



**Funding Review for Salisbury City Council  
1<sup>st</sup> April –Dec 2019 (9 months).**

**Amount awarded:** £20k

**Project Deliverables**

**1. Training:**

WCA offer high quality, affordable and accessible training tailored to the needs of the Voluntary and Community sector on a month by month basis. WCA works with trainers from the private sector who are specialists in the sector and in their fields of expertise. They are committed to ensuring that limited financial resources do not stop the voluntary and community sector accessing first class training.

Our training programme provides organisations with both the tools and skills they need to build proficiency, confidence and improve effectiveness.

We provided a wide and diverse training programme and offered 32 affordable training sessions to date.

Charities are now seeing WCA as their local training provider and we are working with charities to deliver bespoke programs to meet their organisation's needs. This includes Trussel Trust, Alabare, Women's Refuge and Wiltshire Creative

Examples of training delivered:

- Managing Safety for Volunteer Staff
- Effective & Positive Communication
- Cyber Security
- Make Someone Welcome
- Emergency First Aid at Work
- QNUK Level 2 Award in Safeguarding Adults in Health & Social Care
- Fundraising for the Terrified
- Microsoft Word/Excel Going Further
- Microsoft Publisher
- Mental Health in the Workplace QNUK Level 2

Quotes from participants:

'Very informative, really helped me confirm and develop my knowledge base'

'Excellent course, really helped my understanding of excel'

'Well-paced and enjoyable'

## 2. Information and Advice

WCA provide a range of information for organisations, from starting a new community group through to growing, expanding and building the capacity and skills of existing Trustees, staff and volunteers. This is provided through 1-2-1 support; links to other organisations and information sheets and templates.

To date we have supported and advised 73 organisations. Level of support can vary significantly from detailed 1-2-1 support which can include regular meetings over a period of time to telephone consultations which result in information being sent such as templates/policies and procedures etc. This is often followed by additional support such as reviewing draft documents for groups. Recent examples of groups supported in the last 9 months include the Muslim Women's Group; Family Counselling Trust; Co Class Cancer group; Salisbury Pride. We have also supported two groups in their applications for charitable status.

WCA evaluate the 1-2-1 support we offer organisations and groups have told us that they are 'very satisfied' with the service they got; they rated the quality of the information they were given as 'excellent' and that the information provided 'surpassed' their expectations.

## 3. Voluntary Sector Forums

In 2019 WCA supported the development of the Volunteer Managers Forum. A bespoke Forum aimed to support managers develop and build capacity of their organisational volunteer workforce.

35 organisations (70% Salisbury based) are now part of this Forum and a steering group has been established and bespoke training programs for managers being developed by WCA.

The Forum acts as a peer support group for managers and the Forum uses the **Action Learning Sets** model, facilitated by WCA, to offer peer support and development.

Training undertaken by the Forum so far includes: ***Make Someone Welcome*** and ***Developing Personal Profiles for Volunteers*** and ***Volunteer Risk Assessments***.

We have also been supporting the development of existing group, Safer and Supportive Salisbury (SaSS) with their transitional plans, the development of a constitution and moving towards the establishment of a formal steering group.

## 4. Volunteer Week June 2019

Volunteers are central to the work of countless charities and other organisations including public bodies like Councils and hospitals. They are a valuable presence in many communities, making a difference in places as diverse as sports clubs, libraries, schools and hospitals. Of the 121 organisations surveyed recently, together they engaged 5,555 volunteers. If they're voluntary work was paid for at the real living wage of £9 phr. then the annual cost and value to Wiltshire economy would be around £4.5m.

WCA see this as an essential annual event to deliver and support.

The main event took place at the Salisbury Library on the 4<sup>th</sup> June as part of National Volunteering Week and was supported by the Mayor of Salisbury.

17 organisations participated in the event promoting their volunteering opportunities as well as demonstrations given on using and registering with Volunteer Connect, which is the on-line system for registering and advertising volunteer placements and offers of volunteers.

The event was to encourage those that are interested in volunteering to visit the library to see what volunteering opportunities were on offer, as well as having an opportunity to speak directly to organisations about their work should they wish to.

There were volunteers on hand throughout the day for visitors to speak to directly about what it's like to volunteer and understand the value and benefits of volunteering.

The annual campaign, which was established in 1984, recognises the contribution volunteers make to our communities every day.

## 5. Newsletter

WCA produce a monthly newsletter that has a circulation of 800+. We have produced 13 newsletters to date.

Organisations can subscribe and access the latest news, research and policies/legislation affecting the sector, as well as promoting their own events; job adverts etc. In the last year we have increased our newsletter membership from 400 subscribers to 800 registered users. The newsletter is also communicated via our social media. Feedback received from organisations:

***'Once again I would like to compliment you on another excellent newsletter'***

***'Just a note to say, the newsletter this month was very good and we value its content, thank you'***

## 6. Other services

WCA provides an extensive resource library for new and existing groups. This information resource reduces any need for re-inventing the wheel and has the added value of reducing overwhelm in groups, boosting confidence, and develops greater understanding and skills required when they are starting out, or expanding/reviewing their services or projects.

WCA continue to offer room hire for new groups for free, until such time they can access funding and get established.

Our existing photocopying service, offered to groups at cost, is beneficial to those wishing to do large print runs and staple and assemble documents.

We also offer equipment for supporting new groups without funds, with items such as display boards, projectors and in some cases computers for training purposes. We also support groups to undertake DBS checks and help check paper work etc.

## 7. Consultation with the Voluntary and Community Sector

The National Lottery Communities Fund has recognised that the VCS in Wiltshire has been underperforming in securing grant funding in recent years. In part this is due to the fact organisations don't know where to seek support and what support available to them. Also due to the lack of robust governance that is necessary in securing funds.

Following initial discussions over the causes of this, WCA was awarded a development grant in March 2019 by the Lottery, to undertake an independent study into the 'Support Needs of Voluntary and Community Organisations in Wiltshire'. This study was completed during the summer with over 120 organisations responding to an online survey; 23% were from Salisbury. There was a reasonable organisational spread and representation from different sizes, structures and purpose. A report was issued in October 2019 and has been circulated widely.

The key themes that emerged from the research were:

- Financial Sustainability
- Recruiting and developing volunteers, particularly trustees
- Training and management development
- Enabling collaboration and connection
- Collaborative support framework
- Specialist advice and guidance

50 of the organisations who were surveyed and knew of WCA stated that it was WCA's role to support and advise the sector.

WCA have now made a commitment to seek funds to support the sector around these identified themes. Recognising that there is a need to develop links into the geographically separated communities of Wiltshire and that effective communication links will take time to develop, it has been decided to stage a two phased approach: initially, to focus on the VCS in Salisbury in the next two years.

**Amber Skyring - CEO**  
**Wessex Community Action**  
**6<sup>th</sup> January 2020**