

<b>Meeting: Bolsover Voices</b>	
<b>Date and time:</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> August 2024, 2pm – 4pm
<b>Location of Meeting:</b> The Post Mill Centre, South Normanton	
<b>Meeting Objective:</b> Communication, collaboration and networking for VCSE groups in Bolsover	
<b>Attendees:</b> Andria Birch, Rachel Wood, Racheal Mullen, Helen Walker, Tracey Jagger, David Fish, Paul Stears, Justyna Ossowska, Magolena Chotnocka, Pauline Kimantas, Claire Morton	
<b>Agenda &amp; Minutes</b>	
1. DCC proposed end of grants - DCC consultation	<p><b>Derbyshire County Council Consultation on Proposed Cuts to VCSE Discretionary Grant Expenditure</b></p> <p>The proposed cuts, totaling £722,182.00, ( please note more than this is detailed across 2 sections of DCC papers which can be found here <a href="#">Agenda for Cabinet on Monday, 29 April 2024, 2.00 pm - Derbyshire County Council</a> ) .</p> <p>The cuts are being proposed due to the deficit in the overall County Council budget. The DC Cabinet paper with information about the proposed grant cuts was shared and can be found through the links in Annex below and above.</p> <p>The consultation closes 20<sup>th</sup> August. To date, there have been only 12 submissions from Bolsover District and it is very important that groups respond. There will also be a response made on behalf of the sector from BCVS and Derby and Derbyshire Infrastructure Alliance (DDIA) about the potential impact of cuts and the difference the work currently makes.</p> <p>Please see annex A and B for feedback and comms to date.</p> <p><b>Action: VCSE Organisations to please respond individually to consultation where possible and also send any feedback to BCVS for collation into combined response</b></p>
2. Funding opportunities	<p>PK spoke about Community Grants <a href="#">Funding which is now currently open for round 5</a>. Community grants are funded through UKSPF which post-election has rebranded to remove reference to ‘levelling up’.</p> <p>The funding under Priority 3 People and Skills is allocated to support people &amp; skills, basic skills training, formal education qualifications, and access to education and volunteering opportunities.</p>



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	<p>Organisations within the Bolsover area are encouraged to apply prior to the closing date of 14<sup>th</sup> August 2024. Grants are available up to £25,000, bigger grants (£15,000 - £25,000) require more. This is a good opportunity for groups to attract new funding to support their service users and volunteers and to demonstrate a positive track record to the East Midlands County Combined Authority (EMCCA). EMCCA has control over the devolved skills budget from this year in addition to further new funding which represents an opportunity for the VCSE sector.</p> <p>For Community Grants, there is now an online version of the application which has been launched for this round; the application is in 2 stages: stage 1 is for the eligibility check and stage 2 the full application. Project delivery has to be completed by 31<sup>st</sup> December 2024 with final monitoring in January.</p> <p>Support to apply can be provided by Pauline Kimantas and Claire Morton.</p> <p>AB briefed the group on ICB Capital Funding which is to be launched by Erewash CVS and will have a Bolsover allocation. Potential up to £5,000 for each grant and need to support mental health. We awaiting further details. It is likely to go live end of August, beginning of September. The projects for this have to be spent by March 2025.</p>
<p>3. Green Generation</p>	<p>Green Generation is a national lottery funded project which has been codesigned with young people and has been designed to address needs across our sector relating to a lack of volunteering opportunities for young people and the lack of groups across Bolsover whilst also focusing on environmental issues and skills development.</p> <p>Green Generation will place young people at the heart of developing a sustainable, inclusive and healthy VCSE sector for Bolsover.</p> <p>The project aims to involve at least 200 young people between the ages of 16 and 25, in volunteering, improving their confidence, green skills and aspirations. In year one we will be working with those 18+ and will be supporting the sector to develop capacity to work with under 18s ready for year 2.</p> <p>There will be the soft launch on the 2<sup>nd</sup> September with the hard launch going live at the Bolsover AGM on the 18<sup>th</sup> September 2024.</p> <p><b>Action - If any groups are interested in working with new young volunteers please get in touch.</b></p>
<p>4. Vision for volunteering</p>	<p>This agenda point is being moved to the next forum meeting. The Vision For Volunteering 2030 will be developed in partnership with BDC, Bolsover Partnership and the VCSE sector ready for launch in the 25/26 financial year. We will be facilitating a range of online and face to face engagement exercises over coming months.</p>
<p>5. Lloyds update</p>	<p>BCVS is working together with the Lloyds Bank Foundation to build on work to date and move this forward. Following the recent evaluation exercise, BCVS</p>



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	<p>has agreed to host the new Strategic Implementation Lead post and the vacancy is currently live. We will continue to work in partnership with key stakeholders to bring more focus to the work moving forward in response to the evaluation feedback on work to date. It is aimed to bring stakeholders together at a conference in November that will be a follow-up to a previous conference 2 years ago. Bolsover Voices and involvement with Bolsover Partnership development will ensure local groups have the opportunity to be more involved moving forwards.</p> <p><b>Action: BCVS to create new area of website to share progress</b></p>
<p>6. Partner updates</p>	<p>All members of the forum introduced themselves and their organisations at the beginning of the forum. Everyone explained what their organisation did and how the their role was within the organisation.</p> <p>Additional BCVS update included:</p> <p>Positive Anti-Racism training session held in July and a second session to follow in November.</p> <p>Free Bid writing training on the 6<sup>th</sup> September, where members and non-members can book on to the programme (free to BCVS members)</p> <p>An introduction to teaching course is also being developed and will be confirmed via BCVS newsletter and social media.</p> <p>BCVS has invested in a new software platform called Plinth which provides lots of functionality, including AI bid-writing. This will be piloted with some groups, details to follow in the newsletter.</p> <p>Rhubarb Farm - is hosting a day next week, 15<sup>th</sup> August, for people to join them at the farm from 10am – 3pm with a talk from the CEO at 11am.</p> <p>They are also having a ‘business buddies’ event in August funded through the national lottery. This is fully booked now and the potential to be hosting another one in October, but this is to be confirmed.</p> <p>Release is disposing of desks and other office items and will circulate details in the newsletter.</p> <p><b>Action: Claire to find out if there is a new walking group being set up.</b></p>
<p>7. AOB</p>	<p>Andria informed members that work is going on to join up the dots between the various Action Groups within the Bolsover Partnership and share feedback from meetings. The Action Groups’ priorities will be aligned with those of the EMCA. PS advised that it is worth attending the Health and Wellbeing Action Group meetings which are very informative and help to keep up to date in a fast-changing sector.</p>



