On 6 August at the Double Tree Hilton we held our announcement for the winners of our Spirit of Manchester 2019 Community Cohesion and Community Space Award winners. Thanks to everyone who voted, we had a record number of votes this year!

We’re pleased to announce that
- The Edge Theatre and Arts Centre won our Community Space Award
- The Widows Empowerment Trust won our Community Cohesion Award

We’re all busy making preparations for our next Spirit of Manchester Awards Ceremony and looking forward to a fantastic night celebrating Manchester’s voluntary sector.

Tickets are now on sale to attend our Awards Ceremony on 3 October at the Sheridan Suite – tickets are £25 each or £200 for a table for 10 people, please email: michelle@macc.org.uk to buy tickets.
Chief Executive’s update

On Monday 22 July 2019 we marked 100 years (to the day) of the formation of Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service. Macc, Salford CVS and Gaddum worked together to mark the occasion with a celebratory event at the People’s History Museum. We felt it was important to take the time to remember and reflect on a century of social action across the twin cities of Salford and Manchester.

Our event reflected on the collective charitable histories of the two cities. Gaddum was established as a charity in 1833 as a direct result of the cholera epidemic in the area. Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service was established on 22 July 1919 in the aftermath of World War One, with food poverty, housing shortages and an unemployment endemic. From the start, it was a strategic decision (and one shared by the public and charity sectors) that some central organisation was needed to make best use of resources and maximise the potential of voluntarism, charity and philanthropy in the city. Gaddum was instrumental in establishing the new body. Henry Gaddum was the first Chair of the Council of Social Service.

In 1973, it was decided to split the organisation into separate bodies for Salford and Manchester, reflecting the changes to local government which came into effect in 1974. The modern day descendants – Salford CVS and Macc – have continued the development of this role in Salford and Manchester. Salford CVS continues to this day. Macc has its roots in Manchester CVS which closed down some years ago but we essentially play much the same role in the city:

- Supporting local voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- Developing volunteering and active citizenship through our Volunteer Centre and our work on Employee Volunteering and older people’s involvement in Greater Manchester
- Policy and influence work including the city’s Voluntary Sector Assembly and relationships with the Council, the local NHS, businesses and others
- Distributing grants and building partnerships
- Celebrating and championing the sector through our Spirit of Manchester programme
What is striking when you read the history – particularly the Golden Jubilee booklet produced in 1969 – is that the place is fundamentally the most important thing and has been from day one. Local voluntary sector infrastructure is about places (including their diverse communities), supporting and encouraging social action because of the difference it makes in places. The history shows how this infrastructure organisation adapted, changed and organised to play whatever would be the most useful role through the Great Depression, World War II, the post-war recovery and creation of the welfare state, social and economic changes over the last 60 years and even the impacts of recession and austerity in this decade.

This is the hidden history of towns and cities up and down the country: in most, there is some version of what we do. I’m a trustee of the national membership body for infrastructure – NAVCA – which allows me to see how so many members have created their own version of infrastructure, but they are all locally owned, locally shaped, rooted in and identified with a place: part of the architecture. They create a space where those interested in social action come together; an organisation which takes a lead in channelling resources and support to where they are needed (the leverage we can create is huge). We champion practical action to support social change. That emphasis on practical is most important: we are policy-led but want most of all to be pragmatic and useful – meaningful change. I firmly believe charitable anchor institutions that tackle inequality and address all forms of poverty in our cities, towns and rural areas are still needed.

I’ve been looking again at the People’s Powerhouse Charter and the ambition to transform the fortunes of the North and its people. A risk is that it becomes or seems only a plea to London/Whitehall to let us get our hands on power, when in fact it is about changing the way the North itself works too. As I’ve said before, devolution shouldn’t just be about moving power to a different set of institutions which are only different in that they are further up the M1. The principles of inclusion (of different places and people), creating meaningful change, building trust – all these are in our gift to act on already.
Infrastructure bodies act as an honest friend to other local institutions, working behind the scenes to collaborate, to share and to act. We build relationships and influence decisions in ways which are rarely seen or acknowledged. Partly because it means having those difficult conversations and doing so over a long period, influencing and persuading. We are part of the wider ecosystem which helps improve thinking and avoid poor decisions. In a people’s powerhouse, these institutions would be valued and celebrated far more than they currently are.

