

Gosport Voluntary Action Impact Report 2021/2022



A message from Ian Reeves, Chair of Trustees

Welcome to our 2021/2022 annual review, showcasing the impact we believe Gosport Voluntary Action (GVA) has made to Gosport residents during what continued to be a difficult period for many.

In the community, the year proved to be more of a challenge to reset and rebuild as the pandemic progressed. GVA continued to work with, and on behalf of, its members, to mobilise the sector as restrictions were lifted. We worked collaboratively within the Gosport Food Partnership and through our Close Encounters project to deliver support to residents. During the year, the funding received to support our Befriending and Advocacy services ended, but the GVA Executive Committee believed this to be such an important service that, together with Hampshire County Council's support and existing GVA funds, we were able to continue this service. We have now secured funding to continue the service for the next four years.

Within GVA, the year saw continued change as Ted Hill took retirement; we also saw staff changes in our Community Engagement and Finance teams. We wish all leaving staff well in their new endeavours. I welcome our new staff and volunteers and we trust that GVA offers them an exciting opportunity to improve the lives of people in Gosport. We welcome Kay Hallsworth as Chief Executive Officer; Kay brings a wealth of leadership experience to the role. Looking forward, we are keen for Kay to build on the work Ted started to rebuild GVA post-pandemic to become a catalyst for the voluntary sector, as we look for new ways to engage with different communities within the Borough.

I hope you enjoy reading this report. I also hope we may highlight things you didn't know about GVA, and that this will excite you and motivate you to engage and support us in the future. Please share this report and our stories with your colleagues, neighbours, friends and family!



Ian Reeves, GVA Chair of Trustees

I Reeves

Key GVA achievements 2021/2022

- **£141,112** raised for local good causes by Gosport Community Lottery (since its launch in 2018)
- **9,055+** volunteer hours given via core GVA services
- **22,289** hours of home maintenance and cleaning provided
- **3,077** Followers on Facebook

GVA CEO's Report – Resetting Post-Covid

Kay Hallsworth, GVA Chief Executive Officer

As Ted Hill was taking over from Nicky Staveley last year, I was still in the last few months of my career in the Royal Navy and had no idea that 13 months later, I would be taking over as CEO of GVA. As I write this, I reflect on the work done under Ted's tenure as much as mine, and thank him for everything he did during his year here.



We continued to work in challenging times, the pandemic lasting longer than many had anticipated, and it has changed the voluntary sector significantly. We have moved from delivering our routine business alongside the crisis response to COVID-19, and are gradually returning to a new normality. The staff have worked tirelessly, without a break or furlough, many taking on roles they hadn't done before – their efforts should be recognised by everyone.

We have secured new funding for our Befriending and Advocacy services, developed our Dustbusters and Mend & Tend operations and continued our Walking for Health walks with an amazing team of volunteer walk leaders. Our volunteer brokerage service, Go Volunteer, is continuing to support the needs of the community and adapting to the changing face of volunteering post pandemic. The Community Engagement Team is getting back into public-facing work and bringing our communities back together, along with support from our new Community Fundraising Advisor, whilst our Supported Volunteering group, Community Spirit, is also going from strength to strength. **(continued overleaf)**

GVA CEO's Report – Resetting Post-Covid (cont'd)

Gosport Community Lottery, which we administer on behalf of Gosport Borough Council, has continued to bring vital revenue to the small charities and organisations in our community, with the biggest fundraiser being The Trash Café. It's also a great way to win prizes as well as supporting your favourite organisation. We have 66 local good causes registered to the community lottery. Since the first draw, the total raised up to April 2022 was £78,180. Since launch, across the four Community Grant rounds, we have distributed £22,214 in to local groups. The latest round (December 2021) distributed £4,780.

You will read in this report of the everyday work of GVA, and I want to take this opportunity to convey my thanks to the Executive Committee, staff and volunteers, who all do such amazing work. My thanks also to our funders, without whose support none of this work would be possible.

Looking forward, as we deliver our mission and priorities laid out in our Business Plan 2022–2025, I want to hear your views, issues and concerns, so that GVA can help and support you. We have modernised our working practices, implemented new staff training and are reviewing all of our policies to become a more inclusive organisation, making our services more accessible and supporting community and local government initiatives to support local people in what continues to be challenging times to live in.

Kay Hallsworth, GVA Chief Executive Officer

From pandemic to endemic

The global pandemic of COVID-19 has changed the face of the voluntary sector in ways we could not have foreseen. During the main lockdown, when many staff in other organisations were furloughed from their jobs, we had a flood of people wanting to help and support their communities. They did everything from delivering prescriptions to marshalling at COVID clinics – we became one great community.

As we slowly returned to a world where COVID is now endemic in our lives, and we had to learn to live and work with its constant threat, it was important for us to be aware of what those changes would mean to us.

Sadly, COVID took the lives of many older volunteers across the country, and those who are still here are sometimes anxious about the risk they may put themselves in by volunteering, so we have lost a large cohort we used to rely on. We also have many in our community suffering the effects of Long COVID who are not able to work or volunteer as they used to and now need support themselves.

Many younger people who keenly volunteered during lockdown have had to return to their workplaces and now don't have the time to commit as they once did. We are also seeing many people reassessing their work-life balance, and moving into jobs where they can spend more time with their loved ones.

