

VOLUNTEER HUB NEWS

Report for the National Lottery Community Fund

Year 2: May 2023 - April 2024

What we've been up to, what we've learned,
what's next?



Year 2: May 2023 - April 2024

What we've been up to | What we've learned | What's next?

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In summary

This report provides an overview of RVA's Volunteer Hub activities and learnings from May 2023 to April 2024.

Championing Volunteers

We are becoming better at recording and celebrating the contributions of volunteers in Rother, providing a platform for volunteers to share their stories and experiences, inspiring others to get involved in their community. During Volunteers Week (1-7 June), we championed the work of local volunteers and VCSE's focusing on the positive impact of volunteering on the community and the individuals involved. **We must remember to highlight the contribution and benefits of volunteering throughout the year.**

Volunteer Award Ceremony

RVA's annual Volunteer Award Ceremony (18th October) honoured the contributions of local volunteers, with certificates presented by the High Sheriff of East Sussex. The event was attended by over 80 people, including volunteers, representatives from local organisations, and local dignitaries. **The volunteer awards will continue and we will add an award winners gallery to our website and create social media case studies of award winners.**

Young People in Volunteering

Our survey of 100 students from Bexhill College highlighted the importance of peer-to-peer networks in engaging young people in volunteering. **We are working with local organisations to make it easier for them to offer volunteering roles to young people.**

Corporate Social Responsibility

We've been working to connect businesses with community groups so that they can make a difference through volunteering. In September, we connected a team of volunteers from infrastructure company Balfour Beatty with Bexhill Senior Citizen's Club, resulting in a transformation of the club's library. **In the coming year we will continue to connect more businesses and community groups in this way.**

Training

We have conducted several training sessions for VCSE's, including Emergency First Aid at Work and the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) process.

Finding suitable external trainers, extending to rural areas, and developing in house training resources are priorities for the coming year.

Recruitment and Brokerage

Our brokerage service has been instrumental in connecting volunteers with roles in Rother. We have listed 50+ roles from multiple organisations. We have also helped East Sussex County Council develop and refine their new community network platform, Tribe.

We will further develop our online listings so organisations can list directly via our website, and enable better filtering and tagging of opportunities to encourage diversity and inclusion.

Trusteeship

We need improve our offer around governance, which is so vital to strong, sustainable organisations. We have begun to develop our own expertise and resources around Trusteeship. **This is an important area for development as many organisations in Rother tell us that governance is a challenge.**

Diversity and Inclusion

Diversity brings different perspectives and experiences, helping volunteering contribute to a fairer society. Volunteer coordinators expressed concern about the lack of diversity among volunteers. **RVA staff are being trained in unconscious bias and will review our website and wider offer, to facilitate inclusion.**

Future Plans

In the coming year RVA's Volunteer Hub will continue to promote and champion volunteering in Rother, develop a robust training offer, raise the profile of VCSEs, nurture a strong, inclusive and supportive volunteering community, and work with partners to deliver cross-county initiatives.

Championing Volunteers

RVA's third annual Volunteer Award Ceremony was held on Wednesday 18th October as part of the RVA AGM.

Nominations were read out to the audience by Kim Richards (CEO) and Tim Hemmings (Chair of Trustees) and certificates were presented by the High Sheriff of East Sussex, Richard Bickersteth.



The award winners came from a range of organisations across Rother, from foodbanks to the Bexhill Mind Shop, Men's Shed to Gardening Gang and included an award to Mary Bristow who has been volunteering for animal welfare for over 50 years.



What we learned

- Have a list of the award winners on the wall at the ceremony venue so that attendees can re-read.
- Get consent from volunteers to use their case studies to promote volunteering throughout the coming year
- Encourage nominations from diverse communities and across the age ranges

What next?

- Have nominations reminders starting earlier in the year
- Use the award winners as case studies for volunteering throughout the year as positive publicity for volunteering
- Use as an opportunity to promote the organisations too!



Championing Volunteers

Volunteers Week (1-7 June) was an important opportunity to publicise local organisations, volunteers and the benefits of volunteering, both to the community and the individuals themselves. This year's theme was 'Celebrate and Inspire'.

Community Rother volunteers are making a difference

Andrew Hemsley
anderson@nationaltrust.co.uk
www.nationaltrust.co.uk

During the first week of June, Rother Voluntary Action (RVA) will join thousands of charities and voluntary organisations across the UK to celebrate the contribution volunteers make to their communities as part of the 39th annual Volunteers' Week.

This year's Volunteer Week (1-7 June) has the theme 'Celebrate and Inspire' and encourages people from all backgrounds to 'be the change they want to see' and get involved in volunteering

in whatever way works for them.

Throughout June, RVA's 'the Good, the Bad and the Funny' competition invites local people to share their experiences of volunteering. Three winning entrants will each win a donation to a local charity of their choice. An Appreciation Station will be posted on RVA's social media, sharing 'thank you' messages from local organisations to their volunteers.

"Volunteers' Week is a chance to showcase the contribution of Rother's incredible volunteers and celebrate Rother's voluntary sector," says Jen Atherall, RVA's Vol-

unteer Hub Project Lead.

"The contribution of volunteers is often undervalued so we're trying to redress this in a number of ways, including through our Annual Volunteer Awards Ceremony."

