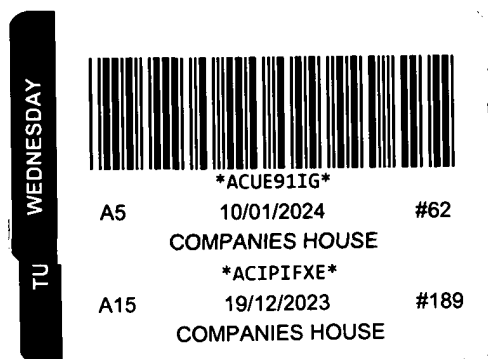




INVESTING IN
COMMUNITIES

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31st March 2023



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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers & Advisors

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, which were last amended in 2020.

Company No. 2000818 | Charity No. 1049663

Trustees

Neil Dawson *Chair*

Mark Barnish *Treasurer*

John Beech

Lesley Morrey

Victoria Hardie

Susan Meredith (*resigned 12 August 2023*)

Nick Maslen (*resigned 14 May 2023*)

Tim Edwards (*appointed 30 June 2022*)

Lee West (*appointed 14 December 2022*)

Pooja Batta (*appointed 13 September 2023*)

John Farrar (*appointed 13 September 2023*)

Joe Martin (*appointed 13 September 2023*)

Cliff Hathaway (*appointed 13 September 2023*)

Cathy Jones (*appointed 13 September 2023*)

Auditors

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd,
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Bankers

Unity Bank Plc, Nine Brindleyplace,
Birmingham, B1 2HB

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel

Lisa Healings FCCA - Chief Executive
& Finance Director

Charlotte Bennett - Strategic Projects Manager

Debra Hefferon - Finance Manager

Jackie Wheeler - Facilities Manager

Registered Office

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley,
Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword



VAST continues to be a local infrastructure support organisation dedicated to the betterment of the voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector. Its core objectives remain to support

development of the local VCSE sector, utilising all available opportunities to best achieve this. When faced with challenges during the year, we have once again reacted swiftly to allow our organisation to meet the needs of our members. As a result, the year has seen the enthusiastic and imaginative VAST staff provide an amazing level of support for the many VCSE sector groups and individuals across our area. Alongside this, VAST, through Lisa Healings, and our small but very effective Senior Management Team, has once again increased engagement with local and national Statutory Bodies.

We have continued to focus on supporting our many members and the communities where they operate through providing the widely recognised pillars of infrastructure support of capacity building, volunteering, advocacy and voice, partnerships and collaboration, and have ourselves focused on our partnership working with other local organisations and continued our close working relationship with Support Staffordshire. Like other organisations in the sector, managing our finances continues to be difficult with the ever rising cost-of-living meaning an increased demand for our support at a time when our finances are already stretched.

The Trustees embarked on a new strategic plan to best position VAST for the future during this year as well as carrying out a review of Board Governance and a Board skills audit ready to embark on a recruitment process to further diversify the Board in the coming year.

It has been exciting, but challenging, to have overseen changes in the operation of the Dudson Museum and promote the heritage of the whole Dudson Centre to ensure that the legacy of the site, which is our home, is preserved for future generations.

We continue to be innovative and seek to develop solutions to emerging issues and I am confident that we can continue to deliver our passion for the VCSE sector and maintain and grow VAST's position as a key provider of advice, support and services to the sector.

I would like to thank VAST's members for their continued involvement, my fellow trustees and particularly all the staff at VAST for their commitment, hard work and dedication and look forward to VAST continuing its invaluable work into the future.

Neil Dawson
Chair
13th December 2023

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2023 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

Fair Review of the Business

Following the COVID pandemic VAST has found itself in a strong position in the local Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire. During the pandemic we proved ourselves to be the reliable "go-to" organisation for both sector-based organisations and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, securing a position as strategic partner and enabling us to continue our role as The Local Infrastructure Organisation for the VCSE sector locally.

We have developed a strong projects team, delivering relevant support services, enhanced by the offer of our community accounts and creative services. We have grown and developed our volunteering offer, delivering a quality brokerage service, volunteer management training and growing our successful Volunteer Manager network alongside working to develop a Stoke based volunteering quality standard which will launch later in 2023.

We have also continued to work closely with Support Staffordshire to create a strong VCSE Alliance with the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board including chairing the North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Healthy Communities Forum enabling VCSE organisations to have a voice into the Integrated Care System locally.

It has not all been plain sailing, however, the cost-of-living crisis continued to hit hard, with soaring energy costs alongside the rises in food and other essentials meaning demand on the VCSE sector was growing whilst the finances of individual organisations were stretched. During the pandemic, the Stoke-on-Trent Together website became the hub for all cost-of-living support information and the place to go to find local support. We were central to Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Stronger Together Through Winter work to ensure no individual was left without support and the team worked hard to ensure that the growing network

of Welcoming Spaces in the City - places where residents could go to get keep warm, meet others, have a warm drink and get advice and support - which were all hosted by VCSE organisations, were well supported themselves and had the capacity and funding they needed to deliver their services safely and effectively.

We are still operating in an uncertain environment, ourselves affected by rising costs and short-term funding, however we have placed ourselves clearly back in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector and continued to be there to support our local VCSE sector to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering on their aims for their beneficiaries.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team, and the continuing support of funders we have been able to move forward and are well positioned to face the inevitable challenges of the future.

Achievements and Performance

How we performed against our plans:

The impact of the cost-of-living crisis following so closely behind the pandemic means that there is still less appetite for the purchase of non essential services and budgets are being tightly managed even for essential services.

What we said we would do	What we did	How successful we were
<p>Chargeable Services</p> <p>Grow our payroll bureau provision.</p> <p>Advertise more widely outside membership base.</p> <p>Develop a provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.</p> <p>Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.</p> <p>Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs for example start up package etc.</p> <p>Explore additional geographical areas.</p>	<p>We have not advertised widely, however, word of mouth and the growing presence of our project staff has meant that clients of our chargeable services have continued to grow. Our accountancy and payroll services continue to attract clients from a wide geographical area and demand for meeting rooms is continuing to grow and is slowly reverting to pre pandemic levels.</p> <p>Our chargeable income covering our business support service, creative services, café and refreshment income and income from rentals was £597,821 in the year.</p> <p>The development of packaged support offer is on hold as we have not found there to be a demand for them, however we will revisit this if we find that demand increases in the future.</p> <p>We have continued virtual or hybrid delivery for most of our training packages and now have a comprehensive annual training offer as well as holding successful volunteering and funding fayres both virtually and in person.</p> <p>We have continued to focus our efforts on Stoke-on-Trent and have not attempted to enter our wider geographic market.</p>	<p>Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely. Pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our client and ourselves by the COVID pandemic and then the cost-of-living crisis has meant it is difficult to expand our services as rapidly as originally anticipated.</p>

<p>Grants and Contracts</p> <p>Explore funding opportunities to ensure we can continue to deliver in key areas such as volunteering and VCSE developmental support.</p> <p>Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.</p> <p>Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.</p>	<p>We continued looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services. We secured additional funding in the year to expand our strategic liaison work and to continue the Community Health Champions project as well as our core support, volunteering and advocacy and voice roles. In addition, we were also able to secure specific funding for support of a Ukrainian refugee network in Staffordshire and the work of both ourselves and the local sector for the provision of Welcoming spaces in Stoke-on-Trent.</p> <p>We have started to develop projects in the areas of Inclusive Volunteering and successfully secured pilot funding for consultation work during this year.</p>	<p>We have funding in place until March 2024 for our core work and we continue to apply for appropriate funding to ensure our key service offer can continue into the future.</p>
<p>Advocacy & Voice</p> <p>Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.</p> <p>Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.</p> <p>Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.</p>	<p>Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and in establishing new Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together more closely and with statutory bodies and enabled VAST to be seen as the route to those bodies.</p> <p>Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area and to meet regularly with senior level employees of both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board.</p>	<p>We are better recognised by the VCSE sector as their representative than we have been in the recent past, however constant staff changes and interim posts across statutory bodies can make it difficult to retain relationships.</p>

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and supporting activities have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally. Sector funding is likely to reduce drastically as the country gets to grips with the aftermath of a global pandemic, the war in Ukraine and a cost-of-living crisis.

Both the Local Authority and Integrated Care System have budget constraints and will need to make large budget savings in future years, and this will inevitably flow through into funding for the VCSE sector, while organisations still have depleted reserves and are facing huge increases in their running costs. There is still however a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

There is still a desire from local statutory partners to engage with the sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from VSCOG. We are still having encouraging conversations, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long-term, benefits for the Sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, that they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE sector, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset-Based Community Development and locality working as a key strategy to develop moving forward, to achieve which requires greater co-production with the VCSE sector and the communities we serve.

The Staffordshire Integrated Care Board has been in the process of developing its strategy and priorities as well as creating a series of portfolios through which they will be delivered. This process has meant that for much of the period it remained internally focused, however as a VCSE Alliance we are ready to engage when they are and a robust Memorandum of Understanding has been developed and adopted.

These positive discussions and relationships are yet to impact upon local commissioning and this year, once again, has seen very little contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods.

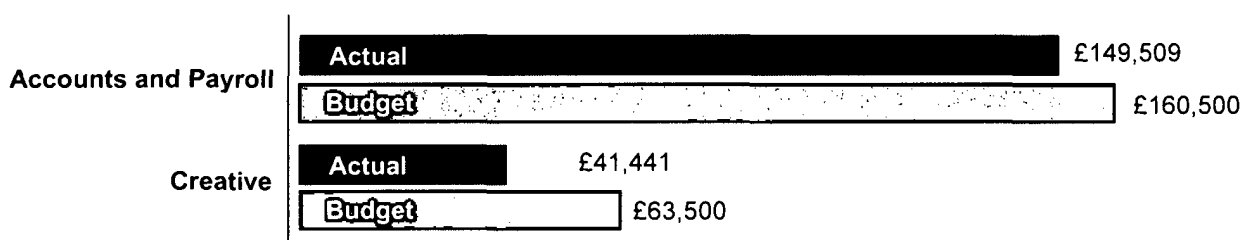
During the year we continued to struggle with occupancy at our premises at The Hub in Stafford. This was exacerbated when long-term work commenced on the Staffordshire Archives and William Salt Library next door, which restricted access to the premises and caused a lot of noise. We therefore have taken the difficult decision to close the premises in Stafford and to focus our efforts in Stoke-on-Trent.

Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

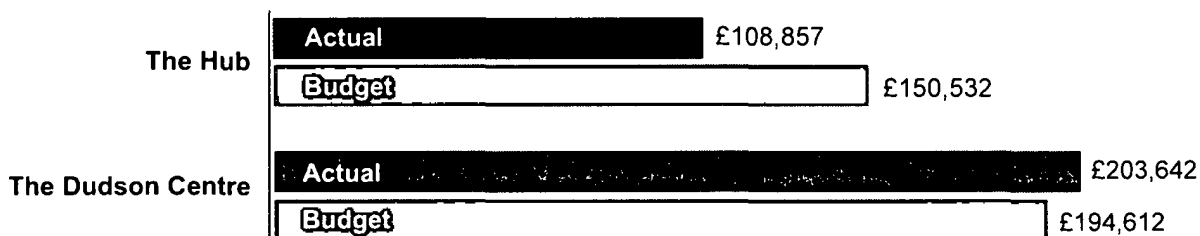
Income against budget for chargeable services:



The budgets set were challenging and we are still struggling to return to pre-pandemic levels of income. Internal work on our own website and CRM system also meant that there was less time available for client work.

Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre and The Hub:

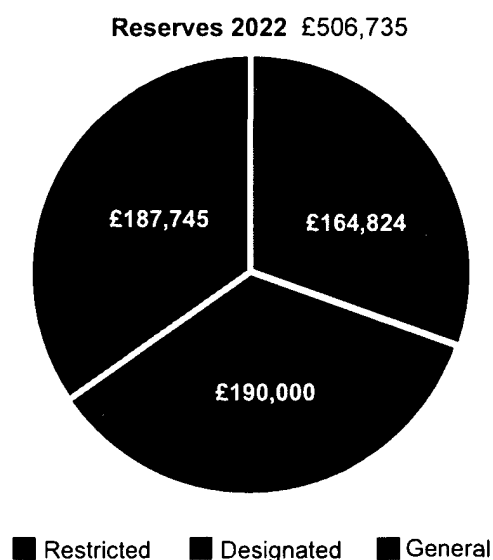
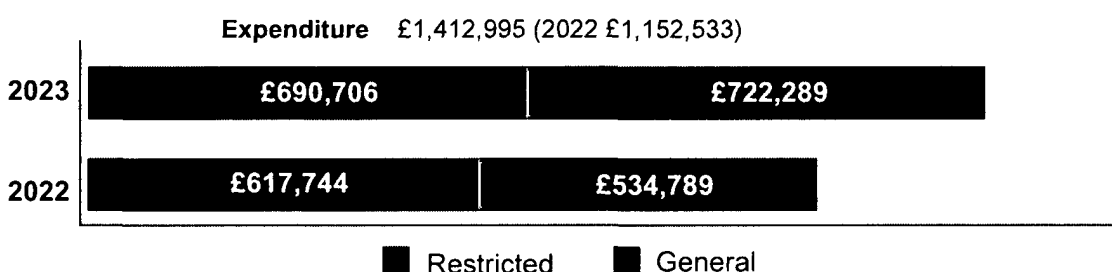
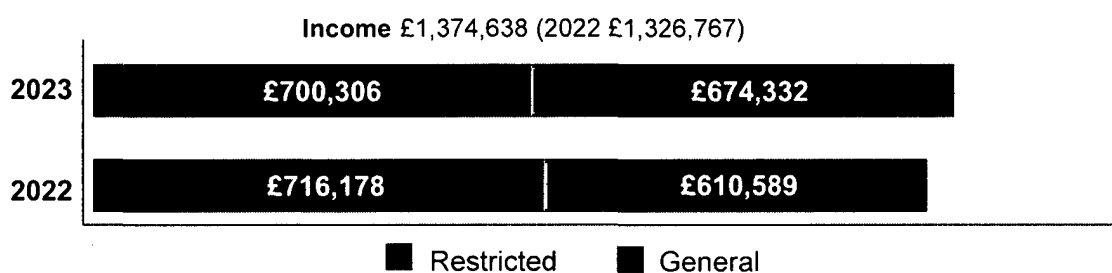


For the year to March 2023 based on income received against total possible income the Hub was 49% occupied and The Dudson Centre was 95% occupied.

Occupancy levels remained good throughout the year at The Dudson Centre, however we have been unable to increase occupancy levels at The Hub due to competition locally and the adjacent building work.

Financial Review

Overall our income has increased slightly from £1.3m to £1.4m.



Of the designated reserves £25,000 is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre, £46,117 is set aside for final expenditure in the lead up to the closure of The Hub and £50,000 is set aside for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

Financial Review

VAST's principal funding sources for 2022/23 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who fund our work with the local VCSE sector and the Community Health Champions project, Staffordshire integrated Care Board who fund our work with the Staffordshire NHSE VCSE Alliance and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2022/23 accounted for 43% of income (89% of unrestricted income).

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not for profit organisations:

- RSPCA (Royal Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals) North Staffs Branch
- Trentham Pre School
- Stoke on Trent Foodbank
- Haregate Community Centre
- ASHA
- RubyGirl UK
- NSAAA
- Disability Solutions West Midlands
- Blurton Community Hub
- St Johns Community Church
- Uttoxeter Gateway
- Packmoor Community Association
- Expert Citizens UK CIC
- Staffordshire Parish Council Association
- North Staffordshire Carers Association
- Willoughbridge Garden Trust
- Biddulph Methodist Church
- Abbey Hulton Sports and Social Club
- Green Door Hub
- Multiple Abilities Club
- Headway North Staffs
- Smallthorne Social Society
- Silvertree Cleaning
- Rachel Wilson (DP)
- Breakthru' Support Services
- Voice of Hope
- St Andrews with St Peters Pre School
- Sunflower Families Support Group
- North Staffordshire Medical Institute
- Staffordshire Sight Loss Association
- Number 11 CIC
- Sage (Staffs)
- Age UK South Staffordshire
- Newcastle Community Transport
- Affordable Food Stoke
- Werrington Young Persons Support Group
- Whitmore Parish Council
- Deafinks Staffordshire
- Kidsgrove Sports Centre
- Madeley Community Association
- Stoke Creates CIC
- Tri Services
- Uttoxeter Heritage Trust
- Silverdale Parish Council
- Keele Parish Council
- Open Door Stoke-on-Trent
- Lea Road Community Church
- Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
- Stone Community Hub
- TWOCO

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year-end financial statements.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed-term bond or within an investment portfolio.

The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.

The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £138,000 to £383,000.

Currently, we hold £130,745 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £468,378 of which £293,954 is unrestricted, and of this £121,117 is designated.

The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

Plans for Future Periods

VAST's strategy and business plan were fully reviewed in 2022.

Aims and Key objectives

To support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Key objectives

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.
- To be a first-choice provider of services and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

Activities Planned to Achieve Aims

We will achieve the above by implementing the following activities:

Chargeable Services

- Growing payroll bureau provision and actively seeking new tenants for The Dudson Centre.
- Advertising more widely outside membership base.
- Developing provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.
- Exploring the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.
- Developing a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

Grants and Contracts

- Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.
- Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.
- Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

Advocacy & Voice

- Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.
- Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.
- Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, meaning that VAST cannot continue to exist as an infrastructure organisation, however, sources of income have been diversified over recent years and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable services to mitigate this risk.

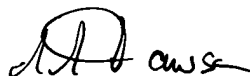
In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Monthly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to

these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

Other risks considered to be high are damage to reputation, loss of influence and loss of key staff. The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standard awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.

This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 13th December 2023 and signed on its behalf by:



Neil Dawson
Chair

Trustees' Report

(incorporating the Directors' Report)

Our Purpose

The Objects for which the Charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent, and in particular, the advancement of education, the advancement of heritage, the advancement of health, the advancement of citizenship or community development and the prevention or relief of poverty.

In furtherance of the above purposes, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

- i. promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above;
- ii. assist any body or bodies financially or otherwise;
- iii. obtain, collect and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful methods, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not);
- iv. procure and provide information;
- v. procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents;
- vi. arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes;
- vii. promote, encourage or undertake experimental work;
- viii. operate a museum and heritage centre.

Role

VAST is a social enterprise that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities and civil society. VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

¹ Voluntary and Community & Social Enterprise Sector (VCSE) - charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, social enterprises, faith organisations, community interest companies, housing associations and mutuals and co-operatives.

² The Geographical entity of Staffordshire which includes Stoke-on-Trent

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE sector to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

- Support
- Inform
- Connect
- Advocate

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following behaviours;

- Authentic
- Pro-active
- Innovative
- Responsive

All delivered with integrity and underpinned by these values...

ADVOCATE **INNOVATION** **ACCOUNTABILITY**
DYNAMIC ENABLING
SOCIAL CHAMPION **INVEST** **TRAILBLAZING** **SUPPORT**
PROMOTION **VOLUNTEERING** INSPIRATIONAL QUALITY
CARING **ETHICAL** TEAMWORK **PROFESSIONAL**
PARTNERSHIP **SUSTAINABILITY** **EXCELLENCE**
DEVELOPMENT **SOCIAL CAPITAL** EQUALITY **INFLUENCING** SOCIAL VALUE
PIONEERING



"As the Member of Parliament representing Stoke-on-Trent Central, I consistently find it immensely rewarding to engage with the dedicated team at VAST and delve into their remarkable work. Their pivotal role in facilitating access to crucial grant funding for local charities and social enterprises is truly commendable. The active involvement of the VAST team in my bi-monthly charity roundtable sessions, where their insightful advice and unwavering support benefit organisations across the city, is both noteworthy and deeply appreciated. I take genuine pride in having such a valuable service operating within our great city, making a positive and lasting impact."

Jo Gideon MP

Support

Enhancing and improving the sustainability of VAST through selling of back office services to Voluntary Organisations, Community Groups, Social Enterprises and Registered Charities in Staffordshire (VCSE) has a twofold advantage. Firstly, it generates income for VAST, thus reducing our grant dependency, secondly, and more importantly, it provides high quality services which are delivered by qualified professionals. Our services are extremely competitive compared to private sector organisations providing a similar service, with the added advantage of our staff being experts in the requirements of the sector.

In addition, through funded contracts we support and develop the local VCSE sector through advice and guidance as well as with practical support.

Accounts and Payroll

Service Summary

Our fully qualified accountancy team are experts in the charity and not-for-profit sector and offer a range of affordable services in a friendly and professional manner. During the year we have worked with 225 community groups, charities and social enterprises and we are always keen to talk to new organisations about how we can help them.

Our Services



Future aims

Increase the number of organisations we support with year-end accounts and independent examinations to ensure as many local small charities and social enterprises as possible have access to quality, accurate information to provide to beneficiaries, regulators and to support funding applications.

To work with an increased number of local not-for-profit organisations to give them access to quality training (classroom-based or virtually) and provide bespoke support.

Accounts and Payroll feedback

"We find Deb and the rest of the team always work in a very professional manner, answering any questions quickly and efficiently. Nothing is ever too much trouble, we would highly recommend them to anyone."

"Very happy with service provided. We know monthly salaries are dealt with on time and in a professional manner."

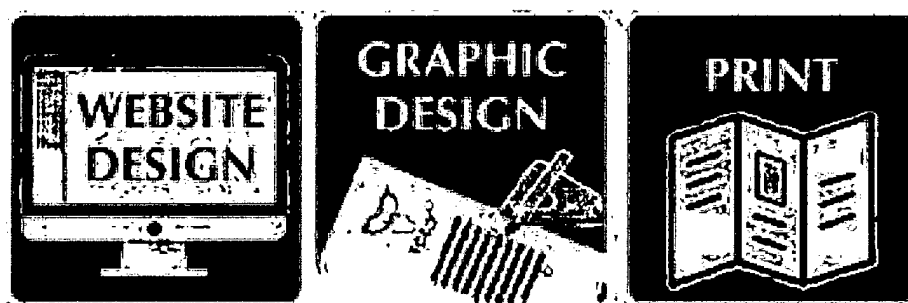
"We are more than satisfied with the service we receive. Most professional. Queries dealt with quickly."

Digital Services

Service Summary

VAST's Digital and Creative department offers a full range of services for charities and the voluntary sector. We work with many types of organisations, but our main aim is to provide high-quality creative and digital services for the voluntary sector at a price they can afford. We have worked with many third sector organisations on a variety of projects providing support from full re-brands and websites, to simple print management.

Our Services



Future aims

We will focus on expanding our client base through marketing our services to improve income generation.

Continued development of the VAST CRM.

We aim to continue to develop skills and processes to grow income generation.

We will continue to focus on new technology and digital developments.

Digital Services feedback

"GOING THE EXTRA MILE"

For well over ten years, we have taken advantage of the creative service provided by VAST which has included the production of an acclaimed community magazine, special signage for those with learning difficulties, visual designs for our Garden Therapy Lodges, monthly schedule layouts and posters to name but a few. The service has always been efficient and professional and has greatly helped us to develop and in so doing win a "Health and Wellbeing National Award" 2023 on top of the Queens Golden Jubilee Award in 2018. We would be lost without them."

Facilities



The Dudson Centre & The Hub

During the year our managed centres have continued to return to more usual levels of activity with meeting rooms occupied and The Dudson Café playing host to coffee mornings and drop-in sessions for service users of our tenants. Unfortunately, it has become apparent that The Hub is not financially sustainable long term, and the decision has been made to close the site in September 2023.

Our services

- Serviced Office space for VCSE organisations at The Dudson Centre, Stoke-on-Trent and The Hub, Stafford.
- Meeting room hire.
- Zoom Rooms functionality for hybrid meetings.
- The Dudson Café .

