

DAVENTRY VOLUNTEER CENTRE Business Plan 2022-2025

a) Introduction:

Daventry Voluntary Centre (DVC) is the accredited Volunteer Centre for the Daventry District of West Northamptonshire. This Strategic Plan sets out our direction for the next three years, from April 2022 to March 2025, and covers the transition period to the new unitary government structure of West Northamptonshire Council. It takes account of the rapidly changing external environment for the voluntary & community sector, with increased levels of need and unprecedented reductions in public spending. It recognises that the population of the Daventry District is projected to rise more rapidly than the national average, with the fastest growing age bracket amongst older people, requiring an increase in accessible services at a time when resources are at best, over-stretched.

b) Daventry Volunteer Centre's Mission Statement:

To improve the lives of the local residents of the Daventry Town and District by mobilising the power of community and individual action.

c) The aims of Daventry Volunteer Centre are:

- 1) To act as the Volunteer Brokerage Centre for the Daventry District of West Northamptonshire and the Local Infrastructure Organisation, supporting local voluntary and community sector groups and not for profit organisations.
- 2) To improve the quality of life of residents of the Daventry District of West Northamptonshire and develop opportunities for people to help others, and in the process, develop their own skills, potential, health & wellbeing through volunteering.
- 3) To operate effective direct services in West Northamptonshire (projects) to meet local needs using volunteer support.
- 4) To encourage good practice in the recruitment and support of volunteers.
- 5) To actively engage in partnership working with statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies.

- 6) For the benefits of volunteering for volunteers, commissioners and wider society to be properly understood, evidenced and mapped and to be recognised as a vital part on a successful community and economy.
- 7) To inform local residents of the personal benefits of volunteering and how to access information and opportunities.
- 8) To offer an inclusive volunteer brokerage service which enables people with extra support needs such as mental health issues, learning disability, long-term unemployment etc., to improve their quality of life through the volunteering process, and to increase the numbers of local not for profit organisations offering volunteering opportunities to volunteers with additional support needs.
- 9) That DVC is known as the hub for information, advice and guidance on all things volunteering; a place where funders come when they want to discuss their agendas and potential funding opportunities for Volunteering issues, and organisations are supported to deliver a quality volunteering experience locally.
- 10) That the DVC hosted Voluntary and Community Sector Forum will be acknowledged by the local authorities, funders, other agencies and stakeholders, as the “voice of local VCSE organisations”, reflecting the views of local voluntary & community organisations.
- 11) That all Volunteers helping on DVC projects will be individually matched to roles which provide them with an appropriate level of meaning, challenge and support and enables them to reach their maximum potential and attain personal satisfaction.

d) Core Activities:

DVC has the following core activities:

- 1) Strategic Development of Volunteering: DVC will ensure an organisational Business plan is in place supporting the long-term sustainability of volunteering support locally, and includes a strategy for volunteering across the Daventry District (Appendix 2). DVC are committed to developing strong relationships with other volunteer stakeholders working on volunteering development across the local community.
- 2) Good Practice Development: DVC will ensure the importance of effective volunteering management is promoted throughout organisations from all sectors involving or providing volunteers locally. DVC will offer appropriate training in partnership with other organisations and agencies, to increase the knowledge base of its own staff and volunteers as well as that of other individual organisations and groups at all levels.

- 3) **Developing Volunteering Opportunities:** DVC will work with local statutory, voluntary and private sector agencies as well as community groups and faith groups to develop the scope and range of local volunteering opportunities, and improve the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering locally, using the Community Action Northants website platform (Northamptonshire's volunteering opportunities hub).
- 4) **Voice of Volunteering:** DVC will maintain an awareness of local, regional and national government proposals and policies and other issues that have an impact on volunteering. The DVC will host the a Voluntary & Community Sector Forum in order to raise awareness of the issues impacting on Volunteering and the work of volunteer involving organisations, with statutory bodies, funders, partner agencies and other local stakeholders. DVC will lead on and/or participate in campaigns on issues that affect Volunteering on behalf of local Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) organisations.
- 5) **Brokerage:** The primary function of DVC is to run a volunteering service appropriate to the needs of the local people and voluntary and community sector organisations. The DVC brokerage service will be marketed and promoted to all sectors outlining the benefits of volunteering for all. Information on a comprehensive range of opportunities will be maintained through the Community Action Northants (CAN) website, and volunteers are also offered 1 to 1 support to find opportunities that match their motivation, skills, and interests.
- 6) **Infrastructure Support:** We will continue to provide capacity building support (funding advice, governance support, start-up advice etc.) to local VCSE groups, and encourage partnership working to share resources and reduce any duplication of services. We will promote and develop an inter-connected voluntary and community sector, where knowledge and experience can be shared with ease. We will continue to host the local Voluntary & Community Sector Forum to provide a platform for local VCSE organisations to meet with, network with, and raise local issues with statutory bodies, funders, partner agencies and other local stakeholders.

