



acvo

Aberdeen
Third Sector
Interface



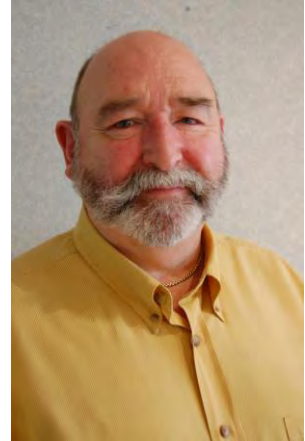
Annual Report 2010-2011



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Chairperson's Report



It is said that time speeds up as one gets older and that premise certainly appears to hold water as far as I am concerned. It does not seem a year since I was last asked to prepare this report. Nevertheless, on reflection, so much can happen in a year. As outlined in our Chief Executive's report of the time, in 2010 the organisation was tackling the Three Rs: Resuscitation, Recovery and Reconstruction.

Due to the unfailing application of Ian and his intrepid team, together with the commitment of the Executive Committee, ACVO has now completed the first two phases of the programme and we are well into the Reconstruction process. Reconstruction is not about putting things back the way they were; it entails building on lessons learned, listening to the those who will benefit from the services ACVO provides, constructing bridges and, in these financially challenging times, putting the organisation on as much of a business footing as is appropriate.

Inevitably this has meant change, and change can be difficult to cope with while striving to provide a seamless service to our customer base. There may have been times when our services were stretched to breaking point, but the team showed their mettle by facing all the challenges with professionalism, energy, belief and humour.

Becoming the Third Sector Interface in the city is a multifaceted task. Work has still to be done and this is being undertaken in a priority based fashion. We are determined to take every opportunity to promote the value of the sector in Aberdeen, give access to a range of assistance and provide a strong combined voice for all voluntary organisations in our area. Our new membership proposals and other initiatives will push this agenda forward.

I do not intend to steal the thunder of the others who will contribute to this document other than to say that I firmly believe that ACVO is now well on its journey to fulfilling its goal of providing the most complete service to the Third Sector in our city.

It is my pleasant duty however to place on record my thanks to all those concerned with ACVO, at every level, for their contribution in allowing the service to go from strength to strength.

Doug Duthie
Chairperson

Chief Executive's Report

In providing a review of the ACVO year 2010-11 I must first reiterate the comments of my Chair, Doug Duthie in relation to ACVO staff. Having spent over forty years with some very dedicated colleagues in a different job, I must say I did not anticipate being able to work with a group who had the genuine interests of others foremost in their minds. Throughout some very difficult and busy times in 2010-11 the team continued to support the third sector, ACVO and me. Many Thanks.



A number of major changes have taken place at ACVO during 2010-11, some of which may have been very obvious to you as a member, partner or colleague, some of which have been less so. Governance is a vital element of charities and to gain the benefits of being a company limited by guarantee compliance with such standards is essential. Following the last AGM we have a new structure for the Executive Committee, now Board and Finance Sub Committee meetings which ensures greater involvement by Board members. With Board Member Gordon Edwards appointed as Treasurer and some new processes now in place, in this **respect ACVO can now say that it is "practising what it preaches"**. Well done, Board.

For a large part of 2010 the Board, staff and I were preparing the Business Plan for the period 2011-2014 and, following its acceptance by the Community Planning partnership in Aberdeen and the Scottish Government, we are now operating to the plan. As many of you will have heard me say, **"A plan with no action is a dream but action with no plan is a nightmare!"**

The ethos of the third sector is focused on service rather than money, but money is essential in terms of that service. In order to ensure that this ethos can continue, ACVO develops, supports and represents, and during the year there have been countless examples of how and when this has occurred. In reading the following pages from my colleagues you will see a number of examples of how ACVO carries out its functions.

With an average of 250 new clients being assisted by ACVO to various degrees each year, my colleagues and I have been very busy in carrying out our core work. Over and above that, there are many different calls on our time.

