

Adur Voluntary Action

Development Plan 2010-13



At the heart of Adur Community Life and Wellbeing

April 2010

Calling at



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“There is no wealth but life” (Ruskin)

Section one: Introduction

I am pleased to introduce AVA's new Development Plan 2010-2013.

Adur Voluntary Action (AVA) was launched on 1 April 2010, as the successor body to Adur Council for Voluntary Service. AVA is a company limited by guarantee, and a charity. Our memorandum and articles of association are available on request, and our annual reports and audited accounts will be posted on the Charity Commission website from January 2011. You can find extensive information on our web site: www.adurvoluntaryaction.org.

We are keen to keep in regular contact with local voluntary organisations, and you can do this by joining the Adur Community Network or Adur Older Persons Network, by receiving our AVA News and Breaking News mailings, and by looking at our website regularly. Our website contains stop press items, news on learning opportunities, coming events and jobs. There are also blogs and discussion forums, to which you can contribute after registering. You can follow us on Twitter ([AdurVA](#)).

Our offices are at Chesham House, Lancing (a short walk from Lancing Railway Station) and visitors are always welcomed. We work closely with the WRVS, and are working to establish Chesham House, with a number of other community buildings, as a linked network of local voluntary action "hubs" right across Adur, offering well-publicised and high-quality facilities.

If you would like to discuss Adur Voluntary Action, this development plan, or attend one of our forum or network events, then please contact us.

We all look forward to working with many of you.

John Lambourne
Chairman, Adur Voluntary Action

April 2010

Section two: Purpose, philosophy, activities and resourcing

Our philosophy and purpose

Adur Voluntary Action was formed thirty years ago (as Adur Council for Voluntary Service), to provide support to voluntary organisations and individuals; and to bring local voluntary groups closer together into co-operative working relationships between themselves, the public sector, and funders. AVA registered as a company limited by guarantee, and charity, in April 2010.

AVA's philosophy has evolved over time. We now focus explicitly on strengthening the voice, capacity, independence and self-reliance of Adur's communities and organisations, drawing on a community development model. We provide public services under contract, but take care to integrate such services into our wider philosophy, to derive maximum community benefits: economic, social, environmental, well-being. We allow space for uncertainty, and unplanned activities, because creativity and flexibility are recognised strengths of the voluntary action organisations. *A strategy is only as good as its capacity to cope with the unexpected.*

Our structure and membership

AVA is a registered charity and company limited by guarantee. Its membership comprises voluntary and charitable organisations in and beyond Adur, and individuals. It has a representative structure, and its membership meet every year at the AGM to elect its Management Committee, approve its audited accounts and launch its Annual Report.

Membership is free of charge, and AVA's services are available for free (or at low cost) to all local voluntary organisations, members or not. Members however may vote at AGMs, and may seek election or co-option onto the Management Committee.

AVA communicates with its members through the monthly *AVA News*, and *Breaking News*. We advertise regularly in *Adur Outlook*, delivered to every house in Adur, and in *Shoreview*. The *Adur Community Network* meets regularly, as does the *Adur Older Persons Network* and the *Older Persons Reference Group*.

Adur CVS employs a number of staff, and also involves volunteers in its work. The Management Committee is actively involved in the organisation's work.

AVA's activities

AVA supports voluntary action organisations

AVA works in the following ways to support organisations:

- To work with voluntary organisations and community groups to improve the quality of their activities and their capacity
- To help voluntary organisations and community groups to access information, practical support services and facilities
- To facilitate active dialogue, liaison and collaboration between voluntary, public and private organisations
- To work with local communities to identify their needs and build appropriate responses
- To represent the diversity of interests amongst voluntary organisations and community groups, ensuring that their viewpoints are accurately reflected at strategic policy making bodies

- To promote the strategic development of all forms of support for voluntary organisations and community groups

AVA supports volunteering

AVA supports individual volunteering in the following ways:

- To manage a volunteer centre which delivers a brokerage service, helping individuals to find suitable volunteer placements, and organisations to find suitable volunteers
- To market and promote volunteering
- To promote good practice amongst organisations working with volunteers
- To extend and develop opportunities for volunteering
- To campaign for volunteering and influence policies
- To lead the strategic development of volunteering, closely involving organisations that work with volunteers in this process

Our services for organisations are closely linked with the functions of all Councils for Voluntary Service in England who are members, like ourselves, of NAVCA (National Association for Voluntary and Community Action). Our services to volunteering are linked with the core functions for volunteer centres who, like ourselves, are members of Volunteering England.

