



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**April 2010 – March 2013**

**Providing voluntary and community support**

Registered charity number 1061069  
Company limited by Guarantee number 3286600

# Executive Summary

Ryedale Voluntary Action (RVA) is the only local support and development organisation in Ryedale. Based in Malton, we provide our service to all voluntary and community groups and charities across the whole District area.

Our main core services are:

- A collective 'voice' for all our local groups by representing their interests at partnership meetings
- Practical hands-on support and advice on how to set up and run a voluntary group
- Information on funding, policy, training and voluntary sector news
- Volunteer brokerage and support to groups using volunteers
- Facilitation of networking opportunities to encourage debate and collaboration

As a charity and Company Ltd by Guarantee, our governance is provided by a Board of Trustees who meet regularly as a full Board and in sub-committees. The staff team is located at Ryedale Community House and comprises 2 full time and 6 part time members of staff on the core services team.

RVA also runs specialist projects, according to local needs and based on gaps which have been identified by the community. These projects have both paid staff and volunteers.

All our services and projects are funded through a variety of funding streams: statutory partners, large national funders, small Trust fund organisations, self-generated income for services supplied, and contracts.

As a predominantly rural area, with a two-tier local authority system, a sub-regional NHS and a perceived affluence, RVA has its challenges in terms of delivery of services, working environment and partnership relationships.

Almost half our member groups are based in small villages, and communities are spread out with poor transport infrastructure to support access to services and facilities. The BME population is diverse and there are no organised groups within this part of our community.

There is a greater need for us to work towards becoming more self-sustaining financially and changes with the political climate and the recession are having their impact on our long term stability and potential growth. As a relatively established organisation, we have deep roots in the community and excellent relationships with our statutory partners but we do not have a secure asset base or a feeling of future financial security.

There are identified gaps in our skills and ability to generate income through growth and development of the organisation in its current form. For example, with the growing move

towards procurement and tendering for voluntary sector services, RVA needs to develop understanding and skills to keep up with this agenda.

We have recently been awarded the NAVCA Quality Award for local support and development organisations and reviewed our strategic aims, developing an outcomes framework and action plan. Trustees will be undergoing a governance review and as an organisation we are committed to developing greater clarity of direction, with clearly communicated aims and outcomes, based on sound financial planning and teamwork.

Investment in the staff team, through training opportunities and regular supervision and appraisal, remains a priority for RVA. Together with effective evidencing of the standard of our work through Quality Award attainment, and regular internal evaluation and monitoring, RVA will build on the already established skills, knowledge and reputation.

Over the next three years, RVA Trustees aim to develop self-generating income streams based on best use of existing resources. One of our strengths is the ability to remain flexible and continue to utilise diverse funding opportunities: core statutory funding; project based funding; self-generated income through services, contracting for the delivery of services and future development of a social enterprise initiative.

RVA will continue to be alert for opportunities to develop new projects and services which benefit our community and fill any identified gaps in need.

Our relationships with our statutory partners are key to our being able to maintain our role as 'critical friend'. Maintaining good communication means that we can challenge policy in a constructive way, when changes are not supportive of the voluntary and community sector, whilst being funded to deliver important services to our local groups and facilitate community engagement.

All staff are working to full capacity on current workloads. It is recognised that existing senior management is insufficient to support further stable growth of the organisation. The Trustees believe that an additional post is necessary, in the medium to long term, to support enterprise growth and business development, from which a secure and self-sustaining financial base can be built.

By putting in place more efficient ways of operating, recruiting volunteers and using available job schemes, we plan to create additional income by making better use of staff skills and introducing charges for some services. By utilising this income, applying for external funding and investing reserves, it is planned that a Development Manager or Deputy Chief Officer would be recruited to enable strategic plans to be taken forward.

Both a marketing strategy and a funding strategy will be developed and individual projects will develop their own Business Plans where this is appropriate.

It is an aspiration of RVA's Trustee Board to take ownership of a community building in the future and we will continue to look for opportunities which arise in Ryedale, and funding,

investment and enterprise opportunities which will support this. A patron for the organisation will help to promote our successes and raise our profile even further in Ryedale and beyond.

The outcomes from this strategic plan will be:

- Clearer strategic direction
- A more sustainable future financially
- A strong reputation as the support and development organisation for Ryedale Community Service
- Retention of a skilled and supported staff team
- A strong and well informed Trustee Board

## **Mission statement**

Ryedale Voluntary Action (RVA) takes the lead in developing, supporting and promoting local voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in Ryedale and represents and supports the interests, issues and values of the voluntary and community sector (VCS) in Ryedale at a range of strategic partnerships locally and in the wider strategic setting of North Yorkshire.

