

Meeting of:	Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee
Date of Meeting:	Monday, 27 January 2025
Relevant Scrutiny Committee:	All Scrutiny Committees
Report Title:	Glamorgan Voluntary Services (GVS) Annual Report 2023/24
Purpose of Report:	To provide the Committee with information of the work of GVS throughout the year April 2023-March 2024
Report Owner:	Rachel Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Glamorgan Voluntary Services
Responsible Officer:	Rachel Connor, Chief Executive Officer, Glamorgan Voluntary Services
Elected Member and Officer Consultation:	N/A
Policy Framework:	GVS represents the Third Sector on a range of VOGC Partnerships, Board and Joint Working Groups
Executive Summary:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The report summarises all areas of GVS activity during 2023/24.

Recommendation

1. That the Committee receive the report for information.

Reason for Recommendation

2. As required by the terms of the VOGC/GVS Deed of Grant.

1. Background

- 1.1 Glamorgan Voluntary Services is the County Voluntary Council (CVC) for the Vale of Glamorgan.
- 1.2 GVS is the umbrella body for the Vale of Glamorgan's third or voluntary sector and our role is to support, develop and represent third sector organisations and promote volunteering in the Vale of Glamorgan. We have a flourishing membership of some 775 community organisations active in the Vale of Glamorgan. We help to improve the quality of life of people and communities by supporting volunteers, volunteering opportunities and voluntary groups.
- 1.3 Thriving and cohesive communities require active engagement and involvement of local people. There is an increasing role for the third sector in the delivery of services and they have an invaluable role as partners and advocates for local communities. Our expert services help to provide a platform for a vibrant and robust voluntary sector.
- 1.4 Our Vision is of a valued and respected Voluntary Sector, in which GVS serves as a trusted leader, effective strategic partner and model of good practice for the Sector.
- 1.5 Our Mission is that GVS aspires to empower people, inspire excellence, and strengthen communities by stimulating and developing voluntary action.
- 1.6 Our values determine what we do and the way we do it. GVS is committed to:
 - Working collaboratively with others.
 - Being a learning and enabling organisation.
 - Conducting our business with integrity in an open, honest, transparent, and accountable way.
 - Recognising and valuing staff and volunteers as our greatest resource and investing in accordingly.
 - Voluntary and community action that is fundamental to the development of a democratic and socially inclusive society.
 - Diversity and equality of opportunity.
 - The value and roles of volunteers and is committed to volunteering.
 - Sustainable development.

- Valuing its independence and to working in mutually beneficial partnerships with others for the benefit of its citizens.
- The achievement of quality standards and services.

2. Key Issues for Consideration

This review looks at what we have achieved and the outcomes of our work in the preceding twelve months. The review also helps us ensure our aims, objectives and activities remained focused on our stated objectives. We have referred to the guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing our aims and objectives and in planning our future activities thus ensuring that we continue our promotion of any charitable purpose for the benefit of the communities in the County Borough of the Vale of Glamorgan and the surrounding areas and in particular, the advancement of education, the furtherance of health, the relief of poverty, distress and sickness.

2.1 Achievements in year

GVS' main achievements during the year fall into the following areas:

2.2 IT

2.3 Website

The GVS website is a major asset to the organisation and the wider Third Sector here in the Vale of Glamorgan. The website contains a range of information including the services we offer, learning opportunities and news updates that impact on the voluntary and community sector.

2.4 Social Media

GVS has made a commitment to ensure that Third Sector organisations operating in the Vale of Glamorgan can gain and build on their skills to make full use of 21st century communication mechanisms. A very comprehensive programme of training courses has been developed for groups and organisations operating in the Vale of Glamorgan to embrace Social Media. This, together with our own extensive use of social media, including Facebook and X, provides effective and useful tools to share news and information with our members and the wider sector.