Often infrastructure organisations act as a co-ordinator (something between compere, receptionist, wrangler, referee and bouncer) between public bodies who want to engage communities in policy and decision-making and the many local community groups and voluntary organisations where people come together. As a system, it is a means of creating genuine diversity and inclusion, building trust and understanding. The voluntary groups, charities, community organisations and social enterprises want to help with informing and shaping – but too often there is a promise of genuine involvement only to have their time, enthusiasm and insight wasted on simply getting words into a policy document. Moving away from that means letting go of some power and devolving it to local people. Supporting others to have power is a huge risk, possibly even allowing people the space to make mistakes and learn.

Although Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service was founded in the wake of World War 1 to tackle issues such as poverty, housing and unemployment, the work of local charities and community groups is also about hope. Social action makes places good to live in – it is about building places and communities which everyone can share, spaces where our children and young people can play, learn and develop. It is about inclusion, diversity, enabling people – a characteristic of our welcoming, forward-looking cities. That’s our offer for the future of Manchester, Salford and from my many counterparts across the other communities in the North, urban, rural and inbetween. After all, we’ve been working on this for over 100 years now.

Mike Wild, Chief Executive
Manchester Voluntary Sector Assembly: Working with Young People

Wednesday 18 September
Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service Training Centre, Cassidy Close, Manchester, M4 5HU

This Voluntary Sector Assembly is an opportunity to discuss how work with young people in the city has been impacted by funding cuts and how the sector has been able to respond to that, and also how different ‘pockets’ of activity might be better coordinated or joined up more effectively. You will hear about Help Through Crisis, a joint project involving Manchester Mind, the GM Coalition for Disabled People and Centrepoint, which supports young people. Included in this is the issue of how the project learning can be built into other work once the project funding ceases.

Becky Bainbridge from Reclaim will also be speaking about their work to support young people, particularly in Moss Side and Hulme, to develop their leadership skills.

This event would be useful to anyone in the Manchester voluntary, community and social enterprise sector who works with young people.

Draft programme
1.30 - 1.45pm Welcome and introduction
1.45 - 2.00pm Introduction and scene setting – Manchester Mind and Young Manchester
2.00 - 2.30pm Showcase Help Through Crisis project – Manchester Mind
2.30 - 2.45pm Break
2.45 - 3.30pm Workshops:
   1. Most significant change – types of outcomes and stories
   2. Coordinating young people’s services across Manchester
   3. Young people’s voice
3.30 - 4.00pm Investing in young people as future leaders – Becky Bainbridge, Reclaim
4.00 - 4.30pm Final plenary: How do we work in partnership across the city and nationally?
4.30pm Close

Click here to register
We’re really excited to be launching our new GMOPN guide to participation later this month. This guide will be based on the findings from our previous two network events held in Manchester and Leigh. All of our members will receive a copy of this guide and we will be sharing it as widely as possible. We’re really looking forward to seeing the impact it will have in ensuring that older people have positive participation experiences.

The GMOPN project team and five members of the Action Group recently attended the Ageing Better 2019 conference in Sheffield, where we had the opportunity to deliver a workshop on the topic of Older People’s Voice. This was a fantastic chance to share the work that we’ve been doing in Greater Manchester and to hear from older people from all across the country.

In August, we will be having our first focus group for our new Positive Ageing Imagery Project, where we will be looking at why stereotypical images of wrinkly hands that reinforce negativity around ageing are used in the media to represent older people. We want to replace these images with more positive ones that celebrate older people and ageing. Helen Morris, who is kindly volunteering her time to work with us, will be facilitating the project and we are really looking forward to sharing ideas and views about ageism in the media.

If you would like to get involved with the GMOPN or to find out more about what we do, please contact GMOPN@macc.org.uk or telephone 0161 834 9823.
Hello everyone, I’m Thomas Waring the brand new Project Co-ordinator for HOUR Manchester!

What is the HOUR Manchester project?
Everybody has a skill, a gift or a talent that they can share. Despite this the way our economy works and the way communities are organised means that there are far too few opportunities for communities to come together and to share their skills their time with one another. As a result there is vast untapped potential in our communities.

HOUR Manchester will encourage and assist people to come together, share their skills and support one another. This will empower communities and will reduce our reliance on money, as people will be able to share those things with each other that do not rely on a healthy economy: time, skills, gifts and talents.

A key part of this project is supporting the development of a city-wide network of time banks, ensuring that all individuals and organisations can get involved in timebanking.