So, what does this mean for us at GVA and for Gosport as a whole? It means we are trying to think differently about who we look at as volunteers, and we are talking to schools and universities, as well as local employers who may offer paid time to staff for volunteering. We are targeting our campaigns more finely and seeking out specific skillsets, such as social media specialists.

What I do know is that Gosport is a great place filled with good people wanting to do good things, and as long as that remains, we will survive to fight another day.

Kay Hallsworth, GVA Chief Executive Officer



Go Volunteer

Go Volunteer acts as a volunteer brokerage service, helping local residents to find and secure suitable volunteer roles, and supporting local organisations with volunteer recruitment, including advice on volunteer recruitment policies and best practice.

In spring/early summer 2021, Go Volunteer was helping with the latest push for vaccination volunteers, but also looking at ways these and the C-19 Project volunteers could continue to help their communities. Around this time, Go Volunteer was re-engaging with community groups to establish new volunteer roles, or provide support in adapting opportunities 'on hold', so that volunteers could return safely as Covid restrictions began to ease. This continues to be a commitment throughout the year, but has been successful with an increase to our current active opportunities.

This year, Go Volunteer carried out a survey of GVA volunteers, and found an overall satisfaction rate of 94.2 percent, with 82 percent likely or very likely to continue with or return to volunteering. Volunteers who responded to the survey held various roles, including Befrienders, C-19 Project volunteers and Walking for Health (now Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Gosport) Walk Leaders, and comments were vastly positive, with words such as 'fulfilling', 'rewarding', and 'satisfying' all recurring.

Go Volunteer continues to promote volunteering roles on our website and on our social media, but have also returned to attending events in person, including at the Bringing Gosport Together Network.

339
enquiries

288
referrals

101
placements

22
interviews

Promotion of both individual volunteer opportunities, as well as the overall benefits of volunteering in general, has continued on social media.



There has been a return to face-to-face appointments for volunteering advice, but phone appointments are continuing, following their success during the Covid-19 lockdown. We have found these phone appointments are still particularly useful for those who may prefer remote forms of volunteering, or who may only have time to volunteer during evenings and weekends.

In early 2022, preparations began for the much-anticipated Volunteer Awards Ceremony that took place in June 2022, in celebration of the work of volunteers across Gosport Borough over the last couple of years (following the cancellation of the 2021 Volunteer Awards, due to Covid-19 restrictions). Special attention to our wonderful C-19 Project volunteers was central to the preparations.

"Thank you for your help and kindness. The appointment has been very insightful." (Go Volunteer service user).

One volunteer thanked us for our time and information. They had a wide range of volunteering experience and were unsure what to do next. Following an appointment with our Volunteer Coordinator and subsequent advice and referral, they were able to narrow down what they wanted. After a successful interview for the role, they were happily placed as a Campaign and Communications Champion with a local Citizens Advice office.

Supported Volunteering



New opportunities for GVA's Supported Volunteering Group members during the past year have included stewarding at local events, working in partnership with Hampshire Cultural Trust's Gosport Gallery, and helping at the 'All Churches Together' Meals for Homeless People project, working in partnership with Christ

Church, Gosport. In each of these initiatives, feedback from our partners about the Supported Volunteering members' involvement has been extremely positive.

Recognising the potential for ongoing supported and partly-supported volunteering, the Project Coordinator has designed and delivered the equivalent of Level 1 Stewarding at Community Events training. In addition, the Coordinator has also helped our Supported Volunteering members to take an online and well-regarded Level 1 qualification in Food Hygiene, using the IT facilities at GVA, made possible thanks to funding from Christ Church. Both sets of training have given our Supported Volunteering members a confidence boost and a real sense of achievement.

In 2021, a new 'Volunteering Passport' was introduced. These passports contain the Supported Volunteering members' training certificates, any feedback from organisations they have volunteered with and their volunteer CVs, as well as tools for self-reflection and development. Overall, the passports have been an excellent way of helping members to really focus on their volunteering goals and achievements. A future challenge will now be to produce the passports at a more sustainable cost, whilst maintaining the user appeal of the current style.

In addition to the new stewarding roles, more gardening volunteer opportunities have been organised with Loud and Proud, at their allotment for two hours a week, as well as at the Hampshire Cultural Trust's Gosport Gallery, where the members have been helping to maintain the flower beds. The challenge is that the number of gardening volunteering hours falls far short of the demand from our Supported Volunteering members and ideally, the group needs access to its own allotment.



In the last quarter of this year, the Supported Volunteering group, formerly known as VoluntHeroes, changed its name to 'Community Spirit'. The name was chosen by the group members to reflect their growing involvement in community projects. For example, the group has been encouraged to volunteer more independently, working in pairs at local charity, Jacob's Well Appeal, helping to pack boxes for the Ukraine appeal, as well as sowing wild flower seeds at the Alver Valley. As part of the project's rebranding, all members now have their own T-Shirts, embellished with the GVA logo and the name 'Community Spirit,' which they all wear with pride!