AVA works for community development

AVA's raw materials are human and organisational relationships.

AVA is committed to a community development approach to its work. We follow the basic principles developed by the Federation for Community Development Learning in their revised *National Occupational Standards for Community Development* (2009). These are explicit about:

- Deep knowledge of a community means being a part of that community for a long time
- Effectiveness in community development depends upon networks of contacts
- Effectiveness depends upon trust and a culture of co-operation
- A sound foundation (a bottom-up approach) is essential to sustainable development
- Conflict requires addressing not papering over

We believe that voluntary and community action *is* different: people become involved, and can withdraw, from their own choice. Co-ordination and management needs to be by negotiation, consultation and consent. The opportunities are there to use and develop personal skills, to influence local polices and social change. AVA works to make such opportunities available to as many people as possible.

We operate with both geographical communities, and communities of interest. Our work centres upon joint working to help groups identify, and achieve, their goals. In the case of geographical communities, the "common bond" is the place within which they are based, and whose past, present or future concerns them. In the case of communities of interest, the "common bond" is the focus of interest rather than any particular locality. Clearly both types can overlap. Activities interact. Promotion of volunteering, and voluntary action, supports community development. Work with our Local Strategic Partnerships (Adur in Partnership and Worthing Together) supports community development. Geographical boundaries are fluid, according to purpose.

Our work in strengthening geographical communities is associated with the development of a network of "community anchors" across Adur, and with delivery of services to localities that are known to show particular needs. This process is closely linked with the work of the local strategic partnerships, Public Service

Board, and to deliver the new Sustainable Community Strategy. AVA's own base in Chesham House is developing both as a community anchor, and as a strong working partnership with WRVS.

AVA promotes health and wellbeing

AVA believes that promotion of health and wellbeing lies at the root of many of the traditional activities of the local voluntary sector. The caring, support, environments, self-help, educational, leisure and sports activities of voluntary organisations all indirectly strengthen well-being and health.

Our **Health and Wellbeing Promotion** initiative works to encourage co-operation between local voluntary groups, and the statutory sector, in meeting health and wellbeing needs

Homefront provides a gardening and practical support service to older people, and helps with environmental projects, using paid staff and volunteers

The *Health Training* service offers support to people who wish to improve their health and wellbeing.

The *POPP* initiative (Partnership of Older People's Projects) draws together groups working to support older people. It supports the Adur Older Persons' Network and the Older Persons' Reference Groups.

AVA's resourcing

AVA takes a broad view about resourcing its activities. We do not compete with other Adur groups to provide services that they can provide, but if there is a gap in provision that we can fill, working alone or with others, then we believe this to be appropriate. AVA is open to raising core funds by running services under contract, or establishing social enterprises to raise funds for our core. Funds are already raised by renting space, and AVA will be alert to future opportunities, because public sector funding for our core activity is never going to be sufficient. Our goal is to have sustainable funding to meet all of our core responsibilities, and to engage in time-limited projects which develop aspects of our core roles but do not commit us to seeking permanent funding.

AVA works in partnerships with other CVSs in West Sussex, East Sussex or Brighton and Hove, and Countywide bodies in West Sussex, where such partnerships strengthen provision of services in Adur. Our main commitment (under our memorandum of association) is to strengthening the capacity of Adur's voluntary and community sector. This capacity can be weakened if voluntary action becomes defined as "service delivery" which may be funded, controlled or managed from some distance. AVA believes that active, engaged local communities require investment: this investment includes delegation of responsibility and authority to independent organisations. AVA recognises the tensions between this and pressures on funders, and seeks to develop service models which both support local voluntary action and deliver quality services.

AVA's own funding is reasonably secure until Summer 2011, but beyond this is very uncertain. The capacity to deliver on this development strategy depends upon successful fund raising to cover the costs of each element. The budget to achieve a basic service (excluding delivery of special services under contract) is about £100,000 pa.