Future Aims

- To continue to promote office space at the Dudson Centre and maintain high occupancy levels.
- To promote the availability of meeting room hire.
- To encourage more tenants and users of the centre to hold social events and informal meetings in The Dudson Café.
- To promote external buffets in the local area.

Feedback

"Having an office in the Dudson Centre, has for us as a charity, been the best place. Not only do we have very pleasant working conditions in our first floor office supported by VAST, we also have easy access to a number of other charities in neighbouring offices, with whom we can collaborate and share information and support for our client groups. This creates for us, an ideal environment of like minded organisations working together for the good of the individual who needs support. We hope that getting together and networking regularly will become a part of the Dudson Centre culture going forward.

In addition, the all round support of having our internet service provided and supported, a reception desk staffed by Jannette and Claire, to vet visitors and provide a waiting area for them plus that sense that we are all working together to provide the best environment for our client groups is something that I value immensely.

We have been very appreciative, during the latter stages of opening up from lockdown, of the very accommodating response that we have received from VAST to getting back to work, and in particular, the opening of the café for our participants to run our Café Social Hub on site. That has transformed our service very quickly, and we, and our clients have appreciated the way that a new safe "normal" has been established for them to meet in a covid safe way on the site every week. Thank you to Jackie, Jo and of course Jon our caretaker who has gone above and beyond to help us open up safely. The provision of the Zoom Rooms facility has been a boon to us as we have clients meeting in groups but some join us virtually through Zoom and others meet face to face in the room. Thank you VAST for applying the latest technology using Zoom Rooms client software and recognising that we need to be flexible in this new world and use that technology to meet the varying needs of our clients."

Development and Governance Support

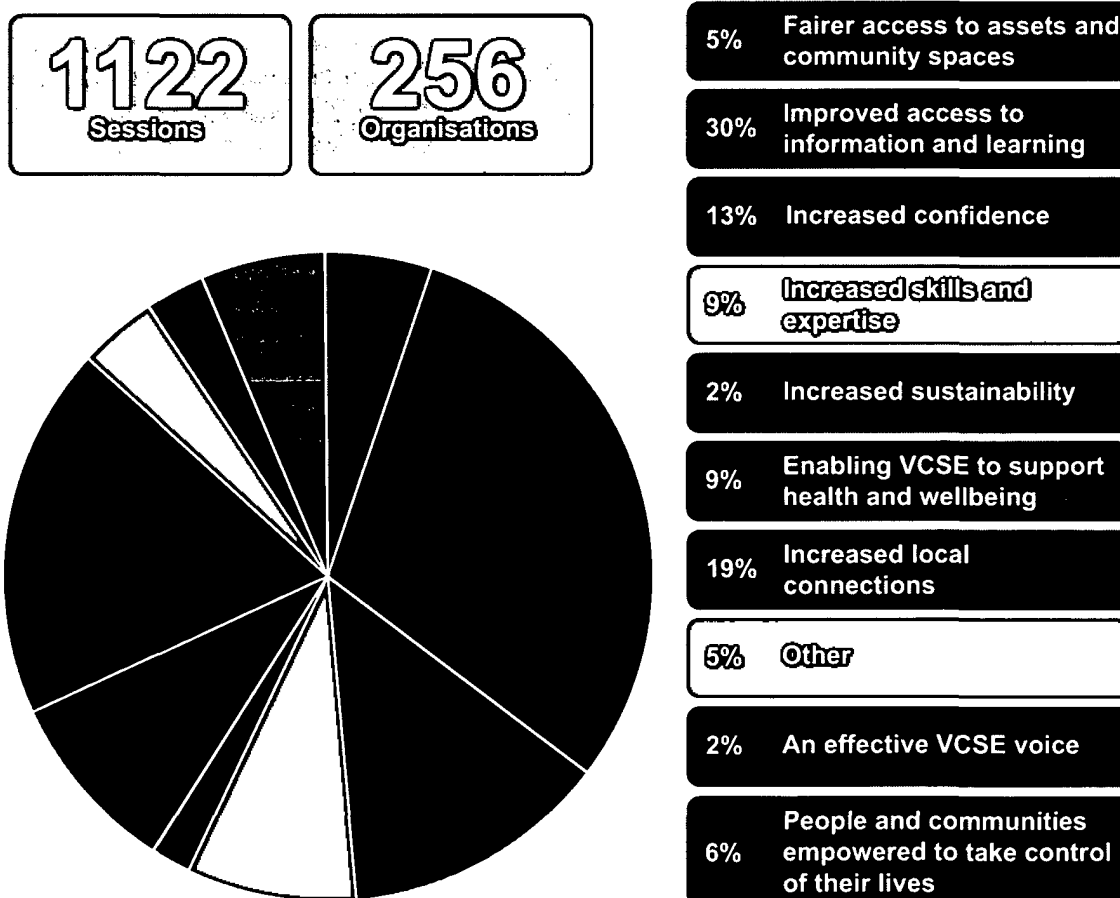
Summary, Achievements & Impact

Supporting the VCSE Sector is central to everything we do at VAST. We want to empower local organisations to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them. It is our mission to develop and promote a thriving local voluntary sector and, by linking closely with other VAST services such as volunteering, accountancy, and our digital team as well as our serviced resource centres at The Dudson Centre and The Hub, we can provide a holistic package to make this a reality.

Our support is often free of charge, thanks to funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council and The National Lottery Community Fund, and, where we do need to charge, we keep this as affordable as possible to ensure it is fully accessible to those who need it.

During the year we have reviewed and relaunched a comprehensive training offer and also focused on developing our range of networks and forums to ensure we provide holistic support across our membership.

During 2022/23 we have supported:



Case Study

VAST has the privilege of working alongside local organisations supporting them as they grow and develop. One example of this was some recent work supporting an organisation with business planning and funding.

Their Awards for All grant was due to end shortly and they approached us looking for support around the management of the organisation including securing funding to pay for dedicated management staff.

VAST's teams were able to support them to develop a strong and well thought out funding application having explored the activities and services they would like to accomplish in the short, medium and long term, the more strategic role they now need to have capacity to undertake, and their organisational structure and the roles and responsibilities of staff and volunteers within the team to deliver these.

Our role is to support organisations in their thinking. In this instance we enabled them to think differently about their organisational needs and secure the right funding to take their organisation to the next level and better support their community.

The development of an organisation and the outcomes of business planning can take many months to prove fruitful, but the advice and support provided along the way, alongside the availability of VAST's support staff at the end of an email or phone line, is very much appreciated.



The VAST Bursary Fund

THE
Bursary
A FUND BROUGHT
TO YOU BY VAST 

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Since its inception in 2015, the VAST Bursary Fund has awarded more than £75,000 to more than 160 voluntary sector organisations throughout Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, an average of almost £10,000 per year. The fund awards grants of up to £500 towards eligible VAST business services.

During the period from April 2022 and March 2023 a total of 28 applications were received and subsequently awarded by the panel. The total awarded for this period was £14,000. Ten applications were for accountancy services and the remaining for website design.



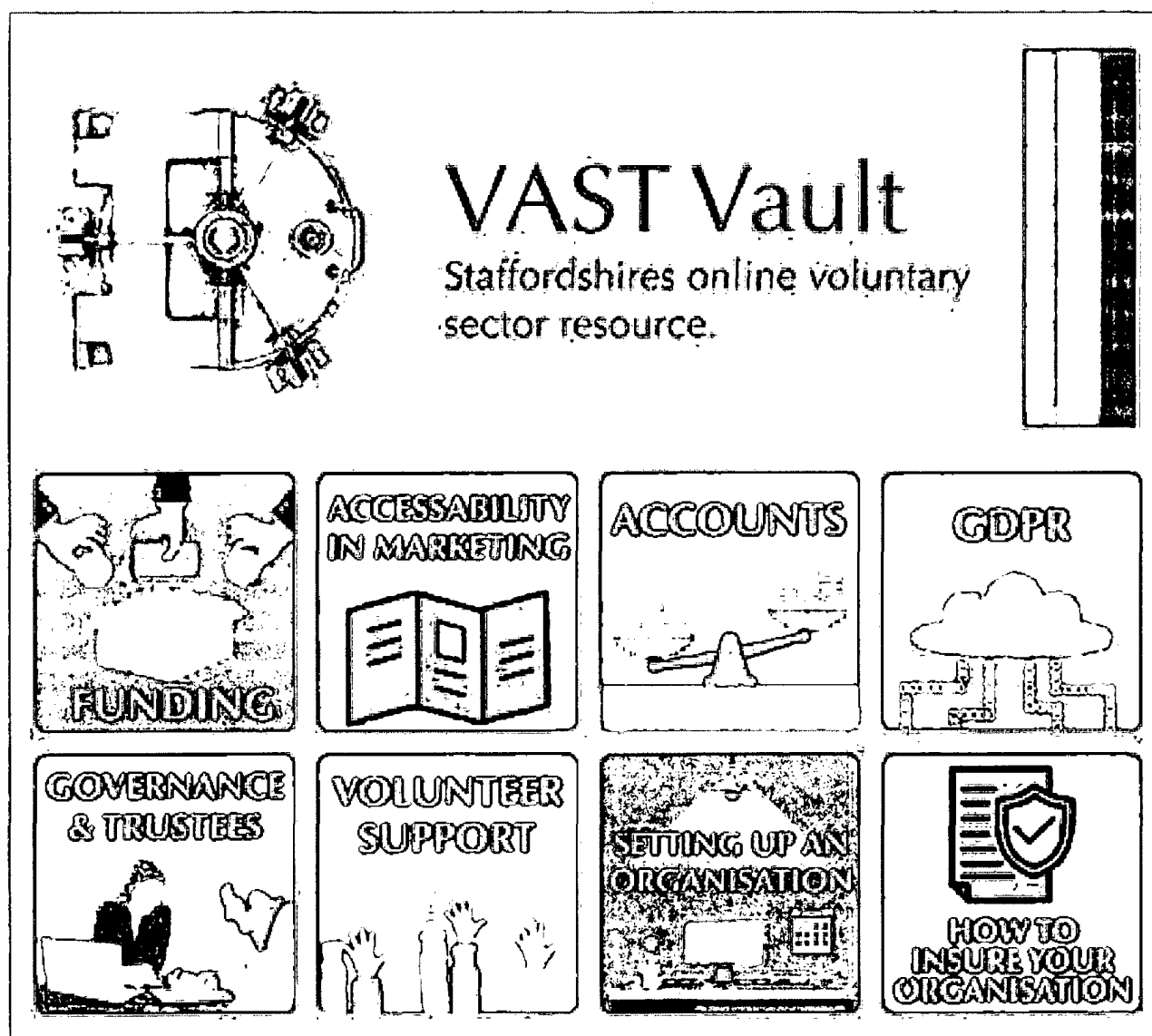
The VAST Vault

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The VAST Vault is an online resource for Staffordshire's VCSE sector. The Vault is a source of information and advice on all aspects of running a VCSE organisation and working with local communities. Containing links to trusted, reliable sources of information and advice, it is a one-stop-shop to get accurate advice.

Future Developments

The Vault continues to be updated to add new links as they become available to make sure VCSE organisations can always have the most current information and guidance at their fingertips.



Door2Door Transport



Summary, Achievements & Impact

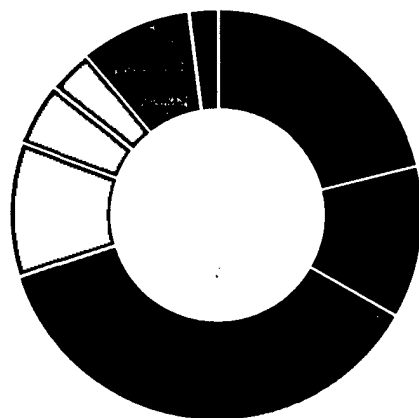
From being an essential service for many as we emerged from the coronavirus pandemic, Door2Door transport has continued to rebuild itself to once again be a fully encompassing service.