G's story

A new volunteer, 'G', was referred to the group by the Department for Work and Pensions. G was reluctant to actively participate in the group, commenting that he had been told to come to Community Spirit, but didn't see the point. However, during the course of the year, G gradually began to join more volunteering sessions and chat to other group members. He hadn't missed a single Supported Volunteering session since August 2021. He also now really enjoys litter picking in particular, which he originally said he wouldn't do! What a development!

587 volunteer hours provided **92** sessions completed



Loud and Proud

It is testimony to their commitment to Loud and Proud that the young members have maintained their 'togetherness' and harmony during a very challenging time of Covid restrictions. However, over the last 12 months, they have gradually started to resume their normal volunteering activities within the local community. These included helping to ensure the smooth running of the Gosport Bank Holiday Car Rally, Partners through Pain meetings, a Marvels & Meltdowns Birthday Party, a Privett House Residential Home tea party, the Ripple Suicide Prevention Campaign and a climate change awareness initiative, in addition to organising a Gosport Half Marathon water station and a Stokes Bay litter pick. Members have attended various workshops, and organised their own social activities, which has all added to their learning and skill sets, boosted their confidence and enhanced team bonding.

To help meet the considerable costs of ever-increasing demand from the local community in supporting their activities, the members organised a 5K Fun Run at Stokes Bay, where Loud and Proud raised over £2,500, in addition to a Thorngate Halls table top stall.

The Loud and Proud allotment continues to be a tremendous success story, with Louis and his dedicated team having attracted a number of Gosport Allotment Association prizes over the last few years in various categories, including 'runner up' for the Best Allotment.

Ever-present team member, Luke, has recently completed his apprenticeship in horticulture at Sparsholt Agricultural College, in addition to regularly tending the Tamar House Residential Home fruit garden. Luke is now in permanent employment at the Alver Valley Garden Centre.

251

volunteer hours given

36

events

20

volunteers

There are so many success stories about Loud and Proud helping members to achieve their goals, including Ikram, who has become the first member to benefit from the Government's Kickstart Scheme by gaining a placement in a computer network technical support role with the Gosport & Fareham Multi-Academy Trust. Writing about Loud and Proud, Ikram said: "Everyone there is really friendly and create a great, wonderful atmosphere to be around. I don't think I would have anywhere near as much confidence if I hadn't joined the group, which in turn helped me heavily in getting a job, in my opinion."

Looking ahead, under the new name of 'Level Up Gosport,' we are grateful to GVA for their help in ensuring we had a smooth transition to independence and registration as a charity. With a change of age range from 18 to 25, and under the dedicated and inspired leadership of Nicola Ure and the Board of Trustees, the work and ethos of the group will continue as before; but with a more managed work programme and pathway through volunteering, for the young adults to progress through local partnerships into meaningful and sustainable employment. They will build practical employability skills and confidence, while still making new friends and having fun.



Walking for Health (now *Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Gosport*)

Whilst the Walking for Health project re-started in April 2021, getting back into the rhythm of walking as a group was initially, understandably, quite challenging for some of our walkers. As such, new Walk Leaders were recruited with the aim of offering shorter walks to help bridge the gap between the less confident walkers and those who were more comfortable with walking.

By the end of summer of 2021, walk attendances were rising steadily. Walking routes over the summer months included, to name but a few: Sunday routes to the Explosion Museum of Naval Firepower and the Royal Navy Submarine Marine Museum, and – thanks to the support of the National Lottery Heritage Fund – Walking Past walks around Alver Valley; Queen Victoria's Railway; Alverstoke; Fort Brockhurst; Royal Clarence Waterside & Marina, and Gosport High Street, among others. Funding for The Walking Past routes came to a close in October 2021.

In January 2022, Walking for Health underwent an exciting rebrand, and was officially relaunched as 'Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Gosport', with the help of a new logo, website and social media profile.

By the end of March 2022, the Ramblers Wellbeing Walks Gosport project was going from strength to strength, with approximately five weekly walks and two weekend walks a month available to local residents, as well as 13 Walk Leaders and a whole raft of

committed and enthusiastic walkers on our books!



Weathering the harsh impacts of the pandemic, followed by a significant period of upheaval as we transitioned to a new name and service platform, have definitely called for our community of walkers and Walk Leaders to rise to the challenge. We're extremely proud of their hard work, commitment and dedication to the group and the past-time of walking – both of which are, we're delighted to say, proving to be ever-more popular among local residents of Gosport Borough.



Terry's story

From joining our Wellbeing Walks and building to a regular walker, Terry then started to help out two of the other Walk Leaders as the back marker. When Terry had the opportunity to train to become a Walk Leader, he took it! As well as helping out the other Walk Leaders, he has created his own, new walk that began in January 2022. Terry has been a fantastic addition to the team.

236
walk attendances/
month
(average)

251
walks
completed

1509
Volunteer
hours
provided

13
Walk
Leaders



Advocacy

In early 2021, learning to assimilate, and respond appropriately and swiftly to, the new and regularly changing C-19 safety guidelines was an urgent and challenging new priority for GVA. Due to the emergence of new Covid variants and related shifting guidelines, newly recruited volunteers weren't able to progress to volunteering in the community by themselves for much of the year. The initiation of home visits by the Advocacy service Coordinator to undertake risk assessments was a vital first step towards slowly and cautiously attempting to get back out into the community.

