

VOLUNTARY SECTOR STUDIES NETWORK

Registered charity:

England and Wales 1114742

Scotland SC052647

Annual Report and Accounts

1 August 2022 - 31 July 2023



Address for official correspondence:

Executive Officer, Voluntary Sector Studies Network

VSSN Office, Foil Cottage, Aberfoyle, FK8 3XF

www.vssn.org.uk

ANNUAL REPORT

Legal and constitutional details

Name of organisation:	Voluntary Sector Studies Network
Legal form:	Charitable Incorporated Organisation governed by Constitution
Charitable status:	Registered charity: England & Wales: number 1114742 Scotland: number SC052647
Correspondent:	Meg Wright Executive Officer VSSN Office Foil Cottage Aberfoyle FK8 3XF
Central e-mail:	execofficer@vssn.org.uk
Website:	www.vssn.org.uk
Objects:	The objects of VSSN are the advancement of public education concerning the voluntary sector in the United Kingdom by: (1) the promotion and diffusion of knowledge; and (2) the publication of research; and (3) encouragement of contact between workers in relevant fields of enquiry; and (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 between August 2022 and July 2023. Affiliations are given for information only; all Trustee Board members serve as individuals.

Chair	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Co-Vice Chairs	Carol Jacklin -Jarvis, The Open University Vita Terry, IVAR
Secretary	Chris Damm, Sheffield Hallam University
Treasurer	Karin Biermann, University of Klagenfurt
Membership and Marketing Officer	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Annual Conference Officers	Jon Dean, Sheffield Hallam University
Day Conference Liaison Officers	Jurgen Grotz, IVR Amy Sanders, Aberystwyth University
Partnership Events	Vita Terry, IVAR
External Affairs & Journal Liaison Officer	Diarmuid McDonnell, University of the West of Scotland
New Researchers	Vita Terry, IVAR Carol Jacklin-Jarvis, Open University
Membership Working Group	Sophie Wilson, BVSC
Ex-officio (VSR)	Daiga Kamerāde, University of Salford
Web Officer	Chris Damm, Sheffield Hallam University
Small Grants	Vita Terry, IVAR Heather Fulford, Robert Gordon University Sophie Wilson, BVSC

Appointment of Trustees

VSSN members elect up to 11 trustees to serve a three-year term of office on a rolling basis. A member of the Editorial Management Board of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as an ex-officio member. The initial terms of office are set according to the results of the Single Transferable Vote. Trustees may serve for a maximum of six consecutive years. A member of the Editorial Management Board of *Voluntary Sector Review* serves as an ex-officio member. 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 Trustee Board, 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 Trustees Board members as set out in the amended constitution. A member of the EMB is appointed ex-officio to the Trustee Board

The EMB is responsible for assembling the International Advisory Board.

Chair: Angela Ellis Paine, City, University of London

Diarmuid McDonnell, University of the West of Scotland (VSSN representative)

Cari Bottois, University of Cardiff / University of Exeter

Jo Crotty, Edge Hill University

Liz Bailey, University of York

Publisher's representative: Edwina Thorn, The Policy Press

Main Editors: James Rees (Managing Editor), Daiga Kamerāde, Lili Wang

Editorial Assistant: Jenna Essex

Policy and Practice editors: Ali Body, Iwona Nowakowska, Francis Davis

Book review editor: Eddy Hogg

For Policy Press: Edwina Thorn (Journals Executive), Sara Bird (Journal Assistant)

Regional Associate Editors: Georg von Schnurbein

Trustee Board Report: activities undertaken for public benefit by the Voluntary Sector Studies Network (VSSN) during the year ending 31 July 2023

1. Co-Chairs' Report

The year 2022-23 has been a successful year for VSSN. Our annual conference was back to full size, hosting over 100 people at Sheffield Hallam University. We welcomed new people onto our Trustee Board who have served with passion and energy. We continued our Small Grants programme, supporting members to deliver projects of interest to the whole community. And we reworked our strategy. We supported the development of early careers researchers through a dedicated and subsidised stream at the annual conference, a series of online peer support events and facilitated networking through the discussion list. We have continued to provide opportunities for inclusive networking between academics, researchers and practitioners, alongside opportunities for peer support and collaboration, through our quarterly newsletters, website, and two discussion lists. VSSN is proud to continue to act as a hub through which to communicate all voluntary sector research and to offer a space for new partnerships to be forged.

