

ADUR VOLUNTARY

ACTION

ANNUAL
REPORT
2019
2021

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A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIR

JOHN KELLY | CHAIR

This Annual Report covers two years developments and operations. We didn't hold an AGM last year because of the restrictions which accompanied the pandemic, staff were often furloughed and there was no Chief Executive Officer (CEO) for much of the time. A further reason was that, because of various circumstances, our AGM cycle had very much deviated from its usual timing in September. It was also felt that a postponement would give any new CEO some time to settle into the post.

Undoubtedly the pandemic affected our activities over the past 18 months. Our income streams from community transport and room hire were immediately adversely affected and different staff have been flexi-furloughed at different times. The effect of the lockdowns circumvented the usual relationships and interactions between ourselves as an infrastructure support body and the wider community and voluntary sector (CVS). Many volunteers in local organisations, including several in our own, were in the 'elderly / at-risk' categories and tended to isolate immediately. Much of the activity of the more formal groups ceased unless - like Foodbanks - their continued operation was imperative. As a result, like many groups, we largely moved over to remote working and found ourselves having to learn new IT skills in utilising 'zoom' to conduct committee meetings. This was done relatively successfully, although it's a development still not to everyone's liking.

It seems that much community action and voluntary endeavour became either 'hyper-local' - the emergence of single estate /or small neighbourhood Mutual Aid Groups (MAGs) - or supersized into a 'mass mobilisation' - as with NHS volunteering. Our having been largely absent from local planning processes, because of the legacy from our recent history, meant we weren't directly engaged with the bigger mobilisations efforts. All in all we restricted our endeavours to where the opportunities arose, and which were within our fairly limited resources.

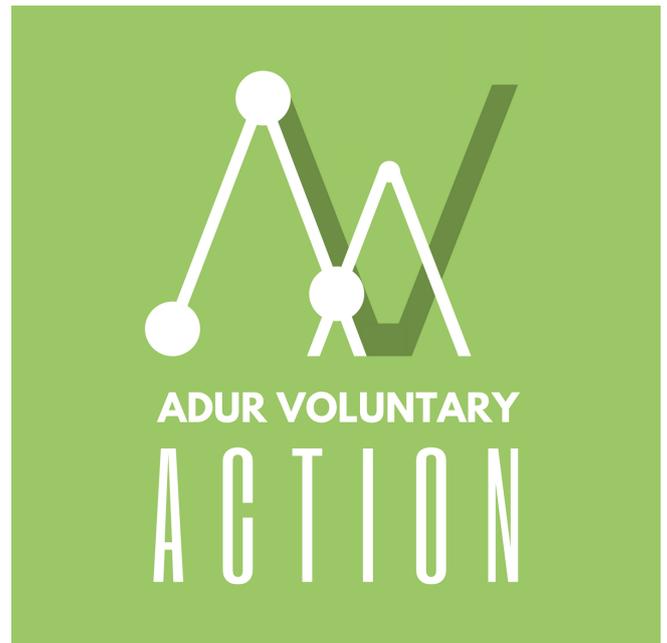
In truth, because AVA was in a period of recovery, the pandemic gave us space and time to address many aspects of the organisation's administration and operation. Achieving outcomes around many objectives / activities was always going to be somewhat problematic during the pandemic. I feel that we have used the time well and have continued to make progress in most areas, internal and external, as needed to re-establish the organisation. We are now in a much stronger position to respond to and shape whatever constitutes the 'new normal' for the CVS in Adur.

EVOLVING AVA'S IDENTITY

After a listening activity with people from around Adur, other CVS organisations, AVA members and local community groups, we started work on both AVA's core and visual identity.

Making things more accessible, inclusive and up to date, we worked up fresh brand guidelines and a new logo, followed by a colour palette, typography, tone of voice work, imagery and photography.

Banners and other external signage are on their way and all our social media channels have all been updated with our new artwork. We are back with a bang and are ready to make a difference here in Adur. You can follow our 'AVA refresh' journey over on Facebook.



**NEW
ADUR
COMMUNITY
CIRCLE**

WHAT WE'LL DO:

- NETWORKING AND SHARING BEST PRACTISE ...BUT WE'LL ALSO...
- INVITE GUEST SPEAKERS & THOUGHT LEADERS
- DEVELOP EQUALITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION PRACTISE
- SHARE TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES TO MAKE IT AFFORDABLE
- BUILD SOCIAL CHANGE, TOGETHER

INTERESTED? CONTACT EMILIE@ADURVA.ORG

**FOSTERING
CONNECTED, CARING
& COOPERATIVE
COMMUNITIES
ACROSS ADUR**

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**ADUR VOLUNTARY
ACTION**

NEW VISION

OUR VISION IS ABOUT WHY WE EXIST

WE WANT THERE TO BE:

CONNECTED, CARING AND COOPERATIVE COMMUNITIES ACROSS ADUR

OUR MISSION IS WHAT WE DO TO MAKE OUR VISION A REALITY:

AT THE HEART OF ADUR, WE PROMOTE TOGETHERNESS BY CONNECTING PEOPLE WITH LOCAL OPPORTUNITIES, SUPPORTING GROUPS TO DEVELOP SUSTAINABLY AND BY FINDING WAYS TO GIVE COMMUNITIES A VOICE.

