



**THIRD SECTOR PARTNERSHIP
ARGYLL AND BUTE**

ANNUAL REPORT 2010 – 2011



Introduction

This Report covers the first year of operation of the full Third Sector Partnership for Argyll and Bute. Prior to March 2010 the Partnership (TSP) was between the two founder members, Argyll Voluntary Action and ABSEN. In March 2010 the remaining infrastructure organisations in Argyll and Bute, Islay & Jura CVS and Bute Community Links joined and agreement between the partners was accepted at the CPP Management Committee that same month.

During the period April 2010 – March 2011 the TSP has received funding from the Scottish Government totalling £289,000. There has also been some local funding support through the Fairer Argyll and Bute Fund enabling an extension of various activities.

The following report details the outputs and outcomes achieved over the year and indicates the future direction for the Partnership.

The following partners have contributed their information, outputs and outcomes within their headline remits as detailed below to this report and form the Third Sector Partnership.

Argyll and Bute Social Enterprise Network (ABSEN)

Support and advice to social enterprise organisations across Argyll and Bute

Bute Community Links (BCL)

Support and advice to voluntary sector organisations based on the Isle of Bute

Islay and Jura CVS (IJCVS)

Support and advice to voluntary sector organisations based on Islay and Jura

Argyll Voluntary Action (AVA)

Support and advice to voluntary organisations on Argyll mainland and 20 inhabited islands; support and advice to volunteers and volunteer involving organisations, registration and matching volunteer opportunities and volunteers across Argyll and Bute.

NB. Islay and Jura CVS has undergone significant changes in 2010. In preparation for a redistribution of funding and in anticipation of a reduced core income, the Board made the difficult decision to amalgamate the full time manager's post and the part time administrator's post. This new single post serves the Islay community (of approximately 3,500 residents), while Jura Development Trust have been commissioned to provide CVS services for Jura residents during 2010.



Context

The Third Sector Partnership is the interface for Argyll and Bute which is an area approximately 10% of the land mass of Scotland with 22 remote inhabited islands. Providing services against this geography, exacerbated by a mainland with fragmented peninsulas and long travel distances is a constant challenge to our Partnership. Many of our communities are deprived of services and rely on a vibrant third sector for a range of support needs. Despite having six areas termed centres of population only two of these have a population of over 10,000 inhabitants, well below the accepted definition of a 'centre of population'. Argyll and Bute has a road infrastructure which is well below standards and is a challenge to upkeep and maintain in safe order. This adds to travel times and is a barrier for many residents – an example was a resident of Carradale who wished to attend a community engagement event in Lochgilphead. With no public transport available this lady hired a taxi to take her and another to return home; the total cost was £170.00.

Our ferries are the mainstay for contact with all our islands but with long journey times – four hours or more for some – and with the frequent cancellation or change in times when the weather is bad, not to mention the expense, yet another obstacle which needs to be overcome to ensure service delivery.

Video-conferencing is often cited as the answer and we use this method when available; this requires a reliance on our partners, Health, Argyll and Bute Council, SNH or one of the social housing associations. There is of course a cost attached, and dependent on the number of sites it is not uncommon to bear a charge of £250 - £350 per virtual meeting. It does, however, enable our very remote colleagues to keep involved and we have successfully adapted some practices to enable the delivery of training through a v-c link.

Argyll is a beautiful area, it's very challenging geography is also a natural asset. As a Partnership and interface we accept that our rural barriers are greater than most but trust that these obstacles are understood and the additional demand in terms of cost, resources and need for services are recognised and considered as we move toward this new phase of development.

Our actions and services are mapped against local and national indicators and reported regularly to our CPP using their preferred 'scorecard' and highlight and exception reporting. In this way we can evidence our impact against the Single Outcome Agreement for Argyll and Bute as well as other strategic targets.



A Statistical overview of our activities

Activity	BCL	ABSEN	IJCVS	AVA
General enquiries (organisations)	881	41	422	5,192
General Enquiries (individuals/volunteers)	c50**	5	84	10,893
General Enquiries (social enterprises)	30	27	13	106
NEW Organisations registered	15	n/a see below	2	
Volunteers registered*	3	n/a	n/a	287
Volunteer opportunities and matches*	n/a	n/a	n/a	1,146
Organisations registered (as volunteer involving)*	n/a	n/a	n/a	79
Millenium Volunteers registered*	n/a	n/a	n/a	470
Organisations trained	15	15	18	93
Individuals trained	45	63	51	265
Enquiries – governance & legal, policies		40	90	2,670
Enquiries - funding	67%	20	110	2,960
Enquiries – training, CRBS, accredited support	30%	n/a	75	436
New groups start up	7	31	3	37
Resources produced and distributed	10	2	4	292
Community engagement events attended	c20	14	11	105
Support visits to groups	40	27	12	265
Attendance & representation at meetings	C50 - 100	22	23	516
Footfall/visitors to offices	1040	n/a	91	1,960
Website visitors	n/a	24,503	n/a	222,341
Newsletter/e-bulletin recipients	n/a	91	n/a	1,530

*Numbers refer to additional registrations for this year only, not total number overall.