2.5 Digital Platforms

During 2023/24 GVS, in partnership with County Voluntary Councils across Wales and Wales Council for Voluntary Action, continued to use a Wales Wide Customer Relationship Management System (CRM), a Wales Wide Volunteer Management System and a Wales Wide Funding Search Facility, Funding Wales.

2.6 Development and Advice Services

Our offices in Llantwit Major (Illtud House and CF61), Penarth (St. Paul's Community Centre) and Barry (Barry Community Enterprise Centre) continued to provide a range of Development and Advice Services. In addition to providing

services on a 1-2-1 basis, GVS continued to offer services online making our service provision more flexible and accessible. Our provision was open to members and potential members for advice and development work. We offered information and guidance to assist organisations to operate legally and efficiently e.g. by providing information on registering as a charity, how to put together a governing document and how to develop policies and procedures.

GVS has provided Third Sector organisations with a range of support to develop ideas and projects. Support has been offered in a variety of ways including face to face meetings, e-mail, telephone consultations and briefing sessions. Our range of GVS branded Information Sheets remain popular and these have been invaluable in helping us deal with the more general day to day enquiries. We endeavour to make sure that all our information is available online via our website, enabling our members to access appropriate development information and advice more effectively and at a time that suits them.

2.7 Information Service

We act as an information agency for and about our members, maintaining a comprehensive database and ensuring the services of our members are publicised. We continue to produce information leaflets on our services in Welsh. Our information service was accessed 1255 times with members receiving additional information via e-bulletins on a weekly basis.

“Vista”, the GVS magazine, is published in house three times a year and is distributed to some 1000 groups and individuals. “Vista” is supplemented by regular updates of newsletters on Health, Social Care and Well Being and Sustainable Funding News.

Our comprehensive range of information sheets are available in both English and Welsh for voluntary organisations to access either by hard copy, e-mail or through our website. This service is free to voluntary organisations and continues to be a resounding success.

2.8 Practical Services

These are a real benefit to many small voluntary organisations with little or no spare income. Low cost, reliable printing, help with desktop publishing, the loan of display equipment for exhibitions and presentations – these are some of the services that GVS offers its member groups.

Our reprographic services continued during 23/24. This service was used some 185 times.

2.9 Networks and Fora

Our Networks and Fora continue to be a popular way for voluntary and community organisations to access and share information. Networks and Fora supported by GVS were:

2.10 Vale Housing and Homelessness Forum

This Forum is the longest established of all our Networks and Fora. It has been operating ever since GVS came into existence. It works to terms of reference and

is made up of agencies (Third Sector and statutory) that have an interest in housing, homelessness and related problems and issues. The Forum meets jointly with the Vale Supported People Housing Group. During 2023/24 the Forum met four times.

The Forum also links in with other strategic partnerships, networks, and fora, e.g. Safer Vale Partnership, Health Social Care and Well Being Network and the Domestic Abuse Forum.

2.11 Funding Service

GVS' funding and information service provided support to 92 groups throughout the year with a reported £650,250 of funding obtained as a result of the advice and information given by GVS. This figure is likely to be substantially higher as most groups do not report their success.

Three editions of the Sustainable Funding Newsletter were produced containing information on a range of funders along with other useful articles to assist groups in their search for vital funds. Updates are posted two or three times a week on the funding section of the website and regular weekly e-bulletins are sent to over 750 groups. Members also subscribe to a dedicated Funding Mailing List where they are able to get up to date information on new sources of funding.

Four Funding Events were held with representatives from funders giving valuable advice on a 1-2-1 basis with Third Sector organisations. Some 80 people attended these sessions. Groups are finding this access to funders, ahead of applying, of great use resulting in a higher success rate.

Funding is still a major issue for many groups as the economic situation becomes harsher for those groups that receive most of their funding from statutory bodies e.g. local authorities. More groups are seeking funding from other sources, e.g. Trusts and Foundations and this is creating a more competitive environment. The cost of living crisis coupled with increasing utility costs are a major concern for the sustainability of Third Sector organisations.