We continue to build our social media presence and website, promoting voluntary sector research and VSSN to wider audiences. Through the Editorial Management Board, we have supported [Voluntary Sector Review's](#) editorial team to extend the international reach of the Journal.

We would like to thank the Trustee Board and the Editorial Management Board for their energetic and hard work during the year. We would also like to thank Policy Press for their ongoing support of the journal, and of course the editorial team: James Rees, Lili Wang and Daiga Kamerāde, and consulting editor Carl Milofsky. Thanks also to David Kane for his ongoing support for the website.

VSSN's Strategy

Every so often, the Voluntary Sector Studies Network's Trustee Board undertakes a review of our organisation's strategy. This includes going back to first principles: looking at our charitable objectives and assessing how best to meet them, to serve our members and the wider voluntary sector and associated research communities. At the start of 2023, with the election and appointment of a new leadership team, alongside our transition to a CIO, we decided it was worth renewing our strategic priorities, alongside codifying the VSSN's mission and values.

Following fruitful discussions, the trustee board have worked to develop the below values, strategy, and actions, as well as continuing to run our events and grants programmes. While this is an evolution of our work rather than a revolution, we are pleased to say we plan to focus on the following strategic aims in the forthcoming years:

- Supporting the career development of researchers looking at voluntary sector and volunteering research
- Facilitating knowledge exchange across research, policy, and practice
- Enhancing opportunities for inclusive networking, peer support and collaboration
- Encouraging research on the voluntary sector & volunteering across disciplinary & geographical boundaries
- Strengthening the links, communication and collaborations between researchers, voluntary sector practitioners and policy actors

Especially important to VSSN is making sure our work and actions fulfil our [Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion policy](#), and its principles are central to all of our work. While this work is never complete, we are pleased to present below an updated strategic document, that outlines the activities and

actions identified to deliver on these aims. Our teams of volunteers, within the VSSN trustee board, the VSR editorial management board, and our wider circle of volunteers, will work hard to make these happen. We will hold ourselves accountable to our strategic plan through six-monthly reviews, and updates in our Annual Report and at our AGM.

VSSN Values

The values of VSSN underpin the network’s ways of working and how we want our people to behave and interact. These values include being **collaborative, inquisitive, supportive and inclusive**.

- **We are collaborative** – we look to build relationships by bringing together a wide range of individuals and strengthening collaborations across our stakeholders
- **We are inquisitive** – we are interested in promoting relevant and new insights from current research on the voluntary sector and volunteering
- **We are supportive** – we offer support that aims to enable and encourage individuals
- **We are inclusive** – we work in a way that is respectful, accessible and relational to facilitate individuals sharing their voice and encourage diversity



All this work exists because of the work of our members, supported by membership fees and the surplus we make from our events. It is because of our members and the hard work of volunteers that we can continue the work of VSSN. For this, as a supportive community of practice, we are very grateful. We look forward to discussing VSSN’s role, mission, and strategy with members and non-members at upcoming events, particularly our conference in September.

2. VSSN’s journal, *Voluntary Sector Review*

In 2022-23, VSSN’s international interdisciplinary journal, *Voluntary Sector Review* (VSR), published by Policy Press, continued into its fourteenth year, with three issues per annum. The journal is designed to appeal to a wide readership and each issue traditionally contains over 100 pages of Research Articles, Policy and Practice Papers, as well as Book Reviews, Debates and Research Notes.

A print copy of each issue is a VSSN membership benefit. In November 2022, the journal published a special issue on Muslim Philanthropy guest edited by Shariq Ahmed Siddiqui and Lili Wang. Special issues appear to be one of the ways as to how to attract good quality submissions.