## **Organisational summary**

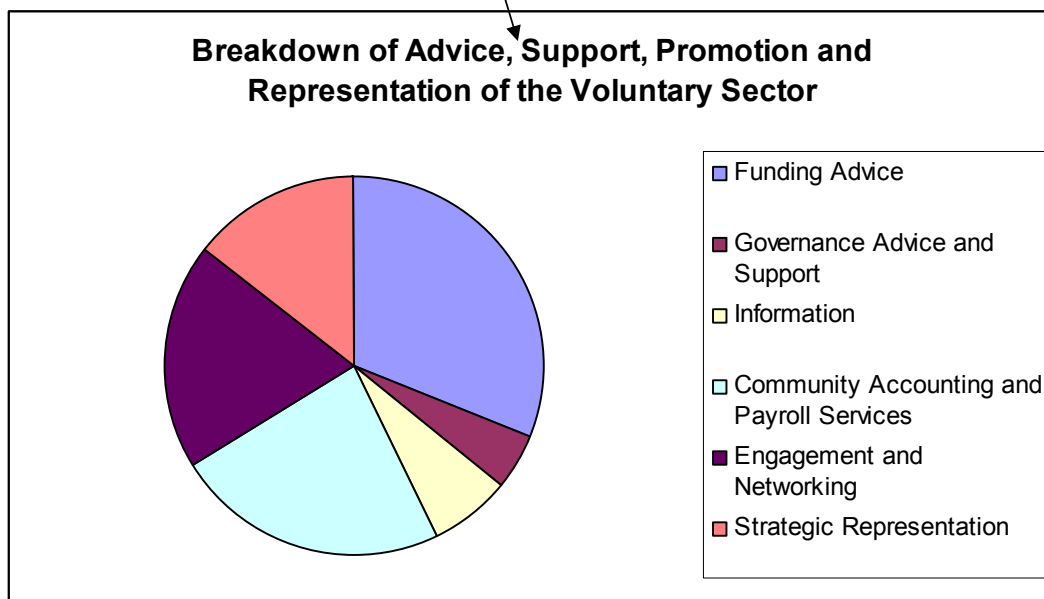
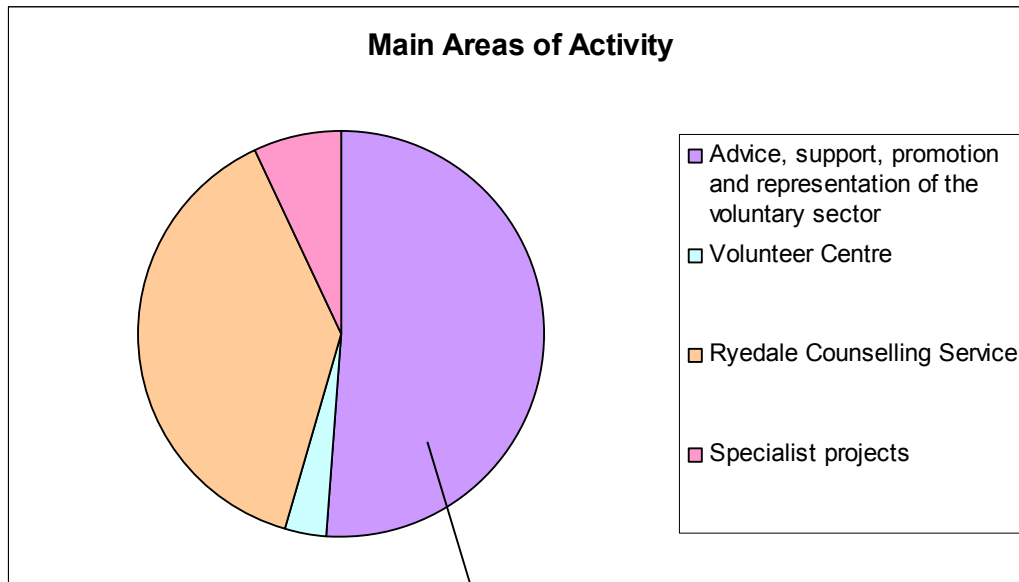
RVA is a membership organisation with over 80 members comprising of local groups and some individuals. It is an independent charitable Company Limited by Guarantee. It was established in the early 1990s and registered as a Company in 1996; becoming a registered charity in 1997. RVA is the local support and development organisation in the district of Ryedale and our purpose is to promote, develop, support and represent the voluntary and community sector in Ryedale in response to locally identified need.

In 2008 the strategic aims of RVA were reviewed by Trustees and staff, outcomes developed and on-going activities identified to achieve these outcomes. The strategic aims and outcomes now form the basis for current activity and future goals, as outlined in this strategic plan.

Our strategic aims are:

- To support the growth, capacity and quality of voluntary and community group enabling the sector locally to improve service provision and to meet identified needs.
- To enable voluntary and community groups to gain greater access to information, practical support services, funding and facilities.
- To lead, facilitate and support partnership working between local voluntary and community groups and between the voluntary, public and private sectors and to enable diverse views to be represented to external bodies.
- To promote volunteering, aim to increase the number and diversity of volunteers, and to enable all people in Ryedale to access meaningful volunteering opportunities.
- Ryedale Voluntary Action is sustainable, proactive and open to change.

# Main Areas of Activity




## Structure

RVA is a Member organisation, governed by a Board of Trustees. Members are local VCOs and faith who are Full Members, Individual Members or Associate Members. The Trustee Board reflects this membership and is made up of a good cross section of people representing member groups, local faith groups, individuals from the business sector and elected member representatives from Ryedale District Council.

A full staff and governance structure chart is shown at page 16.

# Projects

## Current projects

<p>Ryedale Counselling Service</p> 	<p>Established 1995</p>	<p>Generic and specialist counselling with a specialist project offering support to people recovering from sexual abuse, and a specialist young peoples counselling service.</p> <p>1 counselling service manager 8 trained counsellors 4 trainee placements 2 volunteer associates 1 administrator</p>	<p>Funded by BIG Lottery fund, BBC Children in Need, North Yorkshire and York NHS and an anonymous Trust Fund</p>
<p>Malton Town Ambassador</p>	<p>Established June 2009</p>	<p>11 month pilot project but will be extended by 13 months utilising available funding</p>	<p>Funded by Ryedale District Council, Fitzwilliam (Malton) Estate, Malton &amp; Norton Town Councils</p>

## Past projects

<p>BME Engagement Project</p>	<p>Finished 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010 Provided support to individuals within the BME community and developed many aspects of BME support and integration in Ryedale.</p>
<p>RYECAT Ltd</p>	<p>Went independent on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2005 Community transport company</p>
<p>Ryedale Carers Support</p>	<p>Providing respite care and an out of hospital service. Now independent</p>
<p>Ryedale Older Peoples Forum</p>	<p>A large social forum which provides information on a variety of topics as well as outings and social gatherings. Now independent</p>

## Working context of Ryedale

Ryedale is a rural district to the east of North Yorkshire covering 575 square miles. It comprises a low level flat arable Vale area bordered by the Wolds, a high hilly arable strip in the east with many isolated villages, hamlets and farms; and to the north, the dales of the North York Moors moving into sheep farming country with increasingly isolated and small communities. The North Yorkshire Moors National Park covers the north of Ryedale.

The overall population of Ryedale is 52,900 (2007 figures).

There are 4 main towns, all of which would be described as small rural market towns: Malton & Norton-on-Derwent (population 12,120), Pickering (pop 7270), Helmsley (pop 1610) and Kirkbymoorside (pop 3080). Malton could be loosely described as being the most 'urban' area in Ryedale and has the only main railway line. The remainder of the population (approximately 54.5%) live in small villages and hamlets and isolated farmhouses/houses.

Ryedale Voluntary Action's membership reflects this spread of population and the general make-up of groups operating in the VCS across the area. Based on recent membership information we support 24 VCOs operating from Malton, 11 operating from Pickering, 3 from Helmsley and 3 from Kirkbymoorside. A further 23 groups registered with us currently operate or are based in villages across Ryedale, showing that our membership reflects the population spread with around half of our members being based outwith the market towns.

Groups' services and activities range from support and drop-in centre for people with mental health illness, tenancy support, a range of services for the elderly, village hall management, youth clubs, playing fields and support for carers and people and families affected by disability.

The main industries in Ryedale are: agriculture, horse racing, forestry and one food production factory in Malton. There are also some major tourist attraction industries such as Flamingo Land and North York Moors Steam Railway and 3 local museums. There are no other major industries in this area.

There are no BME organised groups in Ryedale that we are aware of. Part of the reason for this is that people are widespread across the rural area and not centrally based. There has been an influx of migrant workers over recent years who have been supported by the RVA BME project and CAB in terms of advice and information when required.

RVA is one of 13 local support and development organisations that are spread across York and North Yorkshire, with the majority covering very rural areas.