In the summer of 2021, GVA was delighted to welcome two new volunteers into the Advocacy team, followed by two pre-existing volunteers, who rejoined us in the autumn. Having grown from a team of zero to four volunteers in the space of just five months, GVA was heartened to see our rigorous commitment to safeguarding and C-19 safety procedures paying dividends, with volunteers now showing more confidence in taking up these roles again, albeit in a challenging new climate.



Whilst client referrals for the Advocacy service were slightly slower than in previous years, the team received a number of referrals from the GVA Dustbusters team in the autumn-winter period, highlighting once again how our Welfare services (comprising Advocacy, Dustbusters, Mend & Tend and Befriending) often complement one another.



Pictured: Advocacy clients, Margaret (above) and Ray (left)

'F', aged 61 and with mild learning difficulties, was unlawfully evicted from their property and left homeless. F's case has been long, complex and incredibly distressing for them, and GVA worked closely with Gosport Borough Council to address and resolve the issues. Following GVA's extensive intervention and advocacy support, F was thankfully granted permission to access and live in the property again, and was also awarded three times the total amount of their monthly rent (as compensation for having been in a non-secure tenancy). A Tenancy Agreement was also put in place. Due to safeguarding concerns (including hostility from F's landlady and neighbours), F was then offered Sheltered Housing by Gosport Borough Council. F accepted this offer, and is now happy, safe and confident in the knowledge that they have long-term security. F's relatives have expressed their thanks for all the support.

"I would like to thank you for being so kind and helpful, and for your assistance through a difficult time in my life" ('Q', Advocacy Client). Many hours were spent with this person with complex financial, physical and mental health problems. A lot of reassurance was given during the process, which was partly successful, against some very difficult odds.

Morrisons & Waitrose in Gosport kindly donated boxes of chocolates and biscuits just before Christmas 2021. The team arranged visits and delivered these donations to Advocacy clients who would otherwise have been completely alone this Christmas.

Befriending

From April to June 2021, there was, due to the fear posed by COVID-19, still some understandable reluctance from both volunteers and clients regarding the re-introduction of home visits through the GVA Befriending service. However, by July 2021, all GVA clients were once again receiving home visits, and many were able to start building up their confidence to venture outside and go to the shops again, with support from their volunteers. In April 2021, GVA also introduced a Wellbeing Support Volunteer, offering peer support to ensure our Befriending Volunteers feel confident and happy in their role. As many clubs and centres remained closed between April 2021 and March 2022, the GVA Befriending service offered a vital source of social connection for our clients during this challenging period.



Above: Befriender, Katy, with another of her GVA Befriending clients, John

"I use the befriending service and have a telephone befriender. We have lovely chats, and I really look forward to her calling me every week." ('R', GVA Befriending service user).

'V' is 77 years old. Due to poor mobility, they sadly became very isolated and unable to enjoy going out like they used to. V was matched with our volunteer, Katy, who works for Bluebird Care. Bluebird Care kindly agreed to allow Katy to be a GVA Befriender during her working hours. Katy and V have built a blossoming friendship over recent months, with one highlight including celebrating Pancake Day together!

181
people
supported

6708
hours of
volunteering

71
volunteers

"Alan, my GVA Befriender, contacts me regularly and has been a big help to me. Thank you for the kind gift you gave me for Christmas." (Mrs. E, GVA Befriending Client).



Buddy Brigade

A new pilot project, called the Buddy Brigade, was launched in 2021, funded for six months by the charity, Independent Age. The aim of the project was to provide a Volunteer Buddy for local adults aged 55+ who had lost their confidence in getting out and about after shielding for over a year during the pandemic.

The volunteer Buddy would provide a weekly friendship call or visit, and help to plan a short walk, a trip to the shop, park or beach, or even offer support for a first trip out on public transport. Once the client felt confident in taking this first trip, the Buddy would be there as a friendly face, to provide support and keep the person calm, so that they could enjoy being back out in the community.

Buddy Brigade received six referrals in total, with most of these requiring transport, company, shopping or support with attending medical appointments (which sometimes included help pushing wheelchairs). Unfortunately, many of these support needs fell beyond the remit and resources of the service being offered, which proved challenging.

The project attracted two wonderful volunteers, who were eager to help boost the service users' confidence. Since the termination of the Buddy Brigade project in October 2021, one volunteer has now moved onto GVA's Befriending project, providing a weekly home visit.

One service user was referred to the Buddy Brigade project following a panic attack at a zebra crossing. The service user has been supported by a volunteer on two occasions, visiting zebra crossings and going into busy shops. The service user now feels more confident with zebra crossings, although will always feel uncomfortable using them. Following support from the Buddy Brigade to tackle this challenge, the service user recorded that their anxiety level had reduced from a 5 to a 3 (1= lowest, 5= highest).

TogetherNet

In an innovative approach to tackling the ever-pressing challenge of loneliness and social isolation amongst Gosport residents aged 55+, the GVA Welfare team launched the 'TogetherNet' project in spring 2021. Akin to a virtual format of our traditional Befriending service, TogetherNet paired up local older residents experiencing loneliness with suitable volunteers, and helped them to connect with one another through weekly video calls via a digital platform.

