

# Voluntary**Action**Islington

# Annual Report



2011 - 2012

Voluntary Action Islington is the membership organisation for people who are working to make a positive difference to life in Islington.

**Our vision is a thriving third sector which leads and sustains individual and community activity.**

Following the successful merger of IVAC (Islington Voluntary Action Council) and the Islington Volunteer Centre, Voluntary Action Islington was formally established in November 2009. We bring together voluntary and community organisations in Islington to improve education, promote health and relieve poverty. We work with community organisations to increase effectiveness, provide volunteer brokerage and support community voice.

**Our mission**

- To lead and support local voluntary activity, by individuals and community not for profit organisations
- To promote strong and mutually beneficial relationships between the Third Sector and the statutory and private sectors
- To develop sustainable voluntary activity in our community
- To engage and support the most excluded members of our community

**Our values**

Underpinning our Vision and Mission statements are the values of Voluntary Action Islington and these are at the heart of what we believe as an organisation and how we work both with all our external stakeholders and within the organisation, with our staff and volunteers.

Our values are:

- equality and diversity, valuing difference, treating everyone with respect
- independence, in our thinking and actions
- integrity and professionalism, maintaining high personal and professional standards
- partnership, working with others to support and develop partnerships across the community
- listening and learning, from all our stakeholders - members, staff volunteers and partners

Thanks to our funders and supporters including:

London Borough of Islington, London Councils, City Bridge, Trust for London, Big Lottery, The Cripplegate Foundation, The Goldsmiths Company

## Introduction

### A smaller organisation but with new services and ways of working

The past year has been one in which we have consulted with members and clarified our core purpose in order to ensure that we maximise our impact with a significantly reduced income.

We carried out an on-line survey which received 176 responses and our trustees and staff undertook a programme of visits to 16 organisations. We held a trustee and staff away day and concluded that we should focus on 4 main purposes:

- Providing support to our members
- Improving the effectiveness of local voluntary and community organisations
- Developing the voluntary sector in Islington
- Mobilising our members to influence change

In relation to these purposes the following priorities were agreed:

- Providing an information service to our members
- Providing basic capacity building support, especially to smaller and newly forming groups
- Promoting and facilitating volunteering
- Enabling our members to act together to influence change by providing some support to networks

During the year a number of services came to an end including the Central London CVS Network, the community accountancy project and much of the work funded by the London Borough of Islington. We thank the staff who worked on these projects.

This year we were successful in securing funds for a number of new short term initiatives including:

- Transition funding to develop courses and the infrastructure for our new on-line Voluntary Action Academy. We plan to generate new earned income through the Academy and provide a valuable learning resource for volunteers and community organisations
- A project to work with local organisation Help on Your Doorstep to support the development of their volunteering
- Projects to engage community organisations and excluded communities with digital switchover

We also secured funds for 4 new longer term projects:

- We are part of the Volunteering England Volunteering for Stronger Communities Project. We will receive funding for 2 years for work to support people who are unemployed to gain skills and experience through volunteering.



- We are being funded by Henry Smith to undertake an innovative 2 year project to support people with substance mis-use issues to engage with the local community through volunteering.
- We have been funded by City Bridge for a further 2 years for work with smaller organisations to increase the effectiveness of their work with volunteers.
- We have just heard that we will be funded for 3 years (with a possible extension for a further 2 years) to provide support services to children's voluntary and community organisations in Islington.

We continued to receive positive feedback about the work that has continued during this transition period including the Third Sector Premises Management Project and our support for the Islington Community Network and hosting of the LINk, through which local residents can influence Islington's health and social care provision.

The loss of funding from the London Borough of Islington to support the volunteering service and their decision to back the development of a new local on-line volunteering initiative was a big disappointment. Many residents want face to face help to find a suitable volunteering opportunity and many organisations are looking for help with managing volunteers. We will be trying to maintain these aspects of the service we have provided, but this may be on a more limited scale. We have an active team of local volunteers involved in running this service and we will be seeking new financial resources to back it as well as using funds that we are starting to generate ourselves.

The building that we are located in continues to be a huge asset for our organisation and the voluntary sector in Islington. There are many benefits in sharing space with other organisations and this helps to create a more dynamic working environment. Having a shop front with proper facilities for meetings and training has transformed our interactions with local residents interested in volunteering and with local community organisations that regularly use the building for a variety of meetings and training courses. We are pleased to be working with Creative Islington to enable local artists to display their work in the building and bring it to the attention of a wider audience.

