

# **VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK**

*Registered charity number 1114742*

**Annual Report and Accounts**

**1 August 2018 - 31 July 2019**



**Address for official correspondence:**

Executive Officer, Voluntary Sector Studies Network

VSSN Office, 11 Commonside, Crowle, North Lincolnshire DN17 4EX

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

## **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 November 2018)   |
| Charitable status:    | Registered charity in England & Wales number 1114742  |
| Correspondent:        | Ann Hindley<br>Executive Officer<br>VSSN Office<br>11 Commonsie<br>Crowle, North Lincolnshire<br>DN17 4EX   |
| Telephone:            | 01724 710819  |
| Central e-mail:       | <a href="mailto:execofficer@vssn.org.uk">execofficer@vssn.org.uk</a>  |
| Website:              | <a href="http://www.vssn.org.uk">www.vssn.org.uk</a>  |
| Objects:              | The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom by:<br>(1) the promotion and diffusion knowledge; and<br>(2) the publication of research; and<br>(3) encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and<br>(4) 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 between August 2018 and July 2019. Affiliations are given for information only; all Steering Group members serve as individuals.

|  |   |
|--|---|
| Co-Chairs                                  | Jane Cullingworth, University of Glasgow<br>Angela Ellis Paine, University of Birmingham      |
| Secretary                                  | Linda Milbourne, Birkbeck, University of London   |
| Treasurer                                  | Carolyn Cordery, Aston University   |
| Membership and Marketing Officer           | Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University   |
| Annual Conference Officers                 | Chris Dayson, Sheffield Hallam University<br>Mike Woolvin, Cairngorms National Park Authority |
| Day Conference Liaison Officers            | Ali Body, University of Kent<br>Linda Milbourne, Birkbeck, University of London               |
| Partnership Events                         | Ali Body, University of Kent<br>Vita Terry, IVAR (from January 2019)                          |
| External Affairs & Journal Liaison Officer | Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University   |
| New Researchers                            | Jane Cullingworth, University of Glasgow  |
| Ex-officio                                 | Rob Macmillan, Sheffield Hallam University  |
| Web Officer                                | Chris Damm, Sheffield Hallam University   |

## 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 a maximum of 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. 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 (EMB) for the *Voluntary Sector Review***

As of 2nd 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(s), in consultation with the publisher, The Policy Press.

### 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>

|                        |   |
|------------------------|---|
| <b>EMB members:</b>    | <b>Chair:</b> Daiga Kamerade, University of Salford<br>Tracey Coule, Sheffield Hallam University (to Nov 2018)<br>Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University (from Nov 2018)<br>Mike Hemmings, York St John University (from Nov 2018)<br>Eddy Hogg, University of Kent<br>Rita Mano, University of Haifa (from Nov 2018)<br>Feilim O hAdhmaill, University College Cork<br>James Rees, Open University (to Nov 2018)<br><b>Ex-officio</b> (VSSN Steering Group): Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University<br><b>Publisher's representative:</b> Julia Mortimer, The Policy Press                         |
| <b>Editorial Team:</b> | <b>Co-editors:</b><br>Nick Acheson, Trinity College Dublin (resigned December 2018)<br>James Rees (since January 2019)<br>Rob Macmillan, Sheffield Hallam University<br>Carl Milofsky, Bucknell University, USA<br><b>Policy Reviews Editor:</b> Cathy Pharoah, CASS Business School<br><b>Practice Papers Editors:</b><br>Alison Body and Bethany Waterhouse-Bradley<br><b>Book Review Editor:</b> Eddy Hogg<br><b>Regional Associate Editor (Europe):</b> Georg Von Schnurbein, Universitat Basel, Switzerland<br><b>Social Media Editor:</b> Eddy Hogg, University of Kent (from January 2019) |

## **Steering Group Report: activities undertaken for public benefit by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) during the year ending 31 July 2019**

### **Co-Chairs' Report**

It has been another busy year for VSSN. The Steering Group met in early January, confirming four priorities for the network – to support early career researchers, to engage with policy and practice, to create enhanced networking opportunities, and to promote interdisciplinarity.