The increasing quantity and, it seems, quality of papers submitted to the journal allows us to publish a greater number of research articles, and since 2021 we have been publishing six research papers per issue as the norm to have a healthy number of papers in pipeline for upcoming issues. It certainly feels that the journal is becoming more international in flavour, and we published a wide range of papers including on relationships between nonprofit organisations and state auditors in the USA, integration and volunteering in Canada leadership training models in Sweden, amongst many others.

Although new sections devoted to 'Comment and Debate' and 'Research Notes' started promisingly in 2021, the demand from authors to publish Comment and Debate pieces perhaps isn't quite there, and we would encourage VSSN members to step up, submit pieces, and help spread the word. The book reviews 'pipeline' is also looking healthy thanks to Eddy Hogg's first-rate efforts.

The editorial team continues to consist of Managing Editor, James Rees (University of Wolverhampton, UK), Lili Wang (Arizona State University, USA), and Daiga Kamerāde (University of Salford, UK). Policy and Practice Co-Editor continue to be Alison Body (University of Kent, UK), Francis Davis (University of Oxford, UK) and Iwona Nowakowska (Maria Grzegorzewska Academy of Special Education, Poland).

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 [Voluntary Sector Review | Bristol University Press](#).

In 2023, the Best Paper in VSR prize, jointly sponsored by VSSN and PP, was awarded to Rowan Magill, Sunny Collings and Gabrielle Jenkin for their paper "The provision of comprehensive crisis intervention by a charitable organisation: findings from a realist evaluation". We hope that the prize will further drive up interest and critically, submissions, to the journal.

The journal has a twitter account: @vsrjournal, with a growing constituency of over 900 followers. This is used to keep people informed about forthcoming content, and the availability of free access articles.

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. Many thanks to Jenna Essex for the excellent support that she is providing 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 meeting to review progress. The EMB is a sub-committee of the VSSN Trustee Board; it is made up of members elected by VSSN, representatives of The Policy Press, and the Editorial Team. Current EMB elected members include Angela Ellis Paine (Chair, City, University of London), Elizabeth Cookingham Bailey (Uni of York), Jo Crotty (Edge Hill Uni), and Cari Bottois (Cardiff Uni); with Diarmuid McDonnell (UWS) as the VSSN SG representative on the EMB. We would like to take this

opportunity to thank Feilim O'hAdhmaill, Joanna Vincent and Geoff Nichols whose terms of office came to an end in November 2022: we are very grateful to each of them for their significant contributions to VSR over the years. For the first time this year, the EMB invited our International Advisory Group members to join us for our mid-year meeting, and this has been established as a new pattern within our meeting cycle helping to extend VSR's international reach. This year the main points of discussion for the EMB included the overall strategy for developing the journal, including enhancing its international reach and reputation, and more generally how to keep building VSR's submissions pipeline, its pool of reviewers, and to continue to drive up quality. We were delighted that in June this year VSR received its first Impact Factor – 1.5. We are particularly grateful to the editorial team for all the work that has gone into strengthening the Journal, to Policy Press for its ongoing support, to the EMB and IAG members, and to all our authors and reviewers whose contributions are essential.

3. Annual conference, day conferences and other events

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

VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference, September 2022

In 2022, our annual Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Research Conference was held at Sheffield Hallam University, on the 15th and 16th September. It was hosted in partnership with NCVO and VAS.

The theme was 'Politics, Partnerships, and Power: Raising Questions for Civil Society'. There were over seventy papers being delivered, workshop and panel sessions, and plenary sessions, with over 100 attendees in total. Plenary speakers included Professor Angela Eikenberry (University of Nebraska at Omaha), Sue Tibballs OBE (Sheila McKechnie Foundation), and a panel featuring Dr Eleanor Rutter (Consultant in Public Health, and Deputy DPH), Gulnaz Hussain (Firvale Community Hub), Abdul Shaif (Aspiring Communities Together), and Paul Harvey (Voluntary Action Sheffield), chaired by Professor Chris Dayson, focused on transforming partnership working and volunteering in a post-pandemic world.

