

cvs life

Council for Voluntary Service Fife

Annual Report
2003 / 2004



Our Mission

CVS Fife seeks to support and strengthen the role of the voluntary sector and, in doing so, to promote and support social justice in Fife.

Our Aim

To develop the capacity of Fife's voluntary organisations and community groups in order that they can continue to provide quality services, support lifelong learning and be an effective partner in Community Planning, as providers of community-based services and as a voice for communities.



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Introduction

It is my great pleasure to introduce you to CVS Fife's Annual Report for 2003/4 in my new role as Chair of the organisation. Since taking over as Chair in October of 2003 I have enjoyed an eventful time at the helm, and I would like to thank all the members of the Board of Directors for their support, particularly Nan Smith, our former Chair, who left things in such good order for me. The past year has seen a number of developments nationally and locally which have had a considerable impact on CVS Fife. As always, we aim to be a responsive organisation, and are tackling these new developments with enthusiasm.

At a national level, following the comprehensive review in 2003, CVS Scotland has identified key areas for development, particularly around the core functions of a council for voluntary service, but also looking at issues such as branding and shared services. CVS Fife was pleased to welcome Paul White, recently appointed as SCVO's Director of Networks, for a one-day visit in September, and staff appreciated the opportunity to discuss some of his ideas for developing CVS Scotland. We were encouraged by his approach of building on effective services and expertise that already exist, and we are keen to play a full part in delivering a stronger CVS network for the future.

Another key development has been the publication of the Scottish Executive's proposals for modernising Charity Law in Scotland. Our manager, Alison Cameron, took part in the SCVO conference on Charity Law in June, and made a plea for proportionate regulation for smaller charities. There is no doubt that whatever shape the final Bill takes, councils for voluntary service will have an important role in working with the Charity Regulator to assist charities at a local level to make sense of the new regulations and give them support to strengthen the governance of their organisation if required.

Good governance has also been high on the agenda here in Fife. Following CVS Fife's conference in November 2003 (see the report on page 5), our staff worked with Fife Council to alert the voluntary sector to the changes the local authority had made to its Monitoring and Evaluation Framework early in 2004. These changes were designed to give voluntary organisations funded by the Council a better level of support, and a clearer framework to operate within. CVS Fife staff were involved in the revision of the framework, and we were keen to highlight the connection between good governance and sound monitoring and evaluation procedures.

To conclude, CVS Fife continues to work locally to support the voluntary sector to meet the challenges of the 21st century while mindful of the role we have to play in national initiatives. The future is a challenge we are confident we can meet.

Jean Hadow, Chair



Capacity Building



Scotland's 1st Earthship, built by the Sustainable Communities Initiative, one of the many community organisations supported by our capacity building services.

CVS Fife continues to offer a range of capacity building services to small, medium and large voluntary organisations and community groups. How do we define capacity building? The support offered by our development staff can cover a range of topics, from constitution development to fundraising strategies, and this support may be a one-off piece of work or a longer term package of support, depending on what an organisation needs. During 2003/4, our capacity building teams provided assistance to a variety of voluntary organisations across Fife, and some of the topics covered were:

- drawing up a constitution
- roles and responsibilities of management committee members
- advice and guidance on funding applications
- developing specific policies, e.g. child protection, equal opportunities
- legal structures, e.g. applications for charitable status, company limited by guarantee
- employing staff
- managing finances
- planning for the future

Our capacity building staff have also been involved in a number of joint working initiatives around support for the voluntary sector as a whole in Fife. In January and February of 2004, CVS Fife delivered a number of sessions throughout the region on the subject of Fife Council's new Monitoring and Evaluation Framework. As a funder, the council supports approximately 1400 voluntary and community organisations in Fife, so any changes in its procedures for issuing and managing grants was likely to have a big impact. Our capacity building staff therefore played a key role in informing the sector of the changes, and supporting organisations to meet the requirements where appropriate.

During 2003/4, we have also seen the increasing emergence of ICT as a capacity building issue. A number of our admin / information staff members have been involved in the delivery of the Connecting Communities baseline ICT training, giving staff, volunteers and service users of voluntary organisations the skills to make use of the World Wide Web and electronic mail. As our society becomes more and more dependent on these tools for communication, the more important it becomes for voluntary organisations to ensure they have the resources, both in terms of knowledge and finance, to make use of this technology.

