About BVSC

BVSC (Birmingham Voluntary Service Council) is the primary voluntary sector support organisation in England’s second city, providing support to volunteers, voluntary groups and civil society in the largest single local authority area in Europe.

BVSC supports voluntary action by local people, including voluntary and community organisations and social enterprises. We work in partnership with the voluntary, public, private, academic and faith sectors in the city, providing collaborative voluntary sector leadership, strong and accountable communications and networking structures, high quality business development support, local volunteering brokerage facilities, and a range of direct services to Birmingham’s residents. We support, inform and network local voluntary organisations and community groups through our Third Sector Assembly, and a significant element of our work is in representing and advocating for the views and needs of people involved in local voluntary action.

BVSC is unique in carrying out this combination of functions across the city. We are rooted in the local voluntary sector but well connected across all sectors within and beyond Birmingham and are widely known and trusted. The quality of our work and organisational management is recognised through a range of awards and accreditations including the Quality Award from the National Association of Voluntary and Community Action, Investors in People, the Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation, the Governance Assessment Process (GAP) Award, and PQASSO.

We own and manage The Centre for Voluntary Action, a fully equipped voluntary sector resource hub and conference and training facility based in Digbeth. This is used by the voluntary sector and its partners as a focus for debate, learning and networking. It provides a showcase for the work of the local voluntary sector and attracts visitors and customers from across the UK and internationally.
BVSC was founded by local Birmingham residents on 19 January 1916, as Birmingham Citizens Society. It brought together the previously-established City of Birmingham Aid Society (which had been founded by Joseph Chamberlain in the 1890s to “help fellow citizens under circumstances of temporary unavoidable misfortune”) and several kindred societies, including the Birmingham Charitable Organisations Society. Its focus then was to support those affected by war and poverty. In 1946, it became Birmingham Council for Social Services, and began to build a library of information on local charities so that support could be co-ordinated. Papers from the time note that the organisation was “wholly voluntary ... founded solely with the idea of acting as a clearing house for relief agencies” and thus demonstrated an early form of the now well-established Council for Voluntary Service model.

Happy 100th birthday, BVSC!

www.bvsc.org  @BVSC
Read all about it!

*Update* was introduced in June 1992 as a four-page newsletter. Twenty-four years and several makeovers later, the 20-page colour magazine has become quite an institution, valued as a source of news and information for managers, staff, volunteers and trustees in the voluntary and not-for-profit sector in the city.

www.bvsc.org/communications

### February

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Better services for older people

Ageing Better in Birmingham is a cross-sector partnership which facilitates local communities to come together to take an asset-based approach to reducing isolation amongst the over 50s. Older adults are empowered to lead and shape the delivery of every aspect of the programme, and a number of local hubs of activity will be in place across the city in 2016.

www.bvsc.org/ageing-better-birmingham

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“Ageing Better in Birmingham: to belong is to believe, and we do…”

Trevor Williams (pictured), a member of the Ageing Better in Birmingham Age of Experience Group
Nurturing young talent

Talent Match Birmingham & Solihull supports young people (aged 18-24) to find and sustain employment. Our service includes 1-2-1 coaching and mentoring, supported work placements, volunteering experience, job skills and ‘wrap-around’ support to overcome barriers to employment.

“It was extremely difficult to find any kind of job in the design field with little or no experience. I have begun an 18 month apprenticeship and an NVQ. The future looks promising. I’m working towards self-employment and improving as a graphic designer.”

Johl (pictured) chose Talent Match volunteering and is now able to work directly on his long-term career aspirations.

www.bvsc.org/talent-match
@talentmatch_ TalentMatchBirminghamAndSolihull

April

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Comprehensive support services

**BVSC provides a variety of free support services** to community groups, including:
- advice on recruiting and managing volunteers;
- self-help business diagnostics via the Transform Portal;
- the BVSC4Community funding directory; and our free AskBVSC information helpline.
In addition to the Volunteer Centre in Digbeth, we broker volunteering opportunities through three local hubs in Northfield, Aston and Castle Vale. We also provide a range of competitively priced professional back office services, including payroll, accountancy and HR support.

www.bvsc.org/supporting-your-organisation

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Rewarding volunteering

Volunteers’ Week – which takes place every year from 1 to 7 June – celebrates the contribution of millions of volunteers across the UK. Join Volunteer Centre Birmingham in a number of events and activities to celebrate the wonderful work of volunteers in Birmingham, and the positive difference they make to our local communities.

www.bvsc.org/volunteering  @volcentrebrum

“It is lovely for the volunteers to be recognised and hopefully it will inspire them and others to do more volunteering, knowing it is appreciated. It is always good to see good work being appreciated.”