2.12 Training Service

During the year 16 group training events were delivered, all aimed at building the capacity of local organisations. Training opportunities offered included:

- Being a Trustee
- Recruitment, Selection and Management of Volunteers
- Introduction to Data Protection
- How to Use X
- Introduction to Social Media.

A total of 84 delegates attended the training courses with 100% rating the training as either good or excellent.

GVS provides IT and social media 1-2-1 training courses. GVS held five training sessions with all attendees rating the courses as good or excellent.

2.13 Partnership, Consultation and Joint Working

The Third Sector is seen as an important partner in supporting the work of statutory bodies in a wide range of areas, and GVS is committed to working in partnership to develop and improve local services.

GVS continues to facilitate Third Sector Representation in formal joint planning in accordance with the agreed Protocol between the Local Authority and the Third Sector, via the Health, Social Care and Well Being Network, or via the full GVS membership where appropriate.

GVS has continued to represent the sector on the Public Service Board, Regional Partnership Board, other strategic partnerships, and appropriate sub-groups, ensuring the voice of the sector and the wider community is heard at all levels. GVS and other Third Sector organisations have been working with the local authority to ensure that people and communities are engaged every step of the way.

Some of the key Strategic Partnerships and other Joint Working initiatives on which GVS plays a key role include:

- Strategic Partnerships
- Vale Public Service Board
- Climate Change / Asset Management Group
- Families First Strategic Executive Group
- Flying Start Strategic Executive Group
- Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health & Social Care Regional Programme Board
- Cardiff and Vale Integrated Health & Social Care Strategic Leadership Group
- Shaping Our Future Wellbeing Project Board
- Equalities Consultative Forum
- Voluntary Sector Joint Liaison Committee
- Town and Community Councils Joint Liaison Committee
- Joint Working Groups
- Cardiff and Vale Ageing Well Group
- Cardiff and Vale University Health Board (UHB) Stakeholder Reference Group
- Cardiff and Vale Safeguarding Board
- Cardiff & Vale Action for Mental Health Mental Health Forum
- Cardiff and Vale Carers Gateway Steering Group
- Cardiff and Vale Carers Support and Information Network Group (CSING)
- Cardiff and Vale Regional Partnership Board (RPB) – Regional Integration Fund (RIF) Capital Steering Group

- Cardiff and Vale RPB – Engagement Steering Group
- Regional Workforce Programme - Carers Training and Development subgroup (chaired by GVS)
- Shaping Our Future Wellbeing (SOFW) Wellbeing Hub in Penarth group
- SOFW Wellbeing Centre in Barry Hospital Group
- Food Vale
- Section 16 Forum
- Cardiff and Vale Learning Disability Planning Group
- UHB's Children and Women's Clinical Board Charity and Voluntary Reference Group
- Disability Futures
- Cardiff and Vale Advocacy Network (facilitated by GVS)
- Central Vale Cluster Network
- Western Vale Cluster Network
- Eastern Vale Cluster Network
- Cardiff and Vale UHB Public Board Meeting – Strategic Regional Group - representative
- Co-production Forum – Working together to support people living with long term conditions
- “@home” Programme Board
- Eastern Vale Hub – Communication and Engagement Group
- Dementia Friendly Llantwit Major
- Unpaid Carers Board
- Screening Engagement Network
- Vale Alliance – now includes the Wellbeing Matters steering group
- Move More Eat Well – Healthy Workplaces
- Move More Eat Well Implementation group
- Social Prescribing Evaluation Framework steering group – finished but GVS continue to meet the Regional Innovation Co-ordination Hub to continue a project on social prescribing

2.14 National Networks

- Third Sector Support Wales
- CVC Cymru
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action Assembly Liaison Group

- Wales Council for Voluntary Action Equality and Human Rights Coalition
- Wales Council for Voluntary Action Health and Social Care network
- Wales Funders Forum.