An Agenda for Action

In November 2003, CVS Fife staged a conference event for 140 delegates from the voluntary, statutory and community sectors on the topic of governance. This conference was an ideal opportunity to focus our capacity building work, as through the practical workshops on offer to delegates, we were able to highlight the topics and issues that our staff can offer support with. It was also a useful forum for CVS Fife to work with representatives from voluntary and community groups to unpick the whole concept of governance, a much-used term that can mean different things to different people. In simple terms, we took the view that governance is about the way an organisation is run, and the relationship between the board or committee and the staff and/or volunteers who are delivering the service or activity. CVS Fife believes that good governance is vital to the success of any voluntary organisation, large or small. Our approach to tackling governance within the conference was to break the topic down, and focus on distinct aspects, as follows:



- What is Governance Anyway?
- Relationships between Board Members and Staff
- Membership Matters: Who Owns Your Organisation?
- Managing Your Finances
- Employing Staff: Recent and Forthcoming Changes to Employment Law
- Supporting Good Governance
- Partnerships and Governance

The feedback from the conference was very positive, as delegates welcomed the opportunity to network and take part in participative workshops. The input of Governance Works, the Newcastle-based consultancy with many years experience of tackling governance issues in the voluntary sector, ensured that while the event had local relevance, it did not lose sight of the national issues. Guest speakers Jackie Baillie MSP, and Shirley Otto, training consultant, also raised a number of interesting issues that provided plenty of talking points. In 2004, we have been working on following up on the feedback provided by delegates at the conference, and have delivered a number of additional workshop opportunities on the topics covered in the conference. Planning has already begun in terms of our agenda for 2005!

Capacity Building Case Studies

John O'Brien is one of several key community activists CVS Fife has come into contact with over the past few years. Mr O'Brien formed LOST (Lee O'Brien Solvent Trust) in January 2002 following the death of his 16 year-old son Lee as a result of inhaling cigarette lighter refill gas. The LOST members first contacted CVS Fife's capacity building service in March 2002 to seek advice on setting up a new organisation and find out what help and support was on offer.



Photo: John O'Brien and Caroline O'Keefe of LOST (sitting), and CVS Fife Development Officer Linda Smith.

The first stage of LOST's activities focused on campaigning to stop the sale of lighter fuels to under sixteens. CVS Fife supported the organisation through the campaigning stage, providing advice on the legislation that regulates the campaigning activities of voluntary organisations.

During 2003/4, LOST, led by John, felt it had achieved good results from its campaign work, and it was time for the organisation to move on. The next stage for LOST was to become a charity, with the aim of promoting awareness of the issues around solvent abuse with young people. At this point, LOST required more intensive support from CVS Fife's capacity building service, and our Development Officer worked with the organisation on the following topics:

- Developing the Constitution of the Organisation
- Recruitment Procedures for the Management Committee
- Applying for Charitable Status
- Roles & Responsibilities Training for Management Committee Members
- Fundraising Strategies
- Support with Funding Applications
- Networking with Other Agencies in the same field

LOST has now secured funding from Fife's Drug & Alcohol Action Team to cover running costs, and the organisation has also obtained office space in the community. It's full speed ahead with future plans for LOST, and CVS Fife will continue to provide help and support where required.

"I would like to take this opportunity to pass on my sincere thanks to CVS Fife for all the help and support it has provided us with over the last 2½ years. CVS Fife has contributed a great deal of time and effort to helping L.O.S.T grow and gain charitable status, giving us practical advice and support and putting us in touch with other professional agencies. They have been a great inspiration to L.O.S.T and should be commended for their hard work and dedication" **John O'Brien, Chairperson of LOST**

Capacity Building Case Studies

CVS Fife's capacity building services are available to small, locally-based community groups as well as larger voluntary organisations or those with a Fife-wide remit. Our Crosshill Team, funded by the Community Fund, has been working with small community groups since 2001, and the team was keen to evaluate its efforts and investigate the impact of the work it is carrying out. The Crosshill Team assists the development of groups by providing training and one-to-one support on topics such as better meetings, constitutions, financial management, committee development, conflict resolution and funding options. It also organises "Social Supper" events which are fairly informal networking opportunities that give members of community groups the opportunity to meet people from other groups and to discuss issues of common concern.

CVS Fife engaged Cathy Sharp, a research consultant from Research for Real, to take a different approach to the evaluation of its Community Fund project. Cathy tackled the evaluation by taking an approach which was designed to give project staff and community organisations opportunities for learning by involving them in the process. She commented:

One of the problems with using evaluation toolkits and frameworks is that ... they do not always point people in the right direction in terms of what methods to use to gather the data they need. Here my goal was to try something that would get them talking; discussing and clarifying how they thought their project might build community capacity and what that would look like.(1)

After doing some introductory work with Cathy, the team realised that the monitoring information it was gathering was not capturing all of the outcomes. The team members wanted to make the link between what they were doing, and the concept of "active communities" where groups would be efficient, effective and empowered. To unpick some of this, the team held 2 Social Supper events for groups, one in 2003 and one in 2004, and additionally in 2004 held an event for colleagues from other agencies. In the 2004 event for groups, the participants were asked to assess their own groups in terms of twenty-six different capacities or skills, all of which fell broadly under the headings of communication, governance, finance and administration and networking/action. This exercise was carried out in a fun and participatory way, and it allowed group members to prioritise outcomes for themselves, and enabled them to think about capacity building in a practical, down-to-earth way.

