

# A Year in our Life 2019-20

## Welcome to the 2019-2020 Mid Sussex Voluntary Action (MSVA) Annual Report.

This has certainly been a period of change and disruption across the globe, as it has for MSVA. However, we have weathered the storm and look forward to the 'new normal' as it has been called. Quite what that will mean for everyone remains to be seen. We do know we will still be here to encourage, empower and enable the charities and voluntary groups of Mid Sussex as we move forward into the next phase.

### Change

Our much-respected Manager Sue Edgson decided to move on to pastures new. She gave us many years of excellent service, both as a Volunteer Coordinator and subsequently as Team Manager. We thank her sincerely for making a huge contribution to the service and wish her well.

As we worked with Mid Sussex District Council, on shared objectives, it became clear that changes needed to be made to our service level agreement to address new and important challenges. The team stepped up to those challenges, including the delivery of three new client group related workshops. Feedback from participants proved these had been very successful.

We also began to raise the profile of the service, not only within our membership group, but also with councillors who represent our district and towns. An example of this was our new format Annual Meeting and AGM, which was well attended. The meeting headlined specific work done by a sample of our member groups and how they have benefited from their involvement with MSVA.

During this period of time, we were finding a sharp increase in the community development dimension of our work, ably encouraged and supported by Julia Beckett. It became clear to the Board of Trustees that we needed to expand this capacity, and we did so by recruiting Sasha Brown to work alongside Julia. This has enabled us to focus also on the needs of young people, with exciting and encouraging outcomes, and to deliver a series of 'drop-in' support sessions for existing and potential members.

### The Alliance

Throughout the period, we were also playing our part in the formation of the countywide West Sussex Community and Voluntary Sector infrastructure Alliance (WSCVSi Alliance), and engaging with the West Sussex Three Year Plan, which set the challenge: 'No change is not an option' - a challenge to which the Alliance willingly responded.

During this difficult time, thanks are due to my colleagues within the staff team and on the Board of Trustees, who worked tirelessly to deal with the relentless but inspiring challenges.

### Additional global pandemic challenges

At the same time, we were in the process of recruiting a new Manager. By February 2020, we were fortunate to have Lauren Lloyd come into post. She was aware of the challenges ahead and was relishing them. However, if that were not enough, a few short weeks after her arrival, towards the end of her induction, Lauren and the team were further challenged by the unwarranted changes brought about by COVID-19. Our world changed in an instant. We began working from home, using new technology to 'meet', and working ever closer with our funding partners. Like everyone else, we had to adjust our priorities and needed to maintain and then build our finances.

In addition to the staff and Trustees, I am extremely proud of the amazing efforts and successes that have taken place jointly with both countywide public and voluntary sector colleagues; and humbled by the vast numbers of volunteers who have stepped forward to meet the challenges we face now, and in the future. The story will continue in our next Annual Report.



Dave Wellbelove  
Chairman at MSVA



The Lord Lieutenant's meeting



@MidSussexVA



[www.msva.org.uk](http://www.msva.org.uk)  
[enquiries@msva.org.uk](mailto:enquiries@msva.org.uk)  
Tel. 01444 258102

Delmon House, 36-38 Church Road, Burgess Hill RH15 9AE



# Our Year in Numbers

**Member groups**

**388**

**Practical 1:1 help offered to groups**

**51**

**New volunteering roles**

**93**

**Volunteering placements**

**30**

**Training courses run**

**11**

**Events held** (Forums and Community Drop-ins)

**35**

**Local groups using our Community Room**

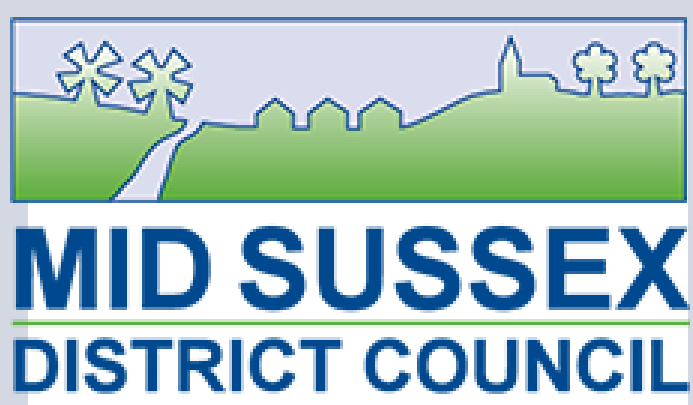
**35**

## Our Funding

### Core:

Mid Sussex District Council 51.07 %

West Sussex County Council 48.93 %



### Grants:

Burgess Hill Town Council

Sussex Community Foundation

National Lottery's Community Fund



# Our Staff

## Manager: Sue Edgson (to September), Lauren Lloyd (from February)



"I started at MSVA in February 2020 and I was immediately struck by how professional the team is and how supportive the Trustees are. Working within the voluntary sector in Mid Sussex is my ideal role as I love this area, and I am passionate about the sector. My previous roles have involved working in delivery organisations in community development, youth work, local authorities and also for a local grant-making foundation. I am enjoying using my experience to lead a brilliant team which is dedicated to serving the community of Mid Sussex. In my spare time I am kept busy by my three children and sausage dog, and the occasional bike ride around the beautiful Sussex countryside."

