

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action

BFVA

ANNUAL REPORT
2006 - 2007

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

The trustees are pleased to present their review of the year, outlining some of the challenges faced and overcome by the organisation; the work of the board and the staff during the year and the much more optimistic outlook at the end of the year.

The year began with a significant cut in our core funding which gave the trustees little option but to restructure the organisation and to face the difficult action of making staff redundant. The necessary changes involved employing a part-time director which it was recognised would be a particularly challenging role.

In recruiting Martin Gilman to fill this position with his wide experience in the community and voluntary sector, he was able to 'hit the ground running' and quickly began to rebuild the reputation of BFVA through the work he was delivering. He has rebuilt a capable and committed staff team around him. The work that they have all been doing is reported on in the following pages of this report

By Autumn 2006, it was apparent that it was crucial to the organisation that the role of Director be made full time and therefore a core grant application was made to Bracknell Forest Borough Council for 2007/08 at a level to make that possible. The trustees were delighted to know before 31st March 2007 that the funding for the year ended 31st March 2008 would allow for the director's hours to be increased. That being so they are confident that the good work being done by Martin and his team will go from strength to strength in delivering on the core functions of a Council for voluntary service/voluntary action; leading on infrastructure development under the Capacity Builders programme; furthering volunteer recruitment in the Borough and the varied work with carers and in so doing further enhance the reputation of BFVA.

The support of our funders is gratefully acknowledged, as are donations in kind. Sincere thanks are also due to all those who have come forward to volunteer during the year and finally the trustees would like to record their thanks to all the staff for all their efforts during the year and believe that with this effort continuing 2007/2008 will see BFVA playing its appropriate part in the Community and Voluntary Sector in Bracknell Forest.

Joyce Ward
Chair

DIRECTOR'S REPORT

The period that this report covers was one of great change for the organisation and I believe a really positive one. One of the areas of change was in personnel with a number of staff changes. Since April 2006, the organisation has seen the departure of Sally Thompson (Director), Allan Briggs (Volunteer Recruitment and Carers' Grant) and Karen Edgington (ChangeUp Administrator). New staff includes myself as Director, coming into post on 1st August 2006, Marion Cox as Volunteer Recruitment Officer and Angela Evans as Young Carers' Support both in October. Chris Cowap returned to BFVA, firstly as a volunteer to oversee the newsletter and then in January she was appointed by the Bracknell Forest ChangeUp Consortium as Partnership Development Officer; she was joined by Judy English as Consortium Administration Support.

They joined an existing team that had worked very hard and with tremendous enthusiasm despite a long period without a Director due to ill health. The staff have now gelled as an excellent team with a wide range of skills and knowledge, which can only benefit the organisation and in turn the wider voluntary and community sector.

The eight months I have been in post for the purpose of this report have been extremely busy, but rewarding with the ever increased importance being placed on the sector by Government and our local statutory partners. The growing understanding of the importance of the sector and improved cross sector partnership working can only benefit the community of Bracknell Forest.

One of the issues that affect the sector is the way the increased partnership work and expectation has increased the amount of information and the way BFVA communicates. Therefore the way BFVA communicates became one of my priorities in my first few months as Director. We have reintroduced community lunches and have begun to take them around the Borough. We have also improved and expanded our quarterly newsletters with the addition of a quarterly BFVA members' newsletter. We supplement this information with regular e-mail bulletins. We have also updated the BFVA website, making it easier to navigate and including a funding search facility section, which is updated weekly and in the first four months had over eight thousand hits. BFVA is very aware of information overload and we are currently refreshing our management information system to enable us to be more selective and to send relevant information to the various interest groups.

The use of our in house practical services such as the use of our photocopier and meeting room continues to grow, with the meeting room being used by 24 different groups on 110 occasions through the year. The development activity has increased considerably during the year, some directly through the Change Up work, and some from everyday growth of the sector and its increased need of support around funding and legal issues. A total of 13 new groups have been formed during the period, nearly all needing funding, legal and development support. Not all groups inform us of funding success, but we do know that 11 organisations in the Borough were awarded a total of external funding of just over £300K.

BFVA continues to act as liaison between the VCS (Voluntary and Community Sector) and other partners and that brokerage increases with every consultation, some 22 have taken place in the period, with an increase likely in the present year. BFVA continues to support the sector in its representative role and is continuing to work with the Voluntary Sector Forum, Federation of Community groups and Additional Support Programme to strengthen the processes for elected representation for the sector.

The strategic partnership element is becoming increasingly more important as Central and local agencies recognise the importance of the VCS and its worth to the community and BFVA has a place on each of the strategic partnership boards including the Bracknell Forest Partnership Board, previously known as the Local Strategic Partnership Board.

