Trustee Appointment Pack



HVA

Hastings Voluntary Action

WELCOME TO HASTINGS VOLUNTARY ACTION



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A MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR

Thank you for considering becoming a Trustee of Hastings Voluntary Action (HVA).

For over 30 years, HVA has been part of the story of Hastings. We are proud to be a trusted organisation, known and valued across the borough of Hastings and beyond, supporting local groups from every part of the town, and helping communities respond to the challenges and opportunities around them.

Hastings has a community spirit that is genuinely distinctive. We are quick to come together, support one another and find creative ways to make things happen. HVA has a unique role in nurturing and connecting that energy, and in making sure the voice of our voluntary, community and social enterprise sector is heard.

We are now at an exciting point in our journey. As we approach the end of our current five-year strategy in 2028, we can see significant opportunities to strengthen our influence, build new partnerships and help shape the future of our town. We are also investing in our own development and thinking carefully about strong governance and succession.

Our Trustees are central to this. They bring the voice of our members into our decision-making, provide challenge and perspective, and help steer HVA towards the future we want to create.

We would love you to consider joining HVA's board at this important moment. It's an opportunity to bring your experience and ideas, learn from a remarkable local network, and help shape something that really matters to Hastings.

We hope this information helps you get to know HVA.

We look forward to hearing from you.

Mary Carter

Chair of Trustees
Hastings Voluntary Action

ABOUT HVA

Vision

We want to see an independent, diverse, innovative and resilient VCSE sector, able to meet the needs of residents - particularly the most vulnerable - and integral to the planning and development of local policies and services.

Mission

Our mission is to support, develop and represent voluntary, community and social action throughout the borough of Hastings.

What we do

At the heart of everything we do is a simple ambition: to help build a stronger, fairer and more connected town.

We work alongside charities, community groups, social enterprises and volunteers, offering practical advice, training, funding support and opportunities to connect. We help organisations start, strengthen and grow, while bringing people together around the issues that matter locally.

We also champion the VCSE sector, making sure local organisations have a voice and can play their part in shaping the future of our communities.

Above all, we believe that local people know their communities best, and that good things happen when people and organisations have the support, connections and confidence to turn ideas into action.

OUR VALUES

In everything we do, we are:

Asset-Based

We start with what people and communities already have — their skills, knowledge, relationships and ideas — and build from their strengths.

Community-Led

We listen to local people and respond to what matters to them. We don't assume we know best, and we make a particular effort to hear from people whose voices are often missed.

Inclusive, Transparent & Open

We want everyone to have a chance to be heard. We are open about how we work, how we make decisions and what we are trying to achieve.

Vocal

We speak up for the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector, making sure its experience, ideas and needs are heard by decisionmakers and leaders across Hastings and East Sussex.

Efficient

We use our time and resources well, focus on what makes a difference and are always looking for ways to learn and improve.

OUR HISTORY

***1989 – HVA is born*:** Hastings Voluntary Action was established to strengthen voluntary action and support local communities. From the beginning, HVA has responded to local needs by bringing people and organisations together.

Early 1990s – Responding to changing needs: HVA developed services including drug and alcohol support, advocacy and services for people with mental health issues, disabilities and children in care.

Late 1990s - A champion for inclusion: When Hastings became a dispersal area for refugees and asylum seekers, HVA created the pioneering **Links Project**, bringing advice, support and opportunities together in one service.

2000s – Giving the sector a stronger voice: HVA established the **Hastings Community Network**, helping local voluntary and community organisations work together and engage more effectively with decision makers.

2011–16 – Investing in community infrastructure: HVA secured **Jackson Hall** as a community hub and supported major local initiatives including Education Futures and the £1m Big Local programme in Northeast Hastings.

2016 – Supporting Hastings' fishing community: HVA partnered with Hastings Borough Council to deliver a £1.5m programme supporting local fishing businesses, community projects and the future of the fishing industry.

2020 – Stepping up in a crisis: During the pandemic, HVA helped create the **Community Response Hub**, coordinating organisations and volunteers to support people across Hastings and St Leonards when they needed it most.

2021–23 – Learning and looking ahead: HVA brought more than 100 organisations together through *Facing the Future*, capturing lessons from the pandemic and identifying future challenges and opportunities for the local voluntary sector.

Today – Still making things happen: HVA continues to evolve alongside Hastings and St Leonards — strengthening communities, supporting volunteering, developing partnerships and helping local people respond to the challenges and opportunities ahead.

OUR IMPACT IN 2025/26

From helping people into volunteering and strengthening local organisations to developing community spaces and influencing investment in the town, here's a snapshot of our impact over the past year.

