptions to ensure the financial sustainability of the journal. Free online trial subscriptions for institutions are available from [Voluntary Sector Review | Bristol University Press](#).

In 2023, the Best Paper in VSR prize, jointly sponsored by VSSN and PP, was awarded to Rowan Magill, Sunny Collings and Gabrielle Jenkin for their paper "The provision of comprehensive crisis intervention by a charitable organisation: findings from a realist evaluation". We hope that the prize will further drive up interest and critically, submissions, to the journal.

The journal has a twitter account: @vsrjournal, with a growing constituency of over 900 followers. This is used to keep people informed about forthcoming content, and the availability of free access articles.

VSSN is hugely grateful to The Policy Press for the expertise, enthusiasm and continued practical support it has brought to the journal, and the resources it is devoting to making it a success. The day-to-day activities of the journal are supported by an editorial assistant. Many thanks to Jenna Essex for the excellent support that she is providing in this role. The post is jointly funded by The Policy Press and VSSN to support the editorial work underpinning the journal, including screening submissions and liaising with authors.

VSR Editorial Management Board

The journal is overseen by an Editorial Management Board (EMB), which meets twice each year – a January gathering to review the journal's development and consider editorial strategy, followed by a mid-year meeting to review progress. The EMB is a sub-committee of the VSSN Trustee Board; it is made up of members elected by VSSN, representatives of The Policy Press, and the Editorial Team. Current EMB elected members include Angela Ellis Paine (Chair, City, University of London), Elizabeth Cookingham Bailey (Uni of York), Jo Crotty (Edge Hill Uni), and Cari Bottois (Cardiff Uni); with Diarmuid McDonnell (UWS) as the VSSN SG representative on the EMB. We would like to take this

opportunity to thank Feilim O'hAdhmaill, Joanna Vincent and Geoff Nichols whose terms of office came to an end in November 2022: we are very grateful to each of them for their significant contributions to VSR over the years. For the first time this year, the EMB invited our International Advisory Group members to join us for our mid-year meeting, and this has been established as a new pattern within our meeting cycle helping to extend VSR's international reach. This year the main points of discussion for the EMB included the overall strategy for developing the journal, including enhancing its international reach and reputation, and more generally how to keep building VSR's submissions pipeline, its pool of reviewers, and to continue to drive up quality. We were delighted that in June this year VSR received its first Impact Factor – 1.5. We are particularly grateful to the editorial team for all the work that has gone into strengthening the Journal, to Policy Press for its ongoing support, to the EMB and IAG members, and to all our authors and reviewers whose contributions are essential.

3. Annual conference, day conferences and other events

For more details of these and previous VSSN events, see <https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/>

VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference, September 2022

In 2022, our annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference was held at Sheffield Hallam University, on the 15th and 16th September. It was hosted in partnership with NCVO and VAS.

The theme was 'Politics, Partnerships, and Power: Raising Questions for Civil Society'. There were over seventy papers being delivered, workshop and panel sessions, and plenary sessions, with over 100 attendees in total. Plenary speakers included Professor Angela Eikenberry (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Sue Tibballs OBE (Sheila McKechnie Foundation), and a panel featuring Dr Eleanor Rutter (Consultant in Public Health, and Deputy DPH), Gulnaz Hussain (Firvale Community Hub), Abdul Shaif (Aspiring Communities Together), and Paul Harvey (Voluntary Action Sheffield), chaired by Professor Chris Dayson, focused on transforming partnership working and volunteering in a post-pandemic world.

Videos of the three plenary sessions can be viewed online here: <https://www.youtube.com/@vssnsteeringgroup398/featured>. The conference also featured our New Researchers Session, which offered a supportive environment for new scholars to present their work and receive detailed feedback.

Overall, the conference was a great success. It was enjoyable to be back face to face in large numbers, with a diversity of material presented. It was nice to see many people attending for the first time, or for the first time in a long time. Despite a few challenges around food supply initially, our hosts at Sheffield Hallam did a great job, and we returned in September 2023. A loved feature of the conference was the dinner hosted at VAS and supplied by Blend Kitchen, a local social enterprise.

Women and girls and the VCS, online, November 2022

In November 2022, we held an online event on 'Women and girls, feminism, and the voluntary sector'. We held this because the women's voluntary sector is operating in a context of both increased difficulty and opportunity. Research points to the gendered impact of significant events such as austerity and Covid-19 (Fawcett Society, 2012; Women's Budget Group, 2019; Women's Aid 2020; IMKAAN, 2020; Sisters of Frida, 2012) and the impact on women's organisations (Women's Resource Centre, 2020; IMKAAN, 2016). Increased attention, awareness, and media coverage of

issues like sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, pay gaps, women in leadership, and trustee representation have brought issues of gender inequality to the fore in the sector. A new tranche of research and media exposés have revealed gender inequalities, discrimination, and assault against women within charities. Other work has shown how girls who volunteer are coerced and stereotyped in their recruitment and participation. How gender intersects with other often discriminated-against identities is also growing in focus within the sector. Yet women's organisations within the VCS have historically not received recognition for their important work.