Partnership work is crucial in tackling the needs of the community and the VCS has a key role to play through its ability to reach "hard to reach groups", special skills and knowledge of the local population. The sector's other assets include the 12.5 thousand volunteers working in the Borough and the conservative figure of over 1.5 million hours given for free for the benefit of the community.

During this year the focus has been on revisiting the five core functions of a CVS and our main objects as an organisation. The five functions are: services and support, development work, liaison, representation and strategic partnerships. In recent years the drive for the voluntary and community sector has come from government, both local and central. It is essential for the sector and an organisation like BFVA to maintain its independence and to remember BFVA's prime reason for being is to support and advise the VCS.

One of the disappointments of the year was the failure to obtain five year funding from BASIS (Big Lottery) for training support for the local sector. Training is one of the key needs of the sector in order for it to meet the growing demands that it has placed on it. Whilst we can utilise neighbouring CVS training events and some training is offered by BFBC it imperative that Bracknell voluntary and community sector has tailor made training delivered locally to enable the groups to maintain standards and to aid the volunteer recruitment process.

Volunteering

Since Marion Cox joined in October, she has been updating the "Volunteer Database" and the organisational information in order to speed up the matching process. This has resulted in a quicker and more efficient service. We are in the process of gaining accreditation with Volunteering England and hope to have this in place by the end of 2007. 215 volunteers have been referred to organisations with 85 confirmed as placed.

Carers

There is a growing need of support for carers in the Borough and BFVA have responded to this through Emma Whitbread's leadership and the expansion of

support we now offer. We have realigned the carers' grant money received from BFBC, to be more flexible in the service to carers, which now includes individual grants for respite, a children and young people carers' support worker and in the present year an adult carers' support worker.

Compact

Despite continued increase in organisations signing up to the Compact, it would be fair to say that the Compact has struggled to be embedded in partner organisations and therefore failed in delivering the very simple principle and understanding of working together as equals, which in turn would make the partnerships better.

Until the Compact is recognised and used as an every day way of working it will be little more than a document gathering dust on office shelves.

Change Up

From April 1st 2006 the control of Change Up has moved from regional government to a new national organisation called CapacityBuilders. The Bracknell Consortium remains and has received further funding to support the strengthening of infrastructure in the Borough to support the governance business planning element of the Consortium. The three strands of support remain for the Voluntary Sector Forum, Federation of Community Groups and the Additional Support Programme (BME). This present funding runs to March 2008, but it is hoped further funding will be made available locally for 2008-2011.

Berkshire East Primary Care Trust

With the formation of the new Berkshire East PCT has come a considerable amount of adjustment for the VCS in building new relationships and realignment of services. However BFVA has historically had a good relationship with the PCT and our partner CVS in the east of Berkshire and we look forward to the many opportunities this new relationship will bring and to the future agenda.

Community Plan (Bracknell Partnership Board)

Through the Director, BFVA plays an important part in the Community Strategy planning and implementation process on behalf of the local voluntary and community sector. BFVA often acts as a broker between the statutory and private sector partners and the VCS and is key to any consultations in the Borough through use of its development workers, community lunches and data base.

The Community plan is due for a refresh in the autumn of 2007 and it is envisaged that BFVA again will play a key part in this process.

Finally I would like to thank all of the staff, volunteers and trustees for the support and the fantastic amount of work and enthusiasm they have shown throughout

the year. I would also like to thank all of our funders and supporters; Bracknell Forest Borough Council, Berkshire Community Foundation, Big Lottery, Connections Small Grant Fund, Youth Opportunities Fund, CapacityBuilders, Dell, GMAC RFC, GE Electric and Waitrose for their continued support.

Martin Gilman

Director

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Carers' Service

The last year has brought continued success and massive changes to the Carers Projects. The Young Carers Project has gone from strength to strength; Adult Carers Services have also grown considerably, and will continue in the coming year. Below are some examples of our successes.

Young Carers' Service

In September 2006 we secured funds from the Extended Schools Programme to employ a Young Carers Support Worker. Angela Evans was the successful candidate and has taken this service forward with huge success. We now work with 40 children between 5-18 years, every week, providing respite and other services to these deserving children and young people.

In October 2006 we supported 8 of the older groups, to attend an 'Outward Bound' trip in Wales, which was a massive success.

In December all of the children and young people involved in the project, received funding from Berkshire Community Foundation to go on Christmas outings. The younger groups enjoyed a trip to a pantomime and the older group a trip in limos to a Chinese restaurant.

We have received continued financial and resource support from Waitrose, Berkshire Community Foundation, Extended Schools, Youth Opportunities Fund, Connexions Small Grants Fund; amongst others.

In March our bid to BFBC for increased funding was approved, and there is currently a bid with Children in Need, which has passed the initial application stage.

Our work has been recognised as an excellent service by Bracknell Forest Borough Council and has been mentioned in local press and publications.

