

Shropshire Voluntary and Community Sector Assembly: **Timeline**



2007

Communications and networking events to engage with the voluntary and community sector and work to establish the Shropshire VCS Assembly. Steering group of sector leaders established and Chair is elected. A VCS Assembly Coordinator is appointed and part time administrative support is provided by Shropshire Council.

2008

27 February 2008 - Shropshire VCS Assembly launch event is held.

2009

Shropshire VCS Assembly Board is formalised and Terms of Reference are agreed. Work takes place to establish Forums of Interest where there are gaps and to invite existing forums to join. Administrative support and small grants are provided to help forums establish. A Shropshire Compact is agreed and launched.

2010

A review of the Assembly is undertaken and the needs of the sector are researched through a 'state of the sector survey' and an 'infrastructure needs survey'. New forums join the Assembly. Big Society is launched as part of the Conservative Government manifesto.

2011

The Assembly has grown to 16 Forums of Interest and large numbers of events are held to engage the sector. A VCS evidence base is developed highlighting the sectors social and economic contributions. Localism brings new national policies such as Right to Buy and Right to Challenge. The support team grows to include a VCSA Support Officer. Shropshire VCS Assembly is represented on all local partnership boards.

2012

£100k is invested into the sector via the VCS Assembly. Shropshire Council provides funding to establish Shropshire Providers Consortium, ShropShare and a forum development project. Social Value is introduced and a local partnership group set up to implement social value good practice in Shropshire.

2013

The Shropshire Compact is reviewed and the evidence base updated. Significant changes are taking place within the public sector and VCS investment is changing. There is a need for new partnership commitments and expectations. Shropshire CCG and Police & Crime Commissioner join Shropshire Council to develop the Compact. The Assembly starts to work with the Marches LEP to support the delivery of EU funding for social inclusion and employment.

2014

A new Shropshire Compact is launched. The Change Group is established to look at strategic changes and VCSE engagement.

2015

A review of the VCS Assembly is undertaken. The Assembly's dedicated support team is lost but support is provided to administer the VCSA by Shropshire Council's Feedback and Insight Team.

2016

The Assembly loses some of its Forums of Interest as public sector support is reduced and funding into the sector reduces (small grants are lost). 11 Forums remain with some increasingly operating as virtual networks rather than holding regular meetings. A significant amount of work takes place with the Marches LEP to secure VCSE engagement and this later results VCSE partnerships securing Building Better Opportunities contracts.

2017

The Assembly delivers research on preventative services and the loss of investment in prevention. Other projects focus on Welfare Reform, community transport, GDPR and social prescribing.

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2018

The Assembly responds to the Civil Society Strategy consultation and holds an event to look at the Strategy. Chair Chris Child and other members of the Board meet with MPs to discuss Civil Society Strategy in Westminster.

2019

The Assembly delivers a report on the VCS and its Value in Shropshire Telford and Wrekin. The VCSA also partners with SALC and delivers research on rural issues to help inform the development of Shropshire Council's Rural Strategy. A key focus for the Assembly this year is on loneliness, and an event is held on this issue.

2020

March 2020 the Covid-19 pandemic requires VCSA members to move into emergency response mode. The Assembly delivered a report in partnership with SALC on the impacts of the Covid crisis on VCS organisation in Shropshire and held all meetings and communications online during the year.

2021

The Assembly signs an MOU with the ICS. The Strategic Infrastructure Partnership Forum of Interest leads a successful grant proposal for funding infrastructure support in the County, and the SIP Voluntary and Community Development Team is launched. The VCSA also launched a pilot Community Asset Grant Scheme, and delivered a report on Debt and Financial Support Services. It also hosted virtual events on climate change and digital inclusion, though the annual meeting could not happen.

2022

A refreshed VCSA website is launched, along with a refreshed format for the newsletter. A State of the Sector survey is also launched—the first since 2017. Also planned for this year: a membership drive and a new membership portal, an annual assembly in April, and an updated report on the value of the VCS in Shropshire Telford and Wrekin.