Residents were free to use their own devices if they preferred, or otherwise GVA would lend them a tablet and provide instruction (home visits were also carried out to help residents with the initial set-up). Volunteers and service users were paired up on the basis of similar interests, so there was always something to talk about, and together, the pair would discuss happenings from the previous week, and enjoy mutual companionship.

Whilst the pilot project was only funded for six months, this additional stream of support for residents struggling with loneliness was greatly appreciated by all involved. Residents that were helped by the service said they found using the devices 'surprisingly easy' and enjoyed 'talking to like-minded people'. One of our service users enjoyed the experience so much, they registered to become a volunteer Befriender!



Dustbusters

A growing waiting list of clients seeking a Dustbuster due to the increasingly popular demand for the service has been an ongoing challenge this year. This has been exacerbated by the retirement of some of our long-standing Dustbusters, as well as other Dustbusters reducing their hours.

To reduce the waiting list, GVA has focused its attentions on recruitment of new Dustbusters over the past year, aided by the collation of good news stories and by sharing both these, and Dustbuster recruitment and service adverts, regularly on social media. As a result – and perhaps partly due to an increase in the hourly rate in April 2021 – we have happily seen a steady rise in the number of Dustbuster vacancy applications. Whilst meeting demand during times of staff sickness or holiday is always tricky to navigate, we have always risen to, and overcome, the challenge, ensuring that no shopping or cleaning need of a Dustbuster client goes unmet.

Thanks to the sterling support of our fantastic team of Dustbusters, who regularly go above and beyond for their Dustbuster clients, we have received some glowing feedback about the service (both online and in person), which has, in turn, helped to highlight Dustbusters as a low-cost, high-quality, reliable service driven by compassion and care. Far more than just practical help with cleaning and shopping, the comments from our clients suggest that it's the regular companionship and kindness of our Dustbusters that makes the biggest difference... And with our workers sharing equally positive feedback about their experience as a Dustbuster employee, we could not be more proud of this win-win service!

"I benefit a lot more [from the Dustbuster service] than I expected. I try to do some things myself when Kay comes, but because of my vertigo, I can't do too much, and Kay always tells me to sit down or to stop if I am overdoing it; she has a very caring nature. She gets more done than I would do on my own, that's for sure. Anything that I am not able to do myself, Kay will do for me. I look forward to seeing Kay each week; she is the only person I see regularly, and she always brightens the day with her cheerfulness. It's nice to have a friendly face to look forward to seeing each week."



Pictured above: Dustbuster Kay and client, John.

When one client, 'A', experienced a fall, our Dustbuster, who was there at the time, acted swiftly and appropriately, calling an ambulance and the client's next of kin. A's next of kin later expressed heartfelt gratitude to the Dustbuster for the care and compassion shown towards their family member, and for the speedy action taken to obtain a response from the emergency services. The Dustbuster stayed until help arrived, and even followed up with a courtesy visit to see how A was getting on the following day.

"I recently lost my wife. We'd been married for 70 years. I miss her dreadfully, but having someone in to clean makes a real difference and is such a great help. [The Dustbuster] cleans my house from top to bottom – she also does the shopping!" ('V', GVA Dustbuster client).

207
people helped
per month on
average

17,870
hours of
cleaning

40
Dustbusters



Mend & Tend

As Covid restrictions eased throughout 2021, requests for home and garden support naturally began to increase. In the summer, heavy rain and vast sunshine produced unprecedented garden growth, creating a surge in demand for gardeners that proved tricky to fulfil throughout the summer and beyond.

However, through a concerted recruitment effort – by advertising online, in print and at the local Job Centre – to help find the best possible workers for our many wonderful clients, GVA is thrilled to have built a team that includes a number of long-standing and newer Mend & Tend workers, each of whom value kindness and compassion, and understand the needs of our older and vulnerable clients.

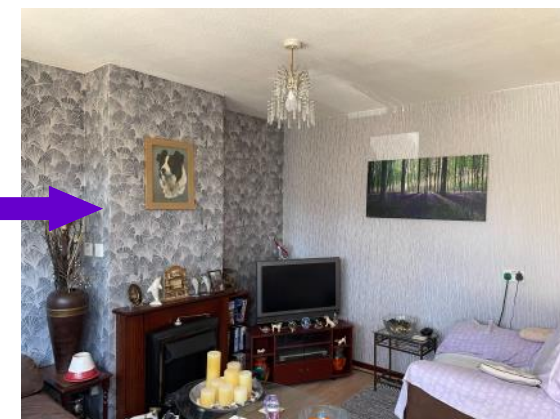
Many customers expressed gratitude for GVA's Mend & Tend workers' willingness to take on some of the smaller tasks that other local, profit-driven companies were unavailable to do, reminding us of the importance of remaining open and accessible in our service offerings, and highlighting the lesson that sometimes, it's the little things that make all the difference!



"I am delighted with my gardener, Jez. My garden was so overgrown, and he worked so hard for six hours, making progress I didn't think possible. I am so happy with the difference he has made." ('Mrs P').

A few happy customers...

"Dan was absolutely wonderful! I was unable to tend my much-loved garden as I was awaiting an operation and had limited mobility. My garden needed lots of weeding, and gardeners don't usually like doing this, but Dan happily did any work I asked of him. He was so caring. He planted approximately 400 plants and it looks wonderful. I have since had my operation and am now able to do the gardening myself, with thanks to GVA." ('Mrs I').



