

VANL Sector Survey Spring 2017

Methodology:

1. An online anonymised questionnaire, advertised in Mailshots over a 6 week period sent to over 2,000 known contacts through membership, advertised on Social Media and on website and re-sent to members a month later.
2. Two face to face Focus Groups – individuals booked on, self-selecting group.
3. Members list was divided between all staff members, proforma questionnaire and telephone script sent to all staff. All organisational members contacted at least once by telephone, and many of those who were uncontactable during the month allocated to the telephone survey were emailed for comments. A number did simply say they were happy with the services they received and chose not to participate.

Total of 47 respondents.

Brief Analysis:

Services:

Our **services** generally appear to be well known, and indeed even where organisations don't really use us frequently for services, they are still known about and accepted, with some key gaps that marketing and publicity have noted and are addressing through marketing plan.

DBS checks and traditional office **services of printing and equipment loan** are most appreciated.

Demand for **room hire** however is low, and a number of other VCS organisations reporting that they also are competing for tenants/hirers for rooms. If the market is over-saturated with meeting rooms this will make the challenge of filling our empty space more difficult. A suggestion was made of perhaps hosting social events such as coffee mornings – this could be developed but may also be a distraction from core and income generating activity.

General advice on charity regulations is appreciated and is used but on an 'as and when needed' basis.

Funding support at the £30 per hour rate is not a barrier – again however not frequently needed. Currently being managed through Associate once a month for surgeries. **Bid writing, Funding Support** are also in demand on an 'as and when' basis.

Financial services did not appear to rate highly on the services in demand. However caution must be applied in that this is a well-known and growing area and from the survey indeed several enquiries have occurred, generating at least one new client. It is an area that may simply be skewed in result by the size of the organisations responding.

A request for a discussion regarding **research** and one regarding **IT support** for a website are being actively followed up and proposals will be made at £28 per hour.

PR and Media:

All organisations said that they would be happy for VANL to publicise their events. This has started with sections on the website, social media posts and postings within our newsletter. Requests for organisations to publicise our news have started and several now link to our website as well.

Campaigning:

Most campaigns highlighted have been around Funding – VANL currently highlights funding in most Press Releases and engages monthly with new campaigns. Recently we have campaigned against the Charity Tax and have also highlighted issues of national interest such as new Fundraising Guidelines.

Volunteer Recruitment:

Interestingly this was not the priority in any of the surveys – again this may be skewed because none of the organisations who responded were human resource-poor. However we have now implemented a volunteer board on the website, and working with a volunteer from the Skill Centre, have created a Volunteering in North Lincolnshire Facebook group. Paid for Volunteer recruitment/brokerage can be delivered on a project by project basis, and the skills remain within the organisation to deliver it. Training is routinely delivered as part of the training programme.

Our continued use of the Do-It site which also advertises and matches volunteers is continuing with the support of a MOVE Project Volunteer.

Accessing VANL Services:

Most people did not express a desire to be able to drop in unannounced and the suggestion of a 'drop-in' was unpopular. Most responders to all elements of the survey favoured appointments or telephone support, with open access being significantly less popular which would lend itself to more flexible working arrangements or peripatetic arrangements if the need occurred.

Membership Fee:

Consensus was that the Fee should rise to £20, with some significant support in all survey methods for tiering the membership fee. Most organisations too acknowledged that they are prepared to pay for consultancy services including funding support and volunteer recruitment where needed. All organisations agreed to promote the individual membership and this information is being widely circulated.

Online survey results:

Question 1:

VANL currently provide a range of services. Please identify the three services you value most highly. NB This doesn't mean VANL will only provide three services going forward but this information will help us to identify where resources need to be focussed.

DBS Checks - currently the cheapest DBS check umbrella body in North Lincolnshire	25%
Constitutional and Charity Commission requirements	35%
Publicity and Promotional Support	35%
Room hire	5%
Training - including externally accredited training as well as bespoke training	50%
Office services, such as photocopying etc	20%
Funding support and support to grow your organisation	45%
Financial Services such as payroll, bookkeeping and pension enrolment etc	35%

5 additional comments:

- Auditing end of year accounts
- Would like more info on Funding; information does not always get passed from VANL to organisations.
- Partnership brokering
- PA Testing
- Advice as to what grants we might be able to apply for

Question 2:

VANL has a range of PR and publicity tools at its disposal. We recognise that increasingly the Community and Voluntary Sector are involved in campaigning to highlight issues of importance to the Sector. Would you like to see VANL undertake more campaigning for the sector? Campaigns range from Recruitment Campaigns to Health Promotion Campaigns and Volunteering Campaigns, to raising issues affecting the Voluntary Sector and the people and communities they serve.

