

Needs Analysis Survey

Report to Connect Hertfordshire Steering Group

25th January 2017

Executive summary

This survey and report has been commissioned by the Connect Hertfordshire Steering Group to undertake a needs analysis across the VCS in Hertfordshire to shape priorities and plans going forward through the Connect Hertfordshire project. It was agreed that a targeted survey be undertaken that ensured potentially hard to reach sections of the sector were included and that where possible, recent survey and analysis undertaken in the County be incorporated. It was also agreed that the survey be co-produced with sector to utilise the access and insight that organisations operating within Hertfordshire will bring.

The project team that designed and delivered the survey enabled 71 respondents to give their views, more than initially projected. Importantly this also ensured that views from all districts of Hertfordshire are represented in the responses and that engagement with existing village hall and minority ethnic group networks was actively sought and contributed to the findings.

The overwhelming priority for respondents was funding and sustainability - This was consistent across the pieces of research reviewed and the organisations responding to the survey. There was a recognition that traditional approaches to funding were changing, (reducing in many cases) and therefore they needed to explore a wider range of income options. This is clearly an area where there is demand for structured support that can reach a wide variety of organisations with differing needs.

Social impact and added value – Respondents acknowledged that this is now important for most fundraising applications and respondents are keen to demonstrate the impact and added value they deliver to beneficiaries and the wider community. This was both a challenge that many respondents recognised and priority for support

Support to recruit and manage volunteers and trustees – Many respondents reported increases in the numbers of volunteers they had supporting their work and reported that they planned to increase numbers further. There were significant pressures for organisations in recruiting and supporting volunteers and trustees effectively and also in planning succession. Respondents recognised the need to diversify the demographic profile of volunteers and trustees, particularly the reliance on older people and the need to bring in more young people

Partnerships and forming alliances - There is an appetite amongst organisations to network and learn from one another, to share their experience and potentially to collaborate and potentially to enter into formal arrangements. It is recognised that this is often a requirement of funders.

Getting the right support at the right time - There is significant demand for support against priority areas. There is already a wide range of support and resources available but it is reported that there is an ongoing challenge for CVSs and providers of support regarding awareness raising and accessibility. Hertfordshire VCS is diverse with many small charities,

groups and enterprises who want support but have limited capacity, resources or access to professional and organisational networks. Access to training, mentoring and advice across a range of topic areas has been identified in the various surveys.

Background

A key element of Connect Hertfordshire's work programme is the requirement for a VCS needs audit, so that the information gathered can shape the priorities and plans going forward. The Steering Group on 20th Oct 2016 agreed the action and approach.

The Steering Group wanted a targeted survey that was focused on priorities in the sector for training and support and that a large scale survey that included mapping of the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) was unnecessary as survey data had already been collected locally in the current year, which could be shared and analysed on a wider level.

It was agreed that:

- A small sample of organisation would be surveyed using existing umbrella groups where necessary – between 30 – 60 organisations
- Collation of existing information from VCS organisations and other organisations would supplement the survey
- Stakeholders including VCS organisations to be offered opportunity to be involved in delivery of these once a template has been agreed
- Set up a permanent survey / feedback form on the new Connect Hertfordshire website in relation to support needs

Methodology

Co-production

The aim was to co-produce the survey with VCS representatives. This would be beneficial in terms of building in genuine understanding of local needs, improving access to organisations and supporting the effective efficient undertaking of the survey. A working group was set up with Susan Jessop and three researchers, recommended by steering group members. Paul Kelly from Resolving Chaos agreed to produce the analysis and report to the steering group

Research team: 8 days work were commissioned:

Anne Taylor, NH CVS, 4 days; Nazma Malik, North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum, 2 days; Kate Belinis, CDA Herts , 2 days

While not having worked together previously, team working skills were strong and there was excellent commitment and a strong work ethic, with everyone communicating regularly with each other to share progress and avoid clashes. Without the high level of interpersonal skills and local contacts, the quality of feedback wouldn't have been as high.

Approach

The list of organisations was agreed, to give a representative range in both income size and geographically, plus proactive inclusion of minority groups. The minimum target was 30 responses: for one small, one medium and one large organisation from each of the 10 districts.

The approach emphasised that the survey would be a Needs Analysis rather than to map the sector. In other words, aiming for a deep dive into what support is needed rather than multiple returns of data per se.

However we were also mindful that the timescale was very short and that there would be constraints around who would be available to contribute in the lead up to Christmas. The researchers used their existing meetings and forums to encourage as many groups as possible to respond.

The researchers agreed to contact organisations personally, either by phone or individually face to face. They were encouraged to gather comments and wider feedback.

The survey was designed on Survey Monkey with 10 short questions. There was an option to print off paper versions if preferred, which were keyed in subsequently. Each question had space for additional comments. In addition an invitation to complete the survey was also included in the Connect Hertfordshire Newsflash, sent to stakeholders in December.

As part of the methodology the Village Hall and ethnic minority representation networks were targeted and accessed to ensure a wide breadth of views were captured and potentially difficult to reach groups were able to have their say.