The event featured the following speakers:

- Increasing gender balance in nonprofit CEO positions: How women make it to the top. Jennifer Kruwinnus, Queensland University of Technology
- Ten years evaluating gendered interventions for vulnerable women and girls: What works? Louise Warwick-Booth, Ruth Cross and Susan Coan, Leeds Beckett University.
- Analysing the feminist potential of time banks. Juliette Wilson-Thomas, Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Shifting power to frontline women's organisations. Rosie Learmonth and Kathy Siddle, Smallwood Trust
- Exploring the ways that schools shape experiences of volunteering for working class girls. Emma Taylor-Collins and Emily Lau, Social Care Wales and University of Kent.
- Girl Voice and Leadership through Crisis and Change: How voluntary organisations and opportunities can empower girls and young women. Sarah Dickins and Leah Widdicombe, Girlguiding UK.
- Women and girl's organisations: mapping a 'hidden' sector and its funding. Lorna Dowrick, Chris Damm and Cathy Harris, Sheffield Hallam University.

Around 60 people signed up with numbers ranging from 25-40 throughout the day. The video of the event can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT3U4ZvHVDY&t=576s>. Many thanks to Jon Dean, Lorna Dowrick, and Chris Damm for organising.

The VCS and polarisation, Aberystwyth, May 2023

Many thanks to Amy Sanders and Jurgen Grotz for organising this event, in partnership with the team from WISERD, and to Meg Wright and Flossie Caerwynt, for hosting the online sessions. VSSN will be focusing more on events that include all four nations of the UK in the near future.

Report by Sophie Wilson and Susannah Wilson (BVSC)

In May 2023, we held an hybrid event in collaboration with WISERD, the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data. The topic of conversation was "The role of community and voluntary organisations in polarisation within local communities". The first session concentrated on the role of community education for empowering communities to achieve change and overcome polarising discourses. Professor Marjorie Mayo talked about the inherent tensions that community educators have to overcome, with reference to a particular community in Highgate, London. Amanda Morris, from the Muslim Council of Britain's Centre for Media Monitoring spoke very powerfully about her role in educating communities to empower them to challenge divisive portrayals of Muslims and Islam in the media.

We then had the opportunity to meet different organisations who are working to overcome polarisation in their own communities. Susannah visited different tables and posed the suggested questions around the challenges they've faced and what activities they've undertaken to tackle those

challenges. The organisations represented challenges such as integrating refugees, intergenerational collaborations, BAME representation, language inclusion, expressing political differences and (the last table) overcoming the division between academic experts and the wider community. It was particularly interesting to talk to those from Aberaid who support refugees.

After lunch, we heard from Anthony Ince from Cardiff University who talked about far-right voluntarism and the 'good citizen'. He talked about the role of the third sector in either perpetuating division or overcoming polarisation, using evidence from a mixed-method pilot study he has conducted. The study provides indicative evidence that far-right individuals are not only engaged in attacks on their sector organisations in so-called 'culture wars' but, crucially, are also often well embedded in local communities as volunteers and 'good citizens', which was really fascinating. This talk was complimented by a presentation by Ali Abdi, a community organiser from Grange Pavilion in Grangetown Cardiff, who has been instrumental in creating community empowerment and cohesion in his community and created a fantastic sounding community venue.

The keynote speaker was Derek Walker, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. This is a unique position that is embedded in legislation passed by the Welsh Senedd, not replicated elsewhere in the UK, and it was interesting to hear how this position's existence makes Wales well-placed to resist division due to polarisation. The Commissioner has the power to block any legislation that they feel will inhibit future generations in Wales, whichever directorate that legislation is presented by, which was fascinating.

The day has given us food for thought, lots of ideas on creating and presenting events, and a unique viewpoint into the challenges facing other areas, both organisationally and geographically.

4. New Researchers

We have continued our successful online sessions for new researchers, providing opportunities for people to connect, give and receive peer support. A new researchers' coordinating group oversees the strategy for supporting new researchers and organises support sessions. The network is facilitated by David Bomark, supported by Daniel Haslam, Suzanne Martikke, Helen Abnett, Vita Terry and Carol Jacklin-Jarvis.