RVA's Volunteer Hub offers marketing and promotion of local opportunities, skills training for volunteers and trustees, networks, resources and supports local organisations to improve and diversify their volunteering offer. RVA works closely with local organisations to support volunteer programmes. "Every year, we promote many volunteering opportunities on our website", says Annette Hol-



Hands of Hope volunteers growing for the community. Pic: Ann Chouan

mes, Volunteer Coordinator at RVA. "We also run training for local organisations that rely on volunteers, and support them with funding bids, administration, trusteeship and management."

Throughout 2023 RVA will promote their Volunteering Roadshow, with Volunteer Taster days at organisations across Rother. "It's a fun, informal opportunity to come along, find out more about local organisations and what it might be like to volunteer there", says Annette.

For more information about volunteering in Rother, email volunteering@rva.uk.com.



Activities included:

- A press release to local papers
- Social media posts championing local organisations
- A social media 'thank you reel'
- A competition for volunteers to video themselves talking about their experiences of volunteering



Championing Volunteers

Thirteen video clips were received for our Volunteers Week competition and from those the top three were selected to receive a cash prize for their chosen charity



Championing Volunteers

Throughout Volunteers Week we reached 4038 people on Facebook and 253 on Instagram and 150 people engaged by either liking, commenting, sharing or retweeting our posts.



What we learned

- Our Volunteer Week activities were a successful experiment in using visual storytelling and animated social media posts to tell volunteering stories in a more engaging way.
- RVA now plans to use it this technique much more across the year, not just during Volunteer Week.

What next?

- RVA's Volunteer Hub team will use more video, photo and verbal storytelling to communicate about volunteering.
- RVA's newly appointed comms Lead will support on this.
- Capturing and presenting positive volunteering news will happen throughout the year on RVA's website, newsletter and social media.

Championing Volunteers

Volunteer Hub

Volunteer of the Month

Derek Merkl, Bexhill Men's Shed



Derek was part of the team that started up Bexhill Men's shed, working to secure premises, funding and advertising. Now that the shed is up and running, Derek works with the other volunteers continuously, encouraging others to join. He ensures people work safely and gain suitable training, he resources materials and services and represents the Shed at events. Derek welcomes everyone and is always open to new ideas. He has made the shed part of the local community. Derek is a star, without whose drive and unwavering commitment, Bexhill Men's Shed would have not succeeded.

Derek says 'It was a real honour to get the award, though The Shed has many wonderful volunteers - it's not just me! The Men's Shed is a brilliant place - and everyone is welcome to come along at 47 London Road, Bexhill. You can also [find us on facebook!](#)'

We have recently begun to feature a 'volunteer of the month'. This will continue on social media and on the Volunteer Hub web page. Our aim is to make sure that featured volunteers represent diverse individuals with a broad range of age groups, cultural backgrounds and interests. It also enables us to promote local organisations.

Get volunteering

Fancy **volunteering in conservation or gardening** in Hastings Country Park, Coombe Valley or local green spaces? [Groundwork](#) has some wonderful gardening opportunities.

Bramber Bakehouse is looking for a **kind and friendly befriender**. [Find out more](#)

[Care for the Carers](#) is looking for new trustees to help with their vital work. They also have some **exciting youth volunteering** roles available.

**DO YOU
HAVE A
VOLUNTEERING
ROLE TO FILL?**

We can list and promote it for you!

Send us your volunteering and trustee roles via the submit a role button.

Submit a role

There is now a Volunteer Hub section in RVA's monthly newsletter, which goes to around 500 local contacts every month.

Young People

Continuing our research into the challenges faced by different groups around volunteering, RVA again attended the Bexhill College Progression Fair to build on our research to understand how to make volunteering more appealing to young people. 100 new intake students took part in our newly developed research activities. Key findings:

65% would prefer the hours to be flexible to suit them.

68% of students would be more likely to volunteer if they could volunteer as part of a group (with their friends).

Learning new skills and getting work experience are important to students

Students would prefer to volunteer 1-2 hours once a week

Social media is the preferred way to find out about volunteering opportunities, followed by organisations coming to college to speak to them.





Young People

June 2023 - Surveys conducted at the Bexhill Progression Fair

Follow Up Survey of Young People's attitudes to Volunteering *

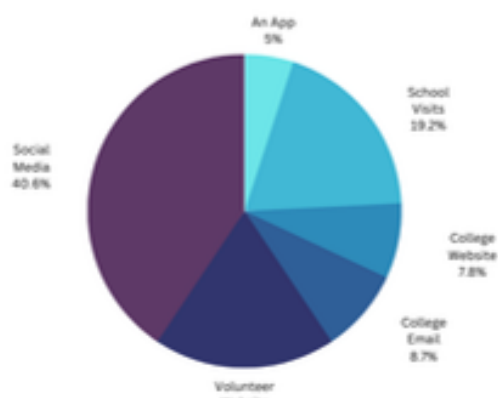


RVA surveyed 100 young people -

89(15-17 years); 6 (18-20 years); 1 (21-25 years); 2 (25-50 years); 1 (50+ years); 1 (preferred not to say)

41 males, 51 females, 1 transgender, 2 non-binary/non conforming and 4 preferred not to say

I'd be more likely to volunteer if...