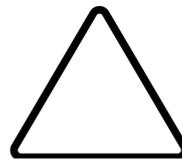
WE COURAGEOUSLY STAND UP FOR OUR **VALUES**, BECAUSE THEY MAKE UP OUR DNA. THEY ARE **HOW** WE DO THINGS HERE:



LOCAL



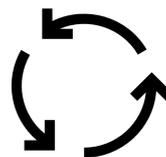
COLLABORATIVE



INDEPENDENT



INCLUSIVE



SUSTAINABLE



EMPOWERING



CREATIVE



ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

DEVELOPMENTS

GOVERNANCE

We have taken action to strengthen AVA's governance by the co-option of several advisers to assist the Board, a number of whom have taken on special responsibility for particular functions such as fundraising. Notwithstanding the progress made to date it remains a key objective to recruit new trustees going forward.

We are also undertaking a review of AVA's membership and have already had some success in increasing the number of organisations subscribing to our aims. Whilst we encourage users of our services to join AVA we will support all VCS groups irrespective of membership status. A comprehensive review of our monitoring procedures is underway as successful funding is always predicated on a sound evidence base.

PREMISES

Adur and Worthing Councils (AWC) are currently re-evaluating their estates portfolio. As part of that process they no longer wish to lease out the Old School House and we will be vacating the premises at the end of September this year. AVA thanks the Council for its support over the last ten years, and also to Esteem for its support in helping to share the management of premises over recent years.

AVA has for several years now worked collaboratively with the 'Community Space' and they have offered us a new home, which we have accepted, in their building which is adjacent to the Co-op supermarket in Ham Road, Shoreham. The practical arrangements for us to continue operations from Community Space are still in the process of being worked through, particularly as we want to ensure the utmost safety and security in light of Covid. We anticipate that the move will be beneficial to both parties, and we look forward to working closely with them as we go forward.

IT SUPPORT

Our IT capacity has been much enhanced by securing the services of a dedicated volunteer with significant expertise. His support has been invaluable to AVA in being able to resume what, in this day and age, is an essential online presence. We are also fortunate in that our interim CEO, Emilie Fellingham, updated our approach to several facets of AVA's communications, both internally and externally.

STAFFING

Following the death of our CEO in March 2018 the trustees reluctantly concluded that we were no longer in a position to fulfil the supervisory obligations to the Sompting Big Local (SBL) project. We had acted in a 'local trusted agency' capacity - SBL not itself being an incorporated body - under a contract we had with their funding body, the Local Trust. We accordingly withdrew from these partnership arrangements during 2019/20.

Emilie Fellingham stepped into the role of CEO (Jan-Sept 2021), part-time for 25 hours per week with responsibility for two part-time staff; Adur Community Transport Organiser, Sarah Leeding, working 15 hours per week, and Book-keeper, Keri Hamblin, working 6 hours per week. The role of the post-holder has, within the confines and effects of the pandemic, revolved around the range of activities including those listed below:

1. Strategic leadership and establishing direction:

Analysing existing operations, designing & implementing a new strategy, vision, mission, values as well as leading AVA's rebrand.

2. Ensuring that the Big Picture is clear and understood:

Working together with the board of directors to build understanding of plans, reporting regularly with updates and progress. Designing external marketing to communicate the changes.

3. Stakeholder relationship management, the joining of local forums and committees, starting to establish new partnerships and build relationships across the district.

4. Modelling AVA behaviours and values.

5. Putting in place the right structure and frameworks:

- Build an intranet/ digital staff handbook to act as a main hub where colleagues have access to policies, insight, advice, guidelines, links and tools.
- Manage Operations and oversee process improvements: Start building new, accessible policies, establish training opportunities, improve recruitment and onboarding processes as well as monitoring and evaluation.
- Risk management; Establishing monitoring and processes including the risk register, premises and activity risk assessment and training.

FINANCES & FUNDRAISING

Some of our efforts had of necessity to have been directed towards fundraising to offset the loss of income from community transport and room hire as a result of the pandemic. We are grateful to Adur and Worthing Councils for business rate relief, and to a grant from the National Lotteries 'Awards4All' programme for their support in mitigating lost income.

The government's flexi-furlough scheme helped us greatly with managing the overall retention of our existing two part-time staff - Adur Community Transport Organiser and Book-keeper - and helped support a deployment from their usual duties between lockdowns.