NB: BCL – these figures are not 100% accurate. During the last financial year BCL has gone through significant organisational upheaval following the sudden retirement and subsequent death of the Chairman followed by the almost immediate retirement due to failing ill health of the existing Chief Officer who had been in post for 26 years, the organisation was somewhat in a state of flux. In terms of reporting, as with finance figures, the figures are based on our own internal reporting which does not necessarily reflect the headings above for this year only. These figures have been estimated according to historical email information, the high level monitoring data we have, and are as close to accurate as possible. ** Not specifically recorded. Enquiries given as a % of overall enquiries.

NB IJCVS. Figures are not 100% accurate. During the office move and the organisational restructure was underway much of this information was lost. These figures have been estimated according to historical email information and as close to accurate as possible.



SVA programme

In common with the majority of interfaces the Third Sector Partnership Argyll and Bute has participated on the SVA strands and below we give the results of the recently audited sampling fortnight.

Organisation	Total enquiries	Total hours supporting organisations and individuals	Annual equivalent Enquiries/hours
IJCVS	49 (none referred)	24	1225 / 600
BCL	59 (12 referred)	12	1475 / 300
AVA	2736 (50 referred)	537	68400 / 13425
ABSEN	5 (1 week only and new manager in post)	5	260 / 260

Financial Expenditure – Core Budget

2010 – 2011

EXPENDITURE	BCL	AVA	IJCVS	ABSEN	TOTAL
Salaries, NI, Pensions	45,526	128,948	36,342	9,412	220,228
Premises, facilities	10,060	10,293	3,900	-	24,253
Operational costs	3,127	15,082	5,690	-	23,899
Travel, subsistence	3,000	7,820	1,200	1,344	13,364
Training delivery	6,500	73	6,200	2,690	15,463
Capital costs	3,500	1,557	390	n/a	5,447
Total	71,713	163,773	53,722	13,446	302,654



Notes to Core Expenditure

NB: IJCVS Salary includes elements of youth project worker to undertake pilot project and south Islay development post, some of which we are due to get back.

NNB: BCL costs are estimated at this stage as end year calculations are not completed and have been delayed due to long term illness of existing accountant. Fully accrued figures will be available in the fullness of time and in terms of above, the figures are based on collating from our own records which do not necessarily reflect the headings above for this year only. BCL has brought in £16,500 of earned income.

Both AVA and ABSEN support core activities through additional income as described within this document (matched funding). Figures above relate purely to expenditure of core grant, not total expenditure on core activities.



Specific Reports

General Training

As indicated in the table denoting activities, each of the partner organisations has carried out its own core training reflecting the demands of its locality and of the wider sector. We have evidence from our Customer Feedback surveys and our evaluation sheets which are always monitored to ensure no opportunities for assessment, learning and improvement are overlooked; these demonstrate the following responses:

ABSEN	77% rated as very good to excellent service from a sample audit of 4
BCL	70% rated as very good to excellent service from a sample audit of 7
IJCVS	88% rated as very good to excellent service from a sample audit of 8
AVA	96% rated as very good to excellent service from a sample audit of 56

Whilst there remains room for development, partners believe we are working to a high standard and that the positive feedback received (see example letters) demonstrates the value placed on our support services. We consistently receive excellent feedback and the level of enquiries for training has risen year on year; as a result, we continue to strive to achieve additional funding to meet demand.

We have been encouraged by the funding of £17,000 made available from Argyll and Bute Council which has given an additionality to deliver further training courses over the winter of 2010/2011.

The Partnership members evaluate their actions and service delivery and although receiving very positive feedback are never complacent and seek to improve services through learning and sharing of resources.

Quote from ABSEN Finance for non-Financial Managers course 'brilliant; hit the nail right on the head'

From AVA outcomes training 'Learned so much – will really help our organisation'

Our experience working as a partnership to deliver on projects resulted initially in a training programme over the winter of 2009/2010 with AVA and ABSEN working together successfully to deliver an intensive training programme. This project concluded with a comprehensive and locally very well received training report and analysis. It is this learning which has helped to inform the current project with all four partners working together to deliver a range of training appropriate to their localities and to their respective geographic areas.



Accredited Training & Accreditation Support

Argyll Voluntary Action continues to be the only partner with the ability to deliver accredited courses itself, currently holding Learndirect Centre status and also able to deliver ASDAN accredited training courses. This enables a very wide range of availability and ensures we can tailor delivery to meet needs. The meeting of the criteria used by differing accreditation bodies underlines our own commitment to quality and to our achieving excellence in the services we deliver. We are currently in discussions with our colleagues in Community Planning to identify ways in which to align training provision and improve accessibility to the sector.

We also carry out a training needs analysis on a regular basis and the results are published in our annual training reports. Current evidence, whilst demonstrating a very real and pressing need also tells us that over 80% of voluntary organisations in Argyll and Bute have no dedicated training budget. Many also tell us that lack of time (as well as funds) is the main barrier to accessing training. This increases our role as infrastructure support to organisations and the need for our continuing ability to deliver training at low, or nil cost; if we are to be the architects of a quality driven and sustainable sector then we need to ensure that needs are met for those organisations working on the ground and frequently delivering services of substantial social value.