Our communications continue to be an important source of information for local organisations in the borough. Building on the success of the email news group we now have a substantial following on Twitter and have launched a YouTube channel and Facebook page. With our web site these are all opportunities to promote volunteering and the work of local organisations.

Thanks to our staff and volunteers, who continue to provide services to support local voluntary action in what are difficult times for local communities.

At the end of the year we were pleased to be re-accredited as an Investor's in People organisation. The summary of our review stated that: "It is clear that people are passionate about the work that they do with or on behalf of the membership groups they work with, and the community that they serve." And that "Staff and volunteers alike have been actively encouraged to develop and achieve their full potential".

Our thanks to John Uden and Nic Durston who retired as trustees during the year. Welcome to Wally Burgess, Mulat Haregot, Simon Greenhalgh and Adrenoke Lawal who joined us as new trustees. We look forward to working with them over the next year.

Mike Sherriff, Chief Executive  
Andy Murphy, Chair

## Providing support to our members

We introduced our new electronic newsletter for members in September 2011, with the second produced in December. The newsletters provide topical information about the voluntary sector in the borough, funding news, information from networks and a training and events calendar.

We have also developed short morning briefing sessions so that organisations can come together to hear about local developments of relevance to their work. One of our briefings was about the London Living wage and Voluntary Action Islington was the first CVS in the country to become an accredited Living wage employer. Other briefings have been about the new Health and Well-being Board, Safeguarding Adults, making the best use of pro-bono help and apprenticeships.

### Feedback from briefings:

"Thank you for a great day today. It was really useful and I hope we can have many more in the future."

"Really useful event - practical information that will help us think about whether we could take an apprentice."

Our web-site continues to be well used with over 2500 visits most months. We have 280 members of the email news group and over 70 items of news including information about funding and events placed each month. We are followed by over 700 people on Twitter and we now have a Facebook page and YouTube channel. All of these facilities provide information that is of use to people interested in volunteering and managing community organisations in Islington.

Our AGM is always a celebration of the voluntary sector in Islington. This year our speakers included the Leader of the Council and the Mayor presented the Volunteer of the Year Awards.



### Feedback from the AGM:

"Not only did the AGM give us a very encouraging message that despite what meagre resources one has, so long as there is commitment and vision, one can pull through. Voluntary Action Islington is a typical example of that strength that the voluntary sector should have. We know what it's like to try to provide the much needed services under tough economic constraints. If VAI (IVAC) manages to be around after forty years and is still growing strong, there must be some positive reasons for this existence. I'm sure I can speak on behalf of the voluntary organisations in Islington to say "it's good to have the continuous support and guidance from Voluntary Action Islington", so thank you."

## Improving the effectiveness of voluntary and community organisations in Islington

Following the closure of many of our capacity building programmes and our survey of members we set up a new telephone advice service and a facility to book face to face advice sessions about running a community organisation with one of our associates or staff members. The face to face sessions have mainly been held at the Resource Centre on Pentonville Road at different times during the day. One session was also held at one of the borough's Community Hubs. To date we have dealt with over 160 enquiries through this service. A lot of the enquiries are about how to get started as an organisation and about sources of funding for group activities.

### Feedback about our service to small groups:

"As a small organisation the help we have received, particularly around training and support with fundraising, has been invaluable."

"You have really inspired myself and Kevin to set up a small charity. It was great to listen to your expertise and specialist knowledge on the subject."

We currently have 2 specialist projects working with community organisations, one supporting smaller organisations to improve the effectiveness of their volunteer effort, and the Islington Third Sector Premises Management Project. We have just won the contract to provide infrastructure support for children and young people's voluntary sector organisations.

The premises management project is working with 15 community centres and buildings to improve efficiency and effectiveness and increase access - 8 intensively, 7 less intensively. We have worked with 5 centres to achieve the Visible Quality standard for community centres and with one youth sports organisation to produce a business plan enabling transfer of the building they work at from the Local Authority to this voluntary organisation. Through this project we have assisted several smaller community organisations to find premises. We continued to explore the feasibility of community centres making savings by jointly purchasing goods and services, and also to distribute premises related briefings and information.

### Feedback about the Third Sector Premises Project:

"I found today's meeting really helpful and am able to pinpoint what needs to be actioned."

"We have found the whole experience to be positive."

"It was great that you could ring up and get help when you most needed it."

"Superb service, especially in relation to the premises facilities management. We have an excellent working partnership...and it continues to play a key part in the development of our organisation as a multi-purpose community centre."

