2013 sees SCVO reach a key milestone: the fifteenth year since we were established to provide leadership, support and representation to Sandwell’s diverse voluntary and community sector. Over those years we’ve supported many hundreds of local projects and services in different ways as the world around us has changed.

Sandwell needs strong co-operation, collaboration and strength of purpose now as much as ever, and SCVO’s focus remains to provide an infrastructure for the important listening, thinking, talking and doing of local community organisations, working with each other and with our local statutory partners.

Our core development support for the Sector, brokering of ‘strategic conversations’ through our forums, and our commitment to offer timely assistance whenever possible remains a consistent feature of our support offer. Highlights for SCVO this last year include an ambitious new collaborative venture with Black County infrastructure partners, an extension of our cross-sector Buddies support programme, a renewed emphasis on bringing in even more funds into Sandwell from outside sources, and a new range of chargeable consultancy services to broaden further the choice for our members.

SCVO is proud to serve our six hundred (and counting) members, local partners and newcomers to voluntary and community action in Sandwell. We hope you enjoy reading this report and look forward to working alongside you over the years ahead.

Mark Davis
Chief Executive Officer, SCVO

Parpinder K Dhatt
Chair, SCVO
Chief Executive, SAFSS
INTRODUCTION TO SCVO

SCVO is an independent charitable organisation which believes that the lives of the people of Sandwell will be happier and healthier where the Voluntary and Community Sector works closely with partners to identify and satisfy community needs.

SCVO is led and overseen by a Board of Directors drawn from its wide membership. SCVO provides a range of development support to Voluntary and Community Sector groups which lead to improved outcomes; including:-

• Improved information and guidance on organisation structures and governance.
• Better strategic planning.
• Up to date funding information and support leading to improved applications and increased funding into Sandwell.
• Increased Social Action through the Buddies programme.
• Excellent support for organisations leading to improved organisational policies and procedures.
• Improved financial management and planning.
• A needs led training programme for groups and organisations leading to increased knowledge, skills and shared learning.
• Support for organisations to be better equipped to take up collaborative and partnership approaches to delivering services.
• Facilitated networks, strategic forums and opportunities to improve shared learning through engagement.
• Maintenance of appropriate and timely information through: newsletters, web updates and e-bulletins with vital local and national news to keep the sector better informed.

SCVO is currently implementing an ambitious Strategic Plan for the five year period 2011-2016. We have listened to the needs and views of our members and we recognise the wide-ranging challenges that we in the Voluntary and Community Sector will be facing in the coming years – the need to raise our profile and visibility, the opportunities available through working together, how to survive in the increasingly challenging funding environment and ensuring that the needs of local residents and those most vulnerable in our communities are heard clearly.

This Plan looks to deliver our practical support and our strong collective voice in ways which are more effective, timely and focused on change in a time of diminishing funds and resources.
A HUB FOR COMMUNICATION AND INTELLIGENCE

‘By 2016 SCVO will be widely known by all stakeholders as the primary source of up-to-the-minute intelligence and strategic insight into voluntary and community activity in Sandwell.’

SCVO’s work to understand the local voluntary and community sector in all its complexity and diversity, and share this intelligence with a wide range of partners remains a core, valued part of our infrastructure role.

Our regular newsletter ‘SCVO.INFO’ which reaches over 1,000 recipients continues to be the first place to look for local and national news and policy updates, voluntary sector features, and information about funding, resources and support for local organisations. During this last year SCVO also stepped up the use of our popular email bulletins, allowing key updates to reach even further, even quicker.

There have been important developments too in how SCVO shares information about the Sector with key partners, with the development of a new Community Health Portal. This impressive new initiative which has been widely acclaimed, has been delivered in partnership with Sandwell’s new Clinical Commissioning Group.

The portal puts detailed information about how to access local community services at the fingertips of health professionals, community practitioners and local residents through a slick, dedicated website. This important development neatly complements SCVO’s established VCS database which remains the mainstay of our information provision, with almost 1,000 groups active in the borough now listed within it.

SCVO’s main website www.scvo.info has also undergone a recent refresh and facelift, providing a truly up to date platform from which to communicate and inform for the years ahead.

FACTS AND FIGURES

- 94,000 visits to our VCS database during the last year
- 1,350 recipients of our regular e-bulletins
‘Raised my awareness more about the role of the voluntary sector in Sandwell - keep up the good work’

‘It is an interesting newsletter with a lot of useful information’

‘Keeps us informed of Local and National policies and initiatives so that we are better able to serve our membership.’

‘Helped with funding applications trainings and highlighted local issues and helped with what is going on locally at cabinet level.’