Other resources are just as important as funding: the time and support of our Trustees, volunteer involvement, sponsorships and donations by local businesses, co-operation between CVSs countywide, help in kind from the local public or private sectors. Many of the benefits that our work generates are not directly measurable, and a social cost accounting framework needs to be developed to explore this.

Section three: Community needs and voluntary action

Adur (eh –der) is a “place apart” in West Sussex, an area of tightly built, partly older, partly post-war housing, with a traditional port, small airport, and economy relying more on light industry, commerce and small businesses. It houses 60,000 people (the smallest District Council in England), and is a narrow, strung-out district, sandwiched between sea and South Downs, traversed by two major roads and the coastal railway line. South Downs, busy A- roads, railway and English Channel all act as barriers to human interaction, and Adur doesn't have a “town centre” or focal point. People tend to look towards Worthing or Brighton for major shopping or leisure, according to which side of the River Adur they live.

But none the less, there is a strong community life, and many local families have lived in Adur for generations. There are seven distinct communities, each providing local shopping, schools, and health services – some with libraries and community centres. And there are sub-communities within these, separated from one another by hard-to-cross roads and railway lines. Parts of Adur are more akin to Hull, Lowestoft or Gosport than neighbouring Hove, Worthing or Brighton

Our Map below shows our entire river Adur valley. Adur district itself is the grey coastal strip west of Hove



Adur's strengths

There is a strong sense of very local community, and rootedness through generations of families – AVA's website identifies these communities. Many of our local authority elected members have lived here all their lives, knowing the place well, and wanting the best for all. Local needs tend to take priority over party political positions.

There are over 400 groups on AVA's mail list, mainly small community ones, with rich variety and history. There are low crime rates, and away from the main roads, not too much pollution. Adur has easy access to the South Downs and seaside, and the coast is well served by the railway and bus service. There is a cycle track along much of the seafront between Southwick and Worthing. The new cultural centre at the Ropetackle offers varied events, and there are a rich variety of local pubs, and small restaurants. There are annual beer festivals, and the Adur Festival. Shoreham has a well-supported farmers' market, and a large car boot sale. Every year the Shoreham Air Show draws very large crowds, and looking backwards, Adur has a rich local history to Roman and prehistoric times.

Adur's challenges

Adur is poorer than much of West Sussex, and some of its communities are less organised and articulate than elsewhere. Adur recently experienced the third largest fall in the deprivation rankings of all 354 local authority areas in England: in 2007, 14% of Adur was ranked in the lowest 20% in England, for deprivation, and the proportion of Adur residents whose qualifications are below NVQ level 2 is well above national average. Parts of Adur are identified by government research as priority zones for tackling serious underlying problems, which affect educational opportunities and achievement, premature death, and employment. Local initiatives tend to focus on these localities, encouraged by targeted government funds. Adur in Partnership, the local strategic partnership, also concentrates its work on these areas. The new Sustainable Community Strategy, prepared jointly with Worthing, maintains this focus and will provide the main strategic guidance for future initiatives to address inequality and deprivation.

There are highish suicide rates amongst older men, and many of our older residents are finding independent living a challenge for very practical reasons: transport, shopping, house and garden maintenance, isolation.

Younger people, and those able to travel, gravitate socially towards Brighton – but Brighton does not gravitate towards Adur. Some have seen Adur as a “sandwich” between Brighton and Worthing. But the point of any sandwich is the filling, and as a place to live and work, Adur's positives far outweigh its difficulties. The challenge for us all is to work to extend these positives so that everyone benefits.

Voluntary and community action

AVA's records show over 400 organisations in Adur, and new ones are discovered regularly. Many are small groups, having no budget and not employing staff. These tend to focus upon community activities, leisure and recreation, cultural or sports activities. There are some larger organisations, but the number of independent medium-sized local charities has been declining for some years. This is because of mergers between branches of charities that deliver contracts funded by the public sector, into structures that cover the whole of Brighton district, West Sussex, all of Sussex, or the entire South-East. Sometimes these mergers are encouraged by governmental bodies, quangos or local public sector funders; sometimes they result from local groups failing to be able to continue (eg lack of Trustees, members or funds), and sometimes because of competitive tendering pressures (need for sufficient capacity and critical mass to participate). The end result of this is progressively to undermine the locally accountable voluntary and community action sector in Adur. Nationally, there is growing awareness of the negative effects of this trend, and it is beginning to become a topic of political debate.

