

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

Registered charity number 1114742

Annual Report and Accounts

1 August 2009 - 31 July 2010



www.vssn.org.uk
Address for official correspondence:

Executive Office, Voluntary Sector Studies Network, VSSN Office
PO Box 7917, Swadlincote, DE11 1ET

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 2 December 2009).
Charitable status:	Registered charity in England & Wales number 1114742
Correspondent:	Sonia Liff Executive Officer Voluntary Sector Studies Network PO Box 7917 Swadlincote DE11 1ET
Telephone:	07902 274161
Central e-mail:	info@vssn.org.uk
Website:	www.vssn.org.uk
Objects:	<p>The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">(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 following people served as trustees of VSSN and members of the Steering Group (affiliations are given for information only – all Steering Group members serve as individuals):
Chair:	Prof Chris Cornforth, Open University Business School (Chair from 2 Dec. 09)
Secretary:	Dr Andri Soteri-Proctor, University of Birmingham (from 2 Dec. 09)
Treasurer:	Prof Cathy Pharoah, CASS Business School, City University
Web Officer:	Véronique Jochum, National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

Marketing Officer: Dr Rob Dalziel, University of Birmingham (from 2 Dec. 09)
External Affairs Officer & Prof Pete Alcock, University of Birmingham
Journal Liaison Officer:

Annual Conference Officer: Colin Rochester
(and Vice Chair)

Directories Officer: Dr Mary Corcoran, Keele University
Ex-officio VSSN member: Emeritus Prof Peter Halfpenny, University of Manchester
(VSR Editor – from 2 Dec '09)

Others who served 01 Aug '09 – 02 Dec '09:

Chair: Prof Peter Halfpenny, University of Manchester
Secretary: Angela Ellis Paine, Institute for Volunteering Research
Marketing Officer: Rob Macmillan, University of Birmingham

We are grateful to Peter, Angela and Rob who have contributed significantly to the developments of the VSSN during their years as SG members.

Appointment of trustees: As of 14 May 2008, VSSN members elect up to nine trustees to serve a three-year term of office on a rolling basis, with three elected at each Annual General Meeting. The editor of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as an ex-officio member. An additional two trustees may be co-opted. This is the second year since the introduction of the new voting rules: the initial terms of office are set according to the results of the Single Transferable Vote on the annual cycle of three members to be elected each year. Trustees may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years.

Sub-committee:

Editorial Management Board for the *Voluntary Sector Review*

As of 2 December 2009 a sub-committee was elected to act as the Editorial Management Board (EMB) for the journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. With direction from the Steering Group, the EMB is responsible for the oversight of the journal and the appointment of the Editorial Team, including the Editor, in consultation with the publisher, The Policy Press.

EMB members: Pete Alcock, (Chair) University of Birmingham
Margaret Harris, Institute for Voluntary Action Research
Rob Macmillan, University of Birmingham
John Mohan, University of Southampton
Gareth Morgan, Sheffield Hallam University
Cathy Pharoah, Cass Business School, City University

Editorial Team: Peter Halfpenny (Editor), University of Manchester

Pete Alcock (Assistant Editor), University of Birmingham
Cathy Pharoah (Assistant Editor), Cass Business School, City
University
Colin Rochester (Practice Section Editor)
Chris Cornforth (Policy Section Co-editor), Open University
Business School
Julie Charlesworth (Policy Section Co-editor), Open University
Business School

Appointment of EMB: VSSN members elect six members of the EMB on a three-year cycle, using the same rules as for the election of Steering Group members as set out in the amended constitution. The Editor, if not already an elected Steering Group member, will be appointed ex-officio to the Steering Group.

The EMB is responsible for assembling the International Advisory Board. For further information, see:
<http://www.vssn.org.uk/journal/index.htm>

Steering Group Report: VSSN activities undertaken for public benefit during the year ending 31 July 2010

This has been a year of significant progress within VSSN. Combined with the Steering Group's continued commitment to work with members and other partners to develop the Network, VSSN has seen the successful launch of the new journal *Voluntary Sector Review*, published by The Policy Press. This and other work consolidates VSSN's position as the key organisation serving the UK voluntary sector research community. Key highlights are summarised below.

