

**Voluntary Action**  
**South Lanarkshire**  
Putting the Voluntary Sector FIRST

# Annual Report

## 2013-14



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# CHAIRPERSON'S REVIEW

## IAN BARCROFT ON THIS YEAR'S PROGRESS

In South Lanarkshire, VASLan is committed to the involvement of the third sector by creating and developing community planning partnerships. Needs are better addressed in the wider community when those who volunteer their time, knowledge, expertise and services connect and create networks of influence to contribute to and develop better local outcomes.

VASLan enables third sector organisations to influence public policy and contribute to better community planning allowing our wider community to reap the benefits simply because of their own involvement and contribution.

However this will only happen when we increase opportunity and enthusiasm for volunteering; enable organisations to recruit, manage and retain volunteers better; develop and grow our social enterprises; and ensure quality service delivery from third sector organisations.

Much of VASLan's time and effort is taken up by strengthening this quality of service across our thematic networks. We have tried to do this by establishing good practice in our own organisation. We depend upon the commitment of our staff and volunteers, Chief Executive Officer and the board, to whom I offer my grateful thanks. All of us

at VASLan are trying hard to run a quality organisation dependent on good leadership, collaboration and integrity, whilst at the same time allowing a common respect for both equality and diversity. This, we hope, allows organisations and volunteers to see the values necessary for the good of our sector and the wider community.

As you read this report, I hope you will be inspired by the dedication of many, who not only gain themselves by their contribution, but give a little back to their community to improve our services and meet the needs of a varied region.



### THE BOARD

**CHAIRPERSON:** Ian Barcroft  
**VICE CHAIR:** John Cassidy  
**COMPANY SECRETARY:** Gordon Bennie  
**TREASURER:** Jack Taylor

### DIRECTORS

John Brain	Amanda Burgauer
John Christie	Nancy Barr
John Edgar	Gordon Muir
Robert Fleming*	William Tynan

\*Resigned

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

# GORDON BENNIE ON OUR ACHIEVEMENTS

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Encouraging successes in each of our key outcome targets have made this an overwhelmingly positive year for VASLan. Having come together as a unified organisation and produced a defined set of objectives for the TSI, we are now making steady progress in our overarching aim of supporting, developing and representing a thriving third sector in South Lanarkshire.

We have worked hard to ensure more people have increased access to volunteering, hugely increasing our availability to potential volunteers by taking on a team of fully-trained, well-informed volunteer recruitment advisers. We have also developed a close working relationship with higher education institutions, helping make sure our services are reflecting a shift in the make-up of volunteers towards a younger client group.

We are proud not only to have received the Volunteer Friendly Award (signifying excellence in involving and recognising our volunteers), but also in being able to offer this accreditation to organisations in South Lanarkshire that meet the standard. The policies and procedures demanded of a Volunteer Friendly organisation will help spread good practice relating

to volunteers and ensure that the vital voluntary work that sustains life-changing services throughout our communities will receive the recognition it deserves.

The development of the social enterprise model is an area which has also received hard work; this year we have supported over sixty social enterprises with fundamental issues including funding, project planning, income generation, finance, marketing and governance. As well as information and networking events aimed at giving practical advice, we recruited a full-time Social Enterprise Development Officer, allowing us to expand the service offered and give organisations dedicated time and expertise geared towards making their socially-valuable work successful and sustainable.

Our core work of supporting organisations to offer the best possible services has continued. With our support, third sector organisations in South Lanarkshire secured a staggering £1.8million in funding over the last year, while we have bulked up our training schedule to ensure groups have access to discount courses in areas such as policies and procedures, governance, becoming a charity,

writing funding applications and involving volunteers.

Membership of our thematic networks has steadily increased, giving a better representation of third sector groups within South Lanarkshire. We continue to encourage partnership working and information sharing between groups, while the voluntary sector strategic group is now asked to present papers at the community planning stage, ensuring the sector's views are heard alongside large statutory bodies.

Aside from our core aims, our project work continues to be a cornerstone in our organisation's ethos. Our Media Project hosted another successful film festival event, giving due recognition to the creative endeavours of young people while passing on practical technical skills. Locator, our database of third sector -run services and activities for older people continues to be popular, while new pilot projects have probed the issue of isolation in our ageing population. Our employability projects have helped hard-to-reach young people into training, education and employment, with our new Chance to Change project offering unique solutions to the complex issue of youth reoffending.

