



supporting voluntary and community
organisations in the Borough

BFVA

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action

ANNUAL REPORT AND IMPACT REVIEW 2009 - 2010

Registered Charity Number 1061373
Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England No 3332555

BFVA Mission statement

BFVA is an independent organisation whose role is to enhance the quality of life of the people of Bracknell Forest borough by promoting and supporting the work of voluntary and community organisations.

We will do this by:

- ◆ Helping both new and existing organisations to develop and effectively meet needs**
- ◆ Providing opportunities for organisations to meet together**
- ◆ Ensuring organisations are well informed**
- ◆ Providing initial and ongoing practical support and training**
- ◆ Working with statutory and other organisations to obtain resources**
- ◆ Assisting in the recognition of the voluntary sector as a true partner**

In a way which:

- ◆ Provides opportunities for all**
- ◆ Encourages and helps people to meet their own and other peoples' needs and desires.**

CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

Review of activities

The trustees have pleasure in presenting their review of the year. With the prevailing local and national economic climate it was always going to be a challenging year but that has not prevented BFVA from moving forward.

It was the Board's good fortune to recruit a new director/trustee who had extensive knowledge of commercial property and who then set about finding new offices for BFVA (necessitated by the ending of the current lease). Following lengthy negotiations a lease was signed for part of the ground floor of Amber House. Fortuitously BFVA has benefited from the stagnant letting of commercial property in the town and secured new accommodation at a rent that is just about affordable. However, for the first time in the more than 20 year history of the organisation from BRAVO to BFVA, the accommodation is truly something to be proud of and to provide a really good, professional environment for the staff. It is also more convenient and appropriate for the many other organisations which use the meeting rooms and office facilities. There is also separate office space for Cruse to continue to work alongside BFVA.

Highlights of activities and achievements during the year include the launching of a befriending service, a successful joint funding bid with Wokingham Voluntary Action to employ an Equalities Officer and the annual joint Funding Fair.

An empty shop window in the town centre is being used to advertise volunteering opportunities. The website has been revised. A successful conference was held in May. The 3 editions-a-year newsletter is circulated to all groups known to us and updates and funding newsletters are sent to all members. These are all valued as important channels of communication and information.

BFVA was invited to speak to the Audit Commission and CQC inspection team and received a Mayoral Award for 'supporting the local community', both of these are seen as recognition of the work being done.

The Chief Executive and all members of staff have continued to work hard in their various roles and projects to support and develop the community and voluntary sector in Bracknell Forest for which the trustees would like to record their thanks.

The trustees also recognise that none of the work would be possible without the financial support of Bracknell Forest Council, The National Lottery, Capacitybuilders and donations in kind.

Joyce Ward
Chair

Chief Executive's Report

This year has been another year of growth for BFVA with increased activity across all of the projects reported in this document. We have continued to build on the way we measure the impact all of that work has on our community in Bracknell Borough, but sometimes it feels like knitting spaghetti when we try to link all the strands together to better understand the difference we make. I am immensely proud of the content of this Annual Impact Report and of the staff, volunteers and trustees who support BFVA's work. You will see throughout the report that there are numerous case studies and impact statements, which reflect the benefit to individuals and groups who use our services. I apologise in advance for any omission of any individual or success not mentioned here as it would be almost impossible to record everything that has happened in an extremely busy and changeable year.

There have been further staff changes this year, The expansion of services and projects has meant a number of new faces in the BFVA team: Sue Patterson, Carers' Services Manager; Carole Allen, Fundraising Advice Officer; Sean Hood, Equalities Officer and Rachel Pettit, Young Carers Support Worker. We welcomed back Gemma Frewin as Befriending Coordinator and confirmed Dianne Benford as permanent Domestic Support Coordinator. Outgoing staff were Clare Rebbeck, Sean Hood, due to home relocation and Rachel Pettit due to funding issues.

In addition to the increase of activity BFVA also moved offices in January from Fitzwilliam House to Amber House in Market Street. The new premises are brighter, more accessible and larger, which enables increased numbers for meetings and training events. The move has taken up a considerable amount of time over the last twelve months and I would like to thank the trustees for their guidance and the staff for their patience.

Partnerships

BFVA continues to recognise the importance of partnership working and 2009/10 saw a further increase in that work, both within the sector and with our statutory partners. With the uncertainty of the recession and public service cuts it is important that resources are pooled and concentration of work is given to areas of most need in our community. At times of recession, there is historically an increase in demand for voluntary and community services and the last six months of the year once again saw that demand rise dramatically.

BFVA continues to seek new partnerships in order to strengthen its ability to support the local groups and is pleased that two such partnerships with neighbouring unitary CVSs have resulted in joint funding. The first is an Berks East Funding project with Maidenhead & Windsor and Slough funded through Big Lottery, which has seen a new Funding Advice Worker post in Bracknell and a Procurement and Commissioning post across East Berkshire. The second is a partnership with Wokingham Borough, funded by Capacity Builders, that has seen the appointment of an Equalities Worker who will support minority and faith groups across the Borough leading to an inter Faith Forum. We are also in discussion with Maidenhead & Windsor and Slough about formalising our on going work by creating an East Berkshire Consortium. This will be primarily to strengthen our position to bid for Government and other funding that due to relatively small populations we would be unlikely to be considered for otherwise.

Within the Borough BFVA continues to work with and support the Voluntary Sector Forum, the Federation of Community Groups and Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance and now the new Faith and Belief Steering group. Through BFVA we have also supported and enabled the Bracknell Forest Over Fifties Forum and the four local stroke groups to expand and effectively engage with other agencies. We have also carried out mapping of faith and belief

groups and children and young people's activity in the Borough, which will help partners and ourselves design services and decide priority areas. This work has great benefits to our local statutory partners through better representation of the community, wider access for consultation over major issues and opportunities to meet the community face to face at various forum meetings

As Chief Executive I sit on the Bracknell Forest Partnership and a total of seven themed partnership boards and am now meeting with the Directors of BFC departments on a quarterly basis. This process has been really beneficial and allows for much more detailed discussion than would be achievable at the various board and forum meetings. I am currently Chairman of the newly formed Older People's Partnership Board and of the Equalities Board.

Development

Through the posts of Partnership Development Manager and Development Officer, work has moved forward at an incredible pace in the support, advice and information the local voluntary and community groups have received. The quarterly newsletters continue to be held in high regard and the community lunches are always well attended and found to be extremely useful for relaying information by our statutory partners.

The development of the three strands of work with the Voluntary Sector Forum, the Federation of Community Groups and the Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance has continued and now forms a part of our core work. One of the great successes of the partnership development work has been the formation of a Development Workers Network across agencies and sectors, which has enabled two way communication from strategic to grass roots and more importantly vice-versa.

Volunteering

Increasing volunteer involvement is one of the thirty five local priorities for the Bracknell Forest Partnership and is proving to be one of the real success stories. Tracey Morgan with support from Rita Woolford has increased the numbers of referrals to groups by a further 50% for the second year running. There has also been an increase in employee volunteering with five projects completed by local companies.

Volunteering has always been and always will be one of the main needs of the sector and if the "Big Society" idea is taken up seriously by the new government then investment will be needed not just to ensure that adequate numbers of volunteers are found, but also to enable support in training, inducting and checking the volunteers.

Funding Support

Carole Allen joined the team from the end of July 2009 as part of the Berks East Funding Project and in the first seven months brought in nearly £85K of external funding with many more applications awaiting decisions. Carole has run a number of funding workshops and supported the East Berkshire Funding Fair held at Windsor Racecourse, which is now the biggest in South East England. This role is becoming increasingly more difficult with many trusts reducing their awards due to the decrease in interest on their deposits.

Part of the project is to improve the knowledge and understanding of the issues and the quality of the procurement and commissioning experience between the public sector and the local voluntary and community groups. This has been done through open events for commissioners and training for the VCS groups.

Carers' Services

With the Carers' Services Manager, Clare Rebbeck, leaving the post in the summer, we welcomed Sue Patterson to the organisation as her replacement in November. The Carers' Panel with the support of Rita Woolford continues to monitor the grant budget against the increased number of applications from new found carers.

Jane Currie, Carers' Information and Advice Worker has worked hard with GP surgeries to improve communication and support to the carers and Melanie Randall, Adult Carers' Support Worker continues to run events and training to support carers, which have been warmly welcomed by the carers.

Angela Evans and her small team have continued to support one of the most vulnerable groups of young people in our community, that of young carers, and as you will see by her report has made a real impact on their lives. It was hoped that we would be able to open at least one further club for young carers in another part of the Borough to accommodate those that are on the waiting list and cut down on the time travelling to the clubs for the young people, but although agreed in the young carers' strategy, we were not able to increase this much needed support due to funding cuts.

Domestic Support Service

The Domestic Support Service has proven to be a real success and as shown by the clients' comments in this report, the service is really valued and welcomed by some of the most vulnerable adults in the Borough. There have already been a number of referrals to the service from the BFC personalisation team during their pilot and this is expected to grow in the coming year.

The service has a client base of 210 covered by 31 workers. The workers give the service a very personal touch and are much appreciated by the clients with ongoing contact with clients' families being a very welcome extra and greatly valued by all concerned. There is always a juggling between the increasing the number of clients wanting the service and having enough workers to support the service, but it is felt that the balance is correct at the moment. Strong links with the new Befriending Service have been made with 9 joint clients at the end of the period.

Aims and Achievements

Aim 1

To provide support services that promote voluntary action and help voluntary and community groups operate effectively

Achieved

The support services BFVA provides have increased considerably during the year with the addition of the Funding Advice Worker and the Equalities Officer. These new posts combined with the Development Workers and the Volunteer Recruitment Officer ensures that support services to the local groups are coordinated and cross cutting and in doing so becomes a complete package. There has been a further 50% increase of volunteer referrals made to local groups, which helps meet the increased demand on services. The office facilities of photocopying and meeting room space has again increased significantly over the twelve months of this report, for example an increase of 42% to 526 uses of the meeting room space by small groups. As a result of the mapping carried out throughout the year BFVA 's database of organisations and groups has grown to 535.

Aim 2

To identify local needs and work with communities, service users and other agencies to develop local services.

Achieved

The Partnership Development Manager has continued to work across agencies and to link the grass root activity with the strategic objectives. There has been continued specific work with older people, stroke, faith and minority groups to help design services and strategic plans. The mapping of faith and belief and young people's groups has been especially beneficial to partners. BFVA has also worked on the Carers' Strategy for both young and adult carers. It is worthy of note here that there is real added value of BFVA 'core' officers communicating with and understanding the Care side of BFVA's work and vice versa. Many of the staff are part time and it is important that groups and individuals can get answers to their questions even if a particular worker is not in the office. We feel this is probably unique to BFVA and something which does not happen across other agencies.

Aim 3

Use and strengthen existing networks to provide opportunities for full and accountable representation on partnership boards

Achieved

By support given to the three strands of Capacity Building - the Voluntary Sector Forum, Federation of Community Groups and Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance - BFVA has enabled an increase of elected representation on themed partnership boards and other forums to take place. This has been achieved through open meetings and specially designed training including specially designed representative training for people with learning disabilities and a copyrighted representative training pack.