2.15 Health, Social Care and Well Being

2.16 The Health, Social Care and Wellbeing Network

This network provides an opportunity to bring together all voluntary organisations operating in the Vale of Glamorgan who have an interest in health and social care. It facilitates a strong, collective voice, supports the involvement of voluntary organisations in planning, development and delivery of health and social care services, influences health and social care policy to bring about change and improve services and facilitates communication between the voluntary and statutory and other sectors. The Network has increased in numbers over the year and currently has over 450 members.

The Network provided an effective mechanism for reaching out to the third sector. GVS was able to find out from Network members about changes in service delivery and utilised this information to send out weekly e-bulletins to members. The Network also held a virtual meeting focussed on the new Section 16 forums.

The weekly e-bulletins include updates on health and social care services in the Vale of Glamorgan, updates from Cardiff and Vale University Health Board, the Vale of Glamorgan Council, Public Health Wales, from third sector organisations and general wellbeing information. The e-bulletin also provided a useful way of disseminating up to date information on various relevant topics.

2.17 GVS is a member of the Wellbeing Hub Eastern Vale planning group and supports third sector to link in. The GVS Health and Social Care Facilitator (H&SCF) sent an updated scope of services interested in the hub. The facilitator also attends the Eastern Vale Comms and Engagement Group meetings to support the communication between the project and third sector.

2.18 GVS has worked with the Dragons Heart Institute and the Health Board in regards to the Regional Innovation Hub (RIIC). This has involved giving a third sector perspective, promoting to third sector and recommending third sector organisations. GVS has attended the steering group meetings. The latest project being worked on is looking into how many social prescribers are in Cardiff and Vale.

2.19 GVS has attended multiple GP cluster meetings to give third sector a voice and input. The meetings were focused on Western Vale, Central Vale and Eastern Vale. We deal with enquiries from the cluster about transport, funding available and which third sector organisations receive cluster funds. GVS sent out a Vale Cluster meeting survey to support the GP cluster work by gathering third sector opinions on what demands are being placed on the third sector from patients.

2.20 GVS continues to support the Advocacy network and continued work on the advocacy strategy. The facilitator sent information on other advocacy organisations who could join the network. The facilitator met with the council

representative to discuss the long delay in contracts. This is an ongoing situation as the tender contracts have been withdrawn. The facilitator is supporting the ongoing situation.

- 2.21** GVS was asked by the Operations Director of the Future Hospitals Programme and Future Clinical Services Programme to create a third sector transport briefing. This briefing covered what third sector services were available to transport people to hospital. This involved contacting the network for information, finding all known transport schemes to see what was available and in what area, emailing those organisations to see if they are still active and running and collating this into a report. There is a gap in services as there were very few transport schemes across Cardiff and Vale.
- 2.22** The Welsh Government Loneliness and Social Isolation funding has been used to create a three year £12,000 grant. The final year of the grant has taken place and all funding allocated.
- 2.23** Funding schemes administered by GVS focussing on Health and Well Being:
- Regional Integration Fund (RIF) – Supporting Older People in the Vale
 - RIF Third Sector Capital Investment Fund
 - Loneliness and Social Isolation Fund
 - Winter Pressures Grant
 - Third Sector Small Grants Scheme – Community Action (funded by the Shared Prosperity Fund).
- 2.24** **Volunteering**

GVS' volunteering service offers a one-stop resource for information, advice and guidance on all aspects of volunteering for both volunteers and recruiting organisations. We aim to link the skills, experiences, time, and enthusiasm of local people looking to volunteer with organisations seeking to develop their services. This service is delivered through several venues across the Vale, as well as at our main office in Illtud House in Llantwit Major, to ensure that we can reach those across the county. Our community centres in Llantwit Major (CF61) and Penarth (St Pauls) have also provided GVS with opportunities to further develop our volunteering outreach work.

