

VAST Services (1920)

Trustees' Report and Financial Statements
Year Ended 31st March 2025



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Trustees, Directors, Principal Officers, and Advisors

Trustees

Neil Dawson	Chair to December 2024	
Tim Edwards	Chair from December 2024	
John Farrar	Treasurer	
Joe Martin	Vice Chair	
Simon Harris	Vice Chair	Appointed 11 th September 2024
Pooja Batta		
Cliff Hathaway		
Cathy Jones		
Rob Craddock		Appointed 11 th September 2024
Hayley Currie		Appointed 11 th September 2024
Melanie Dunn		Appointed 11 th September 2024
Suzanne Roberts		Appointed 11 th September 2024
Bruno Orenlas		Appointed 11 th September 2024
Lee West		Resigned 11 th June 2025 Resigned 2 nd September 2024

Auditors

Geens,
Graphic House,
City Road,
Stoke-on-Trent,
ST4 2PH

Bankers

Unity Bank, Plc,
Nine Brindley Place,
Birmingham,
B1 2HP

Company Secretary

Lisa Healings FCCA

Key Management Personnel



Lisa Healings
Chief Executive and
Finance Director



Charlotte Bennett
Strategic Projects
Manager



Debra Hefferon
Finance Manager



Jackie Wheeler
Facilities Manager

Registered Address

Dudson Centre, Hope Street, Hanley, Stoke-on-Trent, ST1 5DD

VAST is the trading name of VAST Services (1920)

Chair's Foreword



I am pleased to introduce the latest annual report for VAST. As the recently appointed Chair I would first like to give my gratitude to my predecessor Neil Dawson, who steered the organisation with such distinction, and the support provided by my fellow Board Trustees in supporting the work of the Board. We are fortunate to have a strong, diverse and skilled Board who support VAST's vision and values.

I'm delighted that through the hard work and prudent decisions taken, VAST has again delivered more during the year than anticipated, reflected in increased revenue and a financial outcome better than planned. The report reflects the range and depth of the work undertaken by VAST on the sector's behalf.

Our strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care System, among others, are growing from strength to strength, giving us the platform to strategically influence and engage in wider decision-making processes on the sectors behalf. At an operational level, partnerships with organisations such as Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce facilitate resource sharing, skill development, and information exchange. These collaborative efforts are crucial for co-designing solutions that meet the needs of our communities.

Our Board of Trustees, together with the Executive Team, recently took time out to reflect on the impact and direction of VAST in the evolving policy agenda. We remain committed to our core purpose of delivering the four core functions of infrastructure i.e. leadership and advocacy, partnerships and collaboration, capacity building, and support for volunteering, which will shape our future direction and priorities. We were delighted during the year to be awarded both The Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation and the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation, from NAVCA in recognition of the quality of our work.

The report is a testament to the work of VAST colleagues in supporting and helping maintain a strong and resilient voluntary, community and social enterprise sector in the area. Despite this, the sector still faces challenges in terms of certainty of funding and regrettably, we saw a small number of important charities close as a result of these pressures this year. We remain at the sector's disposal to help and support organisations to adapt and wherever possible to maintain the important services that the sector provides.

Our team continues to support the development and growth of the sector through our capacity building work and provision of core services such as accounts and payroll. This development work is core to our purpose in helping VCSE organisations to develop and thrive, creating greater strength and diversity within the sector.

Through our regular newsletters and the VAST Vault, we have maintained a steady flow of vital information and resources to our members. We also committed to engage with and listen to the voice of the sector locally, which helps shape our priorities and to advocate on your behalf. Our conference this year was a spectacular success and drew over 200 people from across the VCSE and public sectors to consider how the sector can support asset-based approaches to community development.

I am proud to have the opportunity to lead an organisation that has social impact at its heart and am inspired to hear the stories of how the sector is leading positive change. Thank you to my fellow trustees, the VAST team, our partners and volunteers in achieving so much on the sector's behalf.

Tim Edwards, Chair

Strategic Report

The Trustees who are the Directors for the purposes of company law present their strategic report for the year ended 31 March 2025 in compliance with S414C of the Companies Act 2006.

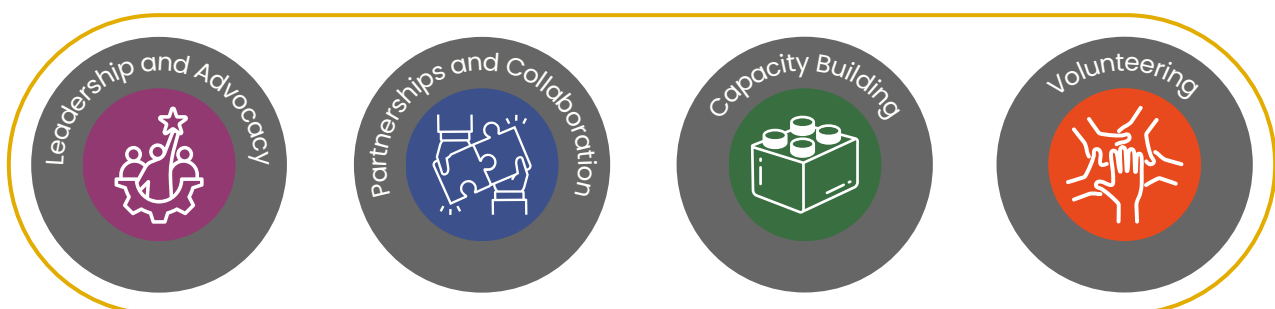
Fair Review of the Business

VAST is well established as the recognised Local Infrastructure Organisation in Stoke-on-Trent and is in the fortunate position of having secured funding for a five-year collaborative working agreement as Strategic Partners with Stoke-on-Trent City Council, which commenced in April 2024, as well as funding from The National Lottery Reaching Communities fund and an enhanced funding agreement to continue to co-facilitate the Healthy Communities Alliance as the link between the VCSE sector and the Integrated Care System in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This funding, supplemented by the many other grants that fund specific projects, has meant that we have been able to continue to develop and embed the Four Functions of Infrastructure; Leadership & Advocacy, Partnerships and Collaboration, Capacity Building, and Volunteering; enhancing our sector support offer with an improved training programme, additional inclusive volunteering projects and a number of new networks and forums.

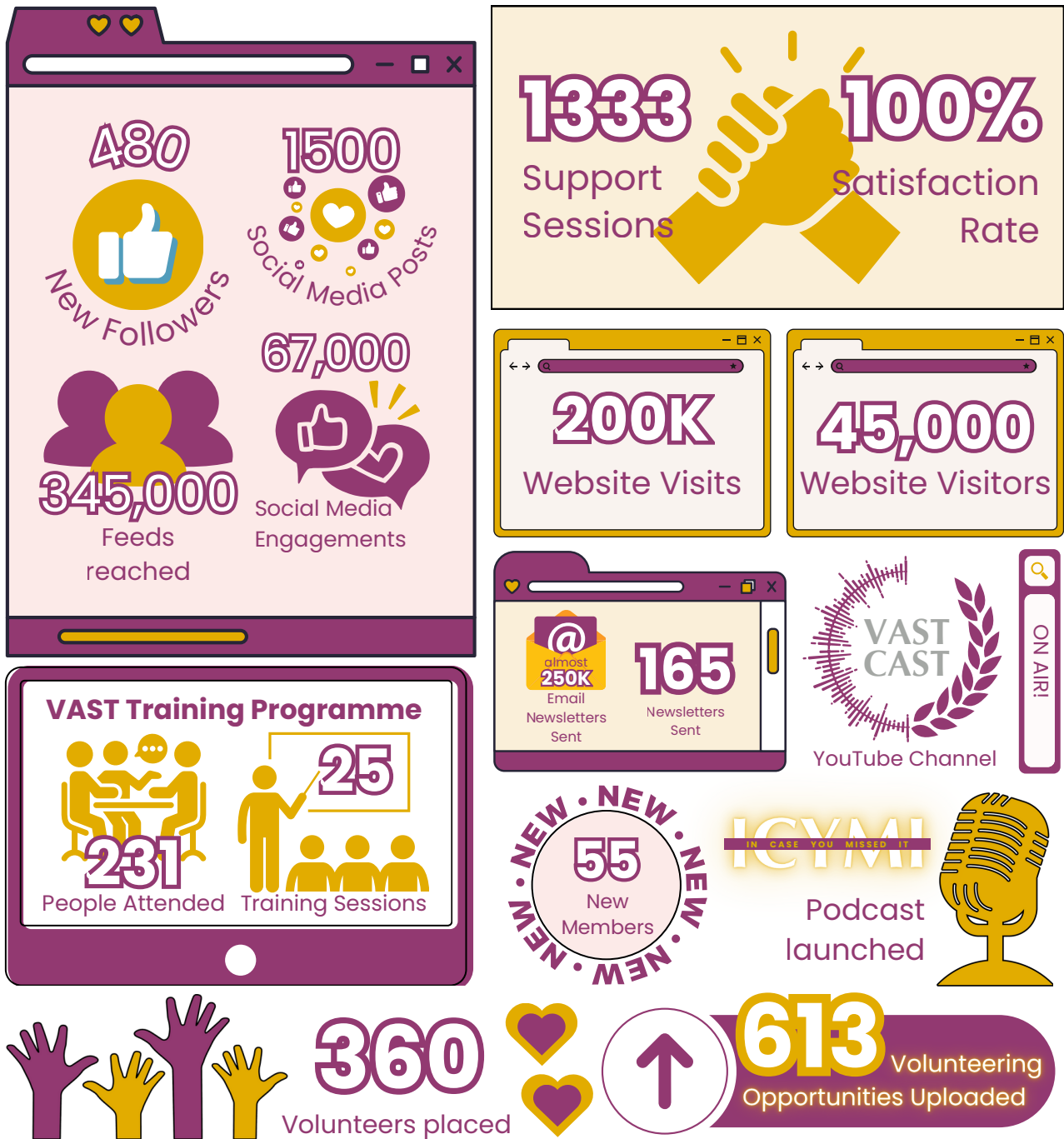
We have also continued to work closely with Support Staffordshire to deliver a varied range of collaborative projects across Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent.

We are still operating in an uncertain environment, affected by rising costs and short-term funding. Stoke-on-Trent City Council was close to receiving a Section 114 notice before additional funding was allocated by Central Government, and still faces huge financial pressures, whilst Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board also faced huge challenges in balancing its budget. These financial stresses on local statutory providers inevitably impact on security of funding for VCSE organisations. Through our work over recent years, we have placed ourselves clearly back in the centre of Stoke-on-Trent's VCSE sector to ensure that we can continue to provide the support, advocacy, and representation that our members need to help them focus on delivering their aims for their beneficiaries.

Thanks to the hard work of our dedicated team and the continuing support of funders, we continue to move forward together, for the benefit of our communities, and are well-positioned to face the inevitable challenges of the future.



Achievements and Performance

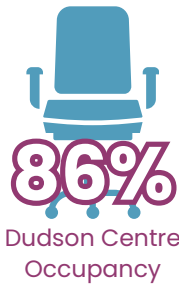


Key Objectives from our Strategic Plan

- To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.
- To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.
- To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

The lasting impact of the cost-of-living crisis following so closely behind the pandemic means that there is still less appetite for the purchase of non-essential services and budgets are being tightly managed even for essential services.

Chargeable Services



What we said we would do

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seek new tenants for The Dudson Centre.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar Local Infrastructure provision.

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

How successful we were

Our support services continue to provide a value for money option for the VCSE sector and we want to continue to build our potential to offer these services more widely.

Pressures on funding for our client base and the added pressures placed on both our clients and ourselves in recent years has meant it has been difficult to expand our services

Our training and events offer has been extremely successful, and we received many excellent reviews and pieces of participant feedback.

What we did

Although we have not specifically carried out targeted advertising, we have continued to grow and develop our range of networks and forums and reviewed and refocused our newsletters to ensure more targeted messaging and information is reaching those that need it. Our social media presence has also continued to grow.

The ever-growing presence of our projects team across the city has also helped contribute to a continued growth in membership numbers.

Our accountancy and payroll services continue to attract clients from a wide geographical area, and demand for meeting rooms is continuing to grow.

Income from our business support service, café and refreshment income, and income from rentals was £335,059 in the year.

We have continued virtual or hybrid delivery for most of our training packages and now have a comprehensive annual training offer as well as holding successful volunteering and funding fayres both virtually and in person.

We have continued to focus our efforts on Stoke-on-Trent and have not attempted to enter our wider geographic market.

We are continually looking for relevant funding opportunities and are working closely with Local Authority and Health Colleagues to secure continuation funding for our services.



Grants and Contracts

What we said we would do

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.

What we did

We have successfully secured project funding in the year to continue to expand our core services and to embed inclusive volunteering within our volunteering offer. We also continued to develop our work in enabling community-based organisations to participate in health research through the Research Engagement Network project.

We also secured funding from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to support community activity in the wake of rioting on the summer of 2024 to promote community cohesion.



GRANTS

How successful we were

Our five-year, strategic partnership with Stoke-on-Trent City Council officially commenced in April 2024, and this, alongside ongoing funding from the National Lottery Community Fund, enabled us to fully deliver the Four Functions of infrastructure. We also secured additional investment into the Healthy Communities Alliance to fund facilitation of relationships between the VCSE sector and the local Integrated Care System and continued to increase the number of additional projects delivered to complement our core work.



Advocacy and Voice

What we said we would do

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.

What we did

Our role facilitating the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and in continuing to grow the Healthy Communities Forums has enabled the local sector to work together more effectively and improved relationships with statutory bodies. Through the Healthy Communities Alliance we have also facilitated, alongside our partners Support Staffordshire, the appointment of VCSE representative to all Portfolio Boards across the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board.

We have continued to create new forums, including the highly successful Connections for Connectors Forum, as well as growing our existing forums.

Our Strategic Liaison Officer and our Senior Management Team continue to have seats on key Boards across the area and to meet regularly with senior-level employees of both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care Board.

How successful we were

We are well recognised by both the VCSE sector and statutory partners as the representatives of the sector; however, constant staff changes and interim posts across statutory bodies continue to make it difficult to retain relationships.

Factors Relevant to the Achievement of Objectives

VAST's objectives and supporting activities have once again been carried out in a turbulent and unpredictable environment, both locally and nationally.

Both the Local Authority and the Integrated Care System are facing significant financial pressures which will inevitably flow through into less funding for the VCSE sector, with further uncertainty brought by the requirements of the changes required by the Devolution White Paper, and proposed NHS reforms. At the same time, organisations still have depleted reserves and are facing huge increases in their running costs while there is still a high level of need for VCSE services and resources are stretched.

There is a growing desire from local statutory partners to engage with the sector, and to this end we have been actively involved in a great deal of representation and advocacy work in partnership with our colleagues from the Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) and Support Staffordshire. We are still having encouraging conversations, and there has been tangible progress made with the launch of the Stoke-on-Trent City Alliance between Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the VCSE sector in December 2024, and subsequent work between sector representatives and the City Council's commissioning team to enable more effective commissioning, but only time will tell if they lead to tangible, long-term, benefits for the sector.

Statutory partners have recognised that, as there is more to be done with ever diminishing resources, they need to improve and reinvigorate their engagement with the VCSE sector, and as such are re-evaluating their relationship with the sector. The Local Authority has embraced the Place-Based Giving agenda and has identified Asset-Based Community Development, Community Wealth Building, and locality working as key strategies to develop and to achieve. This requires greater co-production with the VCSE sector and the communities we serve.

