



Basildon, Billericay & Wickford | CVS

Supporting our local charities



# Annual Report 2014-15

Support

Develop

Collaborate

Influence



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## Chair's Report

I have great pleasure in presenting this Annual Review of the work of Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS. This review can offer no more than a snapshot of our work over the past year. It reflects an organisation that remains deeply committed to its members' and the power of community action and one that continues to offer them and those they serve a well informed and persuasive voice.

You will see from what follows that we have been engaged on a number of fronts: shaping policy, campaigning and speaking out on behalf of our members and their communities. Central to our mission is our development support to local groups which remains our core priority. I am therefore pleased to report that this year we have excelled, securing more money to invest in key local provision.

We have:

- Invested £40,000 Community First money into activities in Pitsea North and South wards.
- Lead the Commissioning of the Talent Match Response fund investing a further £290,000 into employability focused work.
- Held two well-attended conferences on themes of social action and the Who Will Cares Agenda.
- Matched over 400 volunteers with volunteering opportunities.
- Worked with approximately 56 organisations to recruit and place volunteers.
- Secured new contracts to increase employment prospects locally.
- Hosted four trainee Community Organisers – one of only two organisations in Essex.

At the same time we have provided important strategic leadership, not just in Basildon, but across Essex and the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) area. Our Chief Officer has this year played an important role on a number of key strategic bodies. He has represented the sector in negotiations over the effective use of European Social Funds and was appointed as the voluntary sector representative to the European Union Structural and Investment Fund Committee.

## Change for Good

In my view, the vital role of infrastructure is too often taken for granted. This crucial support provided to individuals and communities can be over-looked. It was therefore a big plus that this year we saw the publication of *Change for Good*, the report of the Independent Commission on the Future of Local Infrastructure. Launched at a packed event in the House of Commons in January the starting point for the Commission was how local infrastructure will meet the ever-growing demand for support with shrinking resources. The Commission concluded that infrastructure will be needed in some form as long as people come together to form voluntary organisations and community groups. But the Commission concluded that the infrastructure of the future is likely to be a much leaner enabler, broker and catalyst rather than necessarily a deliverer. A key message from the Commission was that if the message to funders is to invest, the message to infrastructure has to be to change. This must be a 'something for something' deal. Local infrastructure needs to be redesigned and be creative with its resources to meet the challenges of tomorrow.

## Our finances

During the year I have also acted as the Treasurer for the CVS. I am therefore pleased to report that with new contracts and projects we were able to increase our turnover for the second year in a row. Whilst this is positive news we must not be complacent as our core work continues to operate at a loss. With a strong reserve position and a clear sense of direction it means that we are well placed to face the future. That is down to having a committed board of trustees capable of robust challenge and debate and a dedicated and focused staff team. Importantly this has provided an element of financial stability to the service and enabled us to retain core staff.

**Finally**, as this is my last AGM and Annual Report I would like to thank my fellow trustees, staff and volunteers for their continuing contribution to the work of the CVS. I also want to place on record my thanks to our funders and partners the Basildon Borough Council, Essex County Council, the ECC Public Health and the Big Lottery for their ongoing support. Last but not least a big thanks to our members for all they do. I wish you all well for the future.

## Chief Officer Report



**European Union**  
**European Social Fund**  
Investing in jobs and skills

As you can read in this years report with limited resources we accomplished much. Importantly we maintained service provision, and were actively engaged in a number of high profile, regionally significant projects.

Naturally our service level agreement with both Essex and Basildon places an important emphasis on securing additional inward investment into the Borough and the County. In striving to meet this objective we have worked with funders to ensure the best possible use of limited resources.

To meet this objective we:

- Served on Essex Community Foundation Thriving Third Sector panel
- Managed the Talent Match Response Fund allocating a further £290,000
- Served on Essex Community Initiative Fund
- Secured Building Better Opportunities Funding from the Big Lottery

### European Social Fund & Building Better Opportunities

The service has been actively involved in the shaping of European Social Fund. Indicative funding of £16m has been earmarked for social inclusion priorities around employment.

To ensure we considered a range of options we hosted an Essex wide consultation event. Despite having only four days notice, 43 representatives attended.

