

Connecting Communities. Creating Impact.



A REFLECTION FROM OUR CHAIRPERSON

BILL MUIR



Third Sector Interface

As Chair of Voluntary Action Angus, I am proud to reflect on a year of significant growth, innovation, and strategic progress for both our organisation and the wider third sector across Angus. Throughout 2025/26, VAA has continued to strengthen its position as a trusted and ambitious Third Sector Interface, responding proactively to emerging challenges while remaining firmly committed to supporting resilient, connected, and empowered communities across Angus.

This year has once again demonstrated the dedication, professionalism, and adaptability of our staff team, volunteers, and trustees. Across every area of the organisation, there has been a clear focus on continuous improvement, partnership working, and ensuring that communities remain at the heart of everything we do.

VAA has continued to deliver a diverse and impactful programme of work spanning volunteering, youth work, employability, community development, governance support, health and wellbeing, and strategic partnership engagement. Alongside this operational delivery, the organisation has continued to play a leading role within strategic planning structures across Angus, ensuring the voice of the third sector is represented within key local developments and decision-making forums.

One of the most significant areas of progress this year has been the continued development of the Angus Community Connector platform. Since its launch, the platform has continued to grow steadily and now hosts over 380 live listings, with increasing engagement from both residents and organisations across Angus and beyond. User numbers, app downloads, and overall platform visibility have all increased significantly, demonstrating the growing importance of accessible digital community infrastructure. New functionality, including enhanced search features, push notifications, image uploads, and themed information pages, has further strengthened the platform as a key tool for community connection and support.

Supporting volunteering and community participation has remained central to our work throughout the year. The ongoing development of the Angus Volunteer Strategy has been a major piece of collaborative work, with over 238 survey responses received from volunteers, organisations, and residents across Angus. This strong level of engagement reflects both the importance of volunteering within our communities and the appetite to shape the future of volunteering locally.

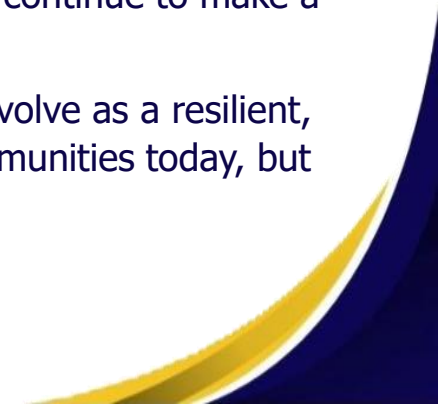
Internally, significant work has taken place to strengthen organisational systems, reporting structures, staff development, and resource planning. Considerable investment has been made in training, governance development, and workforce support to ensure the organisation remains resilient and well-positioned for the future.

This year has also seen increased focus on visibility, collaboration, and community engagement. Through networking events, awareness campaigns, consultation activity, and initiatives such as the Dundee Kiltwalk, VAA has continued to raise the profile of both the organisation and the wider third sector across Angus.

Alongside programme delivery, VAA has continued to invest in the long-term sustainability and development of The Cross as a vibrant Third Sector centre. New tenant organisations have joined the building, consultation work is underway to shape its future use.

I would like to extend my sincere thanks to our dedicated staff team, volunteers, trustees, funders, partners, and supporters. The passion, creativity, and commitment shown across the organisation each day continue to make a meaningful difference to communities throughout Angus.

As Chair, I remain incredibly confident in the direction of the organisation. VAA continues to evolve as a resilient, forward-thinking, and trusted organisation — one that not only responds to the needs of communities today, but actively helps shape a stronger, fairer, and more connected future for Angus.



A YEAR IN REVIEW FROM OUR **CHIEF EXECUTIVE OFFICER**

Hayley Mearns



Connecting Communities. Creating Impact.

This year has been one of collaboration, innovation and continued growth for Voluntary Action Angus. Leading this organisation remains an immense privilege, and I continue to be inspired by the dedication, passion and professionalism of our staff, trustees, volunteers and the many organisations we work alongside every day. Their commitment enables VAA to remain a trusted, responsive and forward-thinking organisation at the heart of communities across Angus.

The environment in which the Third Sector operates continues to evolve. Organisations are navigating increasing demand, financial pressures and growing complexity, while communities continue to face significant challenges. Despite this, I have once again been struck by the resilience of the sector and the willingness of organisations to work together, share expertise and find innovative solutions that improve lives.

Our theme this year, Connecting Communities. Creating Impact., reflects the role that Voluntary Action Angus plays every day. Whether connecting volunteers with opportunities, organisations with funding and support, communities with services through the Angus Community Connector, or ensuring the Third Sector has a strong voice within strategic partnerships, our focus has remained the same: bringing people together to achieve more than any of us could alone.

Throughout the year, we have continued to strengthen our strategic influence while delivering practical support where it matters most. From leading collaborative programmes such as Angus Synergy Spark, progressing the Angus Volunteer Strategy and supporting the ongoing Day Care review, to investing in digital innovation, community-led funding and organisational development, we have continued to demonstrate the unique contribution the Third Sector makes to the wellbeing and resilience of Angus.

One of the things I am most proud of is the way our organisation continues to grow. We are not simply responding to challenges; we are helping shape the future. Through stronger partnerships, greater collaboration and an unwavering commitment to prevention, inclusion and community empowerment, VAA is increasingly recognised as a trusted leader and facilitator across Angus.

As we look ahead, our focus for 2026/27 is **Consolidate & Influence**. The coming year is not about doing more - it is about building on the strong foundations we have created, refining what we do best and using our experience, relationships and expertise to influence positive change. Alongside the launch of our new Strategic Plan, the upcoming draft Angus Volunteer Strategy and plans for a Changing Places Toilet at The Cross, we remain committed to demonstrating the uniquely valuable contribution of both Voluntary Action Angus and the wider Third Sector.

Finally, I would like to thank everyone who has been part of our journey this year. To our staff, trustees, volunteers, partners, funders and the incredible organisations working across Angus—thank you. The achievements within this report belong to all of us, and I am excited to continue working together as we connect communities, create impact and shape an even stronger future for Angus.



ABOUT VAA

WHAT IS A THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE?



Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) are funded by the Scottish Government to strengthen, support and develop the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector within each local authority area. Every local authority in Scotland has a designated TSI, providing a single point of contact for charities, voluntary organisations, community groups, volunteers, social enterprises and public sector partners.

TSIs play a vital role in building strong, resilient communities by supporting organisations to thrive, promoting and developing volunteering, strengthening governance and organisational capacity, supporting social enterprise and ensuring the voice of the third sector is represented within local and national planning and decision-making.

Working collaboratively with communities and partners, TSIs help identify local needs, build community capacity, encourage partnership working, attract investment and influence policy to improve outcomes for people and places. Through this work, they help create a stronger, more connected and sustainable third sector that contributes to tackling inequality, improving health and wellbeing, and empowering communities across Scotland.

While every TSI shares the same core purpose and responsibilities, each organisation responds to the unique needs and priorities of its local area. This means the services, programmes and initiatives delivered by individual TSIs vary across Scotland, reflecting the communities they serve.

ABOUT VAA

WHO IS YOUR THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE?



Voluntary Action Angus (VAA) is the Third Sector Interface for Angus and the recognised organisation responsible for supporting, developing and representing the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector across the county.

Our vision is for resilient and empowered communities creating a stronger, fairer Angus, and everything we do is driven by our commitment to helping people and communities reach their full potential.

At VAA, we support hundreds of charities, voluntary organisations, community groups and social enterprises through expert advice, organisational development, governance support, volunteering, funding guidance, training and networking opportunities. Alongside this, we work strategically with local and national partners to ensure the experiences, knowledge and expertise of the third sector help shape public policy, influence decision-making and improve services across Angus.

ABOUT VAA

WHO IS YOUR THIRD SECTOR INTERFACE?

Our work extends far beyond delivering projects. We bring organisations together, develop partnerships, identify emerging community needs, secure investment, champion volunteering, strengthen community capacity and create opportunities for collaboration that enable communities to thrive.

The following pages highlight just some of the achievements, partnerships and impact delivered by Voluntary Action Angus throughout the past year. They demonstrate not only the breadth of our work but also the difference that can be achieved when communities, the third sector and public sector partners work together towards a shared vision for Angus.

At the heart of everything we do is a simple belief: strong communities are built through collaboration. By connecting people, organisations and partners, we help create the conditions for a vibrant, resilient and sustainable third sector that delivers lasting benefits for everyone in Angus.



OUR PURPOSE

VISION & IMPACT

Building a fairer Angus

We aim to build resilient and empowered communities creating a stronger, fairer Angus. We are committed to tackling poverty and health inequalities to enable the people of Angus to flourish.



MEET THE VOLUNTARY ACTION ANGUS TEAM



Hayley Mearns
Chief Executive Officer



Ruth Ramsay
Deputy Chief Executive



Lenny Gunning
Third Sector Community
Development Manager



Natalie Ross
TSI Project Manager/
Social Enterprise Officer



Katrina Taylor
Business Support
Officer



Hayley McNally
Marketing Officer



Callum Troup
Locality Worker for
Brechin & Montrose



Theresa Hill
Locality Worker for
Forfar & Kirriemuir



Brogan Craik
Locality Worker
for Arbroath



Lucie Bennet
Youth Development
Coordinator



Adhamh Anderson
Youth Development
Worker



Hayley Duggan
Breast Buddies
Coordinator

MEET THE VOLUNTARY ACTION ANGUS TEAM



Michelle McVeigh
Intergenerational
Befriending Coordinator



April Glennie
Telephone Befriending
Coordinator



Barbara Pirie
Improving the Cancer
Journey Link Worker



Vanessa Smith
Link Worker for
Monifieth



Liam McDonald
Link Worker for
Arbroath



Cara Mckellar
Link Worker for
Montrose



Scott Duncan
Link Worker
for Arbroath



Lesley Preston
Link Worker
for Forfar



Katie Reid
Link Worker
for Kirriemuir



Clive Goldstraw
Link Worker
for Carnoustie



Catriona
Matthews
Link worker
for Brechin & Edzell



Cami Rose Alexander
Friday Nite Project
Worker



Sandra Wallace
Friday Nite Project
Coordinator

THIRD SECTOR AND COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

Manager Overview

As Third Sector and Community Development Manager, my role continues to be both varied and rewarding. Supporting a diverse team of staff, including our Locality Development Workers, Youth Development Workers, Befriending Co-ordinators and Breast Buddies Co-ordinator, brings a unique combination of challenges and opportunities.

This year has been one of significant development and growth within the team. We have welcomed new members of staff who have brought fresh perspectives, skills and enthusiasm, while also embracing new ways of working that have strengthened our ability to respond to the needs of the third sector and local communities.

Alongside our core areas of work, we have sought to introduce innovative approaches to community engagement. One particularly successful initiative was the launch of the Feel-Good Fund, which invited grassroots organisations to The Cross to pitch their project ideas for a small grant. By removing lengthy application forms, we created a more accessible and inclusive process that enabled organisations to share their ideas in a relaxed and supportive environment. The initiative not only simplified access to funding but also provided valuable opportunities for face-to-face conversations, helping VAA build stronger relationships with local groups and gain a deeper understanding of the incredible work taking place within our communities.