These positive discussions and relationships are still yet to impact upon local commissioning and, while reviews of contracts with the VCSE sector have been carried out across the Integrated Care System, there has seen very little new contracting with existing contracts rolled on for further periods.



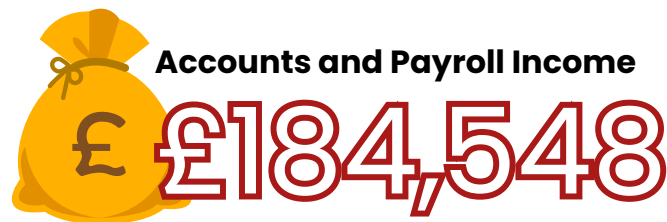
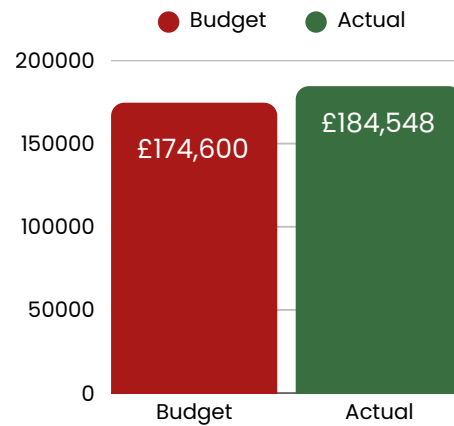
Key Performance Indicators

During the year the main key performance indicators used by management to assess performance against objectives were as follows:

Chargeable Services

Income against budget for chargeable services:

Our accounts and payroll services continue to be successful and once again exceeded budget expectations.

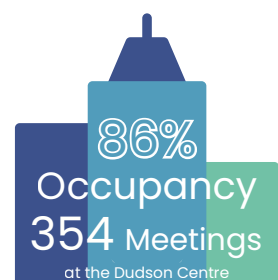
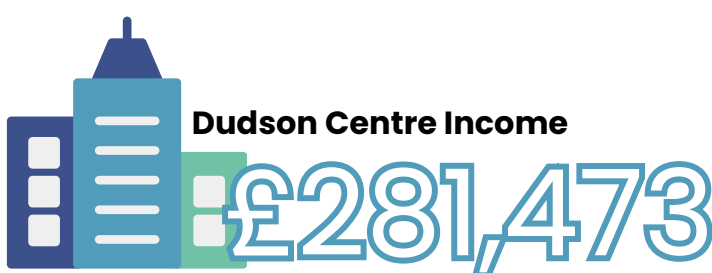
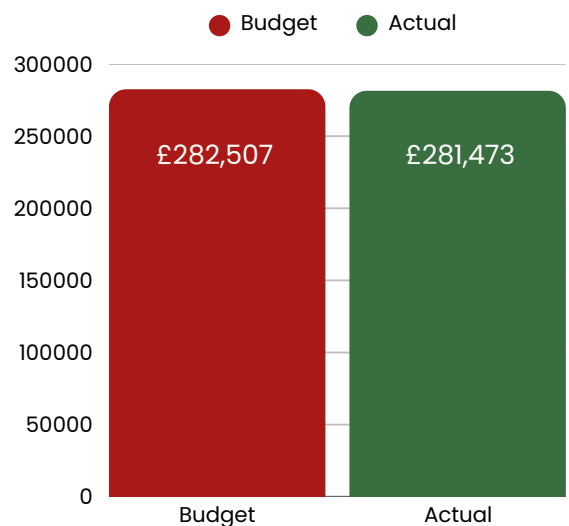


Facilities

Overall income from the Dudson Centre:

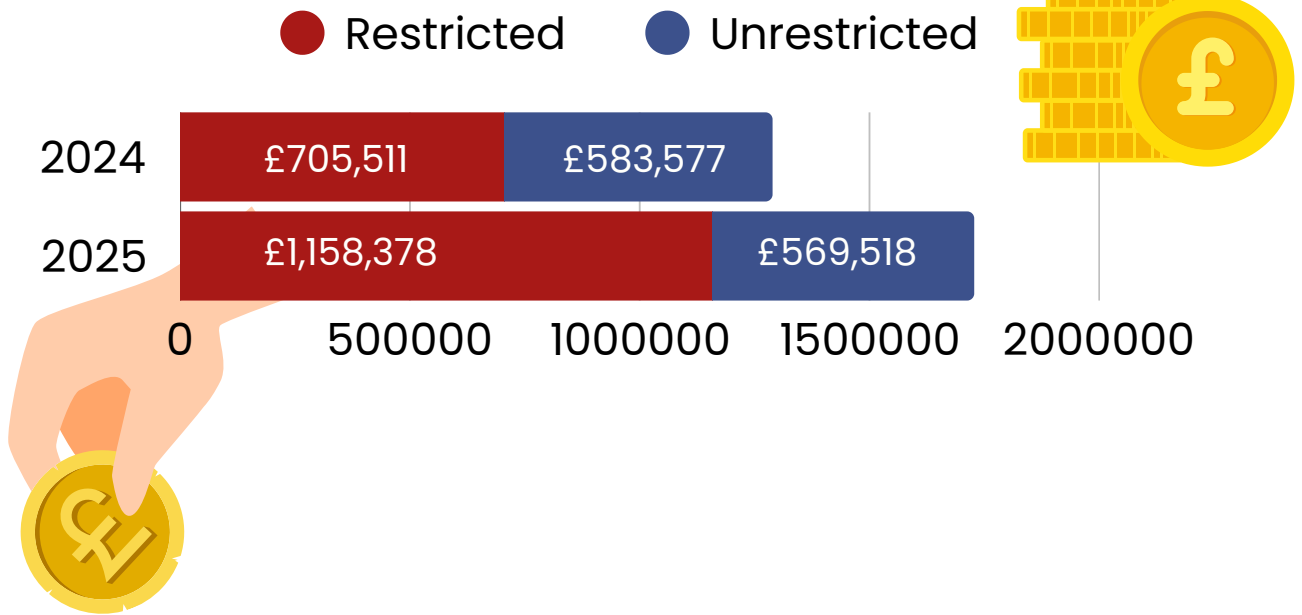
For the year to March 2025, based on income received against total possible income, the Dudson Centre was 89% occupied.

Following a good year in 2023/24, occupancy levels for The Dudson Centre dropped in 2024/25, with The Dove Service, a major tenant since the opening of the Centre, making the decision to leave their offices in the Autumn of 2024 to relocate to smaller premises.

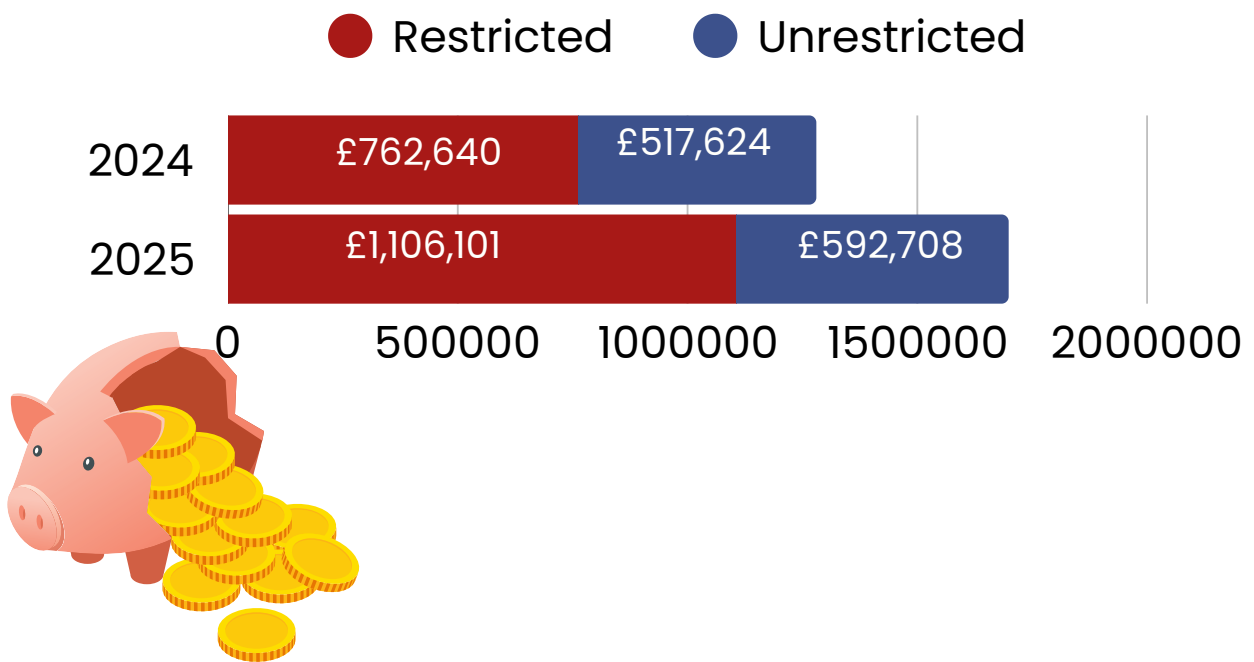


Financial Review

Income: £1,727,896 (2024: £1,289,088)



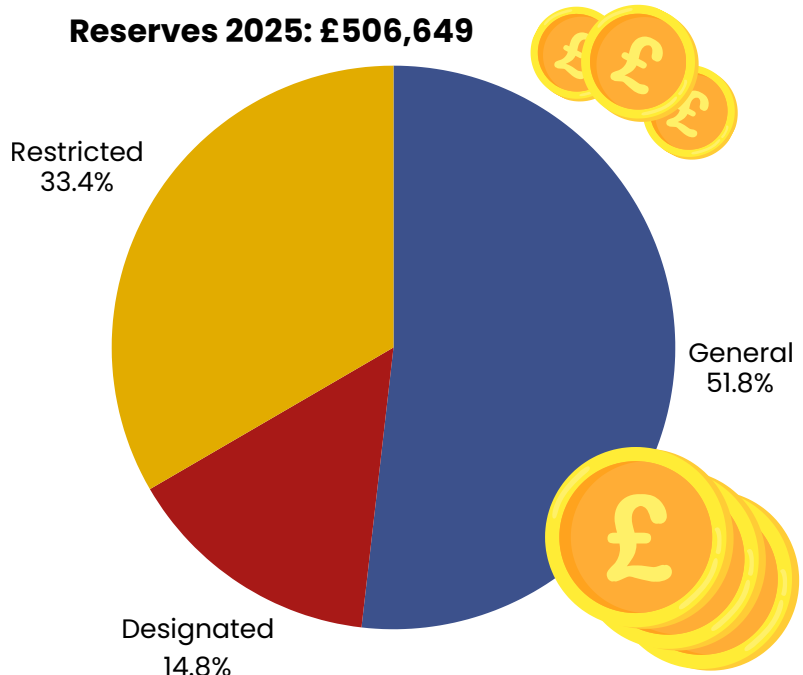
Expenditure: £1,698,809 (2024: £1,279,904)



Reserves

Of the **designated reserves, £50,000** is set aside to allow for times of under-occupancy and unexpected repair work at The Dudson Centre and **£25,000 is set aside** for the running of the Dudson Museum should funding not be available.

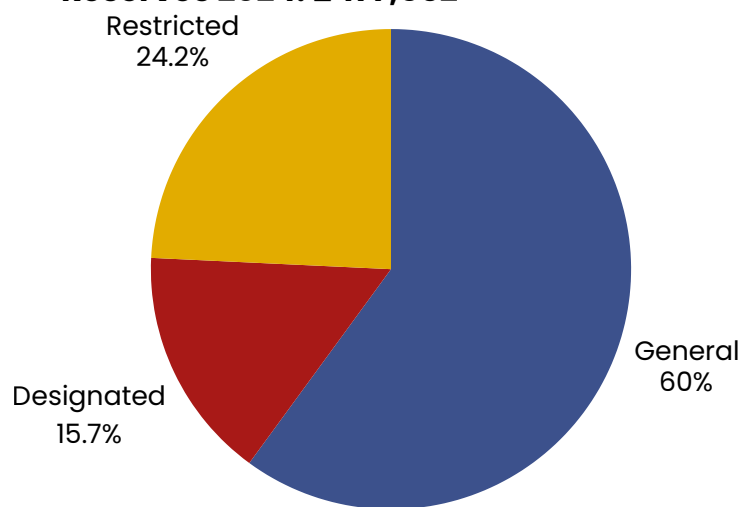
Reserves 2025: £506,649



VAST's principal funding sources for 2024/25 were Stoke-on-Trent City Council who funded our work with the local VCSE sector, , Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent integrated Care Board who funded our work with the Staffordshire NHS VCSE Alliance and the Community Health Champions project, and The National Lottery Community Fund who fund our Totally Stoked Support project.

A large amount of VAST funding comes from our chargeable services, which in 2024/25 accounted for 19% of income (59% of unrestricted income).

Reserves 2024: £477,562



Principal Funders for 2024/25



Agent over Cash Held

The charity acts as agent over cash held for the following not-for-profit organisations:

Trentham Pre-School	RSPCA North Staffs Branch	Stoke-on-Trent Food Bank	Breakthru' Support Services	Biddulph Youth & Community Zone
Haregate Community Centre	ASHA North Staffs	RubyGirl UK	Staffordshire Sight Loss Association	Stone Community Hub
NSAAA	Disability Solutions West Midlands	Uttoxeter Gateway	North Staffordshire Medical Institute	TWOCO
Packmoor Community Association	Expert Citizens UK CIC	Staffordshire Parish Council Association	St. Andrews with St. Peters Pre-School	Open Door Stoke-on-Trent
North Staffs Carers Association	Willoughbridge Garden Trust	Biddulph Methodist Church	Voice of Hope	Lea Road Community Church
Abbey Hulton Sports & Social Club	Green Door Hub	Headway North Staffs	Number 11 CIC	Silverdale Parish Council
Smallthorne Social Society	Association of Dogs and Cats Homes	Rehoboth Well CIC	Sage (Staffs)	Keele Parish Council
Redeemed Christian Church of God	Peter Pan Nursery	Restoration Shack CIC	Age UK South Staffordshire	Stoke Creates CIC
Windmills CIC	Silvertree Cleaning	Rachel Wilson (DP)	Newcastle Community Transport	Tri-Services Veteran Support
Affordable Food Stoke	Whitmore Parish Council	Deaflinks Staffordshire	Kidsgrove Sports Centre	Uttoxeter Heritage Trust
Madeley Community Association	The Teapot Training Cafe	Beth Johnson Foundation	St John's Community Church	

This money is held in order that invoices can be paid on behalf of these organisations, enabling them to achieve their charitable objectives.

These monies are held in the charity's bank account and a separate nominal code kept to record any transactions. These balances are not included in the year-end financial statements.

Policy on Reserves

The policy of VAST has been to invest surplus funds in the growth of the charity. VAST aims to carry sufficient cash of up to £150,000 in bank current or deposit accounts to fund its predicted working capital requirements.

Surplus funds over £150,000 are deposited in a higher interest deposit account, in a higher interest fixed-term bond or within an investment portfolio.