Our agreement with the Scottish Government to provide the Aberdeen Third Sector Interface requires us to support the link between the third sector and community planning, to support social enterprises, to support volunteers and to support voluntary organisations.

The funding provided by the Government only allows a limited amount of work with these 250 clients and, with the contracts and service level agreements we have negotiated, we are limited in what we can use some funds for. As a result, in order that we can continue developing, supporting and representing the third sector, we continue in our efforts in relation to communications and

employability to generate those extra few pounds which ensure that we do not have to turn individuals and organisations from the third sector away from our door.

Although we have been pleased to see our contracts with community partners continue, we must, as we have identified in our Business Plan, increase our self generated funding.

With a new system of funding to be agreed with the Scottish Government for 2012-13, ACVO must hope that, as we were one of the first Councils for Voluntary Service to sign up to establish a single interface, the first to obtain EFQM status outwith the pilot project, and an agreed leader in terms of community planning, that, unlike in 2011-12, there is not a reduction in Government funding and that, in comparison with other similar organisations in the country, we are treated fairly and appropriately.

On the basis of the numerous and various contacts made by individuals and organisations, it is clear that more and more understand the concept of a single interface and more and more are making use of the Aberdeen Third Sector Interface.

As this continues it will help ACVO, but it may also mean that more work is required in order to ensure that we are in a position to develop, support and represent the estimated 4,000 third sector organisations and over 40,000 people involved in the third sector in the city of Aberdeen. I will be looking for the support of these organisations and individuals to put in place a membership **scheme, based on a "£1 per week" system, at the Annual General Meeting.** Alongside that proposal we will be giving details of the Aberdeen Impact initiative which will ensure that organisations requiring assistance at times of greatest need can access support.

With such support, ACVO can show that its recovery phase has been successfully completed and that it can look forward to a similarly positive Annual Report and Annual General Meeting for 2011-12.

Thank you all for your assistance during 2010-11.

Ian Paterson
Chief Executive

Business Support

Following the steep learning curve of last year, we settled into a new system with the day to day book keeping and reporting of accounts to a Finance Sub Committee of the Executive Committee. Finance has continued to be my priority within the organisation and, with the ongoing support of Jeni Warden of A2B, the process has become increasingly robust and vital to the ongoing success of the organisation.

In Reception, I am often the first contact people will have with the organisation. It surprises me how much I have learned about the sector in the 2 years I have been here, and I am more often than **not able to answer people's questions or at least to point them in the right direction.**

My colleague, Claire Conroy, joined us in the summer on an SCVO placement. After the 13 week placement, she was offered the post of Receptionist. She is a really welcome addition to the team, taking on much of the administration for the organisation and acting as the first point of contact for ACVO. If she cannot answer your question directly, she will **point you in the right direction.** Claire's appointment has allowed me to focus mainly on finance and my work with the Third Sector Fora.

It was clear at the end of last year that much more time and effort needed to go into the various fora to ensure that the third sector voice could be heard at community planning level. Through the new structure, including meetings of the Third Sector Liaison Group which are attended by representatives from both the third sector and local authority, we hope that this process has and will continue to allow the sector to have an even stronger voice.

Sarah Irvine
Network Co-ordinator

Children and Young People's Services

The third sector has continued to work towards getting it right for the children, young people and families in Aberdeen by responding to the priorities identified in the **Integrated Children's Services Plan**.

The voice of the third sector organisations who work with children, young people and families continues to be heard via the representation forum called the **Children and Young People's Voluntary Sector Providers Forum (CYPVSPF)**. This is the key reference group offering a route to engagement with integrated **children's services for the sector**. This year's CYPVSPF AGM was attended by Valerie Watts, Chief Executive Officer of Aberdeen City Council.

The CYPVSPF encourages third sector organisations to work together and also with partners across the other sectors. As their strap line says, we all work **"Better Together"**.

More information on the network be found at:

<http://www.aberdeencn.info/Networks/CYPVSPF.asp>



The CYP website (www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk) continues to give value to the third sector and also to **children and young people's** professionals across the city of Aberdeen. It enables professionals in the city to ensure their practice is well informed.