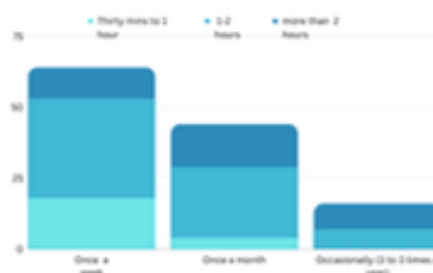
What would be the best way to find out about volunteering opportunities?



What incentives would persuade you to volunteer?

job reference
a challenge
helping others
feel useful
satisfaction
mental wellbeing
exercise
meet people
being part of a team
giving back
screen free time
new skills
self development
positive energy
new surroundings
achievement
fun
sense of purpose
broaden horizons
self confidence

What would you like to get from volunteering?



What would be the ideal amount of time you could spend volunteering?

*This is a follow up survey to one carried out in October 2022
Students were surveyed by completing a number of activities

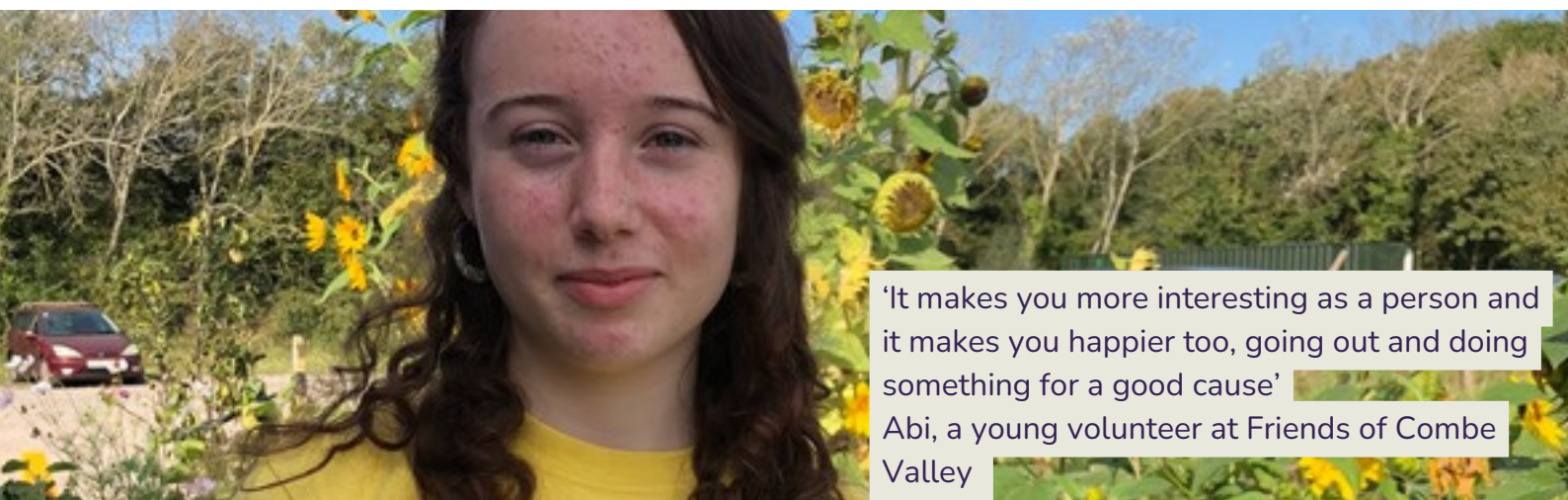
Young People

What we learned

- a greater understanding of / appreciation of the role of VCSO's and the 3rd sector
- for it to be easier to find, and participate in volunteering opportunities
- volunteer opportunity listings to note whether suitable for ages 16-18
- more peer-to-peer comms around volunteering for young people
- for the college to be a conduit for information from RVA / Tribe about volunteering opportunities.
- for student rewards (eg badges) for participation in volunteering
- For Voluneeer Organisations to have clarity about what they need to have in place in order to work with young volunteers

What's next?

- Understand the concerns among local volunteer-including organisations around working with young volunteers (under 15/16-17), developing resources to provide guidance and confidence.
- RVA will designate volunteer listings on its website as suitable for ages 16+ and/or under 16.
- Continue collaboration with Bexhill College's enrichment team to boost youth volunteering engagement and opportunity:
 - Starting in 2024, RVA will have a regular pop-up stand in Bexhill College Reception, alongside local VCSOs, offering information on volunteering opportunities.
 - RVA will conduct volunteering sessions as part of Bexhill College's 2024 enrichment program.
 - Regular updates of volunteering opportunities for ages 16-18 will be sent to Bexhill College for student dissemination.
- Bexhill College will develop e-badges for volunteering achievement



'It makes you more interesting as a person and it makes you happier too, going out and doing something for a good cause'

Abi, a young volunteer at Friends of Combe Valley

Employability

In the past 12 months RVA's Volunteer Hub team has identified new opportunities for raising the profile of volunteering as a step into employment. We have developed strong ongoing relationships with Bexhill and Hastings Job Centre Plus teams.



