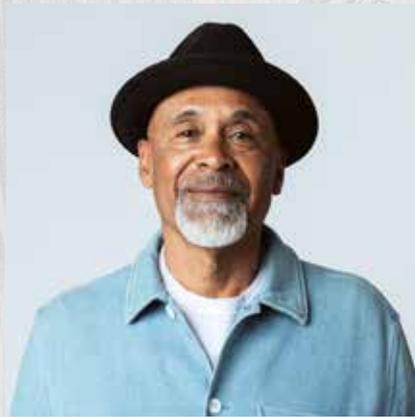




# Trustees are #NeverMoreNeeded

Now is the time to join Voscur's board

**Voscur**



# What is Voscur?

Voscur is the support and development agency for Bristol's Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. By supporting and developing organisations, we help them deliver much needed and impactful frontline services that strengthen and empower local citizens and communities. Increasingly, our work includes close partnership and collaboration with a range of funders, commissioners and social investors where we aim to build trusting relationships that result in greater investment in the VCSE sector in Bristol.

A dynamic and future focussed 'council for voluntary service' (CVS) we:

- ☑ provide strategic and collaborative leadership on behalf of the VCSE in Bristol based on positive dialogue, equality, respect and distributed power;
- ☑ foster the development of trusting relationships between organisations and across sectors and boundaries to achieve shared goals;
- ☑ broker (organise and negotiate) in the interests of members and the wider sector;
- ☑ target our resources to specific geographical areas and/or communities and universally across the sector in line with our strategic objectives and those for the City;
- ☑ advocate on behalf of our members and the wider sector to help reduce and, ultimately, eradicate social and economic inequality;
- ☑ represent the view of the VCSE to public bodies and policymakers to help them make informed decisions, design effective services;
- ☑ increase the engagement and participation of all equalities groups in our work and in civil society generally.

## Voscur in numbers

- ☐ First established in 1996 (unincorporated)
- ☐ Incorporated 1 February 2000
- ☐ Registered as a charity (1148403) August 2012 and company limited by guarantee (3918210)
- ☐ Members: As at 31 March 2020, our membership comprised 532 members, including 148 groups with an income of less than £10,000 per annum that were supported through free membership.
- ☐ 8 Trustees, including a Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer
- ☐ 6 Board meetings per year; 4 Resource Sub-committees per year
- ☐ 16 employees (equivalent to 12 full-time)
- ☐ £594,153 turnover in 2019-20 from a wide range of sources

# What makes a Voscur Trustee?

- ✓ Have you been searching for an opportunity to share and develop your skills, experience, knowledge and connections?
- ✓ Do you want to help shape services that support and develop voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations?
- ✓ Can you give a little of your time to help us create a resilient and sustainable third sector that empowers citizens and communities?

We're looking for skilled and enthusiastic people, from a range of backgrounds and communities, to join our Board of Trustees and help empower, support and develop local community groups, charities and social enterprises.

## Could you be one of our new Trustees?

As a Trustee you would work to ensure that the organisation adheres to its charitable objectives which are to:

- ✓ build the capacity of third sector organisations and support their work;
- ✓ facilitate partnership working between third sector, public and any other relevant bodies.

The Voscur Board is made up of organisational members (people involved in Bristol's VCSE organisations) and individual members.



## Our current recruitment priorities

At this AGM, we are seeking new organisational members to join a team drawn from our membership bringing varied skills and experience.

We are keen to increase diversity within the Voscur Board and applications are therefore strongly encouraged from Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (BAME) communities, people with disabilities, all genders and young people as these are currently under-represented.

We are particularly interested in enhancing these skills on our Board:

- ✓ Human resources
- ✓ Digital and innovation
- ✓ Financial planning/business development

# Some recent achievements

The last year has been remarkable and challenging for us, the VCSE sector and the communities we serve. Over the past few months, Bristol's VCSE sector has been at the heart of the city's response to COVID-19. We have all been hard at work seeking new, innovative ways to deliver services at neighbourhood and city level

and provide support, particularly to the most vulnerable. At the onset of the global pandemic and national 'lockdown' the staff team rose to the challenge of remote interaction, discovering new ways of working and building new partnerships. Some notable highlights are outlined below.

## Highlights from the last twelve months

- Hosting a range of online training and learning opportunities, supporting the sector to respond rapidly to COVID-19 related changes.
- Providing free learning events, job advertising and membership during lockdown.
- Hosting weekly virtual meetings for community groups, community hubs and infrastructure support organisations to facilitate the sharing of intelligence, offers, needs, plans and community information.
- Providing regular updates and creating a comprehensive directory of COVID-19 resources for individuals, organisations, volunteers and fundraisers.
- Supporting the recruitment of COVID-19 volunteers for 'Can Do Bristol' as well creating video briefings giving advice and guidance on safeguarding vulnerable adults and to keep volunteers safe.
- Working with community hubs and specialist organisations, to provide a triage system through the Incident Control Centre (ICC) to support people following hospital discharge and to reduce/prevent hospital admission.
- Securing £200,000 of grant funding from the Sport England Tackling Inequalities Fund to help organisations deliver physical activity programmes to a wider range of people and communities.
- Securing £3m of investment in Bristol's social economy as part of a collaboration with Bristol & Bath Regional Capital, Black South West Network and School for Social Entrepreneurs.