North Yorkshire local government is a two tier system and RVA receives funding support from North Yorkshire County Council and Ryedale District Council as well as being involved strategically and operationally with both authorities.

NHS North Yorkshire & York covers the whole of the sub-region, and Ryedale, with Scarborough Borough, comprise the East Area. There are strong indications of a return to more cross-border joint working. The NHS also supports RVA with a restricted funding grant to deliver Funding Advice, as well as funding the Counselling Service.

RVA recognizes that Ryedale people enjoy the special qualities the countryside provides and also recognises the impact of rural deprivation in terms of social isolation and equality of access to opportunities: employment, decent public services, affordable homes, education and the ability to enjoy life.

The North Yorkshire Local Area Agreement includes indicators for a 'Thriving Third Sector' and also 3 indicators for an increase in volunteering. Through the joint working of the Y&NY Infrastructure Consortium and wider VCS and statutory partners, a strategy paper is to be

developed. Once published, this will influence local support and development organisation operation in the future. In Ryedale, the Local Strategic Partnership has adopted one volunteering indicator 'Participation in regular volunteering (L63) and the indicator for 'Environment for a Thriving Third Sector (L65).

This demonstrates the commitment to the VCS in Ryedale by partners and also the importance placed on services which are delivered in Ryedale through the sector.

## **Working in partnership**

RVA is committed to working in partnership with the public and private sectors as well as with the local voluntary sector.

RVA is an active partner in many groups, initiatives and formal partnerships and a member of other significant infrastructure organisations as listed below:

### **Ryedale**

- Ryedale Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) Board
- Chair of the Ryedale LSP Delivery Group
- Partnership Improvement Programme (PIP), facilitated by IDeA and IVAR
- Steering Group leading development of the VCS Forum
- Development Officers Group
- Chair for Ryedale Charities Together Ryedale Work and Skills Partnership
- Community Safety Board 'Safer Ryedale'
- Ryedale Area Learning Partnership
- Secretary for the Malton and Norton Area Partnership
- Ryedale District North Yorkshire LINKs

### **Cross local authority border**

- Joint initiatives with Coast & Moors Voluntary Action
- Chair for Ryedale, Scarborough and Whitby Rural Transport and Access Partnership
- LEADER local action groups in both LEADER areas

### **County & sub-regional**

- North Yorkshire COMPACT steering group
- Funding Advice Network (sub-regional)
- Funding Advice Workers Network (regional)
- York & North Yorkshire Infrastructure Consortium (Y&NYI Consortium)
- Member of North Yorkshire Forum for Voluntary Organisations (NYFVO)

### **National**

- National Association for Voluntary Community Action (NAVCA)
- National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO)

# Working environment

The voluntary sector nationally is facing a growing challenge associated with national agendas around streamlining of service delivery and a greater move towards cost efficiency, the development of the concept of social enterprise and income generation, developing agendas around commissioning and procurement and the swing away from reliance on grant funding, a changing political climate, regionalisation, the impact of an economic downturn and the related increase in competition for available resources.

## Economic

RVA is not exempt from the challenges and the following need to be addressed over the next few years.

- Charities with a turn over of between £100k and £650K recognised as being most at risk
- Reliance upon projects for income
- Insufficient commercial exploitation of in house skills
- Low capacity to address new opportunities
- Low, if any, Growth Potential

RVA is aware of its heavy reliance on grants for survival, and local government unrestricted grants in particular, and is looking at alternative ways to build a long-term sustainable future. To achieve sustainability, it recognises that it must become more commercially aware and fully investigate the potential benefits of developing a robust funding and income strategy.

## Accommodation

RVA is the main tenant at Ryedale Community House, a Ryedale District Council owned building, which was given to the local voluntary sector as a community resource centre in 1994.



As a tenant, RVA is supported by the Council by receiving grant funding to cover rent costs. Other tenants of Community House are the British Red Cross and the Citizens Advice Bureau. RVA manages the day to day building requirements on behalf of the other tenants and users, which includes letting public space to the public; receiving a small income for this role.

Office space allocated to RVAs core team and to the Counselling Service is insufficient and does not provide a comfortable, healthy or safe work space for staff.

There is a planned change of use to one of the ground level meeting rooms within the building in order that RVA can move into a larger office space and release office and dedicated session room space for the Counselling Service.

The move was due to take place during 2010 but is on hold as the sale of the land and car park on which the building sits is potentially moving ahead during 2010/11 Trustees are awaiting the outcome of these changes before making a final commitment.

Although moving to the ground floor will afford some extra room and comfort for the core staff team, our ability to develop or grow beyond current staffing levels is minimal. Other accommodation options will be considered alongside the changes to the land and the building.

## **Funding**

RVAs grant from Ryedale District Council ended a 3 year cycle of funding in March 2010. Our current unrestricted grant for 2010-11 is for one year only.

North Yorkshire County Council funding is currently awarded on a temporary year on year 'roll-over' basis due to the shift from unrestricted grant funding towards outcomes based commissioning, procurement and contracting. There is currently no guarantee of funding at the same level beyond March 2011. Any funding received after this date is likely to be based on agreed outcomes, and therefore may no longer be able to be considered as unrestricted.

All local authorities are under financial pressure to make efficiency savings throughout the period of recession and potential changes to national Government in 2010 may have a further impact.

NHS North Yorkshire & York are also unable to commit to 3 year funding contracts or funding beyond March 2011 due to the same shifting agendas, recessionary factors and also the internal structural and management changes happening within the NHS locally.

All other funding is project based and as such is restricted funds. Each project is monitored separately to fall within budget. Each project contributes to the overall running costs of RVA through applying the principles of Full Cost Recovery.

## **Regionalisation v local delivery**

As the sole local support and development organisation in Ryedale, RVA is well placed and in a strong position to maintain its profile and continue its role as the organisation providing support, advice and representation to the voluntary and community sector.

In this way, RVA strives to keep apace with the national drive for regionalisation of services and structures, demonstrating our willingness to collaborate, without losing our commitment to deliver our services where people are most likely to look for them, deliver support in a way

that demonstrates local understanding, and make our services available in a way that people can access exactly what they need.

## **Strategic lead**

RVA is recognised locally as the 'Voice' of the voluntary and community sector for Ryedale. As such, we are responsible for ensuring that we have expert knowledge about the needs, gaps and challenges for the VCS in Ryedale, and how healthy or otherwise VCS delivery of service is. In this role we:

- Are a member of sub-regional (North Yorkshire & York) networks
- Are a member of Regional (Yorkshire & Humber) networks
- Impart information to Ryedale based VCOs
- Facilitate local feedback to consultations
- Identify training and knowledge needs
- Lead the VCS Forum (launched in early 2009)

The Ryedale Local Strategic Partnership has 2 VCS seats available within its governance arrangements and RVA occupies one of these seats and is a voting member of the Ryedale LSP Board. We ensure that the strategic needs and direction for the VCS is raised and we inform the Board about agendas affecting the local VCS.