Videos of the three plenary sessions can be viewed online here: <https://www.youtube.com/@vssnsteeringgroup398/featured>. The conference also featured our New Researchers Session, which offered a supportive environment for new scholars to present their work and receive detailed feedback.

Overall, the conference was a great success. It was enjoyable to be back face to face in large numbers, with a diversity of material presented. It was nice to see many people attending for the first time, or for the first time in a long time. Despite a few challenges around food supply initially, our hosts at Sheffield Hallam did a great job, and we returned in September 2023. A loved feature of the conference was the dinner hosted at VAS and supplied by Blend Kitchen, a local social enterprise.

Women and girls and the VCS, online, November 2022

In November 2022, we held an online event on 'Women and girls, feminism, and the voluntary sector'. We held this because the women's voluntary sector is operating in a context of both increased difficulty and opportunity. Research points to the gendered impact of significant events such as austerity and Covid-19 (Fawcett Society, 2012; Women's Budget Group, 2019; Women's Aid 2020; IMKAAN, 2020; Sisters of Frida, 2012) and the impact on women's organisations (Women's Resource Centre, 2020; IMKAAN, 2016). Increased attention, awareness, and media coverage of

issues like sexual harassment and violence against women and girls, pay gaps, women in leadership, and trustee representation have brought issues of gender inequality to the fore in the sector. A new tranche of research and media exposés have revealed gender inequalities, discrimination, and assault against women within charities. Other work has shown how girls who volunteer are coerced and stereotyped in their recruitment and participation. How gender intersects with other often discriminated-against identities is also growing in focus within the sector. Yet women’s organisations within the VCS have historically not received recognition for their important work.

The event featured the following speakers:

- Increasing gender balance in nonprofit CEO positions: How women make it to the top. Jennifer Kruwinnus, Queensland University of Technology
- Ten years evaluating gendered interventions for vulnerable women and girls: What works? Louise Warwick-Booth, Ruth Cross and Susan Coan, Leeds Beckett University.
- Analysing the feminist potential of time banks. Juliette Wilson-Thomas, Manchester Metropolitan University.
- Shifting power to frontline women’s organisations. Rosie Learmonth and Kathy Siddle, Smallwood Trust
- Exploring the ways that schools shape experiences of volunteering for working class girls. Emma Taylor-Collins and Emily Lau, Social Care Wales and University of Kent.
- Girl Voice and Leadership through Crisis and Change: How voluntary organisations and opportunities can empower girls and young women. Sarah Dickins and Leah Widdicombe, Girlguiding UK.
- Women and girl’s organisations: mapping a ‘hidden’ sector and its funding. Lorna Dowrick, Chris Damm and Cathy Harris, Sheffield Hallam University.

Around 60 people signed up with numbers ranging from 25-40 throughout the day. The video of the event can be seen here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bT3U4ZvHVDY&t=576s>. Many thanks to Jon Dean, Lorna Dowrick, and Chris Damm for organising.

The VCS and polarisation, Aberystwyth, May 2023

Many thanks to Amy Sanders and Jurgen Grotz for organising this event, in partnership with the team from WISERD, and to Meg Wright and Flossie Caerwynt, for hosting the online sessions. VSSN will be focusing more on events that include all four nations of the UK in the near future.

Report by Sophie Wilson and Susannah Wilson (BVSC)

In May 2023, we held an hybrid event in collaboration with WISERD, the Wales Institute of Social and Economic Research and Data. The topic of conversation was “The role of community and voluntary organisations in polarisation within local communities”. The first session concentrated on the role of community education for empowering communities to achieve change and overcome polarising discourses. Professor Marjorie Mayo talked about the inherent tensions that community educators have to overcome, with reference to a particular community in Highgate, London. Amanda Morris, from the Muslim Council of Britain’s Centre for Media Monitoring spoke very powerfully about her role in educating communities to empower them to challenge divisive portrayals of Muslims and Islam in the media.