Yes - please specify further below	26.32%
No	25.32%
Don't know	47.37%

3 additional comments:

- Voluntary Arts Festival, Get Creative, Fun Palaces (and other arts related campaigns)
- Promote volunteering
- 'Please do not take this other than constructive criticism, and whilst I understand how vulnerable the whole of the voluntary sector is, I cannot help but note that the last few events I have attended, with particular reference to the social prescribing events you hosted that VANL saw this more of an opportunity to 'feather your own nest' and secure your financial situation, as it felt like a sales pitch. If this is how you plan to use the range of tools at your disposal I feel it is of detriment to the whole voluntary sector and undermines your role and the reputation that you have built up over the years. I know funding for the third sector is hard to come by, but every voluntary group is feeling the pinch and as respected advocates for this marginalised sector little was done that would make me want you to campaign on behalf of the Voluntary sector industry.'
- More funding for all voluntary services in the area.
- Advice and guidance from those with experience.
- There would be value in this for other organisations

Question 3:

Currently there is no funding available for the Volunteer Centre. However we can deliver Volunteer support and recruitment in different ways. Please tick those you would use, and please suggest any other ideas in the comments box.

Volunteer Recruitment board in the VANL window	13.33%
Volunteer Recruitment board on the VANL website	66.67%
North Lincolnshire facebook Volunteer Recruitment page	60.00%
Model role descriptions and Volunteer Agreements on VANL website for you to download	66.67%
Training on Recruiting Supporting and Managing Volunteers	60.00%
Paid-for Volunteer Recruitment	6.67%

1 additional comment:

- 'Not really applicable for a local authority but as a volunteer role I would use the above services'

Question 4:

VANL are considering different ways of working. It is important to us that we do this in a way which meets the changing needs of the Sector. Currently we have Open Access at our premises in Robert Street, Scunthorpe 4 mornings a week. Moving forward Open Access is likely to reduce, we are also aware that many Volunteers are unavailable during office hours so we wish to ensure our accessibility is fit for purpose in today's sector. Please identify ways in which you would be happy to access our services.

By appointment face to face during office hours	66.67%
By telephone during office hours	77.78%
By Facetime or other video conferencing options (for example Skype)	16.67%
Through dedicated office hours such as the current arrangement of open access (daytime only). If so please note preferred day and times below	11.11%

Drop In Sessions - no booking needed	22.22%
--------------------------------------	--------

2 additional comments:

- Email
- via email or a website; I can access at my preferred time; I would expect a reply within a day at VANL convenience

Question 5:

Did you know our Membership costs just £10 for an organisation? We also offer Individual Membership too, at just £10. All members benefit from discounts on all services - in fact attendance at one training course per year will save you £10 as a member, and if you use any other service or attend more than one course you will save much more! Membership has remained at £10 for a number of years. We are anxious to keep membership fees as low as possible. However some services require additional resource, and as outlined there is no longer external funding available, although the needs of the Sector are as great, if not greater than ever. Some of our core services are currently free, and we are keen to ensure that we continue to provide best value to our members. Please indicate those statements below which are true for you and your organisation.

I believe membership fees should stay at £10 per year.	42.11%
I believe membership fees could increase to £20 per year.	36.84%
I believe membership fees could increase to £25 per year.	5.26%
My organisation would be happy to pay the not for profit cost of providing consultancy services such as Funding Support and Development Support when needed.	26.32%
My organisation would be happy to pay for Volunteer Recruitment and Support Services when needed.	21.05%

1 additional comment:

- A sliding scale of membership depending on the size/income of the organisation might work, larger organisations could afford more than £25

Focus Groups and Telephone Survey

The same questions were asked of all respondents in the Focus Groups and the Telephone Survey – answers are documented below:

1. VANL provides the following services for a low cost fee. Which services do you or would you use in the future?

Service	Use now	Would use in the future
DBS (Disclosure and Barring Service) Enhanced Standard Volunteer £56.50 £44.50 £12.50	4	6 yes
Advice on issues affecting Charities, or support to develop new activities or Charities/not for profit organisations, e.g: organisational health check, support to strengthen the organisation, constitutions, reporting, constitutions, solving problems etc	2	£30 per hr 9 yes
Room hire: Low cost supported Office space (£60-£65 per week for non members), members negotiable), hot desk £5 half day £10 per day), meeting space (conf room £30 half day, meeting room £20 per half day for members)		Yes 2 would 2 Might Others no – a number have their own rooms that they struggle to fill/rent
Training (variable but good discount for members £10 - £50)		What subjects would be of interest: 8 said yes they would use or do use: suggested additional topics included Committee Skills. A number of members use their own umbrella