We cannot, therefore, overstate the importance and place that our core funding plays in supporting the sector. Without adequate funding we would be curtailed in our activities by the same constraints and the sector as a whole would be the poorer, and have a bleak outlook, as a result.

AVA also continues its work as an internal and external SVQ verifier, supporting Volunteer Development Scotland (and others) in the delivery of Investing in Volunteers and other accredited modules. AVA also has its own accredited EFQM assessor and thus is able to offer a level of support which is unique in this area. These strands are evidence of the commitment to quality of the Third Sector Partnership and its constituent partners.

“Additionally, BCL is preparing to undertake PQASSO training in the latter part of 2011. A number of small organisations particularly in our (Isle of Bute) smaller communities are keen to progress down the quality management path and PQASSO as an alternative to the more in depth EFQM is a good alternative to achieving a quality standard.”

ABSEN delivers training in partnership with other training providers, including Social Enterprise Academy, which is relevant and appropriate for its member organisations and designed to be accessible for any organisation considering becoming a social enterprise.

The cost of providing accredited training on Islay and Jura can be prohibitively high. Despite having a pool of highly skilled professionals on both islands, there is often difficulty finding local providers for specialist training and importing this incurs the additional burden of travel and subsistence costs. The strength of the partnership is evidenced best where any required skills are resourced from within the partnership itself.



CRBS Intermediary & Trusted Partner activity

In addition AVA is the sole CRBS intermediary organisation for Argyll and Bute and therefore offers a unique (in this area) and vital service for the third sector. Enquiries within this context have risen sharply with the introduction of the PVG Act which has entailed a further emphasis on training and support as well as the intermediary support activities within themselves. This is a critical area for many local organisations requiring expert and responsive support to enable their continued function and appropriate support and development of volunteers as well as staff.

We have developed excellent working relationships with Disclosure Scotland/CRBS and were instrumental in bringing training to our remote area again responding to need and demand.

The services above are an essential component of the Third Sector Partnership to fulfil its remit and ability to offer the levels and style of support required at local level.

Millenium and Youth Volunteering

This last year has seen an increase in activity in our work with young people, and in particular with Millenium Volunteering. The young people of Argyll have been enthusiastic enabling us to achieve 472 registrations all of whom are well on their way to their individual achievements, culminating in recognition either at their schools at the end of summer term or through our Volunteer of the Year Awards event, also in June. We are also making some headway with the few other schools who are not fully engaged (or their heads) who have been less willing to engage but are beginning to recognise the value of volunteering and how positively the volunteering experience can impact on young people.

Some of our past Millenium Volunteer young people have learnt much from their volunteering experience and have now gone on to further education or into employment – we are always heartened to see the positive outcomes achieved and to have been able to play our part in the development of a young person.

Our young people find their volunteering experiences valuable, and feedback is typified by the following comments:

‘I never realised how much I would enjoy helping out’ 2 young people assisting with Christmas dinner for older people lunch club

‘ This has given me confidence and I have learned a lot about my own community’ young girl in Campbeltown

‘ I like working with people and helping people and want to do some training to work in the community’ young volunteer from Helensburgh



Organisational Support

All partners deliver support to a wide range of organisations and across an increasingly large number of topics. It has been imperative that partners themselves keep up to date and all members commit to the continuing professional development of themselves and their staff.

In total, the partnership has supported organisations with over 6,500 queries, concerns and a variety of dilemma or difficulties – many connected to funding problems or governance issues.

The topics this year have reflected uncertainty and difficulties in the economic situation but also evidence the gap between knowledge of many organisations and their abilities to ensure effective and compliant governance. With some still operating under archaic governing documents and a requirement for additional support around mergers, charity reorganisation and charity law we recognise that our ambitions for a sector where all organisations are functioning effectively and delivering quality services is still an aspiration but is also an element which drives our agenda for quality; setting an example by our own achievement of EFQM – for which all partners now have their validation dates and are using some influence to drive quality further up in priority ratings.

The need for bespoke support has grown over the last year alongside a growth in the overall number of enquiries; this type of support is time consuming and expensive to provide but a necessity if we are to truly support our sector. Once again, issues around governance and funding headline the difficulties which face many organisations.

Following advice secured from ABSEN the *Mull & Iona Community Trust* are developing a trading subsidiary to secure work and income streams outside of their charitable activities and will be opening a new £900,000 business centre on Mull in 2011. To achieve these outcomes it is imperative that the infrastructure organisations work one to one with organisations and deliver bespoke support appropriate to needs.

Our interventions and support have also enabled organisations to remain in operation (for example, Jigsaw in H&L) we have brought organisations together, mediated and facilitated a process of change (eg Ford Hall and Community project – see letter below).



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1 February 2011

Ms Glenn Heritage
Argyll Voluntary Action
21 High Street
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Dear Glenn

Ford Village Hall Committee and Ford Community Project

On behalf, particularly of the Village Hall Committee, I'd like to thank you so much for all the advice and guidance you have been able and willing to provide us with to date.