### Building Better Opportunities Fund

In partnership with IMAGO (previously Voluntary Action within Kent) and East Sussex CVS Partnership we submitted a successful application to act as the Partnership Development Funded organisation for the LEP area. The aim of the funding is threefold:

- Objective 1: To ensure widespread awareness of the ESF funding.
- Objective 2: To providing information and be a first point of contact.
- Objective 3: To ensuring good quality applications are submitted to BIG.

The work to deliver programme is ongoing and will be considered further in next years Annual Report.

## Strategic Partnership Work

We continue to work in partnership with the local and national public sector to shape service provision and delivery. Aside from representing the sector on a range of partnership boards we have:

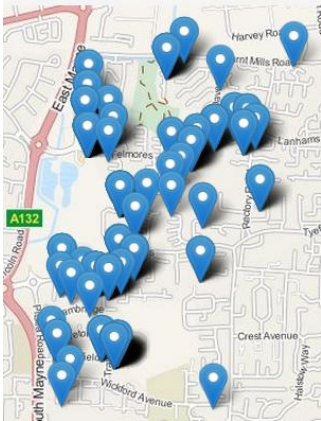
- Assisted Basildon Borough Council with its Voluntary and Community Sector Survey. The aim is to enable the Council better understand the sectors offer and to inform future commissioning intentions.
- Assisted the New Economics Foundation with the evaluation of the Community First Neighbourhood Matched Fund, on behalf of the Office for Civil Society (OCS) at the Cabinet Office. They undertook a number of case studies - one of which focused on Basildon (the Pitsea South East & North West CF Panel).
- Championed the Essex Partnership Voluntary Sector Framework. The Voluntary and Community Sector Framework sets out a number of actions that will help achieve a shared partnership aim of strong, resilient communities and innovation in service design and delivery. Partners will be committing to developing their own organisational strategies to meet the requirements. I represent the sector on ECVS on the framework implementation group.

Encouragingly service user feedback remains overwhelming positive. As an organisation we are committed to being a user-centred service that puts users at the heart of the organisation. This means that we aim to recognise and value our users and build positive relationships with them. In order to do this feedback is collected from users about their experience of the service, including complaints and suggestions.

This was also reflected in 12 new members joining the CVS, so a big welcome to them. We remain committed to growing this membership and ensuring many more organisations understand our service offer and help us grow as an organisation.

As a Chief Officer much of my time is dedicated to supporting partnership meetings, advocating on behalf of the sector and discussing strategies. Our practical interventions therefore provide a sense of immense pride and satisfaction. Examples of these activities include our Winter Warmth Project, our employability activities and our Community Organisers programme.





## Community Organisers

Community Organisers is a national training programme in community organising that focuses on building relationships and mobilising people in communities. It encourages communities to take action that makes a positive difference.

We were fortunate to be selected to host four organisers Helen, Amanda, Jacqui and Louis who were with us until January 2015. During the year they worked in Pitsea, Vange, and Laindon:

- The Community Organisers listened to 1660 residents to hear about what they love about the areas and what they were concerned about.
- They supported 11 projects.
- Recruited 16 volunteers who worked on a number of different projects.

Projects supported included:

- Power of flower
- New Skate park for Northlands
- Youth Facilities
- Stop Dog Fouling Project
- Youth Disco
- Organised a community litter pick.
- Worked with residents towards creating a resident association and a neighbourhood watch scheme.

That's a lot of organising and activity and mobilisation.

Their year ended with a graduation and End of Year Celebration at London's City Hall. It is a tribute to their energy and skills that in these difficult times all four progressed into new roles, two with local organisations. Helen is still with us!

## What have I learnt?

At the end of the programme participants were asked what have they learnt.

One concluded, "People want to talk and want change they just don't know how to. A year is just not enough to start building those important relationships which will lead to action and change". We are sure many will endorse these sentiments.

*“Very informative,  
concise and useful.  
Good networking  
opportunity” –  
Southend MIND  
June 2014*

*“Good session” –  
“Good facilitation” –  
“Good presenters”:  
Dec 2014*

*“Very good and  
interesting forum -  
Learnt a lot” March  
2015*

## Investing & Supporting the Sector

This year we have invested and supported the sector in a number of different ways. We have continued to provide a range of training opportunities delivered locally, provided one to one support for new and existing groups and supported groups with funding advice.

### Training

- We ran 9 courses/workshops. These were followed up by one to one support for all participants.