Continuing our regular programme of activities, we organised two excellent day conferences in Birmingham in November 2018 (*Diversity in the spotlight: Highlighting perspectives on race, culture and migrants*) and Sheffield in May 2019 (*Small groups, big issues? Researching local, community-based, and 'below the radar' organisations and action*). We collaborated again with NCVO to hold the Annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference in London in September 2018 (*Trust, Transparency and Accountability of Charities and Voluntary Organisations: Challenges for Policy, Practice and Research*). In addition, we hosted an event for New Researchers in Sheffield prior to the day conference.

VSR continues to publish articles of high quality on a variety of areas of interest and concern to the voluntary sector and volunteering research community. Our regular newsletter continues to inform members about current developments in the field. You can read more about each of these activities in the sections that follow.

Membership has declined slightly, reflecting wider turbulence in the field, and we have continued to strive to enhance the membership offer. This has not to date affected the financial health of the organisation which remains stable.

We would like to thank the members of the Steering Group for their energetic and hard work during the year, and also to David Kane for his ongoing support for the website. A big thank you and a fond farewell to Beth Longstaff and Jane Leathley who have provided the Executive Officer function over the past three years with exceptional professionalism and enthusiasm, but are now moving on to other opportunities. We wish them well in their new endeavours; they will both be missed.

## 1. The activities of VSSN

### VSSN's journal, *Voluntary Sector Review*

### VSSN's journal, *Voluntary Sector Review*

In 2018-19 VSSN's international interdisciplinary journal, *Voluntary Sector Review* (VSR), published by The Policy Press, continued into its tenth year, with three issues per annum. A print copy of each issue is a VSSN membership benefit. As part of our international collaborative efforts VSR is also the official journal of the European Research Network on Philanthropy (ERNOP), and it is available at a substantial discount to members of the International Society for Third-Sector Research (ISTR).

The journal is designed to appeal to a wide readership and each issue contains over 100 pages of research articles, practice papers and policy reviews as well as book reviews. During 2018-19 the journal has published papers from academics and researchers based both in the UK and overseas on, for example, the financial position of English voluntary organisations, the role of emotion in volunteering, informal solidarity in civil society in Greece, justifications for volunteering in addressing unemployment, and barriers to volunteering among young people in deprived urban areas.

All VSSN members are strongly encouraged to persuade their institutions to take out (and continue) subscriptions to ensure the financial sustainability of the journal. Free online trial subscriptions for institutions are available from <https://policy.bristoluniversitypress.co.uk/journals/voluntary-sector-review>.

The journal has a twitter account: @vsrjournal, with a growing constituency nearing 700 followers. This is used to keep people informed about forthcoming content and the availability of free access articles.

A team of three co-editors is responsible for maintaining the journal's direction, content and quality: Rob Macmillan (Sheffield Hallam University), Carl Milofsky (Bucknell University, US) and James Rees (Wolverhampton University). James joined the team in January 2019, replacing Nick Acheson, who stepped down after four years of excellent service in the role. The editors are joined in a wider team by a policy reviews editor (Cathy Pharoah, City University), a team of three practice section editors (Chris Dayson, Sheffield Hallam University; Alison Body, University of Kent and Bethany Waterhouse-Bradley, Ulster University), and the book reviews editor (Eddy Hogg, University of Kent). Alison and Bethany replaced Anna Visser in May 2019, and Eddy replaced James Rees in January 2019. Thanks are due to Anna and James for their excellent work on the journal.

VSSN is hugely grateful to The Policy Press for the expertise, enthusiasm and continued practical support it has brought to the journal, and the resources it is devoting to making it a success. The day to day activities of the journal are supported by an editorial assistant - thank you to Ellie Rivers for her work in this role. The post is jointly funded by The Policy Press and VSSN to support the editorial work underpinning the journal, including screening submissions and liaising with authors.