What is time banking?
Timebanking is a concept that encourages people to share their time and their skills with one another. Within a time bank every hour you spend helping someone is logged or ‘banked’. You can then spend these hours banked on receiving someone else’s help.

For example you might offer through the time bank to assist someone with computer support. The time bank would then match you with somebody who required help with their computer, and the time you spent helping people with their computers would be banked.

So if you spent three hours helping people with their computers you would then be able to spend these banked hours to request three hours of time bank members help. For example you may need help with your painting and decorating, well now you can request three hours of people’s time who can help with this.

Within this model everyone is valued equally, as an hour of time spent helping or sharing is worth an hour in return. People of all ages and all abilities can join in as everybody has a skill, a gift or a talent that they can share.

For more information: Email: thomas@macc.org.uk
Visit: www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/news/hour-manchester
It’s the run up to the **Spirit of Manchester Awards** and this year’s shortlist have been busy making a start on their short films that will be shown on the evening. The films will be voted on by the audience to determine the winner in each category. They are a great way to showcase all the brilliant work being done in Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector.

Have a look at last year’s films: [www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/spirit-manchester/spirit-manchester-awards-2018](http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/spirit-manchester/spirit-manchester-awards-2018)

Everyone shortlisted is offered the opportunity to attend our two day film training to help them plan their film, practice with the equipment, learn best practice, get ideas from each other and then, after collecting their footage, come back and edit their film with our support.

**Manchester Community Reporter training programmes** are commissioned and developed with organisations to fit their projects. Community Reporting has three interlinked models – Storytelling, Co-production and Insight.

**Community Reporting for Storytelling** provides opportunities and support for people to use digital tools to tell their own stories in their own ways.

**Community Reporting for Co-Production** sees our trainers collaboratively produce with Community Reporters a piece of media that creates a dialogue of different views on a topic that can then be used to create a conversation on the way services are provided.

**Community Reporting for Insight** uses digital tools to gather user voice and grassroots perspectives to ascertain key trends and inform research findings and service redesign.

**For more information** contact Hannah at: [hannah@macc.org.uk](mailto:hannah@macc.org.uk) Tel: 0161 834 9823

**Examples of our projects:** [www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/manchester-community-reporters](http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/manchester-community-reporters)
It has been a fantastic last quarter at Volunteer Centre Manchester and the highlight for us was Volunteers Week 2019. It was a week long celebration that was a little bit different for us this year with us taking a break from our usual and very popular ‘Volunteer Fair’ event but we still had plenty of activities and presentations.

To top off the week we awarded nearly 900 Reward and Recognition certificates to volunteers and organisations that involve them, all signed by the Lord Mayor of Manchester himself, Abid Latif Chohan. The Reward and Recognition highlights and celebrates all the fantastic work that volunteers have put in across our fabulous city over the past year and was a lovely way to round off the week.

At the Volunteer Centre we love engaging with the people we work closely with and support, and this is reflected in our social media. We now have over 6200 followers on Twitter and over 1700 Facebook followers that we connect with regularly and would like to thank you for your continued support.

And last but not least, it’s great to be working with the Manchester Volunteer Coordinator’s Forum on their new website Volunteering Culture, due to launch in September this year. This dynamic website will bring together all volunteering opportunities in Manchester to make it easier for people to find and get involved with volunteering in museums, galleries at festivals across the city and region. It’s hoped that this website, heavily informed and influenced by current cultural volunteers will encourage a greater diversity of people to be part of cultural institutions and events in Manchester. We’re really excited to be powering the application process behind it and are really enjoying working more closely with partners in the cultural sector.
Working towards more diverse community organisations in Manchester

By Phil James, Sarah Whitelegg and Mike Wild

In 2017, the Charity Commission published a report called Taken on Trust: the Awareness and Effectiveness of Charity Board members in England & Wales. Among a number of issues, it confirmed what we had already seen: a lack of diversity among charity board members. The report shows that the majority of board members are white, male, older and have above average income and levels of education.

If this describes your organisation as well, then it is time to start putting in place a diversity action plan. Of course, that is not to say that your current board is not effective, or that all those fitting the above profile should be unceremoniously kicked out of their seats! It doesn’t mean that your current board can’t make an enormous contribution to the organisation they serve. Rather, it is time to start thinking about whether your board actively reflects the people and communities your organisation serves and explores how you can benefit from a broader range of local people bringing assets and skills from within Manchester’s diverse communities?