# OUR STAFF & VOLUNTEERS

## CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER

Gordon Bennie

## TEAM LEADERS

Heather Petrie  
Janet Low\*  
Jenny Gemmell

## IT SUPPORT OFFICER

Angus Lindsay

## FINANCE ADMINISTRATION

Joyce Pye

## EARLY YEARS COLLABORATIVE STRATEGIC OFFICER

Charlie Duffin

## R.C.O.P. LOCALITY OFFICERS

Brian Duffy  
David Lyon\*  
Kay Thomson

## DEVELOPMENT OFFICERS

Ann Sangster  
Fiona Dryburgh  
Jen Fleming  
Mary Sneddon  
Stuart Reilly  
Susan Lennartson\*  
Teeda Boyd  
Wendy Russell\*

## EMPLOYABILITY PROJECT

Chantelle Smith  
Ian McLaughlan  
Winnie Brown

## MAKING IT WORK KEY WORKER

Eric Stallard

## INFOBASE PROJECT

David Bett

## MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Matthew McWhinnie

## MEDIA PROJECT

Mark Melville

## ADMINISTRATION

Audrey Canning  
Joyce Brownlie  
Sharon Lawson

## FACILITIES

Bill Gilroy  
Christine Simpson

## COMMUNITY JOBS FUND

Caitlin Barnes  
Shannon Reilly\*  
Sharie Boyd\*  
Tammy Ducie\*  
Zoe Jamieson\*

## THIRD SECTOR INTERN

Joe Lamer

\*Resigned / contract expired

## VOLUNTEERS

Adele Ahmet  
Adeola Onumona  
Agnes Prentice  
Alan Thomson  
Alex Paris  
Alexander Kennedy  
Andy Goldie  
Anila Ahmad  
Andrew Brennan  
Anne Marie Kennedy  
Brian Hunter  
Bronte Kelly  
Chelsi Allan  
David MacDonald  
Deborah Anderson  
Donna Murray  
Donald Jamieson

Elaine Graham  
Ewan Maguire  
Fiona Boyle  
Fiona Cunningham  
Fraser McEwan  
Gail Caldwell  
Gerry Devlin  
George Mackie  
Glynis Young  
Greig McGregor  
Helen MacKinven  
Irene McLaughlan  
James Corbett  
James Gordon  
Jan Russell  
Jane Jack  
Jean Evans

Jean Feenie  
Jim Young  
John McNamee  
Johnny Wallace  
Jonathan Boal  
Kamal Kumar  
Karen Munro  
Kate Stewart  
Kathleen Reid  
Katie Dryburgh  
Kayleigh O'Rourke  
Keiran Gracie  
Kerry McGuigan  
Khosrow Zantani  
Kirk Grannell  
Lauren Logan  
Lauren Tonner

Linda Mair  
Malcolm Hannah  
Margaret McGuire  
Marion Aitken  
Mary McKinlay  
Michele MacTaggart  
Michelle Farmer  
Nicky Boyle  
Norrie Inglis  
Pamela Moyes  
Peter Stephen  
Rachel Fraser  
Raymond Blair  
Roselyn Drummond  
Robert Sellar  
Robert Sweeney  
Saga Pardede

Thomas Blake  
Walter Boyle  
William Gallacher  
William Shaw

# DEVELOPING THE THIRD SECTOR

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As a Third Sector Interface, one of the core objectives of our organisation is to offer services that make sure third sector groups in South Lanarkshire are well-managed, knowledgeable, well-equipped to meet their aims, successful, and sustainable.

To achieve this, we offer discounted training programmes, thematic networks to aid partnership working, a wealth of advice and support with regards to funding, a volunteer recruitment service, one-to-one support from our social enterprise team, briefings on how policy changes can affect third sector work, and marketing and publicity services to spread the word.

The third sector is currently facing the same challenges as others. Austerity measures continue to pose considerable difficulties to small organisations dependent on Local Authority support to sustain services. Confidence and stability of larger organisations is threatened too by the uncertainty created, while potential future growth is inhibited by short-term service level agreements. We are also aware of a rise in demand for

support from organisations working on tackling poverty.

We have continued to work hard in the face of these challenges, meeting our core objectives and providing what we feel is an invaluable level of support to organisations offering vital services in our communities.