## **VSR Editorial Management Board**

The journal is overseen by an Editorial Management Board (EMB), which meets twice each year – a January gathering to review the journal’s development and consider editorial strategy, followed by a mid-year teleconference. The EMB is a sub-committee of the VSSN Steering Group, chaired by Daiga Kamerade (University of Salford), and is made up of elected representatives, representatives from The Policy Press, and the editorial team. During 2018-19, Mike Hemmings (York St. John University), Rita Mano (University of Haifa, Israel), and Jon Dean (Sheffield Hallam University) joined the EMB as elected members. They replaced Tracey Coule and James Rees, with thanks for their contributions during their terms of office.

This year the main points of discussion for the EMB included the overall strategy for developing the journal, including enhancing its international orientation, emerging issues around open access, a proposal for a new ‘commentary’ section in the journal, and the recruitment of new members of the editorial team.

## **Website**

The VSSN website continues to play an important role in communicating with members and facilitating the booking of events and membership payments. This year VSSN has continued to formally enlist the help of David Kane, a former steering group member, to maintain the technical aspects of the website. Executive officer Beth Longstaff and steering group member Chris Damm have continued to take responsibility for updating website content, including events, blogs and news items.

A list of quantitative resources has now been added to the website, including relevant datasets, external websites and online tools. We hope to expand the resources section to contain similar material covering particular methods or interests, or more multimedia content from conferences and events. David Kane and Chris Damm have also begun discussions to set up a VSSN ‘datastore’ with more detailed links and descriptions to key datasets.

Plans for the following year include looking at ways to simplify the structure of the website behind the scenes in a way which would allow updates to the way user profile information is displayed and membership data is managed. The Steering Group continues to look for ways to improve the site and welcomes suggestions and comments from members.

## Day conferences and other events

VSSN has again organised two successful day conferences over the past year, using community centre bases. The day conferences continue to provide important opportunities for new researchers to showcase findings and for reflections on research developments and practice, as also good opportunities for networking amongst participants.

### **1. Diversity in the spotlight: highlighting perspectives on race, culture and migrants, November 2018, held in the Bond, Birmingham**

This successful day conference attracted 7 presentations and some 30 participants, including researchers and practitioners. Asif Afridi from Birmingham Race Action Partnership drew on recently published research from 'Let's Talk about Race', a section of the *Civil Society Futures* reports, to provide a thought-provoking start to the day. He argued the importance of learning from history; and for a national conversation, which would better embed structural thinking about race across civil society, rather than the piecemeal and cosmetic changes which often remained superficial. Three further presentations followed. Palmela Witter, a community development and youth education worker, presented recent research on young people and violence. Drawing on a black feminist perspective, she argued that to achieve effective analysis and strategies, black women's community voices needed inclusion. Liz Bailey from the Third Sector Research Centre, University of Birmingham presented her historical research with the London Black Women's Health Action Project, established in 1982 to address the specific health needs of black women. She illustrated the mutual aid and social solidarity underpinning their work but reported that the changed financial and cultural landscape, was now threatening the project. Abi Woodward from CRESRC, Sheffield Hallam University discussed research on the experiences of Pakistani Muslims in Sheffield, offering insights into their day-to-day coping strategies in handling financial insecurity. Her findings highlighted the importance of cultural, religious and family values in promoting systems of self-help and mutual-aid, raising questions about common assumptions around welfare benefits.

Mike Aiken, with video footage from colleagues in the *Pledge Against Charging* campaign, Sussex, explored the process of coalition building and making a pledge to defend health care rights. This had grown from a local campaign to contest restrictions in accessing UK health care affecting vulnerable groups including refugees, migrants and asylum seekers. The research also raised questions about how those involved understand such initiatives. Lucy Mayblin, University of Sheffield presented her findings from a large-scale study mapping refugee and asylum seeker support, analysing the extent to which civil society organisations were filling desperately needed support gaps. While many volunteer-based, third sector and self-help groups are doing what they can, the study showed the inadequacies of government policies, which are ostensibly breaching human rights in failing to meet the basic needs of these groups, effectively perpetuating their destitution. Jan Etienne, Birkbeck, and Phil Ware, TSRC led a closing plenary discussion which included consideration of what a 'national conversation' on anti-racism might look like and the extent to which we all needed to take individual responsibility for tackling the issues and to find ways of engaging those not present. There was a need for links between activists and academics, and to give space to vulnerable and little heard groups of people at a time when civil society was also generating divisive, xenophobic and racist groups, some linked to wider populist movements.