"Jez has done a great job: he is very thorough, pleasant, polite and cheerful, and a pleasure to be around. I would recommend him to anybody." (Mrs F).

84
people
helped/month
(on average)

4,419
hours
provided

16
workers

Health Forums & Alliances

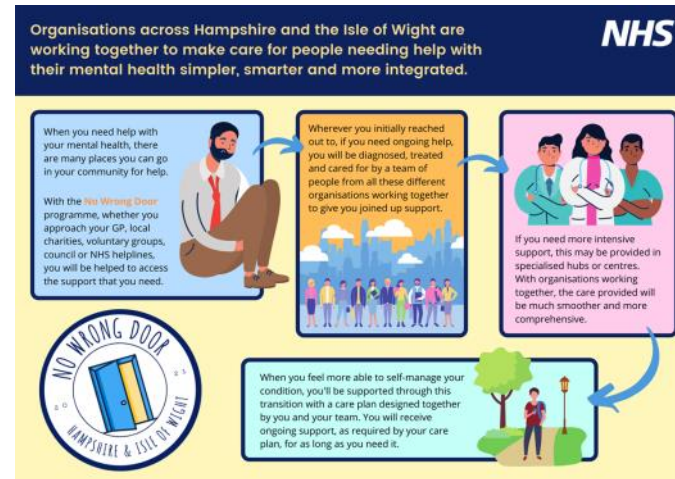
The Health Forums continued to reflect the current situation and ongoing impact of Covid throughout 2021. Health Forum themes over the past year included: the 'Transition and Recovery out of Covid'; 'Preparing for Winter: Long-Covid Recovery and Feeding the Community'; 'Addiction Gambling and Debt', and 'Adult Mental Health Support.' All past Health Forum webinar recordings can be found on the GVA website.

In early 2021, much planning and preparation went into a Health & Wellbeing event, to be held at CEMAST in July 2021. Unfortunately, due to delays in 'opening up' post-Covid, concerns around the rising Covid levels locally and the progress of the expanded local vaccination programme, the Health Forum Steering Group took the difficult decision to postpone the event until summer 2022. It was felt that the risks to any vulnerable adults attending would be reduced by 2022, following the broadening of those eligible for the Covid vaccine, and the availability of the booster vaccination programme.

Collaborative working

GVA continued to demonstrate its commitment to, and support of, the local health agenda, by attending (remotely) and sharing knowledge about relevant services at local Patient Participation Groups, and by contributing to Solent NHS Trust's Local Participation Framework Meetings.

Strong working relationships were developed as GVA contributed to Gosport Central's PCN Community Board Meetings, and provided input to six Population Health Management Action Learning Set Meetings. GVA also supported Gosport's Health & Wellbeing Strategic Partnership Meetings this year, in addition to forging new relationships with the Clinical Commissioning Group's Gosport Transformation Lead.



In partnership with Community First, an eight-week Single Point of Access (SPoA) hospital pilot was prepared and launched in June 2021, with an autumn evaluation report. This was undertaken in partnership with

Queen Alexandra Hospital (Portsmouth), Petersfield Hospital and Gosport War Memorial Hospital colleagues. The initiative involved virtual awareness raising and training for key hospital colleagues on how local Community and Voluntary Services and Projects can support hospital colleagues and their patients, prior to discharge.

In light of the impact of Covid-19, concerning some past and more recent bereavements specifically, an existing partnership was developed in 2021 with Southern Cooperative Bereavement Care (who had in the past delivered free bereavement training at GVA). Local residents are now able to come along to friendly, monthly Wednesday morning drop-in sessions for much-needed bereavement support in Gosport.



A few of our Health & Wellbeing Partners:

- **Age UK Portsmouth (together with GVA, and as part of their Close Encounters Project, we co-delivered an annual online training session for the final year University of Portsmouth Undergraduate Paramedics)**
- **Bereavementcare, Southern Co-op Funerals Ltd (who deliver a free monthly drop-in at GVA)**
- **Citizens Advice Gosport (Pathways and Home and Well Projects)**
- **Gosport Borough Council**
- **Gosport Central Primary Care Network (Board meetings and meetings with the Clinical Director in regards to the Willow Community Garden)**
- **Gosport Health & Wellbeing Strategic Partnership (meetings)**
- **Gosport Local Patient Participation Group (meetings)**
- **Gosport Older Persons Forum**
- **Hants & IoW Social Prescribing Network and Health Forum (Steering Groups)**
- **HIOW Clinical Commissioning Group (Digital Inclusion)**
- **Population Health Management Action Learning Set (meetings)**
- **Solent NHS Trust (People Participation Framework Workshops)**
- **Southern Health**

The Gosport Food Partnership

From 2021–2022, the Gosport Food Partnership (GFP) became more established, with regular virtual meetings and valuable information and resource sharing. A new GFP structure was reviewed and then set up, incorporating two new GFP Working Groups ('Crisis Food and Living Support' and 'Sustainable and Wellness Eating & Living'), led by two new Chairs, to reflect the developing needs and priorities of GFP members. Many partners reported that demand for crisis food and advice support needs grew exponentially during much of this period.