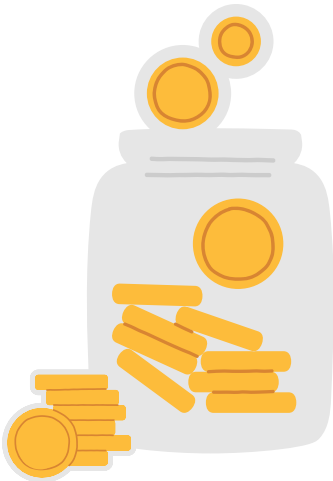
The VAST trustees aim to maintain sufficient free reserves in

unrestricted funds to ensure the charity remains sustainable in the event of a significant loss of funding or other unforeseen financial difficulties arising.

The trustees have carried out a review of the level of reserves necessary, taking into account the key risks identified, to ensure the sustainability of the organisation. This review indicated the need for free reserves in the range of £343,000 to £1,100,000.

Currently, we hold £241,615 of free reserves. Total reserves stand at £506,649, of which £337,507 is unrestricted, and of this £75,000 is designated.

The long-term aim of the trustees is to be able to set budgets which can increase the level of free reserves to the required level.

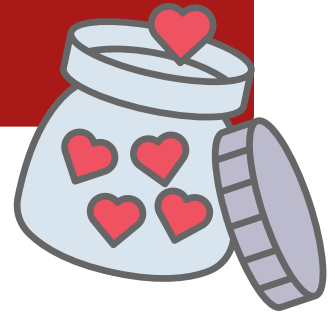


Plans for Future periods

VAST's strategy and business plan were fully reviewed in 2023 and will next be reviewed in 2025/26.

Our Aim

Our overall aim is to support, inform, connect and advocate for Voluntary, Community, and Social Enterprise organisations to improve the quality of life of local residents.



Key Objectives

To be the recognised voice of the VCSE sector in our chosen geography.

To have adequate resources to sustain and grow both our organisation and the local VCSE sector.

To be a first-choice provider of services, and a centre for innovation to the VCSE Sector.



Activities Planned to Achieve Objectives

We will achieve our key objectives by implementing the following activities:

Chargeable Services

Develop a range of packages of support for VCSE and SMEs, for example, start-up package etc.

Advertise more widely outside membership base.

Develop provision to Social Enterprises and other types of not-for-profit organisations.

Explore the market in Cheshire and other surrounding areas where there is currently no similar CVS provision.

Grow payroll bureau provision and actively seek new tenants for The Dudson Centre.



Grants and Contracts

Explore funding opportunities to ensure that we can continue to deliver in key areas such as Volunteering and VCSE developmental support.

Continue to develop as needed to meet demand of the Integrated Care system and changes within Local Authority.

Develop projects in line with identified needs of the local VCSE sector and national agendas.



Advocacy and Voice

Ensure VAST remains the recognised representative and voice of the local sector.

Develop and grow networks and forums according to identified need.

Remain strategically engaged with the City Council and Integrated Care System.



Principal Risks and Uncertainties

The major risks to which the charity is exposed, as identified by the Trustees, have been reviewed, and systems or procedures have been established to manage those risks.

The principal risk is considered to be the loss of a major funding stream, meaning that VAST cannot continue to exist as an infrastructure organisation. However, sources of income have been diversified over recent years, and a significant portion of income is generated through chargeable services to mitigate this risk.

In approving these financial statements, the Trustees have considered the level of free reserves together with the potential impact of the loss of, or failure to renew, one or more contracts, as they come up for renewal over the next year.

Other risks considered to be high are damage to reputation, loss of influence, and loss of key staff.

The Board and the finance and general purposes sub-committee have developed a detailed reserves policy which is closely linked to the key risks identified for the charity, including the potential loss or non-renewal of contracts. Quarterly management accounts and cash flow forecasts, include a rolling forecast to the end of each financial year, are updated and presented to these groups for regular review and comparison to the reserves policy papers. This enables the Board to react to any pending cash flow issues and gives fair warning of any looming difficulties. The Board have examined alternative strategies to ensure any such issues can be faced and costs reduced accordingly to ensure the charity remains a going concern. It is on this basis that the board is able to conclude this going concern risk is manageable.

The trustees consider all of these risks regularly and have taken steps to mitigate them where appropriate. These steps include close regular monitoring of performance, maintaining quality standard awards and ensuring all staff are appropriately qualified and trained.



This strategic report was approved by the trustees on 17th September 2025 and signed on its behalf by:



Tim Edwards, Chair

VAST Services (1920)
Trustees' Report
Incorporating the Directors' Report



Our Purpose

The objects for which the charity is established are to promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community within Staffordshire and the West Midlands, with particular reference to Stoke-on-Trent. These are the prevention or relief of poverty, the advancement of education, heritage and health, and citizenship or community development.

In furtherance of the purposes below, but not further or otherwise, the Charity may:

Promote and organise co-operation in the achievement of the objects and to that end to bring together Council representatives of the statutory authorities and voluntary organisations engaged in the furtherance of the above.

Procure and provide information.

Procure to be written and print, publish, issue and circulate gratuitously or otherwise any reports or periodicals, books, pamphlets, leaflets or any other documents.

Promote, encourage or undertake experimental work.

Assist any body or bodies financially or otherwise.

Obtain, collect and receive monies and funds by way of contributions, donations, affiliation fees, subscriptions, legacies, grants and other lawful methods, and accept or receive gifts of property of any description (whether subject to any special trusts or not).

Arrange and provide for or join in arranging and providing for the holding of exhibitions, meetings, lectures and classes.

Operate a museum and heritage centre.

Our Role

VAST is a Local Infrastructure Organisation that specialises in providing a range of support functions to the VCSE in Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire enabling them to deliver high quality services that benefit local communities.

VAST also promotes the VCSE sector and advocates on their behalf at a strategic level with a wide range of key stakeholders and encourages and facilitates partnerships and collaboration.

Public Benefit

The Trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission guidance on Public Benefit when planning the activities of the charity.

Mission Statement

Develop a vibrant and thriving VCSE sector to improve the quality of life of local residents.

Aims

Support

through capacity building support and volunteer brokerage services.

Inform

through capacity building support.

Connect

by facilitating partnerships and collaboration

Advocate

by providing leadership and advocacy

Values

All of our aims are underpinned by the following values:

Authentic

Proactive

Innovative

Responsive

All delivered with integrity and underpinned by these behaviours...





As the umbrella body for Local Infrastructure Organisation across England we work closely with the VCS support structures at place – organisations like VAST.

We see every day the vital role they play to support communities to be resilient, and enable people to take action on the things that matter most to them. That resilience is pivotal to a thriving civil society, where people can live their best life.



VAST is a pivotal part of the network, bringing insights and perspectives from Stoke. That shapes our thinking and influencing work, to bring the voice of communities to national policy and decision making. VAST clearly draw on a wealth of community knowledge to enable us to do that, as well as being a strategic partner to both the Local Authority and Health system, ensuring the VCSE sector and voice of communities is fully considered and included in planning, development, and setting of priorities.

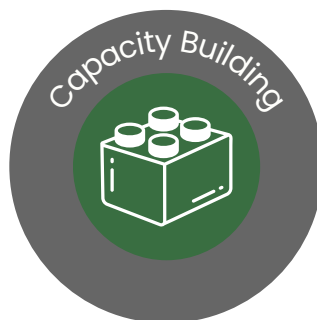
It is testament to VAST's insights, knowledge and energy that they have achieved both the Local Infrastructure Quality Accreditation (LIQA) and Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) this year. This marks them as one of our leading members with the assessment pointing to their strengths in convening the VCSE and connecting with the statutory sector with authority and insight.

Maddy Desforges, CEO
 NAVCA



Our Work

The Four Functions of Local Infrastructure





Gathering the thoughts, needs, and experiences of the sector and local communities, bringing them to the attention of policy and decision makers; influencing conversations at a strategic level; representing and advocating for the local voluntary sector organisations, diverse groups, and marginalised or hard to reach communities.

How we do it:

Leadership: We lead and facilitate groups, networks and forums to gather our members' thoughts, needs, and experiences, and those of the communities they work in. Knowing what the problem is and what our members and their communities need is part of the solution.

We also facilitate one-off workshops and engagement events. Bringing people together across sectors to make sure VCSE organisations can be involved in shaping decisions and solutions at the earliest opportunity.

Advocacy: We sit on and chair different boards, and we attend all sorts of consultation events to advocate for our member organisations, for their communities, and for the sector as a whole. We share our members' thoughts and experiences to partners like The City Council, Public Health, Health Authorities, and Staffordshire Chambers of Commerce.

Our sector does amazing things all the time, and everyone should know about it!

Our Leadership and Advocacy Services



Networks and Forums

VAST facilitates a range of peer support networks for key VCSE sector roles.

Our networks and forums create much-needed opportunities to share best practice, and exchange ideas, skills, and knowledge, together with collaboratively addressing challenges and focussing on key issues.

Thematic forums enable organisations to come together around shared areas of work or common agendas. They are often run in partnership with other key local organisations.

Membership is often cross-sector, enabling our sector to be fully integrated into local thinking on important issues.

VSCOG

The Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group (VSCOG) is a network for VCSE sector leaders in Stoke-on-Trent.



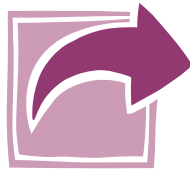
VCSE Finance Forum

Staff members and volunteers who are responsible for any VCSE finance functions are invited to join the VCSE Finance Forum.



Share Network

Community Share Networks focus on sharing resources, information, and advice around a chosen theme.



SEND Forum

A networking opportunity for organisations providing support to children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities in Stoke-on-Trent.

Communications and Events Engagement Network (CEEN)

A space for those responsible for comms, marketing, and/or events.



Volunteer Voices Forum

A peer support space to give volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to provide valuable insight, share ideas and improve volunteering in the local area.



Funding Network

This network is an opportunity to talk all things funding.



Volunteer Managers Network

This network gives people working with volunteers an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.



Food Partnership Network

Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership is a network of like-minded organisations who want to ensure that Stoke-on-Trent has an equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable food network that supports the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities.



Connections For Connectors

A supportive sharing session for anyone working in a social prescribing, care navigating, or community connecting type role in Stoke-on-Trent.



Healthy Communities Forum

Hosted by the Healthy Communities Alliance, this forum enables cross-sector collaboration with health and care system partners. This forum covers Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffs as part of a series.



Hyper-Local Support Network

A peer networking opportunity for hyper-local organisations, like community hubs and Welcoming Spaces, working in and around Stoke-on-Trent to support people their neighbourhoods.



[Find out more about our networks and forums](#)

What we did:

Case Study on VCSE City Alliance



In 2024, VAST worked with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Stoke-on-Trent Voluntary Sector Chief Officers' Group to co-design a new agreement – the VCSE City Alliance – that will guide our work together in the years to come, as we collaborate to better support our communities.

The agreement was launched by Jon Rouse, Chief Executive of the City Council, Jane Ashworth OBE, Council Leader, Lisa Healings, VAST Chief Executive, and Neil Dawson, VAST's Chair, in December 2024. Over 80 organisations have since confirmed their support, committing their energies and vision to the development and exploration of four key priorities – volunteering, prevention, communications, and commissioning.

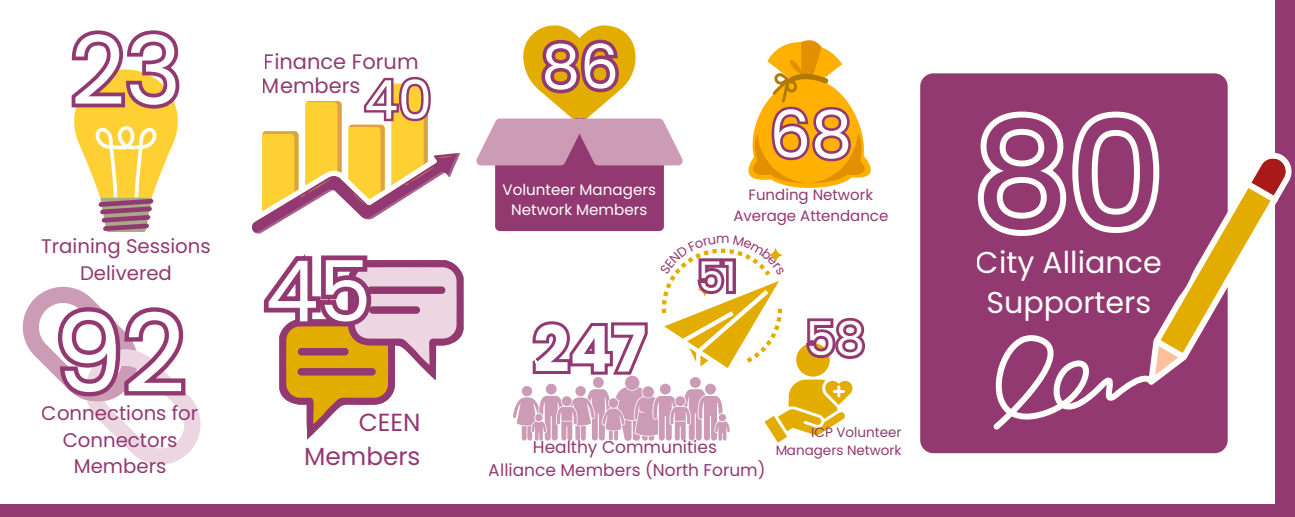
A successful collaboration has seen many of the Alliance's members engage with City Council colleagues in a series of workshops to explore the future of commissioning and procurement, our sector's past experiences, the achievement of clarity for all partners through a codesigned grants policy, exploration of the potential for more equitable approaches, and training to reduce the barriers to take-up of existing commissioning opportunities.

Shelley Brough, Director of All Age Commissioning at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, said: 'It is an absolute pleasure to work with VAST and the VCSE sector in developing the series of workshops supporting the delivery of the Stoke-on-Trent City Alliance. I'm really excited about the opportunities that will flourish through being open and working more closely in partnership, lots to do, but I know we can do it together. A huge thank you to all involved!'



Our Impact

Leadership and Advocacy



Community Health Champions Network and Reach across the Stoke-on-Trent



City-Wide





Creating accessible and inclusive opportunities and driving effective collaborative working through the building of networks and partnerships between local organisations and strategic partners.

How we do it:

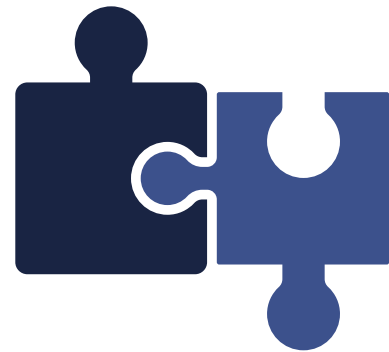
Partnerships: We have a number of partnerships at both strategic and operational level. These include:



Strategic partnerships with Stoke-on-Trent City Council and Staffordshire Integrated Care System which enable active strategic engagement and provide a flow of information to and from the VCSE sector.

Operational project-based partnerships with many others including Support Staffordshire and Staffordshire Chamber of Commerce, and Midlands Partnership Foundation Trust to enable shared resources and skills and information exchange.

Collaboration: We enable collaboration both within the VCSE sector and across sectors by enabling networks and forums for people to come together and build relationships and identify synergies and facilitating engagement events and sessions to co-design and co-produce solutions to address the needs of our communities.



Our Projects and Partnerships



What we did:

Case Study on the Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership

Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership began in 2023 as an ambition arising from citywide conversations about hardship and poverty.