What the Committee anticipated could become an absolute nightmare you have now turned in to what we can now see as an achievable goal. Your willingness to guide us through the rest of the process we grasp with both hands and look forward to meeting you in the not too distant future.

We can't continue subjecting you just to Bill's attentions and sense of humour so we'll make sure he is accompanied at the next meeting!

Yours sincerely

Philip B J Holt
Chairperson
Ford Village Hall Committee



We are always delighted at the outcomes which also best serve our communities and the Ford dilemma was one such occasion. Mediating between two organisations initially diametrically opposed took effort and some time but has resulted in agreement and the preservation of an important resource in the shape of the village hall and recreation land for the community.

In a very different way, Ardrishaig Community Trust has an ambitious plan to work in partnership with British Waterways and Argyll & Bute Council to develop the waterfront. Working with ABSEN the committee have continued to press for this but have also initiated a number of smaller projects to maintain momentum and community buy-in. Help was sought and provided regarding a groundbreaking renewable initiative with a local estate to secure income for the Trust and the work continues.

Some of the achievements this year have been reflected to all partners in the positive responses given on evaluation sheets and that many organisations have been given a helping hand toward achieving sustainability – something that has become a much bigger issue in recent times. Comments reflecting the value of training and support include,

AVA 'I will certainly take the knowledge and notes to my next workers groups meeting and share. Well done.' Funding workshop

AVA 'Very relevant and able to discuss topics in detail – a great help'. Governance training.

AVA 'Excellent delivery, good mix of action and listening' Board skills development.

ABSEN "Very informative, extremely useful and a real eye opener' Lochgilphead delegate.

ABSEN 'Following the meeting the prospect of using ABSEN is very exciting'

From BCL, "without Bute Community Links' support the organisation would have found the recent organisational changes extremely challenging, so a big "thank you" to them for the level of intense support they are giving us"

IJCVS host and line-manage the South Islay Growth at the Edge Community Account Management post. Without IJCVS' support the project would not have been realised and the accrued benefits lost to the area. Although developing and delivering the project required intensive time and support, it now offers a much needed and sustainable service for the Kildalton and Oa communities which are home to some of Islay's most vulnerable residents.

Finance: Income = £96,000 Expenditure = £75,000

The difference between income and expenditure shown is designated funds for work to be undertaken in 2011 for the youth project and a community bakery consultation.



Social Enterprise development

There are a relatively small but growing number of social enterprises in Argyll and Bute and much scope for further development. Over the year a variety of groups have been supported by all partners and in particular, ABSEN has been instrumental in advising groups who are considering taking their first steps into forming a social enterprise with the aim of delivering services under contract to Argyll and Bute Council. This is an important development and heralds a potential new way of working for both the sector and for our partners in the public sector.

For many organisations becoming a social enterprise and embracing those principles is a new venture and the opportunity of taking on existing staff within a transfer agreement has brought its degree of enquiries around TUPE, redundancy and other employment and general HR issues. We are fortunate that two partners (BCL & AVA) have staff holding CIPD qualifications and are well placed to offer the advice and support required at this stage in their development. For some this involves a new start up being plunged into grappling with some challenging elements of employment law, including TUPE. ABSEN has recently run the first of a series of workshops (from ABSEN) designed specifically to cover this, with support from an appropriate firm of employers specialising in employment law and engaged through funding made available by Argyll and Bute Council. The Partnership can also offer generalist people management advice and support to organisations at every stage of their development.

Social Enterprise in Argyll & Bute is characterised by small organisations with few medium sized organisation. Many are emerging from traditional community groups and charities and new starts or 'conversions' make up 90% of enquiries. The most common request is from groups seeking to develop an enterprise approach to their work to generate sustainable income streams. Often this is seen as a governance and legal issue when in fact for many it is about developing an enterprise culture in an organisation, for staff and volunteers.

Auchendrain Township Trust, sought advice and support from ABSEN and accordingly have reshaped their strategy and secured Leader funding for new initiatives which will develop their own income streams for the future.

Similarly *Mid Argyll Swimming Pool* sought assistance and ABSEN secured assistance from HISEZ and an ABSEN Business Health Check which facilitated a complete review of income strategies. With the support of other organisations, including AVA, the Pool has secured new funding and is developing a new approach to trading.

ABSEN itself now has a new Manager, Bill Stewart, with an Argyll and Bute wide brief who will be taking the organisation forward and developing new initiatives.



Volunteering

Our volunteering services and work continue to have an enormous impact on the communities, individuals and organisations across Argyll and Bute. Over **9,000** hours of volunteering activity have been achieved through Argyll Voluntary Actions activities alone and a further 11,000 through volunteer support ; connections have been made between young and old – indeed over 400 older people are now in touch with young people on a mentoring project with enormous benefits to quality of their lives. Older people are able to pass on skills and experience and to act a ‘mentor’ to young people whilst our younger volunteers bring energy and a lively diversion to the lives of older people. We have tracked and monitored people’s sense of wellbeing and been delighted with the outcomes. Many have reported feeling more confident, more in touch with their local community and valued through their volunteering experience.

