

“Volunteering improved my skills and gave me valuable work experience”



“When I retired I became a volunteer, I enjoy it so much, and it's given me a new lease of life”



“After being unemployed for many years... volunteering gave me back a sense of self pride”



“It's a great way to make a difference, and have a positive impact on my community”



“I was a stay at home mum, I volunteered with... improved my CV and now I've got a job”



## Volunteer Centre Merton Annual Review 2010



**Volunteer Centre**  
Merton

## A message from our Chairman

We mark this year's achievements with a look back at our 18 years as an independent charity and note that it has been our steady development that has laid the foundations of this year's successes.

All our services continue to grow both in demand and quality as we see volunteering becoming mainstream within our communities and widely acknowledged for the many individual and social benefits it brings to the volunteers and those they help. Just wandering through this Annual Review will give you a strong sense of the value of our work, our strong partnerships and the commitment and dedication of all our volunteers and staff, to which the Trustees add their gratitude.

We continue to strive to ensure volunteering is recognised for the work it does within communities reaching and supporting the most vulnerable, the least able and those in greatest need. I ask for your support and your passion in this endeavour as we face our communities' future challenges, which we will do optimistically, effectively and with your help, together.

**Ian Petherbridge**

## Volunteer Centre Merton.... making a difference

**Who are we...** Volunteer Centre Merton is the lead organisation in Merton for the promotion, recruitment and management of volunteers in our community.

**What do we do...** We involve local people, through volunteering, in helping those in need and building active and vibrant communities in Merton.

**How do we do it...** We work with a wide range of organisations in the public, voluntary and community sectors to promote, develop and match the skills and interest of local volunteers with volunteering opportunities.

**How do we support you...** We are responsive in working to deliver activities that our communities need, helping people collaborate to find community solutions by utilising volunteers, including those who are hard to reach, marginalised or do not normally volunteer.

**Then** and **Now**: 18 years of service development and progress

164 volunteer involving organisations registered with VCM, offering 294 different volunteer roles.

**335** volunteer involving organisations registered with VCM, offering **635** different volunteer roles.

32% of people seeking volunteering opportunities live in the east of the borough (Mitcham/Morden).

**Nearly 60%** of people seeking volunteering opportunities live in the east of the borough (Mitcham/Morden).

312 local individuals interviewed and referred to local organisations.

**1311** local individuals interviewed and referred to local organisations.

Working with 54 individual volunteers with extra support needs.

**Working with 251** individual volunteers with extra support needs.

171 general enquiries about volunteering dealt with.

**3296** general enquiries about volunteering dealt with.

Ethnic minorities residents are 23.6% of volunteers recruited.

**Ethnic minorities residents are 51.4%** of volunteers recruited.

Help Service Volunteers made 900 visits to elderly clients.

**Help Service Volunteers made 3000** visits to elderly clients.

160 new volunteers were previously unemployed.

**600** new volunteers were previously unemployed.

Just over 70 over fifties interviewed and placed.

**Over 200** over fifties interviewed and placed.

1.5 full time equivalent paid staff.

**7** full time equivalent paid staff.

25% of volunteers aged between 16-25 years.

**31%** of volunteers aged between 16-25 years.

## Coming of Age

### **Celebrating 18 years of Promoting and Supporting Volunteering in Merton**

Eighteen years ago VCM became an independent, autonomous charitable organisation, known as Merton Volunteer Bureau. Although at that stage we severed our legal ties with the local authority, (the Volunteer Bureau had previously sat within the London Borough of Merton's Social Services department), we remain, today, firm partners, sharing a vision and ethos with regards to the contribution, impact and value that volunteering adds to Merton's communities. This has been evidenced by our partnership work on the LAA (Local Area Agreement) 'stretch target' around volunteering, a target that seeks to involve even more local residents in volunteering activities.

#### **Keeping it Local**

Long before the coalition government conceived the notion of "The Big Society", we, here in Merton, recognised the positive impact that volunteering could have, both for the individual volunteer and wider community.

The three year LAA project (2007-2010) has been very successful in increasing the number of volunteers helping to deliver services to the local community.