A fortnightly bulletin is also successful in achieving its aims of getting up-to date information circulated widely to the sector and beyond. Both the website and the CYP e-update are presently maintained by Sarah McGarva at ACVO.

Pauline Gerrard
Integrated Children's Services Officer



Civic Forum

Since its inaugural meeting held in May 2002, the Aberdeen Civic Forum has been a key community forum in Aberdeen. Throughout 2010/11, the Forum has **taken an active part in the city's Community Planning Partnership**, formerly The Aberdeen City Alliance (TACA). The Forum is invited to make submissions on an increasingly wide range of consultations and there are signs that the involvement and views of the Civic Forum are being sought at earlier stages in the community planning process.

The Forum helps communities within the city to have a say in Community Planning by bringing together representatives from each Community Council **area of Aberdeen and from the various "communities of interest" including the Aberdeen Women's Alliance, Ethnic Minority Forum, Grampian Senior Citizens Forum, Aberdeen City Youth Council, Students Association, and the Disability Advisory Group**, to help identify issues of common concern and to ensure that the Community Plan and the Community Planning process are influenced by what the people of Aberdeen want.

In addition to the regular quarterly meetings and participation in the Challenge Forum and consultation processes, efforts have been made throughout the year to consider how best to increase participation in the Forum and how to ensure that the contribution of the Forum is as informed and effective as possible.

The Forum has been consulted regarding and submitted its views on a variety of topics including: the Local Housing Strategy; Re-organisation of Police and Fire and Rescue Services in Scotland; Health Services; and **Aberdeen's Open Space Strategy**. The Forum is currently carrying out a review of its operations including marketing, information technology and communications with a view to achieving, amongst other things, value for money and effective representation in order to make itself better able to meet the challenges of the future.



Charles Lowe
Civic Forum Development Officer

Communications

This has been an extremely busy year for the Communications Unit as we moved towards an income generation role for ACVO.

The Unit also expanded to welcome two new team members in this period. Sarah McGarva joined the team as the Communications Assistant in July 2010 and Wendy Churcher started in January 2011 in a completely new post as the Alcohol and Drugs Partnership (ADP) Information/Service User and Carer Officer.

The ACVO Communications project was launched in August 2005 and has grown over the years to now offer the following services:

- An affordable website development service.
- An event planning service which can organise conferences and events from start to finish.
- The weekly ACVO E-Bulletin which includes the latest local and national news, funding opportunities, consultations, local and national events, job vacancies and volunteering opportunities.
- Fortnightly e-updates for **Integrated Children's Services "Aberdeen Getting It Right"**, Aberdeen Homelessness Directory and Aberdeen City Alcohol and Drugs Partnership.
- Professional design and print service for promotional materials.

The ACVO Communications Unit generates income through nearly 70 websites in its portfolio, which range from single pages to extremely large sites. These are professionally designed websites with corporate branding, hosting and maintenance packages. A lot of the organisations we work with do not have any web design knowledge or do not want to be involved in the web design and maintenance side of things; we offer this service to take the hassle away from these organisations. We offer a complete service including design, launch and ongoing maintenance, although some clients only require certain elements of this service. We can develop new websites or take over their existing website.

The ACVO E-Bulletin now has over 2,000 subscribers in Grampian and is sent out every Friday. An evaluation of the E-Bulletin recently took place and it received an overwhelming response and extremely positive feedback. Some changes were incorporated to make the E-Bulletin easier to navigate around and the design has been updated.

Michelle Duff
Communications Officer

Aberdeen Homelessness Directory

The Aberdeen Health and Homelessness Service Directory (www.aberdeenshomelessness.org.uk) holds detailed information on 130 services in Aberdeen City which can help the homeless and/or those in danger of becoming homeless. The Directory is designed as a signposting tool for professionals working with homeless, or potentially homeless, clients.

The information held is easily searchable by service type (e.g. Accommodation, Drugs, Alcohol, Mental Health or Debt), project name, keyword(s) or A-Z. Service details can be updated at any time and a full information audit is carried out every 6 months, ensuring the information is as up to date as possible.