During 2024, VAST partnered with YMCA North Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent City Council to convene and facilitate a series of conversations exploring the potential for a partnership approach to food issues in Stoke-on-Trent, drawing together the strengths and ideas of both VCSEs and statutory partners across the city.

Towards the end of 2024, the Partnership's members elected an eight-strong steering group, with two co-chairs and an ambassador. All are from different organisations and services, and all have equal influence regardless of organisation size, an approach that is enabling the Partnership's emergent leadership to mobilise the qualities and diverse skills and knowledge of the network.

Building on deepening consensus within the wider network, VAST has responded by supporting the development of a shared, diffuse leadership approach. This now enables a range of VCSE organisations to influence the development of the Partnership's work in the most equitable possible way going forward.

Flowing from this approach, a series of thematic working groups has begun to drive forward a range of work.

In early 2025, six VCSE members of the Partnership led a series of collaborative community cooking sessions based on foodbank or community pantry ingredients; a data and mapping working group is preparing a collaborative City Food Survey to strengthen the Partnership's evidence base and support the efforts of all Partnership members; and a Health working group is harnessing the skills of NHS and Public Health professionals to develop the Partnership's approach to enhancing our work from this vital perspective.

The partnership continues to grow, having recently surpassed 75 members, and has become integrated in the city's wider Family Matters and Cost of Living partnerships.



Published by Hootsuite · January 9 ·

#WeAreTotallyStoked | Food Partnership News

Stoke-on-Trent Food Partnership, is a network of like-minded organisations who want to ensure that #StokeonTrent has an equitable, resilient, and environmentally sustainable food network that supports the health, wellbeing, and prosperity of our communities.

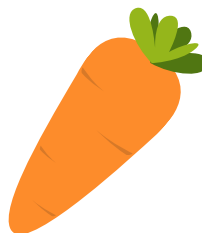
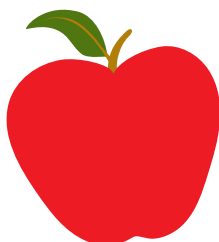
During December's Food Partnership meeting, members elected co-chairs, steering group members and a partnership ambassador to lead the partnership over the next twelve months.

Cris Cohen, [Feasted](#) and Sarah Sambrooks, [Alice Charity](#) were elected as co-chairs.

Danny Flynn, [YMCA North Staffordshire](#) was chosen as the Food Partnership's ambassador.

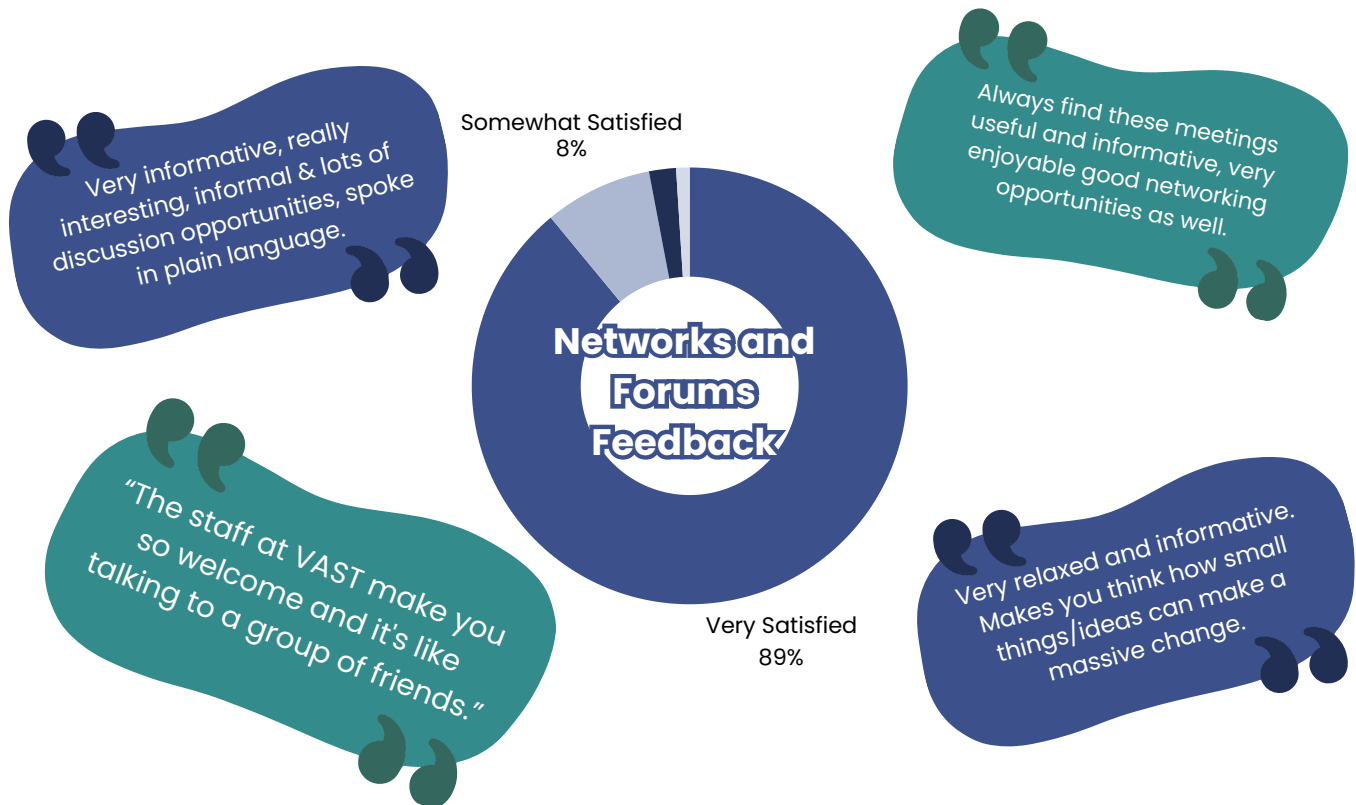
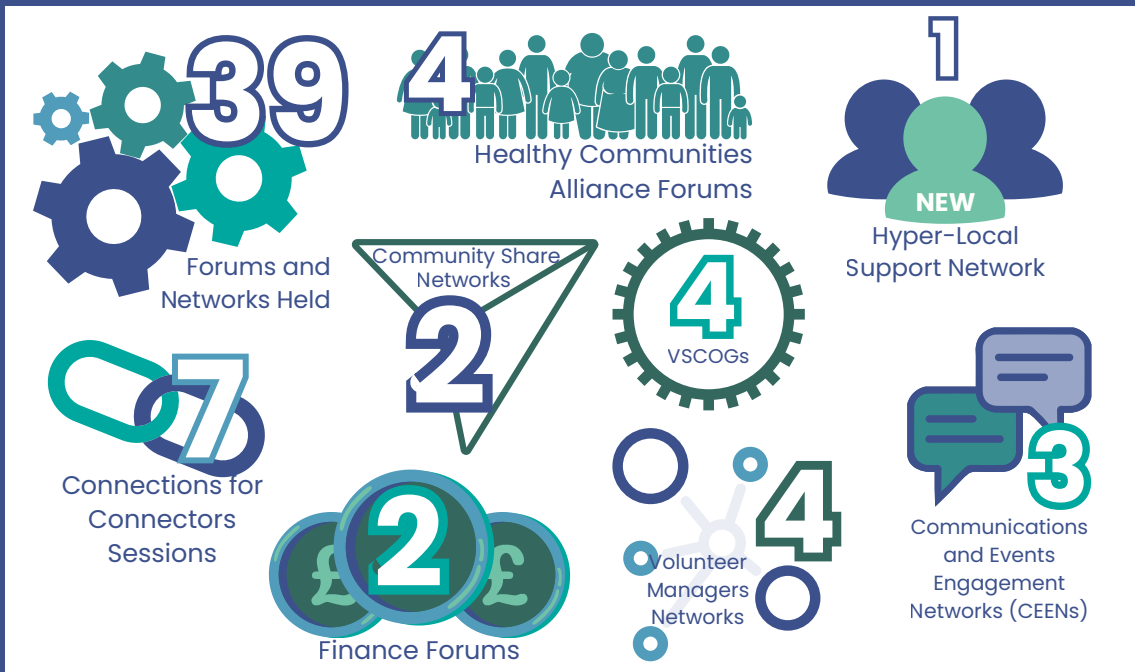
Read more

<https://vast.org.uk/food-partnership-elects-chairs.../>



Our Impact:

Partnerships and Collaboration



Totally Stoked Conference: communities know communities best

Following the resounding success of 2024's Totally Stoke Awards ceremony, the Totally Stoked Conference: Communities Know Communities Best took place in February 2025 and brought together over 150 attendees from across the VCSE sector and statutory partners.

The theme of the conference – Communities Know Communities Best – encompassed the core concept of the event: Asset Based Community Development.

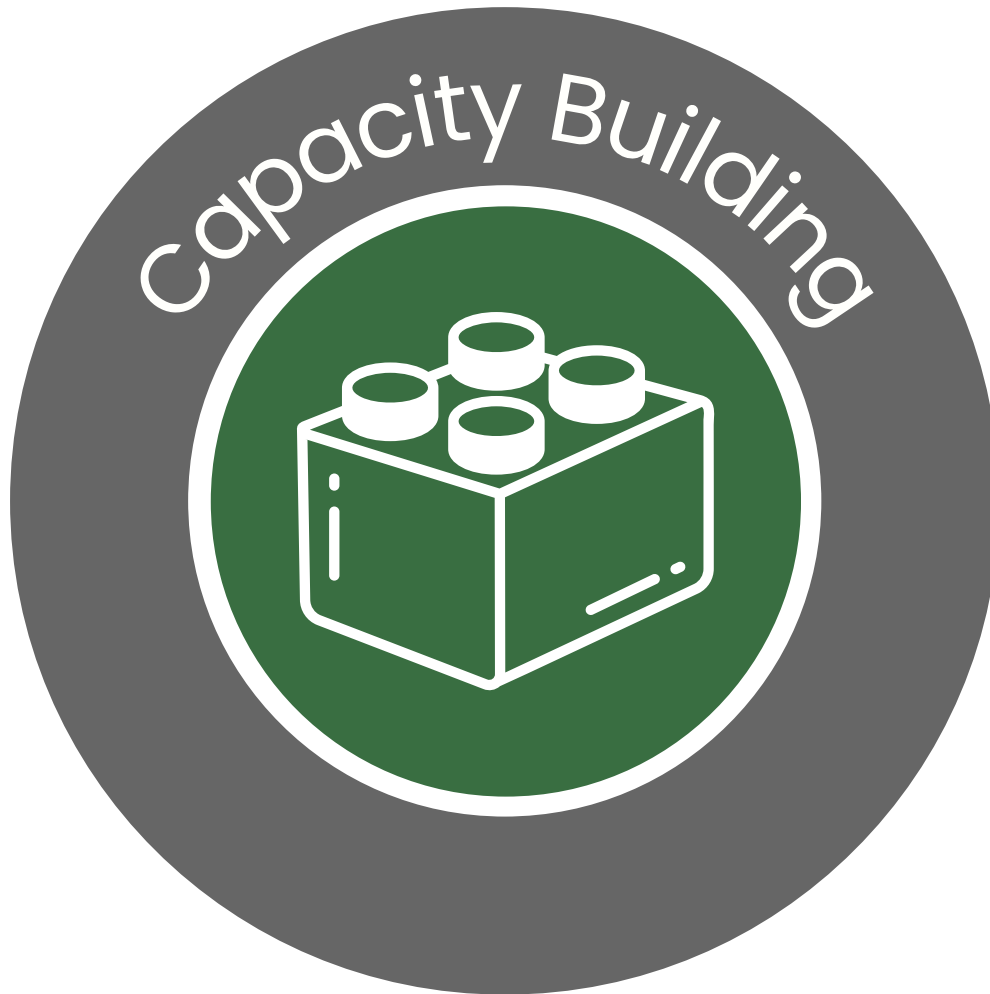
Through a series of workshops, a panel of expert speakers, and an opportunity for peer networking across the sector, attendees were invited to consider the strengths of their communities, and how these can be utilised to create a resilient, inclusive, engaged, and empowered city.

TOTALLY STOKED CONFERENCE

COMMUNITIES KNOW COMMUNITIES BEST

I simply cannot name one best thing about the event, that's how great it was! I loved how varied and interactive it was, large presence from various organisations, variety of speakers on each session and how easy to understand the agenda was.





Providing practical support, guidance, information, advice, training, and essential business services to VCSE groups to enable them to become more resilient and efficient, to achieve their goals, improve lives and help communities to thrive.

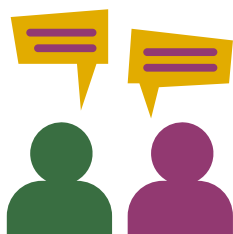
How we do it:

Capacity building is a huge part of our work; to ensure that our members and their communities are as resilient and empowered as possible, it is important that we help them build their skills, knowledge, and networks.

We do this through:

Training

VAST provides a full training programme, covering a range of topics - from essential governance, to volunteer management, and event planning. We also work with expert organisations to provide training around themes like Hate Crime Awareness, Business Continuity, and Health Literacy.

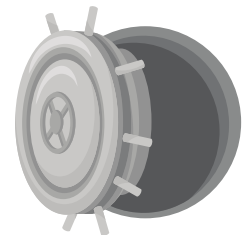


One-to-One Support

Our support team provide free one-on-one support to our member organisations, with tailored support available from the beginning of their organisation or project. We have supported organisations with funding, governance, organisation start-up, volunteering and more.

Information and Resources

Through our regular newsletters, targeted support, and resources available on the VAST Vault, we ensure that our member organisations have ongoing access to important information, resources and learning.



Guides and Resources from the VAST Vault



What we did:

Case Study on Pink Sisters and Misters

Established in 2015 by founder Jackie Mackenzie, Pink Sisters and Misters is a self-help support group dedicated to assisting individuals diagnosed with various types of cancer, along with their families and friends.

Based in Stoke-on-Trent the organisation provides a safe space for those affected by cancer to share experiences, seek advice, and connect with others facing similar challenges.

The group holds monthly meetings in various locations, offering face-to-face support to the community. Additionally, they maintain a private online forum for family members and partners, recognising that a cancer diagnosis impacts not only the individual but also their loved ones.

Through these initiatives, Pink Sisters and Misters aims to ensure that no one faces cancer alone, embodying their belief that **"together we are stronger."**

To further their mission, The Pinks began attending The Funding Network, a partnership between VAST and The Hub Foundation. Having never applied for a large grant before, the process initially felt daunting and overwhelming. However, they were determined to secure funding for two eight-seater vehicles, which would allow them to transport individuals to workshops, events, retreats, and medical appointments. Many of those undergoing cancer treatment, particularly chemotherapy, struggle with transportation, and these vehicles would make a huge difference—enabling them to attend support activities and enjoy a much-needed break at the charity's caravan.

Determined to make this vision a reality, Janet Stanway began attending training sessions with VAST, learning about the importance of a business plan and how to write successful funding applications. Janet found the sessions invaluable, realising that, with proper preparation, the process was far less intimidating than she had initially thought. She then worked closely with Kelly, a Senior Project Officer, to apply for an Awards for All grant through the National Lottery Community Fund. With Kelly's guidance, Janet was able to clearly articulate her project and structure the application to align with the funders' priorities.