With the help from additional funding we are also actively supporting 151 people with long term health conditions to volunteer and, through increased self-esteem and confidence a number have found they are better able to manage their conditions.

The recession has hit hard in Argyll and Bute, an economic landscape now affected further by swathing cuts across the public sector has led to uncertainty for many and stress for not only those who may have lost employment but also those affected by very recent changes in the benefits systems. We are at the early stages but are seeing more people having benefits cut and living on less than would have, at one time, been thought reasonable. This is both a concern and a support need in which volunteering and individual training can both play their part in ameliorating the worst effects of current changes. We accept that our services will be stretched particularly given the lack of employment opportunity and the access deprivation existing in our remote areas; efforts are therefore being made to increase the amount of external funding which can be brought into the area.

Quote from Emergency Services Co-ordinator, Bute and Cowal after Dunoon volunteers assisted at an event, ‘This was an example of the voluntary sector at its finest, working for the good of the community’

‘Volunteers from the Volunteer Centre organised dog-sitting for me while I was in hospital; they were a godsend.’ (DC)

‘Being new to a community is scary and can be lonely; volunteering has allowed me to meet people and make friends more quickly than I ever thought possible.’ (CM)

Commitment to Equality and Inclusivity of Practice

The Partnership commits, individually and collectively to delivering services which are inclusive, barrier free and which are equitably available across Argyll and Bute. To achieve this there have been adjustments made to the future levels of distribution of our core funding and these will be implemented for 2011 within and in accord with all conditions as required by Scottish Government. Discussion around these adjustments has been a difficult



but necessary journey with each partner recognising the need to ensure that all islands and the remote rural mainland areas have the opportunity and access to services which are an integral part of our remit.

Organisationally, each partner organisation operates a robust Equality policy in its delivery of services and, in particular, works to ensure that all peoples have the opportunity to volunteer, associate and express their interests and commonalities through local voluntary sector organisations and community groups or through social enterprise organisations.

Representing and Linking communities, organisations and individuals throughout Argyll and Bute.

Third Sector Partnership members are committed to striving to ensure that the sector has a voice at all levels and an involvement in service planning and delivery. In achieving this aim a network of third sector fora, originally set up through external funding brought in by Argyll Voluntary Action, now exists across Argyll and Bute; seven fora groups are in operation – a number which gives much greater access than the four locality areas of the local authority. Since late 2009 those on the mainland have been a conduit and communication channel for the sector and during 2010 linked more closely to the newly created local area community planning groups established by Argyll and Bute Council under the Community Planning umbrella. In 2011, groups were established respectively by Islay and Jura CVS and by Bute Community Links to serve their specific areas.

Members of the Third Sector Partnership sit at strategic and local level alongside public sector partners and representation includes, but is not exhaustive to, Community Planning Partnership, Community Health Partnership, all Local Area community Planning Groups, Social Affairs and Economy thematic Groups, Public Health Networks, LEADER Local Action Group (which TSP Chairs), GIRFEC, More Choices, More Chances strategic group, HIPAG, Adult Protection Committee, Change Fund strategic group, 3rd Sector & Communities, Area Development Groups.

As is shown in the table, over the last year representatives from the Partnership have attended well over 500 meetings to advance and represent the third sector in this area. There is, arguably, a plethora of strategic and partnership groups which results in a very high number of meetings – this is an issue which is raised at the Management Committee of Community Planning Partnership since it places an onerous demand on all partners and is expensive in costs to time, energy and personnel for the sector as a whole; it is hoped that further progress to rationalise some groups, a process recently introduced, will be made over the coming year – a direction which this Partnership would support.

Within these structures our third sector fora have an equal voice and partners are continuing to develop further their involvement and influence at local and area wide levels. Already recognised as a credible resource by our CPP partners we believe there remains scope for these fora to embrace a wider section of the sector and are working toward this aim.

A diagram is appended showing the links made and how this representation works.



External and Complementary Funding

a. Funding which complements SG funds (leverage)

Each of the partner organisations has a responsibility, and indeed is expected, to maximise the support from Scottish Government by achieving additional levels of funding through their own efforts. Over the years each partner has worked to ensure the maximum value from its core funding by matching and attracting external funds as well as endeavouring to provide other income streams. In this way we are able to supplement our services and increase the levels of service delivery than would otherwise be considered possible.

ABSEN and AVA have led the way in achieving matched funding. Over the last year AVA has achieved £255,000 from external sources. This has been utilised to expand and ensure an equitable delivery of volunteering support across the area and to enable the organisational support for the more remote and rural areas. We have also carried out a significant level of community engagement work and have supported our Community Planning partners with engagement with hard to reach groups and remote areas the outputs of which were incorporated within the local budget report.

ABSEN has taken a small amount of core Scottish Government funding (£13,446) and achieved a remarkable level of matched funding totalling £88,258; Despite the very harsh economic circumstances which prevail ABSEN has been supported through Carnegie Trust, LEADER, Argyll and Bute Council in addition to winning contracts and SLA's valued at £43,258 in its own right.