Many of the service users would not be able to leave the house without the support of the service and it is crucial to reducing loneliness and isolation for service users and volunteer drivers alike, with real bonds and friendships formed. The main challenge during the year was to recruit enough drivers to fulfil the demand for journeys as a number of our drivers had retired from volunteer driving.

The Community Foundation for Staffordshire provided funding for 12 months to ensure the service could continue to provide it's essential support throughout this period, and we carried out a stakeholder survey with both users of the service and those who referred people to it to help us shape a partnership bid, alongside Newcastle Community Transport, to The National Lottery Community Fund for longer term funding.

Future Developments

Our Lottery Funded partnership with Newcastle Community Transport commences in April 2023 and we will be working closely with them to develop and align the two services to ensure the best possible transport solution for vulnerable residents in Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-Under-Lyme.



- Hospital Appointments
- Other Medical
- Social Groups and Activities
- Shopping / Banking / Hairdressing
- Day Centres
- Dentist
- GP Practices
- Visiting



Door2Door Feedback

I had a traumatic time at the hospital and had to deal with it alone as I have no family. I struggled to attend the first hospital appointment via taxi and was rushed and not helped at all and likewise on the return journey. I have always been a confident person but this made me feel vulnerable. When I was referred to Door2Door that changed, I felt someone cared and was there to support me. All the drivers and office staff I have had contact with have been friendly and helpful. I feel Door2Door fills an essential gap for people who don't have family or friends to step in and help.

Door2Door client

Donate IT

Donate IT

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Life is becoming increasingly digital and many services need to be accessed online. Whether it's for home learning, banking, shopping, applying for jobs or looking after your health, most of us need to own a digital device. The digital world has also become increasingly important in the fight against loneliness and isolation, but there are still many people in our community that do not have digital access.

To combat this VAST teamed up with The Community Foundation for Staffordshire, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and local IT partners, to set up a digital equipment recycling scheme so we can ensure that the most vulnerable members of our community in Stoke-on-Trent can get connected.

During the year we have received 123 donated pieces of equipment including laptops, desktop computers, keyboards, mice and monitors. We have allocated 16 sets of equipment to local community groups and a further 13 sets to individuals in need in our communities.

Future Developments

In a world which is becoming ever more digital we will continue to source unwanted digital equipment to recondition and pass on to those most at risk from becoming disadvantaged due to digital exclusion.

Case Study

Birches Head Get Growing received a donation of IT equipment that enabled the group to help individuals in their local community access the internet, apply for jobs, help write C.Vs and support with form-filling and accessing information.

Based at the Bridge Centre in Birches Head, the group was originally created to provide food for the local community. As it has grown, they have become heavily reliant on volunteers and donations to run their Potter and Natter, and Swap Shop sessions. All the activities and sessions they run are free of charge at the point of use for local people, with their "kindness is our currency" motto at the heart of everything they do. In a bid to improve the sessions, Get Growing hope to support more people by creating a reading corner and a learning zone, complete with the right equipment for getting connected and accessing online services.

The donated laptops enabled the group to make some important connections with Stoke Reads and Read Easy to help support residents with developing and improving literacy skills. Another enormous benefit to receiving these computers is that Get Growing can improve their administration processes and now they can share and promote their services too by managing marketing platforms, creating their logo, and designing leaflets to distribute within the local community. All their activities are free and as accessible as possible, so they hope to extend their support to the wider community through this advertising avenue.

Feedback from Birches Head Get Growing: *"The laptops have enabled us to design our logo for our community group and to publicise events for the benefit of the whole community," said Paula Rowcliffe from Birches Head Get Growing.*

"We also use the laptops to search for online courses and information for individuals as well as ourselves. It's so much easier to view on a larger screen as I only had a mobile phone."

Discover Digital



Summary, Achievements & Impact

Discover Digital was a partnership of organisations funded through the UK Community Renewal Fund. The project was set up to help people in Stoke-on-Trent to discover the things they need if they want to use digital and online services and to combat digital exclusion. We want to make sure that everyone can find and use the digital services they need so the project offered grant funding both to community-based organisations who had a great idea to combat digital exclusion, and also to individuals who needed digital equipment. This was complemented by bespoke community-based training and underpinned by community consultation and enquiry to ensure we captured the relevant evidence to develop future projects and to lobby for real change. The project even opened a pop-up shop in the heart of The Potteries Shopping Centre to deliver support to residents where they were and where they felt comfortable.

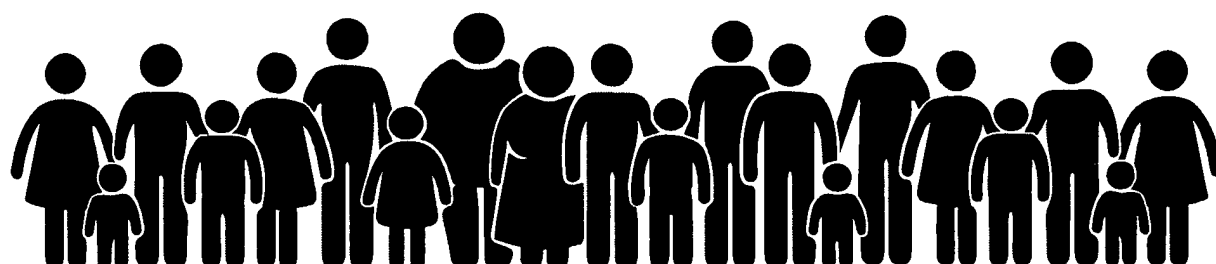
Resources developed during the project, findings of community consultation and enquiry work and the formal evaluation report on the project are all available on the Discover Digital website discover-digital.org.uk

Future Developments

The Discover Digital project ended in December 2022, when Community Renewal Funding ceased. The partnership has since developed a continuation proposal which has been submitted to Stoke-on-Trent City Council as part of their call for projects for The UK Shared Prosperity Fund.



A COLLABORATION OF 25 VCSE ORGANISATIONS
WORKING WITH 1218 INDIVIDUALS



Inform

To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

Marketing and Communication

Service Summary

Under the Creative Services banner, the main marketing objective is to promote the services we offer, increase our customer base and generate income. To support and help the sector to grow and thrive, we share interesting and relevant information and resources, sector news and important updates to the local voluntary sector.

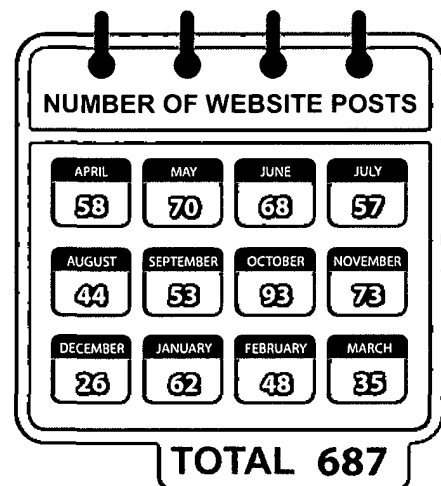
VAST use multiple social media, email and website communication channels for the different projects.



1.4k  followers

2.9k  Followers

 46 Emails set to an average of 1643 subscribers



800  followers

900  Followers

 24 Email newsletters sent



800  followers

200  Followers



200  followers

300  Followers

 53 Email newsletters sent



1000  followers

Community Health Champions



Summary, Achievements & Impact

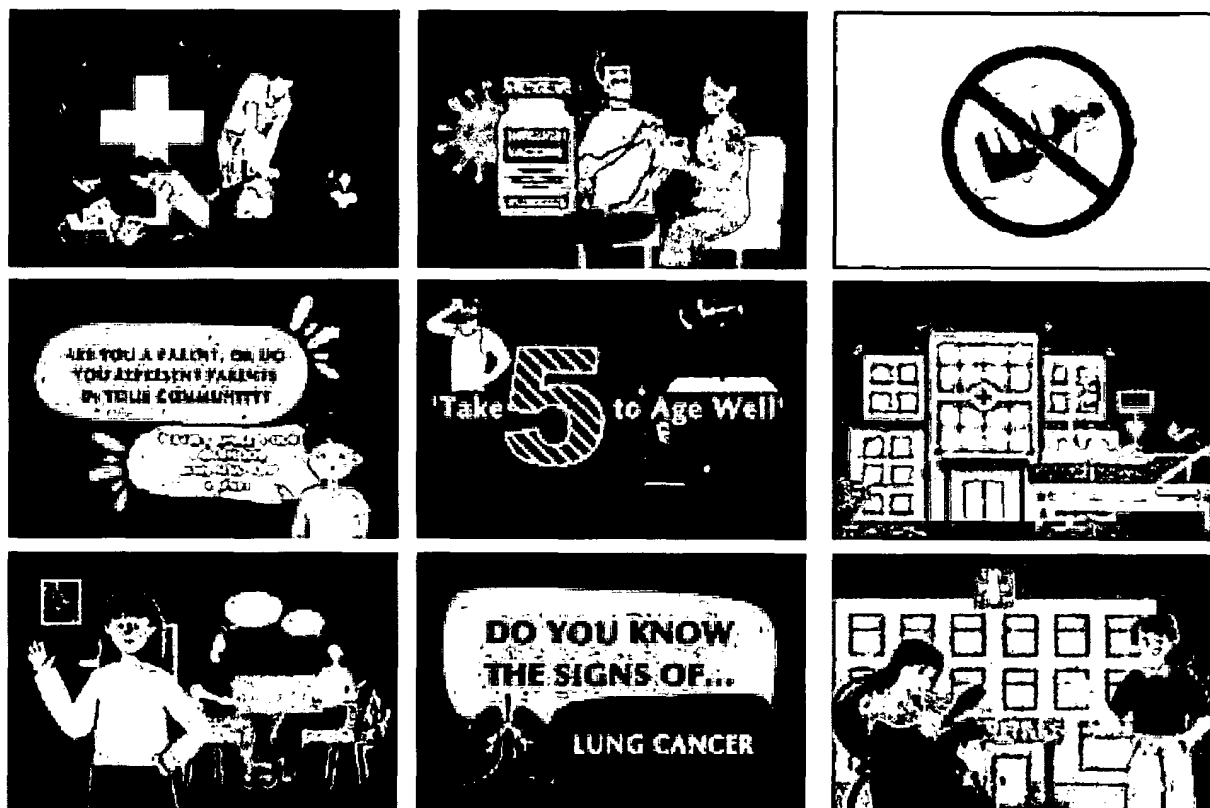
Community Health Champions are local volunteers who help improve the health and wellbeing of people in Stoke-on-Trent. They are people central to, and embedded in, their communities. People who are trusted and listened to by their peers.

The project, funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council, aims to help people better understand health issues and to share clear and accurate health information in their communities in a way that resonates with local people.

We take important health and wellbeing information from national and local sources and develop resources to ensure our network of Community Health Champions are kept well informed. Through regular newsletters, training opportunities, one-to-one support and networking opportunities, Champions are able to get the information they need and importantly, they also provide feedback about what the health and wellbeing issues are in their community.

In addition, the project has provided grant funding to grassroots organisations who are embedded in local communities to enable them to engage in the project and support messaging in their communities.

199 Community Health Champions and
 75 Organisations involved in the network



The project supports health practitioners across the local system to engage local communities that they otherwise find hard to reach. For example in February we supported women from the Sudanese Community to meet with health colleagues, with the support of an interpreter, to discuss the importance of breast care.

We facilitated the session in a community setting where they felt comfortable and familiar and provided practical resources including a projector and translated materials to enable the best engagement possible in the session.

We had the opportunity to present the Stoke-on-Trent Community Health Champions model at the Health Education England event, 'How can we bring health services closer to underserved communities?' Examples of different approaches across the region were presented enabling us to share the Community Health Champions project as an example of best practice developed in Stoke-on-Trent.

Future Developments

We are currently exploring alternative funding sources to secure the future of the work beyond March 2024.

Community Health Champions in Action

This year we have been thrilled to work with local creative companies to develop some bespoke resources for the project. TPD Digital produced film content talking with some of our Champions as well as local stakeholders about their role in the project. Carse & Waterman Productions supported us to develop a series of animations which include a range of characters living on the affectionately named Stokie Street. These characters chat about various health and wellbeing topics such as vaccines and boosters, accessing healthcare, mental health and keeping active & enjoying local green spaces. The animations have a very different feel to NHS campaigns on these topics as they are voiced by our champions but they link to important local and national information and resources to support people to manage their health and wellbeing.