Volunteering offers valuable experience which could aid study, help someone decide if they are thinking about a change in career or simply give them the opportunity to put something back into their community.

The highlights of our Volunteering Development work in 2023/24 included:

- i. Enquiries regarding volunteering in the Vale of Glamorgan for 2023/24 were 669 (up from 553 in 22/23).
- ii. The number of people who GVS then found an opportunity to volunteer in the community was 354 (up from 263 in 22/23).
- iii. For Volunteers Week 2023, through Social Media and other online resources GVS, reached 47,751 people across the Vale (up from 45,137 in 2022), and

engaged with 23,183 (up from 14,722 in 2022). We also ran four Volunteering Events.

Our Youth Led Grant helped local organisations provide more youth volunteering opportunities in the Vale of Glamorgan. We were pleased to present grants to four successful youth projects with a total of £4,960 distributed.

Our FoodShare project delivered opportunities for people to access free or discounted food whilst at the same time reducing food waste. In 2023/24 we had over 3,900 visits to the service, up from the previous year's figure of 2,860.

Our gardening project saw much improved community spaces which has proved very popular within the community of Llantwit Major, supported by over 28 GVS volunteers.

CELT+ is a UK government funded project dedicated to helping the Vale community through voluntary action, by supporting individuals with additional training, skills or support for employment within the Vale. The project has gone well with a steady increase in referrals. Since the beginning of the project in 2023 thirteen candidates have been referred to GVS for volunteering support.

GVS's volunteering service offers a huge array of volunteering roles depending on the volunteers' interests and skills. Volunteers provide invaluable help in the work of Third Sector organisations and beyond, which often enhance the range of services offered by paid staff. The work of our fulltime Volunteer Officer has been greatly enhanced with the appointment of a Volunteer Co-ordinator which has also provided GVS with its own volunteers.

2.25 CF61

CF61 is a community space that is available to rent for a multitude of activities at an affordable rate. The building is fully accessible and welcoming. As a venue it is ideal for children's parties and activities; meetings and conferences; fitness and wellbeing classes as well as many other community activities and functions. The building contains a main hall and two smaller rooms. Our FoodShare project utilises a room at CF61 on a permanent basis. In 2023/24 the building received funding to improve its energy efficiency by installing a new heating system and solar panels.

CF61 has offered an array of different events in the community with regular sessions including: Wellbeing sessions; Chatty Café and FoodShare; Volunteering Advice; Contact Sports; Music and dance classes; fitness; Tai Chi; youth and children's activity sessions. All proceeds are re-invested into the Centre to continually improve the facility for the local community. In 2023/24 CF61 had in excess of 810 (750 in 22/23) activities and 12,789 (12,000 in 22/23) visitors.

2.26 Illtud House

Illtud House is ideally situated in Station Road, Llantwit Major with the train station, bus station and ample parking close by. Substantial refurbishment has

been carried out on the building to deliver modern office space that has incorporated a number of safe hygiene enhancements including hands-free flushing and hand washing facilities. Also available is a community facility which provides a seamless link to the CF61 Centre close by. GVS have relocated their head office to the ground floor. All nine offices on the first floor have been leased to tenants, and a further two offices have been developed, one which was leased in 2024.

The community rooms were used on a regular basis in 23/24:

- The Sunshine Club, a weekly group for up to 12 families of disabled children; Foster Carers Group; Action for Children; A local book group; Stroke Group; Nutrition Network; Cylch Ty a Fi and a local photography club. In 2024 the Community Room has been leased on a long term lease to Adult Services to develop a day centre.

2.27 Nursery

The nursery attached to Illtud House was empty for up to five years. This is now fully operational with a nursery provider, offering up to 32 places at any one time. GVS volunteers have also supported the development of the external courtyard as a provision for tenants and nursery staff.