Bute Community Links – over the last year, despite not being successful in specific funding bids and a number of contracts/SLA's BCL has managed in bring in earned income of around £16.5k from Consulting activity over and above that which is delivered as part of the Core Service. This has mainly been in the specialist field of HR and Business Planning to small voluntary organisations and social enterprises. Whilst Bute were not successful in their attempts to host the newly appointed Local Development Officer for Bute, mainly due to size of operation and the uncertain funding landscape at the time, they were asked to provide support and line management assistance where necessary. Whilst it is difficult to quantify the difference that this will make over the next 2 years, there has been a significant amount of investment from HIE (c.£200k) mainly to be utilised by Bute Community Land Company, and BCL continue to work closely in partnership with this exciting and large, local Social Enterprise.

IJCVS has been successful in achieving funding of £54,000 to employ three youth project staff. Almost £20k of leverage has been secured to undertake community consultation and develop a robust business plan for a community owned bakery.

The support provided for creation of the South Islay Development Project will bring in excess of £55k to Islay. This service will in turn assist in generating enhanced leverage and services for the South Islay community



All partners fully recognise this principle and although not immune in any way from the harsh economic climate commit to those endeavours which bring additional support and initiatives into the area and fully utilise the core funds to achieve this.

We are however, very conscious of some of the real difficulties being highlighted with organisations governance structures and, if we are to forge ahead with our commitment to quality standards being evidenced across the wider sector acknowledge that there will need to hold a dialogue around how this is achieved. Not least, there requires to be public confidence in the voluntary sector and some of our intensive support requests and the withdrawal of funding from organisations where difficulties arise merely emphasises the need for concentration on this area of work. The Partnership would welcome further discussion with the Third Sector Division as well as our colleagues locally to support development in this area.

b. External funding assisted into local 3rd sector

Of equal importance and of social and economic benefit to the area have been the outcomes of our support to other organisations enabling them to attract funding which may well not have been possible without the support of the partnership.

It is always difficult to be completely precise but AVA's conservative estimate from feedback and links with organisations gives a figure of £1.2 million of additional external funding for this area being accessed by organisations receiving support and advice from AVA. Given the rising levels of funding enquiries AVA is taking steps to extend and build on the funding advice available, and to encourage organisations to develop new and sustainable funding streams from income generation. Argyll and Bute faces severe challenges in this respect given its relatively small population the proportions of which are rapidly shifting to the older age group. This results in a paucity of consumers and thus more imaginative ways must be developed to maximise income from a range of sources.

ABSEN is generally working with organisations who are seeking to review their income generation, and reorganise their activities. It is rewarding to see new start-up such as the Soroba House (Training) Hotel, secure £3,000 start up from FirstPort which then unlocks a £20,000 package. Similarly Bute Community Land Company, who were assisted by ABSEN with start up support and finance in 2009 and subsequently progressed to secure a £1.4million land buy-out in 2010. It would be inaccurate to claim any responsibility for these results but indirectly ABSEN estimates that in 2010-11 over £2million of finance has been unlocked by organisations receiving assistance from ABSEN.

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required intensive time and support, it now offers a much needed and sustainable service for the Kildalton and Oa communities which are home to some of Islay's most vulnerable residents.

Finance: Income = £96,000 Expenditure = £75,000

The difference between income and expenditure shown is designated funds for work to be undertaken in 2011 for the youth project and a community bakery consultation.

Organisational Indicators and Best Practice

Each of the partners commits to improvement and development of the organisation, its staff and volunteers and the services which it delivers.

Over this last year initiatives and developments supporting this commitment have been very successful and resulted in our ability to meet rising demand despite a constraining economic landscape.

Argyll Voluntary Action has ensured that it has, amongst its staff a fully qualified SQA Internal Verifier, accredited EFQM assessor and four staff qualified to either D32/33 or A1 levels. All staff complete Train the Trainer courses and three are now ACIE qualified – again extending the range of services but also underpinning the commitment to quality. Staff and board hold memberships or qualifications across a number of professional bodies including CIPD, CMI and ILM. Four staff are qualified to deliver personal development training based on cognitive behavioural therapy principles and thereby well placed also to assist volunteers with sometimes challenging support needs – this underpins a commitment to equality and diversity practise in across all our services.

Organisationally the board of Trustees has been strengthened and is in the process of an improvement plan under the EFQM journey; this will lead to enhanced strategic ability and supports the future sustainability of the organisation.

Our funders and organisations with whom we have held contracts over the past year have all been positive and commended our services (letter attached)

Each partner has robust and frequently reviewed and updated policies and procedures which underpin best practice; in all cases we strive to go beyond that which is a mandatory requirement – another commitment which sits within the EFQM framework. Stakeholder involvement is important in refining and assessing our practices and opportunities for learning are shared with partners across the sectors to maximise value and benefit to our communities.

All members of the partnership commit to National Standards of Community Engagement recognising that their communities, their aspirations, needs and views are central to the way on which services are developed and resources produced to meet these demands and reflect local views.