We then had the opportunity to meet different organisations who are working to overcome polarisation in their own communities. Susannah visited different tables and posed the suggested questions around the challenges they’ve faced and what activities they’ve undertaken to tackle those

challenges. The organisations represented challenges such as integrating refugees, intergenerational collaborations, BAME representation, language inclusion, expressing political differences and (the last table) overcoming the division between academic experts and the wider community. It was particularly interesting to talk to those from Aberaid who support refugees.

After lunch, we heard from Anthony Ince from Cardiff University who talked about far-right voluntarism and the 'good citizen'. He talked about the role of the third sector in either perpetuating division or overcoming polarisation, using evidence from a mixed-method pilot study he has conducted. The study provides indicative evidence that far-right individuals are not only engaged in attacks on their sector organisations in so-called 'culture wars' but, crucially, are also often well embedded in local communities as volunteers and 'good citizens', which was really fascinating. This talk was complimented by a presentation by Ali Abdi, a community organiser from Grange Pavilion in Grangetown Cardiff, who has been instrumental in creating community empowerment and cohesion in his community and created a fantastic sounding community venue.

The keynote speaker was Derek Walker, the Future Generations Commissioner for Wales. This is a unique position that is embedded in legislation passed by the Welsh Senedd, not replicated elsewhere in the UK, and it was interesting to hear how this position's existence makes Wales well-placed to resist division due to polarisation. The Commissioner has the power to block any legislation that they feel will inhibit future generations in Wales, whichever directorate that legislation is presented by, which was fascinating.

The day has given us food for thought, lots of ideas on creating and presenting events, and a unique viewpoint into the challenges facing other areas, both organisationally and geographically.

4. New Researchers

We have continued our successful online sessions for new researchers, providing opportunities for people to connect, give and receive peer support. A new researchers' coordinating group oversees the strategy for supporting new researchers and organises support sessions. The network is facilitated by David Bomark, supported by Daniel Haslam, Suzanne Martikke, Helen Abnett, Vita Terry and Carol Jacklin-Jarvis.

To enable new researchers to participate fully in the VSSN research community, this year's New Researchers' stream took place on the day before the main conference. This gave greater opportunity for new researchers to hear presentations and interact with experienced researchers. An online session prior to the conference provided an opportunity for new researchers to practise presenting and discuss any concerns with their peers.

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 peers and network with delegates across the conference.

Our discussion list designed specifically for new researchers (VOL-SECTOR-NEW-RESEARCHERS) continues to provide a forum for information sharing, networking and support and currently has over 60 participants. 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.

Many thanks to Daniel Haslam, David Bomark and Helen Abnett for their leadership with new researchers over the past year.

5. Membership

We have reviewed membership administration and communications and will continue to refresh these over the forthcoming year.

Efforts have been made this year to replace the former credit collection payment system with a new one costing less in collection fees and it is hoped that it will be in place by the time of membership renewal. It is clearly a more efficient way of collecting subscriptions.

At the end of the financial year, we had 87 individual members and 7 organisational members, very much reflecting the membership numbers of the previous year. Of these, 80 memberships were renewals and 7 were new members. Most members are based in the UK, but there are also memberships from Austria, Australia, USA, New Zealand, Malta and Eire.

6. Development Opportunity Grants

These grants of up to £750, aim to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK. The grant can be used to fund seminars, workshops, roundtables, webinars, podcasts, film/animation and other activities linked to research, learning and teaching. The main focus is to bring individual researchers and/ or practitioners and/or policy makers together to create a dialogue on a voluntary sector and volunteering related issue. In particular, we have encouraged applications that will provide on-going dialogue.

We continue to see the impact from the second round of grants awarded in the previous financial year (2021-2022). For example, a second workshop was held on the 13th October 2022 on Place Leadership, debating issues on the relationship between place, leadership and the voluntary sector. The second workshop was held face to face in Birmingham with 6 presentations, a panel on place-based youth leadership and space for discussion between participants and an expert panel. There was lively conversation throughout.