Through this evaluation of one specific project within CVS Fife, the whole organisation has derived a benefit. We now have specific experience of working with our stakeholders to identify potential outcomes for our work, and are developing systems to track some of these outcomes. CVS Fife recognises the importance of remaining a learning organisation in order to develop the services we provide.

1) ARVARC bulletin, No.92, May 2004. pp5

Training and Learning

Training continues to be a key activity for CVS Fife, and our ESF-funded partnership Training Project, Learning Together: Modernising the Voluntary Sector in Fife, has delivered courses to over 500 individuals from around 150 voluntary organisations during 2003/4. The project has continued to build on its links with the capacity building teams to identify training needs within voluntary organisations, and to provide learning opportunities in other forms apart from one and two-day seminars. This has led to the development of several Action Learning Sets, which allow groups of people with a similar training need to tackle a topic over a six week period in a practical way. The Action Learning Set format is all about participants taking what they have learnt back to the workplace and testing it out - a style of learning that seems to be valued by voluntary sector participants.



The Training Project was Highly Commended by the Scottish Further Education Awards for Innovation and Best Practice in the Continuing Leadership and Learning Category in December 2003. The project received the award at a presentation ceremony at Dunblane Hydro Hotel. Pictured left with the award are Alison Cameron, CVS Fife Manager, and Carol Humbert, Head of Employment and Community Initiatives, from Fife College.

CVS Fife values the opportunity to work in partnership with Fife and Glenrothes College, as well as Fife Council, Volunteering Fife and Scottish Enterprise to deliver the Training Project. Having working relationships with these agencies has allowed us to act quickly to address learning needs identified within voluntary organisations via our capacity building, community planning and enquiry services. For example, when trying to set up an email mailing list of the members of the Voluntary Sector Children's Forum (part of the Community Planning process in Fife), our staff discovered that many of the individuals within these organisations felt they needed baseline training on Internet and Email use. Through the Training Project, we were able to set up specific sessions this year for these organisations to boost their skills in using these applications. With training being a vital component of capacity building, it is important for CVS Fife to continue to develop the Training Project and ensure it remains responsive to the needs of the sector. The best award the project can receive is the positive endorsement of those who take part in the learning opportunities it offers.

"The CVS Fife programme is certainly comprehensive - I hope to access quite a few of the courses on offer. " **Microsoft Access course participant, from a feedback questionnaire, May 2004**

Information

CVS Fife's Information Service remains very active in terms of meeting the changing information needs of the sector. During 2003/4 this has meant looking beyond the regular newsletters, bulletins and the website and considering the issue of two-way communication, particularly with regard to the voluntary sector networks. The Information Officer has been involved in the planning of an information sharing system which will potentially link up providers of children's services from the statutory and voluntary sectors across Fife, designed to provide more protection to at-risk children, as well as a better service generally for children and their families. For this shared system to work properly, it is vital that voluntary sector representatives are involved in the planning stages, to ensure that the sector has the resources to use the system once it is developed. CVS Fife's Information Service has been working to ensure that this participation takes place, and that there is continued dialogue between those within the statutory sector charged with making this development happen, and the voluntary sector agencies that play a key role in the delivery of children's services.



Another big project for the service has been the development of CVS Fife's new database. Our previous database, which was basically a mailing list, was no longer useful, as we recognised that there was a role for us as a council for voluntary service to collect more intelligence about the organisations we work with. This was backed up by the review of the CVS Scotland network, which called on CVS organisations to research the voluntary sector in their own areas. As a result, we drew up a specification for a new database, which would allow us to collect more detailed information on voluntary and community organisations in Fife. The design work is now complete, and the whole of the Admin / Information Team has been involved in developing this resource. Once it is fully populated, it will give us a good picture of the voluntary sector in Fife, as well as enabling us to be more focused in the way we communicate with this sector. Put simply, the more we know about organisations, the better equipped we will be to meet their needs.