New Journal: *Voluntary Sector Review*

With The Policy Press, the VSSN launched the new journal *Voluntary Sector Review* in Spring 2010. Focusing on the third sector, this is a major development for the Network and for the voluntary sector research community as a whole. There are three issues published per volume each year. Members will have received the first three issues forming volume one by the December Day Conference 2010. Elections for the new EMB took place in November 2009 with nominations sought from across VSSN's membership. In addition, the elected EMB appointed the editorial team, in consultation with the publishers. With advice from the EMB, the editorial team is responsible for the content of the journal. Prior to this, the Steering Group acted as the Editorial Management Board and the Editorial Team. With The Policy Press, they worked together to establish the format of the journal; develop the governance and price structures; recruit an international advisory board (of 16 eminent members); and produce the first issues.

VSSN/NCVO Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference

The sixth VSSN/NCVO annual research conference held in September 2009 at Warwick

University brought together a record 154 participants with an interest in the voluntary sector. This drew in researchers, policy makers and practitioners from Australia, Ireland, Japan, Portugal and the US, as well as a UK audience. With ten panels and a further 18 sessions, a total of 108 papers were presented, giving researchers the opportunity to share their ideas and research findings. These were 'topped and tailed' by a pair of plenary sessions. In the opening plenary Lenka Setkova presented an overview of the Carnegie UK Trust's Inquiry into the Future of Civil Society in the UK and Ireland and stimulated a lively discussion by asking delegates to address some of the key questions with which the inquiry team were still grappling ahead of delivering their final report. Complemented by the final session, Bernard Harris of the University of Southampton reviewed the complex history of the relationship between voluntary action and the state over the past two centuries – offering intellectual reflections as well as practice and policy relevance.

We are grateful to colleagues at NCVO for their work on the conference. We are also grateful to Joanna Stuart for organising the New Researchers' element within the conference, which continues to grow in popularity.

Day seminars

Two successful day conferences were held during the course of the year, continuing to provide learning and networking opportunities. The Third Sector Research Centre at the University of Birmingham hosted the December 2009 Day Conference. There were five papers on different aspects of the third sector; all of which reported on (recent and ongoing) empirical work. Forty-three people took part in what proved to be an interesting and engaging set of discussions. The May 2010 Day Conference took place at Sheffield Hallam University in Sheffield. Professor Gareth Morgan opened the conference on 'Governance and Regulation in the Voluntary Sector' and five papers were presented to 45 members and guests.

We are grateful to both Universities and our colleagues therein for hosting these events.

Online directory

Making use of social networking technology, a new online VSSN Members Research Directory was launched in August 2009. The new format for the Directory gives members direct access to an online profile page that shows information they provide about their organisation, role, events, and research interests. The directory is available to the public as a showcase of members' work, although only paid-up members are able to upload information. It is part of our ongoing work to update the VSSN website and improve services to members.

In addition, we have continued to add to the Course Directory, which contains details of many third sector courses offered by universities around the country.

Membership

VSSN's membership continues to grow. At 31 July 2010 there were 111 individual (2009: 115) and 13 organisational members (2009: 12) covering 60 individuals, giving a total of 171 formal members (entitled to vote) compared with 163 in 2009. A detailed strategy is under development to strengthen and market VSSN's membership package with the introduction of

Voluntary Sector Review as a key benefit.

E-mail discussion list:

Both members and non-members can register as subscribers to the VSSN e-mail discussion list. The number of users grows yearly and as of 8 November 2010 there are 478 users. This provides a space for lively debate among colleagues and an important point of information sharing.

We are grateful to Jill Mordaunt who continues to perform an excellent role as discussion list moderator.

Website:

Regular updates, conference reports, member contact details and links have been added to the website (www.vssn.org.uk) throughout the year. There is growing use of the website: between the 1 August 2009 and 31 July 2010, the site received an average of 450 unique visitors per month compared with 390 the previous year.

With the help of web agency Joomkit, the web team (Veronique Jochum and Mike Aiken from the steering group and Nick Plant our e-services advisor) has been working on a new version of the VSSN website using the Open Source CMS (Content Management System) Joomla. The new website will be completed in 2011.