By being active within the Y&NY Infrastructure Consortium, RVA contributes to the sub-regional and county strategic direction for the VCS across North Yorkshire & York, and is able to influence decisions and planning with statutory partners at the North Yorkshire Strategic Partnership (NYSP).

## **Core Service Delivery & action plan**

Our core services action plan is regularly reviewed. Core services are described within the diagram on page 14.

Five strategic aims were introduced to direct the core work of RVA, and under each aim a set of outcomes was indentified. These outcomes more fully describe the difference that RVAs services make to the VCS in Ryedale; the outcome of our activity on VCOs within our area of operation.

Against each outcome, a set of actions has been drawn up. The action plan also notes how this activity is resourced, who our main partners are, any target dates for when the activity should be completed by and how we will be able to evidence that the activity has been undertaken (output indicators).

## **Monitoring and evaluation**

The action plan is formally reviewed on an annual basis with input from the staff team and Trustee Board on either separate or joint Away Days. This internal evaluation will consider how each of the outcomes is being achieved and whether activity or output needs to be changed, addressed or continued. The Business Plan will be updated accordingly and a new action plan developed.

All activities are reported to Trustees via the monitoring report, presented to the Board at each meeting.

RVA receives feedback from Members through the annual Members survey and the Y&NY Infrastructure Consortium joint Customer Needs Survey, both of which inform our work and enable us to make changes to our delivery focus.

The NAVCA Quality Award is an externally assessed performance evaluation which evidences and evaluates our activity and output against national outcomes and indicators.

The NAVCA QA was awarded to RVA in December 2009. It is a tool for on-going use and will allow us to review our performance against the national indicators and look for improvement in our output and performance.

## **Methods of delivery**

Each strategic aim and its set of outcomes encompass the core work of RVA. This core work is delivered by the core staff team.

Specialist workers within the team are employed to provide a personal and tailored service. For example, the Funding Advisor, Rural Network Officer, the Finance Manager and the Community Accountant all have specialist knowledge and expertise. They work face to face with local groups, or remotely if appropriate, to help them with their particular area of need.

Specialist workers visit groups in their own settings and attend Management Committee meetings, as well as arranging office appointments. Our specialist support services are fully accessible by always accommodating the customer according to their own needs with regard to venue and timings of meetings.

In the rural context, this necessarily has an impact on the number of customers that can be supported during a working week, and the overall cost of providing this service, given that a significant amount of working time will be taken up by travel between venues.

Work is being progressed whereby the team of specialist workers will provide joint drop-in surgeries in order to make the best use of time and resources.

The Finance Assistant is office based and provides a payroll service remotely to groups. Pricing structures are being reviewed during 2010 and marketing of this service will be enhanced.

The Administrator is responsible for all of the external communication that RVA undertakes: the website development and maintenance, production of the newsletter, e-bulletin management and content, membership renewals and all communications with our networks. This include the upkeep and lead role in the development of the Common Database, which we share with our Y&NY Consortium partners across the sub-region and which is directly linked to the public search engine for VCS groups in North Yorkshire & York, the VCS Directory ([www.vcsdirectory.org.uk](http://www.vcsdirectory.org.uk)).



The Volunteer Centre (VC) is open for 2 days each week and the VC Coordinator undertakes all the work for the Centre and is currently self-administered due to a lack of available funding. The VC Coordinator identifies volunteering opportunities locally and matches volunteers to those roles. Both the volunteer and the volunteer using organisation are supported and guided, either face to face or remotely as appropriate, to ensure that the experience is a beneficial and enjoyable one for everyone. Opportunities are identified using the V-Base national database which is provided through Volunteering England, to which RVAs Volunteer Centre is affiliated and registered, as well as through local knowledge and local contacts. The Ryedale Volunteer Centre takes an open door approach and likes to encourage volunteers to call in off the street and make enquiries without a pre-appointment always being necessary.

The VC also applies for additional funding from time to time to enable outreach work to be undertaken, in order to raise awareness of the Centre in the market towns and villages across Ryedale.

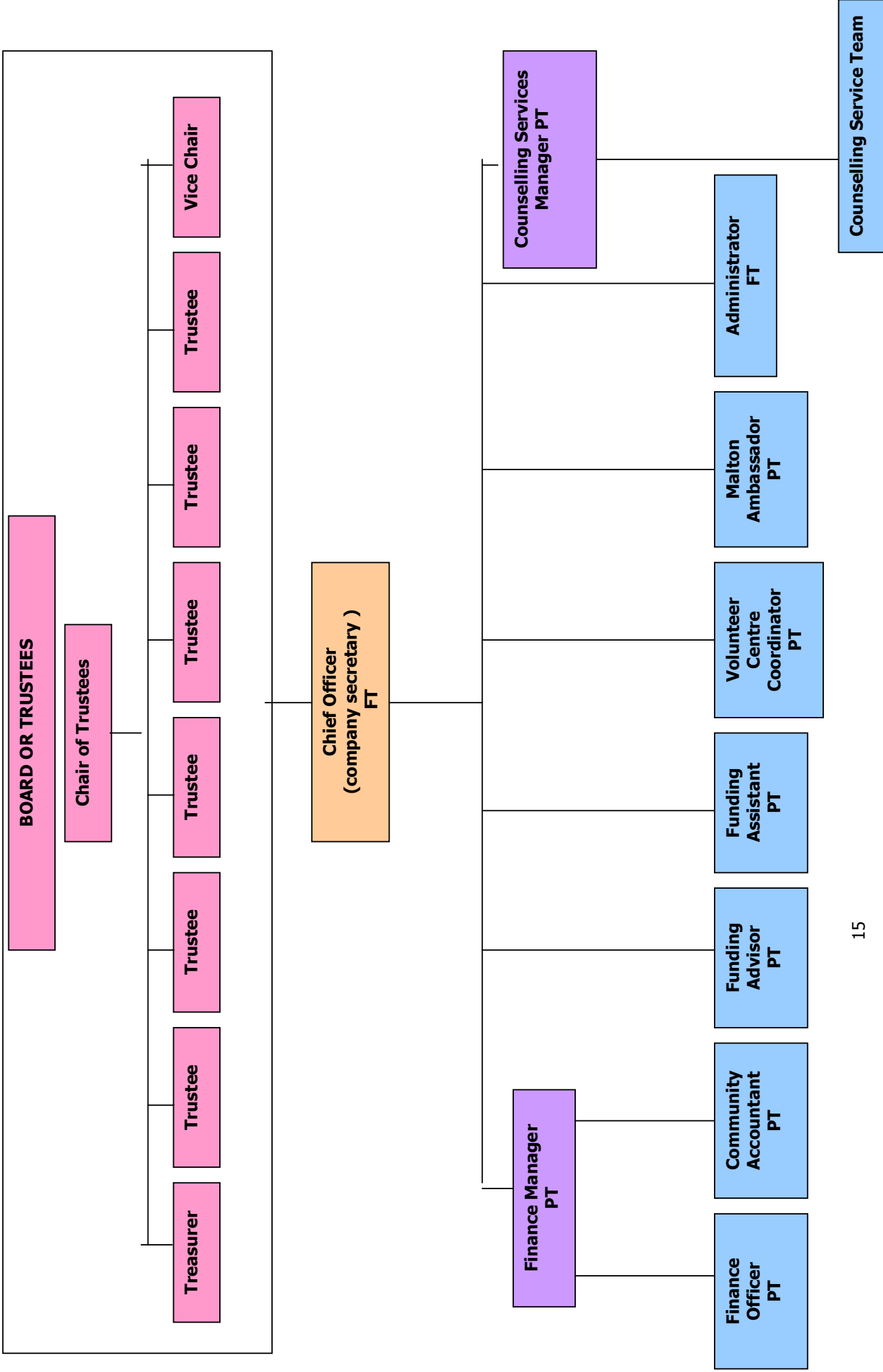
The Chief Officer's (CO) role is to oversee all operational management and the day to day running of RVA, as well as supporting the Trustee Board in their role. The CO has input into support for VCOs when a need arises or when a more developmental or strategic approach is required or requested. The CO is also responsible for partnership working, strategic networking and planning and ensuring that the VCS is well represented and involved in Ryedale.