# Our future plans and priorities

## Sustainability and resilience

As a result of Covid19, the future is now very different. Whilst we remain actively involved in supporting the sector to prepare for the winter and beyond, we are also passionate about supporting the sector to reimagine it's future and be in the best possible position to survive the impact of the global pandemic.

Pre Covid19, the VCSE sector was already dealing with a challenging economic climate. One of the ways in which Voscur has worked to increase sustainability and resilience in the sector is by supporting organisations to diversify their income through, for example, enterprise and trading. As part of this, we have also worked to build knowledge and confidence around social investment and continued to deliver our Kick Start course, to help new social entrepreneurs broaden their knowledge and gain the necessary skills to take their enterprise forward. Through this work, and our continued involvement in initiatives such as Bristol City Funds, we are well placed to continue driving the sector towards greater sustainability. Mindful of the urgent need to help the sector recover from the impact of Covid19, we are also working closely with Bristol City Council, Quartet Community Foundation, Locality and Black South West Network on the development of a new strategy for the sector, which will be launched in 2021.

## Voscur and the Care Forum

Earlier this year, we were invited by The Care Forum to begin initial (informal) discussions to explore the feasibility of a merger between our two organisations. Both Boards have recently made an 'in principle' decision to move to formal discussions, and to enter into due diligence processes. Both organisations have strong track records in our sector, and our respective Boards are particularly interested in the even greater benefits for our members, service users, customers and staff that could be delivered by creating a larger, stronger organisation. Currently, we are still within the exploration and due diligence phase with the expectation that both Boards will discuss and agree whether to proceed to merger in December 2020.



# The role of Trustees

Members of the Board of Trustees bring their skills and experience so we can develop as a strong organisation that takes care of its resources and people and has high impact. Our Trustees:

- Ensure we deliver our charitable objectives.
- Participate in Board/subcommittee meetings, general meetings, conferences/events and development sessions.
- Set Voscur's budget, receive and approve regular financial reports, and ensure good financial practices.
- Set overall strategic direction.
- Ensure compliance with all employer's responsibilities.
- Review and approve our legal and financial policies and act on new legislation.
- Get involved with and/or provide leadership on specific developments and initiatives.
- Provide guidance on new initiatives and issues affecting the sector.

Voscur's Trustees:

- Have strategic vision and thinking.
- Demonstrate commitment.
- Are willing to devote time and effort.
- Act as an effective advocate.
- Offer sound, independent opinions and provide good judgement.
- Think creatively and inclusively.
- Speak their mind and provide constructive input.
- Understand and accept the legal duties, responsibilities and liabilities of Trusteeship.
- Work effectively as a team.
- Adhere to Nolan Principles (the basis of the expected ethical standards) of selflessness, integrity, objectivity, accountability, openness, honesty and leadership.

If you are interested in joining but don't feel you have all the skills and experience, please contact Katharine Gonzales via [katharine@voscur.org](mailto:katharine@voscur.org) who will put you in touch with either our Chair or CEO, both of whom will be pleased to provide further information to help you decide.

# What will you give and gain?

Our current Trustees' and CEO's words illustrate the difference that Voscur's Trustees make.

"Being a Trustee at Voscur has given me a fantastic insight into the wider VCSE sector and the workings of the city. I have learnt a huge amount, much of which I have been able to use within my own organisation. It has been invaluable to my professional development. I'd really encourage you to apply if you're interested in getting involved."

"I became a Trustee as a passionate advocate for the voluntary sector, with the aim to support Voscur in the changing future landscape for the VCSE and maintain and develop their vital infrastructure role."

"Working with other Trustees from very different backgrounds is really interesting and I am constantly learning from my colleagues."

"Our Trustees are a very generous and committed team. They contribute knowledge from a range of perspectives such as large and small organisations, charities, community groups and social enterprises. Their knowledge, expertise and ability to help grow connections across the sector really complements the operational work of the staff team. They are a highly valued and essential part of the 'jigsaw' that helps us deliver impact year after year. Together we make brilliant things happen and we also have some fun along the way!"

*Sandra Meadows, Voscur CEO*



# How to become a Voscur Trustee

It's easy to nominate yourself to become a new Trustee:

- ❑ Have an informal discussion with our Chair, Lin Whitfield or CEO, Sandra Meadows. Contact Katharine Gonzales to arrange this first step: [katharine@voscur.org](mailto:katharine@voscur.org) or 0117 909 9949.
- ❑ Complete and return the nomination form and your CV to [katharine@voscur.org](mailto:katharine@voscur.org) by 18th November 2020.
- ❑ Attend the AGM on 26th November 2020. Book your place online at [tinyurl.com/y3pq33ue](https://tinyurl.com/y3pq33ue)
  - » Induction of new Trustees will take place after the AGM.
  - » Training and guidance will also be available for new Trustees.

Nominations are included in the papers for the AGM (26th November 2020) and Members are asked to vote to confirm new Trustees. Should the number of nominations exceed the number of Trustees required, additional information about an election process will be provided.

We very much hope you will consider applying to join the Voscur Board as we work to support and guide the sector towards a brighter, reimagined future.

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