Building partnerships:

Members of the Steering Group have continued to meet with the Knowledge Transfer Team at the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) to strengthen the relationship and to continue to explore areas for potential collaboration. Meanwhile, our successful partnership with NCVO goes from strength to strength, particularly through our collaboration around the Annual Research Conference (see above). Additional networks are being established and maintained with a range of other organisations, both in the UK and overseas.

Steering Group meetings:

The Steering Group has met three times during the year, with two meetings coinciding with the day seminars and a further full day meeting held in the spring. In addition, the Steering Group has also met virtually via its email discussion list throughout the year, ensuring that communication and work continues effectively between meetings.

The Steering Group has taken into account the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit in planning the charity's activities.

Throughout these discussions, the Steering Group has considered that VSSN is seeking to advance education and research concerning the voluntary sector for the benefit of the wider public. All VSSN events are widely publicised and open to anyone interested, with only modest fees to attend. The launch of *Voluntary Sector Review* is an important step in enabling research work on the voluntary sector to reach as many people as possible.

VSR Editorial Management Board:

The VSR EMB met at the last December day conference in Birmingham in 2009. A further two meetings were held in 2010. As the journal is established and the editorial processes are now running smoothly, much of the work of the EMB can be done through virtual consultation via the email list, so one formal meeting a year should be adequate. The EMB have agreed to organise one-day meetings each year in the mid autumn to tie in with the publisher's annual planning cycle; and, if needed, there will also be a short meetings at the annual research conference or day conferences.

Executive Officer:

The three-year contract with the Association of University Administrators (AUA) to provide an Executive Officer function for VSSN came to an end in March 2009. Subsequently, a new tender was advertised on the VSSN website. The successful applicant (of three) is Appleby, with the role of Executive Officer fulfilled by Sonia Liff. The SG has seen substantial efforts from Appleby to ensure a smooth transition from AUA and significant improvements in the way that enquiries, membership and other supporting work are handled.

A particular thanks to Sonia Liff who, as Executive Officer, has handled the transition and teething problems effectively and efficiently.

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.

During the year VSSN has markedly increased its activities in relation to publications and web development, as well as launching its journal, and this increased level of activity is reflected in higher income and expenditure figures compared with last year.

The level of VSSN membership subscriptions attracted during the year increased to cover the costs of the additional benefit of *Voluntary Sector Review*, the new VSSN journal, and exceeded minimum expectations.

During the year, a total grant of £10,000 was paid to the University of Bristol/ Policy Press for the development costs of *Voluntary Sector Review*, funded from support received for this purpose from the Big Lottery Fund and TSRC.

The accounts show that the charity had a surplus of receipts over payments of £3,419 in 2009/2010: of this, £640 was due to Policy Press to cover a supplementary payment arising

from additional VSSN subscriptions in 2009/2010. This had not been paid at the time of preparing these accounts (though has since), and is included in the Statement of Liabilities.

The remaining surplus is partly due to receipt during the year of some donations, and of increased income from seminar fees and from membership subscriptions, including of advanced membership payments for 2010/2011. It is also due to savings made when the current contract with AUA for membership services was terminated. There was a two-month gap before the new contract with Appleby commenced.

Reserves policy

VSSN has a formal *reserves policy*. This needs to take account of increased obligations arising from VSSN's commitment to Policy Press for supporting the *Voluntary Sector Review*, and its continuing annual contracted Executive Officer services.

Subscriptions are received mainly at the start of the year, but the obligations 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. This amounts to £1,500 and is included on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. The additional minimum obligation for VSR is £2600, and at this developmental stage in the life of the Journal, the Committee would prefer to allow for the whole of this amount as a creditor on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities. It is estimated that VSSN should allow £1000 for other expenses such as possible venue hire costs or any shortfall in revenue taken to cover the costs of day seminars etc, in the Reserves.

As at 31.7.2010 the total balance of the General Fund was £9,115 in monetary terms, but as shown on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities, £6,770 is liable after year end, leaving an effective balance of £2,345, comfortably above the minimum level of reserves needed.

We would like to record our thanks to Sonia Liff of Appleby for revising VSSN's financial recording systems, and for the high quality of financial reports now received. This has been extremely helpful in a year, which has seen such an increased level of activity.

