

# **VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK**

*Registered charity number 1114742*

**Annual Report and Accounts**

**1 August 2006 - 31 July 2007**



**[www.vssn.org.uk](http://www.vssn.org.uk)**

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## **ANNUAL REPORT**

### **Legal and Constitutional Details**

- Name of organisation: Voluntary Sector Studies Network
- Legal form: Unincorporated charitable association governed by Constitution adopted 21 May 2003 (last amended 16 May 2007).
- Charitable status: Registered charity in England & Wales number 1114742
- Correspondent: Matthew McClelland (Executive Officer)  
Voluntary Sector Studies Network  
Room B010  
Eddie Newcombe Student Services Centre  
University of Manchester, Oxford Road  
Manchester M13 9PL
- Telephone: 0161 275 8066
- Fax: 0161 275 2036
- Central e-mail: [info@vssn.org.uk](mailto:info@vssn.org.uk)
- Website: [www.vssn.org.uk](http://www.vssn.org.uk)
- Objects: The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom:
- (1) by the promotion and diffusion of knowledge; and
  - (2) by the publication of research; and
  - (3) by the encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and
  - (4) by undertaking such other activities (being charitable in law) as shall be conducive to the attainment of these objects.
- Trustees: The trustees of VSSN are the Steering Group. The following persons were trustees at 31 July 2007 (all served for the full year unless otherwise indicated). Positions shown are as at 31 July 2007. There were no changes in the trustees between 31 July 2007 and the date of approval of this Annual Report. (Affiliations are given for information only – all Steering Group members serve as individuals.)
- Chair: Prof Peter Halfpenny (University of Manchester)  
Secretary: Dr Angela Ellis Paine (Volunteering England)  
Treasurer/Membership: Prof Gareth Morgan (Sheffield Hallam University)  
Web Officer: Dr Nick Plant (University of the West of England)

Marketing Officer: Dr Rob Macmillan (Sheffield Hallam University)  
Other trustees: Prof Peter Alcock (University of Birmingham) (*from 29 Nov 2006*)  
Véronique Jochum (NCVO) (*from 29 Nov 2006*)  
Dr Jeremy Kendall (University of Kent)  
Dr Cathy Pharoah (Independent Consultant) (*from 29 Nov 2006*)

Other trustees who served during the year were: Dr Jill Mordaunt; Dr Duncan Scott (*both served until 29 November 2006*)

Appointment of trustees: The Constitution allows for up to 10 trustees, up to 8 of whom are elected by the VSSN members at the Annual General Meeting, and two may be co-opted. All trustees stand down at the AGM but are eligible for reappointment. All of the trustees at 31 July 2007 were elected (or re-elected) at the AGM in November 2006 apart from Cathy Pharoah who was co-opted at a trustees meeting on the same day.

### **Report of the Steering Group on the Activities of VSSN for the year ended 31 July 2007**

What a year! 2006-2007 has seen considerable developments for VSSN, not least through the introduction of a new membership package and fee, which enabled the appointment of an Executive Officer for the first time. The highlights of the year are summarised below.

#### Membership

From September 2007 the Steering Group agreed to introduce a formal membership subscription in order to support the development of VSSN, and, in particular, to permit the appointment of the Executive Officer as described in more detail below. Subscriptions were set at £20, £30, or £40 per annum (based on income bands for the member's personal income) – the lowest band was set with the particular intention of ensuring VSSN remained accessible for students and others on low incomes.

The Steering Group was encouraged by the positive response of members to this, and although the request for a subscription led to a modest fall in the total membership, the membership numbers at 31 July 2007 are only 25% less than a year previously.

Members receive a substantial discount when attending seminars; they are also entitled to have their contact details and research interest included in the *VSSN Members Research Directory* (and all members received a copy of the printed directory). Members of VSSN have a right to vote in the affairs of the Network and to stand for election to the Steering Group.

For those who do not wish to become formal members, all VSSN seminars are open to non-members, and non-members can join the e-mail discussion list.

At 31 July 2007 there were 98 (2006: 133) formal members of VSSN (entitled to vote). A total of 325 (2006: 258) persons were registered as subscribers to the VSSN e-mail discussion list.

The membership year runs from 1 October to 30 September. Those joining after 1 April receive membership through to 30 September of the following year.

#### Executive Officer

The introduction of a membership fee enabled VSSN, for the first time, to appoint an Executive Officer (EO) allowing for the planned expansion of the Network. Following a competitive tendering process the Association of University Administrators (AUA) was appointed to provide the EO function, under the leadership of Matthew McClelland, Deputy Director of AUA. Key roles provided by the EO include: dealing with enquiries about VSSN; keeping membership records; receiving subscriptions.