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	<p>Discussion on what members want - the purpose of the forums, frequency of meetings and what this will look like moving forward. It was acknowledged that face to face forum meetings are important, that there are lots of groups and different interests and there could also be smaller groups to discuss specific issues if there was interest.</p> <p>AB suggested the previous TOR are recirculated and updated when SM returns to work in August as he is currently on annual leave. However, confirmed the Bolsover Voices is primarily to provide an opportunity for communication and collaboration.</p> <p>CM shared feedback forms to be completed and returned of the groups expectations and needs. The meetings will be every 2-3 months approximately with quarterly face to face meetings and online meetings as needed in response to specific issues, risks or opportunities.</p> <p><b>Action: Previous TOR to be circulated and refreshed if needed by BCVS</b> <b>Action for all: complete the feedback form or let Claire know what members want from future forum meetings.</b></p>
Networking	
8. Date of Next Meeting	<p>October / November: will be informed by the DCC consultation outcome and any related issues.</p> <p><b>Action: Dates to be circulated for rest of Financial year upon return of SM</b></p>



## Annex A - Draft collective response to DCC consultation

Groups in attendance at Bolsover Voices on 5<sup>th</sup> August and via email and follow up discussions have made the following points about the impact of the proposed cuts:

1. There is an assumption underlying the cuts, which is that because it is the VCSE, more work will be pushed onto volunteers who will fill the gaps in capacity created by the cuts at no cost. This assumption is incorrect. It cannot be assumed that it is feasible to fill all the gaps with volunteers, and there are financial and other costs involved in volunteer-run activities and supporting volunteers appropriately.
2. It is important to invest funding upstream to prevent or reduce problems downstream. The proposed cuts will impact on the upstream activities delivered by those organisations. The impacts will be experienced by communities of interest, including older people, young people, disabled people and in mental health support. There are significant implications for groups protected under equalities legislation.
3. Members of the group spoke about groups and charities being asked to support individuals with high level and complex needs in higher and higher numbers. This work helps to save lives. It is already putting a strain on the sector and cuts will exacerbate this and increase demand elsewhere, including the NHS, Social Care and local authorities.
4. The cuts will lead to loss of trust in the services provided by VCSE organisations.
5. The VCSE already provides excellent value for money and has already streamlined due to previous reductions in funding.

*Groups also provided the following written feedback prior to and after the meeting – more to be added here when received from members*

6. Like other organisations within Derbyshire, are facing an onslaught for survival amidst increasing budget deficits for councils nationwide and between new government admin/financial budgetary announcements that would give us all direction AND HOPE FOR THE FUTURE CONTINUATION OF VITAL SUPPORTIVE VOLUNTARY WORK UNDERTAKEN BY BCVS and others.
7. There appears to be a failure to understand the huge potential financial and social costs to our communities, community groups and individual citizens from such short-sighted cost saving methods which will incur huge costs downstream when prevention and community cohesion work is reduced or disappears.

**BCVS asks groups to respond individually to the consultation and to share their feedback with BCVS for a sector response. It would be useful to share real life specific examples or case studies of how the cuts will impact communities.**

**Please Contact [andria.birch@bcvs.org.uk](mailto:andria.birch@bcvs.org.uk) or [bcvs@bcvs.org.uk](mailto:bcvs@bcvs.org.uk) with any further feedback or case studies.**

Derbyshire County Council consultation page <https://www.derbyshire.gov.uk/council/news-events/news-updates/news/have-your-say-on-future-of-discretionary-grants.aspx>



[Annex B](#)

Good Afternoon

We have circulated information many times already, but due to the significance of this proposal to local groups we are sending out again. We will be discussing this at the Bolsover Voices meeting on Monday [5<sup>th</sup> August]

You may be aware of Derbyshire County Council's (DCC) consultation on the proposal to end discretionary grant funding for Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) groups and we would like to remind you to take part and have your say if you have not already done so.

You can find out more and access the consultation on the link below:

[End of discretionary grant funding - Derbyshire County Council](#) - click on the standard survey link to start the survey

You can also request paper and easy-read copies of the questionnaire from:

[policy@derbyshire.gov.uk](mailto:policy@derbyshire.gov.uk)

**The consultation closes on 20th August 2024 so please share your views with DCC before that date. In addition, BCVS will be collating feedback at the Bolsover Voices meeting on Monday as above.**

There is also an e:petition requesting that DCC debate in full the proposal to end discretionary funding. You can find this on DCC's website on the link below if you wish to sign it:

[ePetition - Save local Charities and Community Organisations \(EPET403\) - Derbyshire County Council](#)

Please show your support by completing the survey, petition and signing the petition.

Thank you and best wishes

**Andria Birch | CEO**