In reality, many communities/groups are historically on the social margins, outside decision-making structures, influence and visibility. As a city, Manchester is a very diverse place and has a generally very positive story to tell about being proud of the many communities which live, work and play alongside each other day to day but there is more to do. One of the things we can do as community organisations is encourage more diversity in our own decision making processes.

We’re going to use the term ‘board’ for the rest of this article but it applies to any kind of governing committee, management group, trustees, executive board or steering group.

So, what is meant by ‘diversity’?
In terms of this issue ‘diversity’ refers to the degree to which a board comprises a wide and varied range of backgrounds and interests, taking into account issues of language, ethnicity and culture, gender, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status and disability.

Diversity is often put alongside the equalities agenda but is much wider than the protected characteristics defined in the Equalities Act. A frequent trap organisations fall into is to see diversity as of having a fixed – trying to find some kind of formula (‘one of each’) which tick the box of adequate representation. It’s not practical or useful to do that: it would mean governance structures would be so enormous they would cease to be of any use at all within the organisations they serve!
Instead, what you can do is to think about the particular make-up of your board and what approach to diversity you need to put in place. Here are some questions to think about:

- What is your organisation’s primary purpose? What have you been set up to do?
- What communities are in the area of benefit that your organisation covers?
- What do you know about the individuals and groups you work with?

Why should your board become more diverse?
It should be obvious that, at the very least, a good board needs to include the voices of the people the organisation works with. Those voices need to be heard at every level of your organisation. For example, if your activities are mainly for young black people, make sure there are young black people on the board. Disability groups have pioneered the User Led Organisation model i.e. one that is run and controlled by people who use support services including disabled people, mental health service users, people with learning difficulties, older people, and their families and carers.

If the people you support are below the legal age for being a director/board member, then you can find other opportunities/roles/advisory groups through which to hear their voices and insights. Key questions:
- How do you encourage people to join your board?
- Who gets to talk to your board? What voices does your board get to hear from?

Increasing the variety of people who serve on your board/organisation means taking up the opportunity to tap into a rich pool of talented individuals in communities across Manchester. Diversity and inclusion helps you bring new voices, experiences and approaches to the decision-making process, add depth to existing board skills and ideas and, perhaps most importantly, brings the board closer to properly representing its stakeholders.

Greater diversity will also:
- Expand your personal/professional networks available to your group
- Help you to reach your ‘target audience’
- Increase the profile of your group
- Build support for what you are doing in key areas of Manchester

A number of national studies have found that having a diverse board makes good business sense. Diversity of knowledge, insight and thinking brings about better organisational performance – both financial and non-financial.
How can our board become more diverse?
The first step is to think about what diversity needs to mean for your organisation: how can you reflect the communities, partners and stakeholders you work with? The Governance Code has useful information to help you do this.

- Begin by making sure your whole board/organisation is supportive of the process of creating greater inclusiveness and diversity: this is everyone’s responsibility – but also recognise that being inclusive is a way of behaving, not a task. It is never a ‘finished’ piece of work. There are always people who aren’t at the table and voices which aren’t heard because communities change constantly. Being inclusive is about recognising that and constantly making an effort to respond.

- Develop an Action Plan and relevant policies/procedures and use them to help monitor your progress.

- Share your equality and diversity policy or a statement. This provides a level of transparency and accountability and tells the story of what you are trying to do. Ask people to hold you to account for what you have promised to do!

- Skills and knowledge are important in recruiting new board members but they are not the whole story. Fresh perspective is incredibly valuable and tends to lend itself to the asking of interesting and useful questions, often leading to reflection and positive change. If you only ever recruit ‘professional’ experienced board members, you won’t achieve the diversity we all need (at any level) and it only increases the problem. We need to value curiosity, enthusiasm and community knowledge, not just the traditional things like financial skills. You will of course need people who have some existing knowledge and skills about how to run an organisation – that’s sensible and helps manage risk – but they should be alongside other people who have other knowledge, skills, connections and insights and should ensure that those are collectively agreed as being of equal value.

- Reach out to your partners and local communities and ask for their involvement.