Aim 4

To promote the role of the voluntary and community sector and establish effective partnerships between VCS, statutory agencies and the private sector

Achieved

This has been achieved through Volunteering "team building" projects with the private sector and presentations by project leads to various companies. The Volunteer Recruitment Officer has also attended two pre retirement seminars.

The formation of the Development Workers Network has also aided the promotion and effective partnership working through exchange of knowledge and issues of local communities.

The compact was updated in May 2009 and became a Partnership Compact to further the ideals of partnership working and improve the understanding of how the statutory agencies and the Voluntary and Community Sector work together.

Aim 5 Internal management – to constantly review and scrutinise the internal procedures, which support and underpin all the other work of the organisation

Achieved

BFVA procedures and policies are reviewed regularly by the Board of Trustees and each of the project funded reports is achieved in the appropriate time period. The annual March to May questionnaire for Monitoring and Evaluation of BFVA, which as a membership organisation guides our service delivery and overall business plan, again received a good response rate.

Aim 6

Improve communications, consultation process and information sharing

Achieved

Acting as a conduit for national, regional and local information BFVA has continued to improve its communication processes by refreshing and updating its website, producing a quarterly 16 page newsletter and an additional members update sent out to 535 organisations. BFVA also has a place on the Partnership Communications Group and oversees VCS input into Community TV with both content and filming support.

BFVA has used its database and networks to assist partner agency consultations. It also regularly sends e-mail updates with time affected events, news and important updates and has now broken this up to varied interests groups to avoid information overload where appropriate.

We also continue to hold quarterly community lunches across the Borough with an average attendance of over 40. The annual Community Conference was once again a great success as was the Volunteers event held in June in Bracknell town centre. BFVA also supported the bi-annual Carers and Voice of Experience conferences.

I would like to conclude by thanking all of the staff, volunteers and Trustees for their dedication, enthusiasm and hard work throughout the year without which none of the work would be possible. I would also like to thank our funders and supporters, Bracknell Forest Council, Big Lottery, Capacity Builders, Children's Workforce Development Council, JJM Taxis, Bracknell Regeneration Partnership, East Berks PCT, Warfield fete, Boehringer Ingelheim, GE Electric, Waitrose and Panasonic.



Martin Gilman
Chief Executive



Jackie Eddolls
Finance Officer

PARTNERSHIP DEVELOPMENT MANAGER

Working in partnership, both across the voluntary and community sector, and with our statutory partners, is always a key part of our work and cross cuts all that we do in order to achieve our overall vision for Bracknell Forest.

Adequate effective and meaningful representation by the voluntary and community sector at the decision making table is a conduit for true partnership working and can be challenging mainly due to capacity issues. However we always promote and encourage wider sector involvement and engagement but at the right stage ie 'at the making up of the menu, not just choosing from it', and that the invite to the table is not purely tokenistic. We have enabled and supported many organisations in getting their voice heard at different stages of the process.

The Over Fifty Forum, previously the Senior Citizens' Forum, has a growing membership and profile achieved with dedicated support from BFVA, and represents the 50+ on an increasing number of statutory bodies including the newly created Older People's Partnership. The 4 Stroke Support Groups in Bracknell Forest are directly linked to the Bracknell Forest Stroke Network through BFVA's representation on this group, and now have a greater say in developing stroke services as well as receiving grants to support their own activities.

Effective partnership working also relies on having the right links and networks in place to ensure a free flow of information to enable groups and individuals to get involved and work together, linking communities with the overall strategic picture. The extensive voluntary and community sector network of volunteers, activists and groups is increasingly recognised as an essential path to the thousands of residents who access the services and activities of voluntary groups, many of whom are often in hard to reach sections of our communities.

The multi agency **Bracknell Forest Consortium** with BFVA as lead agency, has a membership from all partners who in turn have strong links to the statutory, voluntary and faith sectors including the Voluntary Sector Forum (VSF), Federation of Community Groups (Fed) and the Bracknell Forest Minorities Alliance (BFMA). All these bodies work together to provide high quality information, advice and support services to frontline organisations. The Consortium has continued to provide some support the VSF, Fed and BFMA through the Partnership Development role within BFVA.

Voluntary Sector Forum

The VSF is a collective and independent voice for the voluntary and community sector and a platform of elected representation onto key strategic bodies working towards an established two way feedback process. With Grassroots Grant funding this year the Forum has been able to commence production of a regular newsletter to bring together reports from Forum representatives in an easier to read format providing a 'one stop shop' for Forum business and other related activities. In addition the grant enabled the Forum to hold two open meetings, one of which was their AGM event in July, which had speakers from Bracknell Forest Council on Personalisation and the Transforming Adult Social Care agenda, which has many implications for the voluntary and community sector. Many issues and queries were raised at the time, and this huge area of change continues to be a hot topic for discussion.



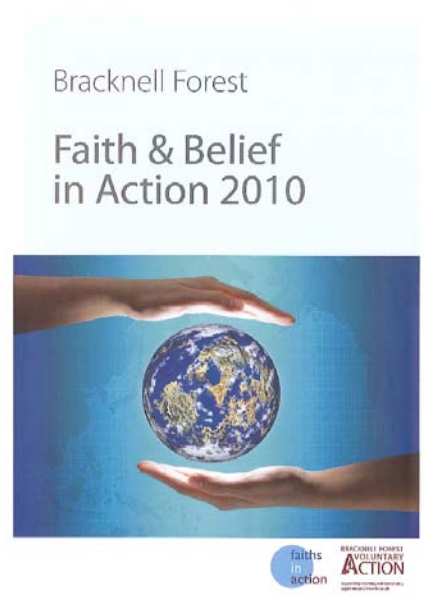
Federation of Community Groups

This year has seen the formation of the new Jennett's Park Community Association (JPCA) run by a group of residents from the new housing development to try and improve facilities in the area. This Association is now an active member of the Federation drawing on the wealth of experience and support of existing Community Associations and other small community groups, linking this new community with the network of voluntary and community activity thereby informing and involving more residents in Bracknell Forest. The Fed continue to organise regular general open meetings covering a variety of topical issues including Bracknell Town Centre, climate change, waste management and fire safety and also support their members through a collective and united voice on common issues.

Equalities

In January 2009, BFVA together with Voluntary Action Wokingham Borough (VAWB) put in a joint bid to 'Improving Reach' for dedicated work in our Minority Ethnic communities, following a need identified through limited existing developmental support. This funding stream was heavily oversubscribed and although we received positive feedback about the proposed project, we were unsuccessful.

However this led to VAWB leading on a Wokingham Consortium bid to the Capacitybuilders Modernisation Fund for an Equalities project covering all strands encompassing more in depth work with faith and minority ethnic groups. However with funders now looking for that 'wider reach' of population, Bracknell Forest Consortium led by BFVA was invited to join this bid, and the project 'Equalities in Central Berkshire' was born. As a result we were able to welcome Sean Hood as the new Equalities Development Officer in September with funding up to 31 March 2011 encompassing all the equality strands but with dedicated support for the development of Faith and Minority Ethnic groups.



Conference speakers
David Jonathan and Sarah Griffin

At the same time BFVA were also successful in a bid to 'Faiths in Action' to fund the 'Faith & Belief in Action' project, and the new Equalities post was able to build on and support this area of work providing an opportunity to add more depth and added value to this project.

The project commenced with a mapping survey of faith and belief organisations and their activities with the results of this mapping being incorporated into a report providing a comprehensive picture of faiths and beliefs in Bracknell Forest. The report also

gave a snapshot of the many activities being delivered across the borough by these organisations, which reach several thousand people, making a significant contribution to the local community. For example, collated results from 23 faith organisations showed a total of 106 different initiatives/projects aimed at benefitting the local community, with a total of 5291 people accessing these activities. The report which included all the survey information, case studies, and recommendations and next steps for the future in order to build on this positive successful start, was presented at the first ever Faith & Belief Conference in Bracknell Forest, held on 9 March at Easthampstead Baptist Church, attended by 61 people from many different faiths & beliefs including Hindu, Muslim, Baha'i and Christian, together with representatives from our partner agencies.

Highlights included speakers from other areas namely Sarah Griffin, Chair of the Reading Interfaith Group and David Jonathan, Coordinator of the Grassroots Project in Luton, who shared their own experiences of faith & belief projects and initiatives, and forums and networks in their respective areas. The feedback from the conference was very positive with a unanimous good/excellent response to the event overall.

From this conference there has been positive take up to establish a Faith & Belief Steering Group to lead ultimately to Bracknell Forest's first Faith & Belief Forum, which will 'own' the actions resulting from the report and be the vehicle for a collective faith & belief voice in the borough.

Bracknell Forest Minority Alliance

The Minorities Alliance continues to be recognised by our statutory partners as a link to minority ethnic communities in Bracknell Forest, with increased requests for 'contact and engagement' with these groups. BFVA continues to support the Alliance and its member groups with the added resources that the Equalities project has provided.



In September, 33 people attended another successful open event covering topical issues which needed views and thoughts in order to influence the way current plans and services are delivered. These included local planning, emergency planning, school governors and the Local Authority's ethnic monitoring. As a direct



result of discussions at this event, Bracknell Forest Council added Nepali, Filipino, Gypsy Roma Traveller and Show People to their ethnic monitoring categories.

A piece of Africa and the Caribbean came to Bracknell Forest in October in order to celebrate Black History Month which promotes knowledge of Black History, Culture and Heritage. The event was organised by the African and Caribbean Frontline Services, a locally based voluntary group supporting and promoting the African and Caribbean community in Bracknell Forest and funded through the Grassroots Grants Scheme. BFVA worked with the group to find a suitable and central venue ie Sandy Lane School and assisted with flyers and other publicity for the event which attracted over 100 people. Zach Anucha, Chair of the Group, welcomed an audience from across the whole of Bracknell Forest, to the event which included choir singers, story telling, a lively steel band and a presentation of artwork produced by African and Caribbean young people and a thought provoking discussion on education. This event was a great success raising awareness of the group and the African and Caribbean culture.

Events pack

As a result of various issues arising from a previously cancelled community event we have been working with the Licensing Department in Bracknell Forest Council to develop a 'one stop shop' pack collating key information relating to planning a public event. This links to the multi agency Safety Advisory Group (SAG) which provides event organisers with guidance and advice, to help ensure that the event is safe for all those who attend. The idea is to provide all the information that is needed to plan and hold an event in one pack together with contact points and signposting to more specialist support. The pack includes licensing information ie the different types of licence, what they do, what is required when etc, together with further information on insurance, food hygiene, fireworks, health & safety.

Older People

The Older People's Strategy, 'Adding Life to Years' developed through a multi agency working group, was finalised and published in July 2009. Work has begun to bring the action plan to life, kick started with the formation of a new Theme Partnership in Bracknell Forest specifically for the 50+. The Older People's Partnership is due to have its first meeting in April 2010 and will be a home for all older people's issues.

One of the areas within the strategy's action plan is around access to information and advice, ensuring that it is open and available to all, providing choice and the ability to have a say in the services and opportunities available. How we communicate with people is key to most strategies and services, and as such could be looked at more holistically across the whole Partnership.