Feedback is gathered after training and networking events. Encouragingly this is overwhelming positive. During 2014-15 feedback was gathered from 58 participants at the June, December 2014 and March 2015 forums.

### Fundraising

Our funding advice continues to prove popular with local groups.

- We supported 103 groups with funding advice on 199 occasions
- Covered funding extensively in newsletters and bulletins
- Supported 17 local groups to raise £82,621
- Distributed £4,000 winter fuel monies
- Delivered the Community First programme. The programme, which has now ended, invested £166,000 in two wards over a 4 year period.

Our funding fayre, delivered in Partnership with Basildon Council, once again proved a popular attraction with 56 delegates attending a series of workshops, and meeting funders and exhibitors.

Funders came from Essex Community Foundation, The Big Lottery, Essex Funding Team, Advice on Church funding and Central Government. Tables were staffed by groups wishing to promote their services such as Red Cross, Synergy, Choices, Essex Carers and our Clinical Commissioning Group.



## **Advice Services**

Our advisory services continue to be popular.

- Provided one to one support to an average of 99 groups per quarter.
- In the period 01/10/14 – 31/03/15 135 unique groups were advised.

## **Winter Warmth Project.**

We secure a small sum of funding to help the frail and vulnerable during the winter months. A meeting was held with local providers to discuss delivery. A modest investment of £4,000 from Essex County Council enabled us to provide funds to Basildon CAB, Synergy and the Volunteer Centre. This money was to provide support for those whose health and well-being is most at risk during cold weather. It resulted in the provision of food and clothing, and deposits to assist homeless clients.

## **Enabling communication and collaboration**

As a CVS we aim to facilitate effective communication, networking and collaboration across local voluntary and community groups, as well as promoting cross sector partnerships.

We keep local groups up to date with news in a variety of formats including our bulletins, newsletters and website. We also host networking events and conferences.

This year we delivered:

- 4 Voluntary Sector network events and brought local groups together to discuss issues, share information and support each other.
- Two conferences attended by over 100 delegates to celebrate and promote best practice.
- 4 newsletters
- 10 bulletins

Our web presence continues to grow with the addition of new project pages. This has proved a big success, with big thanks due to Donna for leading this work. We

will be undertaking further development work over the next couple of years to enhance our social media presence.

Our conferences continue to be well received with a focus this year on social action. Increasing community support and action through volunteering and charitable activities has become an increasing focus for decision makers in central government, Essex and Basildon. Initiatives like the National Citizen Service, Community First funding, and Community Organising have all contributed to local development in Basildon. Delegates were able to:

- Gain an understanding of the projects and initiatives in Basildon and Essex for encouraging social action.
- Hear from and celebrate the different ways charities are making a contribution to transforming lives in Basildon.
- Discuss and debate the future direction for social action in Basildon and Essex and the role voluntary and community groups can play.
- Consider how their organisation can contribute and help shape this agenda.

### **Who Will Care? Swop Shop**

In Partnership with Essex County Council we also hosted a summit for community and voluntary organisations, health organisations and the public sector to debate the power of social action, exchange information and generate great ideas for health and wellbeing.





*“Our vision is for an **engaged community** that **creates***

***opportunities** for **everyone** and **feels good** about itself”*

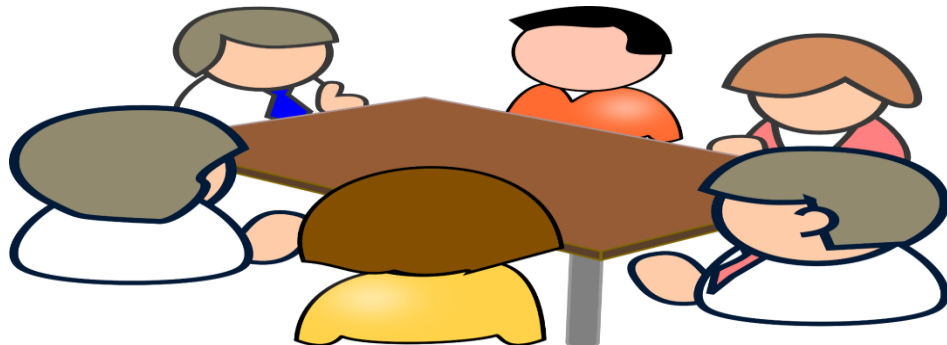
## Big Local – Heart of Pitsea

### Our year on the HoP

The ‘Heart of Pitsea’ is the name chosen by community members for the Big Local Area. This is an initiative which provides £1m to 150 areas in England. Lead by local residents it is currently a partnership of 12 members. At the moment there are eight local residents and four strategic partners.