To enable new researchers to participate fully in the VSSN research community, this year's New Researchers' stream took place on the day before the main conference. This gave greater opportunity for new researchers to hear presentations and interact with experienced researchers. An online session prior to the conference provided an opportunity for new researchers to practise presenting and discuss any concerns with their peers.

The NRS provides a route for emerging scholars and researchers in the field to share their work in a supportive environment, develop a support network of peers and network with delegates across the conference.

Our discussion list designed specifically for new researchers (VOL-SECTOR-NEW-RESEARCHERS) continues to provide a forum for information sharing, networking and support and currently has over 60 participants. If you are interested in contributing ideas to our support of early career researchers or want to get involved, please email newresearchers@vssn.org.uk.

Many thanks to Daniel Haslam, David Bomark and Helen Abnett for their leadership with new researchers over the past year.

5. Membership

We have reviewed membership administration and communications and will continue to refresh these over the forthcoming year.

Efforts have been made this year to replace the former credit collection payment system with a new one costing less in collection fees and it is hoped that it will be in place by the time of membership renewal. It is clearly a more efficient way of collecting subscriptions.

At the end of the financial year, we had 87 individual members and 7 organisational members, very much reflecting the membership numbers of the previous year. Of these, 80 memberships were renewals and 7 were new members. Most members are based in the UK, but there are also memberships from Austria, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Malta and Eire.

6. Development Opportunity Grants

These grants of up to £750, aim to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK. The grant can be used to fund seminars, workshops, roundtables, webinars, podcasts, film/animation and other activities linked to research, learning and teaching. The main focus is to bring individual researchers and/ or practitioners and/or policy makers together to create a dialogue on a voluntary sector and volunteering related issue. In particular, we have encouraged applications that will provide on-going dialogue.

We continue to see the impact from the second round of grants awarded in the previous financial year (2021-2022). For example, a second workshop was held on the 13th October 2022 on Place Leadership, debating issues on the relationship between place, leadership and the voluntary sector. The second workshop was held face to face in Birmingham with 6 presentations, a panel on place-based youth leadership and space for discussion between participants and an expert panel. There was lively conversation throughout.

The VSSN grant increased the diversity of participation by drawing on VSSN networks and also added to the legitimacy of the work, developing partnership between VSSN, ICRD at University of Wolverhampton and CVSL at the Open University. Furthermore, it set up ongoing discussions which are now contributing to an edited book proposal for Policy Press, where again the aim is to include contributions from both academics and practitioners that continue to develop a rich conversation and frame a field of studies for the future. In addition, the project has given us fresh insights into the potential and challenges of working across the practitioner/academic divide to generate different kinds of knowledge and set up debate between the two. The book proposal 'Reimagining Voluntary Sector Leadership: The Influence and Impact of Place' has been accepted and book chapters are planned to be written during 2023/2024.

We held our third round of applications for the development opportunity grants and received several excellent proposals. Grants were awarded in December 2022 for delivery between January 2023 and December 2023. We have committed to two projects which are:

- 1) the development of a series of 'Women in Philanthropy' podcasts. The podcast's premise is to illuminate the roles that facilitate philanthropy and seeks to amplify women's experiences working in philanthropy. [WIP Podcast • Michele Fugiel Gartner, PhD \(mfgchange.com\)](#)
- 2) to support the development of a Research Network and Agenda for Women and Girls' Cricket in Scotland. [Scottish Women and Girls' Cricket Research Network LAUNCH Tickets. Tue 14 Nov 2023 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#)

These projects are still underway, however at the time of writing 6 'Women in Philanthropy' podcasts have already been successfully produced and launched. By December 2023, there will be 10 complete podcasts that were funded by the VSSN. The Scottish Women and Girls' Cricket Research Network will be launched on the 14th November 2023. Reports for the third round of grants will not be submitted until December 2023.

In April 2023, Sophie Wilson and Heather Fulford took over the Development Opportunities Grants committee (to be renamed the [Small Grants Opportunities](#)). The fourth round of grants was launched on the 19th July 2023.

Many thanks to the members of the Development Opportunities Grants committee – Vita Terry, Caroline Walsh and Diarmuid McDonnell.

7. Communications and website

The website has been updated to make it easier to navigate and reduce the complexity involved in the underlying website design. The website no longer contains a database of members and members are not required to log-in to access any material.

VSSN is now on Linked In and we aim to grow our profile on this platform. We have also started a blog series which reflects our research interests with what is happening in communities. For example during Small Charities week we posted a blog with useful links.

8. The organisation and management of VSSN

With our new location in Scotland through our Executive Officer, VSSN registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) in 2023.