One response of AVA to these trends has been to support pressure for funding mechanisms which factor in the value of local engagement and knowledge, and do not force organisations into time taking competition. A further response is to shift focus away from nationally-promoted initiatives designed to “gear up” the local voluntary sector, towards learning to listen and attend more closely to local voices. For this reason, AVA is orienting its philosophy towards a community development approach, as opposed to an approach that views voluntary organisations as purely deliverers of services. It is AVA’s view that a healthy local voluntary sector is linked to stronger civil society, enhanced democratic engagement, and improved social cohesion. These benefits are not achieved by treating voluntary action as a commissioned service which may be operated by managers employed by a distant organisation. Services and funders come and go, but local civil society needs to have an organic existence. AVA’s members, staff, volunteers and Trustees are a part of the Adur community, sharing in its ups and downs from the inside.

Section four: AVA Development Plan (2010-2013)

The plan divides into two sections: AVA looking IN, and AVA looking OUT. Looking out covers AVA’s intended activities to provide its services. Looking in covers what needs to be done to ensure that AVA complies with good practice and the law; and resources that need to be available prior to providing any services (building, meeting rooms, IT equipment, publicity, internet presence etc).

Looking in: MANAGEMENT, ADMINISTRATION AND MARKETING

Management, fundraising, financial management, governance, personnel management, office management, inter-agency liaison and representation, marketing, communication and publicity, Management Committee support

Intentions

- Maintain and share a clear sense of strategic direction
- Raise funding to deliver core s in accordance with the strategy
- Ensure that services are effectively managed and outputs monitored
- Keep Management Committee fully informed with all information needed to make key decisions
- Comply with charity law and our memorandum and articles of association , producing the annual report and audited accounts on time
- Provide funders with all necessary monitoring information
- Maintain full financial control and recording, submitting returns to Companies House and Charity Commission
- Manage our staff, volunteers and premises in accordance with the law and best practice
- Play a full part in local and County networks representing the concerns of our voluntary and community groups. Adur in Partnership, West Sussex Public Service Board, West Sussex CVS PAG Network
- Maintain a high-quality website, up-to-date leaflets and poster. Ensure information and our database of local organisations is kept up to date at nominated outlets.
- Advertise regularly in Adur Outlook and Shoreview, and seek further low cost advertising in local magazines.
- Manage and resource office and building with necessary administrative staff, IT and telephone equipment, and ensure health and safety complied with

Progress to 31 March 2010

This development plan gives a clear sense of direction, but consultation is inadequate. Funding very uncertain beyond April 2011. Registration and launch as AVA now completed, and financial information system running effectively to produce accurate up-to-date management accounts and budget monitoring. One new Management Committee member recruited but still a need for two or three more. Office space and building refurbishment half completed, meeting rooms in use, kitchen refurbished.

Priorities 2010-2013

- To strengthen consultation with local communities so they have greater influence on our actions
- To continue actively to support Adur in Partnership and strengthen its role in community development
- To raise sufficient funding to support vital AVA functions beyond 2011 as set out in other sections
- To start a staff pension scheme with an employer contribution
- To raise sufficient funds to complete building refurbishment, open reception desk and employ receptionist
- Secure AVA on a three-year funding agreements

Resources required

Chief Officer, Administrator, Book Keeper, Newsletter Editor, Receptionist, office rental and running costs

Looking out: STRENGTHENED COMMUNITY LIFE and COHESION

Through human and organisational relationships, to strengthen community life and cohesion, including co-operative and collective action by voluntary groups.