In April 2021, one GFP partner (Gosport Borough Football Club) launched Gosport's Community Pantry – an initiative that has been going from strength to strength ever since.

During this period, face-to-face GFP meetings were hosted by GVA. A GFP Steering Group has been established, and all GFP documentation was reviewed and updated in January 2022. In March 2022, the GFP was represented at a 'Cost of Living' event, held at Gosport Discovery Centre.

A small pot of external funding was secured in 2021 for GVA to develop a GFP webpage, to help improve access to important food poverty-related information and support, later in 2022.



Social prescribing



GVA continues to actively support the Hants & IoW Social Prescribing Network. An interesting range of webinars were delivered, covering topics such as 'Green Social Prescribing', 'Supporting Communities through Autumn', 'Levelling up Through Employment' and a virtual 'Social Prescribing Celebration' event in March. GVA has a dedicated Social Prescribing webpage where all past webinars can be viewed, alongside information about forthcoming webinars and events.

Community Compass

Community
Compass



Compassionate volunteers
pointing you to the support
services you need

After five years of dedicated support from a small GVA team and trained volunteers, a decision was taken to reallocate some of the CCG's Social Prescribing Project funding/priorities. After the interim support of Hampshire County Councillors and Gosport Borough Council funding (to ensure that support was available until Covid restrictions were lifted), the decision was taken to close 'Community Compass' remote support service

at the end of June 2021. GVA would like to register its thanks to all those involved with the innovative, volunteer-delivered Social Prescribing project. Engagement was held between the GVA Social Prescribing volunteers and Gosport Central Primary Care Network (PCN) colleagues, which has resulted in one of GVA's volunteers providing a similar service for Gosport Central PCN patients.

A slide for a webinar. At the top right is the 'Community First' logo with the tagline 'making life better for everyone'. The main title is 'Hants & IoW Social Prescribing Network Webinar' in purple. Below it, the topic is 'Levelling up through Employment: the Role of the VCSE, in Partnership with the Health and Social Care Sectors' in green. The date and time are 'Wednesday 8 December 2021, 1-2pm' in purple. In the center is an image of a balance scale with coins on one side and a stack of money on the other. At the bottom left is the 'Hampshire CVS Network' logo, and at the bottom right is the text 'Social Prescribing Network'.



Community Engagement

In light of the multiple and complex impacts of Covid for many, from spring 2021 onwards, GVA engaged with members and local community organisations on the challenging road to recovery. Thanks to the financial support of the Contain Outbreak Management Fund (COMF), much of the Community Engagement team's efforts were focused on providing wrap-around development support to local community groups, to enable them to restart by the summer in a Covid-secure manner with confidence. To help ease organisations' natural fears around this, GVA continued to engage with groups proactively and consistently, conducting regular site visits and telephone discussions to provide advice and support.

For national Volunteers Week, GVA ran a volunteer survey, which generated a high response rate and excellent feedback. We also released a series of short videos highlighting the great work of our volunteers.

Between autumn 2021 and March 2022, the GVA Engagement team experienced a number of staff changes. The new team hit the ground running, getting out into the community to meet with and listen to local groups, and to learn about the diverse array of projects and initiatives already underway in Gosport.

90+

attendances at
statutory
meetings

250+

instances of
direct group
support

Bringing Gosport Together

Noting the vast wealth of knowledge and expertise held by our local community and voluntary organisations – as well as common gaps amongst our members, partners and friends in terms of funding, resources and networking opportunities – the Community Engagement team launched its 'Bringing Gosport Together' initiative in spring 2022.

This is a bi-monthly network forum (held in a different local venue each time) which aims to bring together local voluntary, community and faith-based organisations, as well as businesses, public services and community champions to connect, share best practices and work together on local initiatives. In January 2022, the Community Engagement Team also re-initiated a quarterly networking meeting with Hampshire community development workers, after it had been on hold due to Covid-19.

Following an extended hiatus of in-person events due to Covid restrictions, the GVA Community Engagement team were thrilled to be able to start re-engaging with a range of public audiences in the first few months of 2022, with highlights including a presentation about the voluntary and community sector to 40+ attendees in honour of International Women's Day, and hosting a stand and chatting with local young people about volunteering opportunities during a careers fair at St. Vincent College.



Gosport Community Lottery



In December 2021, thanks to players of the Gosport Community Lottery, a total of **£4,780** was awarded in grants via the Gosport Community Fund, to four good causes, namely: **Gosport Borough Cricket Club** (to start a ten-week, climate-focused community hub at the Cricket Club); **Friends of Stanley Park** (to provide a bench alongside the woodland trail in Stanley Park, thereby making the trail and ancient woodland more accessible for all); **Lee Hub Independent Community Library** (to provide a weekly social and lunch club for seniors in the local community to combat loneliness and encourage healthy eating and socialising), and **Marvels and Meltdowns Family Centre** (to subsidise activities for the families they support (ie. those affected by autism, ADHD and sensory processing disorders) over the year, throughout the school holidays).