ADDING LIFE TO YEARS

A Strategy for Older People



Bracknell Forest Council August 2009

The borough of opportunity

With this in mind BFVA, Royal Berkshire Fire and Rescue Service (RBFRS) and Thames Valley Police are working on a 'first contact' pilot information scheme for Bracknell Forest to offer access to certain free services to the vulnerable and elderly through a single point. This includes services offered by BFVA and the wider voluntary and community sector, home fire safety checks and smoke alarms and security advice. RBFRS have previously tried similar pilot schemes in West Berkshire and Windsor & Maidenhead. Partners will benefit by being able to reach more vulnerable members of the community, and by working together residents will have access to several different opportunities and services at the same time.

This will be coordinated through BFVA and offered initially to Carers, Domestic Support and Befriending Service clients and the Nepalese Community through the Nepalese Development Worker and the Nepalese Community Groups. It is hoped that the pilot will start in June/July.

Communications

BFVA continues to be an active member of the multi agency Bracknell Forest Partnership Communications Group promoting the work and services of voluntary and community sector groups within the context of the Partnership's vision. In addition by sharing information and processes across partners it further promotes the ethos of joint working. This year Community TV has continued to highlight and promote key messages and services to the wider public in 10 venues across Bracknell Forest.

With support for carers being one of the priorities in Bracknell Forest, BFVA coordinated a short film involving two adult carers and one young carer highlighting their caring roles and raising awareness of the different help and support available to carers across the borough. One of the key priorities of the film was to try to find 'hidden carers' by getting people to recognise their caring role and letting them know that there are a wealth of different opportunities that they can access.

Community TV also offered the opportunity to promote one off events or services, and voluntary and community groups through BFVA were one of the most prolific users of this facility, advertising a variety of events and messages open to all in the community.

Children & Young People (CYP)

With funding received from the Children's Workforce Development Council (CWDC) the Children & Young People's Voluntary and Community Sector (CYPVCS) Forum supported by BFVA have continued to provide a range of resources and activities for voluntary and community sector groups including quarterly networking events, training bursaries, a workforce development pack and a comprehensive mapping of the sector. This year has seen the completion and publication of this mapping report for the CYPVCS in Bracknell Forest. This report highlighted the extensive reach of the sector and the contribution that staff and volunteers make to the children & young people's workforce. In total 10,631 children & young people accessed VCS services, that is 35% of the total in Bracknell Forest. In addition over 124,000 hours are volunteered per year based on an average of 2 hours per week per volunteer.

In addition to facts and figures, other results from issues such as training and development, funding, volunteers and safeguarding have highlighted the need for dedicated support for VCS groups to enable them to fully participate in and link into the strategic picture and also to embrace and comply with the many statutory obligations required in their service delivery.

With this in mind the CYP Forum in partnership with BFVA put forward a proposal to the Children & Young People's Trust Executive for a dedicated CYP Development Worker, which whilst acknowledging that the need had been identified, had no funding readily available in the current climate. The Forum and BFVA will continue to explore funding options for this much needed dedicated support.

Community Minibus

The BFVA Community Minibus was donated to us in 2007 by GMAC primarily for use by the Young Carers' Project with funds raised by their staff which were then matched by the company. The minibus is used for transporting young carers to and from the weekly clubs and also for additional days out in the holidays.

However the minibus continues to be increasingly used by a variety of voluntary groups supporting all areas of the community eg children with disabilities, older people, hard of hearing, adults with learning difficulties and minority ethnic groups. In all this year the minibus was used for a total of 60 trips covering 73 days, in addition to the young carers' activities.



One of the most regular users of the minibus is Winkfield Manor supported housing, managed by Bracknell Forest Homes. They use the minibus for regular shopping trips and pub lunches and outings further afield including old time music shows, the New Forest, Newbury Tropical Gardens and to Rivermead for boat trips, enabling their residents to enjoy a more varied range of activities.



Chris Cowap
Partnership Development Manager



Judy English
Development Administrator

DEVELOPMENT OFFICER

Membership

This year has seen a steady increase in membership, with a mixture of full members and associate members, bringing the total to 535 organisations on our database. Much of this increase resulted from the mapping exercises of children and young people's groups and faith and belief organisations carried out. BFVA continues to be proactive and constantly works to increase our profile within the community by hosting and attending events, networking and advertising our resources including information, advice and developmental support.



Resources

In January this year BFVA moved to new larger premises which have enabled us to offer our members the choice of 3 meeting rooms. Our boardroom, the largest of the 3 rooms, offers a projector, kindly donated by Panasonic, an interactive white board, internet access, flipchart and a large table which can accommodate up to 20 people or if converted into separate tables can be used for training purposes. This year our meeting rooms were used 470 times by our groups and partners and our administration services 569 times, which includes printing, photocopying, laminating etc.

Information/Networking

Information and communication is a key part of BFVA's role in disseminating local, regional and national information within the sector and from our partner agencies, ensuring that groups are kept up to date with legislation, consultations, training, funding opportunities

and events. On average we send out over 30 emails a month to the organisations on our database, many of these are requests from our partner agencies to 'reach' various areas of the voluntary and community sector for consultations and other contact. Our quarterly newsletters and members' updates also provide essential information, contacts and links which are pertinent to voluntary and community groups, enabling them to carry out their key work more effectively.

BFVA's Community Lunches are held quarterly around the borough and regularly have an audience of over 40 who this year have enjoyed talks from a variety of speakers ie Conservation, Fairtrade, Fire Prevention and Protection Advice and the Independent Safeguarding Authority (Vetting and Barring). The lunches are an ideal opportunity to network with other organisations and are often seen as important events to make new contacts and links. Two members of one organisation who recently attended were unaware of the help provided by a local support group offering services for the deaf and hard of hearing. As a result they now attend the group providing them with invaluable information, advice and support.

Our Annual Conference 'Are We Making a Difference' at the Kerith in May focused on measuring the impact of voluntary and community organisations and maintaining independence during the recession. There were many highlights including our keynote speaker, Debra Allcock Tyler, Chief Executive, Directory of Social Change who was very popular with her vocal support for local voluntary and community activity. In all 109 attended the extended morning event with plenty of time for that all important networking. With a mix of voluntary and statutory delegates important links and relationships are established – for example, the Crowthorne Day Centre at COATS met with Berkshire Community Foundation and this resulted in them receiving a grant from the Grassroots Scheme for refurbishment of easy chairs at the Day Centre.



Members

Bracknell Forest Over Fifty Forum (BF OFF)

BF OFF (formerly Senior Citizen's Forum) is going from strength to strength, with membership at present of 161. At a recent Open event and Special meeting members present voted in the proposed change of name to more accurately reflect the national and local strategies for older people.

The Forum received two grants this year with the support of BFVA. A Grassroots Scheme grant enabled the group to hold two further open meetings in Crowthorne and Sandhurst to extend the reach of the Forum's open meetings. This provided more opportunities for everyone across Bracknell Forest enabling all residents to access 'locally' held information events. In addition the grant funded quarterly newsletters which include news and events from the Forum together with information from other voluntary and community groups and statutory partners on issues that concern this growing group. It will also provide a platform for comments and views from residents which will strengthen the voice of the 50+. In addition further funding was secured from the European Human Rights Commission grant which has enabled them to purchase display boards, a pop up banner and information leaflets.

Good Neighbours Schemes (Transport)

BFVA has continued to provide support for Good Neighbours and Voluntary Car Schemes across Bracknell Forest, both on an individual basis and through the 'umbrella' Good Neighbours Association. Collectively the schemes received nearly 6500 requests for help with transport to health sites including surgeries and hospitals. Through regular attendance at their meetings we are able to address any worries and concerns they have with hospital parking, volunteer drivers or volunteer committee members.

Changes in the criteria for the Blue Badge Scheme resulted in the withdrawal of this valuable assistance for volunteer drivers when taking clients to already restricted hospital parking sites. However following discussions with Bracknell Forest Council this decision was overturned with each scheme having one Blue Badge to assist their drivers.

BFVA recently organised a meeting here at BFVA with representatives of all the Good Neighbour Schemes and Mary Purnell, Assistant Director, NHS Berkshire East answered questions and concerns the schemes had with the future of Heatherwood Hospital and the rumours of a possible closure of the hospital. Most of the volunteer drivers do a lot of journeys to Heatherwood Hospital and so were understandably concerned as to its future. In addition BFVA have updated and revised the popular 'Transport to Hospital' leaflet, the reprint of which has been funded by Berkshire East Primary Care Trust.



Kate Eatwell
Development Officer

VOLUNTEER RECRUITMENT OFFICER (VRO)

This year has seen a slight rise in the number of people volunteering, and a large rise in applications; the gap may well be due to people applying whilst looking for jobs and subsequently finding one so no longer being available to volunteer. While the unemployment situation continues to be negative, it is hoped that both volunteers and organisations are benefitting from the rise in numbers. Research has proved that employers look positively at people who are volunteering while looking for work.

There have been quite a few visits by the VRO to organisations this year which has helped immensely in understanding the organisational needs and roles to be filled and thanks go to all concerned for their time,

Rita Woolford has continued to do sterling work in referring the online applications together with the follow-ups, which continue to prove time-consuming, however her achievements in getting feedback are reflected in the statistics. Sincere thanks go to Rita for her continued commitment and support for this work. Not only is feedback needed to prove the effectiveness of the service, it is also great to know that people are being helped!

We have been fortunate to have a shop window in the town centre to enable us to advertise volunteering roles, which has generated a few enquiries. Thanks to Bracknell Regeneration Partnership for allowing us to do this.

Successful Placements

Apart from the successful placements we hear of on an ongoing basis, the 'outreach' recruitment sessions in Crowthorne have proved fruitful; feedback has made the job worthwhile, thank you to Ken Newland, Chairman of Crowthorne Carnival Committee for the following information:

"The Crowthorne Carnival is an entirely volunteer led organisation which organises a Carnival every two years. It is a big event with a full procession (25+ entrants), road closures, fete (over 50 stalls), entertainment stage (local acts), judging, Mayor and other dignitaries, 48 page Programme, and a number of other events during the Carnival week, many of which we organise and run, others we help as needed. We currently have a large team (24 people), five of whom have arrived via the Volunteer Recruitment Service at BFVA. The roles they have taken on are: treasurer; Affiliated Events, Carnival Day coordination and emergency HQ; Programme, and post Carnival one of the volunteers will be assisting us with planning our sponsorship programme for 2012. All roles are critical to the success of the Carnival and of course only reflect the key tasks. Everyone will have extra roles during Carnival week as we all pull together."

The Sandhurst Library event also proved successful, although from speaking to potential volunteers they felt that opportunities towards Surrey/Hampshire would be closer and easier to get to, particularly if they were relying on public transport. It is therefore, hoped to link up to Surrey and Hampshire Volunteer Centres to assist in finding local placements.

Sincere thanks to Jean Heritage, a Crowthorne Volunteer, who assists with Volunteer Recruitment in the Library.

Volunteers Week



Our event in Volunteers Week proved very challenging, bearing in mind it was a very cold and wet day! Sadly, several acts lined up to perform had to be cancelled; Line Dancers and Sandhurst Band amongst others, which was very disappointing.

Despite the rain, 11 organisations braved the elements to staff their stands and raise awareness. Sincere thanks should go to everyone involved, staff and volunteers at BFVA and all the organisations concerned, as well as those who managed to perform fantastically well in the rain. Bracknell Forest Mayor, Bob Wade kindly opened the event, accompanied by his wife, Maggie.



Employee Volunteering

There was a rise in enquiries from companies within Bracknell Forest this year, and an appeal led to a great list of potential projects to choose from with 5 projects being achieved. Thank you to all those who responded.