At the Job Centre Plus Volunteer Fair, Bexhill Jobs Fair and Moving up Fair and the Work and Health event in Rye, RVA's Volunteer Hub team had in-depth conversations with around 30 individuals to promote the benefits of volunteering for employability and introduced people to RVA's website and Tribe as a way to find volunteering opportunities. In August, RVA's Volunteer Hub team gave a presentation to JCP Labour Market Team (East Sussex), connecting the JCP team with Tribe as well as sharing RVAs website and volunteering brokerage process.



Together with Hastings Voluntary Action RVA attended East Sussex College Careers Fair to promote volunteering as a step into employability. We were supported on our stand by a young volunteer from the college.

What we learned:

- Conversations with people attending the employment fairs highlighted how many people were finding getting back into employment difficult.
- Long term unemployment can cause a loss of confidence and concern that they do not have the relevant skills for today's job market.
- One of the benefits of volunteering is being able to learn new and a wide range of skills in a safe and encouraging environment and build up self-confidence through seeing the difference they make to other people.

What next?

- Continue to develop relationships with Job Centre Plus
- Promote volunteering via careers advisors, and JCP reps as a way into employment and CV enhancement and ask them to signpost to RVA's website
- Add a section to the Volunteer Hub webpage about Volunteering and Employability
- Develop relationship with the Youth Employment Service

Training

A one-day training session, one-off and ongoing training clinics have been well attended. This mix has proved a good template for future in-person training delivery.



Really useful, great refresher and I now feel more confident in what to do in an emergency. Thank you!

Emergency First Aid at Work Training, The Pelham, Thursday 11 May

This accredited course was led by Jim Foster of First Aid for You.

There were 12 attendees including 5 from RVA. The other attendees were from Bexhill Mens Shed, Wave Arts, The Pelham and Right Path Hikes, all local organisations.



Excellent! We now have four new first aiders for the Mens Shed - I haven't done a First Aid course for 60 years so very useful' Derek, Bexhill Mens Shed



DBS Training, Tuesday 9 May

Discussions with volunteer coordinators revealed a lack of knowledge about checks for volunteers, including the DBS process. We set up an online training session with Zoe Harris from SELCS and 17 people attended. The session was recorded and edited and now forms part of the resources on the RVA Volunteering page.

Simple Spreadsheets that really work!

FREE online group clinics

Create spreadsheets that unlock your data's power. Fortnightly small-group spreadsheet clinics to explore real-life spreadsheet challenges faced by third sector organisations in Rother.

- Get more out of your spreadsheets
- Stop wrestling your spreadsheets and fall in love with them
- Learn how to better use your data and make it meaningful
- Speed up and automate repetitive and laborious data tasks

Alternate Tuesdays: 3.00-4.30pm

HastingsDIRECT



With Ryszard Skrakowski
Senior Data Engineer at
HastingsDIRECT

Simple Spreadsheets, ongoing

RVA was approached by Ryszard Skrakowski, Senior Data Engineer at Hastings Direct and self confessed 'EXCEL nerd'. Rysz volunteered to provide advice and support to voluntary sector organisations and groups. Fortnightly sessions began in October. So far 13 people have attended from a range of organisations, inc RVA .

Training

What we learned

- Essential to identify relevant training for local groups, adapting to diverse learning styles. Online sessions offer convenience and cost savings, while in-person training fosters networking and hands-on learning.
- Ensure our training is accessible and inclusive.
- Feedback highlights a growing preference for face-to-face interaction. Key training topics identified include Equality and Diversity, GDPR, Safeguarding, Suicide Awareness, Health and Safety, Conflict Resolution, Personal Resilience, Stress Management, Public Speaking, Volunteer Recruitment, and Legalities.

What next?

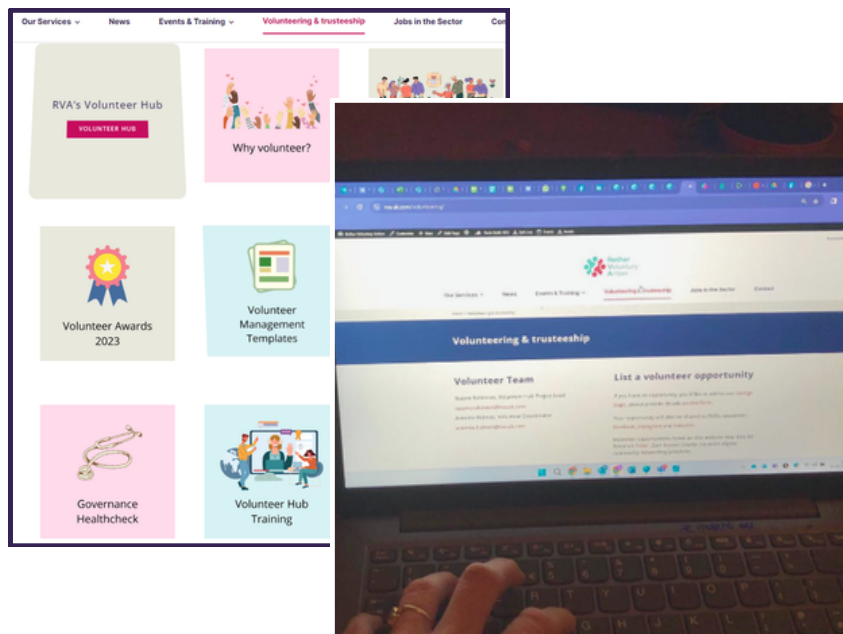
- Organise training addressing these needs in the coming year.
- Continue to identify training needs among Rother's VCSOs
- Develop an online form to find out about the training needs of VCSOs when at events
- Set up a working group to develop a responsive and relevant training offer through RVA that dovetails with and complements the offers of other organisations and VAs
- A better system for listing and signposting other training and resources across the sector.
- Better promotion and online presentation of RVA's training offer.
- Develop RVA's in house offer as well as buying in the best local training where appropriate



