



ADUR VOLUNTARY

ACTION



# ANNUAL REPORT

2024 - 2025

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# A FEW WORDS FROM OUR CHAIR



## ADRIENNE LOWE | CHAIR

This year has seen a further expansion of the work of Adur Voluntary Action due in no small part to the Trustees, Advisors and Staff working together to fulfil our Vision Statement of fostering caring, connected and co-operative communities across Adur. With the continuance of National Lottery funding, AVA has had the opportunity to tackle inequalities in our society and become stronger for it. The expansion into premises in Lancing and 'pop-ups' in Lancing Parish Hall and Fishersgate has enabled us to move into new areas and take our services to where the people are.

During the year, we said goodbye to our CEO, Saffi Price. Her enthusiasm, knowledge, commitment and bubbly personality has rubbed off on everyone at AVA and we are very grateful to her for her contribution to AVA's current success. We welcomed Karen Macleod, who was already working for us as our Development Worker, to the post of Interim CEO, Jo Banks and Leonie Harmsworth as Development Workers and James Clarke as our Communications Officer. We also said goodbye to one of our Trustees, Jonathan Smith and thank him for his contribution over the last few years.

We continue to focus on our core purposes of building up our volunteering centre, support for voluntary groups, developing networks and partnerships, and supporting Adur's charities as well as running our activities. My thanks go to all the Staff who have worked tirelessly over the year to allow AVA to expand, to the Trustees for freely giving their time, expertise and enthusiasm and to the Advisors for their commitment to AVA. We all look forward to what the future has to hold.

# OUR VISION

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

## OUR VISION IS ABOUT WHY WE EXIST

A collaborative, sustainable and inclusive Voluntary and Community Sector which supports people and communities and contributes to positive change in Adur.

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

Offer developmental support to Adur's voluntary and community sector.

Provide activities, information and knowledge to contribute to a thriving Adur.

Promote and facilitate co-operation, connection, leadership and advocacy.

Encourage people to use their strengths and abilities through volunteering and social action.

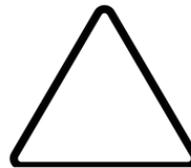
Help organisations to connect with volunteers.



LOCAL



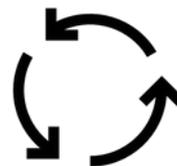
COLLABORATIVE



INDEPENDENT



INCLUSIVE



SUSTAINABLE



EMPOWERING



CREATIVE



ENVIRONMENTALLY RESPONSIBLE

# DEVELOPING THE TEAM



**COLLABORATIVE**

This year we continued to develop and grow the team with more staffing changes at AVA.

In April, Saffi Price retired as CEO for AVA and Karen Macleod became the interim CEO, and alongside the Board of Trustees, continues to develop new opportunities, fundraise, reports to funders and directly supports all areas of delivery.

Jo Banks and Leonie Harmsworth both joined the AVA team in spring as Development Workers, taking over from Karen and also expanding the AVA team and it's capacity to deliver project and organisational support.

Sarah Leeding has continued to work to connect volunteers with opportunities and help organisations to find valuable volunteers to help in delivering much needed services.



Keri Hamblin continues to ensure that AVA has strong financial governance which in turn ensures we are able to continue to deliver new projects and services for the sector and communities.



James Clarke leads our communications and helps grow connections across Adur.

# AVA PROJECTS

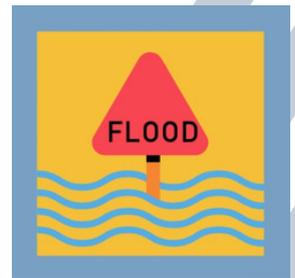
## Digital Essentials

We have continue to run our Digital Skills sessions, and currently we run these as short, 6 week courses throughout the year as well as occasional pop up events in local community venues. Take up of this support offer is good and learners are able to book onto as many courses as they feel they need to be confident online. Thank you to our great team of Digital Champions for helping at these sessions.



## Community Emergency Response

In March 2025 we completed our work on Voluntary and Community Sector responses to flooding which included how local organisations can be involved in emergency responses at every stage, from planning to recovery and also how they can be vital to identifying vulnerable members of the community. Even though this work has finished, we continue to work with the Sussex Resilience Form and other partners to support emergency response work locally.