To date, nearly 4000 new volunteers have been recruited to assist in over 250 Merton projects and volunteer involving organisations, directly benefiting thousands of individual Merton residents.

### **Volunteering helps to build Healthier Communities**

Volunteering has a positive impact on both physical and emotional health. Engagement in positive citizenship, taking part in civic and community activities, has proven health benefits.

65% of volunteers report that volunteering improves their sense of well being. It affords them the opportunity to, amongst other things, get out and about, develop new skills, make new friendships and enhance their self confidence.

#### **Keeping Active, Staying Healthy**

Experts in the field of health recognise that being active in the community is a major contributing factor to the health and well being of older people.

Last year Volunteer Centre Merton recruited nearly 200 older people, (those over 50), to take up voluntary positions within local voluntary organisations.



Volunteer at St Mark's Family Centre

Our **Supported Volunteer Programme** supports and assists 251 vulnerable and marginalised volunteers with additional support needs, those individuals with a physical, learning and/ or sensory disability, enduring mental illness or long term health issues. Our supportive volunteer team work tirelessly to ensure that this particular group of volunteers receive regular 1 to 1 (practical and emotional) help and support. Time is spent preparing them for volunteering, finding suitable roles and maintaining links/contacts to ensure continuation of the placement.

For this group of volunteers, being supported to actively contribute to the community has added benefits as it enhances their sense of inclusion and self worth. Active participation in volunteering is known to reduce their reliance on social, medical and other statutory services and for some it has lead to paid employment.

**Gaining Stability & Independence**

Mr X's reliance on intervention services has decreased dramatically since he started volunteering. He states that the routine of regular volunteering has given him stability and made him feel a lot less isolated and much more fulfilled and happy.

However, a cautionary note, if volunteer management capacity is reduced, volunteer involving organisations become more risk averse and may be less likely to be willing or able to involve a diverse range of volunteers, including those with additional support needs.

**Volunteering assists in the building of Stronger & Safer Communities:**

There is a correlation between volunteering activities and strong/vibrant communities. Over the last 18 years the number of people in Merton engaged in formal volunteering has increased significantly. Updating Roehampton University research (2005) Merton currently has in excess of 45, 000 active volunteers, over 20% of the population.

The diversity of those engaged in volunteering is evident; over half (51%) of the volunteers recruited this year were from minority ethnic backgrounds. Dispelling the myth about young people's apathy, 31% (totalling over 600 individuals) of volunteers recruited this year were young people aged between 16-24.

**Reaching Residents in the East of the Borough**

In 1992 54.5% of the people formally volunteering in the borough resided in Wimbledon, today, only 34.5 % are from this area. However, this does not represent a reduction in the number of Wimbledon residents volunteering, but represents a reduction in their overall percentage.

There has been a corresponding rise in the proportion of volunteers from other areas. The percentage of volunteers from Mitcham, Morden and Pollards Hill has jumped from 36.6% in 1992 to 58.7% in 2010.

One of our latest initiatives partners VCM with the innovative Acacia Intergenerational Centre, in Grove Road, Mitcham. It promotes intergenerational communication, understanding and mutual respect, through the creation of a volunteer workforce combining the talents of young and old to assist and facilitate the centre's programme of activities for local residents.

Equality of opportunity is one of VCM's core values. Encouraging and supporting all sectors of our community to actively volunteer, helps to integrate individuals. By involving people in building and enhancing their own communities, VCM contributes to the target of making Merton a safer, pleasant and more resilient place to live, work and learn.

### **Volunteering supporting the Old and Isolated**

An expanded team of over 110 specially trained volunteers continue to work with VCM in the delivery the Help and Home Visits Library Services. This valiant team of volunteers have between them, in the past 12 months, dedicated over 16,500 hours (constituting approximately 3000 individual visits) of their time ensuring that the frail, isolated and elderly are regularly visited and assisted with small tasks, such as shopping or accompanying to medical appointments, enabling many of the 150 service users to remain living independently in their own homes.

### **Investing in Merton's Future, involving Young Volunteers**

A significant number of Merton young people continue to volunteer within their communities. Each year more and more young people come forward wanting to give their time to benefit others.