		organisation for training.
Office services e.g. printing, poster/leaflet design, equipment loan		All respondents said they either use this service or would use this service
Funding support (charged at £30 per hr for advice currently £20 for surgery session):		<p>Funding information Y – 9, N -1</p> <p>Support to develop a new project Y – 3, N – 3, Maybe -3</p> <p>Bid writing Y-4, N-3, M-1</p> <p>Project Management once funding is achieved (costs for this can be built into a bid) Y-2, Others all No</p>
Financial services		<p>Payroll including auto enrolment pension where applicable (£10 set up, 1 off fee, £30 process pension 1 off fee, £5 per person per process, 6.20 with pension per person process, unless over 20 employees and then £5.25 per person per process).</p> <p>Might Use – 2, Others no</p> <p>Bookkeeping (27.50 per hr).</p>

		<p>No interest</p> <p>End of year accounts preparation (£30 per hr). 1 organisation possibly</p> <p>Independent Examination (included in above) Dependent on level and statutory requirements 2 organisations might</p> <p>Training (£30 per hour) No interest expressed</p>
Research, community engagement and evaluation services		<p>2 Yes, including Headway who want a meeting and Appleby PC. 1 maybe, others no</p>
Any other services that would be useful?		<p>Process Auditing Volunteer Recruitment IT Support for websites</p>

2. VANL has a range of PR tools including a news update, Twitter, Facebook etc. We are hearing from our members that they would like us to take more of a campaigning role on issues affecting the voluntary sector and the people that are served by it.

Is this something you would be interested in? All bar one organisation answered Yes

If so what are the issues that are of key concern to your organisation?

- | |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ongoing support and funding • Negative impact of funding reduction on vulnerable families |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

- Funding (lack of) for essential services such as Bereavement Services
- Grow and eat and its role in reducing obesity and the importance of Mental Wellbeing
- Funding and the constant change in services but the Voluntary Sector never benefit
- We will let VANL know in future
- Struggling for members and helpers
- Getting younger people involved
- Funding difficulty

We are more than happy to publicise your events and news, is this something that would be useful to your organisation?

All organisations said that this would be useful

Would your organisation be prepared to circulate VANL publicity in your newsletter to members or web site/social media sites if you have any?

All organisations bar 2 agreed to do this

3. We do-not currently have any funding for the Volunteer Centre so we are unable to offer the brokerage service that we have offered in the past, when we would on average interview and recommend for placement up to 600 volunteers per year. We are therefore looking at different ways of recruiting volunteers for our members.

Is this something that is a priority for your organisation – only 3 organisations said that this was a priority – all others said no

If yes which methods would you use: (although the priority was not confirmed by organisations above, a number answered these for the ‘when needed’ eventuality)

Recruitment Board on VANL website

Yes-4

Recruitment ads on VANL facebook site	Yes-4
Training on supporting and managing volunteers	Yes-4
Paid for Volunteer recruitment	Yes-2

4. Accessing VANL services

We currently open for 4 mornings a week from 9am to 1pm for open access, however we are finding this increasingly hard as we reduce in staffing and capacity.

So what would your organisations priority be for access given the issues mentioned?

By appointment with your chosen service/staff member	Y-11
By Telephone during office hrs 9-5pm Mon-Thurs and 9am-1pm Friday	Y-11
By video conferencing e.g. Skype, Facetime	Y-1
Through open access office times	Y-4
Drop-in sessions	Y-1

Other suggestions:

5. Membership

Our Membership fee has been £10 since 2005. This fee is recouped if you use 2 of our services per year in direct savings, and if you compare with services

provided by the private sector it would be recouped in less than 1-hrs of service. However we are very aware that some of our members do-not use any services and still continue to remain members and we are very glad of this support. Which of the statements below would apply to your organisation:

I believe membership should remain at £10	No – all
I believe Membership fees should rise to £20 or £25	Y£20-8, £25-1
I believe that VANL should tier membership fees e.g. small and unfunded groups remain low and larger organisations and Parish Councils paying fees Appropriate to turnover	Y-8

My organisation would be happy to pay for consultancy services e.g. funding and development support	Y-10
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	-------------

My organisation would be happy to pay for Volunteer Recruitment and Development support	Y-4
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	------------

Individuals can become a member of VANL, would your organisation be prepared to promote this opportunity?	Y-8, Maybe-1
------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------	---------------------

Do you have any other comments to make on your organisations needs, ideas about how we might raise additional income, or comments on our current services, or on how we can improve, given our financial constraints?