## Adur Repair Cafe for Lancing

We launched the Lancing Repair Cafe in October 2024 and the sessions are thriving. We have a wide range of items brought into the cafe including coffee machines, hoovers, clocks and textiles and on average, we fix 70% of items brought in. This is a great resource for the community and a huge thank you to everyone who volunteers at the sessions.



## Craftivism

This year we began our Craftivism sessions, this project allows people to use crafting as a medium to express themselves and allows a gentle form of activism. Our first project has been a community mural project around what people love about their local area. Participants have created 9"x 9" designs which are being constructed into a series of hanging panels. It has been wonderful to see all the different squares people have made and see all the things people love about Lancing. Thank you to everyone who has contributed to the mural and to Sylvia who has lead the project.



# AVA'S LOCAL PRESENCE

## Shoreham

AVA's work continues from the Co-op Community Space in Ham Road, where we meet with people on an appointment basis - AVA thanks Rosie Denham for the continued use of this space.

## Lancing

We continue to work from our shared office space in Station Parade, South Street, Lancing and we also operate a "drop in" session one morning a week from Lancing Parish Hall Community Hub where we meet with local organisations and members of the community, thank you to Lancing Council for hosting us.

## Fishersgate

This year we started a "drop in" session in Fishersgate, and we are enjoying getting to know the local community there. Thank you to everyone at The Gateway Hub for hosting us there.

Our "drop in" sessions in the community are vital to our work as they allow us to go "where the people are" and form trust based relationships within the communities we support.

## FOCUSING OUR EFFORTS ON THE FOUR FUNCTIONS OF LOCAL INFRASTRUCTURE:

AVA are proud to be members of NAVCA (the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and we work closely with them in order to share and learn good practice and influence and shape our national body and statutory partners. NAVCA have developed four key functions to help explain what local infrastructure. We use these to inform our work.

1

Leadership and advocacy

Mobilising and encouraging community action, strengthening our sector's voice and influence on key decision-makers and funders.

2

Partnerships and Collaborations

Creating opportunities and driving effective joint working, by building networks of local organisations and strategic partners.

3

Capacity Building

Providing practical support and development for local people and organisations, to nurture skills and build community resilience.

4

Volunteering

Building an environment in which volunteers and their communities thrive, by encouraging and nurturing volunteering opportunities.

# CORE SERVICES

## VISIT US



AVA operates an appointment-based service for anyone alongside a drop-in to our office in Lancing on a Monday or Wednesday. We also run drop-in community based sessions in the Lancing Community Hub on a Thursday morning and at the Gateway Hub in Fishersgate on a Monday morning. If you are making a special journey, it is best to contact us first.



## SUPPORT

During this year, we worked with many local groups and organisations to support their development. We help with:

- how to set up a group or organisation
- securing funding and supporting application writing
- collaboration, connecting and local intelligence
- good governance and reporting techniques
- working to The Charities Commission guidance
- promoting services and activities locally

## CHARITY CHAT



Our "Charity Chat" sessions are open to small community, charity or volunteer groups and volunteers across Adur and this year took place every second Wednesday of the Month.

It is a friendly, welcoming space for networking and sharing best practice, hear from guest speakers, funders and thought leaders to support a sustainable and connected Adur area.



## VOLUNTEER CENTRE 2025



AVA's Volunteer Centre is at the centre of our work. In the year past 12 months we had 263 volunteer role enquiries, registered 170 volunteers, made 227 referrals to organisations and placed 103 volunteers. Our face to face offer continues to be a strength for our volunteer centre and provides an in person service for those who can not or do not wish to use the online platform.

## INFORMATION



Our communications are very important to us. We are working to reach even more people and this year have increased our social media presence as well as continuing to publish our Adur Voice and Adur Volunteer newsletters. This year we also launched our "new look" website which has refreshed the appearance of the website and made it easier to navigate.

## FUNDS & POST HOLDING FOR GROUPS



From time to time we have hosted small budgets for community groups. AVA is pleased to continue to offer this support for small start-up projects, with a small fee to cover staff time. We also offer to hold post for start-up groups at our Lancing address.

# AVA IN THE COMMUNITY

During the past year, we have taken part in various community events and initiatives. These include:

**Cost of living event:** This was an event held in Fishersgate showcasing support available for cutting the cost of living.

**Shoreham Health Fair:** Networking and showcasing event for local services.

**Royal Voluntary Service Find it Out Fair:** An event showcasing local charities and support.

**Folds Community Fair:** A community fair in Shoreham with various groups and charities.

**Lancing Village Trail:** We take part in the Lancing Village Trails where we open the office up to local people and provide a “clue” on the village trail.