We also received funding, via our national body, from the government's 'Emergencies Partnership' programme which operated for a six month period to March this year. Operating in tandem with other VCS infrastructure support agencies in Sussex, as part of the 'Local Information Network' strand of the programme. We were involved in the ongoing appraisal of local need around a wide range of issues. This exercise also had the additional benefit to us of enabling contact to be re-established with several groups / networks.

Our main thanks here must go to the Sussex Community Foundation. They have engaged with us in a positive manner prior to, and throughout, the pandemic. We had secured one grant two days prior to the first lockdown, and another for infrastructure support during the pandemic. Combining the objectives of the two grants, and supplementing the funding with monies from our reserves, enabled us to employ our new CEO. That appointment was made in early January 2021, and the post-holder has been supported in their work by a number of activist trustees.

Lastly, our thanks should be recorded to the Arnold Clark Community Trust for a small grant to cover relocation costs in transferring our operations to the Co-op's 'Community Space' Although separate organisations we have supported one another in the past and look forward to continued collaborative working as we go forward.

SERVICES

LANCING FOOD BANK (LFB)

Although LFB are a fully independent organisation we have had a long standing link with them. We have particularly supported them during the pandemic when many of LFB's usual volunteers, who were in the older / at risk category, were having to shield / isolate. Our staff / volunteer support for LFB's continued operation during this period was much appreciated as demand rose by 50% to over 590 families receiving help during the past year.

EMERGENCY PARTNERSHIP LOCAL INFORMATION NETWORK

We found that a closing down of activity was the case with many groups as we conducted, by telephone and email, our fortnightly 'pulse survey' as part of the 'Local Information Network' (LIN) strand of the government's 'Emergencies Partnership' project. By and large we found little evidence that conditions / issues in Adur were dissimilar to those pertaining elsewhere in the county. Because of the proven additional adverse effects of the pandemic on people of black ethnicity, a particular emphasis of the project was to engage as much as possible with local BAME groups. Although we were able to contact a few such groups despite there not being many active BAME groups in Adur. It is perhaps noteworthy that the second lockdown interrupted the possibility of our working with an emergent group - Shoreham-by-Sea Against Racism.

ADUR COMMUNITY CIRCLE

The role previously played by the Adur Community Network was as a forum for the exchange of ideas and information, occasionally with visiting speakers. Network meetings would help illuminate in what way AVA can continue to support the local CVS and would, through the newsletter above, play a role in conveying concerns and issues to relevant statutory bodies. The forum has now evolved to become the Adur Community Circle. Open to small community, charity or volunteer groups as well as interested individuals across Adur, the new forum will be activated during the coming year.

It will continue to be a space for networking and sharing best practise but will also be for Inviting guest speakers & thought leaders, developing Equality, Diversity & Inclusion practise across the region (not currently being explored), sharing training opportunities to make it affordable and building social change, together.

VOLUNTEERING

At AVA we support local volunteering in two ways...

We maintain a database of volunteering opportunities and publicise these (in an anonymised form) by the bi-monthly circulation of a hard copy brochure to libraries, churches, doctor's surgeries and community centres. Some people want help in identifying a suitable placement, discuss further an opportunity they have already identified or want to explore if a placement best suits their circumstances and skills. We help potential volunteers by advice and in making initial contact with the organisations concerned.

Volunteers are also vitally important to AVA in that they are key to the provision of our own services. All volunteers are covered by AVA's insurance, which includes some personal accident cover, and all expenses are reimbursed.

ADUR COMMUNITY TRANSPORT (ACT)

The service had continued to experience steady growth prior to the pandemic, despite modest price increases to the hire charges, but was immediately very badly hit by the first lockdown. We are in the process of undertaking a review of customer intentions as we emerge from the Covid-19 regulations.

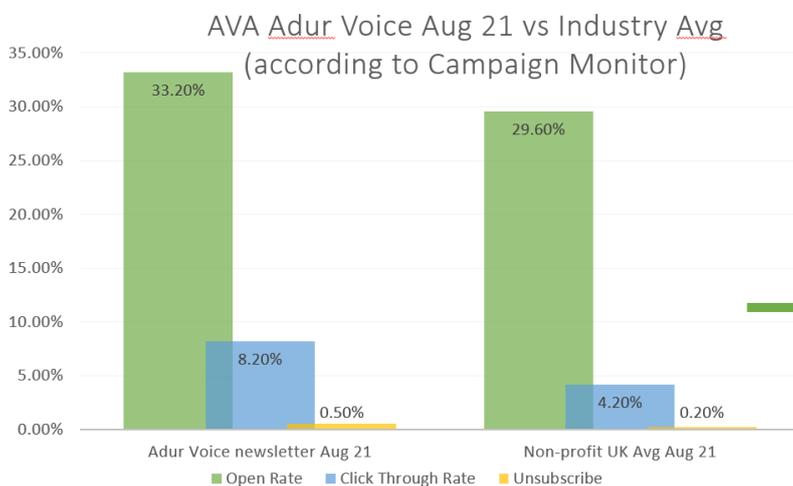
More pressingly, the current minibus is now getting somewhat old and we will need to identify a fundraising strategy for its replacement, if the service is to continue.