The VSSN grant increased the diversity of participation by drawing on VSSN networks and also added to the legitimacy of the work, developing partnership between VSSN, ICRD at University of Wolverhampton and CVSL at the Open University. Furthermore, it set up ongoing discussions which are now contributing to an edited book proposal for Policy Press, where again the aim is to include contributions from both academics and practitioners that continue to develop a rich conversation and frame a field of studies for the future. In addition, the project has given us fresh insights into the potential and challenges of working across the practitioner/academic divide to generate different kinds of knowledge and set up debate between the two. The book proposal 'Reimagining Voluntary Sector Leadership: The Influence and Impact of Place' has been accepted and book chapters are planned to be written during 2023/2024.

We held our third round of applications for the development opportunity grants and received several excellent proposals. Grants were awarded in December 2022 for delivery between January 2023 and December 2023. We have committed to two projects which are:

- 1) the development of a series of 'Women in Philanthropy' podcasts. The podcast's premise is to illuminate the roles that facilitate philanthropy and seeks to amplify women's experiences working in philanthropy. [WIP Podcast • Michele Fugiel Gartner, PhD \(mfgchange.com\)](#)
- 2) to support the development of a Research Network and Agenda for Women and Girls' Cricket in Scotland. [Scottish Women and Girls' Cricket Research Network LAUNCH Tickets, Tue 14 Nov 2023 at 19:00 | Eventbrite](#)

These projects are still underway, however at the time of writing 6 'Women in Philanthropy' podcasts have already been successfully produced and launched. By December 2023, there will be 10 complete podcasts that were funded by the VSSN. The Scottish Women and Girls' Cricket Research Network will be launched on the 14th November 2023. Reports for the third round of grants will not be submitted until December 2023.

In April 2023, Sophie Wilson and Heather Fulford took over the Development Opportunities Grants committee (to be renamed the [Small Grants Opportunities](#)). The fourth round of grants was launched on the 19th July 2023.

Many thanks to the members of the Development Opportunities Grants committee – Vita Terry, Caroline Walsh and Diarmuid McDonnell.

7. Communications and website

The website has been updated to make it easier to navigate and reduce the complexity involved in the underlying website design. The website no longer contains a database of members and members are not required to log-in to access any material.

VSSN is now on Linked In and we aim to grow our profile on this platform. We have also started a blog series which reflects our research interests with what is happening in communities. For example during Small Charities week we posted a blog with useful links.

8. The organisation and management of VSSN

With our new location in Scotland through our Executive Officer, VSSN registered with the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) in 2023.

Trustee Board meetings

The full Trustee Board met formally seven times during the year. Our early-year strategic planning meeting online was held in a hybrid format, in Birmingham and online. Meeting online in general has proved very beneficial as it is a platform that everyone can easily participate in.

During the year, the Trustee Board focused its efforts on: our strategic redevelopment; recruiting a new executive officer; continuing developing our face to face gatherings; continuing our support for early career researchers through regular online sessions; liaising with the VSR editorial board and strengthening our support for VSR; rehashing our website and online presence; developing our membership base; and following through on our Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy.

Public Benefit

One of the Trustee Board'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 either modest or no fees to attend. Similarly, our online discussion lists are open to all as is the COVID-19 research repository. 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: Policy and Practice papers in the journal, many of which are written by practitioners and seek to advance practice-based knowledge, are now Open Access and free to view by anyone. We continued to offer Small Grants, encouraging and enabling members to develop proposals to support and develop an idea or activity that will benefit voluntary sector studies in the UK.

Executive Office

The Executive Officer plays a key role in the smooth running of the Network, particularly membership services. We would like to express our gratitude to our Executive Officers. Ann Hindley of Cross Keys Associates, supported VSSN for many years until her retirement in Spring 2023. VSSN was then delighted to recruit Meg Wright of Meg Wright Consultancy to take up the role from Spring. Meg has done a great job of taking over the reins, running our back office functions, working with members, and getting involved in all aspects of VSSN's work. We are most grateful to Ann and Meg for their work over the past year.