- Seek external help or an outside review of your recruitment and governance processes: new people can often see barriers and opportunities that you can’t see about your own organisation and can help you take a beneficial and different approach to advertising and recruitment. This could be through support services or just linking up to another organisation that has successfully diversified its board.
• Be prepared to listen to feedback – it’s not always comfortable but it’s important and useful. Have a look at charity think tank NPC’s published collection of essays and podcasts called *Walking the talk: Putting workplace equality, diversity and inclusion into practice*.

• Think about opportunities for shadowing, mentoring and co-opting new board members: make room for people to learn and grow into board member roles.

• Ease new board members into the role: ensuring a good induction process will ensure the new board member will have access to ongoing advice, encouragement and support.

• If there are diversity gaps on your board that remain vacant no matter how actively you recruit, then think about alternative ways that your Board can hear and engage with voices and perspectives which aren’t represented at the table – sometimes it’s about building relationships that may eventually lead to a new board member, not always expecting to recruit that ‘ready-made’ board member. Recruit for potential, not perfection.

• Don’t be put off if you don’t manage to recruit the range of diversity your board needs but do keep trying and do be open to hearing ideas and about any barriers to recruitment so that you can adjust and improve your recruitment process each time. Ask for feedback on your recruitment process and learn from it.

At Macc, we have recently been through our own Trustee recruitment drive. One of our aims was to widen our Board’s skills and experience and to increase the diversity of our Board. We’ve achieved some of this and have recruited some excellent board members but we know we need to continue to work to further increase our board’s diversity and in our organisation more generally. Our effort on this hasn’t stopped. It’s also reflected in Macc’s drive to recognise and increase a different type of leadership in the sector, one that is not focussed only on traditional positions and roles of leadership and power but also actively includes other types of leadership in our sector and ways to increase leadership opportunities (of all kinds) for those who often experience significant barriers. We’ve been writing blogs on these subjects as we go along.

All of us in the sector need to be thinking about less traditional routes into our governance and how we can support a sector of recruitment and mentoring that is inclusive, welcoming, nurturing and practical.
Over the last few months, we have been asking the sector to complete our training needs analysis, which gives everyone the opportunity to tell us what they are looking for when it comes to training for their organisation, staff or themselves. It is clear from the results of this year’s analysis that training is still important.

The majority of the responses were very positive about the current training provision we offer which was great to find with many quoting reputation, trust, knowledgeable staff and a relaxed environment as the main reasons for why they chose Macc for training. The preference is very much for face-to-face sessions however, it is noted that e-learning / digital webinars are also favoured in some circumstances.

Encouraging is the fact that a number of those who responded said they attended between one and three workshops across the year and more importantly have been able to use what they had learned by successfully implementing this into their day-to-day work practices.

Of course, along with mentioning what is great about Macc training it is also an opportunity to let us know where improvements could be made and that is great as it really helps us learn and develop ourselves. Comments around the usefulness, frequency of workshops and the varied levels will also be considered. A couple of workshops will be reviewed, run a little more often and we will try to ensure that throughout our advertising we are clear at what level the workshop is and who it is aimed at.

We did receive comments around refreshments and our training rooms, which we are already working on by trialling fruit teas in all of our rooms. Unfortunately, being in the middle of some heavy construction has made our rooms a bit noisy at times but I am sure that you appreciate that this is out of our control.

So what were the trends for this year?
Out of all the responses received, the following topics are rated as top three.

**Governance and leadership skills**
1. Leadership skills
2. Performance management
3. Strategic planning

**Managing risk**
1. Safeguarding
2. Data protection and confidentiality
3. Equality and diversity

**Business skills**
1. Community engagement
2. Monitoring / evaluation / outputs / outcomes / impact
3. Managing and supporting staff

**Funding and finance**
1. Demonstrating impact
2. Fundraising and writing funding applications
3. Writing funding strategies
**Policy and influence**
1. Community development
2. Social value
3. Our Manchester strength based approach

**Volunteering**
1. Understanding mental health and wellbeing
2. Risk assessment
3. Recruit, motivate and retain volunteers

**Other**
1. Gathering stories
2. Lottery workshops
3. Video / media

**What happens next…?**
We will look to review and develop new workshops working with these results – you will see that we have already made a start in scheduling workshops from September onwards:
[www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/training](http://www.manchestercommunitycentral.org/support-groups/training)

I will be exploring how we can make better use of digital technology and maybe include top 10 tips videos or introduction videos to our workshops.

Recently I have come across relevant webinar sessions (by other training providers); these are now added to the training calendar on the Manchester Community Central website. I will continue to add any other relevant webinars and look to design a dedicated webpage for e-learning opportunities.

