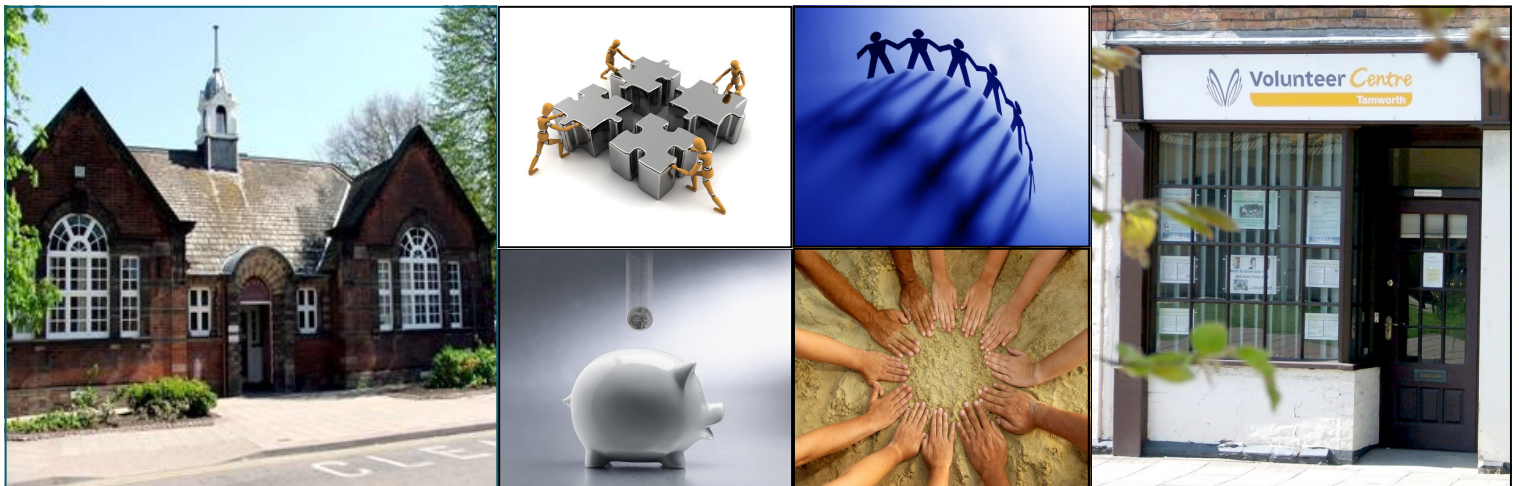


# Tamworth Council for Voluntary Service

## Annual Review 2009-2010



Strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector in Tamworth

# From the Chair



**2009-10** has been a mixed and challenging year for the voluntary and community sector (VCS) and for Tamworth CVS. The impact of the recession has meant greater pressure on services, as community need increases, and at a time when funding opportunities are becoming increasingly limited.

In spite of the challenging times, there have been many positives. We supported Tamworth Borough Council to consult fully with the sector on its Draft VCS Commissioning Framework, a process that led to views from the sector being reflected in the final framework. The Commissioning Board has three VCS representatives, elected by the Tamworth VCS Forum, and during the year let a number of contracts to the sector that focus on local priorities.

We have seen the relaunch of the Staffordshire Compact and have played a key part in embedding Compact ways of working in Tamworth. The Compact provides a foundation for good relations between the VCS and public sector bodies, and Compact ways of working can help make these relations strong and fair, for the benefit of communities in Tamworth. Compact principles will become even more important over the coming months, as details of the effects of public spending cuts unfold.

As we look to the future, there is no getting away from the planned spending cuts and what they may mean for individuals and communities, and for our sector. History has shown that the most vulnerable members of society tend to be those most severely affected by spending cuts. This will undoubtedly put pressure on our sector as we respond to these difficulties. It is important that statutory organisations do not see the VCS as an easy target for cuts, but rather that they recognise the innovation, value for money and ability to reach the most disadvantaged, and embrace the potential to do things differently. Voluntary and community organisations have a vital role to play in building the Big Society, transforming public service delivery and enabling more effective citizen engagement.

In a changing funding environment, we all need to think differently about how we sustain our services. CVS will do all it can to support groups to adapt and respond to the changing environment in order that they can remain true to their aims.

During 2009-10, we have seen a number of changes, both in the staff team and on the Board. We said goodbye to Helen Trueman, Development Officer and welcomed Wil Summers in her place, along with David Bassett, Compact and Partnerships Officer, and Claire Terry, Administration Assistant. On the Board Wendy Hale, Garry Jones, Ray Morris and Howard Shaw have also moved on. I would like to thank all of them for their contributions to Tamworth CVS.