As with many areas of the Third Sector, this year has also brought significant challenges. Organisations have faced increasing pressures around funding, sustainability and governance requirements. To ensure that VAA could continue to provide effective and relevant support, our team undertook a range of specialised training and development opportunities. This has strengthened our knowledge and expertise, enabling us to better assist organisations in navigating challenges, building resilience and continuing to support their local communities.

As we look ahead, we remain committed to working collaboratively with partners, communities and organisations to create opportunities and support positive outcomes for the people of Angus.

LOCALITY TEAM

LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Locality Development Workers are at the heart of community development across Angus, providing practical support to voluntary organisations, volunteers, community groups and partners every day.

Whether supporting organisations to grow, developing volunteering opportunities, making referrals or strengthening local partnerships, the team helps connect organisations, services and communities.

The statistics to the right provide a snapshot of the breadth and scale of this work during 2025/26, highlighting the extensive support delivered to communities across Angus.

ANGUS LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

STATS AT A GLANCE



TOTALS FOR ANGUS		ANNUAL TOTAL
	New Third Sector Organisation Support	188
	Existing Third Sector Organisation Support	365
	New Stakeholder/Statutory interactions	52
	Existing Stakeholder/Statutory interactions	70
	Volunteer opportunities	94
	Volunteer Support	544
	Community Engagement	1,175
	Events attended	29
	Third Sector Forums meetings attended/supported	8
	Youth Volunteer Referral to coordinator	39
	Youth Volunteer referral from coordinator	4
	Social Enterprise referral to officer	4
	Social Enterprise referral from officer	3
	Community Link Worker referral to team	30
	Community Link Worker referral from team	31
	Telephone Befriending referral to coordinator	5
	Telephone Befriending referral from coordinator	3
	Intergenerational Befriending referral to coordinator	1
	Intergenerational Befriending referral from coordinator	1
	Breast Buddies referral to Coordinator	1
	Breast Buddies referral from Coordinator	1
	Employability referral to coordinator	2
	Employability referral from coordinator	12
	Referral to external agency	11
	Referral received from external agency	39
	Drop-In events Facilitated	140
	Drop-In Events attended	183
	Volunteer Registrations	228
	Volunteer Matches	78



TOTAL IMPACT
ACROSS ANGUS



188
NEW THIRD SECTOR
ORGANISATION
SUPPORT



365
EXISTING THIRD
SECTOR ORGANISATION
SUPPORT



544
VOLUNTEER
SUPPORT



228
VOLUNTEER
REGISTRATIONS

LOCALITY TEAM

LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

Our Locality Development Workers continued to play a vital role in strengthening communities across Angus, providing practical support to voluntary organisations, third sector community groups, statutory partners and residents. Working within their local communities enables the team to identify emerging needs, build trusted relationships and create opportunities that improve outcomes for people across Angus. This year saw the team support a wide range of community development initiatives, partnership projects and organisational capacity-building activities.

In Arbroath, work included developing new workshops alongside Angus Council Vibrant Communities Team to support resettled families and ESOL learners, helping to establish new referral pathways between health services and community organisations, progressing the development of the Arbroath Timebank, and creating an emergency food referral pathway through Arbroath Fire Station.

The team also continued to play an active role in the Families First programme, contributing to strategic development through the project's steering group.

Across Brechin and Montrose, our Locality Development Worker strengthened community partnerships and supported local organisations to grow. This included delivering presentations and training to community groups, supporting volunteer development with Rossie's new Coorie House project, assisting Brechin Community Garden to secure funding and oversee pathway improvements, and bring organisations together to explore collaborative approaches to tackling food insecurity. Support was also provided to employability initiatives, including a successful parental employability event delivered in partnership with colleagues and local families.



LOCALITY TEAM

LOCALITY DEVELOPMENT WORKERS

In Forfar and Kirriemuir, support focused on strengthening local organisations and improving community connections. Practical assistance was provided to long-established community groups to help them navigate new PVG requirements, ensuring volunteers remained compliant and organisations could continue operating safely.

Partnership working also supported innovative projects tackling social isolation, including the Creative Ageing Residency with Luminate and HSCP, while regular attendance at school Learning Cafés helped strengthen links between local services and families.

The team continued to create opportunities for organisations to collaborate and learn from one another. Two "Getting to Know Your Neighbour" networking sessions were held at The Cross, bringing together organisations based within the building and local partners to strengthen relationships, improve understanding of each other's services and identify opportunities for joint working and referrals.



LOCALITY TEAM

BREAST BUDDIES ANGUS

Breast Buddies is a peer support service that provides encouragement, information and reassurance to families throughout their breastfeeding journey. Delivered by a dedicated team of trained volunteers and our Breast Buddies Co-ordinator, the service offers a welcoming, non-judgemental environment where parents can access practical support, build confidence and connect with others who have shared experiences.

By reducing isolation and promoting positive breastfeeding experiences, Breast Buddies plays an important role in improving the health and wellbeing of families across Angus.



Breast Buddies *Angus*

2025 REVIEW

Supporting breastfeeding mums and families across Angus through connection, community and care.



273

drop in groups
we hosted



1204

visits from
mums



194

new referrals from
healthcare professionals



1054

Members in
private Facebook
group and
1.4k followers



471

mothers
connecting in
10 local
WhatsApp chats



11

online
antenatal
classes with
48
pregnant mums



324

new referrals
from healthcare
professionals



10

new volunteers
trained



34

active
volunteers



*Stronger together,
supporting mums,
empowering families,
building community.*



Thank you to every volunteer, mum and supporter
who makes Breast Buddies Angus possible.

Voluntary Action  ANGUS

Third Sector Interface


Angus

BREAST BUDDIES ANGUS

CITIZEN OF THE YEAR RECOGNITION

We were delighted to see one of our own **Breast Buddies Angus** volunteers recognised with the prestigious **Citizen of the Year Award** during the year.

Dawn, who volunteers as a Breast Buddies Peer Supporter and leads the Carnoustie group, was honoured in recognition of her outstanding commitment to supporting local families throughout their breastfeeding journeys. Since completing her peer supporter training in 2021 and helping establish the Carnoustie group in 2022, Dawn has become a trusted source of encouragement and practical support for countless mothers, both through face-to-face sessions and the Breast Buddies WhatsApp support group.

The impact of Dawn's volunteering is evident in the feedback regularly received from families, with many mothers describing her as a reassuring presence and crediting her support with helping them continue their breastfeeding journey. Her compassionate approach has also been recognised within our peer supporter training, with conversations she has had with mothers being shared as examples of excellent peer support.

Alongside her volunteering with Breast Buddies, Dawn also gives her time to other community organisations, demonstrating the dedication and selflessness that the Citizen of the Year Award celebrates.

Everyone at Voluntary Action Angus is incredibly proud of Dawn's achievement. Her award is a fitting recognition of the difference volunteers make every day, and of the positive impact that peer support can have on the health and wellbeing of families across Angus.



LOCALITY TEAM

TELEPHONE & INTERGENERATIONAL BEFRIENDING SERVICES

COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS IN NUMBERS

TELEPHONE BEFRIENDING



New Volunteers
Registered

14

Befriendees
supported

47

New Befriendee
referrals

78

Referral
Agencies

68

INTERGENERATIONAL BEFRIENDING



No. of volunteers
supported

17



New volunteers
registered

11



SOCIAL CAFES ATTENDEES



Clyde Court
(Arbroath)



43

Kirkriggs
(Forfar)



20

Kirkton court
(Kirrie)



28

Our Befriending Services continue to make a real difference by bringing people together and reducing loneliness across Angus.

Whether through regular telephone conversations or by connecting different generations, our dedicated volunteers provide friendship, companionship and support that helps improve wellbeing, build confidence and strengthen community connections.

TELEPHONE & INTERGENERATIONAL BEFRIENDING SERVICES

VOLUNTEER STORY

Suzanne – Telephone Befriender

“ For the past four years, I've been volunteering as a Telephone Befriender. When I first started, I made a weekly phone call from my home in North Wales. After moving to Scotland in 2022, I continued volunteering and, as my friendship with Volunteer A grew, our weekly phone calls became regular coffee and cake dates.

I wanted to volunteer because I had some free time and hoped to meet new people. What I didn't expect was to gain such a genuine friendship.

We share stories about our lives and travels, laugh together and enjoy each other's company. Volunteering has been one of the best experiences I've ever had, and I'm so glad I took the plunge.

”

MAKING A REAL DIFFERENCE

This is just one example of how our Telephone Befriending Service brings people together, reduces loneliness and builds meaningful connections. For both volunteers and those they support, the benefits go far beyond a weekly phone call.

A friendly voice. A listening ear. A lasting impact.

THE IMPACT



4 YEARS
volunteering



1 LASTING
FRIENDSHIP



WEEKLY CALLS
BECAME
REGULAR VISITS



A FRIENDSHIP
SPANNING
TWO GENERATIONS

LOCALITY TEAM

TELEPHONE & INTERGENERATIONAL BEFRIENDING SERVICES

VAA proudly celebrated **Befriending Week 2025**, embracing the national theme of "**Collaboration and Partnerships – Uncovering the Power of Working Together.**" Throughout the week, we highlighted the importance of connection in tackling loneliness and showcased the strength of partnership working across Angus.

To mark the occasion, we hosted a Befriending Week Coffee Morning at The Cross, bringing together residents, volunteers and organisations to celebrate the positive impact of befriending. Representatives from a range of partner organisations attended, providing information about the support available across Angus and demonstrating the collaborative approach taken to reducing social isolation within our communities.

Intergenerational activities also formed an important part of the celebrations. Children from Little Leapers Nursery School visited residents at Clyde Court in Arbroath, where they spent time creating autumn-themed crafts, chatting and enjoying refreshments together.

