

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)
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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.