**Finally…**
Thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the survey. Please do continue to let us know what training you are looking for and if we can offer it we will and if not then I may know of someone who can.

Don't forget to keep in touch with any training that you may deliver yourselves or come across as relevant for the sector – the more we can get on the training calendar the better.

**Cheryl McAlister**
**Training Coordinator**
Email: training@mcrcommunitycentral.org
Tel: 0333 321 3021
The Manchester Deaf Centre (MDC) is a registered charity and a private company limited by guarantee; you can find out more about us here:
www.manchesterdeafcentre.com

MDC has established services that are designed around the bespoke needs of Deaf people. These services endeavour to promote positive wellbeing and resilience, while also providing access to information and services pertaining to advocacy, employment, youth and community. MDC also provides professional communication services to support those who wish to communicate between English and British Sign Language. Our Communication Services empower mainstream providers to become more accessible and engaging to their Deaf service-users.

The Manchester Deaf Centre is also considered to be a social sanctuary where Deaf people can gather on a weekly basis to interact, socialise and learn with their peers. MDC also provides a multitude of training opportunities for both Deaf and hearing people, in an effort to bring communities together, while also striving to improve the quality of lives and experiences of Deaf people.

MDC is a charitable organisation with a Board of Trustees with 60% Deaf representation. Our Trustees therefore have an innate understanding and empathy of the needs of deaf people.

“In 2011 the Manchester Deaf Centre was a small to medium sized enterprise facing imminent closure. Over the past eight years we have fought for our survival and are now working towards a position of sustainability with an outlook of longevity. During our most tumultuous times, Macc has provided Manchester Deaf Centre with integral support in the form of consultancy, advice and also through the provision of necessary training ventures e.g. governance, social enterprise and social values topics. Finding income and funding has always been challenging, however Macc have supported in equipping MDC with necessary skills to seek and secure additional funding streams.”
Furthermore, as an organisation we are very pleased to be nominated in the category of ‘Service User Involving Organisation’ for Macc’s 2019 Spirit of Manchester Awards. This recognition and celebration of our contribution to the Greater Manchester community inevitably raises the profile of Deaf people and promotes awareness where it’s needed most.

Macc has provided Manchester Deaf Centre with a variety of support including:

- Developing our Business Plan (and updating this document)
- Funding Application support (critical friend)
- Strategic Planning
- Governance/Trustee Training
- Advice on Membership Structure
- Safeguarding Training
- Advice on Management
- Spirit of Manchester Documentation

"Macc has played a pivotal role in supporting Manchester Deaf Centre in its journey towards sustainability. With expert business planning support MDC was able to secure £250,000 from the National Lottery (along with other funding from Manchester City Council) thereby sustaining our services across the next few years.

We have always found Macc to be accessible as I can phone and email them with any query and they would support or refer to another organisation appropriate to our query."
Odd Arts uses theatre to challenge and change the way people think, behave and see the world. I (Rebecca, CEO) founded the organisation with two friends in 2004. We were clueless in anything linked to starting a company, but full of enthusiasm! Our initial company status (company limited by guarantee) was a messy set up that we eventually converted to something more suitable, when Community Interest Companies (CIC) were an option.

Being a CIC served us well as a small community organisation, but over time we also saw its limitations. As many of you will know, a number of funding streams won't look beyond Charity status, meaning we were limiting our possibility and income streams, as well as having greater financial liabilities than charities (even though all our work was charitable).

Odd Arts has seen a steady growth over the last three years, at the same time of greater competition for funds. I was daunted by the task of setting up a charity, in some ways feeling as clueless as I did back in 2004! Both myself and the Board had questions: Was it safe? Would it really help? Would I lose all control? Was it feasible? Were we capable?

At this point we contacted Macc and shared our vast questions and concerns with Stuart! Stuart has been an incredible help, where he initially: Listened to our fears; shared broad status / constitutional options; focused our mind on the real opportunities and threats of staying where we were verses moving to charity status. On greater investigation it became clear that Odd Arts would benefit from becoming a CIO, and if not now, we would only need to do it in the near future.

Macc guided us with links and support on formal documents (breaking these down into bitesize information that we could understand). With face-to-face support, including attendance at key Board meetings, Macc saw Odd Arts through the initial ‘idea’ stage to where we are now – a Charity Incorporated Organisation.