During the year we concluded our community research project funded through the Trust for London. A programme of workshops was organised for local community organisations on developing evidence of need and demonstrating outcomes. This project also provided one to one support to organisations and worked with a research project on demonstrating impact that was undertaken by Goldsmith's college.

We have delivered paid for training in the roles and responsibilities of trustees, health and safety, sustainable ICT, and income generation. We also provided training for the Homes for Islington residents training programme through our associate scheme.

During the year we received a grant to develop on-line learning and have produced a level 2 accredited course in effective team membership for volunteers and a level 3 accredited course in leadership and management for people running community organisations, with units in leadership, managing costs and budgets, and project management.

## Developing the local voluntary and community sector

We continue to advise and signpost people to local volunteering opportunities with over 500 local community organisations. Over 4000 people have been assisted this year and our team of volunteers supporting the work has grown to 18. We have undertaken more outreach to recruit volunteers including at Islington library and at events held by organisations including the Islington Bangladesh Association, Vibast Community Centre and City and Islington College, Hanley Crouch, Islington Mind, and Working Mum's Live 2012.

We held the annual Volunteer of the Year Awards and there were more entries in the past year. One of the awards was for the organisations that most effectively engaged volunteers. The awards were presented by the Mayor at our last AGM.

Feedback about our work to recruit volunteers:

"We found two wonderful volunteers through your efforts...one's going to do admin and the other is going to help with project development."

"A priority was to attract volunteers and this is in part a big thank you to Philip Boye-Anawomah and Yvette Ellis at voluntary Action Islington who have been instrumental in providing the means to attract a fabulous team of volunteers providing support and expertise: a Press Officer, 2 Grant Research Writers, an Administration Assistant, 2 Social Networking experts creating our Facebook and Twitter profiles, and even a music lawyer!"

This year we started a new initiative that is part of a project funded by the Big Lottery, through Volunteering England. The project will recruit people who are interested in volunteering in order to develop skills that will assist them to find employment. We have already recruited the Project Officer and a team of volunteers to work on the project. 12 employers have approached us about finding volunteering opportunities for their employees and we have worked with 3 community organisations to find placements.

In addition to the development of volunteering we are working to increase donated funds coming into the borough by being part of the Islington Giving Coalition and the new initiative to establish United Way in London.

As part of the community buildings project we are working with local organisations to investigate the feasibility and pilot joint purchasing arrangements. All of the community hubs in the borough have had some involvement in the project and as a result of the project some centres have already made savings on utility bills.

We have completed a contract with Help on Your Doorstep to develop the involvement of volunteers in their organisation.

## Mobilising our members to influence change

### Community Network

Voluntary Action Islington continues to support the Islington Community Network, providing bulletins and organising meetings. During this year meetings were held with the councillor leading on the Local Authority scrutiny review of the voluntary sector. A successful conference was held with local voluntary organisations with over 150 participants and speakers on citizen organising and the Local Authority's plans. Policy lunches were organised on giving and localism.



We continue to attend relevant Council meetings and to feedback to local community organisations, for example about policy on business rate relief and developments in relation to the local initiatives fund.

### Islington Local Involvement Network (LINK)

Voluntary Action Islington holds the contract to host the local LINK. This year a Healthwatch working group has been set up to prepare for the transition to Healthwatch. Local volunteers have completed research for working groups on personal budgets and home adaptations. The findings have been presented to the Council and fed in to the local Joint Strategic Needs Analysis and Health and Well-being Board. Regular outreach is undertaken to obtain the views of residents about services and this year the 1000 voices campaign was completed with 1000 people providing their views about local service provision. These views were collected by staff and local volunteers.

#### Feedback about the work of the LINK:

*"I congratulate you on your many achievements this year, working with GPs to set up patient participation groups, informing the development of personal budgets, gathering views on home adaptations, and on your scrutiny of services provided in care homes for older people and at the Whittington Hospital. The views and feedback of local people are crucial to the development and delivery of high quality primary care services and on behalf of NHS North Central London I would like to thank you for the work you do in representing them."*

*From North Central London NHS*

*"I didn't think I could stand up and speak in a meeting, I'm not that sort of person, but since that training I've done it twice, and I'm quite proud of myself actually."*

*From attendee at LINK training*

## BME Forum

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Voluntary Action Islington hosts the BME forum which delivered a borough wide festival for Islington Black History Month, engaging more than 1000 people and involving schools, businesses, arts venues and community groups. BME Forum volunteers completed the Community Research course to enable members to further develop and carry out research on BME involvement in Community Hubs. The Forum delivered a partnership event with ROTA and local stakeholders to address inequalities faced by BME communities in educational attainment and employment.

## Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum

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We provided support to the Islington Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Forum including support for networking events on youth services and early years' services.

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Voluntary Action Islington continues to be an Investor's in People organisation and our Volunteer Centre accreditation was renewed this year up to October 2014.

### Feedback from our volunteers:

"Today is my last day as a volunteer within the organisation, and I want to tell everyone thank you very much for your support and cooperation. I have received a lot from all of you, and I have no doubt that this has contributed significantly to having the good job opportunity that I have been offered."

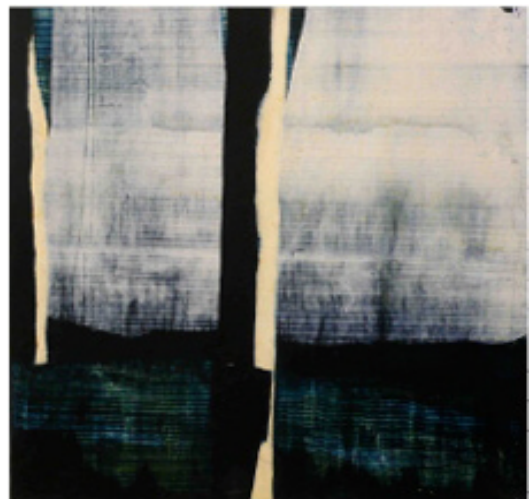
"It has been a real pleasure to have the opportunity to work in the organisation. I just want to say: thank you again and all the best for all of you."



## Voluntary Action Islington Exhibits 2012



Artists clockwise  
from above: Alex  
Cave, Belle  
Robinson, Jon  
Britten, Zoe  
Benbow, and Kate  
Burvill exhibited at  
Voluntary Action  
Islington.



# Finance Summary for the year ended 31st March 2012

The details on this page are a summary of information from the financial statements as independently audited by Jackson and Jackson Accountants Limited, Chartered Accountants, 33 Chingford Mount Road, London E4 8LU.

This summary may not contain enough details to allow a full understanding of the financial affairs of Voluntary Action Islington. The full financial statements are available upon request from Voluntary Action Islington and can be downloaded from our website [www.vai.org.uk](http://www.vai.org.uk).

The financial statements are also submitted to the Registrar of Companies and the Charity Commission.

**Bankers: Unity Trust Bank plc, Nine Brindley Place, Birmingham B1 2HB.**

## Statement of Financial Activities, year ended 31 March 2012

	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds 2011 £
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>			
Incoming resources from generating funds:			
Voluntary income	88,918	167,363	256,281
Investment income	1,512	–	1,152
Incoming resources from charitable activities	260,630	302,613	563,243
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<b>351,060</b>	<b>469,976</b>	<b>821,036</b>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>			
Charitable activities	(309,818)	(605,128)	(914,946)
Governance costs	(5,517)	(3,244)	(8,761)
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<b>(315,335)</b>	<b>(608,372)</b>	<b>(923,707)</b>
<b>NET INCOMING/(OUTGOING) RESOURCES BEFORE TRANSFERS</b>	<b>35,725</b>	<b>(138,396)</b>	<b>(102,671)</b>
Transfer between funds	(9,038)	9,038	–
<b>NET INCOME/(EXPENDITURE) FOR THE YEAR</b>	<b>26,687</b>	<b>(129,358)</b>	<b>(102,671)</b>
<b>RECONCILIATION OF FUNDS</b>			
Total funds brought forward	469,671	253,401	723,072
<b>TOTAL FUNDS CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<b>496,358</b>	<b>124,043</b>	<b>620,401</b>
<b>COSTS OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITIES BY FUND TYPE</b>			<b>£</b>
Leadership and Community Networks	31,617	164,470	196,087
Capacity Building and Training	28,133	321,958	350,091
LiNK	79,862	–	79,862
Community Resource	123,172	1,031	124,203
Volunteering	25,499	69,324	94,823
Support costs	21,535	48,345	69,880
<b>Total cost of charitable activities</b>	<b>309,818</b>	<b>605,128</b>	<b>914,946</b>

## Balance sheet to 31 March 2012

<b>Restricted income funds</b>	<b>Total £</b>
All restricted funds	124,043
<b>Unrestricted income funds</b>	
Designated funds	102,250
General funds	394,108
<b>Unrestricted income funds total</b>	<b>496,358</b>
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>620,401</b>

# Voluntary**Action**Islington

**Voluntary Action Islington | 200a Pentonville Road | London N1 9JP**

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Please note that the map is a simplified representation and is not to scale. Voluntary Action Islington is approximately 10 minutes walk from King's Cross Station. On exiting Kings Cross Underground station turn left and head eastwards on Euston Road and walk for 3 minutes. At the junction continue straight ahead onto Pentonville Road and continue for a further 7 minutes until arriving at Voluntary Action Islington.