The fortnightly Health and Homelessness e-updates summarise the most important news, documents and events for professionals working with homeless people.

The website has quickly gained a reputation for being a unique and indispensable signposting and reference tool for professionals. Towards the end of the 2010-11 period, the website underwent a redesign and this is in the process of being rolled out shortly.

www.aberdeenshomelessness.org.uk

Sarah McGarva
Communications Assistant

Aberdeen City Alcohol & Drug Partnership

Wendy Churcher was appointed to the post of Information/Service User & Carer Officer on the 10th January 2011.

This post is part of the Aberdeen Alcohol and Drugs Partnership Support Team but it is hosted by Aberdeen Council of Voluntary Organisations (ACVO) based at Greyfriars House, Aberdeen.

The overall objectives of the post are:

- To research, develop, co-ordinate and manage information systems and processes that allows the Aberdeen City ADP members to share intelligence on alcohol and drugs and thereby help inform strategic decision making and day to day operational actions. This mainly involves regularly updating the ADP website, undertaking fortnightly e-updates and quarterly newsletters.
- To provide alcohol and drugs support through specialist knowledge and skills in overcoming barriers to communication and engagement within the ADP and associated stakeholder groups, and in particular with service users and carer support groups
- To respond to queries which arise from the media, Scottish Government and other sources in relation to ADP work and partner activity
- To carry out planning and research on alcohol and drugs issues, analyse information, produce reports outlining options, findings and recommendations and thereby help improve policy and service development
- To take a leading part in the work of the ADP Support team and attend relevant meetings in this capacity

Contact details for Wendy Churcher

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Direct Dial: (01224) 686056

www.aberdeencityadp.org.uk

Wendy Churcher
ADP Information/Service User and Carer Officer

Funding and Business Planning

The Funding and Business Planning Unit were proud to take the lead in supporting the ACVO team through the process of developing a new business plan for the organisation in response to the Scottish Government's requirements of a Third Sector Interface for Aberdeen. Towards this end, extensive consultation with the third sector, with partners in the public and private sectors and with the staff team and Board was carried out, identifying the need for a broader range of activity related to the funding and business planning needs of the sector.

It was clearly identifiable from the case load that clients of Funding & Business Planning Support divide into a range of categories of distinct capacity and aspirations:

- New, small and self-help groups with modest needs and without paid staff
- New groups with aspirations to develop as self-sustaining social enterprises
- Established organisations that have a culture of dependency on grants from statutory bodies
- Established social enterprises and organisations with clear entrepreneurial aspirations
- Established fundraising organisations with a diverse range of income streams

Whilst continuing to deliver one-to-one and workshop-based funding and business planning services to all categories, the Unit particularly sought to explore new ways of serving the last three categories of established and enterprising organisations with particular emphasis on smaller organisations in relation to our new business plan.

Business Know How

Reviewing the Business Know How North East programme with BKH partners Aberdeen & Grampian Chamber of Commerce, The Royal Bank of Scotland and the Aberdeenshire CVS Network (now Aberdeenshire Voluntary Action Network) plan to develop a web-based business support portal, connecting third sector organisations to relevant support services. BKH Partners identified that across the public, private and third sectors there are a range of services of value and relevance to the sector, many fully funded. For third sector organisations seeking to take a business-like approach to their futures such services can provide vital capacity. During 2010-11, the opportunity to become part of the portal was offered to business support organisations. Meanwhile, the BKH Network of 400 private/third sector organisations continues to grow and a quarterly e-bulletin provides opportunities for its social enterprise, fundraising and private sector members to share relevant news and opportunities.

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Celebrate Aberdeen 2011

Business Know How also provided the launch pad for a massive project aiming to create fertile ground for third sector organisations to fundraise and trade in the city. Celebrate Aberdeen 2011 was the idea of BKH Network member, Morven Mackenzie of Mackenzie PR, and ACVO became a lead partner in developing the parade on June 11th 2011. With 130 Third Sector organisations and 100 sponsors – equalling 3,500 individual paraders – it was the largest parade in the City for 50 years. It was a massive project to develop from scratch and an unknown quantity for all concerned, in particular the Celebrate Aberdeen steering group of volunteers and the ACVO team, none of whom received funding for this work.