In addition, we support the Argyll and Bute Single Outcome Agreement working with our many partners in Community Planning; in turn this is underpinned by the range of strategies appropriate to each partners across the sectors. We seek to strengthen those relationships and ensure that the third sector makes and is recognised for its valuable contributions to a range of indicators and outcomes.

The IJCVS has strengthened its board of Trustees over the last year bringing a range of skills and experience. This includes commercial enterprise skills, legal and education expertise and representation from two active community organisations. It is hoped a young person participating in the Islay and Jura Youth Project will be welcomed onto the board in the coming year.

Challenges; looking ahead

We are existing in uncertain times and it is no secret that the Scottish Government one year settlement has impacted on our ability to identify ongoing additional funding past the 2011-2012 year end. However, our major challenges lie ahead and within the sector. As support (infrastructure) organisations although apolitical we cannot ignore political impacts both in Scotland and from the UK government. The signals indicate some major shifts may be required in the way we work and the wider sector will need to rise to these challenges and be supported, at local level, to do so. Local authority funding has through necessity reduced and we are seeing these impacts already – this trend is unlikely to reverse in the near future.

The standards required of the sector are, and should be, as rigorous as those demanded of public and private sector service providers. We acknowledge there is still room for development at this level and will be taking actions within our forward business planning.

For IJCVS the organisational restructure has posed a number of challenges. The new manager inherited a number of historic problems and with the development of two new projects resulted in reduced attendance at stakeholder meetings and fewer visits to groups. As the single worker is now responsible for all administrative activities, it was necessary to adjust the time allocated to direct service delivery which, unfortunately, has impacted on the organisations recent profile.

However it is important to stress this restructuring is complete and IJCVS is now able to provide a streamlined and focused service designed to deliver statutory requirements, whilst building on new opportunities throughout the coming year.

ABSEN activity was hampered this year by the reduction in working hours and then retirement of our existing Development Officer, Mike Geraghty, and a four month delay in securing a replacement of suitable calibre – Bill Stewart. This meant fewer newsletters were



circulated than planned and some activities were not completed on time. EFQM has been delayed in order that this can be completed with the new staff member in post.

Simultaneously there has been a dramatic increase in enquires brought about by

- a) greater awareness of the multiple benefits of social enterprise
- b) local authority and NHS officials wishing to work more closely with ABSEN as they prepare to outsource services.

Fortunately this increase in workload coincided with the Carnegie UK Trust and HIE confirming that ABSEN would be the lead partner in the Argyll & Bute Local Services Initiative (ABLSI). This provides additional support to existing or potential social enterprises seeking to secure contracts from Argyll & Bute Council, and to share good practice. In the ABSENCE of a key worker, ABSEN Directors attended key meetings to ensure this project is now moving forward a pace in 2011.

AVA has seen a change at the top; our long serving Chair, David Price has moved to pastures new and for the interim our new Chair is Margaret Jacobsen, already a board member and who brings a wealth of knowledge and expertise. From what could have been an obstacle we were fortunate in identifying four new board members each bringing skills and experience in different disciplines to the mix.

Our greatest challenge has been the completion of our Big Lottery funded project, People Plus which has supported many vulnerable people over the four years of its existence; we have identified some additional funding and work continues to secure funding which would allow at least elements of this work, for which we have received many plaudits, to continue.

The Partnership is proud of the work resulting in the development of the third sector fora across Argyll and Bute; these will require strengthening and building on the experience to cement the communications and input to strategic levels. Equally, we have improved our ability to influence the public agenda and demonstrated (through the community engagement work of AVA in influencing elements of the Council budgets) our efficacy and connection with communities – something which has been publicly acknowledged by our Community Planning partners.

We have made and taken some great strides forward; we recognise the need to build further and whilst appreciating the support from Scottish Government trust that this will continue and allow further development.

A robust, purposeful and well-resourced infrastructure can achieve enormous returns on investment and we can evidence those returns. With the tools to do our job, we can equip the wider sector with the tools, knowledge and indeed the resources to deliver their services and to support community life across Argyll and Bute.

ABSEN looks forward to expanding the services offered across Argyll & Bute by ensuring greater levels of cooperation with Third Sector Partners. The number of enquiries is set to



increase and we are making plans to meet this demand, with frontline enquiries being dealt with by ABSEN local reps and Partners on Islay, Bute and local AVA offices. Specialist support can then be offered from the ABSEN Development Manager.

Therefore, we look ahead in the knowledge that our journey will not be without obstacles and with some unknown elements; however, we represent a sector renowned for its ability to adapt and improvise and each organisations will undoubtedly introduce changes to enable a more sustainable approach to the future. This has been a year of learning; we now feel we have a partnership which can look ahead with commitment and conviction and plan for future services and delivery.

Our hope is that a future Scottish Government will recognise the strength and potential of our sector and play its part in enabling a confident and capable third sector which has the ability to continue to add social and economic value through supporting growth in all its many facets within our communities.