‘Kept me informed on various opportunities to engage with public sector/voluntary sector, training opportunities, funding opportunities.’

‘It helps a variety of people to be informed about local issues etc and is much appreciated.’

‘Given us valuable information that we wouldn’t otherwise have access to.’

‘Enabled us to be nosy about what is going on across the sector and wider.’

‘Kept us in the ‘know.’
In these changing times, as life has become more challenging for many in Sandwell, demands on local community-based services have at times been stretched to the limit. SCVO’s development team continue to offer a wide range of support to local organisations to grow capacity, increase capability and assist organisations under pressure to sustain their services and meet local need.

Support over the last year has been as wide-ranging as ever. Local service providers have benefited from expert guidance in business and strategic planning, development of outcomes, support with governance and management, and assistance with securing funds through trading, grants and contracts.

SCVO has worked to bring local organisations closer to local and regional funders resulting in a significant increase in funding success rates, through training, conferences, and one-to-one guidance and support. Particular focus this year has been given to the Awards for All and Reaching Communities strands of the Big Lottery programme, seeing a huge rise in the number of applications made and in funds secured for Sandwell services.

SCVO continue to look for resources to offer support where it is most needed. Our Managing Change programme is one example of this, where local providers facing an immediate and significant transition have been able to receive intensive mentoring and expert guidance through this process by one of SCVO’s pool of Associates.

**FACTS AND FIGURES**

- Over £1.8 million brought into Sandwell’s VCS with SCVO support
- Nearly 200 organisations receiving a wide range of direct development support
- Over 130 new subscribers to our funding information portal
SCVO’s team was very professional and supportive of our group’s needs.’

‘Because of their continuous support we are able to grow from strength to strength as a group.’

‘We appreciate the time, effort and help you have given us. Help which was far beyond what you needed to do but help which was very necessary. I think the application is very strong now and will deliver a tremendous project for a sustained time.’

‘The structure & planning was excellent and informative. The fact that SCVO is willing to support local led community groups gives us real value and confidence.’

The Shared Reading Company CIC has recently been established to deliver weekly shared reading sessions in a range of community settings in Sandwell, targeting in particular people disadvantaged by social exclusion. The group read stories and poetry in small groups with the aim of improving personal well-being and mental health, increasing social engagement and reading pleasure as well as creating pathways to volunteering and employability.

SCVO supported the CIC in a successful Awards for All bid, enabling them to run three new open access groups in Great Bridge, West Bromwich and Cradley Heath libraries. SCVO also directed them to the Santander Social Enterprise Growth Award, and the funding they obtained for capacity building is enhancing their ability to run their company effectively.

‘SCVO has helped us to realise our potential by providing invaluable information, practical advice and feedback, as well as confidence-building encouragement.’

Read more about SCVO’s work with local service providers
HELPING GRASSROOTS TO GROW

‘By 2016 SCVO will be recognised as an expert facilitator, enabler and resource for community-led initiatives at a local level’

SCVO continue to provide nourishment to the grass roots of community activity, supporting volunteers at a very local level in offering their time, energies and leadership within the community. Our Big Lottery-funded ‘Sandwell Five’ programme focused our wide range of intensive start-up support in areas of Smethwick and West Bromwich, whilst in Great Bridge we completed our engagement with a range of small community groups under the Fair Share programme.

In practical terms this meant training, guidance and information was provided to establish and strengthen committees and governing bodies, to write applications for funding, to develop effective management, and to support with marketing and media. In Great Bridge, eighteen groups shared the benefit of a £20,000 Community Chest, twenty five groups became fit for funding, eight groups received IT training and created a web page, a local beauty spot was revitalised, and relationships between emergency services and the local community improved.

SCVO continues to move forward with an evolving support offer as we saw the first Charitable Incorporated Organisations (CIO) set up in the borough. Our role as a grant administrator at a local level enabled us to further develop good practice within local panels and see these new funds make a real difference to people at a local level.
xplorARTS provides and promotes educational initiatives supporting the performing arts, leading and facilitating the development and performance of young people’s artistic skill and talent within Sandwell. This is done through dance, drama, music, spoken word, badminton, youth leadership and volunteering programme, community heritage programme and basketball.

SCVO supported this new group with registering as a charity, implementing clear policies for better governance, including health and safety and safe guarding policy, Trustee and member responsibilities.

“We greatly appreciate all the assistance SCVO has provided us with over the past few months. The support received from SCVO has boosted our confidence to pursue alternative sources of income in these tough times for long term sustainability. It would be fair to state that without the continuous unconditional support we are regularly receiving from SCVO our group would be struggling tremendously”.