Specific project workers and Managers report to the CO and are individually responsible for all day to day running of their projects. Each project has its own set of outcomes and an action plan.

# Core Services

Area of Activity	Strategic Aim 1	Strategic Aim 2	Strategic Aim 3	Strategic Aim 4	Strategic Aim 5	Lead Staff
Funding advice	✓					Funding Advisors
Governance advice and support	✓	✓				Funding Advisors Chief Officer Rural Network Officer
Information	✓	✓	✓			Funding Advisors Chief Officer Rural Network Officer Administration Assistant
Community accounting and payroll services	✓	✓				Finance Manager Community Accountant Finance Officer
Engagement and Networking	✓		✓			Funding Advisors Chief Officer Rural Network Officer
Strategic Representation			✓			Chief Officer
Volunteer centre				✓		VC Coordinator
Governance and Management of RVA					✓	Chief Officer Finance Manager Finance Officer Trustees Administration Assistant

# RVA Staff Structure



# Equalities and barriers

RVA strives to ensure that all its services and networks are accessible to everyone equally and we endeavour to represent, support and act on behalf of every section of our community. To do this we:

- Offer support services on a face to face basis
- Choose venues which suit our customers
- Occupy a fully accessible building
- Require outreach support staff to have access to a vehicle
- Hold events around the whole District to increase access to our more remote VCOs
- Have an active Equalities Policy

RVA is committed to adhering to equalities principles. The Common Database ThankQ is being developed to allow us to track which equality strand Member VCOs fall into, in order to evaluate our engagement with equalities issues.

## Use of resources

Unrestricted core funding from Ryedale District Council (RDC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) provides support for 4 generic staff post salaries (management, finance and administration). The remainder of these salary costs is covered by a share of restricted funds from projects using the principles of Full Cost Recovery.

NHS North Yorkshire & York provides support for 1 staff post.

Specific project staff posts are supported by or fully funded through grant funding from other funders such as The Big Lottery and Children In Need, as well as restricted grant funding from RDC, NYCC and NY&Y NHS.

RVA has a total of 19 staff, of which only 2 posts are full time, and 3 volunteers (associate counsellors).

### Recruitment

All staff are recruited according to the Equal Opportunities Policy. Adverts are usually placed locally on appropriate web-sites and on our own web-site. Senior Management posts are advertised nationally.

All salaries are based on the National Joint Council (NJC) for Local Government salary scales and cost of living allowances plus increments are paid as appropriate when funding allows.

## **Stakeholders**

RVA works closely with the Y&NY Consortium and its partners to further the core work and support members. Monthly Consortium meetings are attended by the Chief Officer, as well as any associated and appropriate sub-groups and extra meetings and conferences. RVA has contributed to the development of the Y&NY Consortium Business Plan and Infrastructure Strategy documents during 2008 and 2009.

There is a close connection with Ryedale District Council which invests in RVA by providing Elected Members as nominated Trustees and a senior Officer is invited to attend Trustee meetings as a non-voting advisor. RDC also provide a subsidised rent and are supportive generally through close working relationships and at Senior Officer level. RDC and RVA jointly are keen to explore the potential for increased partnership working and are always seeking ways to work together on projects and initiatives.

NYCC and NHS North Yorkshire & York are kept informed through regular monitoring meetings and the submission of evaluative information, as well as through the VCS Liaison Group which the Chief Officer attends. The Chair attends the NYCC Area Committee.

The Ryedale Strategic Partnership (RSP) supported the work of RVA by funding our VCS Forum meetings and the newsletter. The RSP is kept informed of RVA activity through the Chief Officer's attendance at RSP Board meetings.

All funders are acknowledged on our marketing materials as appropriate and invited to our Annual General Meeting.

## **Funding**

RVA is heavily reliant on grant funding. Although funding received from RDC and NYCC is described as unrestricted in the main (a proportion of our RDC core grant is now restricted to rent payment), it is allocated specifically to the delivery of our core work and management of the organisation as a whole.

Part of the unrestricted funding from NYCC is allocated to the Volunteer Centre and is minimal. The Volunteer Centre (VC) undertakes training project work (Moving On Up) in order to provide direct income for the VC. It also applies for other available pots of funding to provide outreach and roaming VC events across Ryedale and other activities as appropriate (e.g. NYCC Community Fund 2009-2011).

NHS North Yorkshire & York funds the Funding Advisor post. This post also covers Scarborough Borough, employed and managed by RVA but also reporting to Coast & Moors VA.

RVA self-generates a small amount of income from:

- A payroll service
- Office support (photocopying; equipment hire; placement of job adverts)

- Management of Ryedale Community House.
- Provision of administration support
- Independent Examination of accounts
- Some charged financial support to local groups



As a member of the Y&NY Infrastructure Consortium, RVA is a partner in three of the Big Lottery BASIS 2 programme bids which were successful in summer 2009 and are as below:

1. Funding Advice project over 3 years.

This project is being led by Selby ACVS and delivered by RVA through additional hours for the Funding Advisor and the newly created post of Funding Advice Assistant. (start date: July 09).