Trustee Board meetings

The full Trustee Board met formally seven times during the year. Our early-year strategic planning meeting online was held in a hybrid format, in Birmingham and online. Meeting online in general has proved very beneficial as it is a platform that everyone can easily participate in.

During the year, the Trustee Board focused its efforts on: our strategic redevelopment; recruiting a new executive officer; continuing developing our face to face gatherings; continuing our support for early career researchers through regular online sessions; liaising with the VSR editorial board and strengthening our support for VSR; rehashing our website and online presence; developing our membership base; and following through on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Public Benefit

One of the Trustee Board's main responsibilities is to ensure that VSSN pursues its stated aim as a charity of advancing education and research concerning the voluntary sector, in ways that provide a benefit to the wider public. All VSSN events are widely publicised and open to all, with either modest or no fees to attend. Similarly, our online discussion lists are open to all as is the COVID-19 research repository. Furthermore, the *Voluntary Sector Review* is now an integral part of the VSSN's work and is an important vehicle in enabling research work on the voluntary sector to reach as many people as possible: Policy and Practice papers in the journal, many of which are written by practitioners and seek to advance practice-based knowledge, are now Open Access and free to view by anyone. We continued to offer Small Grants, encouraging and enabling members to develop proposals to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK.

Executive Office

The Executive Officer plays a key role in the smooth running of the Network, particularly membership services. We would like to express our gratitude to our Executive Officers. Ann Hindley of Cross Keys Associates, supported VSSN for many years until her retirement in Spring 2023. VSSN was then delighted to recruit Meg Wright of Meg Wright Consultancy to take up the role from Spring. Meg has done a great job of taking over the reins, running our back office functions, working with members, and getting involved in all aspects of VSSN's work. We are most grateful to Ann and Meg for their work over the past year.

9. Financial Report and Accounts

The Trustees have prepared the accounts using a receipts and payments basis permitted by the Charities Act 2011 and following the recommendations issued by the Charity Commission to present accounts.

The income of VSSN is insufficient to require an audit or independent examination of the accounts. However, before approving the accounts, the Trustees reviewed and discussed the figures.

Receipts and Payments

As reported last year, VSSN became incorporated as a CIO on 8 February 2022 but remained dormant until the bank account opened on 5 July 2022. With only 3-weeks of operation in the previous year, interpreting the presented results requires caution.

Membership subscriptions totalled £6,685 for individuals and £1,050 for organisations. VSSN's membership year has historically commenced on 1 November. For 2023-24, the trustees have agreed to trial the anniversary date of joining VSSN to better reflect how members make their payments, reduce confusion between financial, anniversary, and membership years, and spread the administrative workload.

Membership benefits include VSSN's journal, *Voluntary Sector Review (VSR)*, a preferential registration rate for day and annual conferences, and the ability to apply for a funding grant. The Development Grant (£480) program has been rebranded and launched as the Small Grants program for following years.

The VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference was held in September 2022 in Sheffield, generating a surplus of £9,884 to more than adequately cover the costs of the associated conference dinner, prizes, and other expenses.

VSSN contributes to the publication of VSR according to the number of members. The amount due in 2022-23 was £2,690 (before deducting a £586 credit for a prior year error), less than the total £2930 in 2021-22 due to reduced membership numbers.

The Trustees thank Ann Hindley and Cross Keys Associates, who ended their agreement with VSSN on 31 March 2023, allowing for a one-month handover to Meg Wright as Executive Officer. The handover and associated travel costs led to a slight increase in executive officer expenses for the year.

The cash surplus in 2022-23 was £3,584 compared to the prior year's deficit of £5,152. For information purposes, combining the previous VSSN entity, closed on 5 July 2022, with this current entity produced a deficit of £3,118 in 2021-22.

Current and Future Assets

Funds held in a Unity Trust Bank current account at year-end were £23,776,81 (31 July 2022, £20,193.29), comprising £23,496.81 unrestricted and £280 restricted funds (see below).

Future Assets comprise VSSN's future year reimbursement from Policy Press for VSR Editorial Assistant services of £1,000.