Stokie Street

In partnership with Carse & Waterman Productions, Community Health Champions created a series of Stoke-on-Trent based health and wellbeing animations. These were centred around a number of themes including immunisations, accessing healthcare and the benefits of fresh air and exercise.



The Dudson Museum

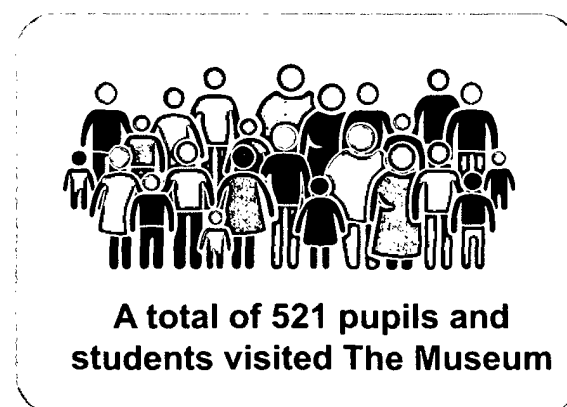
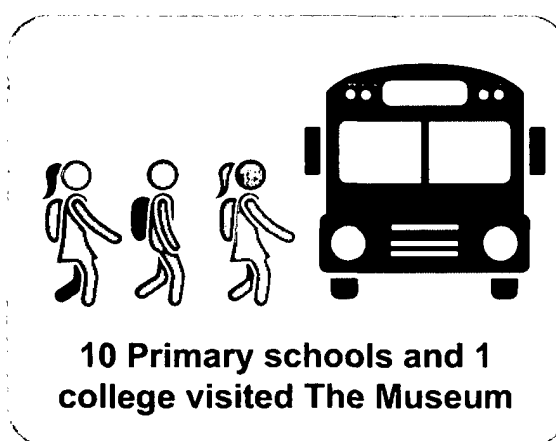
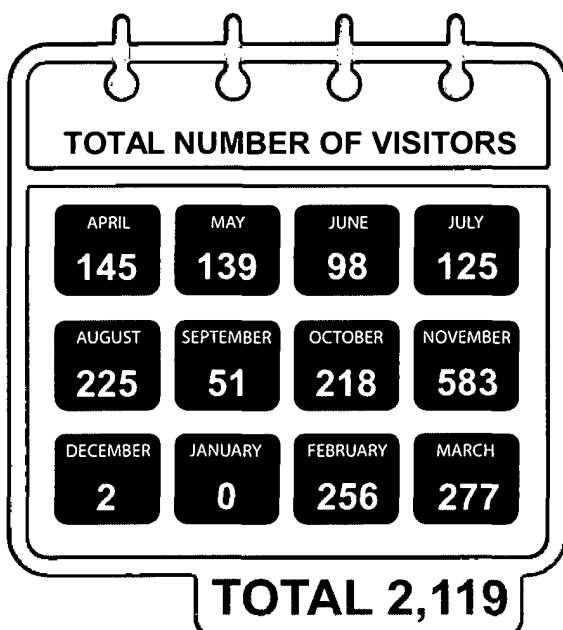


Summary, Achievements & Impact

We have continued to develop the Museum's offer throughout the year. We secured funding from The Heritage Lottery to deliver activities with local schools. Commencing in September 2022, this work attracted many schools who had not visited before.

We were delighted to achieve eligibility to work towards becoming an accredited museum during this year and continue to attract a diverse range of visitors with our holiday activities for children frequently sold out.

We were grateful to receive funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council's Community Investment Fund for new cabinets. The Museum was closed in December and January 2022 while these were fitted and the museum displays were updated.



Future Aims

- Continue to promote and grow the number of school visits.
- Develop activities and events for wider age groups.
- Expand displays into the wider Dudson Centre to create a heritage centre experience.

Connect

Our meeting spaces, events and networks enable VCSE organisations to work together and collaborate amongst themselves and with the wider local community.

VAST Volunteering

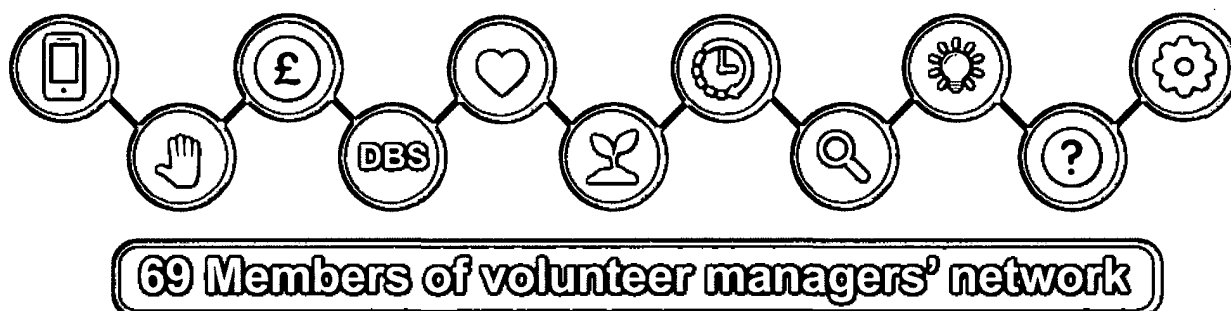
Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST is passionate about volunteering and strongly believe that it can improve health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference to local communities. Through our volunteer bureau we help people find volunteering roles local to them that ideally match their skills and interests. Our popular online volunteer noticeboard advertises opportunities in the local VCSE sector for those who just want to browse for themselves and we produce a regular newsletter showcasing the opportunities available or our knowledgeable and supportive staff will work with people to ensure they find the right opportunity and will even attend with them to give them the confidence to give it a go.

We also support VCSE organisations who want to recruit volunteers to ensure they have the right policies and procedures in place and can provide a safe and supportive environment for their volunteers.

Our volunteer management training remains popular and we are continuing to grow our volunteer managers network which meets regularly and gives people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide mutual support. We have also run volunteer fayres, both virtually and online, to help local organisations recruit the volunteers they need to deliver their services.

At the end of the year we were lucky enough to secure funding through the department for Culture, Media and Sport's Know Your Neighbourhood funding to carry out consultation work around barriers to volunteering and we will be using the evidence of this to develop future inclusive volunteering projects.



Future Developments

Going forward we are looking to grow the reach of our volunteering opportunities and are making links with local schools to ensure that volunteering opportunities are available to young people. We will also be developing inclusive volunteering projects to ensure that barriers to volunteering are broken down both for organisations utilising volunteers and individuals who could benefit from volunteering opportunities.



VAST Volunteering Case Study

Jodie knew she wanted to volunteer as she had just moved into the area and wasn't working. She had tried to volunteer elsewhere but was struggling to get through the application process.

Jodie was told about VAST from Stoke Recovery Service, and she popped in to visit Sian at The Dudson Centre.

Jodie and Sian discussed her background, previous experience and, most importantly – what she would like to do. Various options were discussed, and Jodie knew she wanted to do something either outdoors or with older people. She definitely did not want to be stuck behind a desk, which was her worst nightmare! Father Hudson's Allotment Project seemed like a perfect fit, so Jodie applied there. Jodie says the whole process was simple to sign up for, and Sian was able to help her complete the application form.



Within two weeks, Jodie started at the allotment and got stuck straight in, getting her hands dirty! Sian visited Jodie early on at the allotment, and recently visited again and the difference is just incredible. Jodie says she has learnt so many skills and met a lot of different people. Her favourite part of being at the allotment has been seeing the difference each day. Jodie's volunteering at the allotment is fully flexible, allowing her the freedom to pick exactly when she volunteers.

As Jodie settled into the allotment and learnt more about what happens with the produce grown in the allotment, she found out about the Luncheon Club. Jodie was encouraged to visit the Luncheon Club, and the rest is history! Jodie now helps out every Monday, and really enjoys the social, yet relaxed, atmosphere and feels part of the team there.

Jodie loves being able to give back to her community in two different ways and says "it doesn't matter what mood you're in, you can't help but smile when you're there. My anxiety disappears when I walk through the door."

Jodie has advice for anyone considering volunteering; "People should volunteer because even if you can only spare 1-2 hours a week, why not spend them helping others? When you volunteer, you can literally do anything."

Totally Stoked

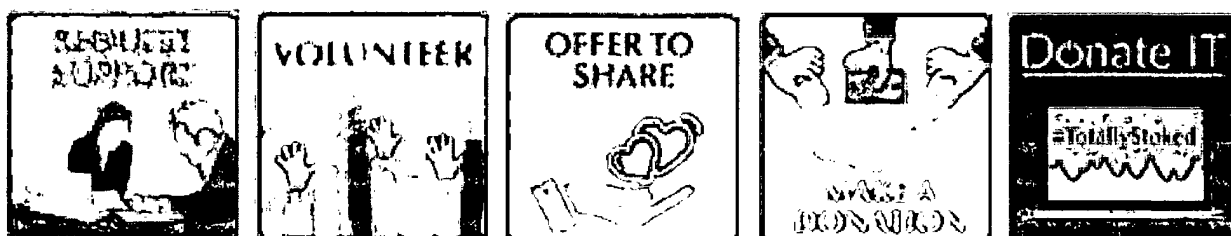
**TOTALLY
STOKED**

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Totally Stoked is Stoke-on-Trent's answer to developing the VCSE sector in the most sustainable way. We believe everyone has something to give, and by sharing our resources we can add value to the wealth of activity already under way in our local communities, strengthening and enabling local organisations and community groups.

Totally Stoked encourages people and organisations to share their time, skills and know-how as well as equipment and resources to support VCSE organisations in the city and its surrounding areas.

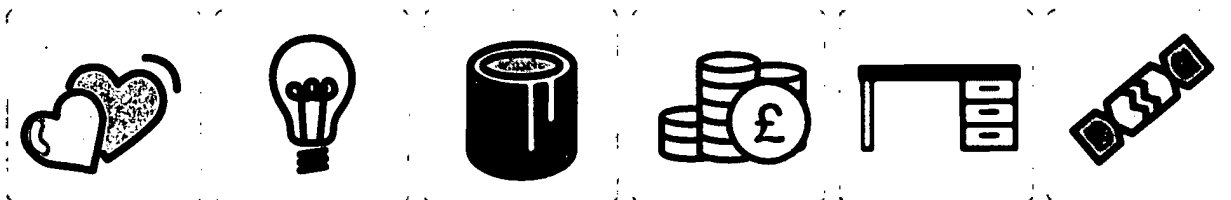
Totally Stoked also provides a link to support for our extensive VCSE sector, to empower them to deliver their services in the best possible way and to ensure vital services are there for the communities that need them.



Thanks to funding from The National Lottery Community Fund we are able to work with local communities in Stoke-on-Trent, Newcastle-under-Lyme and Staffordshire Moorlands, both geographical and communities of interest, to identify gaps in VCSE provision and to help them fill those gaps. Through community reference panels we work intensively to understand what is most important to them and what they would like to see develop, and our project officers can then support them to form the community groups and organisations that will help deliver what they need. Our share networks are the ideal space for people to come together and share both practical resources and know-how and information, as well as to build networks and friendships.

Totally Stoked also helps local businesses to give something back to their communities through brokering Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Employer Supported Volunteering (ESV) opportunities. It doesn't matter who makes the approach, it could be a VCSE organisation with a need to get something done or a local company that wants a volunteering project for their staff, we are well placed to find the answer and create the links to get the job done.

If people prefer to donate money, we have linked with the Community Foundation for Staffordshire to promote their We Love Stoke Fund to make sure donations can remain local.



**Facilitated the exchange of over £66,000 in resources,
from office furniture to Christmas crackers**

Feedback

"On behalf of Voice of Hope, we want to say thank you for your support this year, when we have queries with regards the day to day running of the charity, as this helps us to achieve as much as we can together in combatting and raising awareness for Modern Slavery and County Lines"

Mel & Ann.