The partners are:

- Basildon, Billericay and Wickford Council for Voluntary Services (local trusted organisation)
- Basildon Borough Council
- Essex Youth Services
- NHS Clinical Commissioning Group



The strategic partners are to help assist and advise the residents to make decisions to achieve the intentions of the Big Local initiative.

As the Trusted Local Organisation we assist by managing the finances of the project, employ staff and help oversee the allocation of these funds ensuring they are spent appropriately.

To progress the project two paid members of staff have been recruited.

To meet its mission this year residents have:

- Donated over 750 hours of volunteer time to the project
- Developed a fair and equal way to process and make decisions on all the ideas and proposals for projects, activities and events.
- Recruited two paid members of staff. So lots of time went into advertising, interviewing and deciding on the best people for the roles created.
- Produced a quarterly newsletter
- Organised a Summer Fun Day and a Spring Clean
- Invested £25,000 matched funds in partnership with Basildon Councils Environmental Champions Group to improve and upgrade the play equipment at Elm Green
- So far the residents have chosen to support 13 different projects and activities and these are in development. They will be reported on at greater length in next years report.

### **How can you find more information about what's going on?**

The Heart of Pitsea website, facebook page, and email are the cheapest way for the partnership to share information. Because residents know that not everyone uses the World Wide Web they have also produced a quarterly newsletter delivered to every house and business.

Simon Johnson, Big Local Development Worker

**E:** [hello@heartofpitsea.co.uk](mailto:hello@heartofpitsea.co.uk)

**T:** 07572 001671

**W:** [www.heartofpitsea.co.uk](http://www.heartofpitsea.co.uk)

*Working in partnership with*





## Volunteer Centre

### Working with Volunteers

Basildon Volunteer Centre is a member of Volunteer Essex. Volunteer Centres have six core functions: brokerage, marketing volunteering, Good Practice development, developing volunteering opportunities, policy responses and the strategic development of volunteering.

The majority of the work of the Centre is brokerage. This year 545 potential volunteers registered with the Centre, with 77% of these volunteers matched with a suitable volunteering opportunity.

This year the Centre has also participated in a number of outreach events to promote volunteering including a Circle Anglia employability event for Circle Anglia's residents and #Stepping Up in collaboration with Essex County Council, held at the Eastgate Centre.

### Volunteer Awards

The 'Play Your Part' Basildon Volunteer Awards were held at The Towngate Theatre on Friday 26<sup>th</sup> September 2014, in collaboration with Basildon Borough Council. The event was attended by over 100 people, and awards were given in 10 categories, the final award of the evening was the Volunteer of the Year Tony Guyon Memorial Cup, which was awarded jointly to George Coleman-Wood from Basildon and Pitsea Carnival and Sian Fisher, a young carer.

In addition to the core functions of the Volunteer Centre, the Centre has also been involved in a number of projects.

### Gateway to Work

The CVS received funding from the Essex Learning Partnership, to deliver the Gateway to Work project. This was a programme combining workshops with volunteering placements to Basildon residents without a Level 2 qualification, with the objective of moving participants closer to the labour market. The number of participants engaging with the project was lower than expected in part due to difficulties recruiting the specific cohort and in parts to non-attendance of

registered participants. 94% of people attending the programme went on to volunteer and 3 people moved on to further learning.

### **Timebanking**

BBWCVS received funding from Essex County Council to set up Timebank as part of the Essex wide roll out led by Colchester Council for Voluntary Service.

Timebanking is a new way of volunteering which predominately involves volunteering person to person rather than person to organisation. The majority of the work undertaken this year has been training on the unique Timebank system and methodology and raising awareness of Timebanking in the local community, which including a session on Timebanking at the BBWCVS Conference in December 2014. A mini-timebank was started in Wickford by Basildon Borough Council and is now supported as part of the role out by BBWCVS.