Laura Rollason (centre), Community Fundraiser at Edwards Trust, nominated her volunteer who won Fundraising Volunteer of the Year in our annual Volunteering Awards.

June

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Better services for those most in need

**Birmingham Changing Futures Together** is a cross-sector partnership enabling people with complex and multiple needs to achieve their aspirations and more easily navigate local services. A growing number of voluntary and public sector agencies are committing to work together seamlessly to ensure there is ‘no wrong door’ for those in need. Expert service users have helped shape the programme and continue to be actively involved in its governance and delivery.

www.bvsc.org/bcft

“**It was a great day when BVSC visited, offering an opportunity to be part of something big happening in Birmingham. I was encouraged to find out more and two years later we’re developing a system which is revolutionising service engagement.**”

Barry Lawes, Involvement and Communication Worker

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Getting business involved

**Team Challenge Birmingham** helps teams of business volunteers to take part in activities which support local communities. It’s a fantastic way for private sector employees to really make a difference – by stepping out of the office and giving some of their time to a good cause, employees build their skills and a sense of achievement. It’s fun and it’s fully managed and supported too. In addition, SkillsXchange (which matches private sector employees’ expertise to local charities) and ResourceXchange (which matches spare equipment to community groups) provide other easy ways for businesses and voluntary organisations to work together.

www.bvsc.org/businessinvolvement

100% of volunteers who joined our Team Challenge programme said they’d consider doing it again and would recommend it to a colleague. Every one of them felt they had made a difference to the host voluntary organisation.
Bringing people together

BVSC Conferences provides modern meeting facilities in the heart of Birmingham. As a social enterprise we offer excellent value for money. All our profits are reinvested into our facilities and BVSC’s core work in supporting Birmingham’s voluntary sector.

www.conferencesbvsc.org  @conferencesbvsc  conferences at bvsc

1,054 meetings took place in our conference centre last year and we welcomed 19,500 delegates.

September

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Getting people involved

For BVSC, the contribution of those with lived experience is vital. Meaningful user involvement in our work ensures that our services are what recipients want and need. Through our Talent Match Young Ambassadors, Changing Futures Together Experts by Experience, Ageing Better Age of Experience Group – and BVSC’s voluntary sector-led board of trustees – local people steer the design and delivery of major cross-sector initiatives and help achieve real results for real people.

www.bvsc.org/projects

“My role as Youth Ambassador for Talent Match has enabled me to increase my confidence and self-esteem and has strengthened my skills in being prepared to move forward into future employment.”

Uzma Bi, Talent Match Ambassador (pictured second from right)

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Encouraging good governance

**Trustees play an essential role** in the local community; their good leadership allows charities and community groups to flourish. Trustees’ Week takes place during the first week in November. If you are a new trustee, thinking about becoming a trustee or are an organisation looking for trustees, contact us to find out what is happening during Trustees’ Week and how we can support you.

“I found it extremely beneficial that a realistic outlook was given by in-depth experiences. Brilliant trainer with excellent communication skills, learnt lots from this session and look forward to attending financial sessions next.”

A participant in one of our trustee events in 2015

www.bvsc.org/volunteering  @VolCentreBrum

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Get connected
Register with our Third Sector Directory and be part of the conversation. Not only will you increase your visibility within the sector, you’ll be able to connect to others – in the voluntary, public and private sectors – and have access to BVSC’s full suite of supportive resources which can help your organisation to thrive.

Register now – it’s free!

Organisations registered on our Third Sector Directory

Total 917 (December 2015)

www.bvsc.org/directory

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BH Bank Holidays
1 January New Year’s Day
25 March Good Friday
28 March Easter Monday
2 May Bank Holiday
30 May Bank Holiday
29 August Bank Holiday
26 December Boxing Day
27 December Christmas Day Holiday

❖ Buddhist
15 February Parinirvana
The Buddha’s death, celebrated because he attained total Enlightenment, or Nirvana.
15 May Vaishaka Puja/Wesak
A celebration of the Buddha’s birthday, celebrated with much colour. In some countries there are special Wesak lanterns made, and caged birds are released.
19 July Asalha/ Dharma Day
The beginning of the Buddha’s teaching, celebrated with readings of scriptures.
8 December Bodhi Day
A day when some Buddhists celebrate Gautama reaching enlightenment under the Bodhi tree.