2.28 Saint Paul's Community Centre, Penarth

Saint Paul's Community Centre is a community space that is available to rent for a multitude of activities at an affordable rate. The building is fully accessible and welcoming. As a venue it is ideal for a range of community activities, meetings and conferences; fitness and wellbeing class.

The Centre has offered an array of different events in the community with regular sessions including: Wellbeing sessions; Yoga, Karate, Performing Arts, Music and Dance Classes, Choir Practice and children's activities. The Centre is also used by a local church on Sundays. All proceeds are re-invested into the Centre to continually improve the facility for the local community. In 2023/24, the Centre had in excess of 1400 activities.

2.29 GVS' Environmental Impact

GVS is committed to the welfare of the environment and endeavours to have a positive environmental impact. GVS recycles its printer cartridges, paper, tins, bottles, cardboard, plastics, and most office equipment. GVS strives to send more and more information by e-mail and sends its membership approval packs by e-mail and using electronic questionnaires and evaluation forms instead of hard copies.

2.30 Efficiency Savings

GVS is committed and determined to make the best use of funders' money so has made efficiency savings in several areas. GVS constantly aims to become more efficient in every area of its work. Some of the saving initiatives include: encouraging all contacts to receive GVS' Vista magazine and supplements by e-mail; an e-bulletin service; installation of solar panels at our CF61 Centre, installing energy efficient heating and lighting, turning off electrical items when

not in use; and encouraging our staff to only print if required. This, together with constant vigilance and hard negotiation, continues to ensure that GVS is getting the best possible deals on contracts and services.

2.31 Projects

Celt+, FoodShare and Volunteering Project – see above, 2.180, 2.182, 2.184

2.32 Community Liaison Officer

The Vale Community Liaison Officer (CLO) is employed by GVS and technically based in Contact1V within the Vale of Glamorgan Council. The CLO takes referrals from health and social care staff, including staff in Contact1V, with a focus on families, carers, young adults and people with long term conditions. Referrals focus on people with a variety of sometimes complex needs who are likely to require a range of support from community services. The CLO operates a case management approach to bring in relevant services, ensuring that people get the help they need and that services are in place.

2.33 Future Plans

Glamorgan Voluntary Services is well placed to serve and support the third sector and the communities of the Vale of Glamorgan and surrounding area. The sector continues to operate within a constrained economic environment and GVS is no different especially in the light of continuing rising costs. As funders and partners continue to be hit by austerity, the knock on effect to GVS is very likely to be a reduction in core funding which we have already experienced in real terms. There will also be greater competition for the funding that is available.

GVS is aiming to make all of its buildings dementia friendly.

It will be important that GVS continues to make efficiency savings in the successful manner of the past years, but having implemented these progressively over a sustained period of time, the opportunity to make such savings continues to reduce year on year.

Different ways of working and delivering services to our membership are constantly being explored with focus on moving more services into digital delivery. It will be imperative that additional sources of funding continue to be secured in the way that we have managed throughout this past year. Above all opportunities to develop unrestricted income streams need to be pursued, whether through donations or standalone income generation as has been achieved in this past year.

Whilst GVS is dedicated to ensuring that all these plans are successful, the Board of Trustees is mindful that its plans must be financially robust and subject to due diligence whilst remaining flexible to meet the ever-changing external environment.

3. How do proposals evidence the Five Ways of Working and contribute to our Well-being Objectives?

3.1 GVS aligns it works to the objectives of the Vale of Glamorgan Council

4. Resources and Legal Considerations

Financial

- 4.1** GVS receives core funding from the Vale of Glamorgan Council

Employment

- 4.2** GVS employs 14 people

Legal (Including Equalities)

- 4.3** Whilst there are no direct legal implications arising from this report, maintaining good relations with GVS will benefit the community in terms of improvement to human rights. The Council's position on equality of opportunity is put into daily practice through the funding of GVS's work with the voluntary and community groups operating in the Vale of Glamorgan

5. Background Papers

GVS Annual Impact Report 2023/24