Intentions

- Involve voluntary groups and funders in influencing AVA's work priorities
- Support an Adur Community Network meeting four times each year
- Initiate an Adur Community Anchors (buildings) network
- Produce *AVA News* every month, distributing it widely
- Actively identify needs and develops working partnerships, and resourcing, to meet these
- Respond quickly and effectively to requests for information, support and advice
- Complete the refurbishment of Chesham House and actively widen its role
- Provide individually tailored advice and support to each group that approaches us for help.
- Keep web site contemporary and up to date, providing easy access to a directory of organisations, index of volunteering opportunities, learning opportunities and blogs
- Increase AVA membership to help strengthen the Management Committee
- Support and work closely with Adur in Partnership
- Identify and seek appropriate accreditation if necessary
- Promote letting of space at Chesham House

Progress to March 2010

Engagement of the local voluntary and community sector is still limited though showing signs of increasing. AVA News has much improved and includes more local news. The Adur Community Network is also showing signs of greater strength. AVA currently Chairs Adur in Partnership. Final tranche of funding now raised to complete work at Chesham House. EESI Project (a very important resource) runs out of funding in December 2010.

Priorities 2010-2013

- The focus will be on increasing involvement of voluntary groups in determining AVA priorities, and communicating more regularly and effectively through media and the Adur Community Network. Continue support to Adur in Partnership and complete building work in 2010.
- With other CVSs work to secure continuation of the EESI Project's activities
- Initiate a Community Anchors network involving several key buildings across Adur, and through this develop outreach work for AVA and associated projects such as Volunteer Centre, Health Promotion and Health Trainers. This also to form the nucleus of the community development initiative.
- Produce a published copy of the directory of organisations
- Interest more of the smaller organisations in AVA's activity
- Progress evidenced by more people active in community, stronger civil society, more going on, more vocal communities
- Progress evidenced by evidence of collective action by voluntary groups, and developments in support for older people, work with younger people, transport, the environment, cultural life and leisure

Resources

Chief Officer, EESI Project Officer, Health Promotion Officer, Newsletter Editor, Development Officer Receptionist, AVA Trustees, and working relationships with other local organisations

Looking out: STRENGTHEN VOLUNTEERING

To provide the full range of volunteer centre services in partnership with and in support of the West Sussex CVS Volunteering Network

Intentions

- Promote volunteering and provide a high quality brokerage service
- Develop regular outreach across Adur involving all AVA staff
- Publish clear information leaflets showing how potential volunteers, and groups requiring support, can find out more.
- Ensure that all volunteers with AVA itself are supported and managed to high standards
- Achieve accreditation as approved by the West Sussex Volunteering Network

Progress to March 2010

The Volunteer Centre is funded until 2012 and working hard to develop volunteering. Outreach work has taken place every week in libraries, but this has attracted limited numbers of volunteers, and we intend to widen the range of venues.

Priorities 2010-2013

- Strengthen outreach work across Adur as part of the Community Anchors project and using more venue
- obtain accreditation
- improve publicity with a new poster and regular advertising
- Meet service funders' targets and increase numbers of volunteers placed
- Progress evidenced by more volunteers placed

Resources

Volunteer Centre Co-ordinator, Administrator, other AVA staff in support of outreach work

Looking out: ADUR HOMEFRONT SERVICE

Homefront meets the needs of older people for support with their gardens, and simple practical maintenance.

Intentions

- To ensure sustainable provision of Homefront's services at reasonable cost.

Progress to March 2010

Homefront delivered fully on its funding agreement from the Big Lottery, which ended in September 2009. Sufficient additional funding was found to run the project for a further calendar year. However it is clear that income from service users has to be greatly increased if the project is to be sustained.

Priorities 2010-13

- To put into practice the business plan for Homefront
- To maintain two paid staff funded by the Future Jobs scheme through 2010/11
- To promote the service widely and effectively through advertising, leaflets and word of mouth
- To reach an informed decision about Homefront's future in accordance with its performance

Resources required

Vehicle, trailer and tools; two Homefront Workers; Homefront Co-ordinator

Looking out: PARTNERSHIP OF OLDER PERSONS' PROJECTS

A WSCC – funded initiative to strengthen co-operative working by all groups supporting older people in Adur, and to develop initiatives to meet gaps in services

Intentions

- To provide the POPP Neighbourhood Network Co-ordination and Business Development Service. This aims to draw together groups working with older people, help them with fund raising, publicity and business planning, and increase their influence on local policy

Progress to March 2010

The project has worked well in Adur, especially the work of the Network Co-ordinators and Community Engagement Officers (based at AVA and employed by Age Concern). A guide to fund raising was produced, and the Older Persons Network and Reference Groups have met regularly. Current priorities are to introduce an internet shopping service; support access to services in Lancing by co-ordinating transport; raise further funds for Homefront. The Business Development Officer post became vacant in Autumn 2009 but was quickly filled. WSCC funding for the POPP initiative ends in September 2010.