❖ Hindu
15 January Makar Sankranti
This winter festival celebrates the Sun-God’s entry into the Northern Hemisphere.
7 March Maha Shivarati
Devotion and thanks are shown to Lord Shiva, who danced his cosmic dance this night. Many Hindus fast.
23-24 March Holi
Holi is a festival that welcomes the spring, which also celebrates Krishna, and the legend of Holika and Prahalad. Bonfires are lit to celebrate.
8 April Varsha-Pratipada
The Hindu Spring New Year – a good day to start new ventures. It symbolises renewal.
15 April Rama Navami
The birthday of Rama, an incarnation of Vishnu and the hero of the Ramayana.
18 August Raksha Bandan
“Raksha Bandan” means “a thread for protection”. Sisters tie a thread bracelet around their brothers’ wrists, and receive gifts in return.
25 August Janamashtami/Krishna Jayanti
The birthday of Krishna. Many Hindus forego sleep for the 48 hours, and some fast.
1-10 October Navaratri/Durga Puja/Dusserah
Navaratri (nine nights) is a festival in which God is adored as Mother.

❖ Christian
6 January Epiphany
Epiphany remembers the wise men visiting Jesus.
10 February - 24 March Lent
The season of preparation before Easter, in which Christians often surrender a particular vice – such as chocolate or smoking. The sacrifice represents Jesus’ deprivation in the wilderness.
20 March Palm Sunday
The last Sunday of Lent marks Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem, where the people waved Palm branches at him.
25 March Good Friday
A day to commemorate the execution of Jesus on the cross.
27 March Easter Sunday
Celebration of the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. The most important Christian festival and the one celebrated with most joy.
15 May Pentecost
The festival where Christians celebrate the gift of the Holy Spirit, 50 days after Easter. Regarded as the birthday of the Christian church.
1 November All Saints Day
A day to honour all saints and martyrs of the church.
25 December Christmas Day
The day celebrating the birth of Jesus.

❖ International days
8 February Vietnamese/Chinese New Year
1 March St. David’s Day (Wales)
17 March St. Patrick’s Day (Ireland)
26 March Bangladesh Independence Day
23 April St. George’s Day (England)
14 July Bastille Day
14 August Pakistan Independence Day
15 August Indian Independence Day
30 November St. Andrew’s Day (Scotland)

❖ Jewish
23 March Purim
Commemorates the time when Persian Jews were saved from extermination by a woman called Esther.
22-30 April Passover (Pesach)
A festival celebrating the Israelites’ exodus from Egypt, led by Moses, and a general celebration of freedom.
11-13 June Shavuot
Marks the time when the Jews received the Torah. Prayers are said, especially at dawn, to thank God for the five books of Moses.
13 August Tisha B’Av
A fast day commemorating several calamities that have occurred on this same day in the Jewish calendar. Known as “the saddest day in Jewish history”.
2-4 October Rosh Hashana
Jewish New Year, commemorating the creation of the world.
11 October  Yom Kippur
The Day of Atonement, when God decides how the next year will be for each person. Those who have repented for their sins will be granted a happy New Year.

16-23 October  Sukkot
Sukkot celebrates the Jews’ years in the desert on the way to the Promised Land, and is celebrated by building huts.

23 October  Shemini Atzeret
Shemini Atzeret is the final day of festivities at the end of Sukkot.

24 October  Simchat Torah
Meaning “Rejoicing in the Torah”, this day marks the end of the yearly cycle of weekly Torah readings.

24 December - 1 January  Hanukkah
The Jewish Festival of Lights, celebrated for eight days. It commemorates the Jews’ struggle for religious freedom. During Hanukkah, Jews light one more candle each night.

Muslim

4 May  Lailat-Al-Miraj
The night journey and ascent of the Prophet Muhammad, celebrated by the telling of the story of how he was visited by two archangels.

21 May  Lailat-Al-Bara’ah
‘The Night of Freedom from Fire’, in which Muslims are graced with divine mercy and blessings.

7 June - 7 July  Ramadan
A month of dusk to dawn fasting, in which the gates of heaven are open and the gates of hell are closed.

1 July  Lailat-Ul-Qadr
The Night of Power, when the Qur’an was first revealed to the Prophet Muhammad. Muslims spend this time in study and prayer.

7 July  Eid-Ul-Fitr
Muslims celebrate the end of fasting for Ramadan, with processions through the street and a celebratory daytime meal – their first for a month.