We are very grateful to Gareth Morgan for his continued informal review of the presentation of our financial reporting, but we stress that he is *not* acting as independent examiner for VSSN.

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 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities. It was approved by the trustees (Steering Group) on {xxxxx} and signed on their behalf by:

Andri Soteri- Proctor (Secretary)
{to be signed once approved by members}

Cathy Pharoah (Treasurer)
{to be signed}

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

General Fund	01 Aug 08 - 31 Jul 09			01 Aug 09 - 31 Jul 2010		
	(£) Unrestrict ed	(£) Restrict ed	Total	(£) Unrestrict ed	(£) Restrict ed	Total
Receipts						
Donations	20.00		20.00	1,065.00		1,065.00
Seminar fees -members	1,126.00		1,126.00	1,730.00		1,730.00
Member Subscriptions	2,360.00		2,360.00	4,925.00		4,925.00
Seminar fees-non/members				955.00		955.00
Orgn Member Subs	960.00		960.00	1,800.00		1,800.00
Interest Received						
Advance Subs for next year	555.00		555.00	830.00		830.00
Grants receivable						
Other		5,000.00	5,000.00	94.00*		94.00*
Total Receipts	5,021.00	5,000.00	10,021.00	11,399.00	0.00	11,399.00
Payments						
Expenses of VSSN Events				1,935.80		1,935.80
Banner stand purchase	1,080.00		1,080.00			
Publications Expenses (1)				2,600.00		2,600.00
Website (Dev and Hosting)				616.78		616.78
Post/Tel/Sundry Expenses				6.00		6.00
Travel Expenses				196.20		196.20
Fees	2,250.00		0.00	1,500.00		1,500.00
Expenses - Exec Officer						
Exec Officer Recruitment						
Grants payable					10,000.00	10,000.00
Database development				1,125.00		1,125.00
Total payments	3,330.00		3,330.00	7,979.78	10,000.00	17,979.78
SURPLUS (or DEFICIT)	1,691.00	5,000.00	6,691.00	3,419.22	-10,000.00	-6,580.78
Balance brought forward	4,004.36	5,000.00	9,004.36	5,695.36	10,000.00	15,695.36
Balance carried forward(1)	5,695.36	10,000.00	15,695.36	9,114.58	0.00	9,114.58

*Refund of deposit to Network House, after they failed to deduct this from the final invoice.

(1) This represents £11,714.58 as showing in the bank end-of-year statement, less the payment of £2,600 to Policy Press payment which has been made but has not yet left the account.

Statement of Assets and Liabilities

31 July 09		31 July 10
(£)		(£)
	Monetary Assets	
15695.36	Cash at Bank and In Hand Unity Trust Bank Current A/c	9,114.58
15695.36	Total Monetary Assets	
	Represented by Funds	
10,000.00	Restricted Funds	0.00
5695.36	General Fund	9,114.58
15695.36	Total Funds	9,114.58
	Non-Monetary Assets & Liabilities	
	<i>Assets:</i>	
485.00	Debtors	0.00
	<i>Liabilities – Creditors due within one year:</i>	
555.00-	Subs Received in Advance	830.00-
1,750.00-	Exec. Officer Commitment*	1,500.00-
10,000.00-	Grants payable	00.00
	Minimum VSR payments**	2,600.00-
	Supplementary VSR***	640.00-
54.28-	Sundry (Web)	1,200.00-
12,359.28	Total Creditors Due Within One Year	6,770.00-
11,874.28-	Net Non-Monetary Liabilities	6,770.00-

* Three months due to end November 2010, and minimum 3 months notice on the agreement.

** Main payment for 2009/10 (£2,600) was made before year end. The £2,660 creditor is the minimum amount payable in 2010/11.

***This is supplementary to the agreed minimum payment of £2,600 to Policy Press for 2009/2010, after adjusting upwards for the total journal subscriptions actually achieved in 2009/2010.

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 1st April 2007 to 31st March 2010 ((subject to 3 months notice by either party).

2. 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.

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.

These Accounts were approved by the trustees (Steering Group) on 23 November 2010 and signed on their behalf by:

**Chris Cornforth (Chair)
{to be assigned once approved by members}**

**Cathy Pharoah (Treasurer)
(to be signed)**