We are incredibly grateful for the guidance offered and without Macc's help I feel quite sure we would still be trying to negotiate the complex language and paperwork that goes hand in hand with a new legal set-up. Macc guidance has meant we have spent more time delivering work with beneficiaries, and also created greater opportunities for the future.
As reported in our last newsletter, the Policy and Influence team has been looking at organisations that carry out representation work in the city. Over the summer we’ll be working to update our website with details of this, and but in the meantime you can find out more about the groups where Macc itself acts a VCSE representation [here](#). Each group shows the main representatives’ contact details, so if you want further information, please contact them directly, or email: karen@macc.org.uk

Mike Wild, Macc’s CEO, is taking part in the Poverty Truth Commission which brings organisations from the public, business and VCSE sectors together with people with lived experience of poverty, to understand the true impacts of poverty on people’s lives and agree actions that can be taken to mitigate the worst effects. The Commission was formally launched on the 27 June and will be gathering evidence throughout the summer. There will be an event to present its finding and agree next steps. The commission is being led by Cheetham Hill Advice Centre, so for more information contact them, or follow them on twitter [@TruthPoverty](#)

In May Macc worked with Manchester City Council and partners from across the city to launch HOUR Manchester. This aims to bring together organisations and individuals from across the city to look at how we can re-organise ourselves around a culture of helping, sharing, exchange and reciprocity. This will include mutual support, Timebanking and a community economy and will build upon the skills, gifts and talents that exist across Manchester by identifying, valuing and connecting what already exists and what is strong in our communities. This will now be led by our Active Communities Team. Please contact the new HOUR Manchester Project Coordinator, Thomas Waring for more information email: thomas@macc.org.uk
Organisations that want to find out more about health and social care work in their neighbourhoods will have new opportunities to do so via their Community Explorers meetings and the Integrated Neighbourhood Teams in each area. We’ve also developed a new training course to help people understand the key issues for these topics, including person centred care approaches, co-production and social value. The course will be delivered by Nigel Rose. To find out more and to book a place, go to our website.

Danielle and Claire have been working with Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Conexus Healthcare to provide Active Signposting training for GP receptionist and admin staff. Active Signposting is a model of care that aims to ensure that patients have clear information about a range of services available both inside and outside of GP Practices. The training focuses on supporting staff to develop the skills and confidence to ‘Actively Signpost’ patients to alternative services that better meet their health and social care needs. The first four neighbourhoods to pilot this training programme are: Ardwick and Longsight; Gorton and Levenshulme; Miles Platting, Newton Heath, Moston and City Centre; and Wythenshawe. Promoting the value of VCSE sector services to General Practitioners, encouraging them to think about the diverse range of things that keep us well, is central to this piece of work.

Nesta has been working with Manchester Local Care Organisation on a series of 100 Day Challenges. Each challenge takes place within a neighbourhood, and brings together a team of individuals interested in the health and wellbeing of the residents that live there. Wave one has just concluded and team members involved in this wave include representatives from Manchester’s health and social care system, primary care, social care, mental health, nursing, the VCSE sector, as well as people with lived experience. This is an opportunity to step into action on a real health or care issue in neighbourhoods. Rapidly testing ideas in 100 days to make a real difference for people in Manchester is the aim of this work. Each team receives support from a ‘Catalyst’ and Danielle, the Policy and Influence Team’s Health and Care Development Worker, will be a Catalyst for Gorton and Levenshulme. We’ll be sharing information about this via social media and our P&I newsletters, but do contact danielle@macc.org.uk if you’d like to know more.
On Monday 22 July, Macc and Salford CVS hosted ‘A Tale of Two Cities – A Century of Civic Action’, a celebration and reflection event. The day marked the 100th anniversary of the original voluntary sector infrastructure organisation, Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service, and over 110 people gathered at the People’s History Museum.

The recent Voluntary Sector Assembly event, ‘A Meeting of Minds’, took place at Band on the Wall on 3 June. It looked at current mental health service provision across Manchester and examined the VCSE role with case studies from a range of organisations looking at different ways of delivering mental health services in the community and workplaces. The feedback was very positive and the planning has started for the next VSA in September on the subject of services for young people.

You can sign up to the Policy and Influence Team’s quarterly bulletin here, and we will soon be launching P&I Shorts, brief weekly email bulletins about opportunities to get involved in policy and influence work in the city.

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