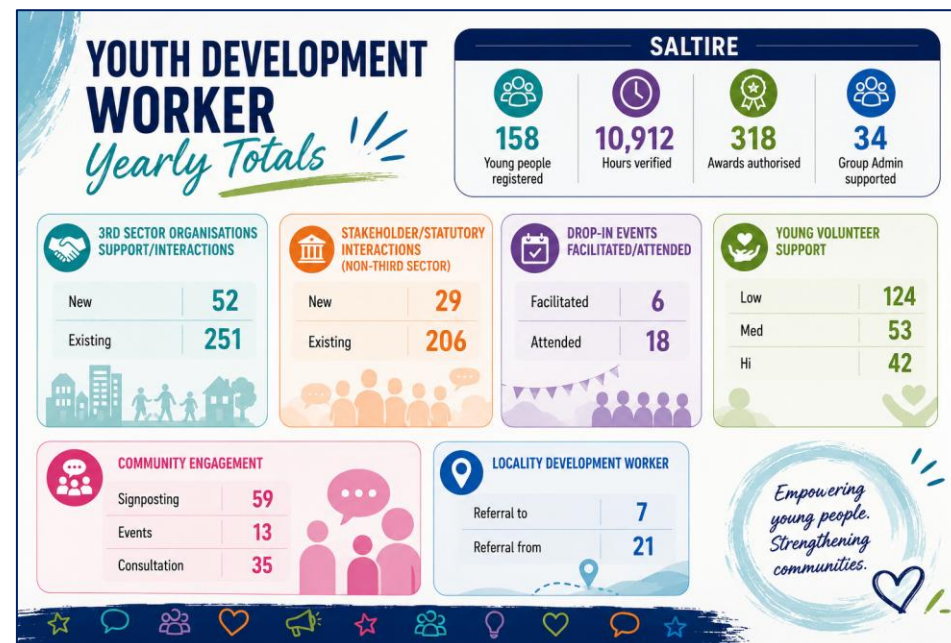
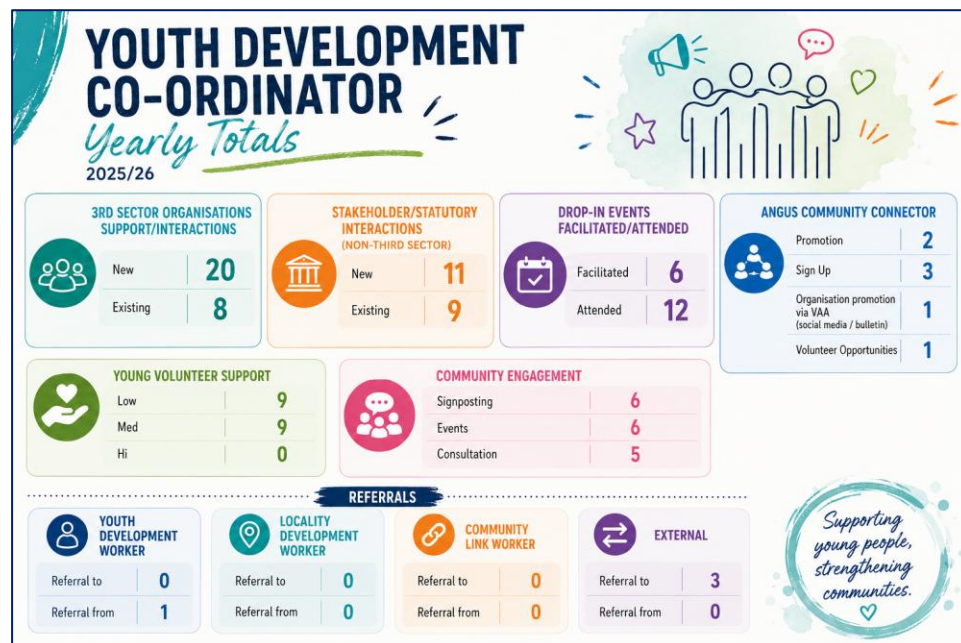
The event highlighted the positive impact that bringing generations together can have on wellbeing, fostering friendships, reducing loneliness and creating lasting community connections. VAA also supported a further intergenerational session later in the week, continuing to strengthen relationships between younger and older members of the community.



LOCALITY TEAM

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

The Youth Work Team continues to create opportunities for young people across Angus through volunteering, youth engagement and community partnerships. The figures below highlight the team's reach and impact during 2025/26.



Saltire Summit Award Celebration

During Volunteers' Week, Voluntary Action Angus hosted the **Saltire Summit Award Celebration** in Forfar, recognising young people who have made an exceptional contribution to volunteering across Angus.

The Saltire Summit Award is the highest level of recognition within the Saltire Awards programme, celebrating outstanding commitment, leadership and the positive impact young volunteers make within their communities.

This year:

- **17 young people** received Saltire Summit Awards.
- Awards were presented in front of family members, peers and partner organisations.
- Partner organisations shared inspiring examples of the difference each young person had made through their volunteering.

“Wonderful to see the young people receiving their awards. Youth Development Worker did a great job of celebrating them, he seemed to have a good rapport with them all.”

“It was a great event, pitched perfectly for young people, look forward to it developing.”



LOCALITY TEAM

YOUTH DEVELOPMENT WORK

- A key strength of the programme is its youth-led approach, with previous Summit Award recipients playing an active role in assessing nominations. This not only ensures the awards remain peer-led and credible but also provides continued leadership opportunities for former recipients.
- Recognition extended beyond the Summit Awards, with a 10-year-old volunteer also celebrated after completing more than 100 Parkrun volunteering sessions, highlighting the value of encouraging volunteering from an early age.
- The celebration helped raise the profile of youth volunteering across Angus, boosting confidence and self-esteem among young volunteers while inspiring others to become involved in making a difference within their communities.



“ I felt the event was really well organised and attended, thank you for providing a positive platform to recognise the contribution of our young people. ”

“ Seeing the joy on the volunteers faces when presented with their awards was priceless. ”

Friday Night Project

Voluntary Action Angus received part-funding from **Planet Youth**, alongside funding from **Police Scotland**, to deliver the Friday Night Project. Planet Youth is based on the internationally recognised Icelandic Prevention Model, which aims to improve the health and wellbeing of young people through evidence-based, community-led prevention.

In Angus, the model has been piloted in Forfar and Kirriemuir, with surveys undertaken every two years to gather the views and experiences of local young people. The findings help shape activities and services that respond directly to the needs of young people and strengthen the protective factors known to improve health, wellbeing and resilience.

The Friday Night Project provides a safe, welcoming and supervised environment where young people can spend time with friends, participate in sport and physical activity, or simply enjoy being together in a positive setting. By offering a free and accessible space on Friday evenings, the project provides an alternative to less positive activities while encouraging social connection, physical activity and healthy lifestyles.

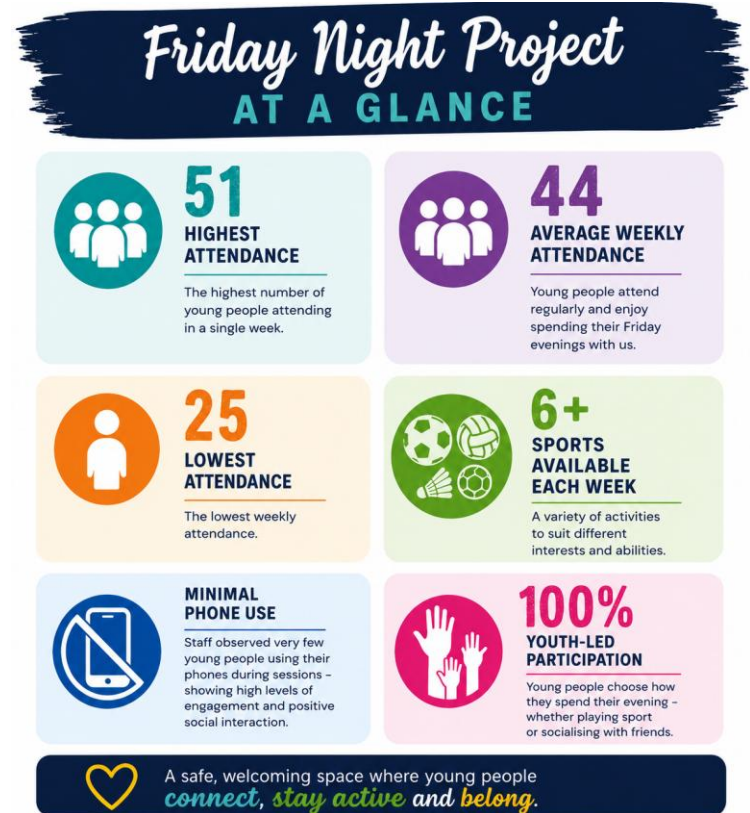
Feedback from young people highlights the value of simply having somewhere safe to go:

"I like coming here because I can see my friends."

"It's better than being outside in the cold."

"It's the only place I can play football indoors."

The feedback reinforces the importance of providing safe, welcoming spaces where young people can build friendships, stay active and enjoy positive experiences within their local community.



Looking back over the year, what strikes me most is just how varied the role has become. From governance and organisational development to social enterprise support, employability initiatives, training, event planning and community engagement, no two days have been the same, and that's exactly what I enjoy about it. Working alongside organisations at various stages; helping them develop ideas, overcome challenges and make connections, remains one of the most rewarding parts of the role.

A key area of development this year has been strengthening our focus on the role of the third sector within the employability landscape. Many community groups, grassroots projects and volunteer-led initiatives are helping people build confidence, develop routine, gain transferable skills and make valuable social connections. It has been rewarding to help raise awareness of this contribution and encourage wider partners to recognise the role these organisations play in supporting people long before they engage with formal employability services.

Another highlight has been developing the role into wider project management and partnership activity. Leading on initiatives such as Befriending Week, Trustee Essentials, Knowledge Bites, supporting the delivery of International Men's Day, and helping shape the Heart of the Community Awards has been both challenging and enjoyable.

Partnership working has remained at the heart of everything we do. Working closely with the Locality Development Workers has enabled us to provide a more joined-up, wraparound approach to support, combining our skills, experience and local knowledge to help organisations access to the people, opportunities and specialist support they need.

I'd also like to give a special mention to Barney, my four-year-old Labradoodle, who joined the team this year. He's become part of the VAA family and has embraced his unofficial role as resident therapist, providing a warm welcome and lots of smiles.

What stands out most when I reflect on the year is the commitment, energy and determination of the people behind community organisations across Angus. I've been lucky to work alongside fantastic colleagues, volunteers, trustees and community groups. There have been plenty of challenges, lots of learning and more than a few laughs along the way, and it's those relationships that make even the busiest days worthwhile.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE & TSI PROJECT

OVERALL STATISTICS

30+ 

organisations supported with governance, SCIO, CIC or social enterprise development



Angus Business Hub progressed from concept stage to becoming an established CIC.



Friockheim Playgroup progressed its SCIO development, with an OSCR-approved draft.

149 

nominations received for the Volunteer Awards 2026.

44 

contacts shared across 25 organisations following the Employability Networking Event.

11 

organisations adopted the Volunteer Journey tool.

40 

organisations and community projects supported.

37 

unique organisations evidenced through referral records.

18 

social enterprise start-ups and enterprise-focused projects supported.

20 

governance and constitutional interventions undertaken.

31 

organisations engaged through employability-focused activity.

28 

attendees at the Employability Networking Event.

34 

participants improved digital confidence and skills through Microsoft 365 training.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORK

Social Enterprise & Organisational Development

Supporting organisations to establish strong, sustainable foundations remained a key priority throughout 2025. During the year, VAA supported approximately **18 social enterprise start-ups**, developing organisations and enterprise-focused initiatives, providing tailored advice on governance, business planning, legal structures, sustainability and funding opportunities.

Where specialist expertise was required, organisations were connected with national partners, ensuring they could access the most appropriate support at every stage of their development.

Demand for support came from a broad range of organisations working across health and wellbeing, community development, sport, recreation, equality and inclusion, reflecting the growing diversity of Angus' third sector.

Several organisations reached significant milestones during the year, progressing through SCIO and CIC development, strengthening governance arrangements, undertaking constitutional reviews and developing plans to support their long-term sustainability.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORK



Organisational Support

Throughout the year, VAA provided direct support to approximately **40 organisations and community projects**, with **37 organisations** evidenced through referral and support records. Support ranged from initial enquiries and start-up advice to longer-term organisational development, helping groups build capacity, strengthen governance and plan for a sustainable future.

More than **30 organisations** received dedicated support relating to governance, legal structures, SCIO and CIC development, social enterprise growth and organisational sustainability, ensuring they were better equipped to meet both current and future challenges.

Strengthening Governance

Strong governance underpins resilient organisations, and this remained one of the most significant areas of our work throughout the year. Around **20 governance** and constitutional interventions were delivered, supporting organisations with constitution reviews and drafting, governance health checks, trustee recruitment, committee development, succession planning, legal structure advice and SCIO development.

