



South
Lanarkshire's
Third Sector
Interface

VASLan
Impact Report
2020/2021

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Welcome to the review of our year; one like no other in the experience of VASLan and all involved in the delivery of voluntary and community-based services across South Lanarkshire and beyond.

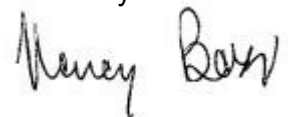
There is no doubt that the pandemic has affected everyone in the country, many of the usual services closed and people were unable to access alternatives; clear and understandable information about the pandemic was not readily available.

As the Third Sector Interface for South Lanarkshire, we wanted to ensure that we could continue to provide our core activities and support everyone known to us. Our staff moved to a remote working model and we stepped up our efforts to ensure those who needed our support received the best possible service during this turbulent time when all of us have felt insecurity and instability.

In providing this support, we worked closely with our partners across the local authority; Lanarkshire Resilience Partnership, Health and Social Care, funding providers and of course the numerous community organisations who so admirably supported their local communities.

You will see from this review of our year, that at VASLan, we worked hard to ensure that TSI services were available to support the rapid and dynamic response from communities and Third Sector organisations as they responded to local need from the start of the COVID-19 crisis.

We look forward to playing our part in continuing to engage, promote and involve the community and voluntary groups who provided unprecedented levels of support for the wider community in a time of great need.



COVID-19 RESPONSE

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE COMMUNITY RESPONSE GROUPS

The community and voluntary/Third Sector across South Lanarkshire is extensive and diverse. As the Impact of the pandemic tightened many of these organisations adapted their services and worked collaboratively to provide much needed local supports.

Joined by community response groups they provided prepared food and food packages, food shopping and delivery of essential items, remote wellbeing and befriending support, mental health support via video and telephone links including online counselling CBT and therapeutic calls, the promotion of resources, self management techniques with digital downloads and benefits, employment and financial advice.

Locality networks were formed, and in conjunction with the South Lanarkshire Community Engagement Team VASLan staff attended these networks to provide support and assistance.



Groups providing a
Community Response



New groups formed to provide
Community Response



into our communities from
April to September 2020

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

COMMUNITY RESPONSE VOLUNTEERING

With thousands of people responding to the Scottish Government “Scotland Cares Campaign” key players; SCVO, South Lanarkshire Council and VASLan received many offers of support over a very short period. Collating this information and providing a single point of contact for potential volunteers became our initial focus and priority.

1580

people registered
with VASLan

2,000

people were ready
and willing to volunteer

COVID-19 RESPONSE

To achieve this, we developed a “**new approach to volunteering**” with our Volunteering web portal linked to our Engage Promote Involve (EPI) system to capture volunteer registration information.

With fewer volunteering opportunities available it became critical that we maintained regular contact with all of the potential volunteers to manage their expectations. To ensure all those who offered their time and support were given an opportunity to help, we requested all potential volunteers agree to be part of a “bank” of volunteers who would be notified as soon as any volunteering opportunity meeting their preference criteria became available.

The majority of those initially registered remain happy to continue to receive notification of any new volunteering, subsequently encouraging people to continue to support their communities.

Organisations looking for volunteers are able to take advantage of our new automated “Broadcasts” to “bank volunteers” matching their requirements. Proactively contacting many people at once now guarantees a quick recruitment drive with notes of interest being directed straight to the organisation. Significant improvement has been evident in the speed of recruitment for voluntary organisations with requests for volunteers met within minutes.



34

'broadcasts' sent

4,237

emails to

1,648

volunteers

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE

WILLIAM GRANT FOUNDATION

The William Grant Foundation provided VASLan with access to a small grants scheme over the period of April 2020 to February 2021.

This funding was available to any community organisation assisting with COVID-19 support.

COVID-19 RESPONSE

Twenty three grants between £50 and £1,500 were issued to a range of organisations enhancing their efforts within local communities.

These grants were used to provide; food vouchers, IT equipment for individuals and organisations, the provision of PPE, activity packs, utility payment vouchers and 'boxes of kindness' for the over 80's living in rural villages.