Developing the parade brought ACVO into contact with many third sector organisations that had not previously connected with the Interface or the wider sector, and significantly increased the private sector and general public's understanding of the scale of voluntary action in this, the European Year of Volunteering. From an early stage of planning Celebrate Aberdeen 2011, the Steering Group agreed that any surplus income would be invested in a new Aberdeen Impact programme to further **raise the profile of the city's third sector organisations** and to increase the capacity of both enterprising organisations and those facing particular crisis. www.celebrateaberdeens.org remains a useful resource listing all the parading organisations and their sponsors, and well into 2011/12 the impact of Celebrate Aberdeen is being felt across the city.

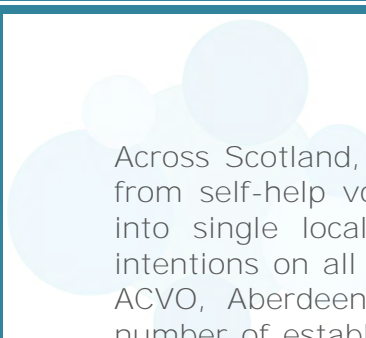
Social Enterprise and the Third Sector Interface

Through ACVO's position as a Community Planning partner, since January 2011 we have had the opportunity, as part of the Integrated Management Team for **the Scottish Government's Change Fund**, to feed into the process of reshaping public services and ensuring recognition of the role that social enterprise can play in meeting the needs of the community and economy. By early 2011/12 this had resulted in a number of established and new social enterprises being able to bid successfully for major Change Fund finance.

Meanwhile, ACVO, through all of our business units, continues to support a large number of individual social enterprises at all stages of their development – their representation in the Third Sector Fora of the Community Planning process; their connectivity with each other; their communication and recruitment needs; their volunteer-engagement; their development and governance; their funding and business planning; and so on.

During 2010/11, as preparations for **ACVO's new** business plan were put in place in consultation with all our stakeholders, regular discussions were held with different representatives of the Aberdeen Social Enterprise Network (ASEN) to try to establish how best the Third Sector Interface could support ASEN members alongside the needs of the wider social enterprise community.

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Across Scotland, bringing together support for all aspects of the third sector – from self-help volunteering groups to profitable businesses with social aims – into single local interfaces has been challenging and, despite the best of intentions on all parts, the same is true here in Aberdeen. A meeting of ASEN, ACVO, Aberdeen City Council and other interested parties, including a large number of established and aspiring social enterprises, was held in March 2011. The meeting provided a way forward towards the recognition that ASEN welcomed and the opportunity to support the aspiring as well as established social enterprises, and various proposals which were made at this meeting have been the basis of ongoing work since.

Professional Fundraisers

Even for fundraisers from the larger organisations, it can be lonely out there – particularly when expected to cover an area of Scotland that in some cases stretches from the Tay to the Northern Isles! The quarterly informal **fundraisers’** lunches and network list facilitated by ACVO provide an opportunity for those with the responsibility of bringing in the cash from community, corporate, trust and other fundraising sources to connect, share tips, pick up on news and get the all important peer support which is so vital when the going is tough and the targets high.



Alison Chandler
Funding and Business Planning Officer

Community Animators and Job Parents

Between July 2009 and July 2010, ACVO employed three Community Animators. The ladies with this unusual job title, as part of a contract with Jobcentre Plus, had the task of seeking out unemployed people in the city and learning from them what services would best prepare them for and support them into employment.

As part of their day to day work, the Animators met and worked with a good number of third sector organisations who could provide training and support to clients. The initiative resulted in the Animators knocking on nearly 5,500 doors within the City and arranging for nearly 400 clients to be provided with valuable assistance.