## Buses

Buses that run along Pentonville Road include 30, 73, 214.

Additional buses that stop at Kings Cross Station include 10, 17, 45, 46, 63, 91, 259, 390.

## Trains

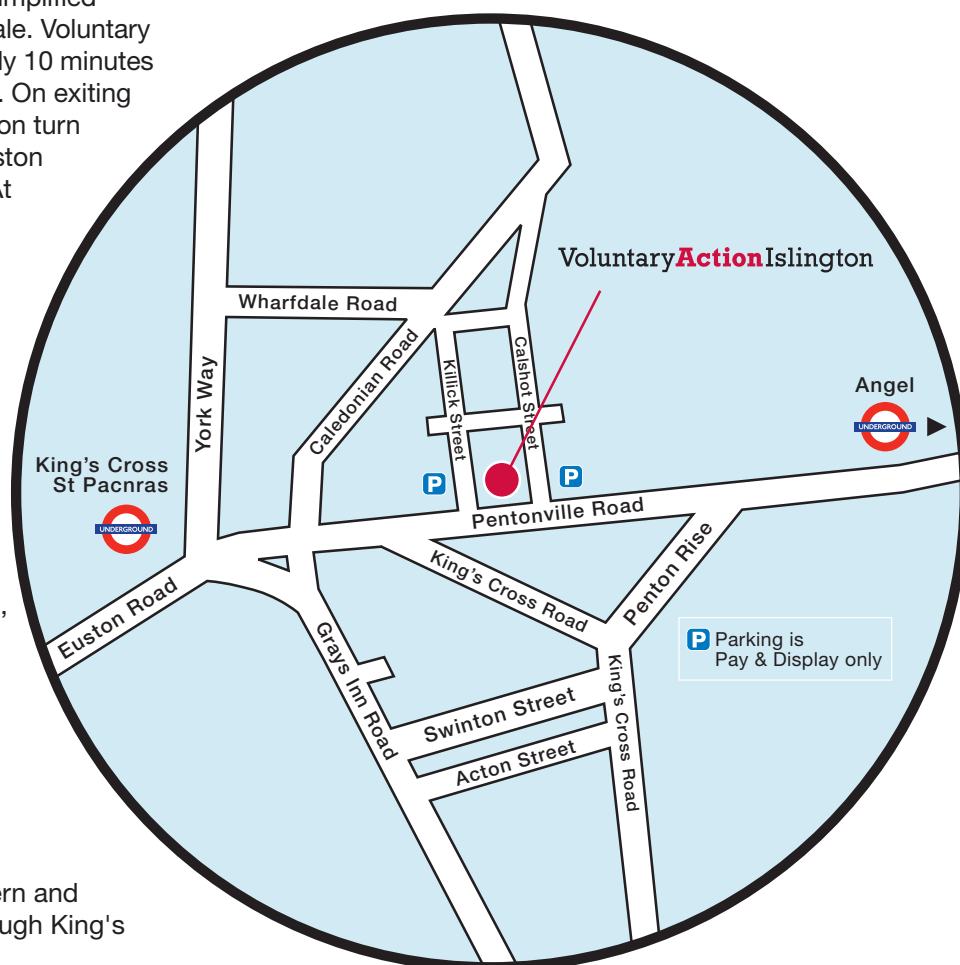
Trains to King's Cross, St Pancras or Euston.

## Tube

Piccadilly, Circle, Victoria, Hammersmith and City, Northern and Metropolitan lines all pass through King's Cross Station.

## Car parking

Parking meters in the surrounding streets.



**INVESTORS  
IN PEOPLE**

Voluntary Action Islington previously known as Islington Voluntary Action Council. Charity Number 291890.  
**Patrons:** Jeremy Corbyn MP, Lord Smith of Finsbury, David Vandivier.  
**Chief Executive:** Mike Sherriff.  
Company Limited by Guarantee Number 1913555.