VASLan express their thanks to the William Grant Foundation and to those organisations whose workforce provided the support to their local communities.



23

grants have been provided to

19

organisations

"The group and the community would like to thank you for the donation. We gave out 180 packs to people in the community and the responses have been amazing. The packs themselves encouraged children to play outside more while also helping them physically and mentally through lockdown. Living in Whitehill we have witnessed parents out showing their kids what to do i.e. the swing ball. Pavements have been covered in drawings done by kids."

Deborah Cunningham
Whitehill Activity Group

WILLIAM GRANT FOUNDATION

SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE



THIRD SECTOR RESILIENCE FUND

A £20 million emergency fund for charities, community groups, social enterprises and voluntary organisations working in Scotland became available during the pandemic. VASLan were delighted to support the assessment and approval of grants. The Third Sector Resilience Fund (TSRF) of nearly £430,000 helped a total of 36 organisations with South Lanarkshire.

The fund supported organisations that deliver services and products but who found themselves in financial difficulties directly as a result of the coronavirus pandemic. The primary intention of the fund was to help Third Sector organisations to stabilise and manage cash flow over a difficult period.

COVID-19 RESPONSE



SOURCE OF KNOWLEDGE COVID-19 LESSONS LEARNED



A Third Sector Chief Officers Group report entitled “Above & Beyond -The Third Sector in South Lanarkshire during COVID” reflects on three key Third Sector response elements namely;

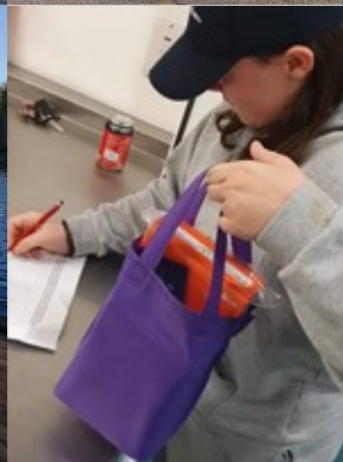
1. **An ability to respond quickly and effectively.**
2. **Strong existing local connections.**
3. **An innovative approach to embracing challenges.**

In addition to these elements the report highlights three lessons learned:

1. **The three elements above are key to our ability to respond to the needs in our community. These qualities have always been there, and in this crisis they were greatly highlighted.**
2. **There has been consensus across the Sector that the qualities which exist need to be recognised and utilised.**
3. **The Sector can bring flexibility, connections and innovation to the ongoing challenges that will be faced in our communities. Community representatives need to be at the table when planning occurs and decisions are being made.**



VASLan would like to say a massive
“Thank You”
to all voluntary organisations and
volunteers in South Lanarkshire for
their hard work and dedication over
the past year.



CAPACITY BUILDING VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS

Due to the COVID-19 pandemic many organisations were unable to deliver their normal services and subsequently, for many, service delivery was modified to capture the urgent need of the community at the time. Over 2,500 requests for support from over 400 organisations were received during 2020-2021 with twice as many support requests received for Governance, Charitable Status and Funding. Many Third Sector organisations looked to VASLan for advice and information when considering reopening under Scottish Government restrictions and as a result our support in this area increased to five times that of the previous year.

2539

organisation support interactions
with 400 organisations

52

new volunteering
opportunities created

5x

increase in advice
and information support

VOLUNTEER FRIENDLY



Volunteer Friendly Award®

2,560

volunteers registered

2,374

volunteer placements arranged

12,028

interactions with volunteers

Four groups successfully achieved the Volunteer Friendly Award this year.

Our congratulations go to National Autistic Society South Lanarkshire branch and the Agape Wellbeing Centre who both achieved the award for the first time.

Praise also to the Machan Trust and the Hamilton District Foodbank, now recognised as achieving the Continued Excellence level for sustaining their original Volunteer Friendly high standards.

CAPACITY BUILDING VOLUNTEERS

As the Third Sector Interface for South Lanarkshire VASLan is committed to supporting volunteering in South Lanarkshire by improving engagement with volunteers, supporting volunteers, promoting good practice in volunteer management and involving voluntary organisations in consultations, partnerships, events and collaborations that help shape local and national volunteering policy.