Adult Carers' Service

At the end of 2006 we started to look at the way the Carers' Grant works, and how the funds are used. We redesigned the Carers' Grant forms and tightened the Eligibility Criteria. We have recruited a new Carers' Grant Administration Officer, who is due to take up post in April 2007.

We also wrote a business plan for the remaining Carers' Grant funds, which is available to view. This was accepted, and we employed an Adult Carers' Support Worker. 2006/2007 has seen the start of many changes for Adult Carers and hopefully 2007/08 will see the development of a successful service.

We continued to support Carers UK Lunches, Bracknell Forest Mental Health

Carers' Support Group and support Adult Carers to get some respite at various outings and activities, including Health and Well-being days, computer training and a trip to Hampton Court amongst others.

We hope to continue these successes throughout 2007/08 and ensure that we continue to secure funding to give the projects security in the future.

Development Officer

This past year has continued to be wide-ranging and diverse, combining projects with the regular tasks.

The Good Neighbour Association (GNA) made up of the Good Neighbour Schemes (GNS) across the Borough, had not met for about two years and was in danger of stopping altogether. With the help of BFVA we managed, successfully, to reform the GNA, providing a united voice for all the GNS across the borough. The requests for transport continue to increase although the demographics have changed. In the year 2005-2006 and between 12 schemes there were 6,337 requests for help with transport shared by approximately 180 drivers. BFVA have recently attended an Access and Transport meeting at St Marks Hospital at which we realised the need to re-establish awareness of the schemes and to that end BFVA will attend the Transport Partnership Board in July.

Community lunches have also been introduced this last year, with the first two well attended. Again the lunches are held in different venues across the borough in order to enable as many of the community and voluntary groups to attend.

The Venues for Hire directory has been updated with several new additions. The Directory of Organisations is at present being updated and should be completed shortly.

We have seen over 20 groups for advice or information, some have visited BFVA and some we have gone out to see. Funding information and advice has been given to twelve groups via Funder Finder and our Grant making Trust books. In November we added a funding programme to BFVA Website which has recorded 8,842 hits, with one known success. We do not always hear about the groups who are successful with the advice and information we have given them, so we think this is something that can be looked at and worked on.

BFVA has facilitated two training workshops and four networking events and have attended fourteen training events and three networking events.

Volunteer Recruitment Officer

The role of the Volunteer Recruitment Officer has changed over the last few years and this year has been no exception. The main purpose of the service is still to recruit volunteers, and match them to the needs of the local voluntary groups. We provide advice and information to volunteers, companies and community groups wishing to provide a service to community, and to raise the profile of volunteering through the Borough.

There has been a change in staff during the period from 1st April 2006 to 31st March 2007. Alan Briggs stood down from the post at the end of August 2006 and the work was then carried on by a very committed, volunteer Adam Cook until Marion Cox started at the beginning of October 2006.

There were over 500 enquiries to the service during this time, which is almost a 100% increase from the previous period. These came either through the Volunteering Website www.Do-it.org.uk, email, letter or through personal callers to the office.

The information on our section of the Do-it web site has been updated with the help of committed volunteers, Basil Meyer and Adam, whose work has been of great assistance to the service. There has been considerable use of this site with 274 enquiries coming to the office via the site during this period. There are over 150 organisations registered with the Volunteer Centre and currently over 150 vacant opportunities.

There has been a big increase in enquirers from groups like StepForward, Social Services and the Probation service looking to use Volunteering as a way to help their clients to move forward. This is sometimes successful but it can be difficult to match their client's expectations with the opportunities available and the support they need.

Publicity

The Volunteering information leaflet has been completely revamped with a section dedicated to the recruitment of Volunteer drivers. There is also a section in the new BFVA newsletter devoted to Volunteering news and issues. There have been articles in the local press and in the Town and Country publication.

Volunteering England

The Licence Agreement for Volunteering National Branding has been signed; this means we are now part of the marketing strategy of Volunteering England to promote "Volunteer Centres" across the country. This is linked to the stringent accreditation process which will be submitted in November 2007.

Events

There were 3 events to promote Volunteering. The first took place at Lily Hill Park as part of an environment day, the second was at South Hill Park and the third was in Bracknell town centre as part of Volunteer week. These were successful in attracting new enquiries from potential volunteers.

Links

The Volunteer Centre continues to nurture links with all local groups and companies. BFVA acts as a broker and by developing links between the two.

Looking ahead

Statistics show that interest in Volunteering is growing, but the needs of the volunteer are changing. We need to be able to meet the challenge of that growing demand, by providing a quick and efficient service and improving our capability to monitor and feedback this increased activity.