After refining the proposal and ensuring it met all the requirements, Janet submitted her first funding application—an experience that felt both exciting and nerve-wracking. When she received the news that The Pinks had been awarded £19,800, she was overwhelmed with joy. This funding allowed them to purchase the two vehicles, making a transformative impact on the lives of those they support.



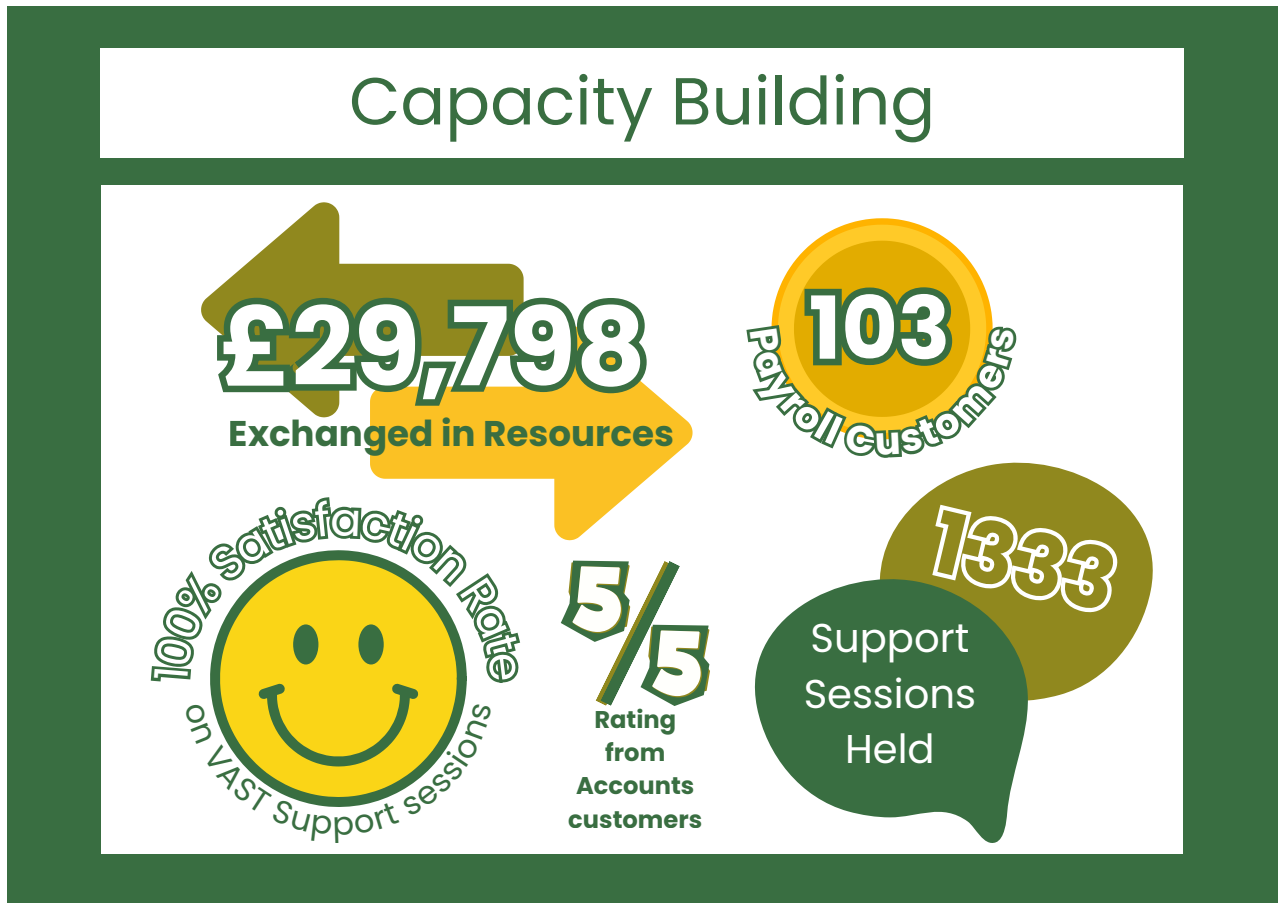
"I felt absolutely brilliant when I heard the news—shocked and absolutely amazed! Thanks to this funding, we can now take people to the retreat, to chemotherapy appointments, and to workshops. Those who previously couldn't get out can now be taken where they need to go. We're also starting Nordic walking sessions and will be able to travel around Staffordshire."

The £19,800 funding for two eight-seater vehicles will make a huge difference—not just for transport but also for moving equipment and organising day trips in the summer."

Janet Stanway, Pink Sisters and Misters



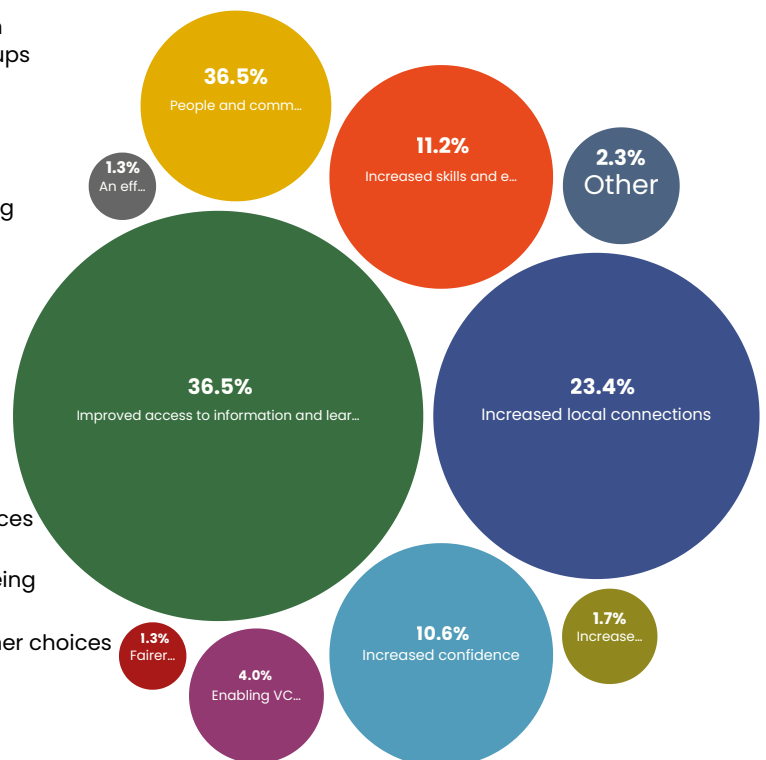
Our Impact



Session Outcomes

These outcomes are measured in % and based on feedback from sessions with voluntary sector groups across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire.

- Improved access to information and learning
- Increased local connections
- Increased confidence
- Increased skills and expertise
- People and communities feel empowered
- Fairer access to assets and community spaces
- Enabling VCSE support for health and wellbeing
- Increased sustainability and enabling greener choices
- An effective VCSE voice
- Other



"Your input has been invaluable. From the inception of our idea to support our local communities, through the initial CIC setup and very generous equipment donation, you have always been there for us, giving your precious time and sharing your knowledge in an area new to us. We have so much more to do, and I look forward to growing a team of local 'tech-minded' and 'community-driven' volunteers to help us reduce digital poverty and provide essential equipment to those in need."

Adam Whitehouse, Director of RE-boot IT

"You gave me essential feedback, allowing me to reflect and refine my application. I knew what I wanted to do, and what my heart wanted to say, but you helped me to be heard. I hope we continue to build upon this success for the benefit of all those in need."

Simon Ward, As One CIC

"Our charity commission application was successful thanks to the help of VAST. A massive thanks for helping with the application process."

Araya Teclé, Eritrean Community

"I wouldn't have been able to complete a successful funding application without VAST. I've always been scared of applying for funding, but this has been a massive turning point. Now, we feel empowered to apply for other funding opportunities.

For years, I was too afraid to apply, unsure about how to include beneficiaries and explain the impact properly. But through training, the Funding Network, and eventually submitting this application, I've gained so much confidence. This means we can now help the pinks even more.

Since this experience, I've started referring more people to VAST, explaining how supportive they've been."

Janet Stanway, Pink Sisters and Mistrs

"I don't know what we would do without the amazing staff at VAST."

Voice of Hope



Tailored volunteering support to voluntary sector groups including training, guidance, and best practice; encouraging and nurturing high-quality, accessible, and inclusive volunteering opportunities; and a personalised volunteer matching service.

How we do it:

Last year, we had a statement around our Vision for Volunteering.

Our 'Vision for Volunteering'

Our vision for volunteering is to create a community where everyone comes together to make a positive impact. We believe that together we can create meaningful connections, foster empathy, and create a real sense of unity. Putting the 'unity' in community, our mission is to inspire others to join in and help make the world a better place for all.



We have spent extensive time since our last report researching into developing a local Stoke-on-Trent Vision for Volunteering. We have consulted with our Volunteer Managers Network and Volunteer Voices Forum and plan to launch this Vision during Volunteers Week 2025.

At VAST we're passionate about Volunteering. We know that volunteering is a great way to improve your health and wellbeing whilst making a huge difference in your local community. Our volunteer service benefits both volunteers and the organisations they volunteer with.

Brokerage Service

Supporting organisations to find the volunteers they need, and volunteers to find the role that's right for them.

Inclusive Volunteering

Supporting those who may need a little extra support to get into volunteering, and helping organisations ensure they're prepared to work with them.

Corporate Social Responsibility

Creating connections between private companies/corporate businesses and the VCSE sector for Corporate Social Responsibility.

Volunteer Managers Network

Giving people working with volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network, and provide mutual support.

Training

Providing in-depth training and support around volunteer management.

Volunteer Voices Forum

Giving volunteers in and around Stoke-on-Trent an opportunity to share ideas, network and provide insight into the volunteering landscape locally.

Volunteer Quality Standards

A framework through which organisations can work towards accreditation based on their volunteering policies and procedures, and the way they work with new and existing volunteers.

What we did: Case Studies

Father Hudson's Caritas

The Young at Heart Project has been running since 2013, and was created to combat loneliness, and give people aged 55 and over a place to socialise and make new friends. They are all about providing a safe and welcoming environment for people who might otherwise feel isolated.

They currently run 14 groups across Stoke-on-Trent and North Staffordshire ranging from social groups, singing groups, guitar groups, local history groups and even a ukelele group! The Young at Heart Project relies on volunteers for it to be a success, and they currently have a team of over 70 volunteers.

Alex, Project Manager, is an active part of our **Volunteer Managers Network**. She had heard about our Quality Standards Scheme but was concerned on how she would find the time to complete the scheme around the other parts of her job.

After hearing from other organisations that had completed the scheme, and how achievable it was, Alex was keen to see if she could make it work for Father Hudson's Caritas. Sian, Senior Projects Officer, was able to explain that the scheme is a great opportunity to improve an existing service.

Alex then jumped at the opportunity to take part. Alex was sent the self-assessment and made a start to collate her evidence.

Sian and Alex arranged to meet over a nice cup of tea and discussed their evidence and if anything was outstanding. This was a great opportunity for Alex to gain feedback on the new documentation she was hoping to implement as a result of the scheme and to assess what changes she had already made.

It was clear through the evidence provided that Father Hudson's Caritas provide a rich and welcoming experience for their volunteers and beneficiaries.



"At first I thought that the accreditation meant hard work that in my busy work schedule I hadn't got the time for. The next time it was suggested it was put across as a way of improving the service that we already provide, this had me sold. The advice given and the suggestions that we took on board enabled us to provide a much better service to our volunteers. This award has meant that we now have the recognition from others that we are doing a good job which in this line of work can never be a bad thing.

Here at Father Hudson's Young at Heart project we run a volunteer led model, so we solely rely on volunteers to run our 14 groups across the city, it is imperative that we have the correct procedures and policies in place to effectively run this project. We currently have over 70 volunteers, most of which have come through VAST, so to have a gold award with them will only enhance our relationship. The initial document sent out clearly informed us on what would be expected and with Sian on board, individual meetings made the process very easy. She would set tasks and give advice along the way to ensure that the process was as pain free as possible.

I would recommend this to anyone (and I have) who wishes to improve the service that they are already providing to their valuable volunteers."

Alexandra Baines, Young at Heart Project manager,
Older Peoples Lead for Father Hudson's Caritas



Adekunle and Citizen's Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent

Adekunle is one of the amazing volunteers that supports Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent as a Welcome Advice Community Volunteer.

Citizens Advice Staffordshire North and Stoke-on-Trent (CASNS) is one of the country's largest advice agencies with a national reputation for exciting and innovative work. They are an independent local charity, led by a Trustee Board of local volunteers. CASNS operates across North Staffordshire, each year they give 20,000 local people the advice they need to solve 55,000 brand new problems, alongside supporting 30,000 victims of crime, and answering 130,000 calls on their national consumer helpline. Wow what a fantastic charity!

Gloria, our Inclusive Volunteering Project Officer, initially met with Adekunle in July 2024 and spent time getting to know Adekunle and gaining insight into Adekunle's skills and abilities.



Adekunle previously worked as a media aide and personal assistant and volunteered in environmental and climate change. Adekunle also had experience of working as a project assistant, and photographer.

Adekunle identified that the Welcome Advice Community Volunteer role would be a great role for him to utilise his own experiences and develop new skills. CASNS were looking for individuals with specific skills and abilities:

- Due to the specifics of the project, they were looking for individuals with lived experience with the UK's Immigration and Asylum system.
- Flexible and open to refugees, asylum seekers and other migrants from diverse backgrounds.
- Ability to speak English as well as other languages desirable.

And these skills matched Adekunle exactly, so this was a great start!

Adekunle was excited to start volunteering and when asked why Adekunle wanted to volunteer, he said: **"I wanted to make an impact on my community, improve my skills and interact with others."**

Adekunle's roles and responsibilities are varied and includes some of the following tasks:

- Assist in empowering members of the local refugee, asylum, and migrant communities with the guidance of CASNS.
- Support CASNS during events and workshops for those communities.
- Serve as a mediator by translating information to members of the local refugee, asylum and migrant communities who have limited knowledge of English.
- Support CASNS by providing first line advice to local people seeking advice and assistance.

Moving forwards, I am sure that you will agree Adekunle has a very bright future ahead of him as he continues to improve his skills, impact his community and support the community in Stoke-on-Trent.



"I get to know about my community in Stoke-on-Trent, I meet people, it helps to support my mental health, and I enjoy learning new things. Volunteering also helps to keep me busy and helps with boredom."