CAPACITY BUILDING

SALTIRE AWARDS



The launch of a new Saltire Awards website during the year concluded our partnership working with Scottish Government, SCVO and our national Third Sector Interface colleagues.

Now with additional functionality for young people, the completely online approval process streamlines the certificate request process and enables young people to create their own achievement certificates.

A new group administrator function is also available for voluntary organisations to manage Saltire achievement on behalf of young volunteers. For more information see the Saltire Awards website section:

[For groups – Saltire Awards](#) or email saltire@vaslan.org.uk

VASLAN SUPPORT

Our Events and Third Sector Forum agenda saw some disruption during 2020-2021 however, our Virtual Third Sector Forum enabled conversations around recovery and renewal and lead to the delivery of three additional Third Sector Forum – more conversation sessions covering topics of:

“Recovery & Renewal”
“Volunteering”
and “Funding” in more depth.

CAPACITY BUILDING THIRD SECTOR FORUM & EVENTS



CAPACITY BUILDING

CAMPAIGNS, SURVEYS & CONSULTATIONS

Most campaigns centred around information to the Sector. A variety of local consultation campaigns looked at the effect of COVID-19 on services across the Sector. Others linked to national agendas such as the Local Government and Communities Committee views on participation requests and asset transfers.

217

campaigns reaching

68,988

recipients

CONNECT

WORKING WITH THIRD SECTOR & PARTNERS

In a year like no other, engagement with TSI colleagues across Scotland through the TSI Network has been invaluable and will continue to be an asset. Closer to home, collaboration has also become more important than ever. Sometimes acting as peer support networks for the workforce through the pandemic, others as enhanced partnership working to best serve our communities as part of a community COVID-19 response. Whether it be across voluntary organisations in a locality or a thematic area or indeed cross-sector with our Community Planning Partners, enhanced collaboration has been a theme of the past 12 months and will be a focal point of our future.

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

"Current network mechanisms such as Voluntary Action South Lanarkshire (VASLan) the Third Sector Chief Officers Group and the Third Sector Forum enabled a quick response"

"Chief Officer Group Above & Beyond" The Third Sector in South Lanarkshire during COVID.

"I wanted to thank you again for the support you gave us during the lockdown to recruit volunteers for the Personal Shopper Service. VASLan's help was invaluable during the time I was recruiting volunteers for the Personal Shopper Service"

LEAP

"The South Lanarkshire Third Sector Chief Officers group has developed into a safe, supportive space for Third Sector leaders to live out our common values, identify opportunities and pursue the vision of strong partnership working in South Lanarkshire. We are open to change and development. Meeting at least monthly we are able to share our challenges and our learning as well as work together towards our goals of strategic engagement and commissioning. There is now a strong platform for collaborative working and we always welcome the open dialogue that comes with having like minded colleagues together and the fun that brings."

Rhoda Reid, Vice Chair of Third Sector Chief Officers Group

"While the pandemic has had many negative impacts, one thing which was a real positive this last year was the way in which our communities, voluntary sector and public services came together to work in new ways and make sure our most vulnerable were taken care of. We have been able to build stronger relationships with each other and realised what it is possible to achieve when we connect with our colleagues and communities, and we look forward to doing more of this in the future."

Rhonda Leith, Community Engagement Manager, South Lanarkshire Council

CONNECT WORKING WITH THIRD SECTOR & PARTNERS

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP

"On behalf of Duneaton Community Council, in the summer you kindly funded £500 which paid for boxes of kindness for the over 80's in our area. They were warmly received so thanks for your support. Thank you so much for supporting my application for £300 to fund a voucher system for shopping, electricity card top ups etc, for vulnerable people within the 6 villages in Duneaton"

Duneaton Community Council

"I have seen first-hand this year the results of our partners and communities working together. The response to the COVID-19 pandemic has showcased the work of our Third Sector and community groups and highlighted the difference we make when working alongside each other. The Partnership will work more closely with you and local residents in our planning and priority setting, and very much hope to strengthen our relationships. I look forward to working with all of you, with the continued help from our colleagues at VASLan, to progress this over the next year."