2. CANNY (Community Accounting Network North Yorks.) project over 5 years.

Lead by York CVS and delivered across Ryedale and Scarborough Borough in partnership with Coast & Moors VA, and employing a fully qualified Chartered Accountant. (start date: June 2009).

3. Rural Voice project over 3 years.

RVA is project lead as well as a delivery partner. Employing a Rural Network Officer to improve representation and involvement of the VCS in strategic planning, and to strengthen and improve collaboration and consistency of LIO services. (Start date: October 2009).

The Counselling Service is funded through the Big Lottery, NY&YNHS and Children in Need as well as an anonymous Trust Fund. It generates a moderate income from a number of contracts with external clients for specific work, a sliding scale donation scheme for clients and through the provision of training.

Other short term projects are funded from various funds as available (e.g. BME/Equalities project and Ambassador project).

## **Volunteers**

RVA has used volunteers in the past to support the work of the office staff and will do so again in the future as appropriate.

All Trustees are volunteers and give their time and services to the governance of RVA for free. Trustee expenses are budgeted for on an annual basis although the majority of Trustees opt to donate back their expenses to the running of the organisation.

## **Future direction and developments**

### **Stay local, be locally focused**

Whilst staying aware and alert to regional trends, RVA will continue to maintain its position as the only local support and development organisation for Ryedale. The provision of support and representation locally is our focus and we will continue to seek ways to improve and increase the quality and quantity of those services. However, as unrestricted and statutory funding becomes less secure, and as we move further into the new commissioning and contracting agendas, RVA will have to seek new ways in which to resource our core activities.

In the future this may mean tendering for work and consideration may have to be given to delivery of projects or services outside our usual locality. It will be imperative that RVA remains aware of and open to other funding possibilities which arise as the economic climate changes and develops over the next three years.

### **Project delivery**

RVA sustains its core activities by generating income through projects which contribute to the general overheads of the organisation, and which support management and administration costs.

There are no plans to float off the Counselling Service as an independent organisation at this current time for economic reasons.

Any loss of current projects will leave a significant gap in our ability to be able to meet overhead and management/administration costs.

We will continue to fulfill our role in identifying unmet needs as they arise in Ryedale, and will support or initiate the development of services to fill gaps in provision. In doing so, RVA will from time to time create new specialist projects, as it has done historically, although it is not the intention of RVA to become a frontline organisation.

An opportunity has arisen for RVA to initiate a project aimed at children and young people in Ryedale following the closure of a recent VCO group providing a variety of activities. The closure of this project was due to governance issues and will potentially leave a gap in provision

in the area. RVA has facilitated partner discussions around this issue and may go on to help develop a new project if there is sufficient evidence of need. Initial discussions have been held in February 2010 and are on-going.

### **Partnership working**

The relationship that RVA maintains with our statutory partners is crucial. Without having a good working relationship with the statutory sector, we are unable to represent the VCS effectively. However, there is also a role for RVA to sometimes challenge partners and act as a 'critical friend', particularly when actions and policies of statutory agencies impact negatively on the VCS.

Therefore, RVA must be mindful of its dual role and stay informed on Public Law and about such documents as the COMPACT, which provides a set of guidelines for partnership working between local government and the VCS, as well as with other statutory partners. There is a new National COMPACT and an existing North Yorkshire COMPACT which is likely to be reviewed during 2010 -11.

RVA will stay actively involved in COMPACT development and will deliver joint training and information with Ryedale District Council and NYCC to the local VCS in Ryedale about its content and usage.

RVA will seek to stay informed about Public Law and individual staff members will undertake low level training in order to be able to assess when VCOs may need more specialist legal help and advice.

Our relationship with RDC is vital from a local perspective in terms of being able to work together to deliver the best services possible for Ryedale. Every opportunity will continue to be sought by RVA to take forward partnership, joint or shared working arrangements.

### **Enterprising solutions**

RVA recognises that it needs to build a strong and flexible financial base from which it can develop into a more self-sufficient and sustainable organisation. As the recession hits, and as the political picture changes, we can no longer rely on grant funding from local government to provide our core services.

Although RVA has a strong history of project development, it has not yet developed any robust income generating activity that could be classed as Social Enterprise or trading, or the capacity to be tender ready.

Income from a trading source within the organisation is required for the future in order for us to continue and grow in sustainability.

In early 2009, Trustees agreed to form a Development Sub-group to move forward with ideas and plans to develop this further.

It is felt that capacity within the current team and structure does not allow for CO time to be spent on developing this aspect of our future growth effectively.

Different options have already been discussed in principle:

- Employment of a Deputy role to cover some CO duties and staff management
- Employment of a Development Officer with enterprise or contracting expertise
- Contracting a consultant to take forward plans for RVA on a self-employed basis

These options will all require funding and potential initial investment from reserves. The post would be tasked with finding continuation/development funding for the role and the expectation would be that any new post created would be self-financing by 2012-13.

The timing of recruitment to this proposed post would be dependent on the economic climate and Trustees' willingness to invest reserve funds. Any decision to move forward with this plan would be balanced against the stability of the core team and the sustainability of core funding.

As the future of unrestricted core funding is an unknown factor at the beginning of 2010, this proposed plan is an aspiration but also key to RVA being able to develop its enterprise ambitions which ultimately will secure core income sustainability for the future.

Consideration has been given to what RVA already does well, and skills that exist within the team, with a view to building on this and exploring income generating ideas around these strengths.

### **Current income streams in development**

The new web-site affords opportunities to offer event and job advert space to VCOs and partners for a fee, and pricing structures for this will be put in place in 2010.

The CANNY project will develop growth income through undertaking Independent Examinations, as set down within the projects' outcomes, and will be self-sustaining.

The payroll service fee structure is being reviewed during 2010 and marketing for this service will be enhanced, with new clients actively identified through the CANNY project.

### **Marketing and administration project**

The current Administrator has marketing qualifications and skills which have been identified through Appraisal and Personal Development Planning. There have been requests for guidance and input with community newsletters, marketing for member groups, building of BLOGs and web-sites.

From time to time there are also requests for support with administration from member groups which do not have the capacity to administer meetings or business needs.

A new post of Information & Members Services Officer will be created and offered to the existing Administrator as a natural progression. This post will continue to service the information tasks for RVA associated with the newsletter, web-site, e-bulletin and Members. It will also be developed to incorporate support services and training which will be offered on a fee paying basis; either as a set piece of work, an on-going support service or as a piece of training.

Volunteers will be recruited in order to provide administrative cover to the office and be trained to undertake some of the core tasks of the current Administrator.

In this way the projected funding gap in core funding will be filled and, if the service is successful, may make a surplus which can be further utilised to support core services and development of RVA's sustainability strategy for the future.