Through this support, organisations strengthened their governance arrangements, improved organisational resilience and enhanced their ability to continue delivering valued services within their communities.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORK

Several key themes consistently emerged across the organisations we supported:

- Increasing demand for governance and trustee development.
- Growing interest in Community Interest Companies (CICs) and social enterprise models.
- Sustainability challenges affecting early years and childcare provision.
- Greater demand for employability collaboration and information sharing.
- Ongoing need for practical organisational development and capacity-building support.
- Continued demand for guidance on funding, governance and organisational change.

These emerging themes have helped shape VAA's priorities and reinforce the continuing need for dedicated organisational development, governance, employability and social enterprise support across Angus.

Supporting Early Years & Childcare

Supporting the sustainability of early years and childcare providers remained a significant area of activity throughout the year. Many organisations faced common challenges relating to governance, committee recruitment, trustee capacity, organisational structures and long-term sustainability.

VAA provided tailored support including governance reviews, constitutional advice, committee development, sustainability planning, partnership working and referrals to specialist organisations where additional expertise was required. By working alongside providers, we helped strengthen governance arrangements, improve organisational resilience and support informed decision-making, enabling organisations to plan more confidently for the future.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORK



Case Study

Friockheim Playgroup – Building Strong Foundations Through Governance Support

The Challenge

Friockheim Playgroup approached Voluntary Action Angus during a period of significant change. Alongside concerns about long-term sustainability, the organisation wished to transition to a Scottish Charitable Incorporated Organisation (SCIO). Following initial feedback from the Scottish Charity Regulator (OSCR), it became clear that substantial revisions to the proposed constitution and wider governance arrangements were required before the application could progress.

Our Support

VAA worked closely with the trustees to provide tailored governance and organisational development support throughout the process. This included reviewing and redrafting the SCIO constitution, advising on trustee roles and responsibilities, governance structures, succession planning and constitutional requirements, while also developing key governance documents including a Trustee Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy. The playgroup was also connected to specialist legal, financial and enterprise support, ensuring access to the expertise and funding required to strengthen the organisation's long-term sustainability.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE WORK

The Outcome

With VAA's support, Friockheim Playgroup successfully transitioned to SCIO status, with its revised constitution approved by OSCR. The organisation now has stronger governance arrangements, clearly defined trustee responsibilities, robust governance policies and increased confidence in fulfilling its legal and charitable responsibilities.

These improvements have strengthened the organisation's resilience, placing it in a stronger position to secure future funding, manage risk effectively and continue providing high-quality early years provision for local children and families.

"The constitution was approved by the Board and sent to OSCR and it has been approved!!! Thank you so much for all your help." **Sarah Smith, Chairperson, Friockheim Playgroup**

At a Glance

- £8,000 crisis funding secured through specialist referrals.
- Successful transition to SCIO status with an OSCR-approved constitution.
- New governance framework, including a Trustee Code of Conduct and Conflict of Interest Policy.
- Increased trustee confidence and understanding of governance responsibilities.
- Stronger foundations to support the organisation's long-term sustainability.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

EMPLOYABILITY WORK

Partnership Working, Connections & Access to Support

Partnership working remained central to strengthening the third sector across Angus, ensuring organisations could access the expertise, funding opportunities, networks and strategic relationships needed to develop and thrive.

Throughout the year, VAA supported organisations across a wide range of areas including volunteering, employability, social enterprise, governance, childcare, food insecurity, welfare and community development. Many enquiries required a coordinated approach, bringing together multiple partners to ensure organisations received timely, appropriate and joined-up support.

By facilitating referrals, introductions and collaborative working, organisations were connected to specialist advice, funding programmes, community benefit opportunities, donated resources and local partnerships. This collaborative approach not only addressed immediate challenges but also strengthened organisational resilience and created opportunities for longer-term sustainability.

Alongside direct support, VAA continued to contribute to wider sector development through active participation in employability partnerships, social enterprise networks, childcare sustainability discussions, the ongoing development of the Angus Community Connector and collaborative working with Locality Development Workers. This strengthened communication across the sector, improved information sharing and helped identify emerging needs within communities across Angus.

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

EMPLOYABILITY WORK

Developing the knowledge, confidence and skills of the third sector remained an important focus throughout the year. Approximately **34 participants** attended Microsoft 365 training sessions, designed to strengthen digital confidence and improve practical skills in key applications including Microsoft Teams, OneDrive, SharePoint and cyber security.

The training helped participants make more effective use of digital tools within their organisations, improving collaboration, communication and day-to-day efficiency while increasing confidence in adopting new ways of working.

Responding directly to feedback from the sector, VAA also introduced **Knowledge Bites** – a series of informal lunchtime learning sessions developed through Third Sector Employability Development funding secured via the Local Employability Partnership (LEP). The programme was designed to increase awareness of employability services, programmes and partnership opportunities across Angus, while providing organisations with an opportunity to connect, share learning and strengthen local networks.

Sessions covered a range of topics, including the Participant Recruitment Programme (PRP), the Angus Restart Programme and Employability 101, helping organisations develop a greater understanding of the local employability landscape and the support available to individuals, employers and communities.



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

EMPLOYABILITY WORK

Strengthening Employability Partnerships

Bringing organisations together to build stronger relationships, improve collaboration and increase awareness of available support remained an important area of work throughout the year.

In May 2025, VAA hosted an **Employability Networking Event**, bringing together representatives from the third sector and public sector to strengthen partnership working, improve referral pathways and share knowledge of local employability services and initiatives. The event highlighted the vital role the third sector plays in supporting individuals to build confidence, develop skills, access volunteering opportunities and progress towards employment. It also created valuable opportunities for organisations to establish new connections, share learning and identify future opportunities for collaborative working.

OBJECTIVES...

Foster meaningful connections among third sector employability providers to promote collaboration and knowledge-sharing.

Provide practical insights and strategies to enhance pre/employability support in the region.

Share and gather information that can shape future improvements around accessibility and coordination of services.

Encourage the development of new partnerships and initiatives that strengthen employability services



SOCIAL ENTERPRISE AND EMPLOYABILITY TEAM

EMPLOYABILITY WORK

EMPLOYABILITY NETWORKING EVENT

Bringing organisations together to share knowledge, build connections and strengthen employability support across Angus.

BY THE NUMBERS



28

Attendees
from third sector and
statutory organisations



25

Organisations
represented



44

Contacts shared
(with permission)
strengthening communication,
referral pathways and
collaboration



71%

Made 1-4
new professional
connections



24%

Made 5+
new professional
connections



100%

Left with actionable
insights to inform
future work



95%

WOULD ATTEND FUTURE EVENTS
showing strong demand for ongoing networking
and collaboration opportunities



INTRODUCING THE VOLUNTEER JOURNEY TOOL

A new electronic resource to help organisations capture
and evidence the impact of volunteering.



11

Organisations requested
copies of the tool
following the event

Lasting Impact

The event also introduced VAA's Volunteer Journey tool, providing organisations with a practical resource to capture and evidence the impact of volunteering. Feedback was particularly positive from smaller organisations, with 11 organisations requesting the resource to support their own volunteer programmes.

By strengthening relationships between organisations and increasing awareness of available support, the event has helped create stronger referral pathways, improved communication and laid the foundations for continued collaborative working across Angus.

What Participants Said:

"Thank you, it has been very insightful and I have learned a lot."

"Great opportunity to network and connect, thank you."

"Really worthwhile day for all."

COMMUNITY LINK WORKING & ADMIN TEAM DEPUTY CHIEF EXECUTIVE

Overview



Third Sector Interface

This year has been one of continued development, growth and strengthening across the teams and services I oversee. Supporting our Community Link Workers and Administrative Team means no two days are ever the same, but it is incredibly rewarding to see the positive difference these services make within communities across Angus.

Alongside delivering high-quality support to individuals, organisations and partners, we have continued to focus on strengthening how we work as an organisation. Throughout the year we have introduced improved reporting processes, developed more robust systems and performance monitoring, and placed a greater emphasis on using data and evidence to demonstrate our impact and inform future planning. These improvements are helping us to work more effectively, identify emerging needs and ensure our services continue to evolve in response to the changing needs of our communities.

Across all of our teams, partnership working, collaboration and continuous improvement have remained central to everything we do. Whether supporting people to improve their health and wellbeing, strengthening community organisations, creating volunteering opportunities or developing innovative approaches to community engagement, our focus has always been on delivering services that are responsive, person-centred and make a lasting difference.

The following sections highlight the breadth of work delivered across these services during 2025/26. While the achievements and statistics demonstrate the scale of activity, they also reflect the commitment to continually improving our services, strengthening our ways of working and ensuring we remain well placed to meet the opportunities and challenges that lie ahead.

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

CLW TEAM

The Community Link Worker Service continued to play a vital role in supporting individuals across Angus to improve their health and wellbeing through personalised, non-clinical support.

Working closely with GP practices and community organisations, Community Link Workers helped people access practical assistance, reduce isolation, build confidence and connect with services and activities within their local communities.

During the year, the team also delivered the **Waiting Well** pilot in partnership with Angus HSCP, NHS Tayside and ANGUSalive. An independent evaluation found the pilot improved participants' confidence, wellbeing and readiness for surgery by providing early, person-centred support while they awaited joint replacement procedures, demonstrating the wider value of Community Link Workers in preventative healthcare.

Continued demand for the service across all four localities demonstrates its importance in helping people address the wider social factors that impact on health and wellbeing.

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER Stats at a Glance

📅 APRIL 25 – APRIL 26 📅



6,812
TOTAL
APPOINTMENTS
BOOKED



6,297
TOTAL
APPOINTMENTS
ATTENDED



2,080
NEW REFERRALS



Most new referrals
received in the
North East area

NEW REFERRALS BY LOCALITY

SE

South East

397

SW

South West

506

NE

North East

616

NW

North West

511

↖ Most new referrals in NE!



Community Link Work Survey

Real people. Real impact. Stronger communities.

Feedback from patients and GP practice staff shows the positive difference Community Link Workers make every day across **all 15 GP practices**.



PATIENT SURVEY

Feedback from **85** service users across all 15 GP practices highlighted the positive difference Community Link Workers make to people's lives.



GP PRACTICE SURVEY

Responses from **69** members of practice staff demonstrated strong confidence in the Community Link Worker service and its contribution to primary care.



95%

were satisfied with access to an appointment.



98%

were happy with appointment waiting times.



93%

were satisfied with the overall service.



More than nine in ten respondents rated their Link Worker as **excellent** or **very good** for:



Listening



Understanding their concerns



Explaining information clearly



Showing compassion



Helping them develop a plan to improve their situation



87%

agreed that Community Link Workers positively improve patient care and outcomes.



87%

felt Community Link Workers were well integrated within their practice teams.



81%

found the referral process easy or very easy.



61

of 69 respondents were satisfied with the service overall.



Practice staff highlighted the value of Community Link Workers in:

- ✓ Improving patient wellbeing
- ✓ Connecting people with community support
- ✓ Reducing pressure on GP appointments
- ✓ Providing personalised support for patients with complex needs.

“

Many respondents described feeling listened to, respected and empowered, with comments highlighting the caring, compassionate and person-centred approach of Community Link Workers. Several said they “**would have been lost without**” the support they received and would recommend the service to others.



