

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROUPS

Ashfield Voluntary Action (AVA) is a voluntary sector infrastructure organisation. A big part of our role is to support and represent community groups in our area so that they are, in turn, well-equipped to support the wider community.

WHAT WE DO

We deliver a wide-range of support to voluntary and community groups locally including:

- A comprehensive training programme.
- Support with governance and structure.
- Help to secure funding.
- Advice and guidance on a wide-range of issues.
- Support as a critical friend.
- Help to set up partnerships and enhance networking.
- Assistance with the recruitment, management and retention of volunteers.
- Holding funding on behalf of small community groups who don't have a bank account.
- Support with marketing and promotion.
- Supporting voluntary and community groups in project development, planning and consultation.
- Advocacy for the Voluntary and Community Sector.
- Acting as a broker with both Statutory and Voluntary services in our capacity as trusted intermediary.



WHY AVA IS WELL-PLACED TO PROVIDE THIS SUPPORT

AVA comprises a team of staff and trustees with a wealth of experience under their belt. Staff have a broad and far-reaching range of experience in the Third Sector. Having individual expertise in funding, governance, training, community development and marketing, to name but a few.

Similarly, our trustees are from a wide array of

disciplines, and the knowledge they collectively bring to the table is truly impressive for what is a relatively small organisation.

This knowledge is matched only by the dedication and commitment of staff, trustees and volunteers.

WHAT IS HAPPENING AROUND INFRASTRUCTURE SUPPORT?

Financial support for infrastructure Voluntary Sector Organisations has all but disappeared in recent years. This could not come at a worse possible time. In a climate of uncertainty, and with a decline in funding and capacity, community groups are struggling to meet an ever-growing level of need.

Groups are hit by a double whammy; their capacity to deliver services in an increasingly pressurised climate is reduced. Organisations also need to ensure that they are robust, appropriately structured, governed and funded. AVA is perfectly placed to provide the support these groups need, but their ability to fulfil this role has been decimated by reduced capacity.



All this at a time when Statutory Services have finally grown to recognise the fantastic role the Voluntary Sector plays in the community. The infrastructure support AVA can provide is needed more than ever. We have the knowledge and expertise to fulfil this role, but our reduced capacity means that local groups may have to wait for support. Furthermore, we may not be able to provide the level of support we have given in the past.

INCREASED DEMAND ON OUR SERVICES

As an infrastructure organisation, we try to fulfil the traditional role of providing advice and guidance to voluntary and community groups, but it is a challenge as capacity falls far short in relation to need.

Ashfield District Council currently provides AVA with some much-needed funding to carry out this work. Whilst this is very welcome and we appreciate the obvious commitment Ashfield District Council shows to the Third Sector locally, this is insufficient to meet the true level of demand from the local Voluntary and Community Sector.

Funding for this type of work is increasingly hard to come by. In a challenging funding climate, ADC provides what financial support they can, but most other funders seem not to appreciate the correlation between this type of work and the end benefit to the whole community.

AVA will continue to raise awareness and campaign for increased recognition of the merit and impact of this type of work. We will also campaign around the need for an ongoing and sustainable long-term commitment to the work of the whole of the Third Sector in our area.

WHAT HAS AVA BEEN DOING LOCALLY?

In the last quarter, AVA supported the following projects:

- A community asset delivering a wide range of organically developed services. The asset is undergoing a major refurbishment and AVA supported a successful funding application for £10,000 towards the initial first phase of the replacement of the heating system.
- A funding application for a proposed pilot for people who have been bereaved.
- Advice to a proposed craft group in relation to insurance, governance and funding,
- Advice and guidance for two organisations exploring the possibility of setting up as a Community Interest Company.



WHY IS THIS SO IMPORTANT?

We are only scratching the surface at present. Now more than ever we need a strong and robust Third Sector which is fit for purpose.

We need to support and upskill these voluntary and community groups, helping them to make the best use of their assets, plan services to meet local need, and ensure that they have access to resources plus support to ensure this. Once these groups have received support in terms of structure and governance, we can assist with funding which will increase their capacity and enable them to provide much-needed services locally.



Ashfield
VOLUNTARY ACTION

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Contact Sarah Taylor
Ashfield Voluntary Action

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