This is a picture of employees from Quintiles hard at volunteering!

There was a very positive outcome to one, requested by Breakthrough Employment Services, who support people with learning disabilities. A workshop was set up to help clients understand about applying for a job and the workplace. Breakthrough fed back this information:

“Eight people attended the workshop - Barbara and I supported. Workshop was Career advice and planning which covered:

- *What you can do, What do you love, What is your talent, What you can become, Strengths etc*
- *Finding a job - target companies, research*
- *CV and covering letter*
- *Application forms*
- *First impressions*
- *Interviews*

The group said that they enjoyed the workshop and will use what they learnt to look for work. The workshop was held at the company - which again was an experience that the group hadn't had before. The workshop was pitched at the right level with a good mix of theory and role play etc, so that the attendees got the most they could from it.

Statistics

These cover the period 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2010

Online Applications:	706
Office Interviews:	95
Referrals:	929
Placed:	88

The Future

It is hoped to continue finding suitable placements for people looking to volunteer, to build on the relationships with different agencies and organisations with clients looking to volunteer and develop the employee volunteering side. Regular advertising space in the Bracknell News is proving very popular with several enquiries as a result.



Tracey Morgan
Volunteer Recruitment Officer

Introduction

The Berkshire East Procurement and Funding Project was launched on 27th July 2009 and is a joint project delivered in partnership with Slough Council for Voluntary Service, Windsor and Maidenhead Voluntary Action and Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action. The project is funded by the Big Lottery for three years until 2012. The lead agency for the project is Slough CVS. The broad aim of the project is to significantly improve the revenue gathering potential of the voluntary sector in this area. This report covers the period from 27th July 2009 to 31st March 2010.

Project Overview

The key priority of the project is to improve the infrastructure support in the form of a more effective, structured funding support service for the voluntary and community organisations across East Berkshire. There are two strands to this project:

- (i) Advice and support to voluntary and community groups in identifying sources of grant funding and improved application and bidding techniques
- (ii) Commissioning and procurement process from the statutory sector to the voluntary and community sector and the development of more effective strategies and systems to increase the financial potential of procurement to the voluntary and community sector.

There are two funding advisors for the project, Carole Allen for the Bracknell area, working 21 hours a week over three days, usually Monday, Tuesday and Thursday. Ray Emmans is the funding advisor for Slough, Windsor and Maidenhead; generally Ray is at Slough CVS on a Tuesday and at Windsor and Maidenhead VA Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, working 28 hours a week. The Procurement and Implementation Officer is Dave Furze who works three days (21 hours) a week at Slough CVS. His appointment is for two years and the funding advisors are for three years.

Key Achievements

The key achievement of the project can really be identified as the number of groups that have been successful in obtaining funding. To 31st March 2010, £84,827.15 of grants has been received by 15 groups in Bracknell Forest.

The total amount of grants received across East Berkshire to 31st March 2010 totals £315,425.15 which is the Bracknell Forest figure, plus £225,798 for Slough and £4,800 for Windsor and Maidenhead.

I have met with local groups and organisations on a one-to-one basis giving advice about making grant applications as well as proof reading some applications for them prior to their submission.

Case Study 1:



Bracknell Forest Over Fifty Forum (formerly the Bracknell Forest Senior Citizens' Forum) received £646 from Equality and Human Rights Commission's 'Older Bursary Scheme' for assistance with publicity costs and promotional material for the forum following its recent name change.

Case Study 2:



The Bracknell Area Deaf and Hard of Hearing Support Group (BADHOGS) received their second grant from Grassroots Grants. Geoff Hallett, BADHOGS Secretary said “We at BADHOGS are very grateful to the Berkshire Community Foundation for awarding us this second Grassroots grant of £2,325. We also had wonderful support from Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action who gave good advice during the application process. The grant will enable us to develop our Deaf Awareness campaign

throughout Bracknell Forest starting from the town centre during Deaf Awareness week June 28th to July 4th 2010. The grant will also help part-fund a portable loop system to help those of our members who use hearing aids.”

Case Study 3:

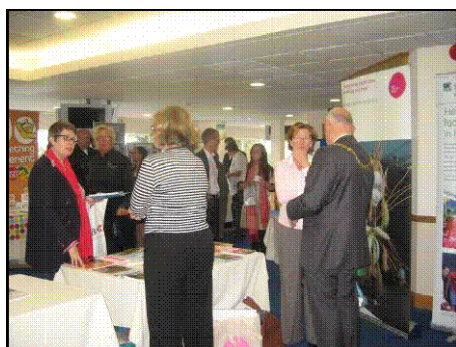


Thursday Stroke Club received a grant of £1,000 from Grassroots Grants. Freda Crookall, the Stroke Club’s Organiser, applied for this grant to help cover transport costs for the club’s members. Many of the members are frail and the offer of transport is crucial for them to be able to attend the club. This is the second grant that they have received from Grassroots Grants; in 2008/09 the club received a grant of £1,890 to help with the transport costs, rental costs and to help with the cost for two members to attend the annual conference.

Diary of Events

Funding Fair – September 2009

The annual East Berkshire Funding Fair was held on 30th September 2009 at Windsor Racecourse. This is the third year the fair was held at this venue and the third year that BFVA has been involved in this event. 180 people attended the funding fair, with a range of people from established, funded organisations to those from small groups that had recently been formed. The photograph shows Councillor Bob Wade (Mayor of Bracknell Forest Council 2009/10) viewing the stands in the main auditorium.



Debra Allcock Tyler, Chief Executive, Directory of Social Change opened the day with an inspirational and encouraging talk about the value of the voluntary sector and the funding issues that it faces at this time of change. The day was a mixture of networking, information from funding organisations such as Big Lottery, Children in Need, Lloyds TSB Foundation and Berkshire Community Foundation as well as workshops across a range of funding issues. It gave an opportunity for delegates to meet with each other and gather information. There was also an opportunity for

delegates to have a 10 minute one-to-one session to help with more direct enquiries from groups.

There has been feedback from the people that attended the day — many thought that “the day was the best yet”, “nicely organised event with useful workshops and contacts”, “helpful, informative and friendly”, a most useful and enjoyable day”.

Planning is currently underway for the Funding Fair on 29th September 2010 again this will be at the Windsor Racecourse.

Newsletters

Three issues of the project's planned four newsletters in the year have been circulated to all members of the three CVS's and other interested groups and associations. There have also been two separate information sheets about different funding streams which have gone out between the newsletters. There has also been one funding newsletter specifically for schools and groups involved in education as there were several funding streams that were particularly for schools. These newsletters have also been out on our website for people to access these on-line.

Find out About Funding Workshops

We have held Find out About Funding Workshops across East Berkshire. The first one was held in November 2009 at Easthampstead Baptist Church – this was well attended by 38 people and information was given about national and local funders, the procurement role of the project and tips on filling out applications for funding/grants. We have also held these in Windsor at the Resource Centre and at the Slough CVS offices. On the whole these have been well received by the delegates as they are free to attend, we provide a sandwich lunch and generally have information from national funders that they can take away. There are more planned across the year – including a smaller workshop for those groups in Windsor and Maidenhead area who have an income of under £30,000. This will be at Ascot in April 2010.

Open 4 Communities

For the year April 2009 to March 2010 the number of visits to the Open 4 Communities webpage was 187.

Impact Statement

The Berks East Funding Project is working across East Berkshire - “supporting the voluntary and community sector in obtaining funding” - enabling groups and local organisations target funding streams that may be able to help them continue the good work that they do in the area.



Carole Allen
Funding Advisor

CARERS' SERVICES MANAGER

Sue Patterson took up the post of Carers' Services Manager at the beginning of November 2009. At the time Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action was in the midst of organising the move from Fitzwilliam House to Amber House – a move made more difficult by the snowy conditions of December and January! The Carers Team took the move in its stride and quickly settled into the new premises.

The Carers' Advice and Information Worker (CIAW) is increasingly busy as carers and other organisations become aware of the existence of the role. Advice is offered at carers' events, on the telephone and by home visits – in fact the number of home visits has increased from 13 (over a period of 5 months) to 70 this year. An increase of 438%! In order to meet this increasing demand the Adult Carers' Support Worker now also undertakes home visits. Links with GP surgeries have improved hugely in this last year. The CIAW also notifies the relevant surgery of each individual carer she meets (subject to the carer's consent) so the surgeries are aware which of their patients are carers which will enable surgeries to give better support to their carers

The Adult Carers' Support Worker continues to organise 6 social/training events a year which are very popular with carers. In order to make the events as accessible to carers as possible we reimburse the cost of a sitting service for the person they care for and transport is arranged where necessary. The Adult Carers' Support Worker also keeps the Carers' Information Pack up to date – carers tell us that these packs are very useful. Over 240 packs have been given out this year.

The Domestic Support Service continues to thrive. The number of clients has increased from 177 last year to 210 this year – an increase of approximately 13.5% The service prides itself on responding quickly to potential clients and visits all of them at home to explain how the service works before allocating a worker. The administrator for the service is being trained to carry out home visits to help ease the pressure on the co-ordinator when she takes annual leave.

The Carers' Grant Administrator has seen over 200 carers awarded grants to help them get a break from their caring roles. This is an increase of 30 from last year. In addition over 100 carers and some carers groups have received extra monies for respite from the Primary Care Trust. The Administrator was pleased to see how much the extra money was appreciated but it did mean a great deal of extra work for her!

The Young Carers' Project continues to offer the only specialist support to young carers and their families. Perhaps the highlight of the year for the young carers was a trip to Euro Disney funded by an anonymous donation. It was the trip of a lifetime for many of the young people and credit must go to the Young Carers Co-ordinator for organising the trip and for her willingness to take on such responsibility. The project is currently under review and it is hoped that the local authority will be able to fund the project at a level which will enable it to continue and develop its work with young carers

Generally the team has been trying to raise its profile. There have been monthly articles in the Bracknell News highlighting a "story" from each of the services. Presentations have been made to various teams within Social Services and Community Mental Health to increase the mutual understanding of services offered. Work with Social Services is also underway to develop a single assessment form for carers to try and prevent carers having to complete different forms for different organisations.

Sue Patterson
Carers' Services Manager

ADULT CARERS' INFORMATION AND ADVICE WORKER

The role as the Carers' Information and Advice Worker (CIAW), which is funded by Big Lottery, is to find 'hidden' adult Carers living in Bracknell Forest and provide them with support and access to information. The CIAW offers home visits to explain about the Carers' services we provide, give advice on benefits, social care services, signpost to local support organisations and agencies, make referrals and provide support and a listening ear to the Carer's often demanding and emotional caring role

This period the CIAW has made 70 home visits compared to the previous period's 13 home visits (it should be noted this latter period is from 1 October 2008 – 31 March 2009 as 1 October was the CIAW's joining date). This is still a vast increase and reflects the value and impact our carers services have on carers in Bracknell Forest. Repeat home visits have also increased and reflects the trust carers show in our CIAW to help with any questions or concerns that occur in their continuing caring role and unique bonds are forged between carers, cared for and the CIAW. The CIAW also offers advice and help to carers on a daily basis via phone call queries, carers' events and meetings, which are not reflected in the key statistics in this report.