### **Planning and development**

A Development Sub-group was formed in early 2010 and outline plans drawn up to look more closely at these options and others, and to further develop a plan and financial profile.

Further opportunities will be looked for which may not be predicted or foreseen, as part of RVAs strategy to continue to support its core functions through innovation.

### **Volunteer Centre Development**

RVA Trustees believe that the Volunteer Centre (VC) should be the locally recognised specialist support for volunteers and volunteer using organisations in Ryedale. In order to do this the VC will require a sustainable funding source.

The VC in Ryedale is the second smallest in the County and core funding beyond March 2010 is insufficient to keep the Centre open for its existing 2 days a week. It will be sustained through 2010-11 by utilising appropriate underspend from old contracts and through the income gained from the Moving On Up training project, taking referrals from the Department of Work & Pensions scheme for the unemployed and by making funding applications for specific pieces of outreach or project work.

Working with the Y&NY Consortium, the VC Management Modernisation project for North Yorkshire will be looking at the sustainable future of all VC's across the County. RVAs VC Coordinator is taking an active part in this project and a VC Business Plan will be developed with support from the Modernisation project staff.

All other opportunities for funding will be explored and exploited when they arise.

### **Commissioning**

RVA is committed to working in partnership with NYCC and NHS North Yorkshire & York to follow through on the 'Securing the Future' consultation and the involvement of the VCS in new

commissioning and contracting arrangements. This will enable the VCS to stay involved and informed and to gain access to training and information about new contracting and procurement arrangements as they develop.

Ryedale District Council are also developing a Commissioning Board during the second half of 2010 and RVA will be involved with this as appropriate, in the interests of the local voluntary sector.

Along with our neighbouring local support and development organisation, Coast & Moors Voluntary Action, RVA will be developing an East VCS Commissioning Forum and electronic network. The first of these meetings has taken place already as part of the early consultation and funding has been applied for to facilitate this work.

Over the next 2 years, RVA will need to advance our internal skills and knowledge about the commissioning and procurement agenda. Training for key staff will be planned and implemented.

### **Good use of technology**

The web-site has been completely updated and now includes links to other appropriate sites which offer support and information to the VCS. There are downloadable documents including our newsletter and annual reviews. It is maintained in-house and is therefore a sustainable resource.

Other IT based initiatives include:

- Development of BLOGS, as a cost effective way of promoting projects
- The internal IT system will be upgraded as part of the accommodation changes.
- A new telephone system will be installed. This will make best use of efficiencies e.g. direct lines and modular handsets.
- RVA will utilise online forums and partnerships

RVA will remain mindful of the fact that some of Ryedale's most rural areas have weak or slow connections or no broadband connection, and not every household has a computer. Therefore, technology, whilst useful, can never be our sole communication channel and our working practices must reflect this.



The development of the ThankQ common database by the Y&NY Infrastructure Consortium has been a large joint project funded through the Capacity Builders Change-Up consortia development stream, which is now coming to fruition.

The database holds records of VCOs across North Yorkshire and will be accessible by the majority of local support and development organisations. The database can be used by LIO staff to log all activity, including newsletter circulation and visits to give advice. It links directly to the VCS Directory, a public search engine ([www.vcsdirectory.org.uk](http://www.vcsdirectory.org.uk)).

RVA staff have undergone basic training on how to use the common database and it is hoped that by the end of 2010, we will be using it as the only method of collecting data and logging activity.

Use of the database will result in staff time being used more efficiently and effectively across LIOs and increase ability to share information, leading to a reduction in duplication.

The common database is being developed through the joint Database Operational Group and RVAs Administrator is a significant member of this group.

### **Accommodation and asset base**

Trustees recognise that the lack of an asset base within RVAs financial profile is a potential weakness in our long term stability as an organisation. RVA Trustees aspire to the ownership of a community building and this remains a long term aim.

In the short to medium term, RVA is actively involved in discussions with RDC about changes to current building and land use within the Malton and Norton areas. There are potential opportunities for the development of a new community building and several locations and ideas have been discussed.

Based on our experience, RVA is well placed to be an anchor organisation within any community building and has the staff infrastructure to support building management. We have taken the lead role and responsibility for the management of Community House and in addition, we already sub-let the portakabin annex office space to two other VCOs.

RVA will continue to put itself forward as a leading community VCS agency which is well placed to take over or manage a community facility.

### **Performance indicators and Quality Standards**

<b>Year</b>	<b>Award</b>	<b>What for</b>
2006	PQASSO Level 1	Basic policy, governance and management demonstrated to be of good standard
2009	NAVCA Quality Award	Evidences ability to deliver nationally recognized LIO core services to a good standard



RVA was successful in achieving the quality mark of the Practical Quality Assurance System for Small Organisations (PQASSO) Level 1 in 2006.

In 2008, all local support and development organisations in North Yorkshire agreed to undertake the NAVCA Quality Award which has been specially designed to monitor our core work requirements. RVA completed and was awarded the NAVCA QA in December 2009.

This award evidences our ability to carry out the main nationally recognised core functions of a local support and development organisation to a good standard. It also celebrates our successes and identifies areas for development. It is regarded as an ongoing tool for self-evaluation and monitoring.

As a local support and development organisation, it is important that we are able to lead the VCS by example and demonstrate our operational and management excellence. To this end, we will seek further improvements in quality and performance and identify other appropriate Quality Awards.

### **Workforce development**

RVA is committed to ensuring that staff are given on-going training and development opportunities. The training budget is seen as a priority.

RVA has signed a Skills Pledge which recognises our commitment to staff training and development.

All staff are supervised and appraised on a regular basis with training needs and personal development aims recorded as appropriate.

NAVCA have introduced the SkILD programme specifically for local support and development organisation staff and this will be explored as the method by which RVA staff identify and monitor their own training needs in the future. This programme will not replace the supervision and appraisal process but will support individuals to feel more in control of their own development and career progression.

### **Good Governance**

The Trustee Board has signed up to take part in a free governance health check in 2010. This is being provided through NCVO. Trustee induction and training is an area already identified as a weakness by the Board.

Recruitment of new Trustees became an issue in October 2009, as key Trustees approach the end of their six year length of service in September 2010. This will leave significant gaps in the skill set of the Board and so a recruitment strategy has been discussed and an Introduce a Trustee event is planned for 2010.

## **Marketing Strategy**

The RVA logo was successfully updated during 2009 and launched at the October AGM in that year. This has formed the basis for the development of a more modern corporate identity. A simple marketing leaflet was developed in-house and the newsletters, annual review and related documents were all re-designed.

This work will be expanded on and developed and a formal marketing strategy is being developed during 2010.

## **Funding Strategy and RVA future**

RVAs Trustee Board is committed to the development of a new enterprising direction for RVA.

