
**2021/
2022**



IMPACT REPORT

Looking back, moving forward.

Table of Contents

CONTENTS

02.

FOREWORD

03.

ENGAGEMENT

08.

LOCALITIES

10.

VOLUNTEERING

14.

DEVELOPMENT

17.

STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

18.

NEXT STEPS



FOREWORD

While still under restrictions relating to the COVID-19 pandemic and with community emergency response initiatives still being delivered, there was a sense of emergence and future planning.

The excellent work of Third Sector organisations was celebrated across Scotland and here in South Lanarkshire, we are proud of the work done to support our communities through seriously challenging times.

Throughout, VASLan staff continued to work with local organisations, ensuring flexibility of service provision. We continued to engage with our partners, stakeholders and funding providers, while both responding to and developing new opportunities to build on the recognition of the value our sector brings to the lives of local people and the communities in which they live.

We have all lived through unprecedented times, allowing us to focus on what is important to us.

People and communities are VASLan's priority, and we will continue to support, empower and encourage all those we work with, to build sustainable communities together.



Nancy Barr

Nancy Barr
Chairperson
Board of Trustees



Steven Sweeney

Steven Sweeney
Chief Executive

We are proud of the work done to support our communities through seriously challenging times.

Steven Sweeney

The work of VASLan can be categorised into four areas, which encompass the breadth of the TSI (Third Sector Interface) function. These 4 areas are **Engagement, Localities, Volunteering and Development**, and form the basis of our Impact Report for the 2021-22 period. VASLan's delivery is also based on the Scottish Government Outcomes Framework for TSI's and focusses on key aims of 'capacity building, connect, voice and to be a central source of knowledge.

ENGAGEMENT

Managed Funds

During the reporting year, managed funds became a significant area of development for VASLan. In addition to continuing to manage the Integrated Care Fund (ICF) several other funds became part of the remit of the organisation this year.

Managed Funds - Integrated Care Fund (ICF)

In July, funding awards were issued to the successful applicants to the 2021-2023 round of the Integrated Care Fund (ICF). With funding available for a two-year period, applications up to £80,000 per year were considered and thirty were received, totalling £3.031M against a funding availability of £1.3M.

An assessment panel approved a total of 12 applications, with the successful applicants now working across the fund's six priorities to deliver a range of positive outcomes in relation to health and wellbeing improvement, greater resilience and independence, reduced health inequalities and more innovative models of person-centred care. Key short-term outcomes reported to date under the 6 fund priorities are:

712 people report feeling less lonely and isolated.

746 people report that they have made new friends.

895 people feel supported to achieve things that are important for their mental health.

... You don't know how much this means to me to have someone to talk to. It was the first time someone had listened to me from beginning to end, you did not interrupt, and you did not judge. I felt better after it. It was a relief to get it all out it made such a difference - thank you.

Quote from a beneficiary of The Haven's ICF funded project.



Managed Funds – Community Based Adult Learning Recovery Fund

A new Adult Learning Fund from Scottish Government was issued in December 2021 to be distributed across Scotland and spent according to local need. The fund was distributed via the network of TSIs and aimed to reduce barriers to learning and isolation for adult learners that have been caused by COVID-19.

Key drivers included involving adult learning, ensuring that providers could deliver learning that considered the wellbeing of adult learners, and ensured a diversity of opportunities. The fund was built around 3 guiding principles:

1. **Involvement of adult learners.**
2. **Building on existing services, assets and knowledge of what works.**
3. **Partnership working and co-ordination.**

The fund specifically targeted those experiencing significant barriers to learning, life and work and looked to address the negative impacts associated with extended periods of isolation, lack of participation in normal activities, and learning loss experienced during the pandemic, providing opportunities for adults to connect and re-connect with learning and others in their local communities. Applications were assessed by the local partnership and £95,000 of investment awarded to 10 local organisations.

Managed Funds – Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund

As part of the Recovery and Renewal Fund, the Minister for Mental Wellbeing and Social Care announced a new Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund for adults on 15 October 2021. An initial £15 million was made available in 2021- 22 through a grant to the 32 TSIs across Scotland. VASLAN worked collaboratively with local partners to establish need and develop a process to assess and distribute the fund locally in line with the fund aims, priorities and criteria. South Lanarkshire were allocated £888,000 and this was subsequently increased to £1,057,983 in December 2021.