The role is Big Lottery funded for 5 years and has 5 Project Outcomes and Milestones to be adhered to. The second Big Lottery End of Year Report to provide information to the Big Lottery on how the Project has progressed over the past year, concentrating on the outcomes of the Project will shortly be completed.

One of the Big Lottery Project milestones is to conduct an annual survey of all adult Carers accessing BFVA services in each year regarding the impact the service has had on them and their lives. The results of this year's survey are shown later in this report. 63 responses were received (just over 19%). One of the questions we asked was 'If you have had a home visit from the Carers Information and Advice Worker, did you find it valuable, and if so why?' Results showed that 68% gave the highest rating to our question, 19% rating it the second highest score and 13% rating it as third highest. No lower scores were received.

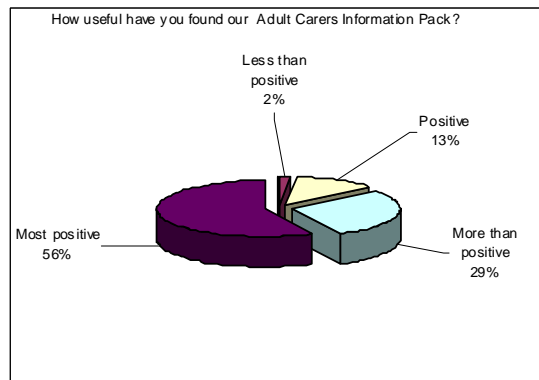
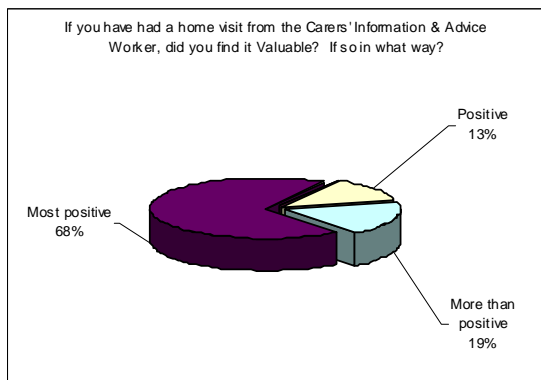
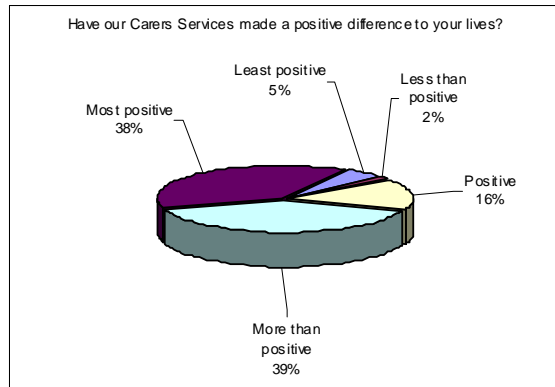
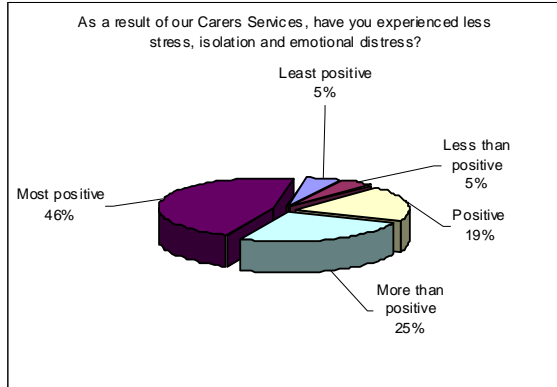
The CIAW promotes our adult carers services, gives talks at local support group meetings, GP surgeries and local organisations to educate and highlight the carers services we provide and explain our referral process.

Our partnership working with GP surgeries is progressing well. 12 surgeries now have our dedicated carers notice board and leaflet holders in their waiting rooms, and we have given a number of carers talks to surgery staff across Bracknell Forest. We strongly believe telling your GP you are a carer can help him or her support you but there may be times when information, advice or some extra help is needed. It is therefore important that strong links are forged with our local surgery staff so that they are confident in referring their patient carers onto us in the safe knowledge that we will support them to the best of our ability in their caring role.

N.I 135 (National Indicator 135 - Carers receiving needs assessment or review and a specific carers' service or advice and information) – Local Area Agreement. This became one of the top 35 priorities for the local Borough under the Local Area Agreement and all monitoring of this outcome and therefore this Project is now entwined in the Local Area Agreement and has to be reported on a quarterly basis. This has given this Project's work a higher profile than it may have had originally.

2010 BFVA Adult Carers Services Survey Results

Based on rating scores 1-5, 1 being least positive impact, 5 being most positive impact



Here are just a few additional comments Carers wrote alongside the completed form:

- *A very caring, patient lady who listened.*
- *Jane's visit gave me so much information and really made me feel I'm not alone. She put me in the right direction of benefits I am able to claim in respect of my husband. She was so positive to me that I now work with Diane (Domestic Support) only part time about 7 hours a week to give something back to the service. it makes a difference to other people in the same position as myself. This is a fantastic organisation with so many dedicated workers.*
- *Jane is an excellent listener. She gave me her time, support and advice. She made me feel like 'me' again, and put me at ease during her visit. She made me feel that I was not alone and that carers stress can be real and distressing. Jane listened to what I had to say and I felt that it was valuable to have someone to listen to what it's like to care for a loved one. She was not judgmental and I felt relaxed in her company. She gave me advice and support at a difficult and distressing time. The information is very useful and has put me in touch with carers groups and other means of emotional support. I would definitely recommend your service in future.*
- *Cheers me up enormously.*

- *The most important thing to me is her genuine caring and kind attitude. I feel she is trustworthy and I could go to her with any problem concerning my role as a carer.*
- *Jane is great and so helpful in every way and all the team. Young Jane is so happy and alive, when she comes on her home visits, it just makes the day for me and my husband who has Alzheimer's, but is happy to see her, the whole group is just great.*
- *The role of BFVA has and indeed is making a huge improvement to carers' lives and those whom they care for. To be acknowledged with respect for the important part carers play, whether at the onset of caring or after many years of doing so, aided by the support and help given and shared not forgetting all the social events so well enjoyed and thoughtfully organised, is indeed voluntary action at its best and much appreciated.*
- *I'm so pleased to have found BFVA, it has changed my life since we moved here eight months ago, so much information I would never have found out about before, I told my neighbours things they didn't know, they've lived here for 16 years, about bus passes, help with the one you care for, lunches and talks, grants, always willing to help, it's just great, anything you need to know they are all there to help. I think the pack is very good, lots of useful information. This group has made my life a much easier one, with so much help and information and just being there to talk about anything and everything.*
- *I value my time spent with other carers once a month and find it very therapeutic. It is very refreshing to have someone like Jane attend our meetings; she is a fountain of information and a shoulder to cry on (poor Jane). Her effervescent persona brings joy to the most troubled of heart. Keep up the good work!*

Case Study 1

The CIAW met a carer at the Carers UK Lunch, who asked for a home visit as she needed someone to talk to. During the home visit the carer explained about her husband's illness and the impact it has on her on a daily basis. She was concerned about finances since leaving employment, and asked whether there was any assistance she could apply for. The CIAW asked pertinent questions concerning their current financial situation and suggested the carer may be entitled to Carers Allowance and Housing & Council Tax Benefit, and confirmed that we could help with the forms if required.

The CIAW explained about our Carers services and that the carer may wish to apply for a Carers' Grant which would go towards the cost of a holiday for her and her husband to visit her brother, which they could not necessarily have afforded by their own means.

The carer also said that she would love to find a small, part time job, which would help her on two different levels – one to help financially and the other to help with getting out of the house and meeting other people. The carer explained about the kind of work she would be interested in, and the CIAW explained about our Domestic Support Service and whether she would be interested in becoming a worker. She loved the idea of this kind of work, and also thought that she would be a good asset to have in the team, with her personal experience. The CIAW advised that as long as she worked less than 16 hours a week it would not impact on any future claim for Carers Allowance. The CIAW collected an Application for Housing and Council Tax Benefit from Time Square Council Offices and dropped it off to the carer to complete. (The carer did not require help with any of the forms).

Outcomes:

- The Carer's application for Housing and Council Tax Benefit has been successful and now does not have to pay any council tax.
- Carer has been awarded Carers Allowance.
- Carer has been awarded a Carers' Grant and will take her husband on holiday in May.
- Carer met with the Domestic Support Service team and has been accepted as a Domestic Support Worker. She is loving the opportunity to meet other carers and vulnerable people in Bracknell Forest, and enjoys being able to leave her caring responsibilities behind for a few hours a week, in the safe knowledge that her husband is being cared for by family.

Case Study 2

Registered a new carer with us and booked a home visit with her. She cares for her husband and they currently do not wish to have any package of care from social services. However, they were getting to the stage that they needed financial help and wanted to know if they were eligible for anything. Spoke to the couple and found out about the husband's disability. Suggested he may be entitled to Attendance Allowance, explained what it meant, and made a referral to the Department for Work & Pensions for help completing the form.

Outcomes:

- Attendance Allowance has been awarded.
- The carer has asked for more BFVA Carers leaflets to pass onto her friends and has made a referral for a carer friend of hers to join our carers register. A home visit has been booked.

**Jane Currie**

Carers' Information and Advice Worker

ADULT CARERS' SUPPORT WORKER

The Adult Carers' Project aims to provide unpaid informal carers with day to day support in their caring roles. We provide these carers with the opportunity to attend social events where they are able to socialise with other carers. In addition we organise learning events where carers gather information and keep up to date with local developments in carers issues. Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action prides itself on enabling carers to attend events wherever possible by covering the cost of professional respite for the person they care for as well as offering transport where necessary. Carers who come to these activities often say that it is a great relief to meet other carers experiencing similar feelings/situations and a noticeable level of emotional and practical support has developed amongst carers who attend these events.

Key Statistics

85 New Carers were added to the BFVA Carers Register this year

Quotes from Carers

- *"I cannot thank you enough for the kindness and support that you gave me in the short time of knowing yourselves. You are an Organisation that is invaluable and whole heartedly needed in the community."*
- *"I'd like to say that I think you are offering really good support for Carers in the Bracknell area with these events."*
- *"I really enjoyed meeting other Carers and seeing how they were being affected by their loved ones. I loved the fact that we could all network and learn from each other..."*
- *"I thought it was an excellent event, and I felt that as Carers we were really supported and that there was a strong team of people (such as you!) who were full of energy and determined to provide a really effective framework for Carers. Thank –you- very much appreciated!"*
- *"Although I will not be able to attend most of your things, I want you to know I appreciate your support and caring. Knowing you are there gives me strength in my situation so do not take my lack of attendance as lack of appreciation."*

Years Events:

Age Concern Open Day - April 2009:

This was an open event for all older people and BFVA Carers' Services were invited to set up an information table - 2 new Carers were found during this event. Councillor Cliff Thompson (Older People's Champion) attended the Open Day and offered his ongoing support with any Carers' issues that I encountered difficulty resolving.

Carers Information Support Network – April 2009 *Stress Management*

This event was set up for carers to discuss the stresses that can come along with a caring role. Mary Oorloff of ReThink spoke to the carers about the definition of stress and suggested some ways of coping. 21 carers attended this event at the Kitty Dancy Room in Sandhurst where they were treated to fresh fruit, tea, biscuits and of course some

chocolate! There were also several very helpful leaflets available with tips about coping with stress. These leaflets were distributed to Carers who were unable to attend but were keen to have the information.