Read more about SCVO’s work with xplorArts

**FACT AND FIGURES**

- Over 50 small groups provided with intensive development support.
- Over £25,000 of new funding secured for Sandwell’s grassroots.
- 16 Groups became better engaged in new networks.

**CASE STUDY**

**QUOTES**

“Would recommend this to anyone starting a voluntary organisation – Thank you for your support”

“It has made a real difference to local organisations having this level of support in our town and a further opportunity would be most welcome”
In such a time of change to local services it could be argued that the need for clear and constructive engagement with local public sector partners has never been greater. SCVO are at the forefront of this engagement in Sandwell, enabling conversations to happen in many different places and at many different levels. The aim is to bring people together, to enable clear views from service providers within the community to shape how services can really support people effectively and to ensure plans and priorities are set which benefit those most in need of help.

Central to this are SCVO’s thriving strategic Forums. Over the last year, these points of engagement have enabled important dialogue to take place with commissioners of services and decision-makers within health and social care, and children and young peoples’ services. The VCS Leaders Forum has grappled with and engaged over issues that cut across themes and service areas and which impact across the Sector and across the borough. And SCVO has taken a lead - both in supporting Sector leaders to represent their colleagues within the strategic arena, and in offering that representation on behalf of its members. From the Safer Sandwell Partnership to Sector breakfast meetings, from Private Sector Finance discussions to Community Development Strategy meetings – SCVO has played its part in bringing the Sector to the fore across a wide and diverse set of strategic conversations.

SCVO’s engagement has expanded to meet new opportunities too. The emergence of our local Clinical Commissioning Group created a need for a VCS Health Network through which SCVO is now bringing together local providers from Sandwell and West Birmingham to engage health leaders and look to collaborate. And as we look to work more closely with infrastructure partners within the Black Country, SCVO is delivering an increasingly important partnership role in helping to attract and secure funding for our local Sector.
A FLAVOUR OF SCVO’S ENGAGEMENT WORK

- Emergency Provision Network
- Gang and Youth Violence events
- Welfare Reform
- Strategic Intelligence Group
- Integrated Offender Management Group
- Commissioners Forum
- Safer Sandwell Partnership Board
- Exploring Private Sector Finance
- Developing a Social Value Framework
- Engagement with Commissioning Leads
- Healthy Homes Healthy Communities Conference
- Facilitating ‘Voice’ and ‘Echo’ Workshops
- Community Development Strategy
- Healthwatch Steering Group
- Anti-Poverty Workshop
- Alternatives to Paid Support
- CCG engagement events
- Crime Innovation Fund Promotional event
- Sandwell Safeguarding Adults Board Learning and Development Network
- Tension Monitoring Group
- Recovery Services workshop
- Community Development Strategy working group
- Joint Strategic Needs Delivery Group
- Chamberlain Forum Localism Briefing
- Talent Match
- Big Lottery Big Local Consultation
- Black Country Community Grants

Sandwell Adventure Play Association (SAPA) share their experience of SCVO’s support:

“We have been involved and support through SCVO in a variety of ways. We have received the support of a Buddy through the Buddies Programme who offered SAPA helpful support, advice and guidance identifying the need for us to have more robust HR processes in place. We have also received support around SAPA’s governance and charitable status and we are looking to move to become a Charitable Incorporated Organisation during the next year, with the ongoing support from SCVO. We are involved in the networks and Forums that SCVO facilitates including the VCS Children and Young People Forum which has been influence voice for the Sector in conversations with the Council and other statutory partners.

SCVO has also played another part in SAPA’s development, through attending an informal breakfast meeting last year, links were made with The Wesley Centre in Wednesbury and a play centre is now being run from their premises”
ONE SECTOR WORKING TOGETHER

‘By 2016 SCVO’s leadership role for Sandwell’s Voluntary and Community Sector will be recognised by all, enabling the Sector to provide greater social impact through collective working’

Whilst many of Sandwell’s large and diverse complement of voluntary organisations strongly value the independence that their roots in the local community give them, there is also a sense of being part of something bigger that is very important. This is an incredibly significant part of life in Sandwell and shows itself in peoples’ openness to share and learn from each other, and in their willingness to collaborate and work together where this can make a greater difference.

Togetherness and collective working is at the heart of SCVO, as the Sector’s membership organisation with over
600 local members. Over this last year SCVO has taken many opportunities to help organisations do more, or be more effective or influential by working alongside each other. Whether through bringing organisations together to look at funding opportunities, convening our Forums to create that stronger voice, inviting groups to engage in consultations over plans and priorities, or simply helping newcomers to the Sector find new friends and partners.