**Councillor Maureen Chalmers, Chair of
Community Planning Partnership**

"An exemplary success has been the unprecedented levels of support by members of the community and Third Sector/Voluntary groups working collectively alongside the Statutory Agencies to ensure support for the wider community. There's a very tangible desire to build on the excellent work developed and delivered by TSI/ Voluntary Sector and the energised wider community to protect and support vulnerable groups. While national organisational support is well recognised, a strong value in local support is to the fore with many noting the unique value local groups bring with local knowledge and local connections developed through building relationships with the local community"

Lanarkshire LRP COVID Debrief

CONNECT GREEN HEALTH PARTNERSHIP

WORKING IN PARTNERSHIP



Our Green Health Volunteering Development Officer has been employed by VASLan for a further year. One aim will be to continue to support green health to embed in community groups who wouldn't traditionally connect with nature, as well as the continued implementation of the LGHP volunteer framework. During the 2020-21 period a wide range of green activities and information were provided including:

- Weekly newsletters with over **50** articles written about connecting with nature.
- The Green Health Volunteering Network (GVN) continued to meet online with **127** members joining a newly established Facebook group.
- Over **30** people attended **3** sessions of Getting Groups Outdoors training. The training can now be viewed on [YouTube](#).
- The [Get Outdoors Lanarkshire website](#) was launched in November 2020 and received over **1800** unique visitors with over **2700** site sessions. In addition, we set up Facebook and Twitter.
- A winter project included our Nature Advent (ure) Calendar with **24** videos, with involvement from **23** different groups encouraging people to undertake a different activity every day in the run up to Christmas.
- Christmas Day launched [12 Days of Nature](#) with a [lockdown performance](#) from the Stonehouse Male Voice Choir. These and other videos produced for the winter project are available on our [YouTube channel](#).
- 13** Zoom sessions on a variety of topics were hosted for the general public reaching over **225** individuals to encourage and support nature connection.

VOICE CELEBRATING THE THIRD SECTOR

As the Third Sector Interface for South Lanarkshire, we feel that it is really important for us to celebrate the successes and achievements of the fantastic voluntary organisations across South Lanarkshire.

Raising the visibility of best practice builds on the recognition the sector merits, allows other to connect and learn and supports service sustainability.

These successes directly deliver upon the Sustainable Development Goals in our own wee patch of the world, transforming our communities and re-imagining sustainable development.

CELEBRATING COMMUNITIES

Larkhall Partnership Work

When the lockdown started, [Larkhall and District Volunteer Group's](#) first concern was for their more vulnerable members and especially those who attended their lunch clubs. Sandra at LDVG and Tuoyo from Heart of Africa got together to discuss this concern. [Heart of Africa](#) is a South Lanarkshire social enterprise offering a mix of Scottish and African culture and food to communities. As the pandemic struck, unable to operate their community café in Cambuslang they started working in partnership with Larkhall and District Volunteer Group to offer hot food to those who were elderly isolating or unable to get out the house.

With help from Fiona from CEMVO, the two groups were able to secure funding to provide four months of free lunch support to the most vulnerable members of the community in Larkhall including the LDVG lunch club members.

At the same time, the [Larkhall Community Network](#) came into existence. The Larkhall Community Network is a partnership of community sector, private sector, local volunteers and public sector bodies, which began life as Larkhall COVID Rainbows and was established specifically to support the community through the COVID pandemic. Many of the partners already had a working relationship having come together to create the Larkhall Community Plan. The hot lunch deliveries became part of the Larkhall Community Network's community support effort. David from LDVG and Liz from Community Links, worked together to coordinate the booking of the lunches, organising the drivers and buses, and coordinated the volunteers to enable the free lunches to be delivered 5 days a week. This support freed Tuoyo and his team to concentrate on cooking the food to be delivered.

Over the four months, the team delivered around **100** meals per day, with a grand total of 5,547 going out. For four months, from Monday to Friday, two buses with volunteer drivers (three volunteers per bus) delivered these hot meals. They ensured they spoke to the people they were delivering food to and reported back any concerns or further support that was required to the Network. This service proved to be a vital lifeline to many of the most vulnerable and isolated members of the community in Larkhall during a period of time when people were overwhelmed, scared and struggling to understand what was happening.