Participants were invited to work in partnership with VSSN to develop other events around diversity and equalities, to further these discussions. Speakers' presentations and abstracts are available at <https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/diversity-in-spotlight/>

## **2. Small groups, big issues? Researching local, community-based, and 'below the radar' organisations and action, the Circle (CVS) Sheffield, May 2019**

The day conference on small charities, community groups, below the radar organisations, and informal grassroots action successfully brought together some 30 researchers and practitioners working or volunteering in small and community-based groups, to consider day-to-day challenges faced in such work and action. The day opened with a plenary presentation from researchers from Northumbria, Sheffield, Sheffield Hallam and York universities, and from Sheffield City Council, on community asset transfer of leisure facilities. It explored some of the issues of small volunteer-group management, focusing on the case of libraries, and considered both advantages and problems in transferring these assets. Katherine Brown and Sonia Liff examined the development of a local history café at the Sir John Moore Foundation from different perspectives, identifying the social value of volunteer-led developments which also fulfil community education aspirations. Combining insights from academic research and a member of the parent council, Ali Body (University of Kent) and Jennifer Ross (parent council) investigated co-production in the establishment of a parent council in a primary school. While positive about greater parental involvement, they were critical of the necessity to support essential school support facilities with volunteers, which long term, leads to exacerbating inequalities in educational provision in poorer areas. The morning concluded with a helpful information exchange.

The afternoon included two papers and a participatory workshop session. Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University explored informal volunteering through the lens of gender and class, finding that informal volunteering largely does not feature in volunteer research. Providing examples from work focused on working class women and domestic labour, Jon suggested that little attention is paid to informal helping because it can't be monetised, traded or attributed the exchange value given to formal volunteering. David Yates, Aston University, explored the, often, concealed worlds behind the doors of UK service clubs, considering their purposes and activities as charitably supported members' clubs, and the extent to which their apparent lack of transparency was constructing exclusiveness. Jon Dean facilitated a final 'world café' session inviting participants to contribute their perspectives on the day and share the issues and challenges that they saw small groups facing. From overall feedback, contributions helped to build a valuable collective research, policy and practice agenda in this field.

Speakers' presentations and abstracts are available at <https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/small-groups-big-issues/>

For more details of these and previous VSSN events, see <https://www.vssn.org.uk/events/>

## **VSSN/NCVO Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference, September 2018**

Once again VSSN partnered with NCVO to host the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Conference, the UK's most prominent annual gathering of researchers, practitioners and policy makers carrying out research in our field. In September 2018 more than 100 delegates attended the conference, held at NCVO's offices in central London, to take part in scholarly debate and discussion associated with 'Trust, Transparency and Accountability of

Charities and Voluntary Organisations' and the challenges these present for policy, practice and research.

Highlights included:

- Two keynote speeches: on day one Baroness Onora O'Neill spoke about the issues and challenges of accountability and trust in public life; on day 2 Fran Perrin of Indigo Trust and 360 Giving shared some thoughts and experiences on the role of data transparency in conversation with Karl Wilding from NCVO
- The annual Campbell Adamson Prize for best paper: awarded to Alasdair Rutherford, Diarmuid McDonnell and Eddy Hogg for their work on 'Incentivising Regulatory Participation' which examined the effectiveness of the fundraising levy in England & Wales
- A vibrant New Researchers session, with thought provoking papers from 13 emerging scholars, and the New Researchers' best paper awarded to Joanne Vincent for her paper on 'Compassion in volunteer befriending'
- A stimulating closing plenary, during which we heard from two participants whose work most closely aligned with the conference theme. First, Alasdair Rutherford and colleagues presented their prize-winning research on the fundraising levy, before Rob Macmillan shared some thoughts on how the third sector has been forced onto the defensive in recent times, and some of the shifting narratives associated this.