Feedback also identified opportunities to further strengthen communication, visibility and integration within some practices to build on the service's success.



COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

CLW TEAM

SOCIAL PRESCRIBING DAY

19 March 2026

Community Link Workers engaged with the public in local supermarkets across Angus to raise awareness of the Community Link Worker service and the wider support available through Voluntary Action Angus.



AT A GLANCE



115

PEOPLE
SPOKEN TO



5

ANGUS LOCALITIES
VISITED



83%

NOT AWARE OF THE
COMMUNITY LINK WORKER
SERVICE



INFORMATION SHARED ON:

- ✓ CLW SERVICE
- ✓ VOLUNTEERING
- ✓ BEFRIENDING
- ✓ MACMILLAN SUPPORT
- ✓ COMMUNITY CONNECTOR
- ✓ AND OTHER VAA SERVICES

ENGAGEMENT BY LOCALITY

TOWN	SUPERMARKET	PEOPLE SPOKEN TO	AWARE OF SERVICE	NOT AWARE OF SERVICE
 Forfar	Tesco	48	7	41 (85%)
 Kirriemuir	Co-op	18	2	16 (89%)
 Arbroath	Tesco	22	6	14 (64%)
 Brechtin	Co-op	19	2	17 (89%)
 Montrose	Tesco	8	1	7 (88%)

HIGHLIGHTS FROM THE DAY



RAISING AWARENESS

The majority of people spoken to were not aware of the Community Link Worker service, highlighting a clear need for greater awareness across Angus.



WIDER SUPPORT PROMOTED

Leaflets and information were shared on volunteering, befriending, Macmillan support, employability, the Community Connector and other VAA services.



NEW CONNECTIONS MADE

Generated volunteering enquiries, potential referrals and opportunities to strengthen links with healthcare professionals, community groups and local organisations.



SHAPING THE FUTURE

Community feedback highlighted the opportunity to enhance the Angus Community Connector, including the introduction of a local Events & Campaign Calendar.

Community Engagement & Key Insights

To mark Social Prescribing Day on 19 March, Community Link Workers engaged with members of the public in supermarkets across Angus to raise awareness of the Community Link Worker service and the wider support available through Voluntary Action Angus.

Across five localities, the team spoke with **115 people**, with the majority reporting they were not previously aware of the Community Link Worker service. This highlighted a significant opportunity to increase awareness of social prescribing and improve access to preventative, community-based support.

The engagement also generated wider conversations about volunteering, befriending, Macmillan support, employability, the Community Connector and other VAA services. Information and signposting were provided to members of the public, healthcare professionals, community groups and local organisations, resulting in new volunteering enquiries, potential referrals and opportunities to strengthen local partnerships.

Shaping Future Services

Feedback gathered during the day also informed future service development, including suggestions to enhance the Angus Community Connector by promoting one-off community events through a local events calendar. These insights have helped shape ongoing improvements to the information and support available to communities across Angus.

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

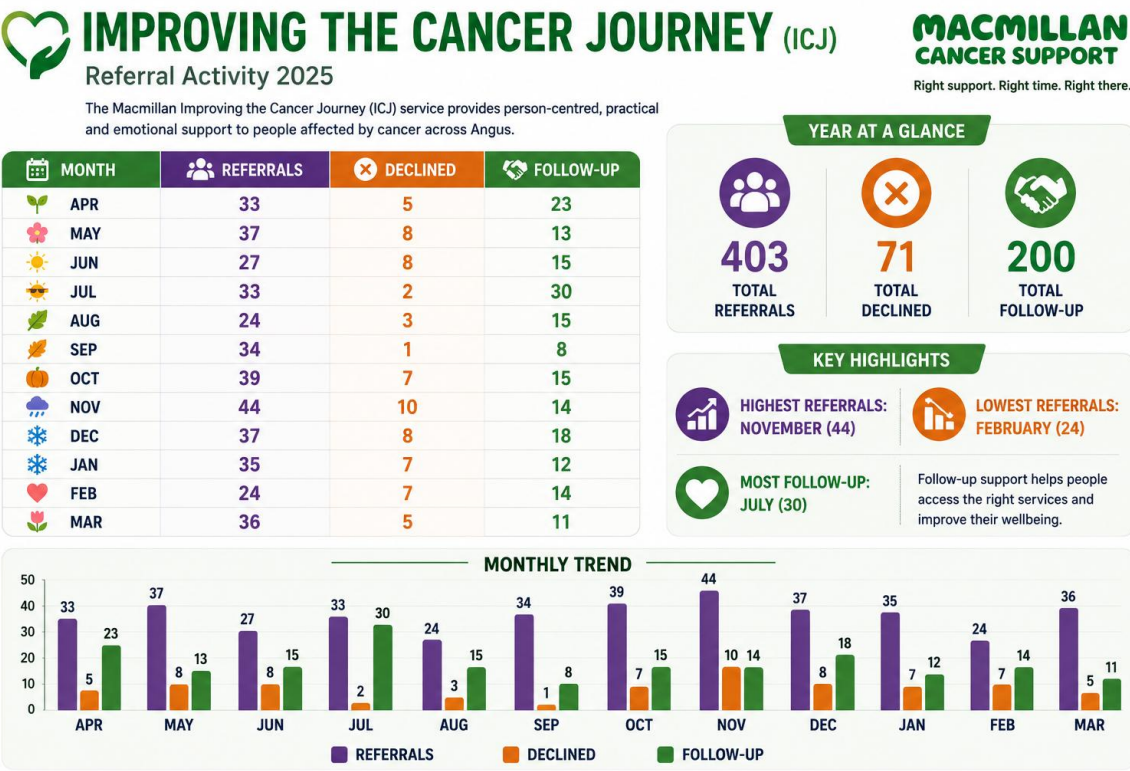
ICJ WORKER

A cancer diagnosis can affect every aspect of a person's life; bringing practical, emotional, financial and social challenges alongside treatment.

Through the **Macmillan Improving the Cancer Journey (ICJ)** service, Voluntary Action Angus provides personalised, non-clinical support to help people navigate these challenges and access the help they need.

Working in partnership with Angus HSCP and Macmillan Cancer Support, Community Link Workers take a person-centred approach, offering holistic needs assessments, practical advice, emotional support and connections to local services. The service empowers people to take control of what matters most to them, helping them access financial support, wellbeing services, community activities and other resources that improve quality of life throughout their cancer journey.

The referral statistics opposite demonstrate the continued demand for this valued service and the ongoing support provided to people affected by cancer across Angus.



COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM ICJ WORKER

Macmillan Coffee Morning

Voluntary Action Angus was proud to support Macmillan's World's Biggest Coffee Morning, hosting a community event at The Cross which welcomed **20 attendees**. The event provided an opportunity for local people, staff, volunteers and partners to come together over coffee and cake while raising funds to support people affected by cancer.

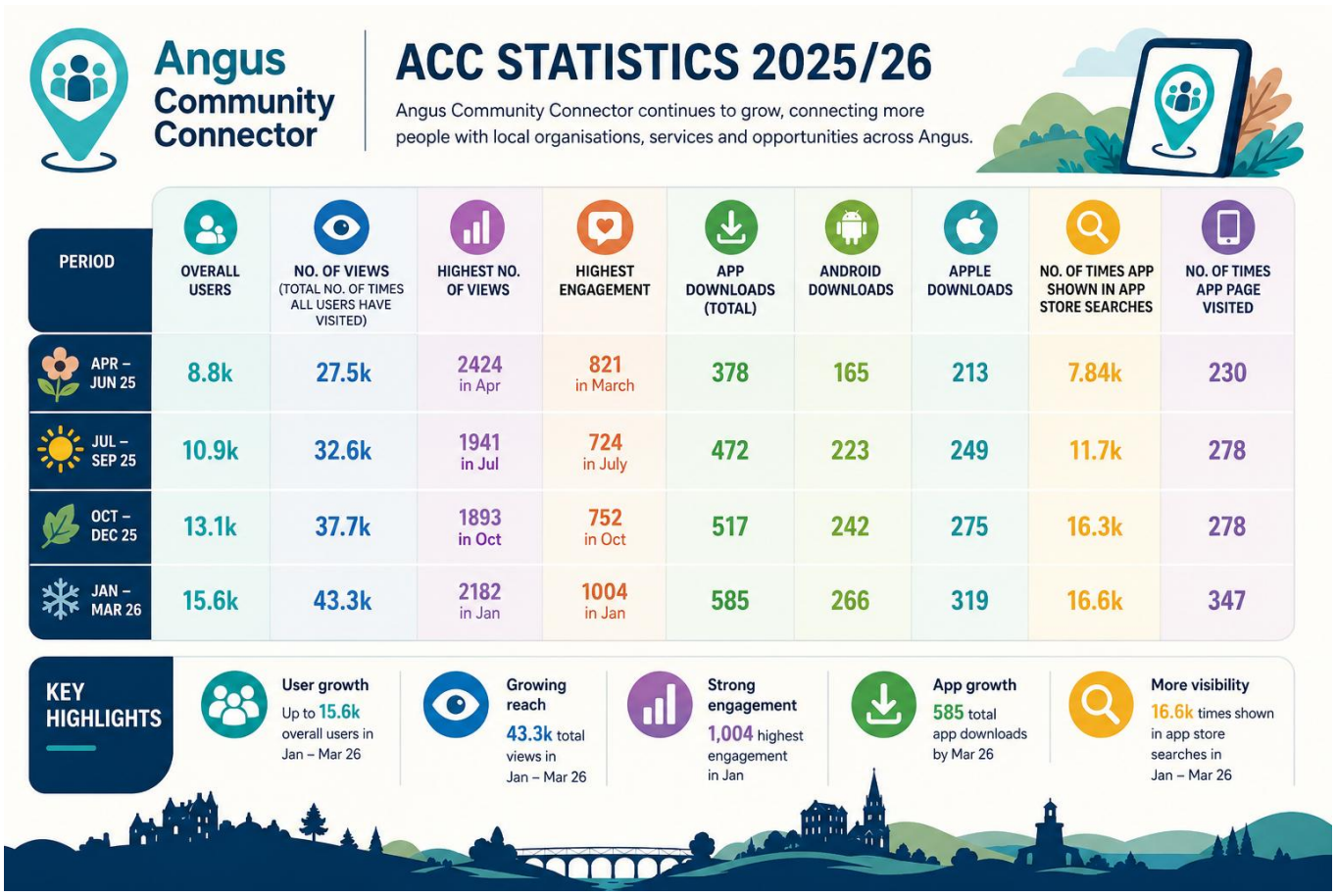
As well as fundraising, the morning created a welcoming space for conversation, helping to strengthen community connections, raise awareness of Macmillan support services and encourage people to access help when they need it. By taking part in this national campaign, VAA continues to play its part in ensuring that no one faces cancer alone, whilst promoting wellbeing and reducing social isolation within our communities.

Together we raised an amazing £70 in donations to support Macmillan's incredible work.



COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

ADMIN TEAM



Angus Community Connector

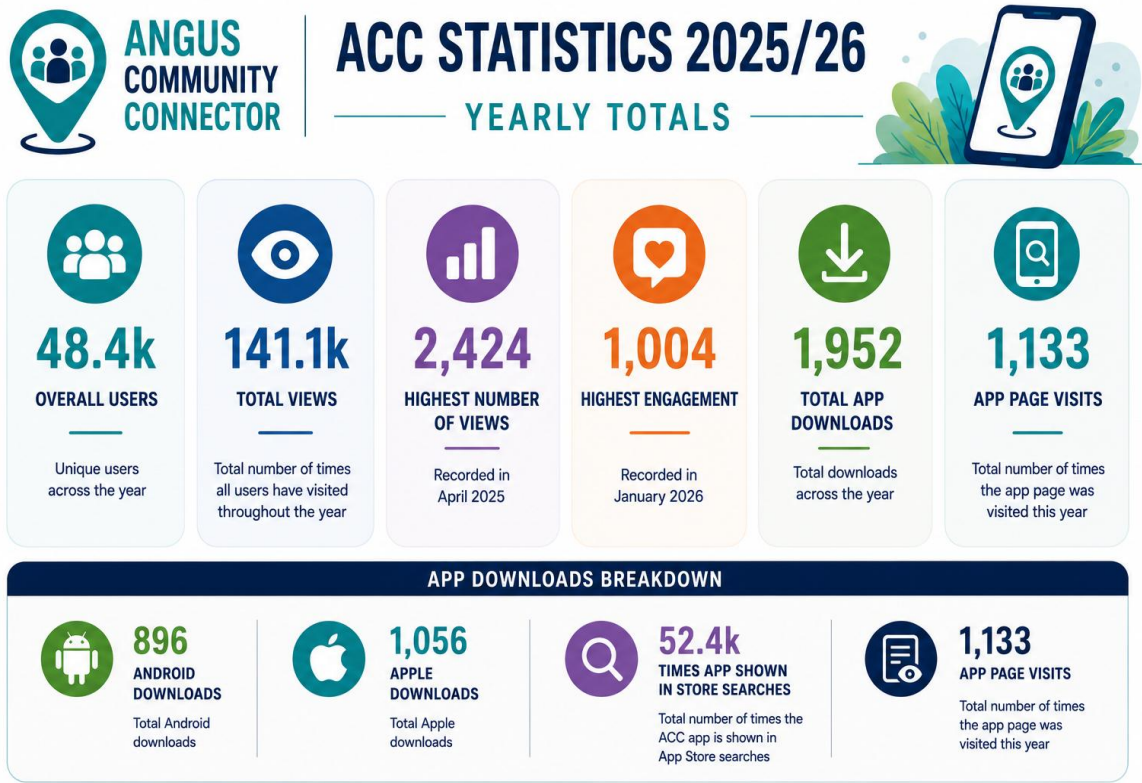
The Angus Community Connector (ACC) continues to grow as Angus' central digital directory for community information, making it easier for residents, professionals and partner organisations to find local services, activities, volunteering opportunities, events and support in one accessible place.

Available via both the web and dedicated Android and Apple mobile applications, the Connector helps people quickly search for organisations using categories and keywords, improving access to community information while increasing the visibility of the voluntary and community sector across Angus.

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

ADMIN TEAM

During 2025/26, the platform continued to experience significant growth in both reach and engagement, with increasing numbers of people accessing community information online and through the mobile app. The accompanying infographic highlights the continued growth in users, page views, app downloads and online visibility over the year.



Alongside the continued expansion of organisations and services listed on the platform, 2025/26 also saw the introduction of the new **VAA Events & Campaign Calendar**, bringing together local events, national awareness campaigns and opportunities to get involved across Angus.

Together, these developments are creating a comprehensive digital information hub that supports communities to connect with local services, promotes the work of the third sector and helps people access support at the earliest opportunity.

The Connector also supports Voluntary Action Angus' wider Third Sector Interface role by:

- improving access to community information
- increasing the visibility of third sector organisations and community groups
- strengthening local service mapping across Angus
- supporting collaboration and partnership working
- promoting prevention and early intervention services
- helping people find the right support, at the right time

ADMIN TEAM

Events & Campaign Calendar

One of the key developments during 2025/26 was the launch of the **VAA Events & Campaign Calendar**, providing a single, accessible place for organisations, volunteers and communities to discover local events, national awareness campaigns and opportunities to get involved across Angus.

The calendar was developed in response to growing demand for a central source of information that promotes activity taking place across the third sector. Alongside events delivered by Voluntary Action Angus, it showcases opportunities from community groups, charities, social enterprises and statutory partners, helping to increase visibility, reduce duplication and encourage greater collaboration across the sector.

Throughout the year, the calendar highlights a wide range of national and local campaigns, including **Volunteers' Week, Social Prescribing Day, Mental Health Awareness Week, Carers Week, Trustees' Week** and many more. Where local activity is taking place to support these campaigns, the calendar also promotes workshops, networking events, celebrations, awareness sessions and community activities, making it easier for organisations and local people to engage with national initiatives at a local level.

The Events & Campaign Calendar will continue to develop during 2026/27 with the introduction of an integrated **Training Calendar**, bringing together learning and development opportunities delivered by both VAA and partner organisations. Combined with the **Angus Community Connector**, these platforms will form a comprehensive digital information hub for Angus, enabling organisations, volunteers and communities to access information on services, events, campaigns and training opportunities in one place. Together, they will strengthen communication, improve collaboration, increase participation and ensure communities are better connected to the support and opportunities available across Angus.

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

ADMIN TEAM



Voluntary Action -ANGUS

Third Sector Interface

[About](#) ▾ [What we do](#) ▾ [News and Events](#) ▾ [Whole Family Wellbeing](#) [Funding](#) [Partnership Working](#) ▾ [Contact](#)



Angus
Community
Connector

f t



International Youth Day

12th August 2025

[Find out more](#)



Celebrating Families Week

23rd - 27th June 2025

[Find out more](#)



Learning Disability Week

16th - 22nd June 2025

[Find out more](#)



Volunteers Week

2nd - 8th June 2025

[Find out more](#)



Employability Networking

20th May 2025

[Find out more](#)



Dementia Action Week

19th - 25th May 2025

[Find out more](#)

COMMUNITY LINK WORKER (CLW) & ADMIN TEAM

ADMIN TEAM

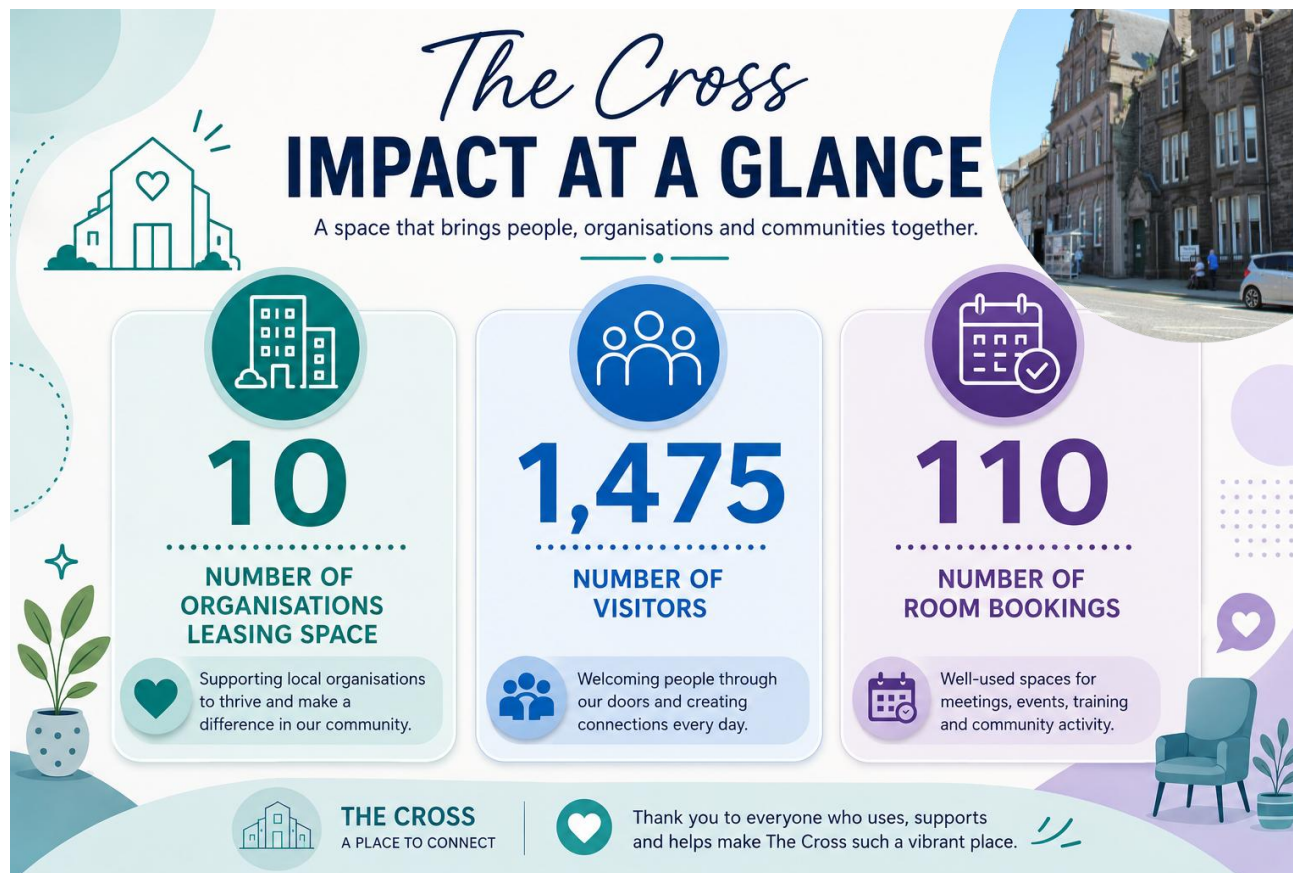
Facebook & Digital Engagement

Our social media platforms continue to play an important role in connecting communities with opportunities, services and local events. Throughout the year, our Facebook presence reached more people than ever before, helping to promote volunteering, celebrate community achievements, share funding opportunities and raise awareness of the work taking place across Angus. The continued growth in engagement demonstrates the value of digital communication in ensuring individuals and organisations stay informed and connected.

The Cross

The Cross remains a thriving community hub, providing a welcoming and accessible space for local organisations, meetings, training and partnership working. As well as being home to a growing number of tenant organisations, the building welcomed hundreds of visitors throughout the year and hosted a wide range of room bookings, supporting collaboration and strengthening the Third Sector across Angus.





VOLUNTARY ACTION ANGUS EVENTS

Throughout the year, the Voluntary Action Angus team delivered and supported a wide range of campaigns, events and community initiatives that celebrated volunteering, strengthened local partnerships and encouraged greater community participation.

Many of these activities are highlighted throughout the individual team sections of this report, demonstrating the breadth of work delivered across our services.

This section brings together some of the organisation-wide campaigns and events that involved colleagues from across VAA, showcasing how we work collaboratively to engage with communities, celebrate success and raise the profile of the third sector across Angus.

The following highlights provide just a snapshot of the many ways VAA has supported and celebrated communities during the year.



VOLUNTEER'S WEEK 2025

Trustee Essentials

As part of **Volunteers' Week 2025**, Voluntary Action Angus delivered a **Trustee Essentials** information session attended by **nine participants**, supporting both new and existing trustees to better understand their roles and responsibilities.