The fund prioritised projects and initiatives that focused on supporting small ‘grass roots’ community groups to deliver activities tackling mental health inequalities exacerbated by the pandemic. The recipients of the fund provided opportunities for people to connect with each other, build trusted relationships and revitalise communities and tackling areas such as suicide prevention, social isolation and loneliness.

In total 171 applications were assessed against local need and fund priorities with 100 applications being successful, 85% of successful applications being less than £10,000. Nearly £1.1M in funding was distributed to South Lanarkshire’s Third Sector by the end of March 2022.



EAST KILBRIDE AND DISTRICT TALKING NEWSPAPER

Due to COVID-19 East Kilbride and District Talking Newspaper could not access their facility, so their volunteers were reading and recording from their own homes. In order to produce the weekly recording, they were passing around an old laptop. This group desperately needed 2 new laptops to allow production to be carried out by other volunteers.

Funding was approved to allow new equipment to be purchased, allowing the group to continue and expand its current service and sustain it for years to come.

”

The application was very easy and VASLAN were there to help me every step of the way. The process was very straightforward, and we had confirmation of our success and the money paid into our charity's bank account very quickly.

With new equipment our group is able to enhance the service that we offer to the community that we serve. We have over 50 listeners and for some this is a lifeline as it might be their only contact with the outside world.

**Lesley Noble, Chairperson
East Kilbride and District Talking Newspaper**



Organisation Engagement - Sustainability

VASLan continued to provide support to organisations who were either looking to find suitable funding or requiring a long-term sustainability plan, this included funding searches, specialised advice, general funding information and application reviews.

Our work has enabled new projects to establish and meet the needs of the community and supported existing services to reconnect and re-establish following the impact of the pandemic.

£3.6 million external funding generated for South Lanarkshire's Third Sector through VASLan's support and advice.

Funding sources have included, South Lanarkshire's Integrated Care Fund (ICF), Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund, the Community Based Adult Learning Fund, Community Grants, the National Lottery Community Fund, the Robertson Trust and other small grant schemes.



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Organisation Engagement - Capacity Building

A large portion of VASLan's role consists of assisting organisations to implement good governance practice, this work can vary from supporting new organisations to establish, to assisting established organisations with accounts and governing document review. The following are examples of our work with local organisations.

CARE & REPAIR IN LANARKSHIRE

Care & Repair in South Lanarkshire was registered as a charity in March 2004 and throughout its existence has provided a range of invaluable support to the elderly and those suffering from disability in South Lanarkshire, particularly in relation to adapting, repairing and upgrading their homes to suit their needs.



Recognising the need to expand services across Lanarkshire, in June 2021 the charity sought support from VASLan to change its name to reflect the expanded area of operation and to update its governing document, including a wider review of the document in relation to restructuring the charity's membership and board of trustees.



SURVIVORS SUPPORTING SURVIVORS

Through support from VASLan, Survivors Supporting Survivors was awarded charitable status by the Office of the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR) in May 2021. VASLan was initially approached by a representative from the steering group seeking guidance on establishing a lived experience-led organisation that would assist those who have suffered or been affected by a traumatic brain injury.

The steering group was provided with advice on all aspects of establishing a new Third Sector organisation, including selecting an appropriate legal structure, developing a governing document, writing charitable purposes, applying to OSCR and implementing suitable governance policies. With the steering group opting to form the organisation as a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO), support was provided with completing and submitting the application to OSCR, as well as responding to OSCR's subsequent queries.

Without the help of VASLan, our organisation would never have got off the ground. They helped us tremendously with the registration process, which to us was bamboozling and VASLan helped us at every stage. Once we were finally registered, I still rely on them for advice in so many different areas! We would not be the organisation we are today without the help of VASLan. I cannot thank them enough and recommend them to any voluntary organisation who just need that little bit of help.

Alan McMaster, Charity Trustee

Organisation Engagement - VASLan Membership

During the year VASLan carried out a review of its membership structure, determining that moving to a free membership with no annual renewal process would be beneficial for both VASLan and South Lanarkshire's Third Sector.

One particular benefit of such a structure would be removing a barrier to organisations/individuals taking out membership and, as a consequence, building a membership that is better representative of the sector, while also strengthening VASLan's mandate to represent it. At the AGM in November 2021, the proposal to move to the new membership structure and implement the required amendments to VASLan's articles of association were put to members. The resolution was passed unanimously.