Timescale

The implementation started with briefings on the 5th December and continued until the Christmas break.

The deadline was for analysis and initial reporting to go to Steering Group on 25th January.

Forums and meetings visited

North Herts Minority Ethnic Forum

<http://www.nhmef.org.uk/pages/umbrella-organisations.php>

Mohammed Alam (CEO and member of Steering Group); Nazma Malik survey

Social Inclusion Forum

The annual forum organised by the Social Inclusion Partnership (Stevenage). Open to all organisations, and members of the public.

<http://www.stevenage.gov.uk/content/15953/33567/157983/157991/Guide-Stevenage-Together.pdf>

Daniel Marshall (chair and also a member of Steering Group); Anne Taylor survey

Stevenage Older People's Network (run by Stevenage Borough Council)

Anne Taylor survey

Herts Citizens Advice Service

Daniel Marshall (chair and member of Steering Group);

Village Hall Network

<http://www.cdaherts.org.uk/projects/village-hall-network/>

Kate Belinis (CEO and member of Steering Group)

Other analysis and surveys incorporated into this report

Across the County there have been a number of surveys and analyses undertaken in the last two years that have similar objectives to this survey. It was felt that it was important to incorporate the findings from these into this report to ensure that a wide breadth of views was collated and valuable learning from these similar exercises captured.

These include:

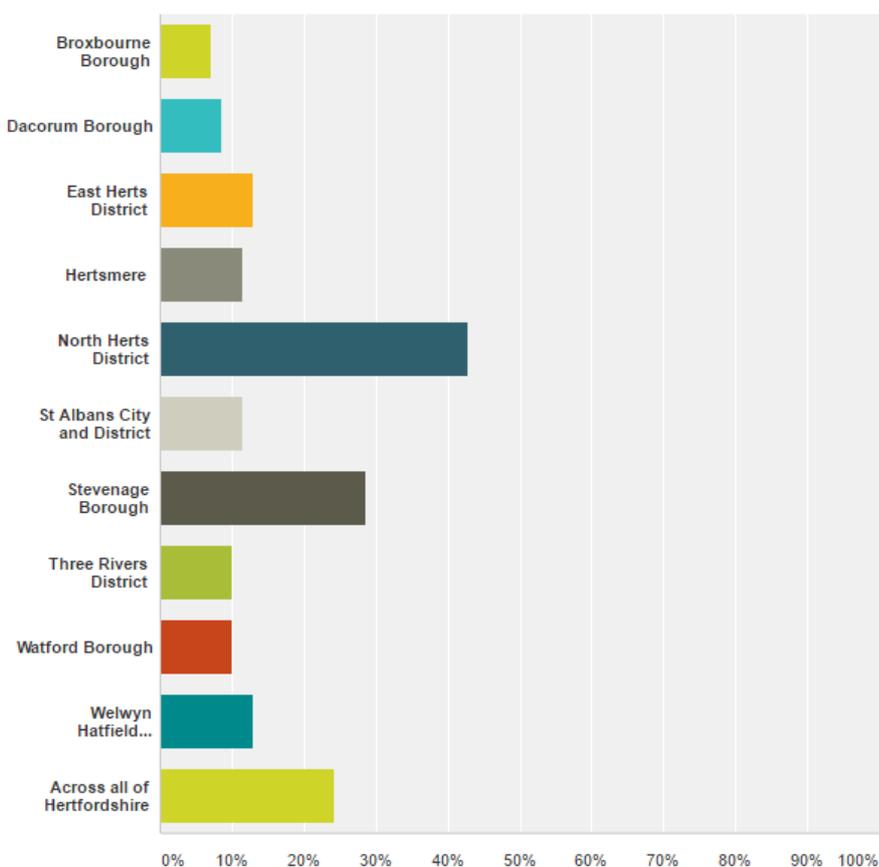
- East Herts Village Halls Survey December 2016 (CDA Herts)
- North Herts and Stevenage – Survey to assess opportunities, challenges and support – March 2015
- Big Lottery Project to support Small Groups (those under £30k pa income) Aug 2014 – Anne Taylor
- The North Herts CVS impact report 2015/6
- St Albans CVS Member Survey 2016

Hertfordshire Voluntary & Community Sector - Needs Analysis Survey

Which areas did respondents to the survey operate in?

In total 71 responses were received – more than initially anticipated. Responses were received from across all 10 Hertfordshire areas and also from 16 organisations that cover all of Hertfordshire.

Which of the following areas of Hertfordshire does your organisation operate in?



