

# An overview of Voluntary and Community Sector Stroud District

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# Voluntary and Community Sector Stroud District

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Sometimes referred to as the 'third sector'

Very diverse range from small community groups to national and international charities and everything in between.

VCS organisations are mostly voluntary led – they are dependent on them in order to deliver aims and objectives.

Do not make a surplus or profit but there will be no personal financial gain

Any profit is put back into the organisation or the community or of 'charitable benefit'



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Smaller end of VCS - Community Groups

Generally are formally constituted groups, often with 'Terms of Reference' as a governing document.

These are unincorporated organisations and because of this Members of those groups are personally liable.

Generally their turnover is less than £5k (at the most) and they would be locally based.

They are volunteer run with no employees



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Generally have fewer policies and procedures in place as there is little need for this degree of governance.

They will have a bank account in the organisations name.

Their aims generally are about delivering practical outcomes

Income generated through fundraising events and grants sometimes donations but largely the former 2

Stroud example = Stroud Village and Community Hall Network or Tynings Area Residents Group.



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Then VCS organisations which have paid staff, less than equivalent 5 f/t and use volunteers.

Most of these will have a legal entity such as a registered Charity, charitable company, IPS or CIO.

Turnover can vary from £5k – ?

Income is generated largely through project grants but other sources such as trading activities, fundraising and donations do have a part to play.

Crucially, when there has been a financial shortfall or gap, this would have been propped up by a mixture of fundraising and grants.

Often have a long history in delivering services for those in need



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Policies in place and exercise more 'accountable' practice

Will have AGM's, members who have voting rights and a greater say in the shape of the organisation.

They tend to be local and regional in their focus and may work and become more involved strategically

Good example would be GL11 in Dursley or Uley  
Community Shop

\*Reliant on grants as major source of income

\*Reliant on volunteers to make their business model work

\*Reliant on support, help and resources



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School PTA's

Stroud and District Citizens Advice  
Bureau

Forest Green Residents  
Association

Community Buildings

Stroud Valleys Project

Bisley Community Orchard,  
Allotments & Composting

Home Start Stroud & Dursley

Luncheon Clubs - Frampton

Day Centres - Dursley

Community Transport

Community Libraries – Berkeley

Cinema – Wotton Under Edge  
Electric Picture House

Door Youth Project

Dr Jenner's House, Museum &  
Garden

Stroud Fringe Festival



# Barriers for VCS

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## 1) Attracting and retaining volunteers

Issue around liability – litigious culture – significant drop in willingness for us all to take on responsibility, e.g. activities around children and younger people

## 2) Financial – balance between delivery and forward planning – harder for VCS sector, especially smaller groups to achieve this balance

## 3) Proving their ‘worth’ – monitoring and evaluation, ‘the difference they make’

## 4) Making successful grant applications, grant sources, understanding the language used



# Voluntary and Community Sector - recent changes

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Recent wider financial changes

VCS groups have seen a reduced amount of grant funding available and therefore there is increased competition for the money that is available.

Coupled with wider austerity measures the likelihood of increases in funding looks unlikely to happen.

VCS groups have voiced concerns about this and its impact, both for themselves and for the wider community

Austerity measures elsewhere, in providing services for example, has also impacted the VCS where there was once a grant to help support and provide. Being asked to help support cutbacks in services.



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Closures for some VCS organisations, although I will stress that there are always a number of factors involved and things are never as simple as they appear

Stroud VCS Network – September - further meeting in January 2017  
issues raised:

## “Funding

- Less money and more competition.
- Need to be funding the right things i.e. need core funding so there is more money to go towards delivery
- Perception that VCS = Free

Recruiting volunteers including trustees

Potential impact of ‘Brexit’, funding gap”.



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What has changed for VC Sector?

CIO brought in to help address personal liability - Helped for model 2 (slide 5) but not for grass roots groups. Big drive now to try and encourage us to volunteer.

Volunteering Glos = county organisation to help drive this + Enabling Active Communities ethos examples of things changing.

'Do-It ForGood' - <https://do-it.org/>

Vol Glos have stated recently that they have seen an increase in volunteering.

But short term volunteering rather than longer term responsibilities i.e. will make a cake for a fundraising event but won't organise event.



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Volunteering – aspects to consider

Increase pressure on our time 2 persons in household encouraged to go to work. Used to be one member only.

Older people, traditional source for volunteering choose to go on cruises for example or are looking after grandchildren because 2 people full time working

The 'spare time' market has changed - we have more choices on our spare time.

Spare time during the day = more and more of a financial luxury



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Culture change for grant dependent groups

Balance between 'charitable' and being more 'business minded' – move away from grant dependency

Growth in new areas of 'funding' e.g. JustGiving, community shares

Exploring new ways of delivery – some groups embrace this

Role of infrastructure VCS organisations to help here e.g. GFAN



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For VCS sector organisations involved in service delivery - changes

Encouraged to collaborate. Perceived as way forward to enable the voluntary sector to remain (and increase) involvement in the design and delivery of services.

Barriers – capacity to do this (internal and external) and increased levels of competitiveness and mistrust.

Need to have space for capacity and capability-building in terms of building effective inter-organisational relationships (between VCS and others)

To do this there needs to be someone/ an organisation helping this to happen but building the capacity and capability of the sector going forward will need funding to the sector



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Commissioning also offers potential for VCS groups who help deliver services

Replace grant funding?

Commissioning is all about the most effective and efficient way of using all the available resources to improve outcomes

Recent cross county event discussed commissioning

Ability to demonstrate impact and delivery towards social outcomes are areas that have grown in importance in the current grant funding landscape too = Social Impact Bonds



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Like collaborative working idea, VCS need the time and space to look at this which costs money

Funders too look for models of service delivery which have established track records in delivering outcomes and value for money

Will automatically exclude VCS groups who are attempting to do this for the first time as they have no track record

Not helpful for small grass roots VCS organisations



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But collaboration can help learning and improve practices

Share back office costs

Getting smaller VCS organisations to collaborate in commissioning and the delivery of services can help them to access larger commissions e.g. GEM Project

Larger commissioning has been run this way for some time and may continue in this way for the future.

Also offers the opportunity to give a 'bespoke' response to commissioning. Have local knowledge which national organisations don't have



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Another recent trend for the VCS sector

Drive to encourage more involvement, a greater relationship with business sector

Benefits to both sectors – learning for the organisation as well as the employees and volunteers alike

Further scope for this ‘collaboration’ to be increased

Donations, Sponsorship, Skills, Employer Supported Volunteering, resources for free, meeting space etc – ‘Involve Gloucestershire’

Sponsorship – ‘Dragons Den’ VERY interested to hear of any companies who would be willing to participate

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Some thoughts to leave you with re VCS

Volunteering – out of date? How can we be more involved in our communities? Process driven over the years, weighty.

Volunteering – need for cultural change? ‘Want to give something back into the community’ – now about ‘what do I get out of doing this?’

Perhaps its about how do you become involved in your community?

Use of technology in this as not subject to geography