This year we supported over five hundred organisations, raising a combined total of £1.8million, an increase of £1.4million on last year. We have bulked up our training programme, working to increase the skills base within the sector, particularly in areas of governance and financial competence. We put on a well-attended Funding Roadshow event that offered large and small organisations the opportunity to hear presentations from prominent funding organisations and gain tips on securing support successfully, and allowing them to have their questions answered.

Our membership scheme gives continuous one-to-one support to organisations who pay a small annual fee, making sure that our staff's time and expertise are just a phone call

or an email away, and this is what organisations have said they value most whether their aims are securing funding, restructuring governance, gaining charitable status, developing social enterprise, finding volunteers or simply getting their ideas off the ground.

Work will continue on maintaining high levels of service in the coming year. We will continue to offer a training programmes tailored to the needs of the sector and at a far lower cost than is commercially available. Staff training has been completed to make sure skills are at the highest possible level in dealing with the changing needs of the sector. With regards to tackling poverty, we are in the process of digitally mapping third sector organisations working in this area to help ensure services can be accessed more easily and knowledge of their existence is more prevalent. Overall, we are committed to continuing our core work of ensuring South Lanarkshire's dedicated and creative third sector continues to be central to our communities.

# A FEW OF THE GROUPS WE HAVE HELPED

## CAMBUSLANG & RUTHERGLEN ETHNIC MINORITY DEVELOPMENT GROUP

The group is a registered charity, established in 1997, that works with the Black and minority ethnic community in the local area to promote and advance educational, social and cultural activities to encourage social inclusion. They wished to organise a series of Zumba classes, offering a modern and fun way of keeping fit. VASLan helped the group develop a funding plan and they were successful in receiving a conditional grant offer of £900 through the Big Lottery for a ten-week Zumba programme. We also helped secure £2,683 for healthy cooking, aromatherapy and henna-painting classes.

## RESOURCEFUL RAMBLERS

The Ramblers are a unique group who have been running walking excursions for blind and visually-impaired people since 1983, helping combat loneliness and improve social interaction for their members. The group develops a walking schedule for the year and required funding to cover the cost of hiring a local community transport bus to take the participants to walking locations. They approached VASLan for help with their schedule and funding application to South Lanarkshire Council and were subsequently successful in acquiring £900 to cover the cost of bus hire.

## BUSY FINGERS

This is a recently-established group of local ladies, formed to satisfy interest in learning handicrafts and alleviate the social exclusion felt by many older people. They approached us for advice on becoming constituted, assembling a management committee, opening a bank account and applying for funding. We provided assistance on successful applications to South Lanarkshire Council and the Big Lottery Fund. These grants allowed the group to buy a sewing machine, folding tables, handicraft materials and specialised craft equipment. This helped the group provide new learning opportunities, resulting in membership increasing significantly.



# DEVELOPING SOCIAL ENTERPRISE

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Social enterprise, like any type of business, generates profits from the sale of products or services. However, unlike others, a social enterprise operates primarily for a social or environmental purpose. All profit is reinvested into the organisation or the community it was set up to benefit.

In the past year, VASLan has taken a lead on promoting social enterprise, in order to help third sector organisations become more sustainable. We have organised regular events with the dual purpose of bringing together existing organisations for networking opportunities and also helping start-ups or existing third sector groups to develop social enterprise activities. Additionally, social enterprise marketplace events have provided organisations with the opportunity of promoting their products and services.

With the employment in January of Jen Fleming, our full-time social

enterprise development officer, we have been able to provide organisations with one-to-one support through the tricky processes of constitution development, legal structures, gaining charitable status and setting up policies and procedures.



We have provided organisations with project plans, guidance in identifying an organisation's needs, aims and outcomes and have recommended areas where training may be required. Advice is given for

monitoring and evaluating activities, and we have offered groups business-planning support.

Funding is crucial to the development of new projects and we have offered sustained support and advice regarding appropriate funding streams. We have continued to offer expert advice on writing applications and checking them prior to submission. Our training programme helped too, from courses focussed specifically on explaining social enterprise to newcomers, to three more general funding-oriented events.

Overall, we are proud to have supported 64 social enterprises this year in a variety of areas, including funding, project planning, income generation, finance, marketing and governance. We also advised and supported four social enterprises through the process of securing new premises to deliver trading activities.