Priorities 2010-13

- To ensure that the POPP Neighbourhood Network, as managed by Shoreham CAB, meets its agreed targets
- To ensure that the Adur Older Persons Network and Reference Group are sustainable through volunteer commitment and AVA support
- To meet the agreed targets for the Business Development Officer's work
- To wind down the project in an organised way as funding ends in September 2010
- To work to maintain the central elements of POPP through other means

Resources required

One Neighbourhood Network Co-ordinator, One Business Development Officer. Volunteer Chairman for Older Persons Network.

Looking out: HEALTH TRAINING SERVICE

A NHS West Sussex-funded initiative to improve health and wellbeing by support in adopting healthier lifestyles

Intentions

- To meet the agreed targets for the Health Training Initiative
- To integrate the work of Health Trainers into AVA's health promotion and community development activities

Progress to March 2010

Three health trainers are in post, supported by the AVA Chief Officer, Health Promotion Officer and Development Officer. Their training is almost completed, and client numbers are beginning to build up.

Priorities 2010-13

- To meet the Primary Care Trust funding targets
- To promote the service widely and especially in priority localities
- To achieve a caseload of twenty clients per health trainer
- To link the service closely with AVA's health promotion and community anchor service

Resources

Three fte Health Trainers, Health Promotion Officer, Development Officer, Chief Officer

Looking out: HEALTH PROMOTION INITIATIVE

To support and co-ordinate the work of local voluntary organisations in promotion of health and well-being

Intentions

- To identify realistic health promotion targets, and work to support the role of the voluntary sector in achieving these
- To work with Adur in Partnership to meet health and wellbeing needs especially in more deprived areas

Progress to March 2010

AVA has a strong team working in this important field. A database of local projects and activities has been compiled, links made with organisations, local authorities and NHS West Sussex.

Priorities 2010-13

- To support the development of a new Wellbeing Information Service across Adur
- To develop a volunteer-based Health and Wellbeing Local Champions service
- To support the work of Health Trainers by developing community and group initiatives
- To work with the Community Anchors network to extend activities which promote health and wellbeing in each locality across Adur
- To develop shared and branded activities across the Community Anchor buildings which support wellbeing

Resources

One health promotion officer, One development officer, one Chief Officer, EESI Project Worker

Looking out: COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT INITIATIVE

To re-orient the work of AVA towards supporting local communities and community organisations

Intentions

- To strengthen regular contact with Adurs' geographical communities
- To achieve regular contact with more community organisations
- To draw support into Adur from outside bodies
- To develop a linked network of community hubs ("anchors") across Adur To build strengthened voices for Adur's communities and community sector

Progress to March 2010

The Adur Community Network has been running for 18 months and now includes Adur District Council community development staff. The Sustainable Community Strategy treats community development and neighbourhood planning seriously, but funding support to help the voluntary sectors engage with this is not yet evident. AVA has good links with Community Development SE and National Coalition for Independent Action, as well as BASSAC. Chesham House making rapid advance as a community centre and local hub for Lancing, and there is interest across Adur in the Community Anchors proposals.

Priorities 2010-2013

- To establish the community anchors network and develop shared activities and promotion
- To maintain the Adur Community Network
- To strengthen links into Adur in Partnership and the roles of sub-groups
- To strengthen links with local elected members
- To strengthen electronic community development and widen access to these media through learning opportunities, local access points, and bulletin boards/wikis/blogs etc
- To host a Digital Adur conference
- To ensure that those without access to electronic media receive paper alternatives

All the above evidenced by strengthened community spirit and cohesion, which we need to seek ways of measuring

Resources

One EESI Project Officer, One Chief Officer, One Development Officer, One Health Promotion Officer, One Newsletter Editor. Colleagues in Adur District Council Community Wellbeing Department