9. Financial Report and Accounts

The Trustees have prepared the accounts using a receipts and payments basis permitted by the Charities Act 2011 and following the recommendations issued by the Charity Commission to present accounts.

The income of VSSN is insufficient to require an audit or independent examination of the accounts. However, before approving the accounts, the Trustees reviewed and discussed the figures.

Receipts and Payments

As reported last year, VSSN became incorporated as a CIO on 8 February 2022 but remained dormant until the bank account opened on 5 July 2022. With only 3-weeks of operation in the previous year, interpreting the presented results requires caution.

Membership subscriptions totalled £6,685 for individuals and £1,050 for organisations. VSSN's membership year has historically commenced on 1 November. For 2023-24, the trustees have agreed to trial the anniversary date of joining VSSN to better reflect how members make their payments, reduce confusion between financial, anniversary, and membership years, and spread the administrative workload.

Membership benefits include VSSN's journal, *Voluntary Sector Review (VSR)*, a preferential registration rate for day and annual conferences, and the ability to apply for a funding grant. The Development Grant (£480) program has been rebranded and launched as the Small Grants program for following years.

The VSSN Annual Voluntary Sector Research Conference was held in September 2022 in Sheffield, generating a surplus of £9,884 to more than adequately cover the costs of the associated conference dinner, prizes, and other expenses.

VSSN contributes to the publication of VSR according to the number of members. The amount due in 2022-23 was £2,690 (before deducting a £586 credit for a prior year error), less than the total £2930 in 2021-22 due to reduced membership numbers.

The Trustees thank Ann Hindley and Cross Keys Associates, who ended their agreement with VSSN on 31 March 2023, allowing for a one-month handover to Meg Wright as Executive Officer. The handover and associated travel costs led to a slight increase in executive officer expenses for the year.

The cash surplus in 2022-23 was £3,584 compared to the prior year's deficit of £5,152. For information purposes, combining the previous VSSN entity, closed on 5 July 2022, with this current entity produced a deficit of £3,118 in 2021-22.

Current and Future Assets

Funds held in a Unity Trust Bank current account at year-end were £23,776,81 (31 July 2022, £20,193.29), comprising £23,496.81 unrestricted and £280 restricted funds (see below).

Future Assets comprise VSSN's future year reimbursement from Policy Press for VSR Editorial Assistant services of £1,000.

Future Obligations and Reserves Policy

The Trustees revised VSSN's reserves policy for the 2022-23 financial year; a summary of the resulting provisions included in the financial accounts (see Note 8) are:

Purpose	Calculation	Amount
Operations		
Executive Officer's contract	Minimum notice of Contract termination: 3 months	£1,458
EO reimbursable expenses	Known or contingent amount, say,	£200
Website Costs	Annual WordPress Forms Add-on fees: currently £75 pa Monthly Hosting fees: currently £28.80pm; 6 months, say	£75 £175
Evalon Financial Services DAC	Direct debit processing fee: cancellable anytime one month's fee, say	£2
Opayo Credit Card Services	Credit card processing fee: one month's fee, say	£2
Unity Trust Bank	Monthly bank fee £18 pm: say, 2 months	£36
Conference and Other Events		
Annual Conference	To reflect purchase orders/contracts issued after allowing for cancellation clauses. Sheffield Hallam 2023 Conference: say 50% Other catering and venue services, say	£2,000 £500
Voluntary Sector Review		
VSR Editorial Fees	Annual renewal unless terminated: 12 months = Less: Prepayment for August to October Editorial Services	£2,000 less £500
VSR Publication Agreement	Minimum contribution 01.08.2020 to 31.07.2025* £2,600pa at 31.07.2023 means 2 years remaining =	£5,200
VSR Printing Contribution	Estimation: number and banding of members less the minimum contribution; calculated at 30.06.2023 (basis for VSR fees)	£90

The net asset balance was £13,538.81 (£11,081.29, 2021-22), taking current assets (£1,000) and commitments (£11,238) into account.