## HOW WE HELPED THE HOPE CAFE

The Hope Cafe, based in Lanark, is a peer-led project which provides opportunities for people within Lanarkshire to engage in activities proven to support positive mental health and wellbeing. As part of their social enterprise activities, they operate a community cafe that raises funds for the project. Along with good quality food, the cafe offers access to various self-help resources relating to mental health.

The founder of the Hope Cafe, Donna Barrowman, first came to VASLan in early 2013. Having developed the idea, she needed advice on starting up a social enterprise. Our team provided support in all aspects, including initial advice on the social enterprise model, information about governance, support in writing a constitution, guidance on building a committee and opening a bank account. We helped too with the development of a project plan and a business plan for the project's trading activities.

We also helped Donna with settling on a suitable legal structure and offered support in the process of applying to become a SCIO. When the project required start-up finance, our social enterprise team provided information of relevant funding streams.

VASLan supported the Hope Cafe in developing an online presence, identifying suitable IT equipment and building the Hope Cafe's website, before offering training on how to maintain it.

Our information and advice also helped with finding premises for the cafe to be based, and we were able to help with the development and advertising of volunteer opportunities to be publicised through the VASLan website and newsletter. Our social enterprise team's advice also helped with the recruitment of a paid employee, ensuring that this was done within the parameters of the Hope Cafe's constitution.



# SUPPORTING VOLUNTEERING

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This year, VASLan registered over a thousand people as volunteers, whether by telephone, through our website, in person or at events and appointments.

We recognise the many good reasons people have to volunteer - it can be to learn new skills, meet new people, gain confidence and self-esteem, or simply to do something worthwhile in the local area. By keeping accurate records of the diverse make-up of South Lanarkshire's volunteering community, we hope to make sure that people get exactly what they want out of volunteering.

We're committed to the ideal that anyone who wishes to volunteer should be able to do just that. To that end, we recruited seven dedicated volunteer recruitment advisers to interview potential volunteers, listen to what they are interested in doing, inform them about what's available to them, and put them in contact with the relevant organisations. A

total of 549 people attended these appointments this year, and this will continue to benefit from the strong relationship we have built with local universities, colleges and libraries hosting the appointments.

A total of 308 voluntary organisations, of various sizes and working areas, benefited from the referral and placement of volunteers coming through VASLan. We have continued to add to an enormous database of volunteer opportunities, helping ensure all parties have as much information as possible and recruitment is a smooth process.

We have also worked to make sure volunteering is recognised as the invaluable and worthwhile undertaking it undoubtedly is. We organised and facilitated the Saltire Awards which give due recognition to the volunteering efforts of young people. This is not just to applaud outstanding examples of compassion and commitment, but also to

hopefully help instill a lifelong love of volunteering.

We also arranged four team challenge days, giving employers the chance to put something back into their community by sending teams to help with tasks for local third sector groups. These challenge days help foster links between the different sectors, turn new people onto volunteering, and, on these occasions, saved the groups involved an estimated £17,000.

We pride ourselves on being the first port of call for those interested in volunteering in South Lanarkshire, and will continue to work to ensure our knowledge of the sector is worthy of this. We remain committed to maximising volunteering opportunities that help strengthen our communities, while continuing to recognise the magnificent social impact volunteers make both individually and collectively.



## YOUTH VOLUNTEERING SALTIRE AWARDS 2013

We again organised the Saltire Awards this year, which recognise outstanding commitment to volunteering by those between the ages of 12 and 25.



CELEBRATING **16,000 HOURS** OF YOUTH VOLUNTEERING





Volunteer Friendly Award

## INVOLVING & SUPPORTING VOLUNTEER FRIENDLY

Volunteer Friendly is a quality award available throughout Scotland, designed to provide support, guidance and information on working with volunteers and recognise and reward groups who meet the required standard. This year, VASLan became the first South Lanarkshire organisation to be officially graded Volunteer Friendly. We have also introduced the award to South Lanarkshire, becoming licensed to deliver it, free of charge, to our member organisations that successfully meet the criteria laid out by the application process.

There are numerous benefits to becoming a Volunteer Friendly organisation. It makes organisations more attractive to potential and existing volunteers, it acts as a measure to ensure best practice in managing volunteers, it shows potential funders groups with good volunteer management, encourages groups to share good practice, it

makes sure good quality volunteer opportunities are in place waiting to be filled, and it will enable VASLan staff to engage with groups through the application process.