By March 2022, VASLan membership had increased significantly to

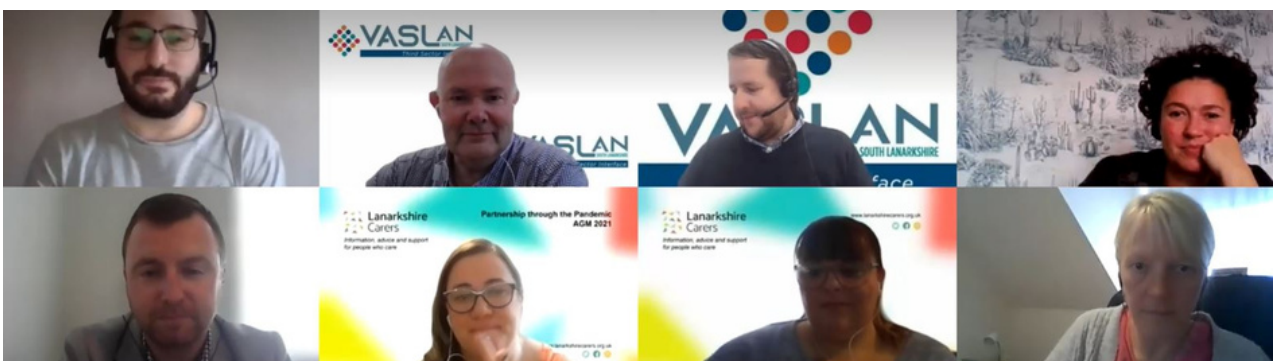
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Third Sector Locality Networks

During the reporting year VASLAN continued to deliver quarterly Third Sector Forum (TSF) events, with a virtual platform used to facilitate safe attendance during the pandemic. The events received a total of 139 registrations from across South Lanarkshire’s Third Sector, with topics including a reintroduction to VASLAN, consultations on local, national plans, as well as a ‘Made in South Lanarkshire’ Christmas market to spotlight local social enterprises and their products. A topic of particular significance covered was the proposal to restructure the TSF to Third Sector Locality Networks, a new structure designed to enhance sector engagement, provide ownership and better drive the local agenda of the events specific to each locality.

As part of this restructure, a proposal was developed by VASLAN and launched to the sector in March 2022, with Third Sector organisations invited to apply to take the lead in facilitating the new events in their locality. A total of £10,000 was available to the lead organisation or partnership in each locality to develop and deliver the new structure over a year, with the successful applicants to be determined via an independent assessment panel.



Community Mental Health

VASLan hosted a one-year post as part of the Community Mental Health Team, the purpose of this role was to map existing services across South Lanarkshire that support children and young people's mental health and to also raise awareness of the role voluntary organisations play in supporting good mental health. The mapping exercise revealed that there were 36 distinct types of mental health support provided by the Third Sector to children and young people in South Lanarkshire, with most of these available in all 4 localities.

Raising awareness with partner agencies of what the Third Sector can offer became a significant part of this role, acting as a catalyst and building confidence within the sector of their ability to provide services for their communities and showcasing how much the sector is willing to participate fully with partner agencies for the benefit of their communities.

Social Enterprise for Health

As part of the ICF funded Enterprising Care Project, VASLan developed a Social Enterprise for Health post with a remit to provide a better understanding of social enterprises and their capability to support community health and wellbeing, identify gaps in provision and build on potential social enterprise opportunities. Significant work has taken place to establish a South Lanarkshire Social Enterprise Network (SLSEN) and to date over 40 social enterprises have engaged in conversations relating to the provision of quality and resilient services that will address existing gaps and challenges within health and social care.

Building and Celebrating Communities (BCC)

The Building and Celebrating Communities (BCC) programme is based on the principles of Asset-Based Community Development (ABCD) and challenges traditional approaches to solving urban and rural development issues by focusing on the needs and deficiencies of individuals and communities. BCC principles demonstrate that people, local assets, and individual strengths are key to ensuring sustainable community development and that people have a life of their choosing.

To support the relaunch of the BCC programme, VASLan, in partnership with the South Lanarkshire Health and Social Care Partnership, established a Development Coordinator post in July 2021. A significant amount of promotional and awareness raising work was undertaken to reach BCC appropriate initiatives and encourage engagement. As part of the relaunch, a small grants scheme will be developed with the objective of supporting grass root Third Sector organisations to deliver projects that help communities to live well, recognise their strengths and generate spaces to build things that matter to them.



VOLUNTEERING

CPP Volunteering Strategy

In January, Community Planning Partners (CPP) agreed to work together to develop a joint CPP Volunteering Strategy. The Volunteering Strategy is intended to demonstrate a South Lanarkshire wide commitment to the importance of volunteering, the benefits to individuals and impact on our communities, now and in the future.