11-14 September  Eid-Ul-Adha
A major festival marking the end of Hajj, it remembers the Prophet Ibrahim’s willingness to sacrifice his son to Allah. Most Muslims will abstain from work.

2 October  Al-Hijra/ Islamic New Year
The new year, which marks the Prophet Muhammad’s migration from Mecca to Medina where he set up the first Muslim state.

11 October  Ashura
A day of fasting marking the day Noah left the ark and Moses was saved by the Egyptians. For some, it is also a day of mourning.

Pagan

2 February  Imbolc
Celebrates the land’s awakening and the growing power of the sun.

20 March  Spring Equinox
Celebrates the renewed life of the Earth.

1 May  Beltane
A fire festival, celebrates the coming of summer with maypole dances.

21 June  Summer Solstice (longest day)
A time to celebrate growth and life but recognise the oncoming decline of the sun.

1 August  Lughnasadh-Lammas
The beginning of the harvest season.

22 September  Autumnal Equinox
A time to reflect on the past season.

31 October  Samhain/Halloween
The Feast of the Dead. A time to remember and honour the dead.

21 December  Winter Solstice
Yule, when the sun child is reborn.

Sikh

16 January  Birthday of Guru Gobind Singh
The tenth and last Guru, who created the order of Khalsa and instituted the Five ‘Ks’.

13 April  Baisakhi
The Sikh New Year Festival, which also commemorates Sikhism being born as a collective faith in 1699.

16 June  Martyrdom of Guru Arjan Dev
Guru Arjan compiled the Sikh scriptures for the first time, and on this day was executed.

30 October  Diwali
A Sikh festival as well as Hindu. Sikhs celebrate the release from prison of Guru Hargobind Singh during this time.

24 November  Martyrdom of Guru Tegh Bahadu
A champion of religious freedom, executed for refusing to convert to Islam.

Rastafarian

7 January  Ethiopian Christmas
A celebration of Jesus, marked by a large feast.

23 July  Birthday of Emperor Selassie
A celebration of the birth of Emperor Haile Selassie I, who Rastafarians recognise as Messiah and God, with music, song and prayer.

11 September  Ethiopian New Year
Celebrated as Rastafarians believe Ethiopia to be their spiritual homeland. Its history is remembered through biblical passages.

Secular

14 February  Valentine’s Day
Based on legends of Saint Valentine, who performed secret marriages while they were banned by Emperor Claudius II. Another legend tells of an imprisoned Valentine signing secret letters to the jailer’s daughter as ‘your Valentine’.

6 March  Mothering Sunday
A traditional time for children to celebrate and thank their mothers, giving them cards, gifts and flowers.

27 March  Clocks go forward.

19 June  Father’s Day
A more recent parallel to Mother’s day for fathers, established in the early 20th Century by a daughter who wanted to express her appreciation for her single father.

30 October  Clocks go back.
Our vision, mission and values

BVSC’s vision is that every Birmingham resident benefits from and has the opportunity to contribute to an inclusive, empowering and prosperous city that supports their wellbeing.

BVSC’s mission is to support local people and organisations to unlock the power of voluntary action to deliver sustained benefits for Birmingham’s diverse communities.

BVSC’s believes in:

- The people of Birmingham
- An independent, effective and sustainable voluntary sector
- Voluntary action as a contributor to positive social change
- Equality and social justice
- Tackling discrimination and poverty at their roots
- The diverse voices of people and communities
- Effective collaboration and partnership working
- Challenge, risk-taking and innovation whilst supporting ‘what works’
- Working towards providing ethical and environmentally supportive services.

Our board of management members

Mohammed Al-Rahim (Freshwinds) – Vice Chair
Beryl Brown – Treasurer
Makhdoom Chishti (SUFI Trust)
Gina Ciotaki
Cllr John Cotton (Birmingham City Council, resigned 29 June 2015)
Jonathan Driffill (Friendship Care and Housing) – Chair
Guy Hordern (Birmingham City Council)
Ricky Joseph (Birmingham University)
Ian Markey (Nurses Association of Jamaica)
Lisa Martinali (Castle Vale Community Housing Association)
Cllr James McKay (joined on 29/6/2015)
Peter Rookes (Birmingham Council of Faiths)
Amrick Singh Ubhi (Nishkam Centre)
Des Workman (Home From Hospital)

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138 Digbeth, Birmingham B5 6DR | 0121 643 4343 | admin@bvsc.org

www.bvsc.org   @BVSC

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