Case Study

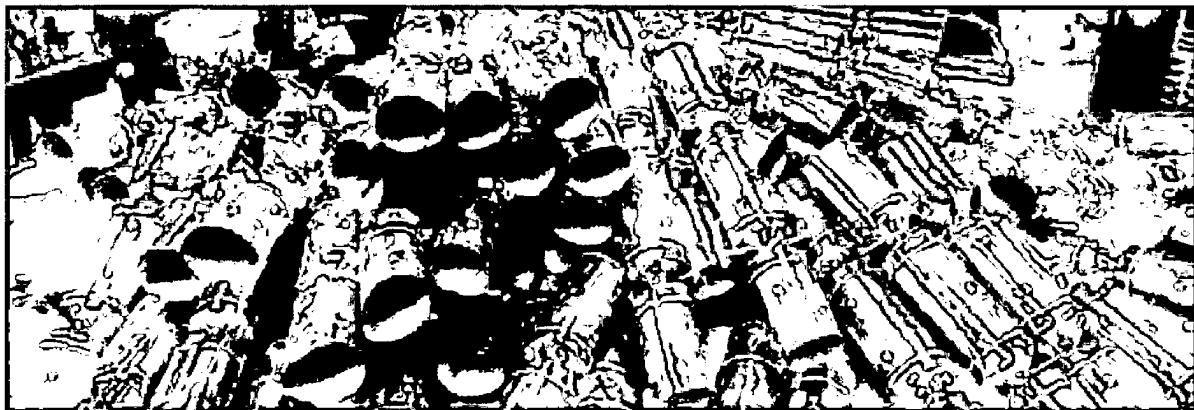
Some cracking news! Totally Stoked were able to donate an incredible 825 crackers thanks to a kind donation from The Three Crowns Pub in Stone.

The 825 crackers were split between 13 different community organisations across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire, ranging from disability support groups, hospices, supported accommodation schemes, children's and maternal mental health support and many others.

The Christmas crackers were used in a variety of different ways including to compliment free Christmas meals provided in local communities, at Christmas parties to celebrate volunteers or clients and also within care packages to add a smile to people's face during winter.

Concrete used their 150 crackers when providing a warm Christmas meal to their tenants over the festive period. The festive period can be a traumatic and triggering time for many of their customers, most of whom would not have had access to a warm Christmas meal. They also provided their customers with a winter warm essentials pack, along with additional support over the festive period.

The Douglas Macmillan Hospice used their 50 crackers within their children's ward for any families visiting over the festive period, and the Stoke-on-Trent Helping Ukrainians Group used them when provided a free Christmas meal for their clients and children.



Stoke-on-Trent Together

**#STOKEONTRENT
TOGETHER**

Summary, Achievements & Impact

Stoke-on-Trent Together has come a long way since it was established at the start of the COVID pandemic. It has developed into a strategic partnership between VAST and Stoke-on-Trent City Council that will ensure that the statutory and VCSE sectors work together for the best outcomes for our communities. Together we have responded to critical incidents being declared across health and social care settings and in our hospital, as well as providing support and co-ordination for the VCSE organisations supporting, first Afghan and then Ukrainian, refugees arriving in the city, as well as supporting VCSE organisations as they responded to the cost-of-living crisis. From providing grants and guides to Welcoming Spaces for attending strategic response meetings with the City Council, we were there to ensure the best outcomes for communities in our city.

Future Developments

Whatever the emergency or crisis faced, Stoke-on-Trent Together will ensure that we pull together to ensure that the VCSE sector can support the solution.

Stoke-on-Trent Together Case Study

VAST Project Officer Kez met with The Hub Fenton in December, to discuss the possibility of the Hub opening as a Welcoming Space.

To help them get set up, Kez provided a list of potential funding opportunities, and visited the Hub to provide some training to their volunteers on using VAST's Community Directory and the Stoke-on-Trent Together site to signpost, to make sure the team were prepared for any energy or finance based questions. Kez also sent some capital funding options, as the Hub were looking to install some energy-saving measures in their building.

Carole expressed that she wanted to have visitors from other organisations at the Welcoming Space to provide additional services, so VAST were able to use connections with the "Mo the Bus" vaccination team to arrange a vaccine clinic at the Hub on 1st March 2023.

Since signing up as a Welcoming Space, the Hub have also been given access to additional activities and resources - they will be used as a centre for Together Active/Nuffield Health to complete some gentle activity sessions and distribute resistance band activity packs.

The Hub Fenton's welcoming space is a warm, friendly, and welcoming environment, with activities from arts and crafts through to digital skills support from volunteers, and has been hugely beneficial to attendees - supporting people with their finances, reducing isolation, and providing a safe space to Fenton residents.

Carole said:

"The attendance at our Welcome Place increased by 50% in one week. We are delighted that people are coming along and enjoying a range of activities. Our first week had a focus on flower making using china clay. The second week saw some people choosing to develop their IT skills. For those who prefer to people watch, it's a warm, no pressure space with tea and coffee for everyone. The support from VAST staff is invaluable for sharing ideas and information... When Kez says she'll do something, she does it"

Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory

STOKE-ON-TRENT COMMUNITY DIRECTORY

Summary, Achievements & Impact

The Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory is an online platform which offers easy access to information about VCSE sector services available to people in the city. The Directory was originally built by VAST Services (1920) in 2019 and has been managed by VAST since its launch. This year it was redeveloped and redesigned to truly be a whole age directory of the VCSE services available to local communities with more streamlined search and navigation functions.

It currently has almost 500 listings, for services from counselling and training services to sporting activities and social groups, and helps people find the services they need to improve their health and wellbeing and avoid social isolation. Funded by Stoke-on-Trent City Council we want to continue to grow this valuable resource so that everyone can easily access VCSE services.

Future Developments

To date the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory has been promoted through VAST channels and networks to build up the content. We will be working with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and partners to arrange a public launch to raise the profile of this valuable resource for people across the city.



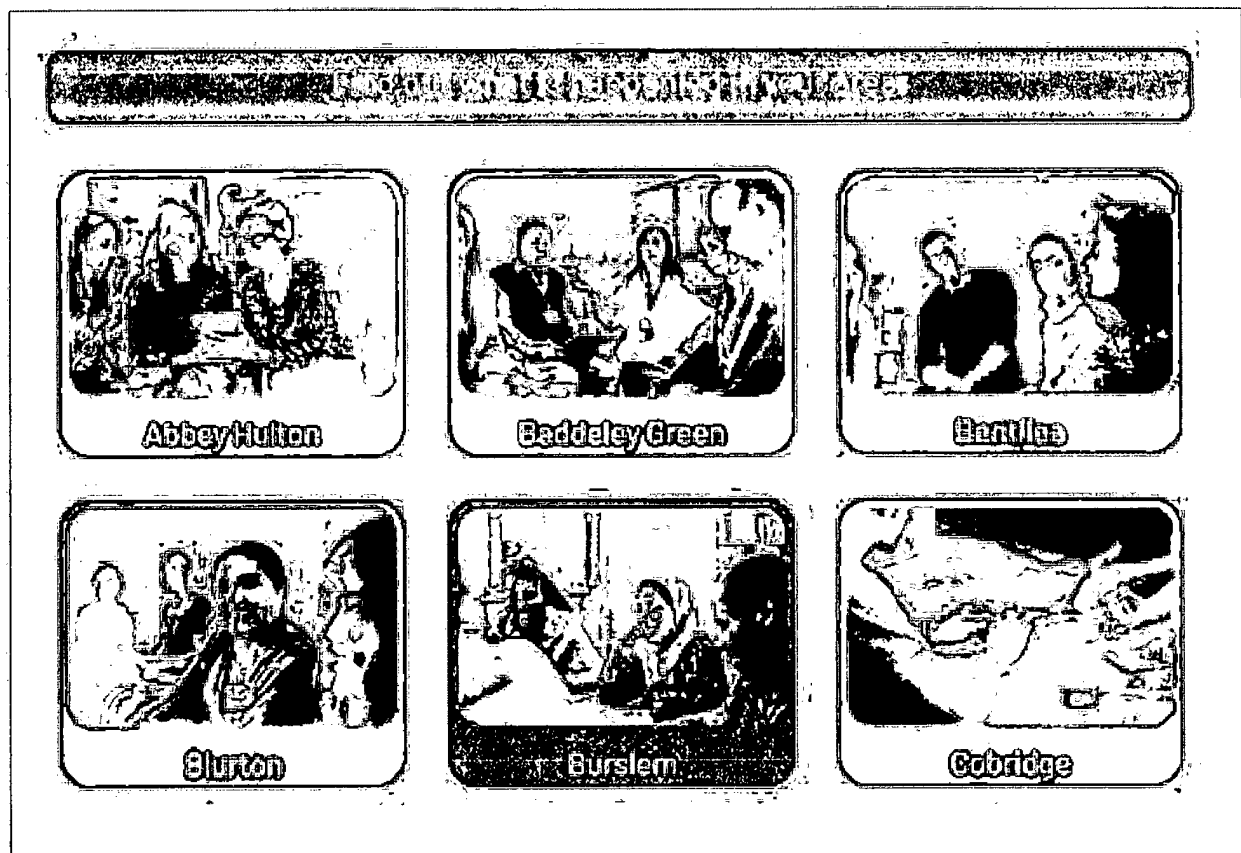
Communities Together

Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST are proud to support the Communities Together programme in Stoke-on-Trent. Communities Together is a programme being delivered in Stoke-on-Trent as part of the National Community Led Support programme. In the city this is led by Stoke-on-Trent City Council and is focussed on delivering social care services that people need in their local community. Utilising cross-sector innovation teams to identify local need and the best locations for provision, the programme has so far developed community lounges in Burslem, Blurton and Bentilee, Baddeley Green, Meir, Fegg Hayes, Abbey Hulton and Hanley where local residents can access the support and advice they need at the same time as taking part in community activities to combat loneliness and isolation. Services available include mental health support, debt and benefit advice, and support with housing related issues and are tailored to the needs of the specific community, allowing professionals to work together to provide a one-stop solution for individuals.

Future Developments

The programme has already identified many other areas of the city where community lounges can be rolled out to ensure that relevant services can be delivered in the best way for residents in their communities.



Advocate

Our strategic presence and national connections allow us to be a voice for the grassroots VCSE community who could otherwise go unheard.

VAST Strategic Representation and Liaison



Summary, Achievements & Impact

VAST is an advocate for the VCSE sector and facilitates the strategic engagement of the sector with a range of statutory partners. The aim of this engagement between the VCSE sector and statutory bodies is to promote mutual understanding between the two sectors and enable them to work better together in partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population. VAST's strategic liaison role, funded by Staffordshire Integrated Care system (formerly Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Clinical Commissioning Groups) and Stoke-on-Trent City Council, acts as a channel to achieve this.

We know that the VCSE sector is well placed to play an active role in improving health and wellbeing for our local population, so we amplify the voice of the sector and people with lived experience giving a stronger voice at a timely point to ensure that local VCSE organisations can contribute to discussion and influence decisions.

We know that the VCSE sector is best placed to understand it's local community and so can help deliver the best quality services for local people. We support a two-way flow of information between VCSE sector organisations and strategic partners and establish positive working relationships with stakeholders. Cross sector working has never been more needed to support our communities. We act at this strategic interface, establishing the links between workstreams and representing the VCSE sector at strategic meetings. We support the VCSE sector to understand and respond to the challenges and strategic priorities of our statutory partners. By working together we achieve more than we can individually. These links enable better partnership and collaboration to best serve the local population and coproduce solutions to improve health and wellbeing in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

As the Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System has emerged and developed VAST has been instrumental, alongside Support Staffordshire, in developing the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance. This provides a vital engagement mechanism to enable cross-sector working which has been formalised through a Memorandum of Understanding between the VCSE sector alliance and the Integrated Care System.

Through our strategic liaison function we share information and act as a communication link. We keep the local VCSE sector informed on the local landscape and national policy developments that may impact on commissioning, tendering and contracts, or otherwise have a relevance to their organisation.