## Community Development Coordinator: Julia Beckett



"I have now been at MSVA for more than two years. Previously I worked in schools and in youth work, but in my time have been involved in a range of roles that have involved interacting with the public. I love people and it is a joy to support and help groups in any way I can. Since I started with MSVA we have introduced Forums and Drop-ins, a good way of meeting face-to-face, having a discussion or networking with other groups. Recently we have experienced lockdown; Zoom at work has connected me with so many more people and communities from around the country, but I have missed being able to see my daughter and son-in-law who are in Sheffield, and my mum, who is on her own 40 miles away. I have also missed physically going to church, but online services in your PJ's is a new experience!"

## Community Development Coordinator: Sasha Brown (from November)



"My journey with MSVA started in 2014 when I worked temporarily for East Grinstead CVS. After working for a time for a financial adviser, I was thrilled to return to the voluntary sector last year where my heart truly lies when I started at MSVA as Community Development Coordinator. Helping, supporting, and connecting others gives me a fantastic sense of satisfaction and seeing how much passion and energy people put into charities and community efforts motivates me to work hard and not let them down. Having moved to Sussex for my husband's job 10 years ago, I adore it and feel I have now found my forever home. My husband and two children keep me busy day to day but I also have a passion for birdwatching, make novelty cakes and enjoy cycling through the Sussex countryside."

## Finance & Administration Coordinator: Sue Rabbett



"Following working as a PA for a corporate law firm in London and then as a full time mum, when I joined MS(S)CVS in January 2007 as an Administrator I found the role both simpler and challenging. From day one I have always worked with an amazing staff team and Trustee Board some of whom remain friends to this day. My role is to provide administrative and financial support to the Board, CEO and staff team enabling them to deliver our service to the community of Mid Sussex. It has evolved and changed over the years, no two days are ever the same and I regularly start the day with a plan in my head only to find I am quickly focusing on something else which needs attention. I continue to be inspired and heartened by all the services delivered by the voluntary sector in Mid Sussex to the local community daily in so many different ways. I am very much an outdoor person and enjoy long walks with my cocker spaniels Stanley and Ollie, gardening, spending time with my husband and keeping in touch with our three grown-up children and their partners who have long since flown the nest."

## Community Room & Training Administrator: Dawn Langston



"Prior to working at MSVA I worked in Flight Scheduling at Gatwick and Heathrow airports for 28 years. When I started with MSVA I liked the idea of being a support to the local community and part of a small team of like-minded individuals. The best part about working for MSVA is without a doubt the staff team and Trustees. I am quite a motivated person and hope this is carried through to my working day. I like to see a job well done and my pet hate is leaving anything for 'tomorrow' or being disorganised! Hobby-wise rather strangely I coach and judge baton twirling."

## Volunteering & Publicity Administrator: Edita Moore



"I've lived in Sussex since 1996 and have been with MSVA (then HAMSVA) since 2015. Before then I worked as an administrator for local government and a translator and interpreter of Czech and Slovak languages. I continue to be amazed and motivated by the vast number of community groups and charities in Mid Sussex and people's willingness to make a positive change in the lives of others. I love being outdoors - be it discovering new walking routes or exhausting myself in the garden, waving a paintbrush, reading and discussing short stories and spending time with my family - husband, two grown up daughters and Hector the dog."

# Our Trustees

David Wellbelove (Chair), John Williams MVO MBE DL (Vice-Chair), Linda Dove (Treasurer),  
Margaret Collins DL, Paula Nicholson, Philip Chadwell, Anthony Aston OBE DL,  
James Baldwin, Alan Reuter, Irene Balls, Stephen Barnett (interim), Gill Edinburgh (interim)



# Our Feedback

Some of the comments received from our clients:

*"MSVA provided support and introduced me to other external agencies which have proved mutually beneficial that I otherwise would not have known about. This promotes partnership working, making work more efficient, reduces duplication, and most importantly, provides better support for those we work with in the community."*

*"Your circulation of our grant facility saves us several hundred pounds in advertising costs each year."*

*"Funding is always a major problem for us and MSVA have been very helpful in listing funding options, giving guidance on how to write applications, giving us space to promote the Group and help in getting volunteers for the different roles we need covered. When we started as a voluntary group, we were a bit clueless on some things and everyone at MSVA has always been approachable and tried to solve our problems."*

*"At the end of last year a group of us got together and decided that we would like to set up a Friends group for a small park in the centre of our town. This is not something that any of us have done before, and the help and guidance that we have received from MSVA has been absolutely critical to achieving our goal."*

*"It's been very encouraging to have such enthusiastic support. Now working on my own, MSVA have made my goals feel achievable despite the current lockdown."*

*"Thank you for the newsletters – really helpful."*

*"Attending the MSVA drop-in event was a great opportunity to network with other organisations who work in and around the Haywards Heath area. I was able to connect with one organisation to plan an event for Carers Week."*