### **New Researchers**

There were two dedicated events for New Researchers over the past year. In September 2018, the New Researchers Sessions (NRS) ran as a concurrent stream at the Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference in London. The NRS provides a route for emerging scholars and researchers in the field to share their work in a supportive environment, develop a support network of their peers and network with delegates across the conference.

This critical aspect of our work is supported by financial support from two prior grants, one from the Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) and one from NCVO. A portion of conference fees collected also contributes to supporting the NRS. This year, the NRS was supported by Jane Cullingworth, VSSN Steering Group member, and Lisa Hornung, Senior Researcher at NCVO. We had a record number of new researchers presenting – 13 in total. Discussants provided feedback to presenters on their research and presentation skills.

In May 2019, Chris Dayson, Jon Dean and Angela Ellis Paine of VSSN facilitated an event for new researchers at Sheffield Hallam. The event included a session about research presentation skills, a discussion about getting the most from the new researchers' community, and an opportunity to socialise and network with attendees in town for VSSN's day seminar.

Our discussion list designed specifically for new researchers (VOL-SECTOR-NEW-RESEARCHERS) continues to provide a forum for information sharing, networking and support. At VSSN's year end, we had 50 new researchers signed up to the list. If you are

interested in contributing ideas to our support of early career researchers or want to get involved, please email [newresearchers@vssn.org.uk](mailto:newresearchers@vssn.org.uk)

## **Membership**

At 31 July 2019 VSSN had a total of 145 members, comprising 130 individual members and 3 organisational members covering 15 individuals. This represents a small overall increase from the same point in 2018. The geographical makeup of the membership remains largely unchanged, including a small number of people from outside the UK, including the USA, Argentina, Israel, Romania and Japan.

Membership fees remained unchanged again this year, in an effort to help keep the network as accessible as possible.

In 2017 we undertook a survey of members to find out what they value about the network and how better we can support them. The findings from the survey are informing VSSN developments, including seeking to expand our co-hosting of events in partnership with other networks, as detailed elsewhere in this report.

We continue to receive positive feedback from members about our regular one-day conferences and the Annual Research Conference, as well as our journal *Voluntary Sector Review*. Debates at events are always lively, suggesting participants value the benefits of being part of a community of researchers, policy makers and practitioners with shared interests.

## **E-mail Discussion List**

As of 31 July 2018 the VSSN discussion list had approximately 460 subscribers, the same as this time last year. The list continues to attract both VSSN members and non-members and to provide a forum for debate and information sharing. As with last year, however, the list has been relatively quiet in terms of debate and discussion, being more commonly used as a valuable resource for colleagues seeking existing research evidence and references, contacting potential research participants and collaborators, promoting events, publications, jobs, research contracts and studentships, and building networks of colleagues researching or teaching similar topics. We are grateful to all our contributors for their ongoing input and commitment; we warmly welcome further contributions and are keen to restore its use as a platform for deeper discussion and debate.

## **2. The organisation and management of VSSN**

### **Building partnerships**

The successful partnership with NCVO continues, particularly through VSSN's involvement in the Annual Research Conference. Through our two one-day conferences we worked with community-based venues, using their catering provision: the Bond Company in Birmingham and The Circle (CVS centre) in Sheffield, also Sheffield Hallam University. We maintain formal links with a range of organisations through our website and through regular meetings and networking.

### **Steering Group meetings**

The full Steering Group met formally three times during the year: immediately after the AGM and day conference in November 2018, at an all-day planning meeting in January 2019 and after the day conference in May 2018. In between meetings, the Steering Group uses its e-mail discussion list to progress business and holds teleconferences as needed.

At our annual planning meeting the Steering Group identified the following four aims to guide our work; our work in developing these areas is ongoing:

- Support for ECRs/new researchers
- Engaging policy and practice
- Enhanced networking opportunities for members
- Interdisciplinarity – reaching out to other academics

During the year the Steering Group focused its efforts on: delivering our day seminars, events and annual conference; building our partnerships; supporting ECRs; liaising with the VSR editorial board and strengthening our support for VSR; developing our membership base; and publishing a newsletter.