From the free text answers it is clear that a number of organisations currently do, and are prepared to work flexibly across areas, the county, nationally and internationally:

“We mainly work within Three Rivers but occasionally outreach in the other areas”

“Our adult learning project delivers a courses in other parts of the county”

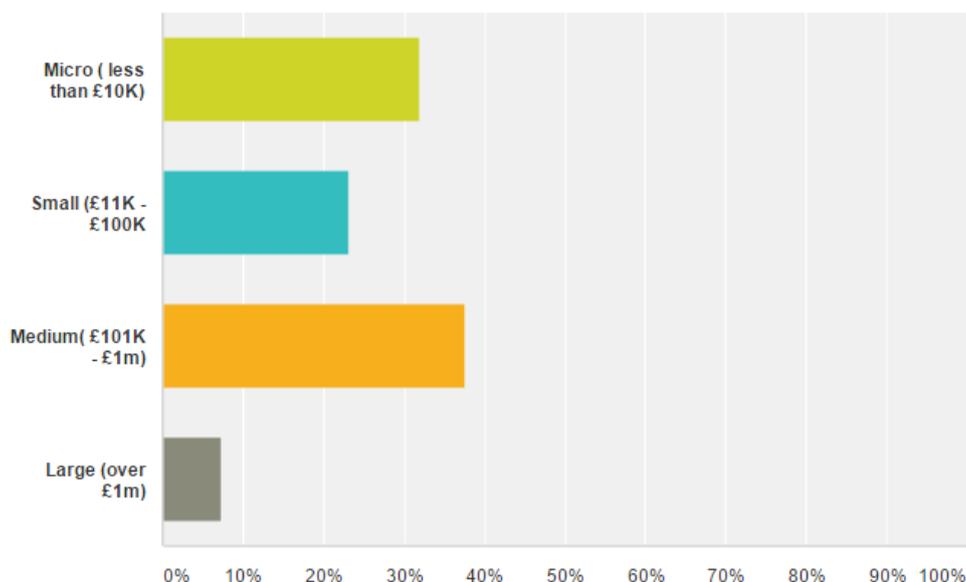
“Our face to face service is within St Albans District but our phone and webchat is county wide”

“These are the two main areas and where we run the groups but we do have members who use our services from other areas of Hertfordshire as well.”

“Primarily based in North Herts however have facilitated ground breaking projects across Hertfordshire, Nationally and Internationally”

What type of organisations responded to the survey?

What size is your organisation, according to your income for the current financial year?



A third of organisation who responded classed themselves as micro organisations with a turnover of less than £10k.

“We have always been a micro project however we have tried to scale up our activities over the past 5 years”

“Although the group does not have staff or volunteers, just myself, the group has members and the numbers have certainly increased in the last year”

“Everyone is a volunteer the heartbeat of the workforce since 1988 has always been local community volunteers”.

“We are more of a mini group and don't have much income, however we do have a bank account and there probably won't be more than about 500 - 1000 pounds at any time, we rely on grants and selling of our items.”

55% were small organisation with a turnover of less than £100k.

“We have in the past been awarded quite large grants which have to be spent within 12 months. Basically we are just about managing.”

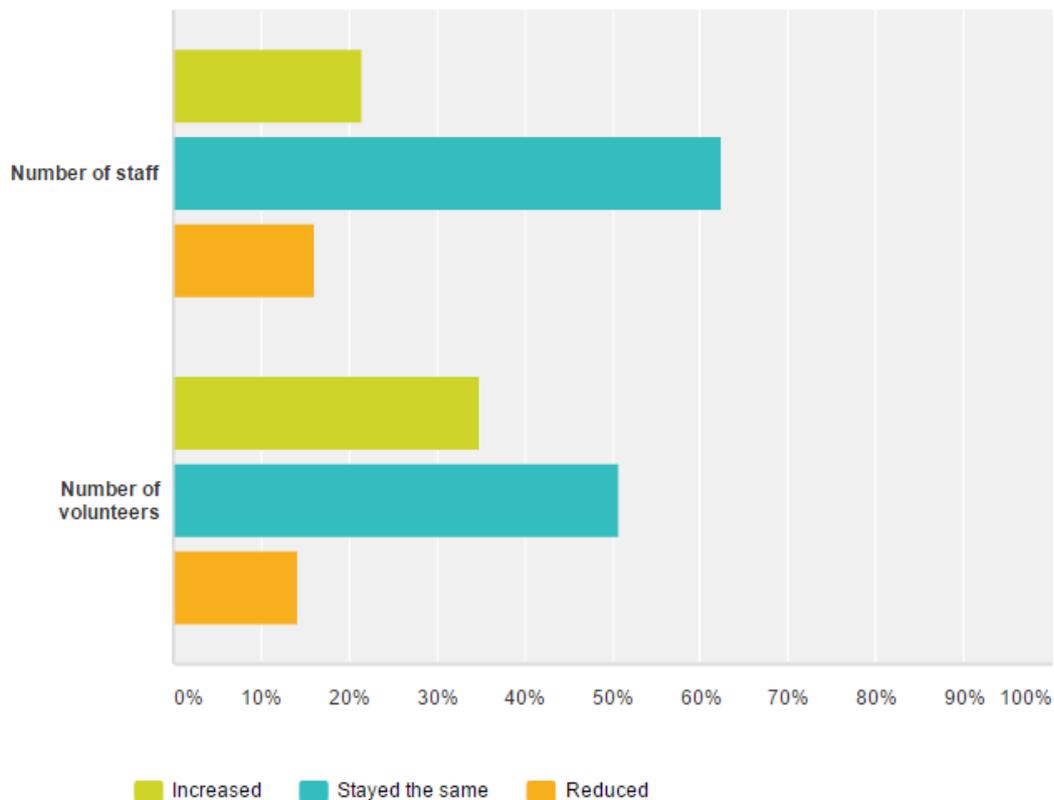
38% had a turnover of between £100k and £1m and 7% were over £1m.