This is an exciting development for VSSN, coming at a time when the Steering Group had reached the limits of what could be provided on a voluntary basis. The appointment has been funded almost entirely through subscription fees and should facilitate the continued growth of the Network and the growth of new member services.

#### 2006 Annual Conference

Over two days, from 13-14 September 2006, 130 delegates attended the 3<sup>rd</sup> NCVO and VSSN Annual Research Conference. The packed programme included 60 papers spread across 24 sessions, including new special sessions for new researchers. In addition, two excellent plenary sessions started and finished the conference, while the annual conference dinner provided an opportunity for more relaxed networking.

The continuing success of the conference is in no small part thanks to our colleagues at NCVO, who worked with Steering Group members to plan the conference programme, review and select papers and invite plenary speakers. We are grateful to colleagues at NCVO for their work on the conference and are pleased to note that the partnership between VSSN and NCVO continues to strengthen.

#### Day Seminars

Two successful day conferences were held during the course of the year, continuing to provide learning and networking opportunities. In November 2006, Glasgow Caledonian University hosted a one-day seminar, putting together an excellent programme, which included four stimulating papers. November's seminar was hosted by London South Bank University and organised jointly with Steering Group members. Over 30 people attended the event and were treated to a programme packed with five thought-provoking papers.

We are grateful to both Universities and our colleagues therein for hosting these events. Full reports from both can be found on our website ([www.vssn.org.uk](http://www.vssn.org.uk)).

#### Membership Directory

A new Membership Directory has been compiled by members of the Steering Group, listing contact details for many of our members. The Directory provides an excellent resource for fellow researchers and for people outside the sector seeking expertise in the area. It has been distributed to all members.

### Discussion List

The email discussion list has continued to provide a space for lively discussion among colleagues and an important point of information sharing. With a total of 325 persons registered as subscribers to the list, from a number of different countries, we are pleased to note that its popularity is growing.

### Website

Regular updates, conference reports, member contact details and links have been added to the [www.vssn.org.uk](http://www.vssn.org.uk) website throughout the year. Of particular note, the New Researchers section has been expanded with the introduction of a blog (<http://vssn.freecharity.org.uk/>) to help connect, support and encourage new and emerging Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) researchers.

Alongside the maintenance of the existing site, work has also been undertaken to plan for a new site, which will maximise the use of new technology.

### Work of the Steering Group

The Steering Group has met three times across the year, with two of the meetings coinciding with the day seminar and the third convened for a full day in September 2006. The Steering Group has also met virtually via email discussion list throughout the year, ensuring that communication and work continues effectively between meetings.

Much of the work of the Steering Group this year has been focused on the appointment of the Executive Officer. After the decision was taken at the September meeting to develop the network in this way, considerable work was needed to design the role, advertise for, select and induct the Officer.

The Annual General Meeting of VSSN was this year supplemented by a Special General Meeting in May 2007 called in order to get the views of members on a number of changes to the constitution. Members voted in the changes, which included amendments to the voting system and the introduction of organisational membership.

The Steering Group have also been active in responding to a number of consultations of behalf of VSSN members, such as for the proposed Giving Research Centre and the ESRC VCS Engagement Strategy.

Various activities have been undertaken to market the VSSN, to introduce the network to potential new members and to develop new links and partnerships. The Steering Group is exploring the possibility of launching a journal as an added membership benefit. Initial contacts have been made with a number of publishers.

### **Financial Review**

The trustees have elected to prepare the accounts on a receipts and payments basis in accordance with s42(3) of the Charities Act 1993 and applying relevant recommendations issued by the Charity Commission in relation to the presentation of receipts and payments accounts.

The income of VSSN is not sufficient to require audit or independent examination of the accounts, but the trustees have conducted individual checks on the figures before approving the accounts.

The membership scheme and the engagement of the Executive Officer mean that both receipts and payments are considerably higher than a year ago. The accounts show that the charity has again achieved an encouraging surplus of receipts over payments – this is mainly due to the introduction of the membership scheme from September 2006 but the costs of the Executive Officer only began from April 2007. The position was also helped by Glasgow Caledonian University generously waiving the catering charge for the November 2006 seminar.