If the transport function of AVA does continue, in line with our values, the plan is to replace the current bus with an electric minibus. This would mean that AVA were able to provide clean community transport across the district, something that is not currently available. We have discussed working together, in partnership, with Community Transport Sussex, and depending on what the review concludes, we will start seeking funding for an electric vehicle.

ADUR VOICE NEWSLETTER

We continue to be members of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and to receive their information bulletins on issues of interest to the sector. Updating our organisations directory, and our IT review, has enabled us to resume the circulation of our own newsletter to 200+ local contacts.

We will continue to circulate information on sources of charitable trust funding and are happy to circulate announcements from local CVS organisations about events, job opportunities or other items of interest.



UK Benchmarks Aug 21

	OPEN RATE	CLICK-THROUGH RATE	UNSUB RATE
Advertising & Marketing Agencies	20.7%	2.9%	0.2%
Agriculture, Forestry, Fishing & Hunting	38.9%	5.2%	0.4%
Consumer Packaged Goods	24.5%	3.5%	0.3%
Education	33.2%	4.9%	0.3%
Financial Services	20.1%	2.2%	0.3%
Food & Beverages	22.4%	1.1%	0.4%
Government & Politics	26.1%	3.8%	0.2%
Healthcare Services	19.1%	1.2%	0.1%
IT / Tech / Software Services	18.6%	2.4%	0.2%
Logistics & Wholesale	25.3%	1.7%	0.2%
Media, Entertainment, & Publishing	21.7%	3.1%	0.1%
Nonprofit	29.6%	4.2%	0.2%
Other	18.7%	2.1%	0.2%
Professional Services	23.7%	3.3%	0.3%
Real Estate, Design & Construction Activities	19.6%	2.8%	0.3%
Retail	13.0%	0.9%	0.0%
Travel, Hospitality, & Leisure	22.7%	2.2%	0.1%
Wellness & Fitness	40.5%	4.0%	1.2%
Average	16.4%	1.6%	0.1%

Source: <https://www.campaignmonitor.com/resources/guides/uk-email-marketing-benchmarks/> & https://www.campaignmonitor.com/wp-content/uploads/2020/01/2021-cm-uk-benchmarks-guide-graphs_CM-UK-Email-Benchmarks-Benchmarks-Industry-Averages-Chart.png

WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

Our operating from new premises in the Community Space building presents us with both new opportunities and challenges. Opportunities in the sense of having greater proximity to a greater range of local groups which will in all likelihood feed into our intelligence gathering, volunteering, advice, support and communications functions. Challenges in that in sharing a building with Community Space we have the opportunity to further develop harmonious working relationships to the benefit of both our organisations.

In many ways our plans remain unchanged. We continue to look towards AVA again being a key support body to the CVS in Adur. We feel that overall we are now a much stronger and better placed organisation to help shape our own services and the local efforts required to emerge positively from the pandemic. Our systems are in the process of becoming much better and we have already begun reviewing and redefining our role in what is likely to be a very much changed environment.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks must go to all the staff and volunteers who over the past two very eventful years, pandemics included, have assisted the trustees in contributing to AVA's recovery.

Thanks to Esteem for being generally supportive of AVA, and in particular for their help in managing Old School House.

Thanks to Community Space for their support, and for offering us a new home from September.

Funders have been acknowledged separately (see page 8)

BOARD MEMBERS ADVISORS, COLLEAGUES & VOLUNTEERS

AVA Board of Directors

John Kelly (Chair), Val Garland, John Hollington, Adrienne Lowe, Robin Ready, Charmaine Skinner (to Sept 2021)

AVA colleagues:

CEO: Emilie Fellingham

Adur Community Transport: Sarah Leeding.

Financial Administrator: Keri Hamblin

AVA Advisors and Volunteers:

Community Transport Drivers: Keith Mitchell, Julian Read

Fundraising Volunteer: David Richardson

General Advisers: Jonathan Smith, Robin Olivier

IT & Digital Support Volunteer: Paul Shepherd

Outreach Service Volunteer: Andy Brook

REGISTERED CHARITY NO: 1131610
LIMITED COMPANY NO: 6922401

HOW TO CONTACT AVA

COMMUNITY SPACE, HAM ROAD, SHOREHAM, BN43 6PA
MAIN OFFICE: TEL 01273 031593, EMAIL: INFO@ADURVA.ORG

WWW.ADURVA.ORG