The provision of funding information and advice remains a core activity for CVS Fife. During the year, our Admin / Information staff delivered 16 FunderFinder sessions to representatives from voluntary organisations. For organisations that are at the early stages of their fundraising efforts, or those who have already drawn down part of the funding they need and are looking for match, a FunderFinder session can be a useful way of focusing thinking and identifying possible avenues of support. Additionally, the Information Officer assisted Youth 1st and Fife Community Interpreting Service with large lottery applications, both of which were successful, and our Development Officers assisted Forth and Tay Disabled Ramblers, WECAN! and Fife Headway amongst others with funding applications which were also approved. The Information Service is anticipating another busy year ahead!

Community Planning

This year CVS Fife has taken some positive steps in the process of demystifying Community Planning for the voluntary and community sector. The publication of Fife's revised Community Plan early in 2004 emphasised again the importance of the voluntary sector to the whole process, as it is often individual voluntary and community organisations that are at the sharp end of service delivery, and the key goal of the Community Plan is improved services for Fife's residents. However, this still leaves CVS Fife with the difficult issue of how to engage busy representatives from voluntary sector service providers in the Community Planning process.

We have had some successes with the Voluntary Sector Children's Forum, which is now at the heart of the planning process for children's services in Fife, and with the Health and Social Care Network, formed initially to look at the Joint Future initiative and now looking at other developments such as the replacement of Local Health Care Co-operatives with Community Health Partnerships, and the role the sector will play in these new partnerships. So far so good, but to date it has been mainly the workers from voluntary organisations who have taken part in these forums, leaving us with the problem that if a worker moves on, the organisation's involvement in Community Planning can grind to a halt. CVS Fife felt that to tackle this concern there was a need to breathe new life into the Community Planning issue for voluntary organisations. This led to an application to Communities Scotland for funding to create a Community Planning Animator post.



The funding bid was successful, and our new Community Planning Animator started work in July this year. The Animator will work with management committee members of voluntary organisations to raise awareness of Community Planning, and improve the ability of individual organisations to take part in the Community Planning process. This work is already underway, with most of the member organisations of the Voluntary Sector Children's Forum having received a visit from the Animator. We hope that we will also be able to identify some of the barriers that stop organisations from taking part in the forums, and take action to remove these. The Animator is playing a key role in making organisations aware that they are already contributing to the Community Plan through the work that they do. The fact that the voluntary sector is already playing a significant part in Community Planning in Fife was highlighted earlier in 2003/4 through a Community Safety project carried out by the Kingdom Graduate who was on placement with CVS Fife. This project demonstrated through a brief publication the contribution voluntary organisations such as Drug & Alcohol Project Levenmouth, Victim Support Fife, Home-Start and Abuse Not make to the Community Safety agenda in Fife. Awareness-raising and engaging with voluntary agencies on the issue of Community Planning will be a key activity for CVS Fife over the coming years .

Who's Who

Our work is led by our Board of Directors. In 2003/4, our Directors were:

Nan Smith	Chair/Board Member (stepped down as Chair in October 2003)
Jean Haddow	Vice Chair/Chair (appointed Chair October 2003)
Mary Hill	Board Member/Vice Chair (appointed October 2003)
Andrew Penman	Company Secretary
David Kinniburgh	Treasurer
Timothy Barclay	Board Member (stepped down November 2003)
Mark Cullens	Board Member (stepped down June 2004)
Walter Goodwin	Board Member (stepped down November 2003)
John McKendrick	Board Member
Euan Porter	Board Member
Donald Robson	Board Member
Bill Seago	Board Member (stepped down March 2004)
Grace Skinner	Board Member (stepped down June 2004)

During 2003/4 our staff team was as follows:

Alison Cameron	Manager	Bryan Poole	Deputy Manager
Caron Hughes	ESF CBP* Co-ordinator	Craig Caskie	Finance Officer
Ian Cowie	Learning Services Co-ordinator	Carole Patrick	Information Officer

Who's Who

Our staff team (continued)

Joanne Roddam	Crosshill Team Resource Worker	Isabel Ritchie	Senior Admin Officer
Sheelagh Lister	Crosshill Team Resource Worker	Lily Begg	Network Support Officer
Linda Smith	ESF CBP* Development Officer	Hayat Hewitt	ESF CBP* Development Officer
Angela Gallacher	ESF CBP* Admin/Info Assistant	Elizabeth McKenzie	ESF CBP* Admin/Info Assistant
Shonna Porter	Crosshill Team Admin/Info Assistant	Elizabeth Kirk	Admin/Info Assistant
Eleanor O'Hare	Crosshill Team Admin/Info Assistant	Sandra Rimmer	Admin/Info Assistant (Finance)
Sandra Bruce	Training Project Admin/Info Assistant	Kirsty Dawson	Community Planning Animator

***ESF CBP** **ESF Capacity Building Project**

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