The session covered key aspects of charity governance, trustee duties, recent changes to charity law, the **Disclosure (Scotland) Act 2020**, and good practice in trustee recruitment and succession planning.

Participants also received information on the wide range of governance support, training opportunities and resources available through VAA to help strengthen boards and improve organisational resilience.

The session formed part of VAA's wider governance support programme and complemented our ongoing work supporting organisations with constitutions, trustee development and long-term sustainability. As a direct result, **three organisations** sought further support from VAA around governance and funding, demonstrating the value of providing accessible, practical guidance for the sector.

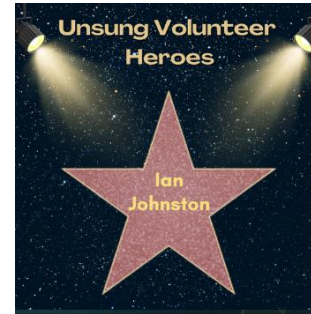


Unsung Heroes Campaign

As part of **Volunteers' Week 2025**, the Locality Development Team celebrated the incredible contribution of volunteers across Angus through our **Unsung Heroes Campaign**. The online campaign invited communities to nominate and vote for volunteers whose dedication and commitment make a lasting difference within local organisations and neighbourhoods.

Seventeen volunteers from a diverse range of community groups and organisations were recognised as Unsung Heroes. Each received a certificate presented by a member of the Voluntary Action Angus team and was featured in a dedicated online gallery, celebrating their achievements and inspiring others through their stories.

The campaign shone a spotlight not only on the volunteers themselves but also on the organisations and communities they support. It helped raise the profile of volunteering across Angus, strengthened relationships with local groups, and celebrated the positive difference volunteers make every day. By recognising these often-unseen contributions, the campaign reinforced the essential role volunteers play in creating stronger, more resilient and connected communities across Angus.



DUNDEE KILTWALK 2025

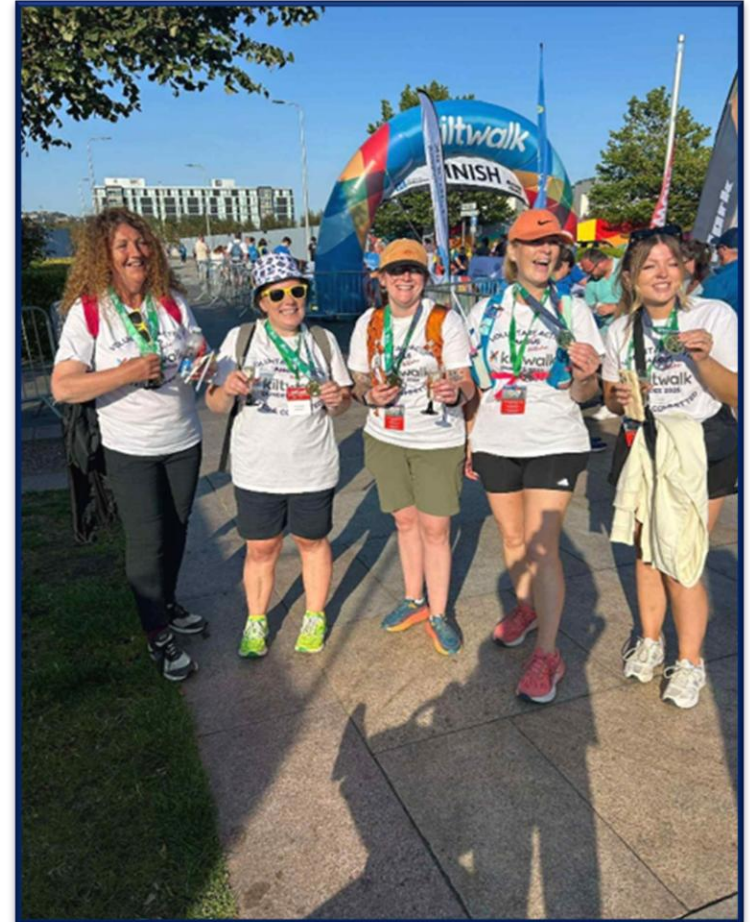
The Dundee Kiltwalk 2025 was another fantastic success, with Team VAA raising £1,590 to support our work across Angus.

This achievement reflects the enthusiasm, commitment and community spirit of the staff and volunteers who took part, together with the generosity of the local businesses, partners and supporters who backed our fundraising efforts.

Following discussions with staff and partners, the funds were used to establish a Community Support Fund, providing practical assistance to local people experiencing hardship. Working alongside our partner organisations, the fund remains open and available to support individuals and families facing financial difficulties by providing essential help when it is needed most.

The Community Support Fund demonstrates how the generosity of our supporters continues to make a tangible difference, ensuring that every pound raised through the Kiltwalk directly benefits communities across Angus.

Beyond the funds raised, taking part in the Kiltwalk also provided a fantastic opportunity for the VAA team to come together outside of the workplace; strengthening relationships, boosting team morale and reinforcing our shared commitment to making a positive difference across Angus.



TRUSTEES WEEK 2025

DID YOU KNOW?

Making Trusteeship More Accessible During Trustees' Week 2025

Sometimes the best way to start an important conversation is to make people smile.

During Trustees' Week 2025, Voluntary Action Angus launched a fun and engaging "Did You Know?" campaign designed to challenge common misconceptions about becoming a charity trustee.

Using a series of eye-catching animal-themed graphics, the campaign highlighted simple but often overlooked facts about trusteeship - showing that trustees come from all walks of life, that young people can become trustees, and that skills and lived experience are just as valuable as professional qualifications.

The campaign was designed to make governance more approachable, encourage people to consider trusteeship for the first time and support charities across Angus to build diverse and effective boards. Rather than simply promoting trustee vacancies, the campaign focused on raising awareness, breaking down barriers and helping people recognise that they already have something valuable to offer.

Trustees don't need to know everything—they simply need the willingness to use their skills, experience and passion to help organisations make a difference

DID YOU KNOW?

Making Trusteeship More Accessible
During Trustees' Week 2025



WHY IT MATTERED?



Challenged myths about trusteeship



Encouraged new audiences to consider becoming trustees



Promoted diversity on charity boards



Used humour and creativity to engage people online



Demonstrated that governance doesn't have to be boring



TOTAL REACH:

3,167



REACTIONS/SHARES:

20



DID YOU KNOW?



Trustees are volunteers – they don't get paid, but their leadership is priceless to the charities they serve.



DID YOU KNOW?



You could become a trustee too – whether you're 18 or 80, your skills and lived experience are valuable.



DID YOU KNOW?



Being a trustee can count towards Saltire Awards for young people in Scotland.



DID YOU KNOW?



Trusteeship is open to everyone – whether you're retired, working, studying, or looking for a new challenge.





VAA TRAINING AND LEARNING

Building knowledge, skills and confidence across our team and community.



TRAINING SESSIONS ATTENDED BY VAA STAFF



SCVO – Charities & Governance Training



What Matters to You Event



VAA Governance



ACAS Management and HR training



Naloxone



Microsoft 365



Motivational Interview Training



TRAINING AND LEARNING ACTIVITIES DELIVERED OR COORDINATED



Microsoft 365 Training
3 modules delivered across 6 sessions



Trustee Essentials
Employability
Networking Event

Knowledge Bites Programme including:



Angus Participant Recruitment Programme (PRP)



Angus Restart Programme



Employability 101



Good conversations training



What Matters to you



GDPR Training



Suicide Awareness Training



Ready for Youth Work Training



Building skills



Sharing knowledge



Supporting our people



Strengthening our community



Through a wide range of training and learning opportunities, VAA continues to invest in our people and strengthen the support we provide to our community.

WHAT MATTERS TO YOU TREE

VAA has continued to embed the principles of the **What Matters to You?** approach across the organisation following participation in a workshop delivered in partnership with AHSCP and facilitated by Tommy Whitelaw.

The workshop encouraged us to reflect on the importance of person-centred conversation, active listening and taking the time to understand what truly matters to the people we work alongside. While these principles have always underpinned VAA's approach, the learning reinforced how asking one simple question – “**what matters to you?**”, can strengthen relationships, improve experiences and ensure people feel listening to, valued and involved.

To help keep these conversations alive, we created a What Matters to You Tree within The Cross. Staff, volunteers and visitors are invited to share what matter most to them by adding their thoughts to the tree, creating an evolving visual reminder of the people, values and aspirations at the heart of our work.

We will continue this initiative during 2026/27 and will continue to encourage our visitors, partner organisations, and tenant organisations to take part. By giving people, the opportunity to reflect and share what matters to them, we hope to continue fostering a welcoming, inclusive and compassionate environment where every voice is heard and valued.

The following page provides a snapshot of some of the responses shared by our staff and volunteers, highlighting the values and motivations that inspire our work every day and reminding us that meaningful conversations begin with a simple question: What matters to you?





Open
conversations,
inclusive results.



The team
meets together
and bonds.



Comfortable
environment
to express
views.



Kind & caring
support from
colleagues.



Good to get
updates from
wider team.



Being able to make
a positive difference
in people's lives no
matter how small
that may be.



Feeling appreciated
and being part
of a team.



STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORK

Throughout 2025/26, VAA continued to support our Third Sector Day Care Providers as well as Angus Health and Social Care Partnership with the ongoing review of Day Care and Day Opportunities across Angus.

Working alongside partners, VAA has represented the interest of the Third Sector Day Care Centres, ensuring that community voices and the experience of voluntary organisations continue to inform discussions.

This remains an evolving piece of work with collaboration between statutory services and the Third Sector continuing throughout the year. VAA has remained committed to supporting a partnership approach that recognises the valuable contribution Third Sector organisations make in helping people remain connected, active and supported within their local communities.

As the review progresses, VAA will continue to work collaboratively with partners to help shape sustainable, person-centred approaches that reflect local need and build on strengths that already exist.

The Day Care work is one example of VAA's wider role as Third Sector Interface for Angus. Alongside supporting organisations, volunteers and communities, we work strategically with statutory and Third Sector partners to influence service development, strengthen collaboration and ensure that the knowledge experience, and strengths of the Third Sector help inform decisions that affect the communities of Angus.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORK

Developing the Angus Volunteer Strategy 2027–2032

During the year, Voluntary Action Angus began the development of the **Angus Volunteer Strategy 2027–2032**, which will provide a clear framework for supporting, developing and strengthening volunteering across Angus over the next five years. The strategy will establish evidence-based priorities and practical actions to ensure volunteering continues to play a vital role in building resilient communities.

To inform the strategy, VAA undertook a county-wide consultation, inviting volunteers, volunteer-involving organisations, community groups and partners to share their experiences and views on the current volunteering landscape. We were delighted to receive **238 survey responses**, providing valuable insight into local priorities, challenges and opportunities. The findings will directly shape the final strategy, ensuring it reflects the needs and aspirations of communities across Angus and supports the continued growth of volunteering in the years ahead.

The survey findings will shape the draft strategy, with further consultation planned before publication to ensure the final strategy is informed by the views of volunteers, organisations and partners across Angus.

STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORK

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund – Angus Synergy Spark

Voluntary Action Angus has continued to play a strategic leadership role in the delivery of the Whole Family Wellbeing Fund through the Angus Synergy Spark programme. Working alongside Angus Council and external consultants, VAA brought together **17 Third Sector organisations** to develop a more collaborative and preventative approach to supporting children, young people and families across Angus.