Future Obligations and Reserves Policy

The Trustees revised VSSN's reserves policy for the 2022-23 financial year; a summary of the resulting provisions included in the financial accounts (see Note 8) are:

Purpose	Calculation	Amount
Operations		
Executive Officer's contract	Minimum notice of Contract termination: 3 months	£1,458
EO reimbursable expenses	Known or contingent amount, say,	£200
Website Costs	Annual WordPress Forms Add-on fees: currently £75 pa Monthly Hosting fees: currently £28.80pm; 6 months, say	£75 £175
Evalon Financial Services DAC	Direct debit processing fee: cancellable anytime one month's fee, say	£2
Opayo Credit Card Services	Credit card processing fee: one month's fee, say	£2
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank fee £18 pm: say, 2 months	£36
Conference and Other Events		
Annual Conference	To reflect purchase orders/contracts issued after allowing for cancellation clauses. Sheffield Hallam 2023 Conference: say 50% Other catering and venue services, say	£2,000 £500
Voluntary Sector Review		
VSR Editorial Fees	Annual renewal unless terminated: 12 months = Less: Prepayment for August to October Editorial Services	£2,000 less £500
VSR Publication Agreement	Minimum contribution 01.08.2020 to 31.07.2025* £2,600pa at 31.07.2023 means 2 years remaining =	£5,200
VSR Printing Contribution	Estimation: number and banding of members less the minimum contribution; calculated at 30.06.2023 (basis for VSR fees)	£90

The net asset balance was £13,538.81 (£11,081.29, 2021-22), taking current assets (£1,000) and commitments (£11,238) into account.

VSSN's ongoing success depends upon retaining existing and attracting new members, attendees at the annual conference and other events, and sponsors to support VSSN's objectives.

Notwithstanding, the current financial outlook appears secure, leading to Trustees considering new programs and initiatives to support members across all stages of their academic and practitioner careers.

Approval

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for keeping proper accounting records for the charity, safeguarding the charity's funds from loss and preparing an Annual Report and Annual Accounts to comply with the Charities Act 2011. This Annual Report is prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities. The trustees approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts on 2 October 2023, which are signed on their behalf by:



Chris Damm, Secretary

26.10.2023



Jon Dean, Chair

26.10.23

VSSN Annual Accounts 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES [Note 1]	2022-23 £	2021-22 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Monetary assets		
Unity Trust Bank current account	23,776.81	20,193.29
Total monetary assets	23,776.81	20,193.29
<i>Represented by monetary funds</i>		
Unrestricted funds	23,496.81	19,913.29
Restricted funds [Note 2]	280.00	280.00
Total monetary funds [Note 3]	23,776.81	20,193.29
Non-monetary assets and liabilities		
Physical Assets [Note 4]	-	-
Receivables [Note 5, 6]	1,000.00	1,586.00
Total monetary and non-monetary assets	24,776.81	21,779.29
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
<i>Miscellaneous creditors and liabilities at year-end</i>		
Executive officer services payable [Note 7]	-	1324.00
Total miscellaneous creditors	-	1324.00
OTHER BINDING COMMITMENTS AT YEAR END [Note 8]		
Executive Office contract	1,458.00	1,324.00
Executive Officer contingency	200.00	200.00
Web expenditure contingency	250.00	300.00
Bank and Financial Services contingency	40.00	-
Conference contingency	2,500.00	-
VSR Editorial Assistant services [Note 6]	1,500.00	2,000.00
Minimum VSR obligation	5,200.00	2,600.00
Additional VSR obligation	90.00	200.00
Small Grants (previously Development Grants)	-	2,750.00
Total other commitments	11,238.00	9,374.00
Total current liabilities and provisions	11,238.00	10,698.00
NET MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY ASSETS	13,538.81	11,081.29

Notes to the Accounts

1. These accounts show revenue and expenses on a cash basis, recognised at the time of receipt and payment. Non-monetary assets and liabilities are shown at estimated values at year end.
2. VSSN holds restricted funds for furthering the activities of New Researchers £280 (£280 in 2021-22). These funds are from a prior NCVO grant and specifically relate to VSVR Conference support for new researchers. VSSN funded the New Researchers' Prize awarded at the annual conference but did not draw down the restricted funds.
3. Apart from the new researchers' fund (Note 2), VSSN's funds are unrestricted.
4. VSSN has some fixed assets in the form of banner stands and table stands, but these are personalised to VSSN and, therefore, do not have any disposal value to show on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
5. Prior year receivables comprise amounts owing by The Policy Press for an invoicing error (£586) offset against expenses in this financial year.
6. The contract with The Policy Press for publishing and printing Voluntary Sector Review includes providing Editorial Assistance Fees. From February 2022, VSSN and the Policy Press share equally the fees of £2,000 pa (paid quarterly) with the accounts disclosing VSSN's commitment and reimbursement for the coming 12 months.
7. The prior year's amount reflected Cross Keys Associates' agreement to extend past the contract end date (October 2022) to facilitate a smooth handover.
8. The Other Binding Commitments at Year End line items reflect the Reserves Policy and calculations at the balance date agreed upon by Trustees noted in the preceding section.