We remain active members of the Voluntary Sector Emergencies Partnership (VCSEP) allowing us to feed in issues, concerns and intelligence as well as sharing best practice and expertise at both a local and a national level. We have also continued our links with NAVCA to ensure we are linked in on national issues that matter to the sector.

Future Developments

We will continue to ensure that we can provide advocacy and voice for the VCSE sector with statutory bodies and provide structures through which partnership and collaborative working can be facilitated.

Networks and Forums

Summary, Achievements & Impact

We know that creating opportunities for our members to come together around common issues or themes is a crucial part of our role. We continue to build on the success of established forums whilst developing new networks based on the needs identified by our members.

VSCOG

Recognising that it can be lonely at the top the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) provides a network for VCSE sector leaders in Stoke-on-Trent. Meetings unapologetically have no formal agenda instead providing a relaxed atmosphere, a fantastic opportunity to network, build relationships, and share challenges and successes with peers.

VSCOG members have common aims, which encompass:

- Promoting the role and value of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector;
- Securing the local VCSE sector's sustainability and prosperity;
- Improving the quality of life for all through the VCSE sector;
- Maximising the potential of the VCSE sector;
- Helping the local public sector to maximise efficiency.

VAST facilitates the VSCOG network and has continued to shape the quarterly meetings to provide a relevant and supportive space for its members.

Finance Forum

Based on the feedback from VSCOG members who valued the opportunity to meet with peers and wanted a similar opportunity for their finance leads, and modelled on our successful Volunteer Managers Network, VAST launched a Finance Forum in November 2022.

The Finance Forum provides an opportunity for those in a finance role within the voluntary sector in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire to share ideas and best practice, network, and provide mutual support. We have created a friendly and informal peer network for anyone whose role includes responsibility for any finance functions within their organisation.

The Finance Forum aims to:

- Explore new or challenging charity finance issues,
- Share tips, resources, and best practice, and
- Provide an effective peer support network for those in a finance role.

The Finance Forum achieves these aims through a combination of workshops, presentations, activities, and discussions led by members to share collective knowledge, experience, and skills and is led by the membership to identify key topics.

The Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Healthy Communities Forum

Health systems are in a period of transition with new Integrated Care Boards (ICB) established across the country from 1 July 2022. This is an ideal opportunity for the VCSE sector to strengthen its links to health systems and to ensure that there is a way for them to be involved in and influence decision making across the system.

As part of the development of the VCSE Healthy Communities Alliance work, we have led the development of the Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire Healthy Communities Forum. This is one of the three place-based forums which form part of the alliance. There has been great interest in this new forum and the membership continues to grow. This offers a space for VCSE sector organisations interested in working more closely with the local health and care system and for NHS and social care colleagues keen to work with local organisations to come together and better understand one another.

Members of the Alliance will have an opportunity to represent the VCSE sector on the ICS's key portfolio boards through an election process and this will enable the system to think differently about the roles the sector can play in supporting our communities' health and wellbeing across all their thematic areas of work.



Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change



Summary, Achievements & Impact

Parent Carer Forums are part of the SEND code of practice which states "Parent Carer Forums are representative local groups of parents and carers of children and young people with disabilities who work alongside local authorities, education, health and other service providers to ensure the services they plan, commission, deliver and monitor meet the needs of children and families".

VAST is facilitating the development of the Stoke Parent Carer Forum, now known as Stoke Parent Carers Champions for Change, and are working with regional and national organisations Contact a Family and NNPCF (National Network of Parent Carer Forums) to help us achieve this.

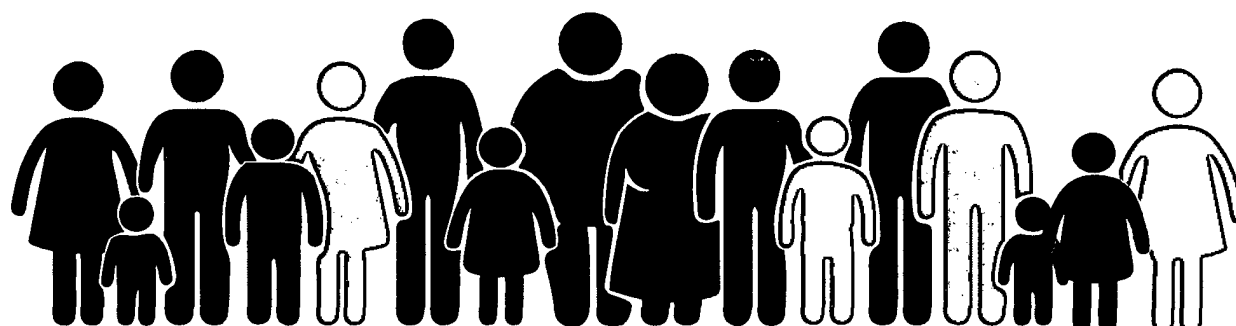
Establishing a new forum was difficult during the pandemic however, through the steering group we have started to really embed our consortium model, made up of key local VCSE sector organisations.

Through PEGiS, the city's well established SEND parent engagement group, we have been able to lead on new areas of work with NHS, Council and Education partners such as the Autism in Schools agenda.

The new look website and CRM we have launched and we are excited to be planning our first large event: Together We Thrive, including a SEND marketplace bringing together the wealth of cross-sector support available to families under one roof in June.

Future Developments

We shall build on the momentum generated from our Together We Thrive event to increase the membership of the forum and to enable us to focus on particular areas of concern which have been identified including supporting families experiencing additional barriers such as language barriers preventing them from accessing the support they need.



Governance

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of no less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:-

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day-to-day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has finance audit and risk, board recruitment and succession planning and remuneration sub-committees. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.



Neil Dawson

Chair

Sub committees Finance & Remuneration



Mark Barnish

Treasurer

Sub-committee Finance



John Beech

Sub-committees Finance & Remuneration



Lesley Morrey

Sub-committees Finance, Remuneration & Board recruitment and Succession Planning



Tim Edwards

Sub-committee Finance



Lee West

Sub-committee Board recruitment and Succession Planning



Pooja Batta



Victoria Hardie

Sub-committee Board recruitment and Succession Planning



John Farrar



Joe Martin



Cliff Hathaway



Cathy Jones

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations. Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law). Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.
- Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

In so far as the Trustees are aware there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and The trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team are recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships including VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) The North Staffordshire Collaborative Network & Team Staffordshire.

Related or connected charities:-

The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

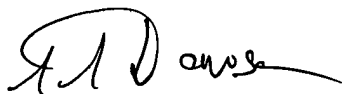
VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2023 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors

Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 13th December 2023 and signed on their behalf by:



Neil Dawson

Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2022 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2023 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2023 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report. We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- we enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- we obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP, FRS 102, Charities Act 2011. Companies Act 2006.
- we considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of *management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.*
- using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at: www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.



Karen Staley FCA BSc (Hons)
(Senior Statutory Auditor)

For and on behalf of Geens Limited, Statutory Auditor

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd,
Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Date: 18/12/23

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	628,863	700,306	1,329,169
Other trading activities	4	36,379	-	36,379
Investment income	5	9,090	-	9,090
Total income		<u>674,332</u>	<u>700,306</u>	<u>1,374,638</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(53,254)	-	(53,254)
Charitable activities	7	<u>(669,035)</u>	<u>(690,706)</u>	<u>(1,359,741)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(722,289)</u>	<u>(690,706)</u>	<u>(1,412,995)</u>
Net (expenditure)/income		<u>(47,957)</u>	<u>9,600</u>	<u>(38,357)</u>
Net movement in funds		(47,957)	9,600	(38,357)
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>341,911</u>	<u>164,824</u>	<u>506,735</u>
Total funds carried forward	21	<u>293,954</u>	<u>174,424</u>	<u>468,378</u>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 55 to 75 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

(Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

Comparative Information

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	583,175	716,178	1,299,353
Other trading activities	4	26,316	-	26,316
Investment income	5	1,098	-	1,098
Total income		<u>610,589</u>	<u>716,178</u>	<u>1,326,767</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(40,594)	-	(40,594)
Charitable activities	7	<u>(530,029)</u>	<u>(617,744)</u>	<u>(1,147,773)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(570,623)</u>	<u>(617,744)</u>	<u>(1,188,367)</u>
Net income		39,966	98,434	138,400
Transfers between funds		<u>(4,188)</u>	<u>4,188</u>	-
Net movement in funds		35,778	102,622	138,400
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>306,133</u>	<u>62,202</u>	<u>368,335</u>
Total funds carried forward	21	<u>341,911</u>	<u>164,824</u>	<u>506,735</u>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The notes on pages 55 to 75 form an integral part of these financial statements.

Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	42,092	86,753
Current assets			
Stocks	16	1,361	1,185
Debtors	17	183,155	148,810
Cash at bank and in hand		581,020	827,574
		<u>765,536</u>	<u>977,569</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	<u>(294,250)</u>	<u>(512,587)</u>
Net current assets		<u>471,286</u>	<u>464,982</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		513,378	551,735
Provisions	19	<u>(45,000)</u>	<u>(45,000)</u>
Net assets		<u>468,378</u>	<u>506,735</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	174,424	164,824
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>293,954</u>	<u>341,911</u>
Total funds	21	<u>468,378</u>	<u>506,735</u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 51 to 75 were approved by the , and authorised for issue on

13th December 2023 and signed on behalf by:



Mark Barnish
Trustee

Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

	Note	2023 £	2022 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash (expenditure)/income		(38,357)	138,400
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6,7 & 8	86,110	68,942
Investment income	5	(9,090)	(1,098)
		<u>38,663</u>	<u>206,244</u>
Working capital adjustments			
Increase in stocks	16	(176)	(1,185)
Increase in debtors	17	(34,345)	(43,171)
Increase in creditors	18	39,792	47,347
Decrease in deferred income		<u>(258,129)</u>	<u>(101,591)</u>
Net cash flows from operating activities		<u>(214,195)</u>	<u>107,644</u>
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	9,090	1,098
Purchase of tangible fixed assets	15	<u>(41,449)</u>	<u>-</u>
Net cash flows from investing activities		<u>(32,359)</u>	<u>1,098</u>
Net (decrease)/increase in cash and cash equivalents		(246,554)	108,742
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		<u>827,574</u>	<u>718,832</u>
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		<u><u>581,020</u></u>	<u><u>827,574</u></u>

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2023

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818), and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:

The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants receivable

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stock

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

- a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
- b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.
- c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either:

- (i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or
 - (ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy.
- Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3a Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Grants & Contracts	-	699,947	699,947
Bursary	17,019	-	17,019
Museum	4,015	359	4,374
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	607,829	-	607,829
	<u>628,863</u>	<u>700,306</u>	<u>1,329,169</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Grants & Contracts	-	660,830	660,830
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	583,175	55,348	638,523
	<u>583,175</u>	<u>716,178</u>	<u>1,299,353</u>

3b Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund £151,830 (2022 £153,415)
Stoke-on-Trent City Council Community Health Champions £100,000 (2022 £288,000)
Heritage Lottery Fund £56,216 (2022 £nil)
Stoke on Trent City Council Closed Grant £nil (2022 £18,000)
HMRC (CJRS grant) £nil (2022 £9,106)

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £308,046 (2022 - £468,521).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	36,379	-	36,379
	<u>36,379</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>36,379</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	26,316	-	26,316
	<u>26,316</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>26,316</u>

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	9,090	-	9,090
	<u>9,090</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>9,090</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	1,098	-	1,098
	<u>1,098</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>1,098</u>

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £
Staff Costs	25,416	-	25,416
Cafe supplies	16,405	-	16,405
Office costs	837	-	837
Premises costs	4,866	-	4,866
Legal fees	567	-	567
Marketing and publicity	77	-	77
Depreciation	99	-	99
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	40	-	40
Support Costs	4,947	-	4,947
	<u>53,254</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,254</u>
	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	17,266	-	17,266
Cafe supplies	7,114	-	7,114
Office costs	1,201	-	1,201
Premises costs	5,499	-	5,499
Legal fees	460	-	460
Marketing and publicity	122	-	122
Depreciation	238	-	238
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	140	-	140
Support Costs	8,554	-	8,554
	<u>40,594</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>40,594</u>