Over five co-production workshops, organisations moved away from traditional competitive funding models to develop a shared vision focused on partnership working, early intervention and improving outcomes for families. Through systems mapping, case study discussions and collaborative design sessions, partners identified strengths within existing services, highlighted gaps in provision and explored opportunities to deliver more joined-up, trauma-informed support.

The workshops also introduced a new approach to monitoring and evaluation, encouraging organisations to focus on meaningful outcomes and collective learning rather than simply reporting activity. Logic models were developed to help organisations understand the difference their projects make for families, communities and public services over the lifetime of the programme.

Building on this collaborative work, organisations developed proposals aligned to the priorities identified through the Synergy Spark process. In total, **38 applications** were submitted across the fund, including **13 applications** to the VAA-managed small grant programme and **25 applications** to the larger commissioning route managed by Angus Council.

The programme has now progressed into implementation, with **five collaborative projects** receiving funding through the VAA-managed grant programme. These projects focus on early intervention, family wellbeing, reducing inequalities and strengthening community-based support. VAA continues to provide strategic oversight, facilitating collaboration between partners, supporting shared learning, and ensuring that the investment delivers sustainable improvements for children, young people and families across Angus.

The Synergy Spark programme has demonstrated the value of bringing organisations together around a common purpose. By fostering collaboration rather than competition, VAA has helped create stronger partnerships, maximise collective expertise and supported to lay the foundations for a more integrated model of whole family support across Angus.



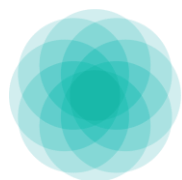
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORK

During the year, the former Angus Third Sector Collaborative completed a significant period of development, resulting in the launch of the **Angus Support Partnership**—a collaboration of nine established third sector organisations committed to improving how people experience support across Angus.

The Partnership brings together organisations with expertise in supporting children and families, carers, people living with disabilities or sensory loss, individuals experiencing financial hardship, relationship difficulties and mental health challenges. By working collaboratively, partners aim to reduce fragmentation, improve pathways into support and ensure people can access the right help at the right time.

This development was made possible through funding secured through NHS Tayside Charitable Foundation fund, by VAA to enable the Collaborative to work with an independent consultant. The investment supported the partnership to review its purpose, develop a clear shared vision and governance arrangements, and transition from the Angus Third Sector Collaborative into the newly established Angus Support Partnership.

While the Partnership operates as a distinct collaboration of delivery organisations, it continues to work alongside Voluntary Action Angus. As the Third Sector Interface for Angus, VAA supports and represents the wider third sector and remains committed to enabling collaborative approaches that strengthen the sector and improve outcomes for communities.



Angus
Support Partnership

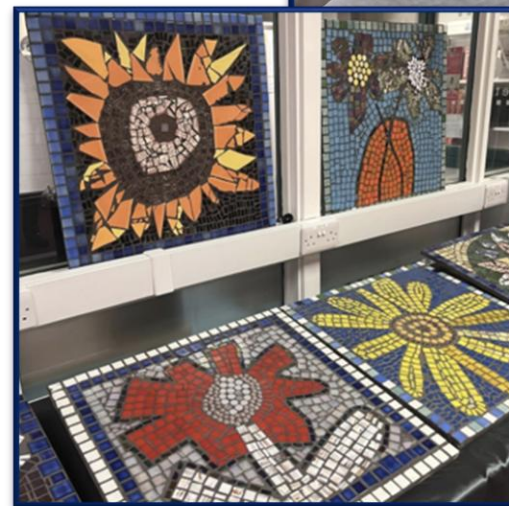
STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT AND PARTNERSHIP WORK

Voluntary Action Angus was delighted to support the development of an innovative new Creative Ageing project designed to increase opportunities for social connection and wellbeing among older people in Forfar.

Working in partnership with Luminate and Angus Health and Social Care Partnership (AHSCP), VAA played a key role from the earliest planning stages through to delivery. Theresa worked alongside Anne to identify local groups that would benefit most from the programme, helping to ensure the project reached those who met the intended criteria.

As a result, **Lochside Connections**, **The Deirdre Knight Day Centre**, and **Forfar Library's Lend & Mend Hub** took part in the Forfar Creative Ageing Residency, led by local artist **Maureen Crosbie**.

VAA is proud to have been involved throughout the project's journey—from its initial development and planning, to engaging local organisations, identifying suitable venues and supporting operational delivery. This collaborative approach has helped establish a strong foundation for a project that encourages creativity, connection and community participation for older people across Forfar.



THIRD SECTOR FUNDING SOURCED AND DISTRIBUTED

Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund

The Communities Mental Health & Wellbeing Fund (CMHWF) continued to support community-led mental health and wellbeing initiatives across Angus, with **£320,828.11** invested during 2025/27.

This funding round introduced a number of important changes, including **two-year awards** to provide greater stability, an increased emphasis on partnership working and measurable outcomes, and a streamlined application process. To support applicants, VAA extended the local application deadline beyond the festive period, allowing organisations additional time to prepare their submissions.

A total of **36 applications** were received, resulting in **13 funding awards** supporting **around 18 organisations** across Angus. The inclusion of several collaborative bids reflected the fund's increased focus on partnership working and shared delivery.

Feel Good Fund

In November 2025, VAA received an additional **£64,167.62** from the Scottish Government as a one-off allocation for 2025/26. Following agreement with the local partnership panel, the funding was ring-fenced to support smaller grassroots organisations delivering preventative mental health and wellbeing activities.

This additional investment enabled VAA to launch the **Feel Good Fund**, providing accessible small grants to local community groups and ensuring the funding reached organisations making a direct difference within their communities.

Feel Good Fund

Supporting community-led initiatives remained a priority throughout the year with the delivery of the **Feel Good Fund**, providing **£6,000** in small grants of up to **£500** to local third sector organisations and grassroots community groups across Angus.

Designed to be simple, inclusive and accessible, the fund took an innovative '**Dragon's Den**' approach, replacing lengthy application forms with a one-page proposal and informal presentations. This significantly reduced barriers to funding for smaller organisations while encouraging creativity, partnership working and community engagement.

The Feel Good Fund awarded grants to 10 local third sector organisations and grassroots community groups, supporting a diverse range of community-led projects designed to improve adult mental health and wellbeing across Angus.

Funding supported projects that promoted positive mental health and wellbeing through fun, creative and community-led activities, with a particular focus on reaching people who may experience barriers to accessing traditional support, including those living in rural communities, experiencing social isolation or financial hardship.

The Feel Good Fund also represented a new way of working for VAA. Locality Development Workers were empowered to lead the programme from promotion through to assessment, forming the judging panel and making funding recommendations based on their detailed knowledge of local communities, emerging needs and the potential impact of each project. This devolved approach strengthened local decision-making, ensured funding was responsive to community priorities and further demonstrated VAA's commitment to community-led investment.

The success of the fund highlighted the value of removing unnecessary barriers to funding, enabling grassroots organisations to access support quickly and deliver activities that strengthen resilience, reduce isolation and improve wellbeing within their communities.

Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF)

The Whole Family Wellbeing Fund (WFWF) aims to improve outcomes for children, young people and families by investing in early intervention, prevention and whole-family support.

The fund encourages organisations to work collaboratively, developing sustainable solutions that strengthen communities and reduce the need for crisis intervention.

During 2025/26, Voluntary Action Angus led the **Angus Synergy Spark** programme, bringing together **17 third sector organisations** and external consultants to co-produce innovative approaches to supporting families across Angus. Through five collaborative workshops, organisations developed a shared vision, mapped existing services, identified gaps and opportunities, and designed projects that reflected the needs of local families while embracing partnership working, prevention and trauma-informed practice.

The programme then moved into the implementation phase, with organisations invited to apply for funding through either the Small Grants Programme (managed by Voluntary Action Angus) or the larger commissioning programme managed by Angus Council.

In total, **38 applications** were received, comprising **13 applications** to the VAA Small Grants Programme (up to **£25,000**) and **25 applications** to the Angus Council commissioning programme (up to **£50,000**).

Five projects were awarded funding through the VAA Small Grants Programme. Together, these projects demonstrate the strength of collaborative working across the third sector and will help strengthen early intervention, improve family wellbeing, reduce inequalities and provide accessible, community-based support for families across Angus.



LOOKING AHEAD

2026/27

As we look ahead to 2026/27, our focus is clear: **Consolidate and Influence**.

Following a period of growth, innovation and new opportunities, the year ahead is about building on the strong foundations we have created. Rather than expanding into new areas, our priority is to strengthen, refine and embed the work we already do, ensuring we continue to deliver the highest quality support, leadership and collaboration across Angus. By becoming experts in our core areas of work, we will maximise our impact, strengthen partnerships and use our experience to influence positive change for the third sector and the communities we serve.

Delivering Our New Strategic Plan

Our new Strategic Plan will set the direction for the next phase of Voluntary Action Angus, providing a clear framework that builds on our strengths while ensuring we remain responsive to the changing needs of communities, volunteers and the third sector.

Completing the Changing places toilet

One of our key priorities is the development of a **Changing Places Toilet** at The Cross. We are progressing plans to transform the former garage attached to the building into a fully accessible Changing Places Toilet, increasing accessibility and supporting more people with profound and multiple disabilities, complex health conditions and their carers to participate fully in community life. To support this ambition, we have already appointed an architect to undertake the initial surveys, measurements and costings, ensuring we are ready to submit a strong funding application when the programme opens in **summer 2026**. Subject to a successful application, we hope to receive confirmation of funding before the end of **2026**, allowing work to begin on delivering this important community asset. The project reflects our ongoing commitment to improving accessibility, reducing barriers to participation and ensuring our facilities are inclusive for everyone in Angus.

Launching the Angus Volunteer Strategy

Following extensive consultation with volunteers, organisations and partners, we will launch the Angus Volunteer Strategy. This shared vision will help strengthen, support and celebrate volunteering across Angus, ensuring it continues to thrive for years to come.

Demonstrating Our Uniquely Valuable Contribution

We will continue to evidence the unique contribution of Voluntary Action Angus and the wider third sector. By demonstrating our impact, sharing learning and strengthening relationships, we will reinforce the vital role the sector plays in improving outcomes for communities across Angus.

Shaping the Future of The Cross

The Cross has become much more than a workplace - it is a collaborative hub where organisations, volunteers and communities come together. During 2026/27 we will undertake a consultation to help shape its future, ensuring the building continues to evolve to meet local needs while maximising opportunities for partnership working, innovation and community use.

Showcasing Voluntary Action Angus

To help raise awareness of the breadth and impact of our work, we will launch a new promotional video celebrating Voluntary Action Angus and The Cross. The video will showcase our people, partnerships, facilities and the difference being made every day across Angus through the strength of the third sector.

Building on Strong Foundations

Our ambition for 2026/27 is not to do more - it is to do what we already do, even better. By consolidating our strengths, embedding excellence across everything we do and using our knowledge, experience and trusted relationships to influence positive change, we will continue to champion the third sector and help create stronger, more resilient communities across Angus.

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our staff, trustees, volunteers, partners and the many organisations and communities we are privileged to work alongside every day.

***Thank you for being part of our journey.
We look forward to continuing to work together as we shape the
next chapter for Voluntary Action Angus and the Third Sector in
Angus.***





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