Pat Dix



*“The level of delivery in this standard is exceptional considering the small staff team at Tamworth CVS.”*

## NAVCA Quality Award

In December 2009, we achieved the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA) Quality Award - awarded to local third sector infrastructure organisations that meet NAVCA's performance standards. The Quality Award is given following a rigorous independent audit process. The five standards are outcomes focused and address the difference local infrastructure organisations make through the delivery of their services:

- Supporting the identification of community needs and facilitating provision to meet those needs.
- Supporting third sector organisations to function more effectively and deliver quality services.
- Facilitating effective communication, networking and collaboration among local third sector organisations.
- Enabling the diverse views of the third sector to be represented and in supporting structures which promote effective partnership working.
- Ensuring the third sector has a role in local planning and policy-making.

*In 2009-10 we received funding from:*



*“Having links to CVS has helped us in developing our service.”*

## Building the Capacity of Voluntary and Community Organisations

Work continued apace in 2009-10 providing one-to-one development support on setting up a group; governance; legal structures; funding; business planning; quality systems; managing people and employment law; finance management; marketing and promotion; and a range of organisation policy and procedural matters.

Groups responding to our impact survey, conducted early in 2010, reported that our support had led to increased confidence to make funding applications (85%); greater awareness of funding opportunities (76%); increased knowledge, skills and confidence (69%) and their being better informed about relevant issues (79%).



## Promoting the Compact

June 2009 saw the relaunch of the Staffordshire Compact to underpin the relationship between the voluntary and community sector and statutory sector partners. We received funding from Tamworth Borough Council for a one-year post to promote and drive forward the

implementation of Compact working arrangements in Tamworth. One element of this was the introduction of a Compact Champions scheme, and in January we worked with our county partners to deliver an event in Tamworth attended by Compact Champions, who made commitments as to how they would champion Compact principles in their day to day work.

*“I have found the information provided invaluable.”*

## Voice and Influence for the Sector

We recognise the importance of ensuring that the sector has a strong, collective voice and opportunities to influence policy and the planning and delivery of services. Building on the previous year's work, when we relaunched the Tamworth Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) Forum, we organised and facilitated four meetings of the Forum covering such themes as children and young people, Independent Safeguarding Authority; economy and prosperity; and health. These events provided opportunities for VCS groups to discuss issues with councillors and officers from a number of different statutory bodies. The Forum also provides invaluable opportunities for groups to network and share information.

Respondents to our 2010 impact survey felt that the sector in Tamworth is a strong one (85%), with a high profile (75%) and effective networks and forums (75%), and is valued by external bodies (73%).

We introduced a process for the election of voluntary sector representatives to strategic partnership boards, and implemented this process on two occasions, resulting in representatives being elected democratically by the Forum. This is a process we plan to continue into the future.

Like similar forums elsewhere in Staffordshire, Tamworth VCS Forum is part of, and feeds into SCIO's Staffordshire Third Sector Network, which supports voice and influence for the sector at county level.



*“I’ve been impressed with the level of support given. Being engaged in volunteering has helped rebuild my confidence.”*

## Developing Volunteering

As the recession began to bite, demand for Volunteer Centre services soared, with a significant increase in numbers of people finding themselves out of work and looking to volunteering to use their time productively and improve their prospects of getting back into paid work. Volunteer Centre staff and volunteers met the challenge head on, working with almost 1,100 new and existing volunteers during the year.

Our core volunteering development and support services continued throughout the year:

- Marketing volunteering
- Recruiting, placing and supporting volunteers
- Supporting volunteer-involving organisations to build their capacity to recruit and manage volunteers and develop volunteering opportunities

**Volunteering for All**, our supported volunteering programme, aims to enable people facing barriers to volunteering - through incapacity, mental ill-health, lack of confidence or social situation - to engage in volunteering. Again, we saw a range of positive outcomes for participants, including improved confidence and self esteem, gaining skills and experience and improvements to health and well-being.

Similar outcomes were achieved for individuals engaging with **Volunteering for Health**, the countywide project designed and managed by Tamworth CVS, which works closely with health professionals to promote volunteering as a route to improved health and well-being.



In 2009-10 we continued to be at the forefront of volunteering development in Staffordshire: leading on SCIO’s volunteering work; providing support and co-ordination for the Volunteer Centre Network across Staffordshire; and leading on the delivery of Local Area Agreement National Indicator 6: Participation in Regular Volunteering.

## 2009-10 at a glance

- With our support, groups in Tamworth secured **£296,096** of funding
- **35** Funderfinder sessions delivered
- Regular dissemination of funding information to **295** groups
- **6** editions of our Tamworth Connects newsletter issued to **295** groups
- Proactive organisational health checks, resulting in detailed action plans, conducted with **25** groups
- **4** meetings of the Tamworth Voluntary and Community Sector Forum organised and facilitated
- **694** new volunteers registered and referred to opportunities within **197** groups
- Ongoing support provided to **397** existing volunteers
- Information and advice provided to **295** volunteer-involving organisations
- In-depth support in working with volunteers provided to **72** volunteer-involving organisations

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