TREASURER'S REPORT

Unrestricted income increased by £2k to £130k. Core funding from BFBC reduced by £50k, but was replaced by a donation of a minibus, worth £24k, from the GMAC Community Fund and BFVA earned management fees of £27k during the year in accordance with contracts to manage certain non-core projects. The trustees acted to offset the reduced BFBC funding by reducing the core (unrestricted) headcount, resulting in a net income of £47k for the year.

Unrestricted Reserves stand at £71k at 31st March 2007, representing 10 months of unrestricted reserves expenditure. This is considerably in excess of BFVA's policy of 5 months of expenditure, which will be reviewed in 2007/08.

Furthermore, core funding from BFBC will increase in 2007/08 but core expenditure will also increase, partly as the Director is now a full-time post, and the minibus will be in use and will start to be depreciated. Additionally, management fees are not likely to be as high as in 2006/07 and a further single large donation such as the minibus is unlikely.

By its nature, being project-based, Restricted income is liable to significant fluctuations from year to year, falling by £53k, mainly due to the Infrastructure Development project coming to its end. This £89k decrease was partly offset by other, smaller projects starting, or expanding.

Malcolm Hawkes

Treasurer

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION

INFORMATION

TRUSTEES: J Ward (Chair)
M Hawkes (Treasurer)
P Bestley
M Parson
P Ridgway
G Robertson
E Worsley

SECRETARY: E Worsley

CHARITY NUMBER 1061373

COMPANY NUMBER 3332555

PRINCIPAL ADDRESS 5th Floor, Fitzwilliam House,
Skimped Hill Lane
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1BQ

REGISTERED OFFICE: 5th Floor, Fitzwilliam House,
Skimped Hill Lane
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

National Westminster Bank Plc
5 High Street
Bracknell
Berkshire
RG12 1DH

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES INCLUDING INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2007

	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2007 £	Total 2006 £
<u>Incoming resources from generated funds</u>					
Core funding	2	70,000	-	70,000	120,000
Donations and legacies		23,500	-	23,500	-
Investment income	3	5,442	-	5,442	5,778
		<u>98,942</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>98,942</u>	<u>125,778</u>
Incoming resources for charitable activities.	4	31,389	299,556	330,945	355,163
Total incoming resources		<u>130,331</u>	<u>299,556</u>	<u>429,887</u>	<u>480,941</u>
<u>Resources expended</u>					
Charitable activities					
Grants payable		-	124,919	124,919	108,367
Charitable expenditure		31,213	267,609	298,822	207,120
Total charitable expenditure		<u>31,213</u>	<u>392,528</u>	<u>423,741</u>	<u>315,487</u>
Governance costs		54,785	-	54,785	82,620
Total resources expended		<u>85,998</u>	<u>392,528</u>	<u>478,526</u>	<u>398,107</u>
Net incoming/(outgoing) resources before transfers		<u>44,333</u>	<u>(92,972)</u>	<u>(48,639)</u>	<u>82,834</u>
Gross transfers between funds		2,668	(2,668)	-	-
Net income/(expenditure) for the year/ Net movement in funds		<u>47,001</u>	<u>(95,640)</u>	<u>(48,639)</u>	<u>82,834</u>
Fund balances at 1 April 2006		23,775	148,177	171,952	89,118
Fund balances at 31 March 2007		<u>70,776</u>	<u>52,537</u>	<u>123,313</u>	<u>171,952</u>

The statement of financial activities also complies with the requirements for an income and expenditure account under the Companies Act 1985.

BRACKNELL FOREST VOLUNTARY ACTION


BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2007

	Notes	2007		2006	
		£	£	£	£
Fixed assets					
Tangible assets	10		28,169		11,743
Current assets					
Debtors	11	21,766		32,216	
Cash at bank and in hand		104,312		157,047	
		<u>126,078</u>		<u>189,263</u>	
Creditors: amounts falling due within one year	12	<u>(30,934)</u>		<u>(29,054)</u>	
Net current assets			<u>95,144</u>		<u>160,209</u>
Total assets less current liabilities			<u>123,313</u>		<u>171,952</u>
Income funds					
Restricted funds	14		52,537		148,177
Unrestricted funds			<u>70,776</u>		<u>23,775</u>
			<u>123,313</u>		<u>171,952</u>

The accounts were approved by the Board on 5 September 2007


M Hawkes (Treasurer)
Trustee


J Ward (Chair)
Trustee

**BFVA would like to thank the following for
their support:**

Bracknell Forest Borough Council
Berkshire Community Foundation
Big Lottery
Connections Small Grant Fund
Youth Opportunities Fund
CapacityBuilders
Dell
GMAC RFC
GE Electric
Waitrose

during the year 2006 - 2007

BFVA

Bracknell Forest Voluntary Action
5th Floor, Fitzwilliam House
Skimped Hill Lane, Bracknell
Berks RG12 1BQ
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