



Annual Review

2016-2017

Chair(s) Report

2016-2017 was a very difficult year for Barking and Dagenham Voluntary Services Council.

Despite the challenge of funding cuts and the prospect of redundancy however the staff and trustee team collectively during 2016/17

- Produced 41 weekly newsletters
- Held 11 Commission Watch meetings
- Saw 390 new groups signing up to Funding Extra
- Gained 405 followers on twitter
- Provided specialist bulletins to womens groups in the borough
- Providing bespoke support to 28 organisations between April-June 2016
- Helped raise £1,617,455 for local voluntary activity
- Launching a State of the Sector Report into local voluntary activity
- Hosted the first ever Local Charities Day Celebration in Barking & Dagenham
- Staff and trustees continued to support engagement with the local public sector by serving on a number of strategic bodies

The Trustees in particular spent a great deal of time deliberating as to the future of the organisation and the role of infrastructure locally. At the same time, we have also had to contend with uncertainty of irregular income and an increase in costs for the operating of the Ripple Centre.

Such challenges, aside we are grateful for the continued support of the London borough of Barking & Dagenham and the many community and voluntary organisations in the borough.

Terry Miller (Chair April 2016-to November 2016)

Rita Chadha (Chair November 2016 -)

CEO's Report

B&D CVS have had an exciting and challenging year.

We sent out our regular monthly funding bulletins to over 390 organisations and our monthly e-bulletins continue to be well received providing a range of information and sources of support to our community organisations and partners, raising awareness of crowdfunding opportunities, training workshops and issues impacting on the sector. Our social media continues to provide updates and information about our member's events and activities in our borough.

We provided 19 training workshops/seminars in the year ranging from ***"An Introduction to Online Fundraising"*** to ***"Leadership in the Voluntary Sector"*** We also provided training on developing a consortia and developing a fundraising strategy. We continued to offer one to one support to organisations on developing their financial literacy and improving long term sustainability.

In order to ensure that the voice of our community organisations was heard we devoted considerable time and resources to attending and representing our members at a range of partnership boards and fora. The need for the voluntary sector to be treated as an equitable and integral partner is clear in order to support our residents. Our strategic sector forum supported the dissemination of a number of strategically relevant issues including the ***Borough Manifesto, Healthy Lifestyles Hubs*** and the local authority's ***Single Equalities Scheme*** consultation.

We presented our ***State of the Sector Survey*** in November 2016 in which we estimated that there are at least 200 small "below the radar" groups not registered with any regulatory body working in the borough, that is a total of 566 not for profit organisations in the borough.

Data indicates that the number of charities has increased from 233 on 2011 to 302 in 2015 with the smallest charities (income band £0K to £10K) collectively received barely 1% of all income. Large charities in the £1m to £5m income band received almost 60% of the total income.

It is estimated that there are a total of 5092 volunteers in the borough. Their annual contribution has been costed at £8.4m per year.

Our volunteer brokerage project continued to grow and placed over a hundred volunteers in a wide range of opportunities. Many others were signposted on to organisations both in Barking & Dagenham and in the wider East London area particularly.

We finalised our partnership with the Young Foundation and Big Lottery Fund on the ***Communities Can*** programme and were delighted to present the independently commissioned evaluation of the project to the funders in March 2017.

- 95% of the groups found the support they received useful and just fewer than 50% found it extremely useful.
- The groups were highly satisfied with the quality of support, with many highly praising providers. 90% awarded their provider a 4 star rating or higher during feedback; 71% awarded the maximum 5 stars.
- After receiving the support many of the groups improved their impact and effectiveness, with a number attracting more funding and expanding their reach.

Key learnings about capacity building small community organisations:

- ‘Assertive’ models of outreach are needed to locate harder to reach grassroots organisations in order to offer support.
- A segmented approach – by stage of development and ambition – could lead to further improvements in the tailoring and marketing of support.
- It takes time to build a relationship and adequately assess community groups’ support requirements.
- Some community groups would value more time over which to access support – being able to check in with advisors or take further counsel over several months.
- Communities Can piloted a voucher system and encouraged a market of providers but a tailored group of providers could provide a similarly effective but less complex and costly model for delivering support.

The Communities Can pilot has provided many insights for the Big Lottery Fund. As it establishes its new small grants programme, the Fund will consider ways to incorporate learning from Communities Can in pursuit of its ambition to reach smaller and more informal community groups and put people in the lead

We held a *Local Charities Day* in December 2016 at which 34 organisations showcased their work and had the opportunity to talk to other groups delivering services in the borough at the same time; we provided workshops on funding with The Big Lottery, Heritage Lottery Fund, City Bridge Trust, Local Giving and Global Giving. This highly interactive day also saw the launch of our “WarmerHome/Rough Sleepers Project” funded by Public Health. We provided 98 bedding packs and 31 rough sleeper packs to vulnerable people with additional clothing packs being given to a number of people including refugees and asylum seekers.

We were delighted to open in December 2016 the Huggett Centre, a partnership project between Nia, DABD UK Ltd and B&D CVS. Sandie Shaw opened the building with a variety of partners and stakeholders attending. The Huggett Centre is a women’s centre, run by women for women with a focus on supporting women with disabilities and marginalised women.