Tribe drop in training at RVA

Resources

The volunteering pages of the RVA website are constantly updated and new resources included to assist both volunteers and Rother's Volunteering Involving Organisations (VIO)



Webpage redesign: RVA's Volunteer Hub is working with RVA's new Comms Lead to refresh and re-arrange the Volunteer Hub web pages to make them more dynamic and include more motivating imagery

Resources for working with Young Volunteers.

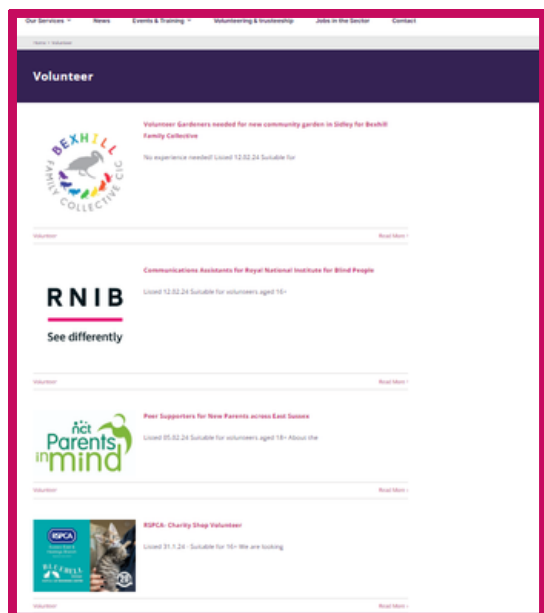
We are aware that, in order for RVA promote volunteering opportunities to young people we need to understand what VIO's need in place in order to do support young volunteers with confidence. We have liased with Community First, who have kindly given us permission to adapt and use their young volunteers handbook as a resource for Rother Organisations. This is now available on RVA's website.



Brokerage

Listing volunteering opportunities is at the heart of RVA Volunteer Hub offer.

Along with Hastings Voluntary Action and 3VA, RVA's Volunteer Hub team is working with East Sussex County Council to promote and support their new social prescribing and volunteering platform, Tribe.



- Over 50 new volunteer opportunities listed
- New online listing form makes it easier for organisations to list volunteering roles and for RVA Team to process these.
- System implemented to add listed dates to listings to show how recent they are
- Volunteer age suitability added to listings to encourage young volunteers
- Volunteer roles section added to RVA monthly Newsletter
- All roles now listed immediately on facebook and linked in
- Better dovetailing with Tribe to ensure new opportunities are also listed on Tribe



- RVA signed up to Tribe platform and test-driven tribe web and app versions, both as an organisation and as individuals
- Shared RVA's volunteer listings with Tribe
- Hosted two tribe drop-in introductory sessions at RVA (attended by 8 volunteer organisations)
- Provided planning support, sector advice and platform feedback to Tribe team
- Provided content for Tribe promotions
- Introduced and promoted Tribe via multiple digital and in-person platforms



st michael's hospice



Urban Outdoors London
ADVENTURES IN NATURE



Supporting children,
young people and families



Bexhill Environmental Group



hastings & rother furniture service



Brokerage

What we learned

- A vibrant and well-used volunteer listing facility is at the heart of RVAs entire offer, not just as a Volunteer Hub but as an infrastructure organisation supporting Rother's 3rd sector. This is because:
 - It creates a reason to reach out, connect and support Rother's VCSO's helping us understand the areas 3rd sector landscape
 - It creates an opportunity to build our local voluntary sector networks and explore other voluntary sector challenges and needs
 - It is a physical portal by which our website beomes a destination for those wanting to find volunteering opportunities
- Whilst Tribe has potential to unify, professionalise, digitise volunteering opportunities and create a virtual one-stop-shop for VIO's and volunteers, feedback from volunteers has shown us that their preferred methods of seeking volunteering opportunities would be social media and a local website with a local team of people behind it . VIOs have struggled with functionality in listing their opportunities. RVA will continue to support Tribe as it evolves, whilst building our own offer in parallel
- RVA's online resources are a little buried in the current website layout. They are likely to be under-used as a result.
- End-users will need reminders and signposting to access and locate these resources.
- It would be good to align resources to those of East Sussex's other VAs to avoid duplication and ensure they are consistent.

What's next?

- Further streamline listings process: A plug in so organisations can list their own opportunities
- Develop mechanism to count metrics (clicks, views, applications) to quantify outcomes (a form sent to listers every 3 months to check on progress?)
- Review RVA's website layout to make volunteer hub pages more dynamic,story-based, accessible and user-friendly.