VSSN's ongoing success depends upon retaining existing and attracting new members, attendees at the annual conference and other events, and sponsors to support VSSN's objectives. Notwithstanding, the current financial outlook appears secure, leading to Trustees considering new programs and initiatives to support members across all stages of their academic and practitioner careers.

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 Charities Act 2011. This Annual Report is prepared to comply with the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008, taking advantage of simplifications available to non-auditable charities. The trustees approved the Annual Report and Annual Accounts on 2 October 2023, which are signed on their behalf by:



Chris Damm, Secretary

26.10.2023



Jon Dean, Chair

26.10.23

VSSN Annual Accounts 1 August 2022 to 31 July 2023

STATEMENT OF ASSETS AND LIABILITIES [Note 1]	2022-23 £	2021-22 £
CURRENT ASSETS		
Monetary assets		
Unity Trust Bank current account	23,776.81	20,193.29
Total monetary assets	23,776.81	20,193.29
<i>Represented by monetary funds</i>		
Unrestricted funds	23,496.81	19,913.29
Restricted funds [Note 2]	280.00	280.00
Total monetary funds [Note 3]	23,776.81	20,193.29
Non-monetary assets and liabilities		
Physical Assets [Note 4]	-	-
Receivables [Note 5, 6]	1,000.00	1,586.00
Total monetary and non-monetary assets	24,776.81	21,779.29
CURRENT LIABILITIES		
<i>Miscellaneous creditors and liabilities at year-end</i>		
Executive officer services payable [Note 7]	-	1324.00
Total miscellaneous creditors	-	1324.00
OTHER BINDING COMMITMENTS AT YEAR END [Note 8]		
Executive Office contract	1,458.00	1,324.00
Executive Officer contingency	200.00	200.00
Web expenditure contingency	250.00	300.00
Bank and Financial Services contingency	40.00	-
Conference contingency	2,500.00	-
VSR Editorial Assistant services [Note 6]	1,500.00	2,000.00
Minimum VSR obligation	5,200.00	2,600.00
Additional VSR obligation	90.00	200.00
Small Grants (previously Development Grants)	-	2,750.00
Total other commitments	11,238.00	9,374.00
Total current liabilities and provisions	11,238.00	10,698.00
NET MONETARY AND NON-MONETARY ASSETS	13,538.81	11,081.29

Notes to the Accounts

1. These accounts show revenue and expenses on a cash basis, recognised at the time of receipt and payment. Non-monetary assets and liabilities are shown at estimated values at year end.
2. VSSN holds restricted funds for furthering the activities of New Researchers £280 (£280 in 2021-22). These funds are from a prior NCVO grant and specifically relate to VSVR Conference support for new researchers. VSSN funded the New Researchers' Prize awarded at the annual conference but did not draw down the restricted funds.
3. Apart from the new researchers' fund (Note 2), VSSN's funds are unrestricted.
4. VSSN has some fixed assets in the form of banner stands and table stands, but these are personalised to VSSN and, therefore, do not have any disposal value to show on the Statement of Assets and Liabilities.
5. Prior year receivables comprise amounts owing by The Policy Press for an invoicing error (£586) offset against expenses in this financial year.
6. The contract with The Policy Press for publishing and printing Voluntary Sector Review includes providing Editorial Assistance Fees. From February 2022, VSSN and the Policy Press share equally the fees of £2,000 pa (paid quarterly) with the accounts disclosing VSSN's commitment and reimbursement for the coming 12 months.
7. The prior year's amount reflected Cross Keys Associates' agreement to extend past the contract end date (October 2022) to facilitate a smooth handover.
8. The Other Binding Commitments at Year End line items reflect the Reserves Policy and calculations at the balance date agreed upon by Trustees noted in the preceding section.