Carers Week – June 2009 *The launch of the Carers Emergency Respite Scheme*

This event was organised in partnership with Barbara Briggs of Carers UK and the Princess Royal Trust to both celebrate Carers Week and to launch the Carers Emergency Respite Scheme where carers were treated to a sit down meal. The event ended with a live performance by the singer Lynne Roper. The lunch was attended by 60 carers. 11 carers were provided with transport and 2 carers were reimbursed the cost of respite for the people they care for.

Carers Information Support Network – June 2009 *Health Space meeting*

This event was held at Priestwood Youth Centre allowing carers the opportunity to pose questions about Bracknell's Health Space as well as get up to date information of the latest developments. 32 carers attended this event. After this meeting we produced the final newsletter with the information from the previous two meetings which we distributed to all Carers registered with Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action. The Carers Information Support Network has now ceased to operate as the funding for the project has run out.

Carers BBQ- August 2009 *A chance to relax and socialise*

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action held a Carers BBQ to give carers the chance to relax and socialise. 57 carers attended this event where we also had a few crafts to try out. Jewellery making, card making and a few do-it-yourself crafts such as paint by numbers and model making were on offer. We were given several donations for this event - £250 from Boehringer Ingelheim which we used to purchase 10 £25 vouchers for Sainsbury's, a Panasonic hi-fi system from Panasonic, a £25 voucher for a meal at the Wellington Arms Pub and a 3M gift box. All of these great prizes were raffled off in a free draw.



Carers UK Lunch- September 2009 *Personalisation- with Derek McCarthy*

This was a lunch put on by Carers UK with BFVA taking care of the administration. There were a total of 57 Carers in attendance who learned about the personalisation scheme and enjoyed a sit down meal and a chance to socialise.

Patient Focus Group- September 2009

Health Awareness Forum

I was invited by a carer who is a member of the "Patient Focus Group" to come along to a meeting that was to be attended by local GP's and provide an information table to show them the support offered to carers from BFVA. We found 2 new carers at this event.

Carers Pamper Day – December 2009

A chance for Carers to relax

This event was the Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action Christmas event and an opportunity to treat carers to a well deserved break. This day was held at the Grange Hotel in Bracknell who gave us star treatment at a discounted price. We are proud to say that this event proved to be the most successful of the year with a record 94 carers attending. carers were provided with a hot lunch and the chance to enjoy the complimentary therapy treatments on offer which included toe nail trimming, hand massage, leg massage, Indian head massage & Reflexology. Transport was provided for 22 people and respite care costs were met for 4 carers.





- *“I really enjoyed myself, this was my first opportunity to meet other Carers and it certainly put my role in perspective, realising that others have a far more exacting part to play with their families.”*
- *“Thank you so much for a super fun time on Friday-great fun, very relaxing, and I was impressed by the hotel staff and catering as well.”*
- *“Just wanted to thank you and the team once again for all your hard work and endless enthusiasm on Friday- it was lovely to have a few hours to myself!”*

Carers UK Christmas Lunch- December 2009

Carers were treated to a sit down turkey dinner as well as an opportunity for Carers to socialise with other Carers, ex-Carers and most importantly, have some time for themselves. 78 Carers attended this event. This event was supported by BFVA by booking taxis, sending out the invitations and keeping tally of attendees.

Peter Pan Pantomime- November 2009 - South Hill Park

We had a very unexpected kind offer from Paul Stewart Marketing Director of South Hill Park of 20 free tickets to a pantomime. This was the first show for the season and was opened by the Mayor.

Carers UK Carers Lunch March 2010 - Individual Carers Grant

At this event Carers were invited to a sit down meal where they were able to socialise with other Carers and hear updates on the funding for the individual Carers Grant. 89 Carers attended this lunch.



Melanie Randall

Adult Carers' Support Worker

CARERS' GRANT ADMINISTRATOR

I administer the Carers' Grant at BFVA and this has been another busy year. As more Carers get to know about the Carers' Grant we receive more first time applications as well as repeat applications. A Carer is someone who provides unpaid regular and substantial care for another person due to illness, disability or frailty. The grant is to give the Carer some respite from their caring role and to enable them to continue caring. The funding for the Carers' Grant comes from Central Government via Bracknell Forest Council to BFVA. We keep statistics to show how the money is allocated for both ourselves and BFC.

This year we also received extra monies from the PCT to be awarded to carers for respite. The PCT criteria was slightly different from the usual Carers' Grant and enabled the carers to use the monies for such things as hairdressing, gardening, meals out, theatre trips etc which was much appreciated by the carers. We continue to advertise the Carers' Grant in our newsletters, with leaflets, in surgeries and the local paper.

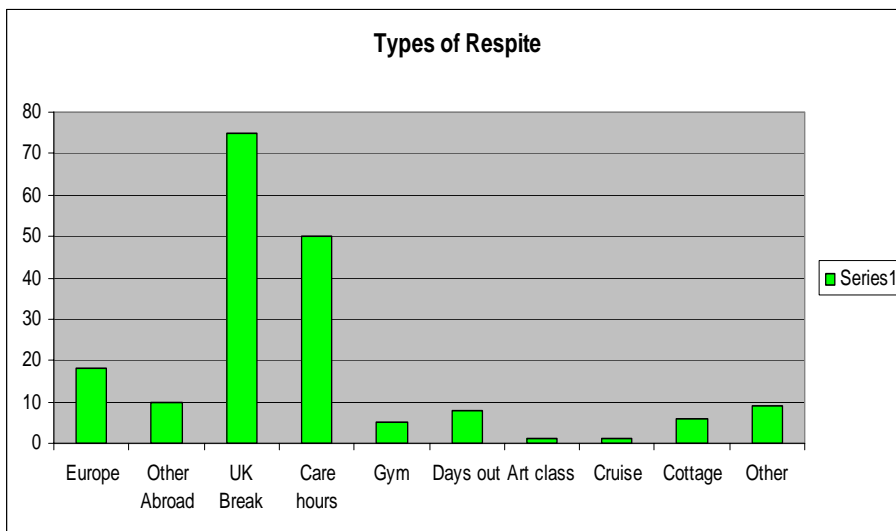
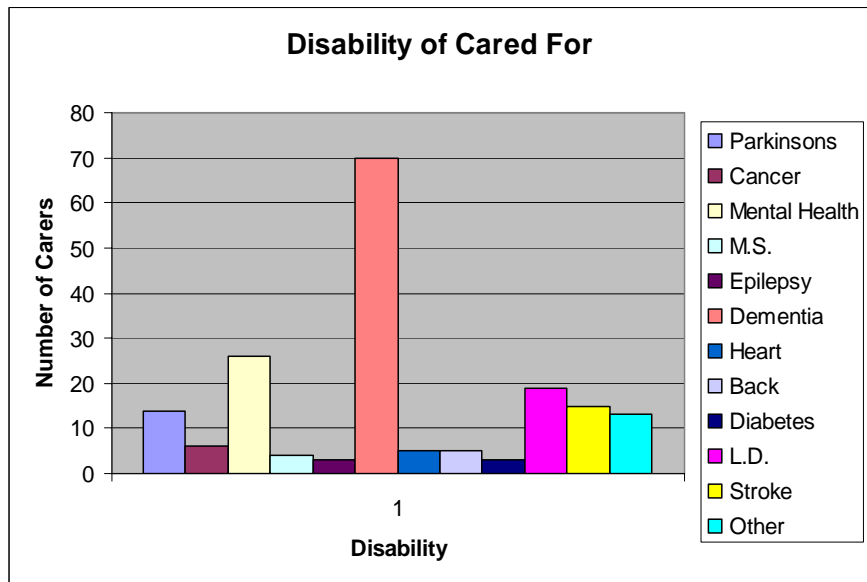
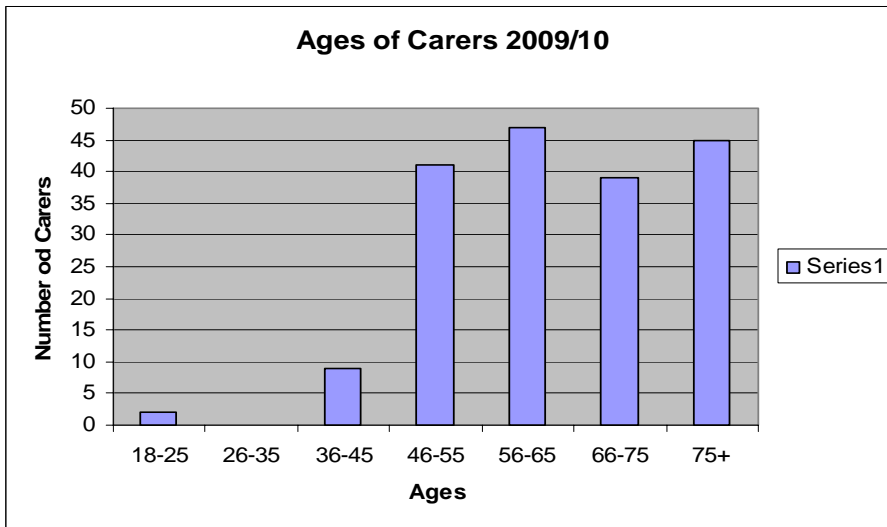
Sue is one lady who has benefitted greatly from accessing the Carers' Grant after her father developed Dementia and Sue became a carer. Sue heard about the Carers' Grant from an Alzheimer's Group that she attended. She and her family moved in with her father when he could no longer care for himself. Sue used some of the grant to have a holiday break with her husband whilst her sister cared for Dad.



Sue then talked to the Carers' Grant Administrator about how to use the rest of her grant and expressed a wish to join an art class. She was put in touch with an art group and she has now been happily painting with this group for a few months.

Sue said "I enjoyed the break away with my husband and it helped to recharge my batteries. The art class gives me weekly respite. I find the art class takes my mind off my responsibilities for a while, it is a nice social activity with lovely people. The people at the class ask about my Dad and it makes me believe people really do care. Shortly after starting painting with the group we had an exhibition and I was very pleasantly surprised to sell one of my paintings."

The following three graphs show the numbers of carers using the Grant in the 2009/10 year by age, disability and type of respite taken.



The Carers' Grant Panel continues to meet once a month to decide on the applications from Carers. Each application will be assessed on an individual basis and purely on merit. By this we mean that the application must show that the break will have a positive impact on the carer and support the carer to continue their caring role.

The Carers' Grant Panel is chaired by Carers UK and made up of representatives from local Carers' Groups and Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action.

The Carers' Grant is additional to any statutory respite the carer may be entitled to and the application is not subjected to a means test. Once a carer has accessed the grant they will also learn about the other services provided by BFVA for arers.

Quotes from recent feedback forms.