Adekunle



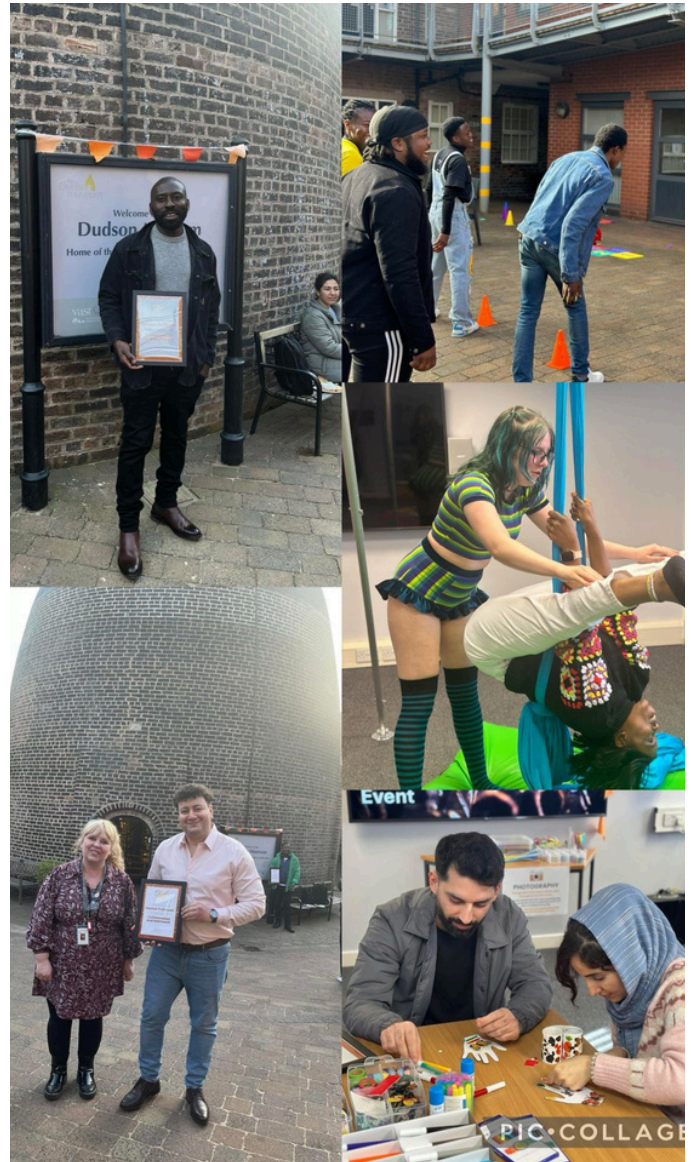
Spirit of Giving Event

To recognise and celebrate the remarkable contributions of asylum seekers and refugees throughout the project we came together for a family friendly afternoon of appreciation and connection.

Johura, VAST's Inclusive Volunteer Buddy, provided invaluable cultural insights, advice, and guidance on the Ramadan festival, including appropriate foods and activities. Given that the event coincided with Ramadan, we ensured that everyone was catered for. For those wishing to break their fast with us, we offered a delightful vegetarian grazing buffet and provided takeaway bags for everyone. During the celebration, asylum seekers and refugees who had volunteered through the project were presented with certificates recognising their achievements across seven key themes: resilience and determination, community impact and contribution, compassion and empathy, leadership and initiative, collaboration, and teamwork, learning and growth, and dedication and commitment.

The event featured a variety of activities for all to enjoy, including circus skills, crafts, soft play, and children's activities. Additionally, The Community Cast conducted interviews with individuals to capture their perspectives on how volunteering had helped them connect with their communities and the benefits they had experienced.

To capture the spirit of the day and the fun had by everyone who attended, we worked with The Community Cast to create [this short film](#).



Click or scan to Watch the Video



Our Impact

Volunteering



- 182 Opportunities Registered
- 1590 volunteers Subscribed to Mailing List
- 602 Volunteering Quality Standards Awards
- 8 CSR Projects Completed
- 86 Volunteer Managers Network Members
- 613 Volunteers Placed
- 3 Volunteer Voices Forums Held
- Inclusive Volunteering Report published for KYN2 Project



vast 
Volunteering



Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA)

After submitting an extensive and detailed portfolio of evidence for the accreditation, we exceeded requirements in all five areas of the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) from NAVCA. VCQA is designed to assess the quality of volunteering services provided to their local communities by Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIOs) like VAST.

Applications for the award are independently assessed against NAVCA's Five Functions of Volunteer Centres:

- Strategic development of volunteering.
- Good practice development.
- Developing volunteering opportunities.
- Brokerage.
- Voice of volunteering.



The evidence we submitted in our application portfolio, which generally takes around six months to prepare, included strategies, and policies and procedures, as well as service delivery and local impact evidence, including case studies showcasing our work. In her final report, assessor Sue Dunmore said that our **“integrated approach to delivering work means that there is a seamless delivery of services. [As an organisation VAST] is now seen as the vital organisation to deliver Infrastructure support.**

“All the interviews with external bodies stressed how easy it was to work with VAST and nothing was ever too much trouble and staff were always ready to support. It responds to enquiries through social media, phone, website as well as in person visits.”

We were also praised for innovation; the development of our local Volunteering Quality Standards programme with the assessor saying it is an area of work that, **“has received very positive feedback from organisations,”** taking part.

Press release from VAST Volunteering

Our Volunteer Centre exceeds requirements in all areas!

Our vision for volunteering has been recognised for its “robust strategic plans” for volunteering across Stoke-on-Trent as part of a recent volunteer centre accreditation process.

After submitting an extensive and detailed portfolio of evidence for the accreditation, we exceeded requirements in all five areas of the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation (VCQA) from NAVCA.



Read our press release [here](#).

What our clients say

“The dedication and commitment shown by our asylum seeker and refugee volunteers has been truly invaluable to our community garden. Their diverse skills, enthusiasm, and willingness to contribute have transformed the space and strengthened our organisation.

The garden wouldn't be what it is today without their consistent efforts. We're especially grateful to VAST for their exceptional staffing support, thorough processes, and attention to detail in connecting us with these talented individuals. We're proud to provide opportunities for integration while benefiting from their tremendous talents. We look forward to continuing our collaboration and building on these meaningful relationships.”

Maurice Thaw, CEO, Collab Training Academy CIC

“Volunteering in Stoke on Trent Libraries is relatively new concept and thanks to the vital support we received from VAST and their dedicated staff we have been able to develop a successful volunteering programme.

VAST has demonstrated an uplifting approach to collaboration and there is always something new, creative and inspiring to take away from Volunteer Management Meetings, wide range of trainings, and individual consultations. Stoke on Trent Libraries are looking forward to our future collaboration with VAST. We are excited to welcome more volunteers from VAST, broaden the scope of our initiative and deepen impact we are having on our communities.”

We have been able to refine our volunteering offer into a meaningful and impactful experience that empowers individuals, strengthen communities and improves peoples' wellbeing. VAST are always ready to provide swift guidance, resources, and share best practice. We have received dedicated time and expertise that helped us to identify areas for improvement, streamline our processes while ensuring all we do is volunteer friendly. Now, we are proud to have robust onboarding processes, clear role descriptions, and pathways to support and keep in touch with our volunteers.

Mariana, Volunteer Coordinator, Stoke Libraries

“I attended the training that VAST have delivered around the Volunteer Management.

This went into great detail about the advantages of volunteering for an organisation, as well as incorporating the laws that are in place, so that there is clear understanding and support. It was delivered in a way that made it very easy to understand with systematic steps. This made it clear of the managerial responsibilities which assisted me in how volunteers can be incorporated into the organisation.

After completing the training, it was reassuring to know that I could go back to have documentation checked to make sure it was robust. Sian was really supportive of this, so I knew we could move forwards with volunteering as a service.”

Heather, SENDIASS Team Lead

Governance

Organisation Structure

VAST is governed by a Board of no less than three Trustees who are appointed by the Board based upon a skills matrix to ensure a range of skills and representation from all communities. This is achieved in one of three ways:

Any voluntary organisation or community group either based in or operating in Staffordshire is eligible for voting membership, on becoming voting members they may nominate trustees.

Trustees try to ensure an ongoing and appropriate skills and diversity balance, where any gaps are noted they seek to appoint appropriately through an application process.

Occasionally the Trustees may co-opt individuals with relevant skills to strengthen the Board. All of these appointments are then ratified by members at the AGM.

The day-to-day management and running of the charity has been delegated to the Chief Executive, supported by the senior management team via a written scheme of delegation, which is reviewed and updated annually.

The Board meets quarterly and also has finance & general purpose, board recruitment and succession planning, and remuneration sub-committees. Task and finish working groups are set up and meet as required to deal with specific issues.

Governing Document

VAST is a company limited by guarantee and a registered charity governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, last amended in 2022.

Trustee Induction and Training

All trustees receive an induction into VAST and receive a handbook. Training is provided for all trustees as required, and all best practice guidance is reviewed and discussed at Board meetings regularly.

Sub-Committee Membership

Tim Edwards, Chair

Sub-committees: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Board Recruitment, Risk

Joe Martin, Vice Chair

Sub-committees: Finance and General Purpose, Board Recruitment, Museum

Simon Harris, Vice Chair

Sub-committee: Finance and General Purpose

John Farrar, Treasurer

Sub-committee: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Board Recruitment, and Risk

Cathy Jones

Sub-committee: Board Recruitment

Pooja Batta

Sub-committee: Board Recruitment, and Risk

Neil Dawson

Sub committees: Finance and General Purpose, Remuneration, Museum

Statement of Trustees Roles & Responsibilities

The Trustees (who are also Directors of VAST for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing the Trustees' Report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law, trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (United Kingdom Accounting Standards and applicable law).

Under company law trustees must not approve the financial statements unless they are satisfied that they give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for the year.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently.

Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP.

Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in operation.

Make judgements and accounting estimates that are reasonable and prudent.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping adequate accounting records that are sufficient to show and explain the charitable company's transactions and disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and, hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Statement of Disclosure of Information to Auditors

In so far as the trustees are aware, there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information, and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

Pay Policy for Senior Staff

The Trustees consider that the Board of Trustees and senior management team comprise the key management personnel of the charity. All trustees give their time freely and no trustee received remuneration for their services in the year. Details of any related party transactions are disclosed in note 12 & 24 to the accounts.

The pay scales for senior staff are set by the Trustees and are benchmarked against other similar size organisations operating in the area. Pay of individual members of the management team are recommended by the Remuneration Committee.

Related Parties, Partnership Working and Networks

The Charity continues to support and participate in several key and strategic partnerships representing the interests of the VCSE.

VAST is a member of NAVCA (National Association of Voluntary and Community Action) and is also extensively involved in several networks and partnerships, including VSCOG (Voluntary Sector Chief Officers Group) Stoke-on-Trent Collaborative Network & The Healthy Communities Alliance.

Related or Connected Charities

The Dudson Centre is an independent charity (reg. No. 1059186), the trustees of the Dudson Centre have subcontracted the management of The Dudson Centre to VAST. VAST is a member of this charity.

VAST's annual report and financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2025 have been prepared by the trustees in accordance with the Charities Act 2011.

The trustees have adopted the provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice FRS102 in preparing the annual report and financial statements of the charity.

Auditors

Geens will be reappointed in accordance with Chapter 2 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006.

This trustees report was approved by the board on 17th September 2025 and signed on their behalf by:



Tim Edwards, Chair

INDEPENDENT AUDITORS REPORT TO THE MEMBERS AND TRUSTEES OF VAST SERVICES (1920) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2025 (REGISTRATION NO:1049663)

Opinion

We have audited the financial statements of VAST Services (1920) for the year ended 31 March 2025 which comprise the Statement of Financial Activities (including the income and expenditure account), Balance Sheet, Statement of Cash Flows and Notes to the financial statements, including a summary of significant accounting policies. The financial reporting framework that has been applied in their preparation is applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards, including FRS 102 "The Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland" (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

In our opinion the financial statements:

- give a true and fair view of the state of the charitable company's affairs as at 31 March 2025 and of the charitable company's incoming resources and application of resources, including its income and expenditure, for the year then ended;
- have been properly prepared in accordance with United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice; and
- have been prepared in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011.

Basis for opinion

We conducted our audit in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK) (ISAs (UK)) and applicable law. Our responsibilities under those standards are further described in the Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements section of our report.

We are independent of the charity in accordance with the ethical requirements that are relevant to our audit of the financial statements in the UK, including the FRC's Ethical Standard, and we have fulfilled our ethical responsibilities in accordance with these requirements. We believe that the audit evidence we have obtained is sufficient and appropriate to provide a basis for our opinion.

Conclusions relating to going concern

In auditing the financial statements, we have concluded that the trustees' use of the going concern basis of accounting in the preparation of the financial statements is appropriate.

Based on the work we have performed, we have not identified any material uncertainties relating to events or conditions that, individually or collectively, may cast significant doubt on the charity's ability to continue as a going concern for a period of at least twelve months from when the financial statements are authorised for issue.

Our responsibilities and the responsibilities of the trustees with respect to going concern are described in the relevant sections of this report.

Other information

The trustees are responsible for the other information. The other information comprises the information included in the Trustee's Report other than the financial statements and our auditor's report thereon. Our opinion on the financial statements does not cover the other information and, except to the extent otherwise explicitly stated in our report, we do not express any form of assurance conclusion thereon.

In connection with our audit of the financial statements, our responsibility is to read the other information and, in doing so, consider whether the other information is materially inconsistent with the financial statements or our knowledge obtained in the audit, or otherwise appears to be materially misstated.

If we identify such material inconsistencies or apparent material misstatements, we are required to determine whether there is a material misstatement in the financial statements or a material misstatement of the other information. If, based on the work we have performed, we conclude that there is a material misstatement of this other information, we are required to report that fact.

We have nothing to report in this regard.

Opinions on other matters prescribed by Companies Act 2006

In our opinion, based on the work undertaken in the course of the audit:

- the information given in the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report, for the financial year for which the financial statements are prepared is consistent with the financial statements; and
- the Trustees' Report, which includes the directors' report and the strategic report has been prepared in accordance with applicable legal requirements.

Matters on which we are required to report by exception

In the light of the knowledge and understanding of the charitable company and their environment obtained in the course of the audit, we have not identified material misstatements in the strategic report or the directors' report included within the Trustees' report.

We have nothing to report in respect of the following matters where the Companies Act 2006 and the Charities Act 2011 requires us to report to you if, in our opinion:

- adequate and proper accounting records have not been kept by the charitable company, or,
- the charitable company financial statements are not in agreement with the accounting records and returns; or,
- certain disclosures of trustees' remuneration specified by law are not made; or,
- we have not received all the information and explanations we require for our audit; or,
- the trustees were not entitled to prepare the financial statements in accordance with the small companies regime.

Responsibilities of trustees

As explained more fully in the trustees' responsibilities Statement, the trustees (who are also the directors of the charitable company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the financial statements and for being satisfied that they give a true and fair view, and for such internal control as the trustees determine is necessary to enable the preparation of financial statements that are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error.

In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are responsible for assessing the charitable company's ability to continue as a going concern, disclosing, as applicable, matters related to going concern and using the going concern basis of accounting unless the trustees either intend to liquidate the charitable company or to cease operations, or have no realistic alternative but to do so.

Auditor's responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements

We have been appointed as auditor under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 and report in accordance with the Act and relevant regulations made or having effect thereunder.

Our objectives are to obtain reasonable assurance about whether the financial statements as a whole are free from material misstatement, whether due to fraud or error, and to issue an auditor's report that includes our opinion.

Reasonable assurance is a high level of assurance, but is not a guarantee that an audit conducted in accordance with ISAs(UK) will always detect a material misstatement when it exists. Misstatements can arise from fraud or error and are considered material if, individually or in the aggregate, they could reasonably be expected to influence the economic decisions of users taken on the basis of these financial statements.

Irregularities, including fraud, are instances of non-compliance with laws and regulations. We design procedures in line with our responsibilities, outlined above, to detect material misstatements in respect of irregularities, including fraud. The extent to which our procedures are capable of detecting irregularities, including fraud, is detailed below.