The strategy will provide a framework of support for individual volunteers, community-based organisations and groups, and Community Planning Partners alike. A writing group with partners and Third Sector representation was formed in March 2022 to develop agreed aims, objectives and actions. The Strategy launches in October 2022 and will be supported by a Valuing Volunteers Initiative to ensure the actions within the Strategy can become a reality.

Volunteering Support

During the global pandemic and as we started to emerge from restrictions, volunteering was arguably more essential than ever. In 2021-22 volunteers have displayed exceptional generosity with their time, effort, and commitment right across South Lanarkshire.

As the TSI for South Lanarkshire, VASLAN promoted the benefits of volunteering across the local authority area. We committed to support as many people into volunteering as possible, and to provide help and advice to any volunteer involving organisation who needed support. We collaborated with a range of organisations to ensure best practice in volunteer management, and involve the sector in volunteering consultations, events, and partnerships.

VOLUNTEERING SUPPORT

1,442 volunteering placements arranged.

636 new volunteers registered.

45 new volunteering opportunities created.

14,787 Saltire hours logged.

234 Saltire Volunteer registrations.

10 Saltire Group admins approved.



Green Health Volunteering

During the reporting year, our Green Health Volunteering Development Officer worked across 3 main areas; supporting groups that already offered green health opportunities; promoting everyday nature connection as a continuation of the COVID-19 Winter Project; and working to integrate green health within a range of VASLan activities.

As part of this work, the Green Volunteer Network continued to meet regularly. Promotional events and videos were launched across a wide range of topics and where possible, working with partners to promote Green Health across Lanarkshire.



GREEN HEALTH VOLUNTEERING

- Launch of the 'Green Elf Code' which saw 30 'elves' and 500 leaflets and posters distributed to partners across Lanarkshire.
- Mental Health First Aid training delivered by LAMH to 12 participants from green health groups.
- 'Walktober' promoted a different walking prompt for every day of the month.
- Second year of our Nature Advent(ure) calendar running from 1st to 24th December.
- New partnership with the walking app Go Jauntly.
- Tracking for Nature Connection with Scottish Badgers.
- 500 booklets were distributed across the Cambuslang and Rutherglen area encouraging people to notice nature in their local area.



Transitional Support Programme for Young People

This reporting period saw VASLAN work in partnership with South Lanarkshire Council to create and run the Transitional Support Programme for Young People as part of Scotland's Youth Guarantee Programme. Aimed at giving young people aged 16-24 the chance to succeed despite the economic impacts of COVID-19, the guarantee ensures everyone aged between 16 and 24 has the opportunity of work, education, or training.

Our 13-week programme provided support and volunteering opportunities to the participants, through a bespoke training programme, tailored to each participant helping us address their specific barriers to volunteering and work.



We wanted to focus on "wellbeing" before employability, working with young people who had a broad range of barriers to employment. We focused on building self-esteem and confidence and if appropriate signposting to practical support to tackling other specific barriers.

Joanne McMann, Youth Guarantee Support Officer

TRANSITIONAL SUPPORT PROGRAMME FOR YOUNG PEOPLE

63% of participants completed the course achieving certificates in First Aid and Mental Health First Aid.

38% of participants went on to positive destinations.