- VANL to set up a hostel for homeless people – happy to work together
- Not at this moment, however very happy with the support received. Liz Crowston does a great job on the Newsletter
- Have been very happy with the support and info over the years. When we have dropped in you have always helped us.
- Speaker opportunities with Headway or by charging for public speakers?
- Rotary? Might they sponsor VANL or fundraise for you?

- Wednesday Singers might do a fundraising concert for VANL
- We would be sorry to lose you
- It would be a shame if VANL closes
- Not at this moment however very happy with the support received.
Kick up a fuss about our lack of funding.

Additional Notes from Focus Groups

Points/ideas from Focus Group meeting

3 May 2017

Appleby Parish Council: Derek Hall, Ivor Keyes, Lynne Watson. Howsham Village Hall: Debbie Clark. HWRCC: Carole Johnson.

Ideas for Income Generation:

Providing guidance and practical support for Neighbourhood Plans (perhaps in partnership with HWRCC for the technical bit).

Writing bids for organisations projects and including an element delivered by VANL. Separate but relative conversation took place about being project managers on behalf of Community Groups who do-not have the time to do this. The example given was creating a new children's play area (could even be budget holders perhaps).

Carrying out Independent Examination of accounts for Parish Councils.

A debate took place on the membership fee and all thought it was time to raise it to perhaps £20-£25. However this was followed by concern that a knock on effect maybe fewer members and then this would have a negative impact on 'sales'. There was a variety of suggestions about how to increase members and this included:

- Asking current members to recommend membership to other organisations in their area and offer them an incentive e.g. a free place on a relevant training course.
- By far the biggest suggestion was much better publicising of VANL and what it can offer. In common with the last Focus Group there are services that we offer that no-one knows about. In fact 1 attendee thought we were for the benefit of drug and alcohol misusers only (going back to the time when we were in Frances Street).
- Writing to current membership telling them what our situation is and that we will be raising the membership fee, however we are reluctant to do so this year and ask them if they would consider making an additional donation.

Ideas for better publicising VANL

Make a big splash of the birthday celebrations including media coverage e.g. double page spread in Telegraph, Look North/Calendar, Radio. Hold an event and invite people/organisations that have benefited from VANL in the past to speak about their experience (Debbie Clark volunteered). Ask people (friends of/members/partners) to talk about VANL and rally support, ask Community Newsletters and community websites to run birthday articles and put links to our site on their websites.

Write to members and tell them that we will be adding them to relevant mailing groups unless they respond by return of email to say they don't want to be added.

Run training sessions on evenings and during school holidays as well as other times.

All in attendance were more than happy to advocate for VANL.

Needs: Bring back PAT. None of the attendees use the office as access to services.

Points/ideas from Focus Group meeting

27 April 2017

Those Present: Nicola Massingham, Humber Sports Partnership, Dorothy Fagge; Saxby All Saints Church, Claire Chapman Mind, Az Modak Crosby Community Association, John Lee, Age UK North Lincs, Donald Campbell VANL, Allen Ransome, VANL.

Apologies: Anne Cook, James Truepenny

Ideas for generating income

Rotary, Lions, Roundtable clubs have money and may well be happy to pay a significant amount to support VANL e.g. £1-2k

We need to target marketing of training and services/support more effectively. 1 participant had not received any information on events or training from us including funding fairs.

Need to promote widely what you get for being a member of VANL

Need to review prices – are they too cheap, people will be willing to pay more and reinstate PAT at a more sustainable price

Need to review membership price, most people will be happy to pay £25 and consider banding i.e. unfunded groups staying lower.

Need to Promote activities in local newsletter/members publicity/news mechanisms. Active Humber are happy to promote training for example.

To use our members to promote services with other groups.

Recruiting someone like Sue Hollingsworth to organise a big fundraising 'do'.

Holding a support your local voluntary sector day, including through supporting VANL.

Collaborating with St Johns ambulance to provide first aid training in exchange for joining VANL (perhaps at an increased cost).

Key needs/services

Need a united and more visible campaigning role (very strongly vocalised)

Need almost to take a Trade Union approach to the sector, so it is seen as a sector, rather than disparate organisations that can be picked off easily – so united, with VANL at the forefront!

All agreed VANL was very important to them and they probably would either not be here or would not have achieved what they had if we had not been around and gave us their mandate to say this to the powers that be.

Agreed that our reduced cost services help them to make the most of scant resources, ensuring maximum investment in delivering services, instead of expensive private sector provision.

Need a volunteer theme – how great volunteering is for careers, skills, health and wellbeing with a list of current opportunities we are aware of.

Open access to the office is not important to any of the attendees.