We are enthusiastic about the difference Volunteer Friendly will make to third sector organisations in South Lanarkshire. Groups wishing to work toward Volunteer Friendly are given full access to the Volunteer Friendly website, as well as full support from VASLan. It is a great

opportunity for groups to take stock of their current way of working, identify potential areas of improvement, and put effective policies and procedures in place.

With one organisation already achieving the Volunteer Friendly award, and a number of others currently working towards getting the seal of approval, we look forward to it becoming a well-recognised mark of quality in managing and involving those who offer so much.



## OFFICIALLY VOLUNTEER FRIENDLY

# WISTON LODGE



Wiston Lodge is the first organisation we have officially declared Volunteer Friendly. A Victorian hunting lodge located in the beautiful woodlands at the foot of Tinto hill in rural Clydesdale, the charity caters for diverse groups with an emphasis on working with children, young people and vulnerable adults to encourage their personal social and emotional development using adventure activities, nature connections and the creative arts.

Wiston Lodge is well-deserving of the Volunteer Friendly name, having welcomed volunteers for many years and made them integral to the charity's continuing success. Their volunteers work closely with the core staff team, helping to create a friendly, welcoming community into which visitors arrive. Taking on specific tasks to enable the charity to continue to grow and develop, their time at Wiston in turn ensures the volunteers develop new skills,

create friendships, build confidence and gain a strong feeling of self-worth.

We are proud to have Wiston Lodge as a VASLan member and be able to honour their excellent standards in involving and supporting volunteers. We will continue to work with groups, ensuring that Wiston Lodge is just the first of many great Volunteer Friendly organisations in South Lanarkshire.

# REDUCING REOFFENDING

# CHANCE TO CHANGE

This year saw the launch of Chance to Change, an employability-focussed mentoring project geared towards helping guide prolific young offenders away from crime and towards training, education and employment.

A public-social partnership (PSP) between South Lanarkshire Council, Routes to Work South, Lanarkshire Community Justice Authority and led by VASLan, the scheme is funded by the Robertson Trust, the Scottish Prison Service and the Scottish Government's Reducing Reoffending change fund.

Based on VASLan's tried-and-tested mentoring programmes that have run for over ten years, Chance to Change focuses specifically on young unemployed people between the ages of 16 and 24 who have racked up multiple low-tariff offences. Having expressed a desire to change their lives and find employment, they are then paired with fully-trained

volunteer mentors who meet up with them regularly, discuss ambitions, interests and concerns, offer a sympathetic ear, encourage and support positive lifestyle changes and offer advice to help them find a new path in life.

In the year since launching, Chance to Change has seen 52 referrals; 31 have completed PX2 or STEPS personal development training, 3 moved into regular volunteering, 36 into training and 8 secured full-time employment.

This is fantastic progress, particularly considering the challenging nature of the client group, and well in excess of the targets deemed necessary by the funding bodies.

We feel Chance to Change and similar schemes are an invaluable way of offering an alternative to multiple short-term prison sentences and provide vital support to those committed to moving away from crime.





## JIMMY'S JOURNEY

Jimmy left school at 16. He was unemployed for the next few years, struggling with alcohol and cannabis misuse. At 18, the Job Centre referred him to the Work Programme, but having completed two years on it, he was still unable to find a job.

A year later, Jimmy made the decision that he needed help to change his life. Following a referral from Routes to Work South, he signed up to the Chance to Change programme. He met VASLan staff and began to engage with the project, attending and successfully completing personal development training. He was also referred to Lanarkshire Alcohol and Drug Service to get help addressing his alcohol problem.

Through Chance to Change, Jimmy was matched to a volunteer mentor and began to meet him on a weekly basis. After beginning a college course but being unable to complete it, Jimmy continued to meet with his mentor who helped him to identify the barriers

that were holding him back from success at college. His mentor signposted him to various agencies, including housing, benefits, anger management and health.

At age 22, Jimmy started a Connect 2 course and obtained SVQ level 2 in Landscaping. This gained him a 6-month work placement with a landscaping company, and he missed only two days' work due to illness. Jimmy again found himself unemployed at the end, but continued to meet with his mentor to perform job searches and cold-call businesses looking for work.

Eventually, he contacted a car valeting company and offered to do a work trial for free. This gained him a full-time job as a car valet. While Jimmy has come on leaps and bounds, he continues to meet with his mentor to help remain focused on making positive progress and to deal with any problems as soon as they arise.

## EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

# MAKING IT WORK

Making it Work is a partnership programme, launched in July 2013, that aims to help lone parents return to work. The programme began this year, with VASLan participating alongside Routes to Work South and hosting a key worker covering the Hamilton/Blantyre area.

The key workers help to break down barriers and nullify any sense of apprehension in returning to work. Participants are helped through being supported to improve their confidence and self-esteem, increase their base of skills through training, find suitable and sustainable childcare solutions and receive money advice and information on dealing with debt.

VASLan are ideally suited to host the project's key workers. Due to our extensive experience delivering employability projects, we have established referral networks with social work, while we have also delivered personal development training on other projects for many

years. We also have contact with around 1,300 voluntary groups (including mother and toddler groups, nursery committees, parent councils and family services) who we can help make aware of the service and encourage to signpost clients. Holding a record of around 400 volunteering opportunities in South Lanarkshire, our development officers also have in-depth knowledge of third sector organisations across South Lanarkshire and are in a good position to flag up suitable

volunteering opportunities for pursuing particular career paths.

Making it Work's key worker based with us currently has over fifty clients signed up and engaging with the project, with over thirty completing training and five having moved into employment. We hope to see the positive results continuing as VASLan plays a role, offering our knowledge and relationships to the benefit of this vital service.



# THE ENHANCED VOLUNTEERING INITIATIVE

The Enhanced Volunteering Initiative (EVI) provides specialist guidance, training and support for anyone over the age of 16 who is unemployed and needs additional help in finding the next step in their route to employment.

Run as part of the South Lanarkshire Works 4 U employability programme, the project has been running in some form for over a decade. Those volunteering to take part in EVI choose from a programme of options, including a personal development programme to build confidence and push back barriers, an individual training plan and package provided by partner agencies, a trained volunteer mentor with relevant skills and experience to provide support and motivation, and appropriate volunteering opportunities.

Under the supervision of VASLan staff, mentors provide one-to-one support, helping to motivate clients to move into the direction of their

choice, be that training, education or employment.

We have again seen some impressive results. Of the 71 people who took part in the last year, 41 completed personal development training, 10 moved into a volunteering role, 7 went into further education and 18 gained employment.

Tribute must be paid to the enthusiasm and commitment of the volunteer mentors who make such an enormous impact on the project,

discussing ambitions and interests, addressing any potential barriers to finding employment and encouraging positive lifestyle changes that may help along the path. VASLan has continued to work hard in forging connections within the voluntary sector that will help get the best possible outcome for those engaging with the project. We will continue to ensure that the third sector has a significant role to play in tackling issues of unemployment facing our communities.



## TEACHING CREATIVE SKILLS

# VASLAN MEDIA PROJECT

The VASLan Media Project engaged with 80 young people across South Lanarkshire this year as part of the South Lanarkshire Youth Film Festival programme, funded by the Big Lottery's Young Start fund. This involved visiting young people in communities, giving them access to high-quality equipment, teaching them professional filmmaking techniques and guiding them through the process of getting their ideas up on screen. The culmination of this was a fantastic awards ceremony at the University of the West of Scotland in May, where the groups of young people who took part had their films shown on the big screen and voted on by those attending. Films ranged from supernatural horror and action-comedies to thoughtful explorations of mental health and Scottish politics. As well as passing on skills and promoting volunteering, the Festival properly recognises hard work, creative thinking and achievement, and gives young people the chance

to tell the stories they want to tell.

The expertise and equipment our Media Project has at its disposal was used positively in other ways. We produced promotional videos for the charities One Parent Families Scotland and Naewhips Riding School, as well as two for South Lanarkshire Council promoting More Choices, More Chances and Regeneration Services. Income generated from these commissions goes back into the running of the

Media Project.

As well as launching the Laughs and Landscapes heritage media project, we continue to work with schools and community groups on projects for this year's film festival. We are also working on forging closer links between the Media Project and VASLan's employability services, providing valuable and inspiring volunteering opportunities and giving young people the chance to work together on creative projects.



EXPLORING HERITAGE

# LAUGHS & LANDSCAPES



Laughs and Landscapes is a heritage media project launched by the VASLan Media Project this year. The aim is to work with unemployed young volunteers to create a website and traveling exhibition that reflects South Lanarkshire's social and environmental history, while passing on much-valued media skills. The volunteers have been working across South Lanarkshire, making films, taking photographs, digitizing slides and films and gathering information for engrossing and educational events that will take place later in the year.