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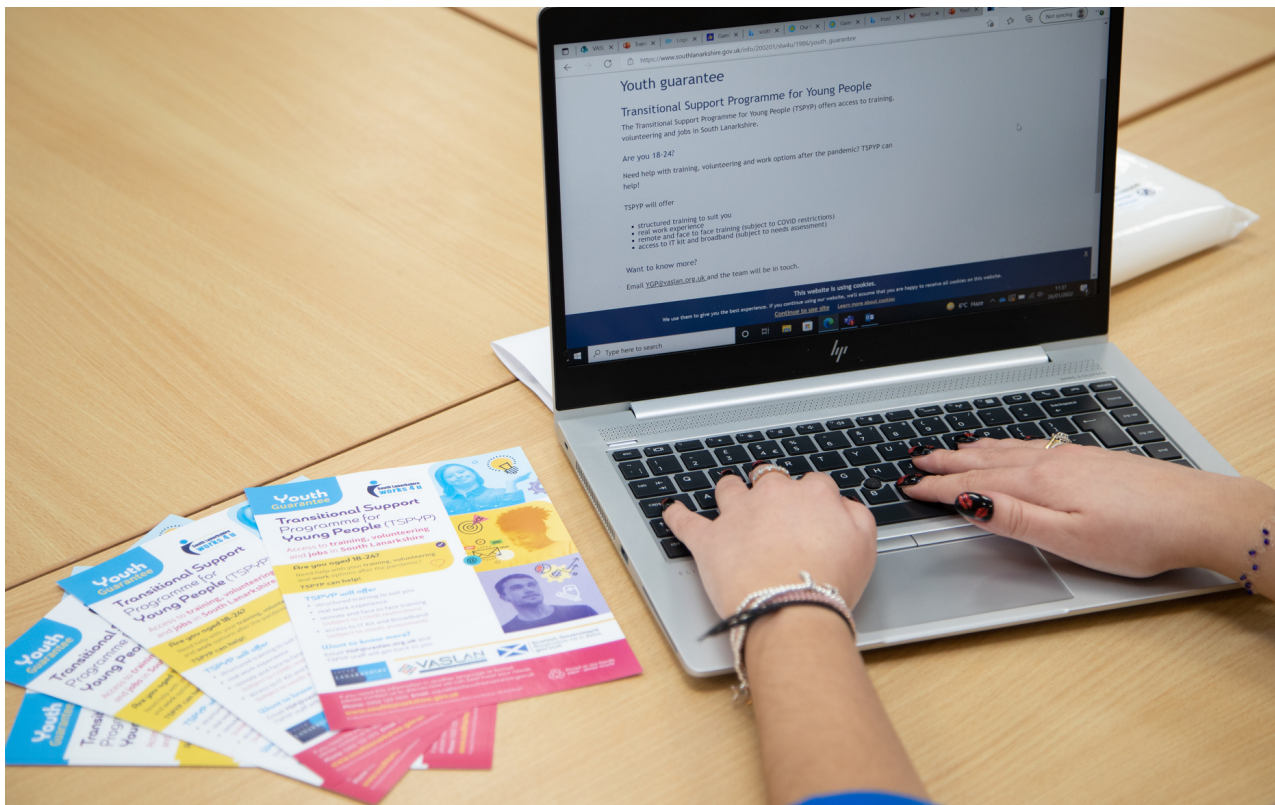
CASE STUDY

Through supporting the youth guarantee project, we met a young person who suffered from severe anxiety, depression, left school with no qualifications and their problems were exasperated due to the pandemic. During zoom sessions their camera always remained off and they were incredibly quiet. Over time this young person started to engage more, it became clear that they had a passion for a certain industry, and this gave us a direction to focus on.

When we managed to get off camera and meet in person, it was noted that there were other significant barriers that needed to be addressed. Offering advice, support, signposting and starting carefully directed, difficult conversations we helped this person open up, face the barriers that were in front of them and over time successfully get work within the hospitality industry.

This means that they are now interacting with the public, having the confidence to speak in group situations and more importantly on a journey of building their self-esteem which gives them the tools to build on their mental health. More recently this young person has been accepted into university.

A massive milestone in this young person's journey.



DEVELOPMENT

Internal Development

Following the easing of COVID-19 restrictions VASLAN acquired and relocated to new premises. This move allowed VASLAN to formally introduce our hybrid working whilst being able to come together as a staff team and with partners to collaborate on key areas of work.



In the second part of the year, VASLan were delighted to introduce a Communications and Marketing Officer and a Video and Media Officer to the Team. The aim of this dedicated team is to increase the visibility of the TSI, reach a wider audience and better promote the work of South Lanarkshire's Third Sector.

As a result, we have doubled our social media audience, as well as undertaking a complete revamp of the VASLan newsletter to provide consistent content, friendlier design, and more relevant information for the sector.