Last year 385 young people, including over 100 considered to be hard to reach, NEET (not in education, employment or training) or at risk of offending participated in volunteering through our Youth Action Project. An additional 461 local young people aged 16-25 volunteered as part of V-Involved, the national scheme dedicated to encouraging youth volunteering.



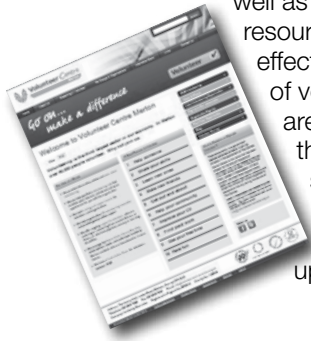
Linking Communities Around the World Project

A further 120 young people volunteered during the final year of the innovative BLF funded Linking Communities project. This project introduced young people from a diverse range of social, economic and cultural backgrounds to volunteering.

Through bespoke volunteering projects, such as the Youth Justice Mentoring Scheme and events, such as the hugely successful around the world in 80 minutes workshop, these newly recruited young volunteers have been able to exchange skills, cultural information and experiences with each other and wider community members, gaining invaluable life and social skills along the way. These new approaches to ensure diversity and develop team projects are now part of VCM Youth Action.

### Recovering from Recession

The increase in individuals wanting to help out and make a difference in their community is great news. However, this influx of volunteers presents us, at VCM, with challenges as well as opportunities. Given our limited resources, it is a real challenge to deal effectively and efficiently with the volume of volunteers now coming through. We are facing this challenge and meeting this increase in demand for our services through the introduction of group interviews (held monthly) and the development (and continual updating) of our interactive website.



Home Visits Library Service Volunteers

There are many reasons why people are motivated to volunteer: altruism, to help out, to give something back, and to share their skills. Increasingly people are volunteering because they wish to improve their own skills and employment/career prospects and know that volunteering is a good way of achieving this. Whilst it is encouraging and rewarding to have this larger body of volunteers, it is incumbent on us to ensure that the volunteering opportunities and placements on offer are able to meet their growing expectations. To do so we work with all our volunteer involving partners in Merton.

### **Strengthening the Sectors' Volunteering Infrastructure**

Our Good Practice Team continues to work with organisations seeking to involve volunteers in the delivery of their services. Currently over 330 organisations and public sector departments are registered with VCM. These include large voluntary organisations such as The Citizen Advice Bureau and South West London Law Centre (the biggest law centre in England); small community groups, for example, Merton Sickle Cell and Thalassaemia Group; and department/services within the Local Authority, Police and Health Trusts /Authorities.

In a climate where more and more people want to volunteer their time, good robust volunteer management is essential if we are to engage them effectively. This relies on VCM's ability to provide appropriate support to the sector. Our provision of quality free training (12 training sessions facilitated), access to networking and peer forums, comprehensive traditional and online resources, tailored advice, and support for organisations wanting to achieve the IIV standards or the Greater London Volunteering Management Charter are just some of the ways we seek to help our peers and colleagues in volunteer involving organisations.

For those small and emerging community groups and associations new to the concept of volunteer management, we can offer intense support through our dedicated Good Practice Outreach service. This time limited project has enabled us to work with many new groups (over 45) previously unfamiliar to VCM, and support them to develop systems and practices that will encourage best practice in volunteer management.

### **VCM a Responsive Partner**

A survey of partner agencies, both within the public and voluntary/community sector in 2007 revealed the VCM services that partners valued most and the ones that they felt should, but were not at the time, being delivered.

#### **Partners said they wanted VCM to:**

- Promote organisations' volunteering opportunities.
- Provide training for volunteer managers.
- Facilitate networking opportunities.
- Keep them abreast of developments in policy and law.
- Provide support to small groups unfamiliar to volunteer management.
- Host borough-wide events to acknowledge and reward their volunteers' contributions.

#### **VCM responded by:**

- Developing a 5 session training programme for volunteer managers/coordinators.
- Facilitating quarterly volunteer coordinator forums.
- Publishing a quarterly newsletter, with regular updates of policy & legal developments, plus discussion articles on topical issues.
- Providing advice & information to small groups through the Good Practice Outreach Service.
- Hosting 5 public award ceremonies, celebrating the achievement of 656 local volunteers who each volunteered for over 100 hours in the past year.