By December 2010 it was clear that another type of service was required to support those who were moving from one type of benefit to another, and so the Job Parents were employed. The Job Parents work with identified clients to provide a mentoring service, again connecting them with third sector organisations which can provide training and guidance. The nature of their work has earned the ladies the title "Fairy Job Mothers"; their work has continued into year 2011-12.

Ian Paterson
Chief Executive

Governance/Development

2010/2011 was a year which brought many changes. Leading the organisation through the European Framework for Quality Management (EFQM) process was at times a challenge, but becoming the first non-pilot Third Sector Interface Organisation in Scotland to achieve the "Committed to Excellence" award was a worthy climax to the year.

Contributing to the renewal of ACVO's Business Plan was also a major focus of our in this year, ensuring that Quality considerations were included from the start.

ACVO's own governance was also a feature of this year, culminating in the amendment of our governing document in January 2011.

As ever, it is upon our services to the sector that we will be judged. This year, those services included 46 new organisations being helped to establish themselves in a variety of fields and 162 different organisations receiving assistance with a great number of questions relating to their governance.

Enquiries were varied and included: accounting queries; assistance with constitutional amendments; advice regarding Disclosures; regulatory questions regarding the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR); and many more.

An increasing number of enquiries about the formation of social enterprises and the options relating to this have required specialised knowledge regarding lesser known vehicles such as Community Interest Companies.

Over the course of the year, Sandy Mathers delivered some 70 training sessions, mostly in Management Committee Skills but also in Charity Trustee Duties, Charity Accounting requirements, and effective meeting skills. These were in a mixture of settings, either with diverse groups, whole committees or in one-to-one sessions.

During this time Sandy also gave three days training through the CVS Training Initiative in Aberdeenshire which reflects our positive relationship with our fellow Third Sector Interface Organisations in the Shire.

Sandy Mathers
Development Officer

Volunteer Centre

Looking forward, the establishment of the new business unit, Voluntary Action and Active Citizenship which incorporates the work of Development Officer, Sandy Mathers and the Volunteer Centre promises to bring greater efficiencies to our work. The unit is contributing to the revision of Community Planning Aberdeen's Volunteering Strategy and developing an accompanying Toolkit to promote good practice.

April 2010 saw the Volunteer Centre come to ACVO from its former home with VSA. The first year within ACVO was busy and filled with change. The move to Greyfriars House and the loss of Youth Development Workers, Catriona Hogg and Sonya Walker, meant major changes to the ways in which our service to the public is delivered. More effort has been put into participating in public events to compensate for the smaller **numbers of "walk-in" customers**.

Nonetheless, over the year the number of voluntary opportunities registered on the Volunteer Aberdeen website increased, as did the number of organisations offering these opportunities.

The shmuFM radio programme "**Why Don't You Just Volunteer**" has proved to be a very popular feature of our work, featuring more than 48 different volunteer-involving organisations. We were nominated for a number of awards and a programme featuring our show was broadcast on the European Union website to mark the start of European Year of Volunteering.

We continue to support the Aberdeen Volunteer Co-ordinators Forum, a network which promotes good practice in the use and management of volunteers, and which now has 116 members. Five accredited training sessions were also provided to volunteer managers in partnership with the Volunteer Centre Aberdeenshire and the CVS training Initiative.

Hits on our website (www.volunteeraberdeen.org.uk) are running at an average of over 1100 per month. This reflects the growing desire of people to volunteer to make a difference to their communities.

Our support for Youth Volunteering continued throughout the year with our 1,000th registration for the MV Awards programme for 16-25 year olds being achieved. The popularity and success of MV both locally and nationally means that this is an area of work where we expect to face increased demand.

In looking forward, there are great challenges with our current staffing and physical space. It is likely that from 2012 the Saltire Awards will look to build on the success of MV and lower the entry age for the award to 12. Participation in Saltire will, in all likelihood, be a mandatory condition of our Scottish Government funding. We plan to meet that challenge.

Rod McDermid and Mike Melvin
Volunteer Co-ordinators



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