In addition the findings from an organisation needs survey for East Herts Village Halls undertaken for CDA Herts by Kate Belinis had 14 responses 11 of which were registered charities. As you would expect 11 reported income of less than £25k per annum although one

had income of between £100 and £250k. The survey found that main sources of funding were from hirings to local clubs / classes, grants, donations Parish Council and fundraising events.

How have organisations changed in the last year and what changes do they expect in the next year?

Has your organisation's workforce changed in the last year?

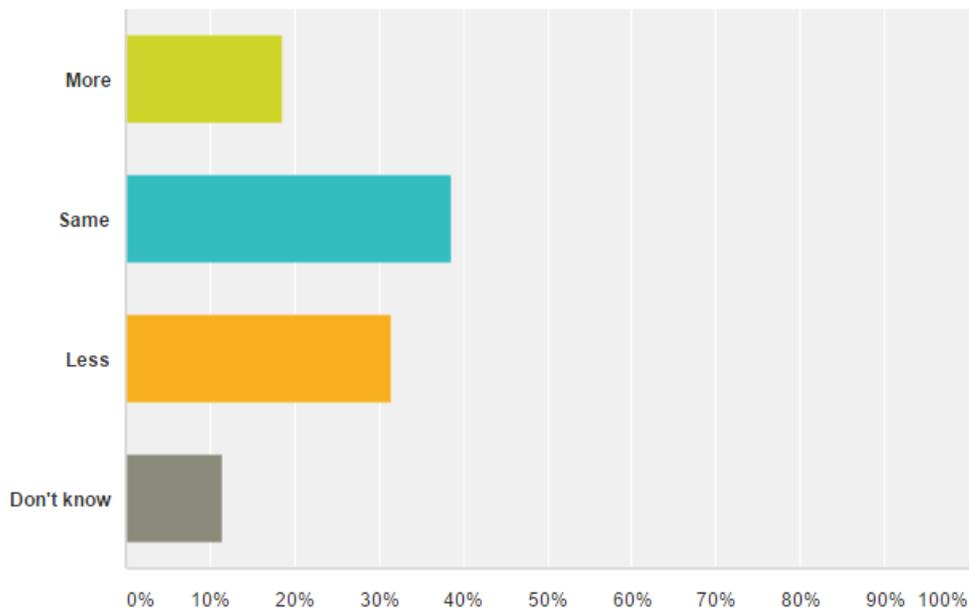


Over the last year over 60% of respondents have reported that numbers of paid staff have remained the same. 21% of organisations have increased the number of staff in the last year. 16% have seen a decrease in number of staff in the last year

“(staff) reduced because of loss of contracts.”

Respondents are reporting that more volunteers are being recruited with 35% saying the number of volunteers has increased compared to 14% reporting a decrease.

Compared with last year, do you expect next year's income to be



Most organisations expected income to remain the same (39%) or increase (19%)....

"We have the same number of staff but the roles have changed considerably to include fundraising."

"Increased member subscription and donations will help to raise more income"

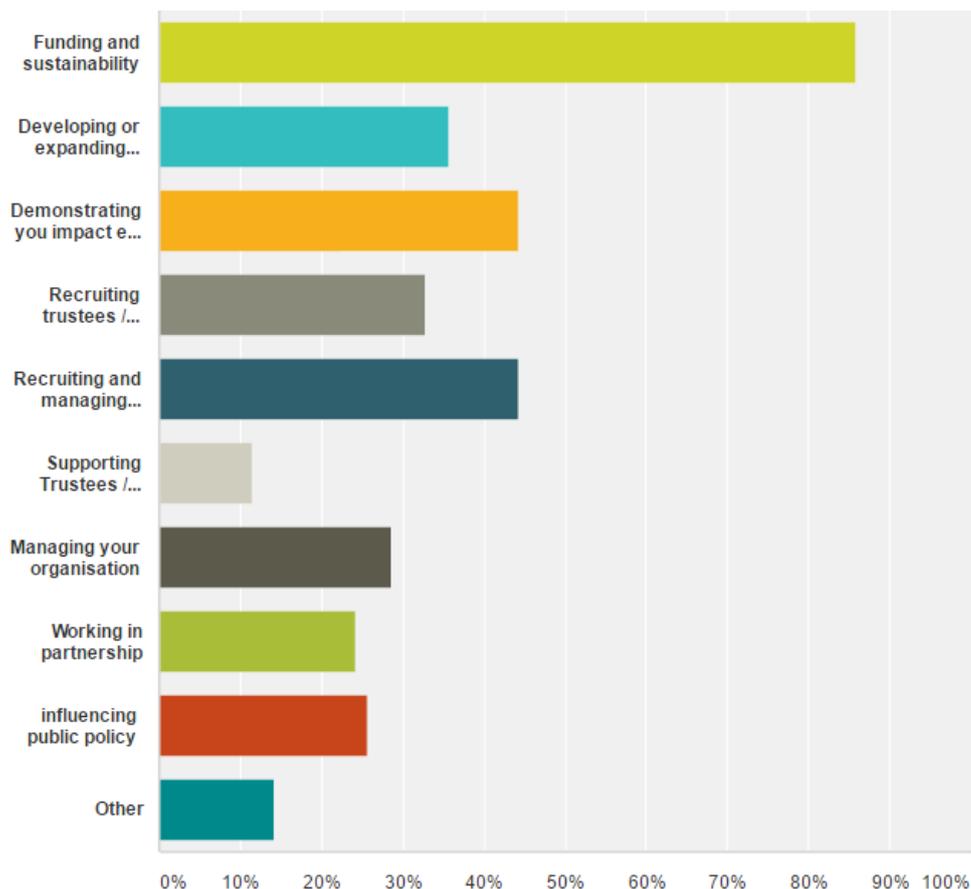
"Due to increased number of member population, donations are expected to be little more"