The work of the Larkhall Community Network received a special recognition award for "Ambitious Partnership for Improvement" at the 2020 SURF Awards. Their work involved a total of **34,708** interactions with local people aimed specifically at health and wellbeing.

In addition, Heart of Africa was recognised by Prime Minister Boris Johnson as part of the Points of Light Awards.



Biggar Community Action Group

In order to provide assistance to those in the Biggar community who were isolated, vulnerable and particularly at risk during the COVID-19 crisis members of Biggar Community Council, Womankind Clydesdale, Biggar Church, Biggar Medical Practice and other local organisations met in March 2020 to form Biggar Community Action Group.

The group worked quickly to introduce a helpline to support with shopping and prescription collection/delivery as well as a listening ear telephone service for isolated and vulnerable people. Start-up funding from Healthy Valleys and Biggar Community Council allowed the purchase of mobile phones to support the delivery of the group's helpline as well as the purchase of masks, hand sanitiser and ID cards for its dedicated volunteers on the frontline. Funding via the Response Recovery & Resilience Fund then enabled the group to deliver a hot meals service which, thanks to a successful application to the Scottish Government's Wellbeing Fund allowed the service to be expanded to reach more of those in need. Other initiatives provided much needed relief to those in the community including boxes of kindness for those feeling isolated and an afternoon teas project funded by the #ShiftThePower Coronavirus Response Fund to provide those accessing the group's services with the opportunity to have a treat and a chat.

A key member of the Clydesdale Community COVID Response Group, the group is supported by over **90** fantastic volunteers and secured charitable status in November 2020. As a charity, it has continued to develop new projects to respond to the needs of the community including a winter footpath clearance and gritting initiative, a hot lunch for vulnerable people on Christmas Day and, funded by the Enabling Neighbourhoods and Communities Fund, a digital inclusion project to get isolated people in the community online. To date the group's volunteers have contributed **4,500** volunteer hours and supported with:

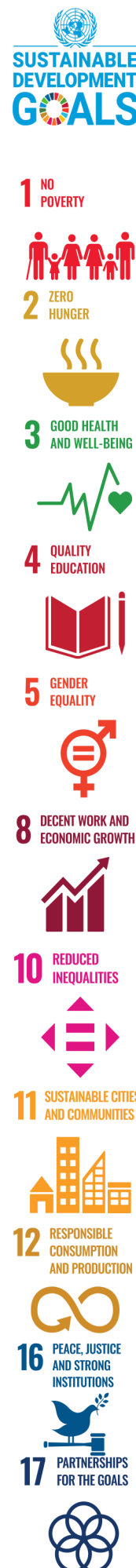
- **3,028** Shopping and prescription deliveries
- **1,800** Listening Ear conversations
- **3,105** Hot meal deliveries



CamGlen COVID-19 Support Group

Camglen COVID-19 Support Group was quickly set up, including a website, brand and direct online communication facility. A partnership of local politicians and community organisations worked closely to enable a coherent and coordinated community response to the COVID-19 crisis. Within the first six months of the crisis over **750** unique people and families were supported with over **6000** food packs being distributed to families across the Cambuslang and Rutherglen locality.

As part of the local response, Healthy n Happy the Community Development Trust for Cambuslang and Rutherglen were awarded funding through the Scottish Government Supporting Communities Fund for a CamGlen COVID Community Chest. The fund provided much needed financial support to neighbourhood groups and local organisations so they could help local residents' volunteer and help neighbours access the items they need and enable everyone to be more connected and less socially isolated, supporting wellbeing in a difficult time. Specifically, the funds purchased IT equipment so groups could reconnect with each other virtually, provided resources to deliver outdoor games and activities, enabled the development of local community gardens and growing spaces and provided arts and crafts packs and activity boxes for both seniors and children across Cambuslang and Rutherglen.