Strengthening the voluntary sector

- **102 people** supported to begin volunteering, with **80 volunteering opportunities** promoted across the sector.
- **28 training sessions** delivered to **258 participants**, alongside leadership training for 25 emerging leaders through our partnership with Clore Social, worth over **£75,000**.
- **41 independent examinations** completed and **26 organisations** supported through our payroll services.
- **£26,000 in grants** made available to help local organisations develop or improve green spaces across the borough.

Supporting people and communities

- **Around 80 people each week** supported through the Links Project, with 100 drop-in sessions delivered for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants.
- **365 attendances** at Age Friendly coffee mornings and six new Age Friendly Ambassadors recruited.
- **115 people** attended cookery workshops through the Food Network, with 22 projects receiving support.
- **350 people** signposted to support through the Macmillan Cancer Champions Project, with 14 Champions recruited and 30 events organised.
- **140 children** took part in free creative workshops led by Radiator Arts in Broomgrove, alongside 160 participants at the Bright Lights festive celebration.

Bringing people together and shaping the future

- Working with partners on the Pride of Place initiative, helping develop plans to unlock **£20m investment** in the town and contributing to its steering board.
- **450 residents involved** in the Baton of Hope Hastings Tour, supported by 43 Baton Bearers.
- **£18,000 raised** to establish a permanent Garden of Hope in Alexandra Park, commemorating the Baton of Hope initiative.