Over the next 3 years, RVA will work towards more closely identifying our organisational direction and exploring potential areas for enterprise which builds on our existing strengths.

Trustees will aim to balance growth against risk by developing a blend of approaches. It has been agreed that 4 main areas of business would give greater stability and these will form the basis of our long term aims:

- Development of trading activities/income generating business
- Development and lead of project based work
- Good relationships with current funders
- Full use of partnership working opportunities

Trustees are committed to meeting on a regular basis for development away days in order to take forward their plans.

RVA will need to develop a sound funding strategy and plot our critical path as the funding climate is changing rapidly. This is being influenced by the economic downturn and by potential changes to government policy.

RVA needs to plan its funding strategy in order to provide a stable financial basis for growth through this changing climate.

## **Patron for progress**

RVAs Trustees are keen to recruit a local Patron who can understand and champion the complexities of the LIO role within North Yorkshire and the importance of infrastructure support for the VCS.

This idea will be developed over the next 3 years and potential people identified and approached.

# SWOT Analysis

<p><b>strengths</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Supportive employer/work environment</li> <li>▪ Strong team &amp; teamwork</li> <li>▪ Outcomes framework for core activity</li> <li>▪ Action plan used and reviewed</li> <li>▪ Strong governance - Trustees skilled and experienced</li> <li>▪ Strong financial management</li> <li>▪ Members – number and range of groups &amp; individuals</li> <li>▪ Good relationships with statutory bodies</li> <li>▪ Healthy financial reserve</li> <li>▪ Central to community engagement within LSP</li> <li>▪ Well established</li> <li>▪ Good organisation of governance</li> <li>▪ Clear lines of authority within organisation</li> <li>▪ NAVCA QA awarded</li> <li>▪ Ability to adapt to changes quickly</li> </ul>	<p><b>weaknesses</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Capacity of senior staff</li> <li>▪ Deputy role not affordable/ no funding</li> <li>▪ Marketing of core services</li> <li>▪ No asset base</li> <li>▪ Loss of interest income from reserves invested</li> <li>▪ Short term project work &amp; contracts</li> <li>▪ Need projects for income but no capacity</li> <li>▪ Diminishing Trustee skill set due to 6 year term</li> <li>▪ Funding not COMPACT compliant 2010-11</li> <li>▪ Insufficient office space for development</li> <li>▪ Portakabin upkeep</li> <li>▪ Reserves needed for recession cushion</li> <li>▪ Ryedale perceived as affluent</li> <li>▪ Lack of staff skills in tendering and contracting</li> <li>▪ Reactive not responsive culture</li> </ul>
<p><b>opportunities</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Expansion of cross District collaborative working</li> <li>▪ Potential project development e.g. young people, training, RCS</li> <li>▪ LSP Delivery Group development &amp; PIP action plan</li> <li>▪ Office move &amp; IT/telephone development</li> <li>▪ Change of Government</li> <li>▪ Recession</li> <li>▪ Reserves to invest in development of team/project</li> <li>▪ Refresh of Compact</li> <li>▪ BASIS 2 programme</li> <li>▪ Volunteers/Future4Jobs for admin/reception</li> <li>▪ New rural evidence of deprivation (OSCI's)</li> <li>▪ Changes in Malton re buildings and land</li> <li>▪ Trustee recruitment of skilled professionals</li> <li>▪ Collaborative working with Ryedale Charities Together</li> </ul>	<p><b>threats</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Staff burn-out</li> <li>▪ Recession – cuts to funding</li> <li>▪ Cannot recruit volunteers/job scheme workers</li> <li>▪ Change of Government</li> <li>▪ Office move delayed</li> <li>▪ No 3 year funding agreements in place</li> <li>▪ Procurement and tendering agenda</li> <li>▪ Changes in Malton re buildings and land</li> <li>▪ Unable to recruit Trustee with skill sets needed</li> <li>▪ Regionalisation</li> </ul>

# Risk Analysis

Description	Impact	Probability	Existing controls	Action required
Financial management	High	Low	Fully qualified Accountant in FM post PS Financials accounting package Regular Finance Sub-committee meetings	
Funding cuts and changes.	High	High	Good relationships and communication with stat partners. Healthy reserves built up and unallocated. Staff posts supported through project funding	Communication with stat partners. Forecast planning for contingencies. Funding Strategy
No 3 year funding arrangements	High	High	Good relationships with stat partners COMPACT	Communication with RDC & NYCC as appropriate
Staff burn out/staff leaving	High	Medium	Regular staff supervision and appraisal structures in place. Open Door management. Staff meetings. Exit Interviews. Trustee Board aware of staff pressures. Clear Line Management	Review of supervision and appraisal procedures. Early communication with project funders where applicable.
Appropriate volunteers not recruited/job scheme workers not found for additional roles	High	Medium	Good brokerage record of VC	Clear job descriptions for roles
Change of Govt	Medium	High	Member of NAVCA – keep abreast of changes and their impact through news bulletins and conferences/seminars. Good relationship with stat partners.	Keep abreast of changes and assessment of impact
Accommodation changes/changes to Community House land and delays to changes	High	High	Communication with RDC Solicitor engaged	Consider other accommodation Maintain communication with RDC
Changes around grants and contracting (commissioning and procurement agenda)	High	High	Staff receiving training as appropriate Membership of Y&NY I Consortium	Further training identified for staff. Employ Business Development Manager
Trustee Board numbers decline/Trustees with low skill set	High	Low	Trustee Recruitment drive undertaken Governance Review planned Trustee CV record maintained	Full skills audit
Regionalisation/move away from locality based work	High	Medium	Member of NAVCA & Y&NY I Consortium Active role taken in forward planning for local support and development organisations through Consortium. Strong relationship with RDC	Marketing Strategy developed Develop cross boundary efficiencies where possible Good communication with RVA Members

# Supporting Information

## Supporting Information 1

Outline Summary 3 Year Strategic Plan Budget 2010/2011 to 2012/2013



3 Year Strategic Plan  
Budget

## Supporting Information 2

Outline Summary 3 Year Business Plan Cashflow 2010/2011 to 2012/2013



3 Year Strategic Plan  
Cashflow

## Supporting Information 3

Action Plan



Strategic Aim 1



Strategic Aim 2



Strategic Aim 3



Strategic Aim 4



Strategic Aim 5

## Supporting Information 4

Summary of Strategic Aims and Outcomes



Summary of  
Strategic Aims

## Supporting Information 5

Trustee CVs



Trustee CVs

## Supporting Information 6

Copy of NAVCA QA certificate



NAVCA QA

## Supporting Information 7

Copy of skills pledge



Skills Pledge

## Supporting Information 8

List of policies in place



Policies in Place