.....and 31% expected income to fall.

"We are finding it very hard to secure any funding. But statutory organisation seek our assistance, but don't want to pay"

What challenges do you expect in the next 2 years?

What are the 4 main challenges your organisation will face in the next 2 years?



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|--|-----------|
| ▼ Funding and sustainability | 85.71% 60 |
| ▼ Developing or expanding trading activities eg. social enterprises | 35.71% 25 |
| ▼ Demonstrating you impact e.g. evidencing your outcomes and cost benefits | 44.29% 31 |
| ▼ Recruiting trustees / Board members with the necessary skills | 32.86% 23 |
| ▼ Recruiting and managing volunteers | 44.29% 31 |
| ▼ Supporting Trustees / Board members | 11.43% 8 |
| ▼ Managing your organisation | 28.57% 20 |
| ▼ Working in partnership | 24.29% 17 |
| ▼ influencing public policy | 25.71% 18 |
| ▼ Other | 14.29% 10 |
| Total Respondents: 70 | |

Overwhelmingly the biggest challenge is anticipated to be funding and sustainability with 86% reporting this as a challenge. Some organisations are reporting that they have to develop and allocate resources to raise funds, market successful services and look at new ways of generating income

“Funding and sustainability is by far our biggest challenge. We have the skills and knowledge amongst our team to meet the other challenges but have to divert a lot of management time to raising enough money to stay open“

“Raising funds to cover the core cost of delivering the tried and tested drop in and telephone advice services is extremely difficult as the majority of funds are for new/specific services”

“Less grant income, more contract/private/fundraising”

“Funding and sustainability is by far our biggest challenge. We have the skills and knowledge amongst our team to meet the other challenges but have to divert a lot of management time to raising enough money to stay open.

Raising funds to cover the core cost of delivering the tried and tested drop in and telephone advice services is extremely difficult as the majority of funds are for new/specific services. Funding that is raised is often short term (one or two years) which makes planning for the long term difficult and means that we are constantly looking for new sources of income.”

Some respondents are also reporting difficulties in funding due to cuts in grants, contracts and restrictions in accessing funding:

“We operate on minimum reserves so we need the same level of income to continue operating”

“We have been asked to make a further 5% savings from our contract value for 17/18”

“Our main challenge is to maintain our HCC funding as without this the projects sustainability is very uncertain.”

“We are a vibrant and lively group, our main challenge is to find funding to make the group sustainable. This is an ongoing and time consuming challenge since we lost all our HCC funding. The rest is all manageable.”

“Being a place of worship we often are not eligible to apply for funding”

The St Albans member survey also asked “*What is the biggest challenge your organisation faces in the next 2 years?*” Over half said funding was the key issue followed by lack of volunteers. When asked what services the CVS provided were most critical over 30% said those addressing funding issues.

Respondents to the Connect Hertfordshire survey said that the next biggest challenge is evidencing their impact and cost benefits with 44% reporting this as one of their 4 biggest challenges and developing and expanding trading activities was a priority for 36% of organisations.

“Promoting engagement by all churches in shared enterprise”

“Our biggest challenge will be exporting our core projects to the wider eastern region incl Norfolk & Suffolk.”

“Probably our biggest challenge is workload with a small team, covering the county with no space for development work, without impacting on the existing work.”

“To prove to organisations with potential funding 'pots' the benefit of our organisation, and therefore the reason to provide us with funding/grants.”

Recruiting and managing trustees, volunteers and the organisation were priorities and may reflect the difficulties organisations face in meeting financial and other challenges around recruitment. Across the surveys analysed a key issue has been the need to look at how the VCS deals with succession planning and recruiting new and younger people into organisations;

“We lost some volunteers due to their age (approaching very old age)”

“We are striving to get younger volunteers as most of the present ones are of retirement age.”