## TACKLING ISOLATION

# RESHAPING CARE FOR OLDER PEOPLE

The national Reshaping Care for Older People agenda aims to shift the focus of caring for our ageing population away from emergency health services and towards more anticipatory and preventative measures. VASLan's job is to oversee the South Lanarkshire third sector's contribution to this, finding ways that services and activities run by the third sector can help reduce the isolation that can lead to deterioration in health.

Our Locality Officers build working relationships with groups providing older people's services, focussing on how we can help build their capacity and signposting them towards core services we offer such as funding advice, networking, governance, registering as a charity and publicity. We also encourage collaborative working between groups, in the hope that working together can help eliminate service gaps and duplication of work.

The main development of the last year was the introduction of Locator, an online tool that makes it quick and easy for older people to find third sector services and activities locally. Since launching in March 2013, the Locator has proved popular with statutory services and the general public, receiving a staggering 260,000 hits.

We also developed a series of pilot projects aimed at addressing both social and geographical isolation.

Under the banner Stay Connected, we offered a morning call service to flag up emergencies for older people who live alone, a telephone befriending service offering weekly calls to combat isolation and a volunteer driver service in the Hamilton and East Kilbride area, allowing people to access social activities and appointments at affordable rates. The information gathered from these projects will allow us to help address these complex issues in a well-informed, intelligent way.



## THEMATIC NETWORKS

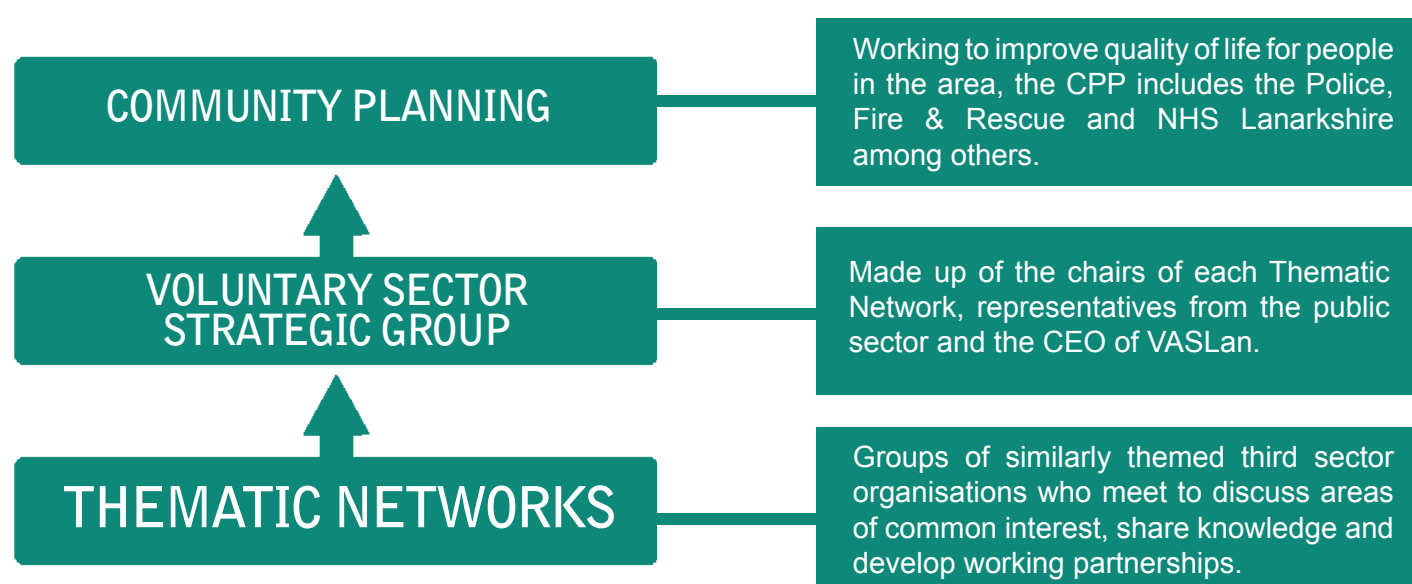
# SUPPORTING COMMUNITY PLANNING

Our thematic networks continued to act as a platform for third sector organisations to engage with public policy, acting as a framework carrying input from local organisations to the community planning level.