**Looking to the Future - Big Society and the Delivery of Services through Volunteering**

VCM is leading the response in Merton to national and local governments' vision of delivering an increased number of services through volunteering. VCM chairs and facilitates the Merton Partnership Volunteering Board. We are working with Merton Council and other voluntary and public sector partners to enable voluntary and public sector agencies to deliver services through volunteers, focusing on Children, Schools and Families, Adult Social Care and Health Service priorities:

- Reviewing if and where volunteers might help to fill gaps in local services.
- Mapping the skills and availability of local volunteers.
- Providing additional support and assistance to enable more vulnerable Merton residents to volunteer, including those with disabilities, the unemployed and parents with children under 12.
- Sourcing and managing a 50+ team of volunteers to deliver the Merton Home Visits Library service.
- Training and supporting a team of volunteers to take on roles, such as IT trainer and Meters & Greeters, in Merton's 8 libraries;
- Developing, recruiting and training, young and old to work together delivering services at the Acacia Intergenerational Centre.
- Guiding, supporting and assisting parents with young children to become volunteers, working with Children Centres.

- Piloting a new befriending project at Cricket Green School.
- Taking responsibility for the local delivery of Government initiatives. Working with Job Centre Plus to place those, unemployed for 6 months or more, in volunteering opportunities which will enhance their employability through the development of skills and relevant experience.

**And Finally...**

We would like to thank our team of 19 office based volunteers, who contributed just under 5000 hours to assist with the smooth running of our office, services and projects. Without this force of vibrant, enthusiastic people, the efficiency and reach of our services would be considerably diminished.

Moreover, we cannot ignore the significant contribution of our Board of Trustees, whose valuable time is given to oversee the continuing strategic development of the organisation and compliance with our legal and procedural obligations.



VCM Volunteers receive their Volunteer Awards

# Summary of Financial Activities

## SUMMARISED STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES For the Year Ended 31 March 2010

	Unrestricted Funds £000	Restricted Funds £000	Total 2010 £000	Total 2009 £000
<b>INCOMING RESOURCES</b>				
Incoming Resources from Generated Funds	71	-	71	74
Incoming Resources from Charitable Activities	29	292	321	249
<b>TOTAL INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	<u>100</u>	<u>292</u>	<u>392</u>	<u>323</u>
<b>RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>				
Charitable Expenditure	87	276	363	302
Governance Costs	3	-	3	6
<b>TOTAL RESOURCES EXPENDED</b>	<u>90</u>	<u>276</u>	<u>366</u>	<u>308</u>
<b>NET INCOMING RESOURCES</b>	10	16	26	15
Transfer between Funds	-	-	-	-
<b>NET MOVEMENT IN FUNDS</b>	10	16	26	15
Funds Transferred from Volunteer Centre Merton (Registered Charity No. 1014035) at 1/4/2009	61	33	94	79
<b>FUND BALANCES CARRIED FORWARD</b>	<u>71</u>	<u>49</u>	<u>120</u>	<u>94</u>

The summarised financial statements do not constitute full accounts and may not contain sufficient information to allow for full understanding of the financial affairs of the Centre.

The information has been extracted from our Financial Statements for the year ending 31 March 2010. These were approved by the Trustees on 1 November 2010 and reported on without qualification by the Independent Examiner, D Roberts FCA DChA of Strover Leader & Co, whose report was dated 2 November 2010.

The Annual Report and Accounts have been filed with the Charity Commission. For further information the full Financial Statements should be consulted, copies of which are available on request.

## SUMMARISED BALANCE SHEET As at 31 March 2010

	2010 £000	2009 £000
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors	7	7
Cash	165	89
Creditors	(52)	(2)
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	<u>120</u>	<u>94</u>
Financed by:		
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Unrestricted Funds	71	61
Restricted Funds	49	33
	<u>120</u>	<u>94</u>

Independent Examiner's Report to the Members of Volunteer Centre Merton  
I have examined the summarised financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2010.

Respective responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner  
You are responsible as Trustees for the preparation of the summarised financial statements.