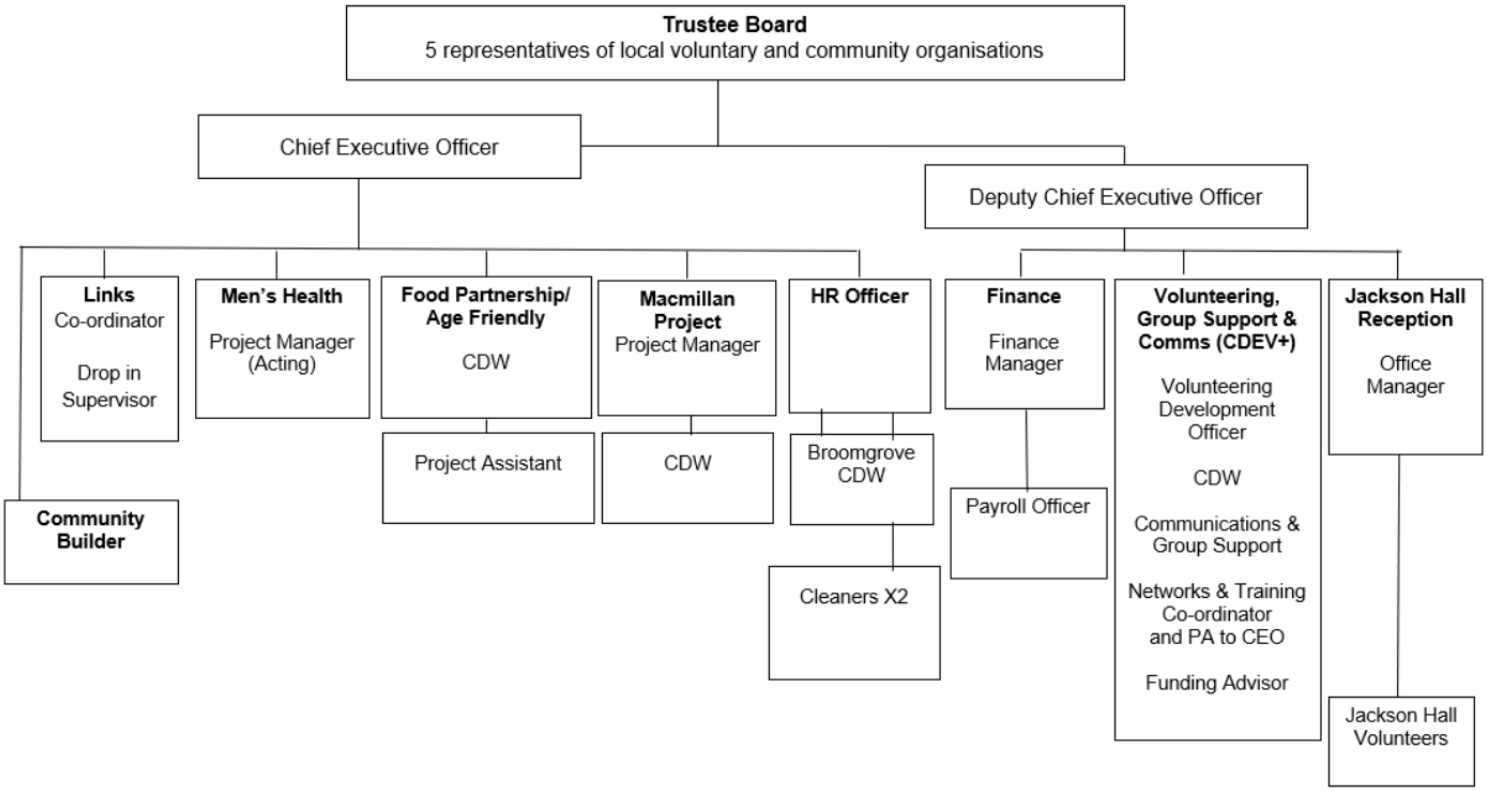
Our Finances

In 2025–26, HVA received **£962,613 in funding** and spent **£1,055,939** delivering its work and supporting local communities.

Our full accounts are available on the Charity Commission website:
tinyurl.com/HVA25to26

These achievements reflect the strength of local partnership and community action. As HVA looks to its next strategic phase, we remain committed to helping Hastings' voluntary sector thrive and ensuring local people and organisations can shape the future of their communities.

OUR STAFF STRUCTURE



OUR TRUSTEES

Mary Carter – Chair

Mary brings over 35 years' experience in the voluntary and community sector. She is passionate about community development, collaboration and bringing people and organisations together to make a positive difference in Hastings.

Angie Lowe – Vice Chair

Angie brings strategic leadership experience from Hastings Furniture Service, alongside a strong commitment to community resilience and volunteering. She is passionate about practical ways to reduce poverty and build stronger local partnerships.

Dr Nell Chang – Trustee & Treasurer

Nell brings experience in higher education, governance and financial oversight. As HVA's Treasurer, she provides valuable expertise in supporting the organisation's financial health and good governance.

Andrea Randall-Smith – Trustee

Andrea is CEO of Little Gate Supported Employment and brings experience of supporting people with learning disabilities and autism into employment. She is passionate about reducing inequality and strengthening local communities through partnership.

Dr Paula Radice – Trustee

Paula brings extensive experience in education and a particular commitment to improving opportunities for children and young people, including those with SEND. She founded Enjoycation C.I.C. and brings a strong focus on social fairness and equality.

ROLE DESCRIPTION

HVA has a unique role at the heart of Hastings' VCSE sector. As a Trustee, you will help ensure we continue to nurture the extraordinary community spirit of our town, connect local organisations and people, and strengthen the voice and influence of the sector.

Working collectively with the Chair, fellow Trustees and senior leadership, you will:

- Help shape HVA's strategic direction and future priorities.
- Bring insight, experience and constructive challenge to Board discussions.
- Ensure HVA remains focused on its charitable purpose and the needs of local communities, especially those whose voices often get missed.
- Provide oversight of HVA's finances, performance, risk and long-term sustainability.
- Support HVA to build strong partnerships and increase the influence of the voluntary and community sector.
- Help ensure HVA remains responsive, relevant and ambitious in a changing local environment, and given new funding coming into Hastings in the coming years.
- Act as an ambassador for HVA and champion the contribution of local voluntary and community organisations.
- Contribute to a positive, inclusive and collaborative Board culture.

Time commitment:

Trustees attend four Board meetings each year, an Annual General Meeting and one annual strategy away day with the whole HVA team. You may also be asked to contribute to occasional additional discussions or activities between meetings.

PERSON SPECIFICATION

We are looking for people who:

- Share HVA's values and belief in the power of local communities — valuing collaboration, inclusion, equality, partnership and the contribution of voluntary and community organisations.
- Can help shape HVA's next chapter — bringing strategic thinking, curiosity and fresh perspectives as HVA begins a new phase of strategic planning in 2027.
- Can think beyond the immediate and contribute to thoughtful, strategic decision-making.
- Listen well, ask constructive questions and are comfortable offering respectful challenge.
- Bring skills, experience, knowledge, networks or lived experience that could strengthen the Board. We're especially keen to hear from people with communications, fundraising and HR expertise.
- Have the time and commitment to participate fully in the role.
- Are committed to equality, diversity and ensuring a broad range of voices and experiences are represented on the Board.

Previous Trustee experience is not required. We are particularly keen to hear from people whose backgrounds, experience or perspectives are currently under-represented on the Board.

HOW TO APPLY

To apply to become a Trustee of HVA, please send a current CV and covering letter explaining why you'd like to join the Board to mary@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk.

If you'd like to have an initial chat to find out more, contact Mary on mary@hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk.

We'd love to hear from you.



hastingsvoluntaryaction.org.uk

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