### **Youth Volunteering**

The Volunteer Centre received funded from Essex Council County to develop a Youth Volunteering Project as one of five centres in Essex, lead by Southend Association of Voluntary Service. Young people have traditionally been underrepresented in the work that the Volunteer Centres have done, and this programme aims to offer a more tailored service to young people looking to volunteer. This project is funded until September 2015. In the first two quarters of the project 16 young people were placed in volunteering roles. Feedback from the young people volunteer has been positive, and indicative comments made by young volunteers is that 'I have gained experience which I hope will help with getting a job' and '(I have) met new people and improved confidence in talking to new people'

## Financial Review of Activities

The total income for 2014/15 was £231,909, against total expenditure of £187,884. At the end of the financial year £84,207 remained as restricted funds. The organisations free reserves increased from £158,291 to £167,187

Year ending	2014/15	2013/14	2012/13	2011/12	2010/11
Incoming Resources	£231,909	£140,985	£134,040	£151,673	£236,784
Resources Expended	£187,884	£121,919	£137,790	£196,027	£245,138
Surplus / (Deficit)	£44,025	£19,066	£(3,750)	£(44,354)	£(8,354)
Fund Balance	£251,394	£207,369	£188,303	£192,053	£236,407

## Policies and Reserves

We continue to obtain our core funding from Essex County Council, Basildon Borough Council. However, we remain committed to diversifying our sources of funding and are pleased to report that over 34% of our funding in 2014/15 came from other sources. As well as our core funders, this year we received funding from the Locality, Big Lottery, The Princes Trust, Community First and the Big Local Trust.

We are only too aware of the financial pressures experienced by our funders, and as such the trustees wish to thank our core funders for their continued support.

The strategy of the organisation remains one which aims to have core funding from local authorities and income generation, and to enable on-going development through project funding from large funders like the Big Lottery, and charitable trusts.

As a Board the trustees are committed to:

- Keeping the reserves policy under review to ensure it meets a charity's changing needs and circumstances.
- That the level of reserves is monitored throughout the year.



In furtherance of this policy a review was requested in July 2014 using the framework based upon the most recent Charity Commission guidance (2010). Our aim is to ensure that we can give confidence to stakeholders that the charity's finances are being managed and can also provide an indicator of future funding needs. In the development of this policy the Board is mindful of risks identified in the services risk assessment and action plan.

Following this review it is recommended that the reserves are set at the equivalent of 18 months core costs. This will enable provision to be made for the risk of unforeseen emergency or other unexpected need for funds; providing cover for unforeseen day-to-day operational costs; changes or a reduction in a source of income, e.g. a grant, not being renewed enabling funds needed to give the trustees time to take action if income falls below expectations and to make provision for redundancy costs. The free reserves at the year end amounted to £167,187.

## Our Thanks

Our thanks go to...

As a CVS we recognise the important role our partners can play in assisting us to improve and develop our services. As a result we have continued to work with other providers and community and voluntary groups. This year we would like to thank a number of partners.

The following list is not exhaustive but our thanks to:

Lorraine Jarvis, Chief Officer at Chelmsford CVS and Chair at ECVS, Leah Douglas at Basildon Borough Council, Helen Lax at Essex County Council, the Heart of Pitsea residents, colleagues at IMAGO and 3VA for delivery of the Building Better Opportunities programme, Paul Ridley and Sufina Ahmad at the Big Lottery fund, Mike Rayner and Lorraine George at the SELEP and colleagues at the ECVS and local Volunteer Centres.

We are also grateful for the funding and support given by our core funders.

This year one of our long serving members of staff Pam McCarthy left us following a number of years of service. Pam made an important contribution locally and will be missed. We wish her all the best with her future endeavors.

Last by no means least a big thank you to our volunteers, staff and trustees. The importance of this contribution to our work community cannot be overstated.

## **Our Staff**

- Chris Evans, Chief Officer
- Pam McCarthy, Development Services Manager (Left Jan 2015)
- Jessica Plant, Supporting People Volunteer Co-ordinator
- Donna Plakhtienko, Finance and Marketing Co-ordinator
- Simon Johnson, Heart of Pitsea Co-ordinator
- Amanda Clare, Community Organiser (Left Jan 2015)
- Jacqueline Skinner, Community Organiser (Left Jan 2015)
- Helen Davis, Community Organiser
- Louis Webster, Community Organiser (Left Jan 2015)