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Support & Volunteering	Other	Heritage	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	132,072	151,777	42,842	284,569	38,224	42,335	691,819
Travel Costs	397	131	5,889	3,228	3	102	9,750
Training	533	2,533	60	2,416	-	80	5,622
Office Costs	43,469	4,114	617	31,938	1,819	3,993	85,950
Legal & Professional	5,348	29,025	723	60	-	10,745	45,901
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	2,644	5,865	165	8,674
Premises Costs	132,051	-	3,875	500	-	8,332	144,758
Insurance	7,656	1,222	350	524	-	524	10,276
Management Costs	-	-	-	3,857	3,847	-	7,704
Sundry	80	146	-	-	-	-	226
Depreciation	85,496	163	-	-	-	-	85,659
Bursary	-	17,019	-	-	-	-	17,019
Partner Payments	-	-	-	57,285	7,000	-	64,285
Events	2,427	161	-	8,120	4,316	12,670	27,694
Grants	-	-	-	58,652	-	-	58,652
Support Costs	8,245	9,894	8,000	46,132	13,751	9,730	95,752
	<u>417,774</u>	<u>216,185</u>	<u>62,356</u>	<u>499,925</u>	<u>74,825</u>	<u>88,676</u>	<u>1,359,741</u>

7 Expenditure on charitable activities (comparative)

	Facilities Management £	Rechargeable Services £	Health Projects £	Support & Volunteering £	Other £	Total 2022 £
Staff Costs	104,085	134,915	38,979	217,715	68,885	564,579
Travel Costs	780	156	3,224	145	235	4,540
Training	880	1,106	-	2,814	-	4,800
Office Costs	48,376	11,286	1,776	33,393	6,582	101,413
Legal & Professional	6,350	15,817	3,621	12,371	1,837	39,996
Advertising & Publicity	162	110	3,435	1,225	3,070	8,002
Premises Costs	102,856	-	-	5,686	8,286	116,828
Insurance	7,400	979	326	-	-	8,705
Management Costs	-	-	-	1	2,534	2,535
Sundry	1,728	-	-	1	1	1,730
Depreciation	68,059	278	-	-	-	68,337
Bursary	-	3,854	-	-	-	3,854
Partner Payments	-	-	-	52,060	-	52,060
Events	1,881	3	42	10,806	4,184	16,916
Grants	-	-	-	79,347	-	79,347
Support Costs	28,512	17,107	5,702	14,256	8,554	74,131
	<u>371,069</u>	<u>185,611</u>	<u>57,105</u>	<u>429,820</u>	<u>104,168</u>	<u>1,147,773</u>

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds

Allocated by no. of staff:	Care 2023 £	Care 2022 £
Staff Costs	1,381	3,939
Staff Training	75	64
Travel	43	26
Premises Costs	1,123	85
Depreciation	34	38
Legal & Professional	1,924	940
Insurance	51	-
Advertising & Publicity	202	143
Events	311	-
Office Costs	2,043	659
Sundry	1,402	1,814
Partner payments	479	-
Governance Costs	677	688
Reallocate management fees	(4,798)	-
	<u>4,947</u>	<u>8,554</u>

8 Analysis of support costs (continued)

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Projects	Support & Volunteering	Heritage	Total 2023
Allocated by no. of staff:	10	6	2	3	5	4	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	2,302	2,763	921	921	4,144	1,842	12,893
Staff Training	124	149	50	50	224	99	696
Travel Costs	71	85	28	28	128	57	397
Premises Costs	1,871	2,245	748	748	3,368	1,497	10,477
Depreciation	57	68	23	23	102	45	318
Legal & Professional	3,207	3,849	1,283	1,283	5,773	2,566	17,961
Insurance	85	101	34	34	152	68	474
Advertising & Publicity	337	404	135	135	606	270	1,887
Events	519	622	207	207	933	415	2,903
Office Costs	3,405	4,087	1,362	1,362	6,130	2,724	19,070
Sundry	2,337	2,804	935	935	4,206	1,868	13,085
Partner Payments	798	958	319	319	1,437	639	4,470
Governance Costs	1,129	1,355	452	452	2,032	903	6,323
Reallocate Management Fees	(7,997)	(9,596)	1,503	7,254	16,897	(3,263)	4,798
	<u>8,245</u>	<u>9,894</u>	<u>8,000</u>	<u>13,751</u>	<u>46,132</u>	<u>9,730</u>	<u>95,752</u>

8 Analysis of support costs (continued)

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health projects	Other	Support & Volunteering	Total 2022
Allocated by						
no. of staff:	9	9	2	2	4	
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	13,129	7,878	2,626	3,939	6,565	34,137
Staff Training	213	128	43	64	107	555
Travel Costs	85	51	17	26	43	222
Premises Costs	284	170	57	85	142	738
Depreciation	127	76	25	38	63	329
Legal & Professional	3,132	1,879	626	940	1,566	8,143
Advertising & Publicity	475	286	95	143	238	1,237
Events	527	316	105	158	263	1,369
Office Costs	2,198	1,319	440	659	1,099	5,715
Sundry	6,049	3,628	1,209	1,814	3,023	15,723
Governance Costs	2,293	1,376	459	688	1,147	5,963
	<u>28,512</u>	<u>17,107</u>	<u>5,702</u>	<u>8,554</u>	<u>14,256</u>	<u>74,131</u>

3

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

	Grants to institutions	
	2023	2022
	£	£
Analysis		
Community Health Champion Grants	58,652	79,347
VAST Bursary	17,019	3,854
	<u>75,671</u>	<u>83,201</u>

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2022 - £Nil).

No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net (outgoing)/incoming resources for the year include:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Operating leases - other assets Audit fees	5,553	6,006
Depreciation of fixed assets	7,000	7,000
	<u>86,110</u>	<u>68,942</u>

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2023 £	2022 £
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	619,963	537,926
Social security costs	46,473	37,754
Pension costs	50,345	44,240
	<u>716,781</u>	<u>619,920</u>

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2023 No	2022 No
Direct charitable activities	18	17
Generating funds	9	8
Management and administration	4	4
	<u>31</u>	<u>29</u>

No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000 during the year.

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £185,166 (2022 - £173,156).

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

No trustees have received any reimbursed expenses from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents.

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2022	294,229	158,442	1,832	96,941	551,444
Additions	-	41,449	-	-	41,449
At 31 March 2023	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2022	220,332	157,847	1,519	84,993	464,691
Charge for the year	73,399	450	313	11,948	86,110
At 31 March 2023	293,731	158,297	1,832	96,941	550,801
Net book value					
At 31 March 2023	498	41,594	-	-	42,092
At 31 March 2022	73,897	595	313	11,948	86,753

16 Stock

	2023 £	2022 £
Stocks	1,361	1,185

17 Debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Trade debtors	161,240	136,268
Prepayments and accrued income	21,915	12,542
	183,155	148,810

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Trade creditors	25,325	29,161
Other taxation and social security	40,800	47,854
Other creditors	20,862	13,995
Accruals	93,591	49,776
Deferred income	<u>113,672</u>	<u>371,801</u>
	<u>294,250</u>	<u>512,587</u>
	2023	2022
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2022	371,801	473,392
Resources deferred in the period	113,672	371,801
Amounts released from previous periods	<u>(371,801)</u>	<u>(473,392)</u>
Deferred income at year end	<u>113,672</u>	<u>371,801</u>

Creditors include £113,672 (2022: 371,801) of income deferred into the following year due to the timing of the charity's entitlement to the income after any performance conditions have been met. There are no unfulfilled conditions attached to this income at the balance sheet date. The closing balance of £113,672 is all held in restricted funds.

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	Other provisions	Total
	£	£
At 1 April 2022	<u>45,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>
At 31 March 2023	<u>45,000</u>	<u>45,000</u>

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

There was no movement during the year ended 31 March 2023.

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2023 £
Tangible fixed assets	42,093	-	-	42,093
Current assets	591,111	174,418	6	765,535
Current liabilities	(294,250)	-	-	(294,250)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	<u>293,954</u>	<u>174,418</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>468,378</u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2022 £
Tangible fixed assets	86,753	-	-	86,753
Current assets	812,745	164,818	6	977,569
Current liabilities	(512,587)	-	-	(512,587)
Provisions	(45,000)	-	-	(45,000)
Total net assets	<u>341,911</u>	<u>164,818</u>	<u>6</u>	<u>506,735</u>

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2022 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2023 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General Fund	151,911	674,332	(650,406)	(3,000)	172,837
<i>Designated</i>					
Dudson Centre					
Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	100,000	-	(53,883)	-	46,117
Museum Contingency	65,000	-	(18,000)	3,000	50,000
	<u>190,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(71,883)</u>	<u>3,000</u>	<u>121,117</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>341,911</u>	<u>674,332</u>	<u>(722,289)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>293,954</u>
Restricted funds					
Health	21,719	51,474	(49,933)	-	23,260
Support & Volunteering	22,685	152,000	(145,478)	-	29,207
SOT CC	30,834	204,341	(201,960)	-	33,215
Community Health					
Champions	92,487	100,000	(135,343)	-	57,144
Other	(2,907)	88,350	(91,970)	-	(6,527)
Heritage	-	104,142	(66,023)	-	38,119
Capital funds	6	-	-	-	6
	<u>164,824</u>	<u>700,307</u>	<u>(690,707)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>174,424</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>164,824</u>	<u>700,307</u>	<u>(690,707)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>174,424</u>
Total funds	<u>506,735</u>	<u>1,374,639</u>	<u>(1,412,996)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>468,378</u>

	Balance at 1 April 2021 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2022 £
Unrestricted funds					
<i>General</i>					
General Fund	181,133	610,589	(516,704)	(123,107)	151,911
<i>Designated</i>					
Dudson Centre					
Contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub Contingency	50,000	-	(42,631)	92,631	100,000
Museum Contingency	50,000	-	(11,288)	26,288	65,000
	<u>125,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(53,919)</u>	<u>118,919</u>	<u>190,000</u>
Total unrestricted funds	<u>306,133</u>	<u>610,589</u>	<u>(570,623)</u>	<u>(4,188)</u>	<u>341,911</u>
Restricted					
Health	21,206	59,402	(61,254)	2,365	21,719
Support & Volunteering	22,334	153,415	(153,064)	-	22,685
SOT CC	14,306	131,177	(116,120)	1,471	30,834
Community Health					
Champions	-	289,250	(196,763)	-	92,487
Culture Recover Fund	-	49,218	(49,218)	-	-
Other	4,350	33,716	(41,325)	352	(2,907)
Capital funds	<u>6</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>6</u>
Total restricted funds	<u>62,202</u>	<u>716,178</u>	<u>(617,744)</u>	<u>4,188</u>	<u>164,824</u>
Total funds	<u>368,335</u>	<u>1,326,767</u>	<u>(1,188,367)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>506,735</u>

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at the Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of restricted funds:

The Health related projects are funds from the CCG's PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

The Support and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council relates to funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Heritage funds include funds received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other small grants and donations for the running of The Dudson Museum.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

The total value of future minimum lease payments was as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Within one year	8,061	6,006
In two to five years	22,673	26,022
	<u>30,734</u>	<u>32,028</u>

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2023	2022
	£	£
Land and buildings		
Within one year	3,000	3,000
Between one and five years	12,000	12,000
After five years	42,000	45,000
	<u>57,000</u>	<u>60,000</u>
Other		
Within one year	8,061	6,006
Between one and five years	22,673	26,022
	<u>30,734</u>	<u>32,028</u>

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2023 £	2022 £
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	161,240	136,268
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(25,325)	(29,161)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £54,197 (2022 £68,858). Receipts of £3,446,912 (2022 £2,520,726) were received during the year and payments of £3,419,664 (2022 £2,493,094) were made leaving a year end balance of £81,445 (2022 £54,197).