Brokerage

To support volunteer recruitment and promote local voluntary organisations, RVA's Volunteer Hub team is working with organisations to support and promote Taster Days. This is a way for individuals to visit organisations and find out more before committing to volunteering.



Friends of Combe Valley Taster Day
Saturday 16 September
Attended by 30



Rye Community Garden Taster Day
Saturday 25 November
Attended by 21

A massive thank you for your help and support in making the event possible on Saturday! Everyone really enjoyed it, and hopefully that means a few more might come more regularly, so very useful'
Alize De Buck, Rye Community Garden



What we learned

- Taster Days are quite labour intensive to organise - usually because of lack of capacity within the organisation.
- They work well for outdoor organisations, although some indoor organisations could work too.
- They are a great opportunity for the organisation to review and define important elements of their volunteer offer including risk assessments, volunteer recruitment processes, health and safety and promotion.
- They are also an opportunity for RVA to find out more about organisations and gather photos, footage and good news stories

What's next?

- Continue to support Taster Days - perhaps cluster them by area.
- Local flyers of volunteer opportunities by area - could be distributed via Parish Councils

Trustees

Voluntary sector Trustees, Advisory Panels, Boards of Directors are also volunteers, who play a vital role in the strength, direction, structural integrity and vitality of their organisations.

RVA are aware that boards often underperform due to lack of good management, stagnation, and poor clarity of purpose. And yet a strong board is essential for a well-functioning organisation.

On 8th June 2023, RVA's Volunteer Hub arranged an informal Trustee induction at The De La Warr Pavilion, in response to a new RVA Trustee joining to board, and feedback from a current trustee that indicated RVA's own induction process could be better (see Annual Report 2022-2023).

Alongside coffee and cake, we asked one of the existing trustees to give an overview of the history of RVA, its mission and aims, whilst the Chairman answered questions about strategy and vision.

RVA's new CEO, Kim Richards, outlined her hopes for her new role and four relatively new trustees asked questions freely to get to know the charity in a friendly and unstructured way.

The opportunity was appreciated by all that attended, demonstrating good practice, and adding to our collective learning. It empowered RVA's Trustees to contribute more effectively during board meetings moving forward.

We intend to recommend this idea to other charities we work with.



During Trustee Week (6-10 Nov), RVA shared social media, produced by Trusteesoweb.org. We would have also liked to share local case studies, and the experience made us aware that RVA lacks connection with local volunteers at Trustee level. Volunteer Hub would benefit from gathering trustee insight, connections and stories.

Trustees



In April, Volunteer Hub Team Member, Annette Holmes, completed her IEACW trustee training. This training enhances the Volunteer Hub's knowledge and expertise around this important area.

What we learned

- Trustees and boards are vital to healthy VCSEs, but many are under functioning
- RVA's volunteer hub needs to promote, support and celebrate high-level volunteers such as Trustees
- RVA needs to do more to find out about Trusteeship and improve support to local VIOs

What's next?

- Further examine our own board and trustees: recruitment, skills audit, roles, support, satisfaction, processes
- Continue to assess RVA's organisations using the Trustee health checker tool developed in 2023
- Gather and collect more trustee stories and case studies from local organisations.
- Improve our own knowledge and expertise - Naomi to become a trustee of an organisations, and to continue with the Trustee training she has signed up for.
- A dedicated area of RVA's Volunteer Hub web pages for Trustees including more effective signposting to Trustee resources

Corporate Social Responsibility

Throughout the past 12 months, RVA has promoted Corporate Social Responsibility as a way for local businesses to support their communities through volunteering.



In September 2023, RVA connected a team of volunteers from infrastructure company, Balfour Beatty with Bexhill Senior Citizen's Club. The volunteers swooped in with their paint brushes and transformed the club's library.

It's so exciting - it has made such a difference to the appearance of the place!

Christine Nee
Bexhill Senior Citizens' Club

Charity IT Leaders
2,252 followers
8mo •

We all know that CSR is great for companies, and that it can provide real benefits for charitable organisations and their beneficiaries. But CSR can still be seen as a tickbox exercise, carried out because it's something companies 'should' ...see more

Previously live

Powered by StreamYard

Tree Hall
Annette Holmes
Jade
Noreen Robinson
Michelle
Glenn
See more

And we'll lie. Hello, welcome, everybody

Event ended
The real impact of CSR and why it's great for charities and corporates
LinkedIn Live

On 13 October RVA's Volunteer Hub Team took part in a Linked In Live conversation hosted by Tree Hall from Charity IT Leaders.

In the conversation, Glenn Douch, and Jo Saxby from Bexhill-based Factory Internet explained how RVA connected them with Hub on Rye Hill, where Glenn has been volunteering his time to support older hub-visitors with digital access skills.

Good hot topic to share. Charities can attract more support by referring donors to align with national Responsible Business Standards.
Clive Bonny (attendee)

Simple Spreadsheets that really work!

FREE online group clinics
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With Ryszard Skrakowski, Senior Data Engineer at HastingsDIRECT

Alternate Tuesdays: 3.00-4.30pm

HastingsDIRECT Rother Voluntary Action

Simple spreadsheets that really work!