e) Requirements for Success:

In order to successfully discharge the above core functions, supportive policies and activities are identified. These may be considered in three main categories i.e. funding, Governance, Policies and Resources Management. Where appropriate, supporting objectives, success measures and actions appear in Appendix 1 of this business plan.

- 1) **Funding:** The Centre depends crucially on both core funding and project funding to deliver its services. Funding is derived from a variety of sources including commissioning from the local authorities at Town, and Unitary level,

National bodies dispensing public funds, as well as funding from Trusts, Foundations and other non-public sector organisations. The strategy for securing funding needs to be carefully planned and effectively executed, with the priority on obtaining sustainable funding, to assist future strategic planning, and reduce staff time devoted to this activity. The funding plan for the next 3 years is contained in Appendix 1.

- 2) Governance: The Centre is managed in accordance with its constitution (see Appendix 2). The Centre adheres to all its policies, but is especially pro-active in ensuring diversity and equal opportunities in all aspects of the work (see Appendix 3).
- 3) Resources management:
 - i. The Centre operates within budget constraints and to planned budget outcomes facilitated by appropriate accounting reports and controls. A copy of the most recent independently examined accounts is contained in Appendix 6.
 - ii. The Centre achieves and maintains planned staffing levels.
 - iii. The Centre achieves planned support in relation to IT, office accommodation and other equipment including vehicles, to meet internal needs and to support other voluntary organisations.
 - iv. The Centre trains and develops its staff and volunteers in a supervisory capacity, to realise their full potential, and to meet current and future needs.

f) Background Information:

- 1) The Daventry area is a large, mainly rural area of 257 square miles within West Northamptonshire, made up of 74 parishes plus the expanding town of Daventry, where around 25,000 of the Districts 84,484 population live (2018 ONS data). Daventry town is a market, shopping and administrative town, and is the District's main employment centre. More than half of the District's 78 villages have a population of less than 300, while the three larger villages of Brixworth, Long Buckby and Moulton each have a population of more than 3000. The residents form 31,647 households, 74% of which are owned, 14% are social housing and 12% are privately rented. The population is expected to have risen by 7.9% by 2021. The fastest growing age bracket is those aged 60 – 64 years.
- 2) Daventry Volunteer Centre is a registered Charity (No: 802879 since 1990), run by a board of Trustees with a wealth of experience and skills from the public, private and voluntary and community sectors. There are currently 3

full time paid staff members, 14 part-time paid project staff, and 1 part-time Admin worker, supported by teams of volunteers.

- 3) The Voluntary and Community Sector Membership of DVC includes around 250 local groups. Members are offered capacity building support (funded through West Northamptonshire Council) plus good practice information and advice, information on the DVC website and a link to their organisation, regular information e-bulletins including consultations, funding information, and access to free or low-cost training opportunities, and membership of the DVC's Voluntary & Community Sector Forum.

g) Current Resources:

- 1) DVC is currently staffed as follows:

CEO/Infrastructure Contract/DDWF Management/Volunteer Brokerage & Project Management	37 hours p/w
Deputy CEO and Happy @ Home Project Manager	37 hours p/w
3 x Happy @ Home project staff	3x 20 hours p/w
3 x Covid Recovery project staff	Totalling 40 hours p/w
Milk&You Breastfeeding project Co-ordinator	37 hours p/w
5 x Milk&You Breastfeeding project Workers	2 x 14 hours p/w 3 x 16 hours p/w
Horizon project staff	2 x 20 hours p/w
New Street Café project Community Cook	16 hours p/w
DVC Admin worker	13 hours p/w
Office Volunteers	Flexible

- 2) The staffing structure for 2022/2025 is contained in appendix 5.

h) Current Activities:

- 1) Daventry Volunteer Centre's principal business is to act as a Volunteer Centre and local infrastructure organisation (LIO), offering support to frontline organisations, promoting and developing all aspects of Volunteering. A summary of the range of core activities is contained in the Section d) above.
- 2) The Centre is involved in a wide range of partnership activities including the local Health & Wellbeing Partnership Board (HWPB), Welfare Reform Board, LION (Local Infrastructure Organisations Northamptonshire), Northamptonshire Development & Funding Workers Network, the National Social Prescribing ALS (Action Learning Sets) of the Thriving Communities learning programme, and the Health & Wellbeing Board development sessions.
- 3) The Daventry Voluntary and Community Sector Forum established by DVC in 2001, is the "voice of the voluntary & community sector". The Forum exists to foster networking, information and partnership working amongst local voluntary and community organisations and not for profit groups, statutory agencies, funders, local businesses, and other interested organisations. The forum provides a platform for consultation, enables an election process for local VCSE representatives to strategic boards, acts as a communication and information conduit for the voluntary & community sector, offers training and support to members and feeds into the Northamptonshire Assembly.
- 4) DVC has over thirty years of experience in the recruitment and support of volunteers, and in the development of volunteering in the local area. DVC is linked to Community Action Northants Volunteering Database (<https://communityactionnorthants.org.uk/>) where the Centre maintains volunteering opportunities on behalf of VCSE organisations operating in the Daventry and South Northants areas. DVC acts as a catalyst and facilitator to continuously increase volunteering effort in the Daventry area for the benefit, not only of the VCSE organisations supported, but also of the volunteers themselves, and the local economy, from the skills development and personal growth achieved as a result of volunteering.

i) Current Projects:

- 1) The Happy @ Home project is a Lottery funded and collaborative partnership with VIN (Voluntary Impact Northamptonshire), aligned with the Countywide Befriending project and the COVID Recovery projects, running across West

Northamptonshire to offer information, support and befriending with the aim of reducing isolation and loneliness in older people. In addition, the project runs social events and activities which act as a conduit for providing information about local services and promoting awareness of the project. The project is funded by the Lottery Community Fund.

- 2) The Milk&You's project vision is that no new mother is left feeling isolated during the early years of parenting, and that all mothers are given the opportunity to build social networks that reflect their cultural, social and emotional health needs. A range of support is given to mothers across Daventry, South Northants and Corby areas that help new mothers to feel they are part of a community that supports their choice of infant feeding.
- 3) The Horizon project is funded by The Henry Smith Foundation for 3 years to support and enable individuals with a wide range of extra support needs to participate in volunteering opportunities, undertake training and skills building, benefit from 1-1 tailored support aimed at increasing health & wellbeing & community connections, and take part in social activities and events.
- 4) The Daventry Time Banking project is a community mutual help scheme using the sharing and exchanging of volunteer skills. Volunteers are rewarded with "credits" for donated skills, e.g. dog walking, babysitting, book keeping, DIY etc. which they can use for themselves, or donate back to the Time Bank for others who need them. This project is innovative in that it has proved to be highly successful in recruiting volunteers from marginalised groups, and those not usually involved in volunteering.
- 5) The BBO project (Working Progress support into Employment). The "Building Better Opportunities" programme is funded by the Big Lottery and European Social Fund and is an initiative that helps local people to gain training, education, volunteering opportunities and employment. The project helps those furthest from the job market to access a variety of support that aims to firstly improve their confidence, health and wellbeing in order to be able to access training, volunteering and other support that will eventually lead them towards finding paid employment.
- 6) The New Street Café project is a Community Café offering services to meet the needs of isolated elderly and vulnerable people in the local community. The Cafe is open 4 mornings a week and a team of volunteers are supported to cook and serve hot food and drinks to older people, and weekly home cooked Community Lunches to 40 elderly people. In addition, a variety of activities take place in the Cafe (Craft group/Knit & Natter/Art Group) and regular drop-in sessions are arranged with organisations promoting well-being for older people. (Police, Age UK, Royal British Legion, Healthwatch).

j) Anticipated changes in the Environment:

1) Daventry District is situated in West Northamptonshire and has a population of approximately 84,484 (source: Office of National Statistics 2018). The district is largely rural, made up of one market town (Daventry) and 74 Parishes containing 78 villages. The district forms part of the Milton Keynes South Midlands growth area and Daventry Town is set to increase its population to around 40,000 by 2021. A huge urban expansion is planned over the next 20 years to build 3000 new houses, new accommodation for the elderly, new schools and a Country Park extension.