### **Public Benefit**

One of the Steering Group's main responsibilities is to ensure that VSSN pursues its stated aim as a charity of advancing education and research concerning the voluntary sector in ways that provide a benefit to the wider public. All VSSN events are widely publicised and open to all, with modest fees to attend. Similarly our online discussion lists are open to anyone to join. Furthermore, the *Voluntary Sector Review* is now an integral part of the VSSN's work and is an important vehicle in enabling research work on the voluntary sector to reach as many people as possible.

### **Executive Office**

We would like to express our gratitude to our Executive Officers, Beth Longstaff and Jane Leathley, who both support the Network with the utmost professionalism and skill. We would like to particularly acknowledge Beth, our lead Executive Officer. She has provided ongoing support to the Steering Group and our work, making a significant contribution to VSSN not only over the last year, but the past three years. We are very sorry to say goodbye to both Beth and Jane. They have been an exceptional team and will be missed. We wish them both the very best in their future.

### 3. VSSN's Financial Review

The trustees have prepared the accounts on a receipts and payments basis as permitted by the Charities Act 2011 and have done so in accordance with the recommendations issued by the Charity Commission for presentation of accounts on this basis.

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

#### Receipts and payments

During the financial year, membership subscriptions were held at the 2017-18 level. Membership benefits include its journal, *Voluntary Sector Review* and a preferential rate of registration for day conferences and the joint VSSN/NCVO Conference. Total membership subscriptions were £8,340 (£7,790 in 2017-18). This reflects the gain of two organizational members and additional individual members.

During the financial year, day conference fees received were £2,245 (£2,047 in 2017-18). A small surplus was made from these totaling £210.90 (£928.87 in 2017-18). The May 2018 day conference held in Sheffield attracted a good number of participants, but while fewer attended, the vibrant discussions at the November 2018 day conference in Birmingham were also valuable. We also supported the Volunteering research and practice workshop in London in June.

During the year VSSN received a grant of £2,000 from NCVO for work in support of the annual VSSN/NCVO/IVR research conference.

VSSN continued to support the work of new researchers. At year end it held restricted funds for use in furthering the activities of new researchers of £480 (£820.00 in 2017-18). The New Researchers Prize fund stands at £0 (but this will continue to be paid by VSSN from general funds) with £480 from a prior NCVO grant to be directed to early career Researchers attending the annual conference. Further support of new researchers will continue in the coming year.

Funds in the bank at year-end were £26,008.97 (£23,538.83 in 2017-18) which reflects the overall surplus on a cash basis of £2,470.14. In 2017-18 the deficit was £395.39. This year, payments had not been made at year end for certain obligations (see below). The overall effect on an accrual basis would have been to record a deficit of £2,601.82 (compared to a deficit of £1,840.39 on an accrual basis in 2017-2018). This reflects the lower surplus made on day seminars and the costs of preparing for and maintaining compliance with GDPR.

#### Obligations

There were a number of obligations at year end. These consisted of:

- Current liabilities of £1,325 for the fee of the Executive Officer for June to August 2019, £2,970 to Policy Press for publication of *Voluntary Sector Review*, £500 for editorial assistance and £276.96 for the website .

- Other binding commitments of £7,150: the fee of the Executive Officer for at least one quarter plus an additional quarter's notice period (£2,650); likely expenses of the Executive Officer (£200); one-half of the fee of the Editorial Assistant (£500); payments to Policy Press for publication of *Voluntary Sector Review* (estimated £3,500); and expenditure on the website (estimated £300).

### **Reserves policy**

VSSN has a reserves policy. This takes account of obligations arising from VSSN's commitment to the Policy Press for supporting Voluntary Sector Review and its contract for services as Executive Officer with Beth Longstaff and Jane Leathley in the current and future financial years. It also recognises the forthcoming commitment to jointly host the VSSN/NCVO annual conference with an academic partner and the risks involved, as well as the commitment to support early career researchers.

As at 31 July 2019 VSSN's total balance at bank was £26,008.97 (£23,538.83 in 2017-18) of which £25,528.97 was unrestricted and £480.00 restricted (see above). Allowing for current liabilities and other long-term commitments the effective balance was £13,787.01. This is £1,386.82 lower than 2017-18.