I have agreed to report to you my opinion on the summarised statements' consistency with the full financial statements, on which I reported to you on 2 November 2010.

Basis of Opinion  
I have carried out the procedures I consider necessary to ascertain whether the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements from which they have been prepared.

Opinion  
In my opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements for the year ended 31 March 2010.

D Roberts FCA DChA  
Barry House  
20-22 Worpole Road  
Wimbledon  
London SW19 4DH

Strover Leader & Co  
Chartered Accountants

2 November 2010

### The Core Functions of VCM

VCM delivers the core functions of a Volunteer Centre to the standard required by Volunteering England's Volunteers Centre Quality Accreditation:

- **Brokerage:** We recruit and match volunteers with appropriate opportunities in the local community.
- **Marketing Volunteering:** We stimulate and encourage local interest in volunteering and community activity.
- **Good Practice Development:** We strengthen volunteer management, delivering training and supporting local organisations to achieve the **Greater London Volunteer Management Charter** and **Investing in Volunteers**.
- **Developing Volunteer Opportunities:** We work in partnership with the statutory, private, voluntary and community sectors to develop local volunteering opportunities for all, and overcome barriers to volunteering.
- **Policy response and campaigning:** We lead on campaigns concerning issues and legislation that affect volunteers to give volunteering a higher profile in Merton.
- **Strategic development of Volunteering:** To contribute to strategic partnerships; and play a leading role in the development of the local volunteering infrastructure.

### How VCM Helps Volunteering in Merton

Our delivery of the core functions enables active participation by more and more Merton residents each year.

- We work to deliver activity that the community needs.
- We help people collaborate to find community solutions.
- We ensure volunteers are safe and happy, supporting them to continue to participate.
- We provide informed volunteers.
- We involve people who do not normally join in as volunteers.
- We deliver a local support service for involving volunteers that is friendly and peer led.

### VCM Services & Projects 2009-10

- **The Recruitment and Placement Programme** - promotes supports and advises volunteers (including those new to volunteering); offers a personalised placement service to match volunteers with the requirements of organisations.
- **The Good Practice Programme** - provides training, information and support to volunteer involving organisations and manages an outreach project supporting small community groups and public sector managers funded by Capacity Builders.
- **The Youth Action Programme** is supported by LBM (Children, Schools and Families), V-Involved, The Wates Foundation and The Dorus Trust. Working with local schools and colleges it seeks to engage, recruit, place and support and develop young people in new local volunteering opportunities. Young Enterprise London, a new initiative enable local young volunteer to get involved in the development of business and enterprise projects.
- **The Linking Communities Project** was funded by the Big Lottery and through the vehicle of volunteering brought together young people from different cultural & ethnic backgrounds.
- **The VCM Help Service** recruits, trains and supports volunteers to provide befriending, driving and gardening services for elderly, isolated and/or vulnerable Merton residents, assisting them to remain independent and in their own homes.
- **The Home Visit Library Service Volunteer Team** selects and delivers library books to elderly and housebound Merton residents.
- **The Supported Volunteering Programme** is funded by LBM Adult Social Care. It offers extra support to enable people with disabilities and mental health problems to volunteer. It has been expanded to include young people with disabilities and a project that recruits, trains and supports volunteer mentors to support some of the most vulnerable and disadvantaged Merton residents, working with the New Directions Team.

Volunteer Centre Merton provides the support and guidance that community organisers need to have a real and sustainable impact. The government is asking us to deliver “The Big Society” and VCM is working with Merton Council and our local partners to deliver a local agenda for volunteering.

**VCM gratefully acknowledges the support of:**

London Borough of Merton  
SW London and St George’s NHS Trust  
Government Office for London  
London Development Agency  
Greater London Volunteering  
Volunteering England  
South London CVS Partnership  
Connexions South London  
Big Lottery Fund  
V involved  
Wates Foundation  
Dorus Trust  
Marie Helen Luen Trust  
Sport England  
Youth Action Network  
Merton Voluntary Service Council  
Merton Mainstream  
Merton Unity Network  
Merton & Lambeth CAB  
Merton Mind  
Capacity Builders  
All Ware Systems Ltd  
Peninsula

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INVESTOR IN PEOPLE