- *"Very much appreciated, very beneficial, thank you"*
- *"Had very relaxing time, feel happier with life"*
- *"Without the help from BFVA I would be a nervous wreck"*
- *"Extremely helpful"*
- *"Able to concentrate on event without worrying about Mum"*
- *"I think the short break has done us both good"*
- *"Very beneficial, my stress levels came down, I was able to relax and be me. Had deep sleeps instead of listening out all the time"*
- *"The break was quite marvellous"*
- *"It helped me to realise I did need to feel better, this break was very much needed"*
- *"It was wonderful, I enjoyed it very much. I felt revived and fresh again".*
- *"Very relaxing with good company".*
- *"More happy with life".*



Rita Woolford
Carers' Grant Administrator

YOUNG CARERS' PROJECT CO-ORDINATOR

The Young Carers' Project provides respite services for young carers aged between 5 and 18 who have a caring role for a family member. The project provides support for these vulnerable young people and their families, and continues to work in partnership with the Youth Service, Connexions, Bracknell Forest Council, schools and Social Services. The youth clubs and holiday activities offer an opportunity for young carers to mix with other young carers and to share their experiences as well as having some fun! We continue to receive sponsorship from GE Electric, who provide Christmas presents and Easter Eggs to all the young carers and their siblings.

Project Overview

The Young Carers youth groups run on a Monday night for the older group (12 -18 year olds) from 7 – 9pm, and Wednesday evening for the younger group (5 – 12 year olds) from 4.30 – 6pm. Currently there are 19 young people attending the older group and 16 attending the younger group, and there is no waiting list.

We have employed a new Lead Youth Worker from June 2009, who plans and runs the youth groups on a weekly basis and organizes the trips in the school holidays. The Lead Youth Worker is supported by four part time youth workers who help with the running of the clubs and trips in the holidays.

Key Statistics

Number of new referrals:	21
Number of users who declined service	2
Number on waiting list:	0
Number of young people engaged:	35
Gender	12 male 23 female
Age range:	6 – 18
Ethnicity:	White British 74% Mixed African 6% Mixed other 18% Jewish 2%
Number of sessions held:	68
Number of holiday activities:	10
Number of holidays:	2
Referrals received from:	Childrens Social Services, Community Mental Health Team, Self Referrals

Key Achievements of the Project

- Continued high attendance of young people that attend the project.
- Family involvement – the Project's approach is to provide holistic care to the family as a whole.
- Holiday programme that gives young carers trips away during their school holidays.
- Committed staff.
- Drama Project – focusing on promoting young carers' issues by the young carers for young people in the school environment.
- Two holidays for the young carers.

Diary of Events:

- Easter 2009 – The younger group was taken to Birdworld in Farnham for the day and had a great time seeing all the birds and the aquarium. The older group went to Go Ape at the Look Out in Bracknell and enjoyed climbing on the high wires, and zip lining through the trees.



- Summer Holidays 2009 – The younger group went to an Alice in Wonderland theme park, a picnic in Windsor Great Park and a Wolf Walk in Reading where the group experienced walking with wolves and watching them being fed.



- Summer Holidays 2009 – The older group went to Bournemouth seaside, a picnic at Windsor Great Park and Go-Carting in Reading.
- September 2009 – The older group started to work on a drama performance with the Trouble Maker theatre Company to perform to schools to highlight issues young carers face. The young carers continued to write and practice their work until January 2010. They performed the finished piece to Easthampstead Park School where it was well received and 10 new young carers were identified. The pilot show helped us gather evidence to support an application for funding for a three year program to enable performances to be given to all schools in Bracknell Forest.
- October 2009 – The older group held a fashion show for friends and family. The young people made all the outfits on show from old clothes, recyclables and balloons! The young people were supported in this by Top Shop, Burtons and Bentalls who all agreed to be judges. Also three make up artists from Bentalls came and helped to make up all the models.



- December 2009 – The older group’s Christmas trip was to see a show in London called Wicked and then have dinner at a restaurant. The younger group went to see Aladdin at Windsor theatre and also had dinner in a restaurant.
- February 2010 – The project took 15 young carers to Disneyland Paris for a four day break. This was a special trip which was funded by a large donation received in 2009. No expense was spared, including first class travel on the Euro star to Disneyland, a character tea, half board accommodation and all passes to the parks. The young people and staff had a trip of a life time and enjoyed the shows, the parks and each other’s company.

Some quotes from some of the young carers on the trip

“Thank you for bringing us to Euro Disney for four days we really enjoyed it”

signed by all the young carers on the trip

“Thank you for taking me to Euro Disney I had a fantastic time”
Marissa aged 13.

“Thank you for taking me to Disneyland Paris. I enjoyed all of the activities, especially the Tower of Terror. I had a great time, thank you for everything. Love and hugs Roxy xxxx”
Roxy aged 7

“I enjoyed sleeping in the hotel”
Hollie aged 7



- March 2010 – Ten of the older group and three staff had a long weekend in Cumbria at the YMCA. All participants enjoyed canoeing on Lake Windermere, walking in the glorious countryside, team games and much more. See some of the young carers' comments below.

"I have had so much fun getting to know people better. The best bit so far was canoeing, Liz and Marissa capsized and I was gonna jump in after them but I wasn't allowed and plus the water was like minus 5 degrees. The worse bit must have been when we did the night line and we got proper muddy."

Sophie aged 13

"I enjoyed everything. The thing I enjoyed most was canoeing. I am thankful to Ollie or Olly (soz) and Libby for showing me water is not that scary and I loved the obstacle course. Thanks it was immense!"

Cally aged 15

"Hey all, this YMCA trip has been amazing, thank you so much. I would definitely advise this trip to others. The best part of the trip was fell walk (or whatever it is called) it was lots of fun. I'd definitely go on this kinda thing again. Thanks. Love from Sam."

Sam aged 14

Young Carers' Project Case Study

Child J

Child J was referred to the Young Carers' Project in 2005. The referral came from CMHT as Child J was caring for both his mother and father who were suffering from mental disorders. Child J was very isolated and his caring role meant he had a lot of household chores to do and prepare meals. Child J also was under emotional pressure due to his parent's mental illness and would have to calm them down when they got anxious or stressed.

At the time of the assessment Child J was showing as withdrawn, very shy, would not make eye contact and was hostile and very angry about his current situation. Child J did have a friend who he played with at this time but was not allowed anyone in the family home. Child J presented as being much younger than his age mentally. Child J started the youth group at Young Carers in March 2006. Initially Child J was withdrawn and kept himself to himself and did not integrate with the other members of the group.

Due to Child J's attendance at school being below average and concerns about his welfare and eating habits, the Young Carers' Project with Charters School set up a CAF to monitor and signpost the family onto relevant agencies that could help. This included counseling for the family, Child J parents meeting at school, a parenting course for Child J's parents and a physical health and nutritional course to address food issues. There have been three family support group meetings since 2006 where the Young Carers' Project has led the procedure with the Deputy Head teacher from Charters School.

Although Child J had a quiet start with the Young Carers' Project he has become a valuable member of the groups. Child J has discovered a love for media and drama through the activities arranged by the Young Carers' Project. In August 2008 the project held a week's workshop where all the young carers wrote, practiced and performed a play called "Twisted Fairy Tales". Child J excelled at this and discovered a very comedic side to his nature.

Child J has since gone on to record a radio show, to set up Young Carers TV where young carers recorded their feelings and comments about life as a young carer, and is currently working on a drama project to run for three years to promote young carers in all school across Bracknell Forest. Child J supports his peers and is generally the lead, and performs with confidence and humour which makes a compelling performance.

Child J has gone from being a quiet, shy and hostile child into a bright, enthusiastic, caring and talented young man. Child J has stayed on at sixth form to do his A levels, which is incredible considering at one point it was clear how badly he would do in his GCSE's as he missed so much school.

Best Practice:

The Young Carers' Project remains the only organisation that supports young carers and their families in the Bracknell Forest Area.

The Young Carers' Project continues to provide a valuable service. The impact that the project has on the young people we look after has a long term effect, and we pride ourselves that we are making a difference to their hard and sometimes troubled lives. The feedback we receive from parents is always positive and they ask that we do more youth clubs and one to one help.

Ultimately I would like to see the project grow and find the hidden carers in the Bracknell Forest area which are estimated to be in the region of 450 young people, a very conservative figure taken from Loughborough University studies in 1992. At the moment we have the capacity for approximately 40 children so we are only providing a service for approximately 10% of the estimate. Any growth does have financial implications.

At the time of writing this report the Young Carers' Project is being reviewed and there are concerns that the current funding will not meet the needs of the project. However I believe the service and staff offer a valuable, second to none service. Our attendance records are excellent and I believe that speaks for itself. I am proud of what we do and what we achieve as a whole project, and ultimately proud of the young carers who attend the project.

Impact Statement:

The Young Carers' Project has supported over 140 young people and their families since it began in 2005. Sometimes these families have been in complete turmoil with financial difficulties. The overbearing pressure that is put on these young people has been supported by the project and helped these young people work through difficult times and come through the other side as well adjusted, confident young people and adults. BFVA continues to believe that the services offered by the Young Carers Project continues to meet the needs of the young people and without our services young carers would become isolated and marginalised and would not have opportunity for rest and socialisation, and fun with young people in the same situation as themselves.



Angela Evans
Young Carers' Project Co-ordinator

DOMESTIC SUPPORT SERVICE CO-ORDINATOR

The Domestic Support Co-ordinator is very proud that her role has become permanent as the previous co-ordinator has taken up the position of Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator.

The Administrator for Domestic Support currently works 25 hours a week ensuring the paperwork, filing and statistics for Social Services are constantly kept up to date. The Administrator also covers the Co-ordinator's role when she is out of the office on home assessments.

The Domestic Support Service now works in line with the Befriending Scheme. Many of the clients we meet are lonely so we will ask if he/she would like a volunteer to visit them for a cup of tea and a chat. If the person is interested in having a visitor we will liaise with the Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator who will match up a volunteer to visit the client. This also works the other way around in that the Befriending Co-ordinator will refer people she meets who need help with domestic chores. Currently 9 clients are using both services

The Domestic Support Service continues to provide a valuable service to the elderly and frail. 4 of the workers are on the Personalisation scheme which Social Services began to pilot last November. These workers still do the housework, laundry, shop runs and pension collection but they also prepare meals, take clients to hospital/ doctor appointments and can work up to 10 hrs a week per client. (The average hours a worker does is 2 hrs to 3 hrs a week per client)

Statistics as at end of March 2010

Clients

Total number of active clients	210
Self Funding	132
Funding through Social Services by direct payments	78

In addition the Service was suspended temporarily for 16 clients whilst they were in hospital.

Staff total 31

- 2 with Learning Disabilities
- 2 University Students to cover during bank holidays/summer and winter breaks
- 2 Gentleman that can carry out light maintenance duties in the home other than domestic support.
- 25 Permanent workers with full client base.

All workers are self employed, CRB checked, have car insurance for business use and have undergone Health & Safety, Protection of Vulnerable Adults and Food & Hygiene training. All workers have 1:1 supervisions with the Co-ordinator every 6 months where they can raise any worries they may have about their clients (in between supervisions workers flag up any queries by telephone). Concerns are referred to Social Services where appropriate.

We are aiming to set up Alzheimer's/Dementia and Stroke Awareness training for the workers this year.

In September we posted out a survey to our clients asking them to rate the Domestic Support Service. We were delighted that 90% of our clients rated the Service as excellent.

The extract from an article in the Bracknell News highlights the importance of the Service to our clients.

Sheila Hasted from Easthampstead has had help with her shopping and her housework since August last year. Mrs Hasted says.....