Photo credit: Lee Hub (above) and Marvels & Meltdowns (below)



Photo credit: Gosport Borough Cricket Club



In June 2021, one of our Lottery Players, Miss P, won £250! Miss P said: "I chose to support Lee Hub because I have been a Lee-on-the-Solent resident for 40 years, and I was upset about the closure of our library, which had been here all my life. With my daughter at infant school, I wanted to help in some way to fundraise for the hub. I discovered the Gosport Community Lottery via their Facebook page, and I thought that would be a great way to fundraise... I never imagined I would win anything! I would definitely recommend playing the Gosport Community Lottery to everyone as they have just as much of a chance at winning as me...!"



The Gosport Community Lottery has made a real difference to the local community since its launch in 2018. **By the end of March 2022**, over **£141,112** had been raised for **66 of Gosport's local good causes**. **£22,214** had been distributed in grants, and there had been **4,973** winning tickets, representing prizes valued at **£35,533**. There was also an average of **27 winning tickets per week** at that time, with the maximum weekly prize totalling over **£4,000**. By the end of March 2022, over **248,716** tickets had been sold since the launch in 2018.

Gosport Borough Cricket Club, 2021 Gosport Community Fund award winner, commented: "The project has brought the local community together and encouraged more people to think about the impact of behaviours on climate change, and the little things we can all do to help. It's improved life chances by helping to generate lots of conversations, and encourage people to make those changes and share their skills, knowledge and resources. It's empowered people to recognise they can make a difference by taking small actions."



Our Online Presence

Following positive feedback about the GVA website from many of our members (as indicated via a survey circulated amongst GVA Members in early 2021), GVA endeavoured to further enhance this platform this year. New webpages (including a dedicated GVA Membership page) were added to help boost resources available and ease navigation for website visitors.

GVA E-news was disseminated via our mailing distribution list (standing at some 968 subscribers at the time of going to print), to ensure we continue sharing news about local community events and initiatives with as wide an audience as possible, including those who don't use social media.

With our Members and local organisations cautiously re-engaging in activities following the lifting of Covid restrictions, the opportunity to actively publicise their news and events – and promote these happenings on social media – was a privilege. Our social media followings on Facebook and Twitter grew consistently throughout the course of the year, and in early 2022, GVA re-activated its LinkedIn and Instagram accounts, to try and enhance our outreach to, and engagement with, local businesses and younger people in particular.

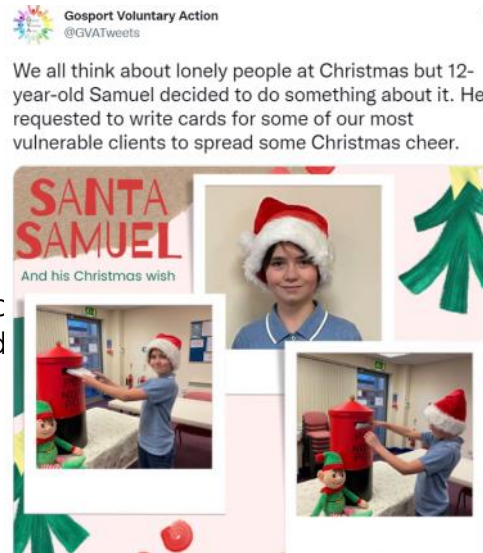


Photo (left) by Elena Mozhvilo, Unsplash



48 website posts
15,252 visits to the website
59,737 page views



15 mass mail campaigns
968 subscribers



3,077 Followers
566 posts
347,593 post views



558 Followers
204 Tweets
77,994 post views

Acknowledgements

We are grateful for the continued support of Gosport Borough Council and Hampshire County Council. We have been fortunate to receive grant funding to deliver a variety of projects, from sources including: The National Lottery Community Fund; Fareham & Gosport Clinical Commissioning Group; Hampshire County Councillor Grants; Age UK Portsmouth; NHS Hampshire Southampton and Isle of Wight CCG; Gosport Cultural Consortium, and Voluntary Sector Emergencies Partnership.

Our sincere thanks go to our many partners, members and supporters, including: Age UK Portsmouth; Age Concern Gosport; Citizens Advice Gosport; South Central Ambulance Service; University of Portsmouth; The Gosport Globe; Gosport Hospital Radio; Lee Residents Association; The IBD Partnership; Gatherwell; Hampshire CVS Network; Community First Wessex; the Community Infrastructure Partnership; the HIOW Clinical Commissioning Group; Gosport Primary Care Network, and the many businesses and organisations who have supported us.

Finally, GVA could not continue to support our community without the dedication and commitment of our wonderful volunteers and contributions of our staff. This year has highlighted the incredible difference you make to people's lives, and we deeply appreciate all that you do.



GOSPORT
Borough Council



Hampshire
County Council



Legal & Administrative Details

President of Gosport Voluntary Action: The Mayor of Gosport

Council of Management: Ian Reeves (Chair)

Other Elected Members: Adam Corcoran, Andrew Mair, Chris Robson, John Jeffs, Julia Golding, Oliver Fisher, Suzanne Pepper

Ex-Officio Representatives

Gosport Borough Council: Cllr Zoe Huggins, Cllr Lynn Hook, Cllr Jamie Hutchison

Hampshire County Council: Cllr Zoe Huggins

Bankers: Lloyds Bank plc, High Street, Gosport, PO12 1BX

Independent Examiners: Wood Hicks & Co, 9 –11 Mumby Road, Gosport, PO12 1BS.



Gosport Voluntary Action Impact Report 2021–2022



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