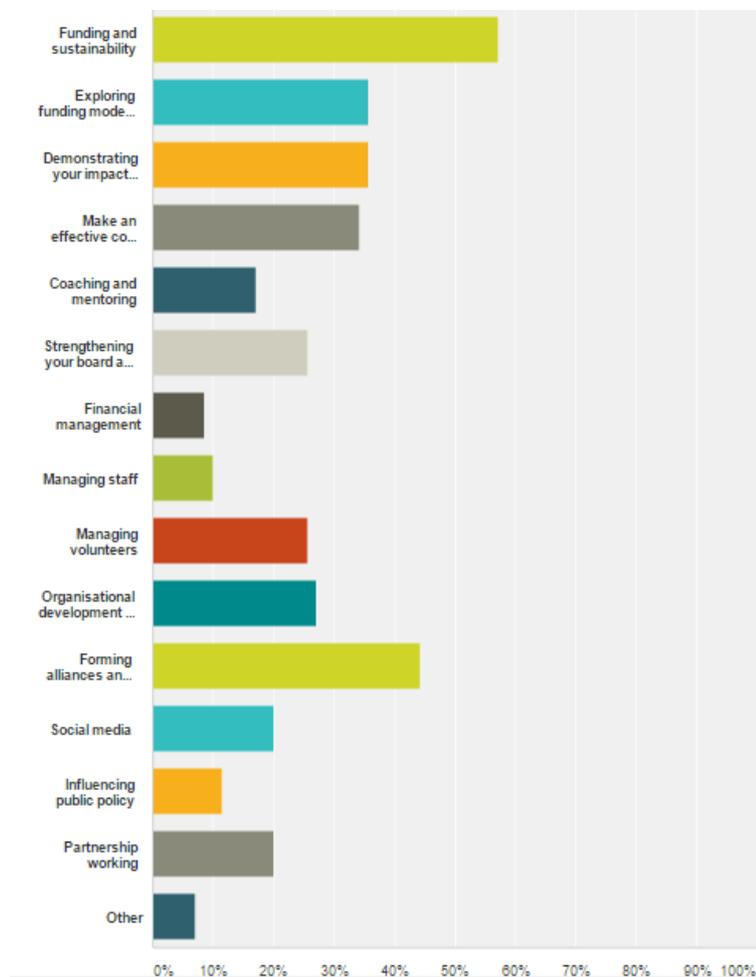
“The Project Manager has had support with volunteer recruitment but has not found anyone suitable to help. The Treasurer wants to stand down but again a suitable replacement has not been found despite efforts to recruit.”

“All members getting older and no younger members coming in....making it attractive to entice newcomers.”

The St Albans member survey also highlighted volunteer recruitment and support as priorities for members. When asked what support they wanted nearly 40% identified mentoring and training as priorities.

What are the priorities for training and development?

Which 4 areas do you think you would prioritise for training and development



| Answer Choices | Responses |
|---|-----------|
| ▼ Funding and sustainability | 57.14% 40 |
| ▼ Exploring funding models for trading activities e.g. social enterprises, crowdfunding | 35.71% 25 |
| ▼ Demonstrating your impact e.g. evidencing outcomes | 35.71% 25 |
| ▼ Make an effective cost benefit case for your service | 34.29% 24 |
| ▼ Coaching and mentoring | 17.14% 12 |
| ▼ Strengthening your board and supporting trustees | 25.71% 18 |
| ▼ Financial management | 8.57% 6 |
| ▼ Managing staff | 10.00% 7 |
| ▼ Managing volunteers | 25.71% 18 |
| ▼ Organisational development / management | 27.14% 19 |
| ▼ Forming alliances and tendering with other organisations | 44.29% 31 |
| ▼ Social media | 20.00% 14 |
| ▼ Influencing public policy | 11.43% 8 |
| ▼ Partnership working | 20.00% 14 |
| ▼ Other | 7.14% 5 |
| Total Respondents: 70 | |

These broadly reflect the challenges organisations reported. 57% saw funding and sustainability as a key areas for support in training and development, and 36% wanted to explore opportunities for different funding approaches and models including crowdfunding.

“Funding that is raised is often short term (one or two years) which makes planning for the long term difficult and means that we are constantly looking for new sources of income.”

“We are unusual in that we have a professional fundraiser on our board, however, setting our future direction is a big priority for us as well as being something we are struggling slightly with.”

“It seems that we did not fulfil the criteria (grant funders) of those we applied for”

The North Herts and Stevenage research into small groups found a high demand for funding advice amongst small groups and was “head and shoulders above every other kind of help (requested)”. This research also went on to say that small groups also needed help in understanding costs associated with activity even the recruitment and management of volunteers. This was coupled with a need for support in business and project planning to ensure they understand the resources needed and where they could get funding from.

This research also found a difference in the support needed for groups in within areas “Stevenage groups tend to be more culturally diverse and often need help just understanding the system – banking, insurance, Health and Safety Legislation, constitutions. “

The author of this report presented the view that having the right capability within organisations was important even if the groups were member and / or volunteer led;

“Vulnerable or disadvantaged people need support from others who are not vulnerable themselves. Every group is different – find out right from the start, where do they want to go, what resources will they need, how will they sustain themselves – if they won’t, don’t spend time.”