RVA hosted 7 informal working sessions with a Senior Data Engineer from Hastings Direct. Ryszard Skrakowski was keen to use his professional expertise to support local organisations. So far Ryszard has helped 13 individuals from 6 local organisations to build better spreadsheets and has now agreed to continue as a 'expert volunteer' for RVA.

Thank you so much for your time and undivided attention!

Arthur Sloman, Hands of Hope Charity

Diversity



On 18th July Volunteer Hub had a meeting with Dawn Dublin of Black Butterfly, a local organisation that aims to enhance the lives of Afrodescendant and displaced communities. We discussed techniques to start inclusive conversations that lead to community-led actions. The Hub Team came away with some very helpful insights around engaging effectively with potential volunteers from diverse cultural backgrounds.



Continued attendance by Volunteer Hub team at Rother District Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion quarterly meetings, attended by a range of groups and organisations that work with residents with protected characteristics. This helps us better understand some of the challenges and needs faced by diverse groups around engagement with volunteering.



On 6 March, the Volunteer Hub team attended 'Cultural curiosity: working better with migrant communities – introductory course', run by Hastings' Refugee Buddy Project. We discussed ways that Volunteer Hub could support the project with recruiting volunteers, as well as volunteering as a way to gain work experience and references for migrant people looking for work in the UK.

What's we learned

- To reach diverse audiences we need to go to where they are.
- We also need ways to make RVA's interaction at public events: not standing behind a table, but having an informal seating and chat zone, with conversation starters about volunteering.

What's next?

- Work on ways to improve RVA's interaction at public events: and identify events where we would be more likely to reach diverse audiences.
- RVA's entire team is taking unconscious bias and E&D training to embed inclusive thinking and doing. Once this is complete, Volunteer Hub will programme E&D training for external organisations.
- We will continue to attend forums and events that extend our connections with diverse communities and support those organisations who work with diverse communities by helping them recruit volunteers.
- We will connect with diverse communities and groups via social media too - something we have not fully done yet.

Networks and Collaborations



RVA is now working much more closely to deliver cross-county initiatives with our partners at HVA and 3VA.

This has included collaborative planning for future joint projects, events and resources, sharing tips and learnings and setting up a Volunteer Organisations facebook group.



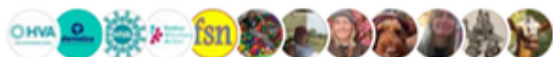
The Volunteer Hub Team are members of RVA's Civi CRM development team. We are supporting with the creation and set up of a comprehensive CRM system. This will enable us to be more targeted and strategic in our approach to working with VIOs.

As part of this work we are also developing RVAs Membership Directory for local VIOs.



East Sussex Volunteer Coordinators

Private group · 12 members



+ Invite

Share

In March, RVA and HVA set up a new facebook group, 'East Sussex Volunteer Coordinators'. This is to provide an online forum where organisations working with volunteers can work with each other, share ideas and experiences and learn from each other.

What we learned?

- Face to face networking is highly valued by VCSEs
- Try to have an objective so it's not just a 'talking shop'
- Online networks like tribe and social media groups are great, but only in addition to in-person events
- When aiming to reach members of the public - go to where the 'fun' is, with informal conversation starters. Don't expect them to come to you.

Team update



Jen Atherall went on Maternity leave in July and has since had a daughter, Lois, to join big sister Elise.

Naomi Robinson has joined the team to cover Jen's maternity leave alongside Annette.

Marketing Officer, Betty has moved on, and Cheryl White and Josie Korda, have joined as RVA's new marketing team

Since July the team has been guided by RVA's new CEO, Kim Richards.



Naomi Robinson – Project Lead (Volunteer Hub)



Annette Holmes – Volunteer Coordinator



Cheryl White – Marketing & Comms Lead

Coming soon

- From June, we will hold quarterly pop up's in the Bexhill College's refectory to discuss volunteering with young people: The first one is on 4 June and RVA's Volunteer Hub team will be joined by three local organisations who work with young volunteers.
- On 3 June we are holding a community network event for VIO's from Rother. This will have a focus on volunteering, including a workshop on volunteer ambassadors and a discussion about working with young volunteers.
- On 5 June the whole RVA team will volunteer at Rye Community Garden to raise awareness as part of our Volunteer Week Campaign
- During Volunteer Week the RVA Volunteer Hub Team will visit charity shops across Rother with 'thankyou' cards, to raise awareness and celebrate local volunteers.
- From September RVA will deliver a 10 week enrichment course about volunteering to young people at Bexhill College
- RVA's updated Volunteer Hub webpage will be supported by a campaign promoting the bank of resources available for VIOs.
- RVA will roll out the Governance Health check to build a clearer picture of the state of Governance and Trustees in Rother's VIOs and begin to develop resources and training to support Trusteeship.
- The East Sussex Volunteer Coordinators Forum will meet every quarter to share peer-to-peer know-how around recruiting and managing volunteers.
- We will continue to establish a CRM and Members database.
- We will roll out a training programme that addresses the priority needs for Rother VIO's

Budget review from May 2023 - April 2024

	Revenue			Capital		
	Budget	Actual	Difference	Budget	Actual	Difference
Year 2	£56,159	£6,0791	£-4, 632	0	£642	£-642

Reason for difference:

There is an overspend for Year 2 on salary costs. This is down to Jen's maternity leave and the overlap handover period starting in June.