For ABSEN

James Hilder, Chair

For AVA

Glenn Heritage, CEO

For Bute Community Links

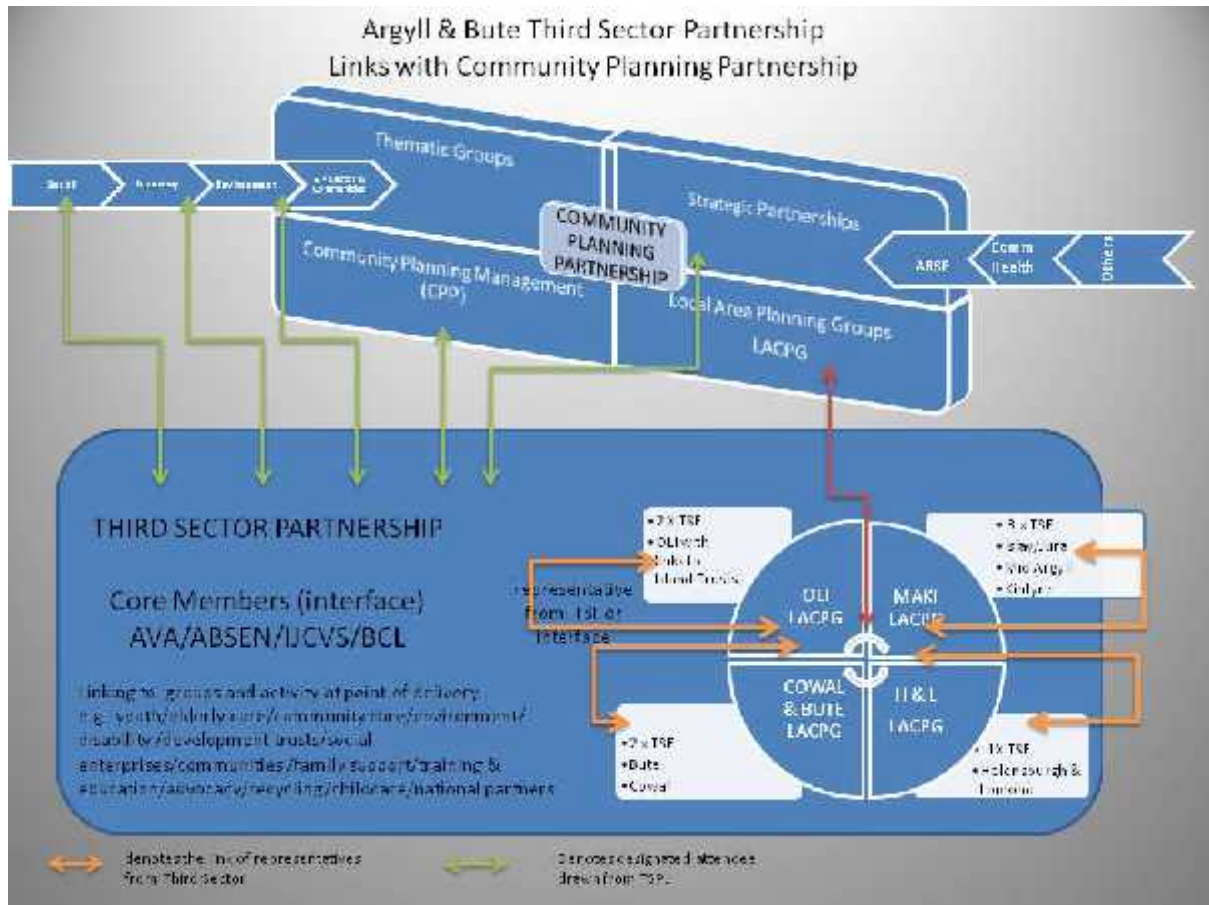
Janet Skillin, CEO

For Islay & Jura CVS

Lesley Anderson, Manager

23rd March 2010

How We Link to our Community Planning Partners





16-18 Chapel Street, Glossop SK13 8AT
 t 01645 861 5340 e enquiries@digitaloutreach.org.uk
 www.digitaloutreach.org.uk

...digital
 outreach
 Bringing clarity to the digital world

Eleanor MacKinnon
 Argyll Voluntary Action
 21 High Street
 Oban
 PA34 4BG

22 November 2010

Dear Eleanor,

I would personally like to say a huge thank you for all the hard work that the Argyll Voluntary Action team put into raising awareness and understanding of digital TV switchover and the Switchover Help Scheme.

It was a pleasure to work with your team in the Torosay region and we hope that AVA continues to perform with a huge amount of success in the community and is able to use the experience gained in a positive way in the future.

The results speak for themselves – For the Torosay region, Argyll Voluntary Action, alongside VA Lochaber, ensured that 54 events took place, over 1100 one to one conversations were carried out, and a further 268 people were helped at one of the Advice Points. A fantastic achievement – thank you.

It has been a pleasure to work with yourself and the wider team and we wish you every success in any future projects.

Best Wishes

Ian Agnew

Chief Executive, Digital Outreach Limited

COULD WE
 FOR COMM
 ENGAGEMENT



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