It was interesting that 44% organisations reported that they would welcome support in forming alliances and tendering with other organisations. 20% also wanted more support in partnership working.

“To continue to build relationships with organisations that can prove either financial support, or to access to potential new clients.”

“Working in partnership is always important but not particularly challenging because of existing good relationships

“Re influencing public policy, would like to see County Council acknowledging the importance of services we provide eg healthy eating, exercise, budgeting for vulnerable families”

Another key trend is organisations wanting to be better able to demonstrate their impact (36%) and to make an effective costs benefit case (34%). Feedback from researchers and other analysis is that this is in part in response to demands from funders.

“Managing our organisation - this is particularly to do with ensuring we have IT systems in place to enable us to record and manage our membership and case work and track outcomes.”

The potential for using Social Media was prioritised by 20% of respondents and this was picked up in the free text response from some respondents

“How we can use social media to get our messages out into the community and how we can encourage public participation.”

“Publicising our service through social media”

The St Albans CVS survey also found a demand for social media training and support with over 35% of their respondents saying this is a service they wanted.

A smaller percentage of respondents said they wanted support in financial management (9%) and managing staff (10%) – this may in part reflect that a large proportion of respondents were from small charities and enterprises. Significantly more wanted training and development in managing volunteers (26%) and in managing the organisation (27%).....

“Recognise the importance of training and have on-going dialogue with volunteers about this”

“The two volunteers are very hands-on, working directly with the children, but as the Junior Club grows, they will need more admin and management help”

“Recruiting more volunteers, especially younger people”

“Just an opportunity for us to have a big 3 and or a 5 year plan with 2 or 3 paid part time staff to give us sustainability”.

.....as was strengthening your board and supporting trustees (26%).

The findings from the March 2015 NH CVS survey across North Herts and Stevenage found similar areas of need for training and support

“Funding, income generation, communications, and recruiting and retaining skilled trustees and volunteers are enduring needs of the sector.”

This research also found that increasingly, knowledge of contracting and associated monitoring requirements are additional needs to be effectively resourced and that opportunities for the sector include: personalisation, demonstrating social value, increasing use of social media and commissioning,

Although within the Connect Hertfordshire survey only 11% identified influencing public policy as a training priority the North Herts CVS survey reported that amongst respondents there was a desire for support to enable the sector to provide voice, representation and influence

strategically and would welcome support to facilitate a range of collaborative working partnerships and to raise the profile of VCS and its outcomes.

The East Herts village hall survey identified a range of topic areas for support including:

- Governance (x2)
- HR
- Employment of staff
- Employment legislation
- Building legislation(x2)
- H&S
- Payroll
- Trustees/Staff(x2)

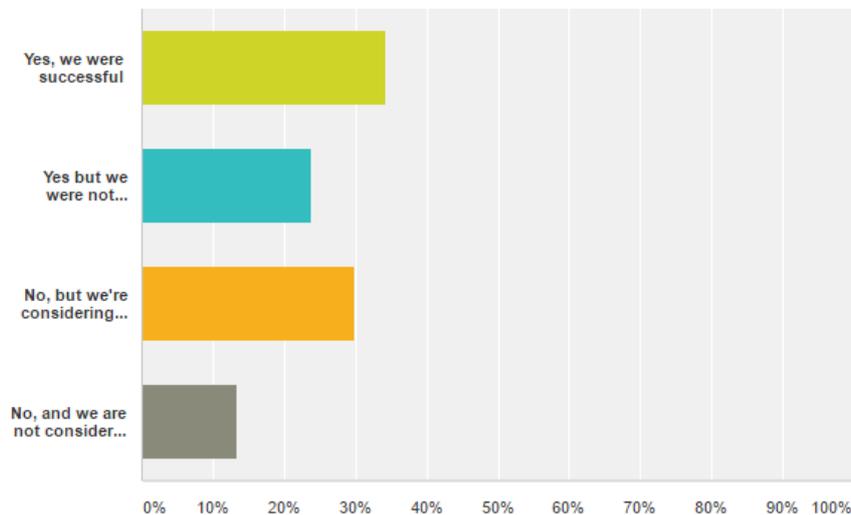
When asked what their burning issues were, fundraising was a high priority, as were support with recruiting and managing volunteers and this is consistent with the analysis above. For the village halls building and maintenance issues were a priority to deal with structural and maintenance issues.

One interesting area for support was in relation to the need to transfer a pilot fostering scheme back into public sector which raises the issue of how can successful initiatives be effectively supported to develop and extend in partnership with others including the statutory sector.

Some village halls accessed support from CDA and there was some demand for support around governance although 4 reported that they didn't need support on compliance.

Working and bidding for funding in partnership

Over the last 2 years, has your organisation bid for funding in partnership?