"I cared for my husband who had Parkinson's Disease until 2 years ago. It was difficult to get out much but I used to do my shopping once a week by taxi. I have arthritis in my knee so I can't walk too far nor can I stand for too long. After my husband died I did try and find someone to help me in the house but with no success. My daughter then spotted a poster for the domestic support service at the Easthampstead shops. My son contacted Diane, who co-ordinates the service and she came to my house to meet my daughter and myself. Diane was very friendly and she introduced me to Amanda who now works for me once a week – 1 hour for shopping and 1 hour for housework. Amanda and I get on really well because we have many common interests but we try not to talk too much! She is very good at shopping and we will often swap ideas on what to try from the supermarket. After Amanda has been to the shops she vacuums the house and washes the floors. I don't know how she manages to fit everything in! I look forward to seeing Amanda and she has really helped me get back on my feet again.

November to February were very hard months for both the workers and clients due to the terrible weather. The workers were getting to their clients on foot and working the weekends to make sure that their clients were ok. They cleared the snow off clients' drives and ensured people had sufficient food whilst they were housebound. Many clients rang to praise the workers' dedication during this difficult period.

At the beginning of the year Social Services said that they wished to transfer approximately 100hrs of Domestic Support to our Service. This is a compliment to the Service and workers have been recruited in anticipation of this additional work.

The strength and commitment from the working team and communication with Social Services is getting stronger and stronger enabling our work to be carried out more quickly and efficiently.



Diane Benford
Domestic Support Service Co-ordinator



Kat Lord
Domestic Support Service Administrator

BEFRIENDING SCHEME CO-ORDINATOR

My role as Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator is to recruit volunteers and then match them up with clients who need company and someone to talk to. Some clients have trouble getting out socialising, and having a volunteer can enable them to do this.

The need for a Befriending Scheme was identified through the other services run at BFVA. It has become apparent that loneliness is a real and ongoing problem for the elderly and vulnerable in Bracknell Forest and at Hope 09 there were a large number of people who said they would be willing to volunteer their time to befriending.

The Bracknell Forest 'Adding Life to Years' - A Strategy for Older People document (published August 2009) - shows that in the Bracknell Forest area 42% of people in the 65+ age group live alone, rising to 77% of those aged 85+.

BFVA felt that this information needed to be addressed and so has worked closely with Age Concern, Carers UK Bracknell, BeHeard, Rethink Bracknell, Bracknell Forest Homes and many churches and faith groups, to get a clear idea of what people think would be gained from a befriending scheme. We wanted to establish whether or not a befriending scheme would be well received in the Borough, and to try and utilise the resources and volunteers already in contact with those organisations who backed the idea of a scheme to target the issue of loneliness and isolation. The result of this work was the Bracknell Forest Befriending scheme which was launched in September.

I always expected that the need for the scheme would be great, and to be inundated with referrals, so to me the biggest challenge was going to be recruiting sufficient numbers of volunteers. Especially as each volunteer would realistically only be able to befriend 1 or 2 people.

I have been pleasantly surprised as although the number of clients still outweighs volunteers, I potentially have enough volunteers to befriend 50% of our clients. Much of this is thanks to Tracey Morgan our Volunteer Recruitment Officer and Rita Woolford who is assisting her. They are always quick to pass on the details of anyone interested in Befriending.

Another great source of volunteers was from Melanie Randall's Adult Carers. We sent out a letter to all of her carers as we thought that there would many of them who might need a befriender for themselves or their cared for. We also suspected that some of them may be happy to volunteer, especially if their caring roles had ended. This letter resulted in the recruitment of 4 volunteers.

To date there are 40 clients on our statistics, and 17 volunteers. I have made 12 matches, 11 of which Befrienders and Clients are already meeting regularly, I have another 4 potential matches to be made.

The scheme seems to be running well, and feedback from both clients and volunteers is positive.

Client P is a mum of two. She originally comes from India and has recently moved again from a neighbouring village. P feels very lonely, her husband works long hours and she hasn't made any friends locally. They argue a lot, and she feels she has no one to confide in. I introduced her to F a volunteer who previously worked in the police; she can speak five languages and has a lot of experience of working in difficult situations. She is very calm and feels that everybody should help those in need where possible.

P says 'The Befriending Scheme has helped me, I have someone to talk toI am happy when she (F) comes in. I have started taking English lessons and was really pleased when I got 81% on my test. I hope to start a computer course so I can go back to work'. Since meeting F, P has started to work towards her goals.

*F has noticed there has been a noticeable difference in P
'I enjoy befriending, my first experience has been positive. P had low self esteem when I first met her, but now she is doing things for herself and I can see her blossoming and gaining confidence. It is encouraging and rewarding to see the change'*

The recruitment of the volunteers can be a slow process, as we have to receive a cleared enhanced criminal records check back before we can allow volunteers to fulfil their role. These can take up to 3 months in some cases.

Training can also be an obstacle. We require each volunteer to attend training in Roles and Responsibilities and Boundaries which is delivered by myself. We also require the volunteers to complete Safeguarding Adults training which up until now has been delivered by Bracknell Forest Council. There are always limited places available on these courses, and so waiting for free places can take time. To overcome this problem I have recently attended a Train the Trainer Safeguarding Adults Level 1 course, which now means I can hold this myself, and plan it as and when required.

Future Plans

As I mentioned before my main concern is recruiting a steady flow of volunteers, and so I will be focusing on raising the profile of the scheme, with a view to appealing to potential volunteers. I have an article coming out in the local paper soon which is to focus on volunteering and how rewarding and enjoyable it can be. I will also be getting out into the community more, meeting with local groups to explain about the scheme and how it works.

Some clients like their Befriender simply to pop in for a chat, but we have clients who like to visit the Meadows in Camberley, go out for a coffee or lunch. We have also started to receive suggestions from clients themselves, such as setting up a book club. My hope is that eventually the clients can start to engage in group events or activities, where they can start to make acquaintances, and friends of their own.

I plan to initiate this with regular activities such as coffee mornings and outings, and hopefully engaging local businesses in this by seeing if pubs and cafes would help by agreeing to special deals for the clients of the scheme, and the volunteers accompanying them.

I believe that the group activities will also prove useful, as when I can't immediately place a volunteer with a client, they will be able to come to these regular events until a suitable volunteer can be found to match them up with.



Gemma Frewin
Befriending Scheme Co-ordinator

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION

INFORMATION

TRUSTEES:	J Ward (Chair) W Neen (Treasurer) P Bestley M Parsons P Ridgway N Long K Long E Worsley R Wagland
SECRETARY:	E Worsley
CHARITY NUMBER	1061373
COMPANY NUMBER	3332555
PRINCIPAL ADDRESS	Amber House Market Street Bracknell Berkshire RG12 1JB
REGISTERED OFFICE:	Amber House Market Street Bracknell Berkshire RG12 1BQ
AUDITORS:	Rice Associates Sherwood House, 104 High Street Crowthorne Berkshire RG45 7AX
BANKERS	CAF Bank Limited 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill West Malling Kent ME19 4JQ

TREASURER'S REPORT

Financial Review

Unrestricted income decreased by £15k to £171k, as Other Sources of Funding decreased and Bank Interest Income decreased by £4k. The decreased income is always a concern and the Trustees continue to monitor the forward fluctuations in Income and the need to meet objectives, by managing the core (unrestricted) expense costs. Additional work was undertaken in 2009/10 and funded by the Core Fund which led to the increased costs of £66k, this increased spending was directed at direct support of activities with administration costs remaining below last year's level.

Unrestricted Reserves stand at £65k as at 31 March 2010, a reduction of £22k, reflecting the reduction in income this year. It has been BFVA's policy to maintain reserves of a minimum of 5 months' expenditure because of the nature of future funding. The level we currently have is just below this target, therefore the Trustees will undertake a review of the need of our minimum reserve level against spend levels and against the new grant monies anticipated.

Restricted reserves stand at £111k, which is an increase of £51k from the start of the year. By the nature of these funds, the Income is liable to fluctuations from year to year, with income increasing by £106k this year, but with Grants and expenses increasing by £46k.

The Cash Balance of £160k is sufficient to cover our outstanding Restricted Reserve commitments.

William Neen
Treasurer

The following Balance Sheet and Income and Expenditure Account are extracted from the full accounts which are available on request.

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION

BALANCE SHEET


AS AT 31 MARCH 2010


	Notes	2010		2009	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	11		30,896		20,246
Current assets					
Debtors	12	7,275		6,579	
Cash at bank and in hand		159,818		133,706	
		<u>167,093</u>		<u>140,285</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	13	<u>(11,360)</u>		<u>(6,677)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>155,733</u>		<u>133,608</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>186,629</u>		<u>153,854</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	15		111,349		54,258
Unrestricted funds:					
Designated funds			10,668		16,980
Other charitable funds			64,612		82,616
			<u>186,629</u>		<u>153,854</u>

The company is entitled to the exemption from the audit requirement contained in section 477 of the Companies Act 2006, for the year ended 31 March 2010, although an audit has been carried out under section 43 of the Charities Act 1993. No member of the company has deposited a notice, pursuant to section 476, requiring an audit of these accounts under the requirements of the Companies Act 2006.

The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for ensuring that the company keeps accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act and for preparing accounts which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of sections 394 and 395 and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 relating to accounts, so far as applicable to the company.

The accounts were approved by the Board on 27 July 2010


W Neen (Treasurer)
Trustee


J Ward (Chair)
Trustee

Company Registration No. 3332555

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2010

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Designated funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2010 £	Total 2009 £
<u>Incoming resources from generated funds</u>						
Core funding	2	141,010	-	-	141,010	141,152
Investment income	3	424	-	-	424	4,460
		141,434	-	-	141,434	145,612
Incoming resources for charitable activities.	4	29,349	-	416,398	445,747	352,370
Other incoming resources	5	-	2,832	-	2,832	1,416
Total incoming resources		170,783	2,832	416,398	590,013	499,398
<u>Resources expended</u>						
Charitable activities						
Grants payable		-	-	63,106	63,106	69,412
Charitable expenditure		116,770	-	303,206	419,976	349,454
Total charitable expenditure		116,770	-	366,312	483,082	418,866
Governance costs		66,428	7,728	-	74,156	76,867
Total resources expended		183,198	7,728	366,312	557,238	495,733
Net (outgoing)/incoming resources before transfers		(12,415)	(4,896)	50,086	32,775	3,665
Gross transfers between funds		(9,842)	-	9,842	-	-
Net (expenditure)/income for the year/ Net movement in funds		(22,257)	(4,896)	59,928	32,775	3,665
Fund balances at 1 April 2009		86,869	15,564	51,421	153,854	150,189
Fund balances at 31 March 2010		64,612	10,668	111,349	186,629	153,854

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 2006.

BFVA would like to thank the following for their support:

Bracknell Forest Council
Big Lottery
Youth Opportunities Fund
CapacityBuilders
Berkshire Community Foundation
East Berks PCT
Panasonic
GE Electric
Waitrose
JJM Taxis
CWDC
Boehringer Ingelheim
Warfield Fete
Bracknell Regeneration Partnership

during the year 2009 - 2010

BFVA

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
Amber House, Market Street
Bracknell, Berks
RG12 1JB
Tel: 01344 304404
Fax: 01344 411878
e-mail: info@bfva.org



Registered Charity No. 1061373
Registered Company Limited by Guarantee
Registered in England, No. 3332555
Patron: Baroness Jill Pitkeathley