These figures mean that VSSN's current financial position is comfortable. However, its financial position is determined by its capacity to attract members and to encourage attendance at its day conferences. There is, therefore, a need to continue to promote memberships (especially from among the large number of those on its web-based mailing list) and to encourage attendance at day conferences and, where possible, to attract additional funding and lower costs for its conferences.

We would like to record our thanks to Beth Longstaff and Jane Leathley for continuing to develop and manage VSSN's financial recording and payments systems and for the high quality of support they provide. This has been invaluable in helping VSSN increase the effectiveness of its financial planning and provide better services to members.

### **Approval**

The trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for keeping proper accounting records for the charity, safeguarding the charity's funds from loss and preparing an Annual Report and Annual Accounts to comply with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011.

This Annual Report has been prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to the non-auditable charities. It was approved by the trustees (Steering Group) on **23<sup>rd</sup> November 2019** and signed on their behalf by:

Angela Ellis-Paine  
Co-Chair

Linda Milbourne  
Secretary

## VSSN Annual Accounts 1 August 2018 to 31 July 2019

### RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNT

|   | <b>2018-19</b>   | <b>2017-18</b>   |
|---|------------------|------------------|
|   | <b>£</b>         | <b>£</b>         |
| Receipts  |                  |                  |
| <b>Grant from NCVO</b>                            | 2,000.00         | 2,000.00         |
| <b>Seminar fees – members</b>                     | 1,595.00         | 1,522.00         |
| <b>Seminar fees - non-members</b>                 | 650.00           | 525.00           |
| <b>Member subscriptions</b>                       | 7,500.00         | 7,370.00         |
| <b>Organisational member subscriptions</b>        | 840.00           | 420.00           |
| <b>Contrib. towards publications officer fees</b> | 500.00           | 500.00           |
| <b>Other</b>                                      | -                | -                |
| <b>Total receipts</b>                             | <b>13,085.00</b> | <b>12,337.00</b> |
| Payments  |                  |                  |
| <b>Conference expenses</b>                        | 216.00           | -                |
| <b>VSSN event expenses</b>                        | 2,034.10         | 1,118.13         |
| <b>Publications expenses</b>                      | -                | -                |
| <b>Publications supplement</b>                    | -                | 3,030.00         |
| <b>Editorial assistant - fees</b>                 | 1,000.00         | 1,000.00         |
| <b>Website development and hosting</b>            | -                | -                |
| <b>Committee expenses</b>                         | 117.00           | 222.80           |
| <b>Executive officer – fees</b>                   | 5,300.00         | 5,300.00         |
| <b>Executive officer – expenses</b>               | 223.10           | 196.04           |
| <b>Database and software</b>                      | -                | -                |
| <b>GDPR preparation and maintenance</b>           | 775.00           | -                |
| <b>Equipment (table banner, stand)</b>            | 51.59            | -                |
| <b>Publicity</b>                                  | -                | 242.55           |
| <b>Early Career Researchers</b>                   | 460.00           | 1,226.98         |
| <b>WorldPay</b>                                   | 366.07           | 323.89           |
| <b>Other (Bank fees)</b>                          | 72.00            | 72.00            |
| <b>Total payments</b>                             | <b>10,614.86</b> | <b>12,732.39</b> |
| Surplus/loss                                      | <b>2,470.14</b>  | <b>-395.39</b>   |
| <b>Balance b/fwd from previous year</b>           | 23,538.83        | 23,934.22        |
| <b>Balance carried forward to next year</b>       | <b>26,008.97</b> | <b>23,538.83</b> |

**STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES**

|   | <b>2018-19</b>   | <b>2017-18</b>   |
|---|------------------|------------------|
| CURRENT ASSETS                                  | £                | £                |
| <b>Monetary assets</b>                          |                  |                  |
| Unity Trust Bank current account                | 26,008.97        | 23,538.83        |
| Total monetary assets                           | <b>26,008.97</b> | <b>23,538.83</b> |
| <b>Represented by monetary funds</b>            |                  |                  |
| Unrestricted funds                              | 25,528.97        | 22,718.83        |
| Restricted funds                                | 480.00           | 820.00           |
| <b>Total monetary funds</b> [Note 3]            | <b>26,008.97</b> | <b>23,538.83</b> |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| <b>Non-monetary assets and liabilities</b>      |                  |                  |
| Membership/day seminar fees owing               | 95.00            | 230.00           |
| <b>Total non-monetary assets</b>                | <b>95.00</b>     | <b>230.00</b>    |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| <b>Total monetary and non-monetary assets</b>   | <b>26,103.97</b> | <b>23,768.83</b> |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| CURRENT LIABILITIES                             |                  |                  |
| <i>Miscellaneous creditors at year end</i>      |                  |                  |
| Expenses payable at year end                    | 276.96           | 120.00           |
| Executive officer services payable at year end  | 1,325.00         | 1,325.00         |
| VSR editorial assistant services owing          | 500.00           | -                |
| Amount payable to Policy Press for VSR          | 2,970.00         | -                |
| <b>Total miscellaneous creditors</b>            | <b>5,071.96</b>  | <b>1,445.00</b>  |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| Deferred income: Subs received in advance       | -                | -                |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| OTHER BINDING COMMITMENTS AT YEAR END           |                  |                  |
| Executive Office contract [Note 4]              | 2,650.00         | 2,650.00         |
| Executive Officer expenses                      | 200.00           | 200.00           |
| VSR editorial assistant services 2017-2018      | 500.00           | 500.00           |
| Minimum obligation for VSR                      | 2,600.00         | 2,600.00         |
| Estimated supplementary obligation for VSR      | 900.00           | 1,100.00         |
| Web expenditure                                 | 300.00           | 100.00           |
| Deposit for day seminar                         | -                | -                |
| <b>Total other commitments</b>                  | <b>7,150.00</b>  | <b>7,150.00</b>  |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| <b>Total current liabilities and provisions</b> | <b>12,221.96</b> | <b>8,595.00</b>  |
| <br>  |                  |                  |
| <b>NET ASSETS AND NON-MONETARY</b>              | <b>13,882.01</b> | <b>15,173.83</b> |



## Notes to the Accounts

1. These accounts are prepared on a receipts and payments basis, with all revenue and expenses shown on a cash basis. Non-monetary assets and liabilities are shown at estimates of the value at the end of the year.
2. VSSN has some fixed assets in the form of banner stands and a table stand, but as these are personalised to VSSN they do not have any disposal value to show on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
3. VSSN has two funds: an unrestricted General Fund and an Early Career Researchers' Fund. The latter is a restricted fund supported by prior grants from NCVO and the Early Career Researcher's Prize. The Prize payment for 2017-18 year of £100 is shown in the accounts.
4. VSSN contracts with Beth Longstaff and Jane Leathley to provide the role of Executive Officer from 1 August 2016 to 31 July 2019 (subject to three months' notice by either party) for a fee of £5,300 per annum. This includes costs of travel to the two-day conferences and reasonable costs of posts and printing. Day conference accommodation and extraordinary costs are claimed as additional expenses. The outstanding payment for July to August 2018 is shown as a current liability.
5. VSSN's contract with The Policy Press for the publication of the *Voluntary Sector Review* specifies two payments, the first a basic payment of £2,600 per annum ('minimum obligation') and a second payment based on the number and income category of VSSN's members ('supplementary obligation'). Due to the timing of invoice by The Policy Press, payments may occur in different financial years than the corresponding membership fee receipts.
6. VSSN has agreed with Policy Press to share the fee (£1,000) per year of the editorial assistant of *Voluntary Sector Review*. The fee is paid by VSSN which invoices The Policy Press for its half of the fee.
7. In most cases members of the Steering Group or their institutions meet travel expenses when attending meetings of the Steering Group held on the same day as VSSN day conference and the annual conference. However, Steering Group members may be reimbursed for these costs when they do not receive institutional support. Apart from this expense reimbursement, no remuneration was paid to any trustee.