The last year saw us working hard to push things forward, as we clarified terms of reference, established a clear governance structure, formally recognised the capacity of each network to address three or four key pieces of work per year, and ensured that the strategic group will be asked

to present papers to the community planning meeting. We took a joined-up approach to working with the four networks (Older People, Health & Care; Children & Young People; Rural; and Social Enterprise), ensuring that there was information shared between networks and each one had action plans feeding into the strategic group. Much of this was achieved with the creation of a dedicated staff role for the networks, ensuring their development was given an increased level of attention.

Membership of the networks has steadily increased, as our staff work to increase awareness of their existence and the potential impact they can make. This continues to give a more representative cross-section of South Lanarkshire groups, while partnership-working and information-sharing has been evident and will continue as trust builds between networks. We will continue to work on intelligent ways to make sure the sector's voice is heard at a level where effective change can be made.



# STATS

Some figures which reveal just what a successful year this has been in terms of getting people into volunteering, making the public aware of third sector services that are available, and helping groups achieve what it is they want to achieve.



## WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

# LOOKING AHEAD

We recently celebrated VASLan's third birthday since coming together as a unified organisation. This year we have seen the depth and range of work we can achieve as the result of this unity. The future will be about building on these solid foundations, expanding our capabilities and coming up with even more imaginative ways of serving the sector.

Our staff will continue to be at the heart of our achievements. Our dedicated social enterprise role will let us offer more focussed, personalised support, while another new role will increase our strategic involvement in national agendas relating to children's early development and how the third sector fits into this. The core support we offer to organisations will be strengthened by a new staff role focussing directly on our training programme, helping bring new skills to the sector while keeping a keen eye on further training opportunities to be gained through partnership

working.

What we have learned this year will be put to good use. The success and popularity of our Locator tool means we will be expanding this service to include not just older people's groups, but those relating to young people and tackling poverty. We are also holding discussions with other interfaces in Scotland with a view to them potentially offering the Locator to their own communities.

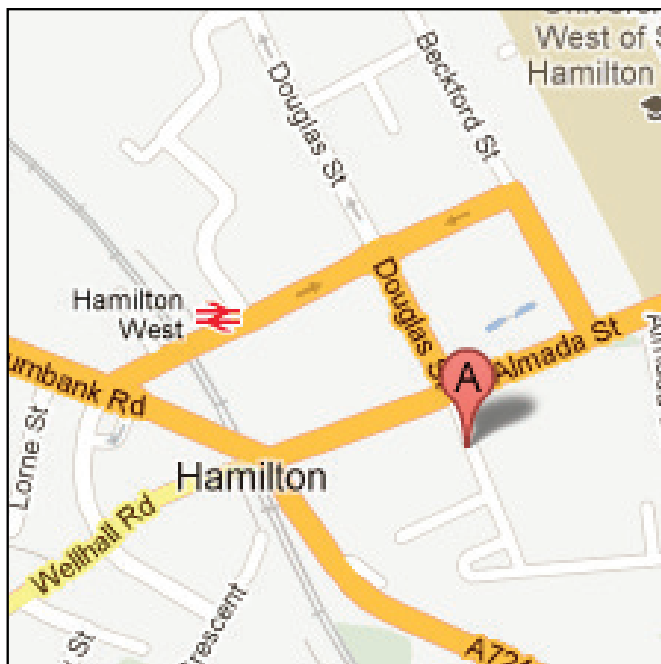
Volunteers will continue to be a priority. We will roll out the Volunteer

Friendly Award to all localities in South Lanarkshire and work with a number of groups to help them achieve this accreditation. We are also working hard to make sure volunteers' efforts are properly recognised in this year's Volunteers' Week campaign.

The monumental efforts of our staff and volunteers will be geared towards the TSI continuing to offer excellent service in all our areas of work, ensuring the third sector is given the support and representation it richly deserves.



**You can find us at:**



## **Voluntary Sector Support Centre**

155 Montrose Crescent

Hamilton

ML3 6LQ

**Tel: 01698 300 390**

For general enquiries, email **office@vaslan.org.uk**

For volunteering enquiries, email **volunteer@vaslan.org.uk**

For information on becoming a VASLan member, visit **www.vaslan.org.uk/members**



**Voluntary Action**  
**South Lanarkshire**  
Putting the Voluntary Sector **FIRST**

[www.vaslan.org.uk](http://www.vaslan.org.uk)