Working Together for Avondale

Working Together for Avondale (WTA) was formed by Strathaven and Glassford Community Council in March 2020 and included partners from Strathaven Business Association, Strathaven Evangelical Church and Outreach Community Church. It has worked together with Avondale LEAP, Glassford Community Group, Creative Strathaven CIC, Mind Marvels and Avondale Young Farmers to deliver a coordinated and comprehensive set of community support initiatives. It also had wonderful help and advice from VASLan and also from Home Energy Scotland.

Over the last fifteen months WTA has raised over £36,000 to deliver meals, mental health support, PPE, art kits, mindfulness sessions, peer support groups, Xmas presents and Strathaven in Bloom support amongst other things. It also delivered 200 snow sticks kindly provided by VASLan. It has also supported Strathaven Foodbank through its Hardship Fund, developed its website and social media presence and also produced videos in conjunction with Theo Giameos of Roasted.

WTA plans to continue its work over the coming months with a Family Fun Day planned for June 13th in conjunction with Strathaven miniature railway and has applied for further funding to enable a Mindfulness and Art Camp for children over the summer.

Older and Active East Kilbride

As an organisation, Older and Active was aware quickly that many older and disabled people would need support and we were more than happy to join forces with other local organisations to provide assistance.

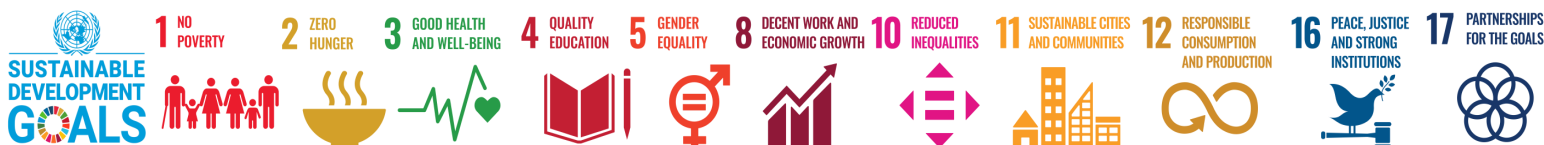
We worked with many organisations including VASLan, South Lanarkshire Council, and many local Third Sector organisations. Getting support to the most vulnerable was vital and strong partnerships helped this happen.

Initially prescriptions and shopping were services that isolated people were struggling with, and we quickly introduced help with this. Older and disabled people can be the most digitally excluded which was a barrier to accessing online services.

In response to this Older and Active worked with our local Co-op store in East Kilbride delivering shopping to local people who were struggling to get essentials. The community spirit of the Co-op was remarkable with a view of 'getting shopping out to people and collect payment when things settled down'.

The initial few weeks of the pandemic were fraught, fast paced and completely unknown. What became clear within the first few weeks was that mental health would be a huge issue.

'Well Connected in East Kilbride' a joint project between Older and Active and EK CAB responded to this by offering a mental health support service which offered activities, peer support, wellbeing classes, befriending and counselling sessions. The project helped many local people experiencing mild anxiety, depression, fear and apprehension to more severe mental health problems.



MOVING FORWARD & HOW TO GET INVOLVED

Steven Sweeney, VASLan CEO

Having joined VASLan and South Lanarkshire's Third Sector in March 2021, I have been fortunate to witness some of the incredible COVID-19 community response work from individuals, neighbourhoods, voluntary organisations and communities. Thank you for all that you do, and as the Third Sector Interface adopts a servant leadership role alongside the Sector we promise to endeavour in supporting you to deliver upon your mission and goals.

As we look ahead, the focus is on recovery, on renewal, and over the next year re-imagining what sustainable development looks like for voluntary organisations of all shapes and sizes across the Third Sector. It is indeed a year of change, and a year of opportunity, with extensive consultation over the new Community Planning Partnership Strategy and the Health and Social Care's new Strategic Commissioning Plan to name but a few.

Please do take part in the conversations that are coming, we all have a valued part to play as we recover, renew and re-imagine. Help us understand how to best support localities and communities. Help us understand how we place people as our greatest asset, including how we excitingly develop a cross-sector volunteering strategy on behalf of the Community Planning Partnership. Help us understand how to continuously improve and as an Interface demonstrate servant leadership alongside the Sector.



www.vaslan.org.uk