The Steering Group agreed a formal *reserves policy* during the year. Subscriptions are received mainly at the start of the year, but the obligation for the Executive Officer (EO) role arise quarterly and are subject to 3 months notice, so the Steering Group considers that at any time VSSN must have sufficient funds in hand to cover both the current and next quarter for the EO contract. In addition, a small reserve is needed for ad hoc expenses, and until the membership exceeds 100, some of the donations from previous years will be needed to subsidise the costs of the EO contract once it becomes payable for a full year. Taking these factors together, the Steering Group considers that VSSN requires reserves of at least £2500 at year end. As at 31.7.2007 the total balance of the General Fund was £3457 in cash terms but £190 of this related to advance subscriptions for next year giving an effective balance of £3267. The current reserves figure is thus £767 more than the minimum requirement – this will allow investment in some further development work in the coming year.

## **Approval**

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for keeping proper accounting records for the charity, for safeguarding the charity's funds from loss, and for preparing an Annual Report and Annual Accounts to comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 1993.

This Annual Report has been prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2005, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities. It was approved by the trustees (Steering Group) on 6 September 2007 and signed on their behalf by:

*Peter Halfpenny*

*Gareth Morgan*

Peter Halfpenny (Chair)

Gareth Morgan (Treasurer)

# ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

## RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

01 Aug 05 - 31 Jul 06 £		01 Aug 06 - 31 Jul 07 £
<b>Receipts</b>		
140.00	Donations	16.54
0.00	Members Subscriptions	2890.00
1281.00	Seminar fees - members	690.00
0.00	Seminar fees - non-members	175.00
95.19	Gift Aid Tax Refunds	0.00
1.10	Interest Received	0.00
0.00	Advance Subs for Next Year	190.00
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1517.29	TOTAL RECEIPTS	3961.54
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<b>Payments</b>		
676.82	Expenses of VSSN Events	384.58
0.00	Banner stand purchase	269.07
0.00	Publications Expenses	134.49
58.58	Website Expenses	55.46
6.80	Post and Telephone Expenses	60.70
0.00	Trustees Travel Expenses	126.80
0.00	Fees for Exec Officer Services	750.00
0.00	Exec Officer Recruitment Costs	22.50
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742.20	TOTAL PAYMENTS	1803.60
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775.09	SURPLUS OF RECEIPTS OVER PAYMENTS	2157.94
524.07	Balance brought forward 01 Aug 06	1299.16
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1299.16	Balance carried forward 31 Jul 07	3457.10
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See next page for Statement of Assets and Liabilities

### NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS

1. The role of Executive Officer is provided by a contract between VSSN and the Association of University Administrators at a total fee (including VAT) of £3000 per annum. The contract lasts 1 April 2007 to 31 March 2010 (subject to 3 months notice by either party). In the 2006/07 year, VSSN has paid for the first 3 months of this service, covering the period up to 30 June 2007.
2. The trustees travel expenses relate to two trustees (2006: none). Steering Group members or their institutions normally meet their own travel expenses when Steering Group meetings are held on the same day as VSSN seminars, and VSSN appreciates this support. However, the Steering Group held a meeting in September 2006 which was not linked to a seminar, and occasionally Steering Group members undertake other travel on VSSN's behalf.
3. All income and expenses of the NCVO/VSSN Researching the Voluntary Sector Conference are handled by NCVO and do not therefore appear in these accounts.

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

31 Jul 06 £		31 Jul 07 £
<b>Monetary Assets</b>		
	Cash At Bank and In Hand	
1299.16	Unity Trust Bank Current A/c	3457.10
-----		-----
1299.16	TOTAL MONETARY ASSETS	3457.10
=====		=====
<b>Represented by Funds</b>		
	Unrestricted Funds	
1299.16	General Fund	3457.10
-----		-----
1299.16	TOTAL FUNDS	3457.10
=====		=====
<b>Non-Monetary Assets &amp; Liabilities</b>		
	NON-MONETARY ASSETS	
	None	
	CURRENT LIABILITIES	
	Creditors Due Within One Year	
0.00	Subs Received in Advance	190.00-
0.00	4 Mths Exec Officer Commitment*	1000.00-
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0.00	Total Creditors Due Within One Year	1190.00-
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0.00	TOTAL NON-MONETARY ASSETS/LIABILITIES	1190.00-
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\*This represents the amount due for July 2007, plus the minimum 3 months notice on the agreement.

These Accounts were approved by the trustees (Steering Group) on 6 September 2007 and signed on their behalf by:

*Peter Halfpenny*

*Gareth Morgan*

Peter Halfpenny (Chair)

Gareth Morgan (Treasurer)