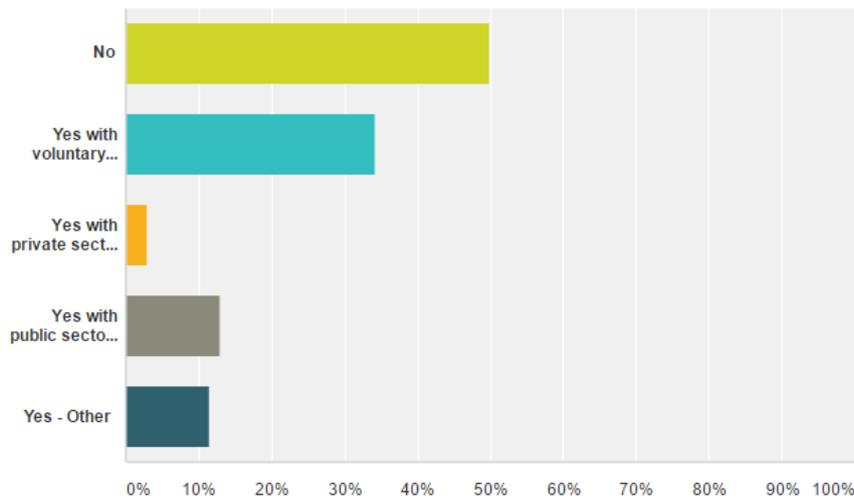
It was encouraging to note that 34% of respondents were successful in bidding in partnership for funding in the last two years. A quarter had bid but were unsuccessful and a further 30% are considering bidding in partnership which along with the reported demand for training and support in forming alliances and tendering with other organisations indicates that this is an area that should be prioritised in the next year.

The North Herts CVS survey in March 2015 also found an appetite for partnership working amongst respondents in North Hertfordshire and Stevenage. In this survey partnership working within the VCS in both districts is common, with relationships considered to be between 'fair' and 'very good'. However, the commissioning environment has created 'tensions' which has reduced contact between some VCS colleagues.

Partnership with business is less established though many organisations have at least one contact with business. It is largely not meeting identified needs. Equally it is not found to be carried out strategically by many organisations responding to that survey.

Half of respondents were not in any form of partnership or consortium (50%), but the free text answers indicates that a number of organisations want to explore this further

Is your organisation part of a formal partnership or consortium?



“We would be very interested in this but have no idea how to go about this.”

“We would like to consider this but have no experience or expertise in this area at all.”

“This only represented a small proportion of our income, but it is something we would like to grow in.”

“We are in informal partnerships which we are happy to formalise but don't know how this works?”

“We have informal links with other groups in the area but nothing formal. We would be interested in making these links where possible but not sure how to do so.”

Of those who were in partnership these were mainly with other VCS organisations (34% of total respondents).

The North Herts CVS survey (March 2015) captured views in relation to working with statutory agencies and commissioning more generally. In this survey relationships with statutory organisations are noted by both VCS and statutory partners to be less good than desired.

There was a recognition that this is at least in part due to the commissioning process and that there is desire on both sides to build trust and good relationships. In considering voice and influence, the VCS is thought to not be as proactively engaged at a strategic level as is possible or desirable. Although there is widespread engagement in consultation activities, very few stakeholders said they had been proactively approached by VCS organisations to clearly discuss their work strategically.

Amongst respondents some saw opportunities for establishing partnerships with businesses, Housing Associations and education providers all of whom have indicated they are open to partnership working with VCS organisations.

Is there anything else you would like to tell us about the support you need for your organisation?

Across the comments to the last free text box, respondents reinforce that opportunities for and accessing funding is the dominant theme.

“We would like be informed (of funding opportunities), please”

“The occasional grant keeps us viable. The problem will be when our 84yr old cook (voluntary) retires.”

“We have been struggling to just to have an office/a desk space to run our service”

“A majority of funding are usually for the Project Manager and running cost of the project i.... we are currently in a very difficult situation to sustaining our charity as the funding we can usually claim or awarded are not a large amount of funds & short term funding. It would be a very nice if these elements put in a considerations of the future funding if possible.”

“We have tried some partnership funding. But the funding we usually awarded would be a not long term project and funding. Also lacks of funds towards sustaining the organisation itself e.g. cost to pay staff members for admin work, cost / contributions towards using the office/pay rent etc. Therefore, we can run the projects however, it is not like previous voluntary sector or funding, we do really not have luxury to keep running the office as well as running project. This has been a huge concern to a small organisation like us.”

The St Albans CVS member survey identified newsletters and training as the services they provided that were most important to respondents – each with over 60% of members who responded saying it was either important of very important to them. When asked how members wanted to hear from St Albans CVS or access latest information the overwhelming preferences were for newsletters, e-mail alerts and the website.

There is a key thread within this survey and across the others pieces of research that have taken place, that reflects the need organisations have to be informed and keep up to date about developments in the sector across Hertfordshire. Organisations had an appetite for opportunities to network and learn from one another, to share their own experience and potentially to form closer relationships with others and potentially to collaborate. However they also felt that this was a real challenge for them given the day to day pressures they faced in running their organisations and is clearly an area where support was required.

Feedback from across the research analysed and the researchers involved in the survey is that a variety of methods need to be used to enable communication, networking and access to support. There is already a wide range of support and resources available but there is an ongoing challenge to improve awareness and accessibility, so that organisations know where they can find out what is available, and then get what they need when they need it.