Across the two years of the project to date we are about 3% under budget.

Recap of Priorities from year 1

Recap of priorities from Year 1 (May 2022 - April 2023)

- Ongoing attendance at Job and Apprentice Fairs to promote volunteering as a way into employment.
- Develop sessions for organisations around attracting younger people into volunteering.
- Continue our series on New Forms of Volunteering, to also include micro-volunteering, digital volunteering and remote volunteering.
- Launch our CSR programme in businesses to encourage young employees to consider Trusteeship as a good learning and developmental experience.
- Continue to work with Tribe's digital volunteering platform to bring volunteering opportunities to those who search online (particularly young people).

Next Steps

- Make contact with other organisations that do Volunteer and Trustee brokerage to find out how they are run.
- Look at types soft skills training that we can provide.
- Look to develop training on marketing that helps organisations recruit (especially younger) volunteers.

The top most requested basic skills training courses are: votes

Top organisations training needs requested:

1. Equality and Diversity (14) 2. GDPR (13) 3. Safeguarding adults (12) 4. Safeguarding children (11) 5. Suicide awareness (10) 6. Basic Health and Safety (10)

1. Conflict resolution (9 priority) 2. Building personal resilience (11 nice to have) 3. Self-development (10) 4. Stress and overwhelm (10) 5. Public speaking and non- verbal communication (9)

1. GDPR (10) 2. Equalities and Diversity (9) 3. Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers (9) 4. Safeguarding Adults (9) 5. Volunteers and the Law (9)

Recap of Priorities from year 1

(As written by participants, clustered by RVA)

Young People (14 votes)

Start doing

- Working with schools to attract younger volunteer population.
- Getting into schools to actively promote the voluntary sector.
- Charity and volunteering – change language to –community involvement.
- Arrange for groups to present in schools to recruit volunteers.
- Start workshops for students to gain information about the benefits of volunteering. Ask them to give feedback afterwards.

Stop doing / adapt

- Language – getting it right for young people.

Skills and Training (13 votes) specifically developing resources (2 votes)

Keep doing

- Keep on with training—Volunteers and Volunteering organisations.
- Training sessions works well – conflict resolution, GDPR.
- Training sessions to support community: plus St. Michael's could support in stuff.
- Upskilling VIO organisations to work better with volunteers. Good mix of training for volunteers and organisations.
- Templates and training and networking to support organisations to look after their volunteers.
- Training – But ensure awareness of/into key company stakeholders.
- Policies and procedures – Induction programme, GDPR, job/role description.

Start doing

- Volunteers to offer translation.
- Language skills for a variety of cultures.
- Foundation Volunteers Course
- Accredited training for volunteers to either step into role with VIO or elsewhere.
- Training/education for organisations to recognise where volunteering opportunities exist.
- Basic Skills
- Clarity on organisation – ambassador training.
- You mentioned Trustees skills audit. Audit for general volunteers?
- Marketing and organisational training.
- Social Media aspect of volunteer services to update websites.
- Help VIO's develop a package – ambassadors.
- Managing expenses / Bookkeeping / Accounts / Excel Training.

Stop doing / adapt

- If hosting online training sessions, try out live webinar as a platform to run sessions.

Networks and Forum (13 votes)

Keep doing

- Networking Events
- Keep putting on networking events – so that we can see how other charities are doing with volunteers.

Start doing

- Workshops bringing local organisations and charities together to discuss / action on relevant issues (working parties).
- Volunteers speed dating -opportunity to meet organisations and match with volunteers.

Diverse Communities (11 votes) specifically organisational training (3 votes)

Start doing

- Voluntary opps for incoming populations.
- Connect asylum seekers to volunteer opportunities.
- Not box ticking on diversity and inclusion. Genuine discussion.
- Training on how organisations can work with more people
- that they struggle to reach (equality, inclusion etc). Do they need adjustments? Do they know what barrier exist?

Stop doing / adapt

- Support and develop diversity in volunteers and Trustees.
- Need more capacity to support vulnerable people who want to volunteer.
- Interested in digital methods and how these can be used to recruit diverse and marginalised groups.
- Two-way relationship – Volunteers bring skills to an organisation, and organisations need to be better at offering new forms of opportunities.
- How to move organisations on from being naturally 'risk adverse' to becoming more pro-active and inclusive.

Better Marketing – creating a hub (both RVA and Volunteering) (11 votes)

Start doing

- An induction to those that are new to RVA.
- RVA Network Events – Interviewing with video set up on YouTube channel with link on the website.
- Directory of Volunteer Services.
- Increase/higher profile locally for RVA e.g. More social media and local press so that RVA are synonymous with local volunteering.

Stop doing/adapt:

- More awareness of training
- "I ought to know more about RVA but I don't" – how to address this?!
- RVA website *probably* excellent but people don't necessarily know it's there.
- Connect/recruit young IT experts with organisations needing social media website skills.
- Marketing and recruitment of volunteers – what works?
- Communicate ambassadors – training package.
- More visibility – raise profile. Make RVA Volunteering.
- Management Awareness / Value validation of volunteers