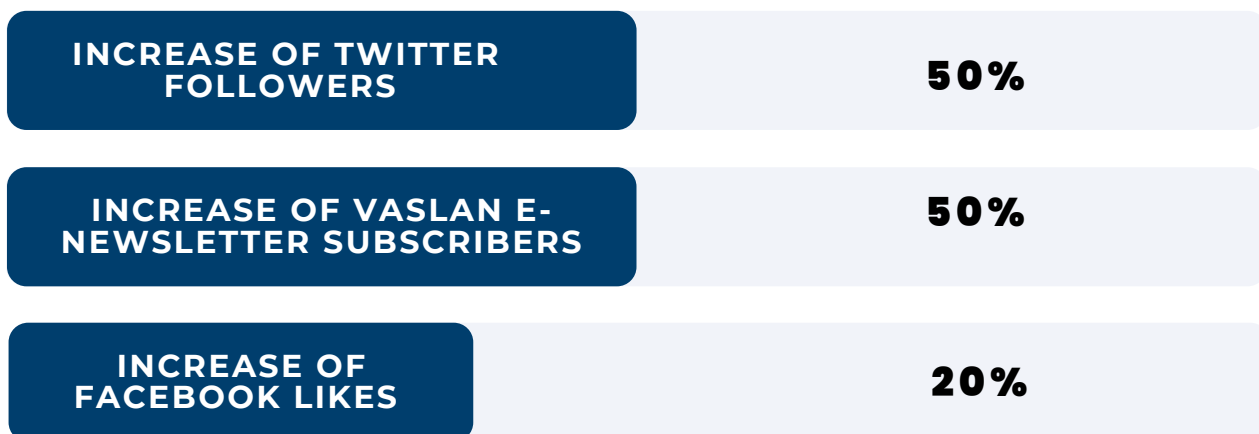
We also introduced 'Organisation Spotlights' as video segments, these are video stories produced by VASLan to promote Third Sector organisations, raising awareness and visibility of local activity.

We currently have several communication channels that we use to actively engage with our audiences: Twitter, Facebook, YouTube, LinkedIn, and a VASLan Newsletter.

VASLAN ORGANISATION SPOTLIGHT VIDEO



Some highlights of this year's work include:



- Re-launching VASLan LinkedIn.
- We produced 12 Organisational Spotlight videos.
- 13 new videos of VASLan Internal Project Promotions.
- 3 new videos of Third Sector Event Highlights.

Development of our Systems

Information Technology has become a key element in VASLan's ability to support the Third Sector in South Lanarkshire. During 2021/22 VASLan has continued to invest in our IT infrastructure, supporting our staff team to adopt hybrid working and to support the development of new internal systems.

Development Example:

As part of Scottish Government's Communities Mental Health and Wellbeing Fund VASLan were assigned to manage the fund locally, this allowed us the opportunity to develop new systems to manage the application and fund distribution process.

Our existing VASLan EPI Database was adapted to support applications, assessments, and payments of funding significantly reducing the levels of bureaucracy from application to approval and payment of funds.

The highlights of system developments include:

- Fully developed in house.
- Detailed monitoring reports created.
- An average time from receipt of application to approval of 3 weeks.
- Automated emails to applicants, assessment panels and VASLan Admin.
- Systems development now used with all funds managed by VASLan.



STRATEGIC ENGAGEMENT

Advocating for South Lanarkshire's Third Sector

Throughout the periods of COVID-19 restrictions, communities and South Lanarkshire's Third Sector collaborated across boundaries to work together like never before.

As a result, there is a tangible desire to create more productive relationships between public sector partners and Third Sector organisations giving rise to greater influence from the sector in policy development, decision making, and delivery of commissioned community-based services.

In supporting this VASLan participates in a number of strategic partnership boards, groups and networks advocating for the Third Sector at all levels of our engagement, exploring potential synergies and interrelationships to harness engagement and a sense of collective responsibility.

Over this reporting year, VASLan has strived to build on our collective relationships with our public sector partners across a wide range of initiatives ensuring that our statutory partners better understand the Third Sector's contribution to service delivery.

We will continue to develop our relationships, advocating for our Third Sector partners and looking to respond to innovation and leverage new opportunities for communities and Third Sector partners.

- South Lanarkshire Council
- NHS Lanarkshire
- South Lanarkshire's Integrated Joint Board
- Community Planning Partners
- The Third Sector Chief Officers Group



South Lanarkshire
Community Planning Partnership



NEXT STEPS

As South Lanarkshire's TSI, VASLan has undergone an exciting period of growth and transformation, to further our support to South Lanarkshire's third sector we will continue these developments as we enter the 2022-2023 reporting year.

Through our continued partnership approach, we are looking to develop new areas of work, including;

- A volunteer led home from hospital support service.
- A workforce development post to support our planned work around supporting staff development and training.
- The continued development of the CPP volunteering strategy, leading to a programme of valuing volunteers.

Other developments already underway include a **Social Prescribing development** post for the East Kilbride locality and a **Health and Wellbeing development** post within the new Blantyre hub, both funded via the 'NHS Charities Together' fund.

As the TSI for South Lanarkshire, VASLan are delighted to support these initiatives and are looking forward to these developments supporting our communities and driving the continued success of South Lanarkshire Third Sector.



We thank you for your continued support in our efforts to contribute to the Third Sector in South Lanarkshire.

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