**Gateway Hub Open Day:** This was an open day where the Gateway Hub invited local groups, councillors and members of the public to see the work they do. AVA also helped support this event.

**Adur Festival Revival:** We are part of the core group planning the relaunch of the Adur Festival in 2026.

**Thriving Together:** AVA were devolution community facilitators for Lancing where we engaged with the local community enabling them to have their say on issues that matter to them which will help inform devolution priorities.

**Volunteer’s Week:** To celebrate volunteer week, we held a “thank you” party for AVA volunteers and volunteers from local groups. This was extremely well attended and everyone enjoyed themselves. It was a great way to celebrate volunteers and the work they do.

**Local Alliance Partnership:** Information stall at The Local Alliance Partnership Retro Family Fun Day.



# FUNDRAISING

## Thank you to all of our funders!



### National Lottery - Reaching Communities Fund

AVA secured running costs for 3 years from Jan 2022 to Dec 2025. This funding has helped us to grow our offer, develop our work in Lancing and remain an independent place-based local infrastructure organisation.



### Sussex Resilience Forum

We have been funded to pilot a community flood response across Adur in the year April 2024 - March 2025.



### Clarion Futures

AVA have been supported by Clarion Futures to run Digital Essentials, our digital inclusion project between 2023/2025



### Sussex Community Foundation

SCF have been great supporters of our work over a number of years. In the year 24/25 we received a grant to help increase our digital outreach.



### Lancing Council

We have been supported this current year with a small grant for our Repair Cafe in Lancing.



### Hyde Housing Match My Project

We have been supported by users of the Hyde Housing Match My Project scheme and we have received funding for our Repair Cafe through this platform.

# WHAT THE FUTURE HOLDS

## KAREN MACLEOD INTERIM CHIEF OFFICER



Over the course of many decades, AVA has shown itself to be determined, adaptable and resilient, and as we move into the next year, we continue with that spirit of resilience, determination and hope. Like many organisations, securing core funding continues to be a challenge and we have submitted a Reaching Communities application to try to secure funding for another 3 years. As we await the outcome of this bid we continue to seek new opportunities and resources to further our vision and mission. Whatever happens, we remain hopeful for AVA. We have a strong board of trustees, a dynamic team of staff and an amazing bunch of AVA volunteers. We also strongly believe in the work we are doing and the value of the support we provide to both the sector and the communities we serve.

Once more, we have a lot to be proud of this year with the success of our AVA projects including Digital Skills Sessions, Repair Cafe and Craftivism. We have also supported a wide range of organisations from wild flower trails and community gardens to baby banks and community hubs. One of the wonderful things about working for AVA is meeting all the amazing groups and individuals who are making positive differences to their local communities. It is truly an honour for AVA to work with these brilliant projects, supporting them where we can, and seeing the wonderful work they do.

Looking ahead, we hope to continue our work in the Adur area, both in terms of supporting the sector and also in delivering activities and services that benefit the local community. As we end 2025 and look towards 2026 we will continue to work in local communities, support local groups, enable people to take action on the issues that matter to them and help communities become connected, cohesive and resilient.

Thank you for your ongoing support, we hope you will stay in touch with us as we continue this journey and we look forward to moving together towards a bright future for everyone.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Special thanks must go to all the staff and volunteers who over the past year have assisted the trustees in contributing to AVA's growth and put the organisation on a good footing for the future.

Thanks to Co-op Community Space, Shoreham, Electric Storm Youth, Lancing Parish Hall Community Hub and The Gateway Hub for their support by hosting us.

## TRUSTEES, COLLEAGUES AND ADVISORS,

### AVA Board of Trustees:

Adrienne Lowe (Chair)  
David Richardson (Vice-Chair)  
Val Garland,  
Trevor Bignell  
Sally Clark

### AVA colleagues:

Interim Chief Executive Officer: Karen Macleod  
Development Worker: Leonie Harmsworth  
Development Worker: Jo Banks  
Volunteer Administrator: Sarah Leeding  
Financial Administrator: Keri Hamblin  
Communications Officer: James Clarke

### AVA Advisors:

Robin Olivier  
IT and Digital Support Volunteer: Paul Shepherd



**We welcome new members and are looking for additional Trustees.**

**If you are interested in finding out more, please contact us:**

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# Thank you



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