During national **LGBT History month**, we launched in February 2017 our first social space for the LGBTQi community which is in partnership with the Broadway Theatre. Offering an attractive, accessible venue for people to come and meet and mingle, this regular monthly event is well attended. We were also delighted to host “*An Evening with Margaret Pepper*” a transgender artist showing a film of her gender identity journey and exhibiting her art work.

With the ever present insecurity in funding that is a critical risk issue within our sector a key challenge will be supporting our member organisations in partnership work and developing more sustainable income streams to ensure that the impact of welfare reform and austerity measures are ameliorated on vulnerable and marginalised people.

Sadly this will be my last report as the Chief Executive of the CVS and I would like to thank the board of trustees, staff and volunteers for their continuing hard work and commitment to the organisation and wish them continued success and growth in the future. I am sure that the community, faith and voluntary sector organisations in the borough will work together to support residents and partners in strengthening and developing their work.

Erika Jenkins

Communicating with the sector

Over the past financial year, BDCVS has collated and distributed both funding and general information emails and e-Bulletins that were relevant to the local Voluntary, Community & Faith Sectors.

Regular monthly e-Bulletins and e-Alerts were sent out through the CVS e-Network with information appropriate to local groups. Important information including consultations was sent to groups covering: the ***LBBB Budget 2017/2018; Police & Crime Plan (Mayor of London); Care Quality Commission: Improving Health Services and CPS: Hate Crime Consultation***. Targeted emails were also used to send out to specific sections of the VCS (Womens' Sector) as well as Ward-specific emails to groups based in particular Wards advising them of public meetings and funding opportunities.

Information was also sent out using regular funding e-Bulletins and "Funding Extras" that contained funding opportunities, hints and tips on income generation, news and information. Funding alerts were also an integral part of giving local groups details of urgent or time-limited funding opportunities.

The Voluntary Sector Strategic Group (VSSG) continued to meet during 2016/17, bringing together local groups and organisations to discuss issues affecting the sector, share experiences and network with each other. Recently, the group has met to discuss important issues including: ***LBBB's Borough Manifesto & Framework***, where the VCS gave its feedback. During this time a Commissioning Watch group was set-up to alert local organisations about commissioning and funding opportunities within the borough. This has been a great success and continues to meet on a regular basis.

Highlight: Local Charities Day 2016

The first ever Local Charities Day took place on 16 December 2016 at Ripple Centre to celebrate local charities, community groups, voluntary organisations and the faith sector to showcase their work, services and expertise and the benefits they bring to all communities locally.

There were 60 participants from 34 local voluntary and community groups that took part and during the day; they were also given the opportunity to attend funding workshops provided by The Big Lottery Fund, City Bridge Trust, Business in the Community, Global Giving, Heritage Lottery Fund and Local Giving.

From the 39 evaluation forms that were collected on the day, all participants said they were satisfied (46%) or very satisfied (54%) with the event. With the most popular aspect of the event being the networking opportunities presented (46%) and 37 (95%) of respondents said that they would attend a similar event again.

Highlight: Active Citizens Program

In May 2016, CVS hosted 10 women from the Active Citizens Program to run an English-speaking Women's Coffee Morning at Ripple Centre. Women working in the local authority, the voluntary and community sector and women from the local community who enrolled on the Program in October 2015 are still active post the training and continue to collaborate on social action projects for the benefit of local women and their families that come from Barking & Dagenham.

Highlight: LGBT+ History Month 2017

To celebrate LGBT+ History Month 2017, a number of LGBT+ events have also taken place with the launch of the LGBT+ Social Space in partnership with the Broadway Theatre. The launch took place in early February and was attended by approx. 30 people including Positive East, NELFT, Barking & Dagenham Police and members of the local LGBT+ Community.

We ended LGBT+ History on a high by holding 'An Evening with Margaret Pepper' a local trans artist. Margaret presented a documentary film called 'Margaret's Story', exploring her life as a married man living with a secret and tells the powerful story of her personal journey through gender re-assignment to becoming the woman she is today. There was also an exhibition of Margaret's artwork, which she uses to illustrate to great effect, the complexities of identity, orientation and sexuality.

Challenge: Funding

This continues to be a challenging time for the Voluntary and Community Sector as funding becomes more difficult to secure.

Tom Williams

The Ripple Centre

The Ripple Centre continues to be the venue of choice providing a flexible and welcoming environment for a range of local voluntary and community organisations, residents and businesses.

Over the last year the Centre hosted 1360 events including social clubs, drama workshops, after school tuition, business conferences, fundraising events, private functions and much more.

We are pleased to report that there has been a 20% increase in the usage of the Centre from the previous year.

138 organisations and private hirers chose the Centre to hold their event; the voluntary and community sector represented 36% of these bookings.

It remains one of the London locations for British Red Cross first aid training and a venue for the NHS Blood Donation service.

The Centre has supported a number of projects with limited or no funding by providing meeting space and therefore enabling those projects to continue to succeed.

We continue to review our expenditure by reducing non-fixed costs and in the coming year we are committed to developing a planned calendar of events in consultation with our current users and the local community.

Lisa Flannery