Our Buddies programme is one of SCVO’s more recent initiatives to help organisations work more closely with each other – with many organisations benefiting through our matching of volunteer buddies from the voluntary, public or private sectors to help share their expertise in the areas of finance, funding, marketing and business management.

SCVO is keen to use the strength of our membership effectively and is now developing new avenues for our members to find cost-effective support through discounted deals negotiated with commercial suppliers. Our first foray into this area this year has resulted in a promising partnership with a local law firm, and more such partnerships are being pursued for the coming year.
SCVO FINANCE 2012/13

SCVO income during 2012/13  £452,327
(compared with £348,392 in 2011/12)

SCVO expenditure during 2012/13  £479,209
(compared with £495,450 in 2011/12)

Balance for 2012/13  -£26,882
(compared with - £147,058 in 2011/12)

Income for SCVO Activities During 2012/13

- Change management grants programme, £12,000, 3%
- Forums and commissioner engagement, £30,000, 7%
- Health portal and Health Network, £43,440, 10%
- Chargeable services, £10,337, 2%
- Local community support programme, £66,683, 15%
- Training and support for youth organisations, £5,205, 1%
- Buddies programme, £105,278, 23%
- Strategic Engagement, Communications and Capacity Building, £124,265, 28%
- Local support for Great Bridge VCS, £22,908, 5%
- Grants for Great Bridge VCS, £10,000, 2%
- Partnership and collaboration support, £20,000, 4%

SCVO funds carried forward 2011/12  £369,461
SCVO funds at 31st March 2012/13  £342,579
Funders of SCVO During 2012/13

Bankers
Lloyds TSB Bank Plc
65 Cape Hill
Smethwick
West Midlands
B66 4SF

CAF Bank Limited
25 Kings Hill Avenue
Kings Hill
West Malling
Kent
ME19 4JQ

Auditors
Howell Davies Limited
Chartered Accountants
Tudor House
37A Birmingham New Road
Wolverhampton
WV4 6BL

Expenditure Against Different Service Areas During 2012/13

Capacity-Building 61%

Information and Communication 16%

Strategic Engagement 21%

Grants 2%

Trading 2%

Sandwell PCT 9%

Sandwell MBC 33%

Social Action Fund 23%

Big Lottery BASIS 15%

VCS youth organisation 1%

Fair Share Trust 5%

Fair Share Trust 5%

Sandwell and West Birmingham CCG 10%
Parpinder Dhatt,
SAFSS, (Chair)

Ruth Levesley,
Relate Birmingham (Vice Chair)

Geoff Coleman,
Options for Life
(until November 2012)

Andy Davies,
Options for Life
(appointed November 2012)

Tonia Flannagan,
St Albans Community Association

Geoff Foster,
Sandwell Cares

Jon Grant,
Krunch

Deska Howe,
independent member
(until November 2012)

Sejal Karavadra,
independent member
(appointed November 2012)

Mohammed Loan,
Oldbury Jamia Mosque

Janet Maye,
Esther Community Resources
(appointed November 2012)

Ragih Muflihi,
Yemeni Community Association in
Sandwell

Khatija Patel,
Ideal for All

Balbinder Singh,
5K Foundation

S J Sudhakar,
Balaji Temple

Pauline Tomlinson,
Black Country YMCA

Shane Ward,
West Bromwich African
Caribbean Resource Centre
(appointed November 2012)

Dates of appointment and/or
retirement appear in SCVO’s Trustees
Report 2012/13

REGISTERED ADDRESS AND
PRINCIPAL OFFICE
First Floor
Landchard House
Victoria Street
West Bromwich
B70 8ER

COMPANY REGISTRATION NUMBER
3570517

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER
1071514
SCVO TEAM

Mark Davis
Chief Executive Officer
SCVO’s strategic lead

Leona Bird
Strategic Engagement Officer
Supporting VCS engagement with statutory partners and co-ordinating a range of VCS networks and strategic forums

Steve Baylis
Organisation Development Officer
Providing funding information, guidance and support and administering grants programmes

Carole Harte
Organisation Development Officer
Organisational development support, governance and quality standards

Helen Trueman
Small Groups Development Officer
Administering a Community Support Programme to Build And Sustain Infrastructure Support for five areas of Sandwell

Debra Hill
Administrator
Supporting the smooth running of SCVO’s operations

Mazeline Hemmings
Database Administrator
Maintaining SCVO’s Directory of the voluntary and community sector