As part of our planning process:

- We enquired of management the systems and controls the charity has in place, the areas of the financial statements that are most susceptible to the risk of irregularities and fraud, whether there was any known, suspected or alleged fraud. The charity did not inform us of any known, suspected or alleged fraud.
- We obtained an understanding of the legal and regulatory frameworks applicable to the charity. We determined that the following were most relevant: the Charity SORP, FRS 102, Charities Act 2011, Companies Act 2006.
- We considered the incentives and opportunities that exist in the charity, including the extent of management bias, which present a potential for irregularities and fraud to be perpetuated, and tailored our risk assessment accordingly.
- Using our knowledge of the charity, together with the discussions held with the charity at the planning stage, we formed a conclusion the risk of misstatement due to irregularities including fraud and tailored our procedures according to this risk assessment.

The key procedures we undertook to detect irregularities including fraud during the course of the audit included:

- Identifying and testing journal entries and the overall accounting records, in particular those that were significant and unusual.
- Reviewing the financial statement disclosures and determining whether accounting policies have been appropriately applied.
- Reviewing and challenging the assumptions and judgements used by management in their significant accounting estimates.
- Assessing the extent of compliance, or lack of, with relevant laws and regulations.
- Assessing the validity of the classification of income, expenditure, assets and liabilities between unrestricted and restricted funds.
- Obtaining third party confirmation of material bank balances.
- Documenting and verifying all significant related party balances and transactions.
- Reviewing documentation such as charity board minutes for discussions of irregularities including fraud.

Because of the inherent limitations of an audit, there is a risk that we will not detect all irregularities, including those leading to a material misstatement in the financial statements or non-compliance with regulation. The risk increases the more that compliance with a law or regulation is removed from the events and transactions reflected in the financial statements, as we will be less likely to become aware of instances of non-compliance. The risk is also greater regarding irregularities occurring due to fraud rather than error, as fraud involves intentional concealment, forgery, collusion, omission or misrepresentation.

A further description of our responsibilities for the audit of the financial statements is located on the Financial Reporting Council's website at www.frc.org.uk/auditorsresponsibilities. This description forms part of our auditor's report.

Use of our report

This report is made solely to the charitable company's members, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 of Part 16 of the Companies Act 2006 and to the charity's trustees, as a body, in accordance with Chapter 3 or Part 8 of the Charities Act 2011 and regulations made under section 154 of that Act. Our audit work has been undertaken so that we might state to the charitable company's members those matters we are required to state to them in an auditor's report and for no other purpose.

To the fullest extent permitted by law, we do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charitable company and the charitable company's members as a body, for our audit work, for this report, or for the opinions we have formed.

Geens Limited

Geens Limited (Statutory Auditor)

Geens Limited is eligible for appointment as auditor of the charity by virtue of its eligibility for appointment as auditor of a company under section 1212 of the Companies Act 2006.

Geens, Graphic House, City Rd, Stoke-on-Trent ST4 2PH

Date: *23 September 2025*

VAST Services (1920)
Financial Statements
Statements of Financial Activities for
the Year Ended 31 March 2025



VAST Services (1920)

Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	495,757	1,158,378	1,654,135
Other trading activities	4	53,145	-	53,145
Investment income	5	20,616	-	20,616
Total income		569,518	1,158,378	1,727,896
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(63,839)	(1,106,101)	(63,839)
Charitable activities	7	(528,869)		(1,634,970)
Total expenditure		(592,708)	(1,106,101)	(1,698,809)
Net (expenditure)/income		(23,190)	52,277	29,087
Transfers between funds		(1,058)	1,058	-
Net movement in funds		(24,248)	53,335	29,087
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		361,755	115,807	477,562
Total funds carried forward	21	337,507	169,142	506,649

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period. The notes on pages 58 to 79 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)
Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March
2025 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and
Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Income and Endowments from:				
Charitable activities	3	527,244	705,511	1,232,755
Other trading activities	4	41,173	-	41,173
Investment income	5	15,160	-	15,160
Total income		<u>583,577</u>	<u>705,511</u>	<u>1,289,088</u>
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds	6	(60,218)	-	(60,218)
Charitable activities	7	(457,046)	(762,640)	(1,219,686)
Total expenditure		<u>(517,264)</u>	<u>(762,640)</u>	<u>(1,279,904)</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		66,313	(57,129)	9,184
Transfers between funds		1,488	(1,488)	-
Net movement in funds		67,801	(58,617)	9,184
Reconciliation of funds				
Total funds brought forward		<u>293,954</u>	<u>174,424</u>	<u>468,378</u>
Total funds carried forward	21	<u><u>361,755</u></u>	<u><u>115,807</u></u>	<u><u>477,562</u></u>

The Statement of Financial Activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year.
All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above period.
The notes on pages 58 to 79 form an integral part of these financial statements.

VAST Services (1920)
(Registration number: 02000818)
Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Fixed assets			
Tangible assets	15	20,892	31,419
Current assets			
Stocks	16	1,503	996
Debtors	17	148,652	257,344
Cash at bank and in hand		610,145	566,858
		<u>760,300</u>	<u>825,198</u>
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	18	<u>(274,543)</u>	<u>(356,555)</u>
Net current assets		<u>485,757</u>	<u>468,643</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		506,649	500,062
Provisions	19	-	<u>(22,500)</u>
Net assets		<u>506,649</u>	<u>477,562</u>
Funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds			
Restricted funds	21	169,142	115,807
Unrestricted income funds			
Unrestricted funds		<u>337,507</u>	<u>361,755</u>
	21	<u>506,649</u>	<u>477,562</u>
Total funds		<u><u>506,649</u></u>	<u><u>477,562</u></u>

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice - Accounting and Reporting by Charities FRS102 and in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements on pages 54 to 79 were approved by the board, and authorised for issue on 17 September 2025 and signed on behalf by:

.....
John Farrar Trustee

VAST Services (1920)
Statement of Cash Flows for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Note	2025 £	2024 £
Cash flows from operating activities			
Net cash income		29,087	9,184
Adjustments to cash flows from non-cash items			
Depreciation	6	10,527	10,673
Investment income	5	(20,616)	(15,160)
		18,998	4,697
Working capital adjustments			
(Increase)/decrease in stocks	16	(507)	365
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	17	108,692	(74,189)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	18	26,878	(54,704)
Decrease in provisions	19	(22,500)	(22,500)
(Decrease)/increase in deferred income		(108,890)	117,009
Net cash flows from operating activities		22,671	(29,322)
Cash flows from investing activities			
Interest receivable and similar income	5	20,616	15,160
Net increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents		43,287	(14,162)
Cash and cash equivalents at 1 April		566,858	581,020
Cash and cash equivalents at 31 March		610,145	566,858

All of the cash flows are derived from continuing operations during the above two periods.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

1 Charity status

The charity is limited by guarantee, incorporated in England (registered number 02000818), and consequently does not have share capital. Each of the trustees are liable to contribute an amount not exceeding £1 towards the assets of the charity in the event of liquidation.

The address of its registered office is:

The Dudson Centre
Hope Street
Stoke-on-Trent
ST1 5DD

2 Accounting Policies

Summary of significant accounting policies and key accounting estimates

The principal accounting policies applied in the preparation of these financial statements are set out below. These policies have been consistently applied to all the years presented, unless otherwise stated.

Accounting convention

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice (applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)) (issued in October 2019) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006.

The financial statements are prepared in sterling which is the functional currency of the charity. Monetary amounts in these financial statements are rounded to the nearest £.

VAST Services (1920) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Going concern

The accounts have been prepared on a going concern basis. The trustees have reviewed budgets and cash flow forecasts for the next 12 months and consider that the charity will be able to meet all obligations as they fall due for the foreseeable future. The charity regularly has to tender for grants and contracts. If these tenders are not successful the operations of the organisation could be scaled back to ensure that all expenditure could be met within the level of income available.

Income and endowments

Income is credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the period in which it is receivable.

Grants Receivable

Grants, including grants for the purchase of fixed assets, are recognised in the Statement of Financial Activities when the charity is legally entitled to the income after any performance conditions have been met.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Investment income

Income from investments is included in the year in which it is receivable.

Charitable activities

Income from chargeable services and facilities management are recognised, net of VAT, at the point at which the service is completed.

Other trading activities

Trading income is recognised, net of vat, at the point of sale.

Voluntary assistance

In addition to the income disclosed in the financial statements VAST also receives help and support in the form of voluntary assistance. This help and support is not included in the financial statements. This voluntary assistance is very much appreciated.

Fund Structure

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources receivable or generated for the objects of the charity without further specified purpose and are available as general funds. Designated funds are unrestricted funds earmarked by the trustees for particular purposes. Restricted funds are to be used for specific purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure that meets these criteria is charged to the fund together with a fair allocation of management and support costs.

Stocks

Stocks are valued at the lower of cost and net realisable value, after making due allowance for obsolete items.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised in the year in which it is incurred.

Charitable activities

Direct charitable expenditure is identified as cost incurred directly as a result of running the various projects, supporting voluntary groups that are members of VAST and delivering our chargeable services.

Raising funds

Costs of raising funds are those incurred in seeking voluntary contributions, and the costs of running the Dudson Centre café. They do not include the costs of disseminating information in support of the charitable activities.

Governance costs

Governance costs are those incurred in connection with administration of the charity and compliance with constitutional and statutory requirements.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Support costs

Expenditure is allocated to the particular activity where the cost relates to the activity. However, management, administration and finance staff costs are apportioned on the basis of time spent on each activity.

Tangible fixed assets

Fixed assets over the value of £1,000 are capitalised with all assets valued at historic cost.

Depreciation and amortisation

Depreciation is provided at rates calculated to write off the cost less residual value of each asset over its expected useful life, as follows:

Asset class	Depreciation method and rate
Leasehold improvements	over the term of the lease
Office equipment	25% straight line
Computers	25% straight line
Telephone system	10% straight line

Pensions and other post retirement obligations

The pension costs charged in the financial statements represent the contribution by the charity on behalf of the employees to a Stakeholder Pension Scheme or other designated Personal Pension Scheme payable by the charity during the year.

Deferred income

Amounts held as deferred income refer to funds received in the reporting period but specifically held for use in the following financial year due to either:

- a) Project activity not commencing until the following financial year.
- b) Funds being restricted for use in a future period.
- c) Invoiced amounts for services to be provided in the following financial year.

All amounts held as deferred income in the prior year have been released and are recorded within the total incoming resources figure for the current year.

Deferred income is released to income in the reporting period in which the conditions that limit recognition are met.

Trade debtors

Trade debtors are amounts due from customers for services performed in the ordinary course of business. Trade debtors are recognised initially at the transaction price. A provision for the impairment of trade debtors is established when there is objective evidence that the charity will not be able to collect all amounts due according to the original terms of the receivables.

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Cash and cash equivalents

Cash and cash equivalents comprise cash on hand and other short term highly liquid investments that are readily convertible to a known amount of cash and are subject to insignificant risk of change in value.

Trade creditors

Trade creditors are obligations to pay for goods and services that have been acquired in the ordinary course of business from suppliers. Accounts payable are classified as current liabilities if the charity does not have an unconditional right, at the end of the reporting period, to defer settlement of the creditor for at least 12 months after the reporting date. If there is an unconditional right to defer settlement for at least 12 months after the reporting date they are presented as non-current liabilities.

Provisions

Provisions for liabilities are recognised when there is an obligation at the reporting date as a result of a past event, it is probable that a transfer of economic benefit will be required in settlement and the settlement amount can be reliably estimated.

Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and financial liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised at transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at amortised cost using the effective interest method.

Termination Benefits

Termination benefits are payable when employment is terminated by the charity before the normal retirement date, or whenever the employee accepts voluntary redundancy in exchange for these benefits. The charity recognises termination benefits in the statement of financial activities when it is demonstrably committed to either

- (i) terminating the employment of current employees according to a detailed formal plan without possibility of withdrawal, or
- (ii) providing termination benefits as a result of an offer made to encourage voluntary redundancy. Benefits falling due more than twelve months after the end of the reporting period are discounted to their present value.

3 Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Grants & Contracts	17,250	1,158,378	1,175,628
Bursary	5,360	-	5,360
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	473,147	-	473,147
	<u>495,757</u>	<u>1,158,378</u>	<u>1,654,135</u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Grants & Contracts	4,000	693,011	697,011
Bursary	11,247	-	11,247
Facilities Management & Rechargeable Services	511,997	12,500	524,497
	<u>527,244</u>	<u>705,511</u>	<u>1,232,755</u>

4 Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	53,145	-	53,145
	<u>53,145</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>53,145</u>

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Trading income;			
Cafe income	41,173	-	41,173
	<u>41,173</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>41,173</u>

5 Investment income

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	20,616	-	20,616
	<u>20,616</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,616</u>

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Interest receivable and similar income;			
Interest receivable on bank deposits	15,160	-	15,160
	<u>15,160</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>15,160</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

6 Expenditure on raising funds

a) Costs of trading activities

	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2025 £
Staff Costs	31,560	-	31,560
Cafe supplies	20,545	-	20,545
Office costs	1,995	-	1,995
Legal fees	1,358	-	1,358
Marketing and publicity	15	-	15
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	354	-	354
Support Costs (note 8)	8,012	-	8,012
	<u>63,839</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,839</u>
	<u>63,839</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>63,839</u>
	Unrestricted funds Cafe £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £
Staff Costs	28,674	-	28,674
Cafe supplies	19,589	-	19,589
Office costs	1,737	-	1,737
Legal fees	1,164	-	1,164
Marketing and publicity	54	-	54
Other direct costs of activities for generating funds	193	-	193
Support Costs (note 8)	8,807	-	8,807
	<u>60,218</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,218</u>
	<u>60,218</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>60,218</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

7 Expenditure on charitable activities

	Facilities Rechargeable Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Support & Volunteering	Other	Heritage	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	103,996	131,256	102,007	366,471	462,625	18,942	765,297
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	179	271	7,681	3,313	180	884	12,505
Training	-	545	100	1,506	-	-	2,151
Office Costs	17,743	5,938	1,908	44,043	900	1,984	72,516
Legal & Professional	6,169	21,702	723	7,434	1,613	391	38,032
Advertising & Publicity	1,272	-	-	3,553	5,000	-	9,825
Premises Costs	188,210	-	5,218	-	-	1	193,429
Insurance	7,796	610	305	-	-	102	8,813
Sundry	1,227	-	-	832	-	4,445	6,504
Depreciation	164	-	-	-	-	10,363	10,527
Bursary	-	5,360	-	-	-	-	5,360
Partner Payments	-	-	25,250	31,725	20,620	-	77,595
Events	-	170	-	15,864	14,810	1,183	32,027
Grants	-	-	-	250,000	10,350	-	260,350
Support Costs (note 8)	16,023	28,042	16,023	48,071	-	4,005	112,164
Reps Allowance	-	-	27,875	-	-	-	27,875
	<u>342,776</u>	<u>193,894</u>	<u>187,090</u>	<u>772,812</u>	<u>96,098</u>	<u>42,300</u>	<u>1,634,970</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