Projection figures also show that the population of Daventry District is expected to rise more rapidly than the national average with an expected percentage of change by 2026 of 49%, compared to 16% growth in the East Midlands and 17% growth in the United Kingdom.

Older People Population of Daventry District: The Social Exclusion taskforce and DEFRA have undertaken a National study on Older People in Rural Areas in which it has identified Daventry District as being one of the top three local authorities with the greatest expected increases in the over 65 population, from 11,600 in 2008 to 20,400 by 2025. To further enhance the work that is already being carried out within the district, the Council has produced an Older Persons Strategy to help identify and implement the vision for older people's services throughout the district. The strategy places an emphasis on ensuring that all services are equally accessible to older people as well as ensuring the provision of specific services.

Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) Population of Daventry District: According to the 2001 Census, 4.3% of the population of Daventry District are from a Black and Minority Ethnic background, which is lower than the 8% average for Northamptonshire.

The increase in population will inevitably lead to greater numbers of people available for volunteering, which will put pressure on the DVC's brokerage service. The rise in the numbers of elderly people in the community will lead to increased need for support services, leading to additional pressure on the DVC's infrastructure support services for VCSE organisations.

2) DVC currently has a VCSE membership of around 250 organisations. With the increase in the population of Daventry town set to double over the next few years, and in particular the growth of the Older Population, there will be an associated growth in the number and size of VCSE organisations requiring support to build their capacity to deliver local services, and a demand from emerging new groups for start-up advice, governance, funding, good practice etc. This will put pressure on DVC's infrastructure support service to VCSE organisations.

3) The change to Northamptonshire's two-tier Unitary local government structure from April 2021 has impacted on Local Authority commissioned services and small

grant funding for projects. Any reduction in the amount of funding available to VCSE organisations will impact on our capacity to deliver services. Stringent public spending cuts challenge the way we are able to deliver our services and will lead to an increase in collaboration and partnership working arrangements.

4) The Volunteer Centre continues to embrace the fast-changing web-based technologies available in relation to volunteering. DVC have worked in partnership with the LIO's to fund, design and manage the (CAN) Community Action Northants website, which is the countywide volunteering portal. It is now time to invest in cloud-based CRM to replace our VBase, VCS Tracker and outdated analysis systems, offering versatility and hybrid modes of working to the DVC staff team, and enabling comprehensive monitoring of our KPI's.

k) Future Strategic Direction:

- 1) Over the next 3 years the DVC will seek to develop and expand collaborative partnerships that will impact on, strengthen and expand the work of the Centre, including the development of our existing projects and funding new projects that meet identified needs in the local community. Wherever collaborative partnership work would add value to DVC's service delivery, this will be actively considered by the Trustees.
- 2) DVC will keep its scope of operation under regular review through consultation and research, in order to evidence and respond to local need and plan effective future service provision.
- 3) Sustainable funding is critical to DVC's operation (see section 5 of Appendix 1). Over the next 3 years the DVC will seek to inject additional resources and effort into the core business of local infrastructure provision, developing diverse volunteering opportunities and recruiting and placing volunteers. This will require sustained and diligent effort to identify sources of long-term funding.
- 4) With the introduction of the new Unitary Authorities and the development of the new countywide VCSE Assembly, there is an increasing need for effective communication to ensure a proper flow of information and ideas between the VCSE, Unitary Authority and Statutory agencies. Over the next 3 years we will continue to promote the Daventry Voluntary and Community Sector Forum to increase attendance by VCSE organisation members, using virtual and physical meetings, and to promote opportunities for local VCSE representation on strategic boards across West Northamptonshire.

l) Business Objectives, Success Measures and Action Plans 2022/2025:

Business objectives, action plans and success measures have been developed which are intended to support the requirements of Sections c) and d) of this plan as well as reflecting Section k) further strategic direction. These are contained in Appendix 1.

Evaluation of the Business Objectives will be undertaken by the DVC Trustees annually, in consultation with key stakeholders.

Appendix 1 DVC Business Action Plan 2022/2025 including Funding Strategy (Section 5)

Appendix 2 Volunteering Strategy for the Daventry District

Appendix 3 DVC Constitution

Appendix 4 Diversity and equal opportunity policies

Appendix 5 DVC Organisational Structure

Appendix 6 DVC Accounts April 2020 to March 2021