7 Expenditure on charitable activities (continued)

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Support & Volunteering	Other	Heritage	Total 2024
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
Staff Costs	110,386	138,642	55,998	337,295	20,094	52,089	714,504
Staff & Volunteer Expenses	186	128	-	8,370	6,846	509	16,039
Training	337	962	-	998	-	-	2,297
Office Costs	25,888	10,732	91	838	(1,707)	266	36,108
Legal & Professional	2,681	37,052	20	4,950	5,464	6,303	56,470
Advertising & Publicity	-	-	-	4,885	-	704	5,589
Premises Costs	129,138	-	-	18,291	1,218	-	148,647
Insurance	7,689	866	173	-	-	-	8,728
Sundry	-	-	-	495	-	2,533	3,028
Depreciation	165	-	-	-	-	10,362	10,527
Bursary	-	11,247	-	-	-	-	11,247
Partner Payments	-	-	-	46,282	24,400	-	70,682
Events	1,238	164	162	21,206	4,269	3,072	30,111
Grants	-	-	-	26,450	-	-	26,450
Support Costs (note 8)	177,613	23,484	5,871	17,613	2,936	11,742	79,259
	<u>295,321</u>	<u>223,277</u>	<u>62,315</u>	<u>487,673</u>	<u>63,520</u>	<u>87,580</u>	<u>1,219,686</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

8 Analysis of support costs

Support costs allocated to raising funds

	Cafe £	Total 2025 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	2	
Staff Costs	1,302	1,302
Staff Training	199	199
Travel	18	18
Premises Costs	1,006	1,006
Legal & Professional	386	386
Insurance	75	75
Advertising & Publicity	60	60
Events	326	326
Office Costs	1,651	1,651
Sundry	2,522	2,522
Governance Costs	467	467
	<u>8,012</u>	<u>8,012</u>
	Cafe £	Total 2024 £
Allocated by no. of staff:	3	
Staff Costs	1,170	1,170
Staff Training	157	157
Travel	90	90
Premises Costs	250	250
Depreciation	15	15
Legal & Professional	1,103	1,103
Insurance	49	49
Advertising & Publicity	75	75
Events	304	304
Office Costs	1,708	1,708
Sundry	3,166	3,166
Partner payments	720	720
	<u>8,807</u>	<u>8,807</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

Support costs allocated to charitable activities

	Facilities Rechargeable Management	Services	Health Projects	Support & Volunteering	Heritage	Total 2025
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Allocated by no. of staff:	4	7	3	12	1	
Staff Costs	2,605	4,558	2,605	7,814	651	18,233
Staff Training	398	696	398	1,193	99	2,784
Travel Costs	35	62	35	106	9	247
Premises Costs	2,011	3,520	2,011	6,034	503	14,079
Legal & Professional	772	1,351	772	2,315	193	5,403
Insurance	149	261	149	447	37	1,043
Advertising & Publicity	121	212	121	363	30	847
Events	652	1,141	652	1,956	163	4,564
Office Costs	3,302	5,779	3,302	9,907	826	23,116
Sundry	5,045	8,829	5,045	15,136	1,261	35,316
Partner Payments	-	-	933	2,800	233	3,966
Governance Costs	933	1,633	-	-	-	2,566
	<u>16,023</u>	<u>28,042</u>	<u>16,023</u>	<u>48,071</u>	<u>4,005</u>	<u>112,164</u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Facilities Management	Rechargeable Services	Health Projects	Other Support & Volunteering	Heritage	Total 2024	
	£	£	£	£	£	£	
Allocated by no. of staff:	10	6	2	3	5	4	
Staff Costs	2,339	3,119	780	390	2,339	1,560	10,527
Staff Training	314	418	105	52	314	209	1,412
Travel Costs	180	240	60	30	180	120	810
Premises Costs	501	668	167	83	501	334	2,254
Depreciation	29	39	10	5	29	19	131
Legal & Professional	2,206	2,941	735	368	2,206	1,471	9,927
Insurance	98	131	33	16	98	65	441
Advertising & Publicity	150	200	50	25	150	100	675
Events	608	810	203	101	608	405	2,735
Office Costs	3,415	4,553	1,138	569	3,415	2,277	15,367
Sundry	6,333	8,445	2,110	1,057	6,333	4,222	28,500
Governance Costs	1,440	1,920	480	240	1,440	960	6,480
	<u>17,613</u>	<u>23,484</u>	<u>5,871</u>	<u>2,936</u>	<u>17,613</u>	<u>11,742</u>	<u>79,259</u>

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

9 Grant-making

Analysis of grants

Analysis	Grants to institutions	
	2025	2024
	£	£
Community Health Champion Grants	10,000	21,551
VAST Bursary	5,360	11,247
Cadent	10,350	-
Community Cohesion	240,000	-
	<u>265,710</u>	<u>32,798</u>

The support costs associated with grant-making are £Nil (31 March 2024 - £Nil).

No individual grants made to institutions during the year were material.

10 Net incoming/outgoing resources

Net incoming/outgoing resources for the year include:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Operating leases - other assets	7,892	7,892
Audit fees	7,500	7,200
Depreciation of fixed assets	10,527	10,673
	<u>25,919</u>	<u>25,765</u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

11 Staff costs

The aggregate payroll costs were as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Staff costs during the year were:		
Wages and salaries	683,139	644,357
Social security costs	53,532	47,382
Pension costs	60,918	55,610
	<u>797,589</u>	<u>747,349</u>

The monthly average number of persons employed by the charity during the year was as follows:

	2025	2024
	No	No
Direct charitable activities	19	18
Generating funds	7	8
Management and administration	4	4
	<u>30</u>	<u>30</u>

During the year, the charity made redundancy and/or termination payments which totalled £2,611 (2024 - £1,102).

Pension costs are split between restricted and unrestricted expenditure in line with the associated staff salary costs.

The number of employees whose emoluments fell within the following bands was:

	2025	2024
	No	No
£60,001-£70,000	<u>1</u>	<u>-</u>

The total employee benefits of the key management personnel of the charity were £203,018 (2024 - £196,951).

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

12 Trustee remuneration and expenses

During the year the charity made the following transactions with trustee:

£105 (2024: £Nil) of expenses were reimbursed to one trustee during the year.

No trustee, nor any persons connected with them, have received any remuneration from the charity during the year.

13 Pension and other schemes

Defined contribution pension scheme

The charity operates a defined contribution pension scheme. The pension cost charge for the year represents contributions payable by the charity to the scheme and amounted to £60,918 (2024 - £55,610).

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

14 Taxation

The charity is a registered charity and is therefore exempt from taxation.

15 Tangible fixed assets

	Leasehold Improvements £	Furniture and equipment £	Computer equipment £	Telephone System £	Total £
Cost					
At 1 April 2024	294,229	199,891	1,832	96,941	592,893
At 31 March 2025	<u>294,229</u>	<u>199,891</u>	<u>1,832</u>	<u>96,941</u>	<u>592,893</u>
Depreciation					
At 1 April 2024	293,896	168,805	1,832	96,941	561,474
Charge for the year					
At 31 March 2025	<u>165</u>	<u>10,362</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,527</u>
	<u>294,061</u>	<u>179,167</u>	<u>1,832</u>	<u>96,941</u>	<u>572,001</u>
Net book value					
At 31 March 2025	<u>168</u>	<u>20,724</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>20,89</u>
At 31 March 2024	<u>333</u>	<u>31,086</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>31,419</u>

16 Stock

	2025 £	2024 £
Stocks	<u>1,503</u>	<u>996</u>

17 Debtors

	2025 £	2024 £
Trade debtors	69,668	250,419
Prepayments and accrued income	75,706	6,925
VAT recoverable	3,278	-
	<u>148,652</u>	<u>257,344</u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

18 Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2025	2024
	£	£
Trade creditors	29,177	11,163
Other taxation and social security	13,811	29,226
Other creditors	27,721	29,773
Accruals	82,043	55,712
Deferred income	121,791	230,681
	<u>274,543</u>	<u>356,555</u>
	2025	2024
	£	£
Deferred income at 1 April 2024 Resources	230,681	113,672
deferred in the period	121,791	230,681
Amounts released from previous periods	(230,681)	(113,672)
Deferred income at year end	<u>121,791</u>	<u>230,681</u>

19 Provisions

	Other provisions	Total
	£	£
At 1 April 2024	(22,500)	(22,500)
Utilised during the period	22,500	22,500
At 31 March 2025	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

The provision of £45,000 arose in 2019, as a result of a claim for historical invoices from Staffordshire County Council (SCC), in respect of utilities and business rates at the premises on Eastgate Street, Stafford. Legal advice has been taken and both parties have agreed the principles of a settlement to this matter. Heads of terms have been drawn up in which the settlement figure will fully utilise the amount provided.

During the year ended 31 March 2025 payment of £22,500 was made to Staffordshire County Council.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

20 Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Capital Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2025 £
Tangible fixed assets	168	20,724	-	20,892
Current assets	490,091	270,203	6	760,300
Current liabilities	<u>(152,752)</u>	<u>(121,791)</u>	-	<u>(274,543)</u>
Total net assets	<u><u>337,507</u></u>	<u><u>169,136</u></u>	<u><u>6</u></u>	<u><u>506,649</u></u>
	Unrestricted funds General £	Restricted funds £	Other funds £	Total funds at 31 March 2024 £
Tangible fixed assets	31,419	-	-	31,419
Current assets	483,547	341,645	6	825,198
Current liabilities	<u>(130,717)</u>	<u>(225,838)</u>	-	<u>(356,555)</u>
Provisions	<u>(22,500)</u>	-	-	<u>(22,500)</u>
Total net assets	<u><u>361,749</u></u>	<u><u>115,807</u></u>	<u><u>6</u></u>	<u><u>477,562</u></u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

21 Funds

	Balance at 1 April 2024 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2025 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	286,755	569,518	(533,938)	(59,828)	262,507
Designated					
Dudson Centre contingency	25,000	-	(25,000)	50,000	50,000
Museum contingency	50,000	-	(33,770)	8,770	25,000
	<u>75,000</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(58,770)</u>	<u>58,770</u>	<u>75,000</u>
	<u>361,755</u>	<u>569,518</u>	<u>(592,708)</u>	<u>(1,058)</u>	<u>337,507</u>
Total unrestricted funds					
Restricted funds					
Health	23,387	265,160	(189,494)	-	99,053
Support and Volunteering	3,735	175,163	(178,889)	(9)	-
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	1,410	462,500	(463,793)	464	581
Community Health Champions	55,694	100,000	(107,949)	-	47,745
Other	130	148,955	(148,051)	3	1,037
Heritage	31,445	6,600	(17,925)	600	20,720
Capital Funds	6	-	-	-	6
	<u>115,807</u>	<u>1,158,378</u>	<u>(1,106,101)</u>	<u>1,058</u>	<u>169,142</u>
Total restricted funds					
Total funds	<u><u>477,562</u></u>	<u><u>1,727,896</u></u>	<u><u>(1,698,809)</u></u>	<u><u>-</u></u>	<u><u>506,649</u></u>

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

	Balance at 1 April 2023 £	Incoming resources £	Resources expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31 March 2024 £
Unrestricted funds					
General					
General Fund	172,837	583,577	(440,930)	(28,729)	286,755
Designated					
Dudson Centre contingency	25,000	-	-	-	25,000
The Hub contingency	46,117	-	(40,036)	(6,081)	-
Museum contingency	50,000	-	(36,298)	36,298	50,000
	<u>121,117</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(76,334)</u>	<u>30,217</u>	<u>75,000</u>
	<u>293,954</u>	<u>583,577</u>	<u>(517,264)</u>	<u>1,488</u>	<u>361,755</u>
Total unrestricted funds					
Restricted					
Health	23,260	50,000	(49,873)	-	23,387
Support and Volunteering	36,372	177,715	(208,875)	(1,477)	3,735
Stoke-on-Trent City Council	18,123	193,023	(209,736)	-	1,410
Community Health Champions	57,144	102,500	(103,950)	-	55,694
Other	1,400	128,819	(130,078)	(11)	130
Heritage	38,119	53,454	(60,128)	-	31,445
Capital Funds	6	-	-	-	6
	<u>174,424</u>	<u>705,511</u>	<u>(762,640)</u>	<u>(1,488)</u>	<u>115,807</u>
Total restricted funds					
	<u>468,378</u>	<u>1,289,088</u>	<u>(1,279,04)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>477,562</u>
Total funds					

VAST Services (1920)

Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

The specific purposes for which the funds are to be applied are as follows:

Purpose of Designated Unrestricted Funds:

The Dudson Centre Contingency is to allow for underoccupancy or unexpected repair work at Dudson Centre.

The Hub Contingency is to provide a fund for unexpected repair work at The Hub.

The Museum Contingency is to provide funds for the Dudson Museum whilst it becomes re-established and funding is sourced.

Purpose of Restricted Funds:

Health related projects are funds from the CCG's PCT to fund the Strategic Development Worker for Health work and funding for the Door 2 Door transport service.

Support and Volunteering Fund is funding from The National Lottery Community Fund for the Totally Stoked Support project.

Stoke-on-Trent City Council is funding for our core development and volunteering work and funding for the Management of the Stoke-on-Trent Community Directory.

Community Health Champions funding is from Stoke-on-Trent City Council to fund the Community Health Champions project.

Heritage funds include funds received from the Heritage Lottery Fund and other small grants and donations for the running of The Dudson Museum.

Other restricted funds relate to various small grants and pilot projects.

22 Commitments

Capital commitments

There were no capital commitments at the balance sheet date.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

23 Obligations under leases and hire purchase contracts

Operating lease commitments

Total future minimum lease payments under non-cancellable operating leases are as follows:

	2025	2024
	£	£
Land and buildings		
Within one year	4,200	3,756
Between one and five years	12,600	12,000
After five years	50,400	39,000
	<u>67,200</u>	<u>54,756</u>
Other		
Within one year	7,892	7,892
Between one and five years	22,700	14,781
	<u>30,592</u>	<u>22,673</u>

24 Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in the year.

25 Control Relationship

The charity is controlled by the trustees.

VAST Services (1920)
Notes to the Financial Statements for the Year Ended 31 March 2025

26 Financial instruments

Categorisation of financial instruments

	2025	2024
	£	£
Financial assets that are debt instruments measured at amortised cost	69,668	250,419
Financial liabilities measured at amortised cost	(29,177)	(11,163)

27 Funds held as agent

During the year funds were held on behalf of the clients in respect of VAST acting as their agent for payroll or other purposes.

At the start of the year the balance of held funds was £92,457 (2024 £81,445). Receipts of £5,874,112 (2024 £5,407,753) were received during the year and payments of £5,880,663 (2024 £5,396,741) were made leaving a year end balance of £85,906 (2024 £92,457).

28 Government grants

VAST received the following government grants during the year:

National Lottery Community Fund - Totally Stoked & Door2Door £174,786 (2024 £213,689)
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Collaborative Working Agreement £206,000 (2024 £nil)
 Heritage Lottery Fund - various projects £6,600 (2024 £43,454)
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Community Health Champions £nil (2024 £100,000)
 Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Integrated Care Board - Community Health Champions £100,000 (2024 £nil)
 Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent integrated Care Board - VCSE Alliance £123,000 (2024 £nil)
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Strategic Development Officer £nil (2024 £30,282)
 DCMS (via the Community Foundation for Staffordshire) - Know Your Neighbourhood £69,475 (2024 £48,551)
 NHS England - Volunteering for Health £89,160 (2024 £nil)
 Stoke-on-Trent City Council - Community Cohesion £240,000 (£2024 £nil)

The amount of grants recognised in the financial statements was £1,009,021 (2024 - £435,976).

There were no unfulfilled conditions in respect of these grants at the year end.

No other forms of government assistance have been received by the Charity.