Now open for applications
Macc is pleased to announce that the Spirit of Manchester Fund 2020 is now open for mini-grant applications.

This year’s funding pot contains £4,500 which we are offering as nine £500 mini-grants aimed at helping local people to feel connected to each other and more active in their communities.

To be eligible to apply for a £500 mini-grant, organisations must be voluntary, community or social enterprise groups based and working in the city of Manchester with a yearly income less than £100,000.

We are particularly keen to receive applications from groups for whom this would be their first grant and / or from organisations representing minority communities of interest / identity.

The deadline for bid submissions is midday on 5 March.

For more information and to apply click here
The Manchester Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA) is a series of quarterly events for voluntary, community and faith groups, and social enterprises in the city. Its purpose is to strengthen the voice of the voluntary and community sector, improve communication across the sector, increase our influence on strategic and policy decisions that affect individuals and communities, provide opportunities for the sector to learn, and to support collaboration between organisations.

The next VSA will take place on the afternoon of **Monday 30 March** and is for the VCSE sector to discuss and agree what we want and need in order to increase the impact and effectiveness of social prescribing. Together we will write a manifesto which will be presented to Manchester Health and Care Commissioning and Manchester Local Care Organisation.

More information and a link to register your interest in the event will be available soon.
The network has been really busy over the last few months! We’ve recently published our new report ‘Age Proud: Exploring Positive Ageing’ which is based on the Age Proud event we held in October 2019. The event explored the negative ways that older people are portrayed in the media and aimed to create a more positive narrative around ageing. We would like to thank everyone who attended the event and contributed to our findings. We hope that our findings and recommendations will be used to help build an Age Proud Movement in Greater Manchester! Click here to read the report.

We have also been planning for our next large network event ‘Influencing the agenda: what matters to older people in Greater Manchester’, which will take place on the 20 February at Friends’ Meeting House. This event will be an opportunity for our members to engage with the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham along with other key influencers! The event will also showcase the work of the network over the last 5 years. To find out more about the event please click here.

If you would like to find out more about the network and the work that we do, please contact us on 0161 834 9823 or email: GMOPN@macc.org.uk
I’m Tom Waring and I am the lead on a project called HOUR Manchester.

At HOUR Manchester we recognise that there are so many things that people and organisations in Manchester have that they could share with one another, but there aren’t enough opportunities to do this.

For example, every household in a street may have a lawnmower that is only used a couple of times a month. This isn’t sustainable for our planet or cost effective for people, so couldn’t a street come together to purchase one lawnmower and share this between them?

Also, the charities, voluntary groups and social enterprises across the city do not currently have a simple and accessible way to exchange expertise and resources with other organisations across the city. In a sector based on helping others, imagine the potential if a charity could offer the free use of a room in their building in free exchange for training from another organisation.

These are just two examples of the kinds of initiatives HOUR Manchester is developing. We want to increase the opportunities for people and organisations to share and exchange across Manchester, building an alternative economy where people can access support and resources offered by others without money.

22 January 2020 marked 6 months of the HOUR Manchester project and so far we have found an enormous appetite for sharing across the city. People have recognised that an alternative economy based on helping each other out could have a real impact.

Want to learn how you can get involved with this? Come along to our training on 12 March, 12pm-3pm click here to book your place.

Thomas Waring, HOUR Manchester Project Coordinator

Have any questions or what to get involved? Email at thomas@macc.org.uk or via Twitter @hour_manchester Click here for the latest updates on our website.
Volunteer Centre Manchester

There is plenty to look forward to from the Volunteer Centre this quarter. First up we have our Volunteer Coordinator Forum (VCF) that is available to book on. The VCF is a chance for people who look after volunteers, whether as their paid job or as a volunteer themselves, to come together to share good practice, offer peer support, have a cuppa and a catch up, the date of the next VCF is:

Friday 6 March, 10am - 12pm
Age UK Manchester, Openshaw Resource Centre, 10 Catherine Street, Manchester, M11 1WF

Please note that you will need to book on these beforehand if you wish to attend.

In addition to the VCF we are also about to begin planning for this years Volunteer’s Week, which takes place from 1-7 June as it does each year. There are lots of ideas we want to pursue and we intend to make the event bigger and better than ever before. As part of the planning for this year we are also part of the Volunteers Week national working group to make sure we are up to date with all that’s happening.

And last but not least for now, we are looking at developing our training programme for 2020. We currently deliver training around Volunteers and the Law, Recruiting and Retaining Volunteers, and Managing Volunteers, so if you are interested in these keep a look out for more information on our website.
At the start of the month, we mentioned a few things the team is working on and will continue with this year. Not least, this included, of course, our support service for groups! However, in addition to bespoke and individual group 1:1 support, the team also gets involved with various other themes and projects around the city and you can read more about some of these below.

Looking back at the last quarter (October-December 2019), the support we were most asked for was on funding and governance. Getting enough money to run an organisation and running it well always feature high on the agenda. Within governance, the most asked for support was on helping you to choose the right legal structure. Third on your list was business planning.

As ever, the team strive to provide useful and realistic support. This means we don’t just ask you what support you have identified that you need, we also use our skills and expertise to dig a bit deeper and help you identify where else support may be needed and which bits you need to tackle first.

Although funding and legal structures are high on the list of support, often there’s a need to clarify the vision and aims of a group in order to be successful at funding and have the right information to make your decision on a legal structure. With this in mind, a number of support sessions provided last quarter focused first on strategic planning and visioning to help you plan a clear path for the future, or as one group put it:

‘I found this meeting very helpful. It helped to put everything into a structured form, bring all our ideas and projects into a logical form.’
North Manchester Together

This is a working group and a new mailing list arising out of the North Manchester Inquiry of 2019. If you live, work or volunteer in North Manchester, sign up to the mailing list here to keep in touch about the latest North Manchester support offers, information and opportunities. The geographical areas included in this work are: Crumpsall, Harpurhey, Higher Blackley, Charlestown, Ancoats and Beswick, Miles Platting and Newton Heath, Moston, Clayton and Openshaw and Cheetham.

North Manchester Together is a new partnership between the local voluntary and public sector and was created to take action on five areas of work in North and East Manchester:
1. Strengthening voluntary community groups
2. Getting people involved
3. Improving funding for the voluntary and community sector
4. Communication, information and networking
5. A long term approach to working together

Macc is part of the working group which wants to work with voluntary and community groups, social enterprises, faith organisations and local people in North Manchester to help make it an even better place to live, work and visit. Look out for further North Manchester Together communications in February (and don’t forget to sign up here if you haven’t done so already).

Community Asset Transfer (otherwise known as ‘CAT’)

Continuing to work closely with Corporate Properties to develop a consistent approach to CAT in the city and support for groups applying. This includes looking at how to improve the experience for groups and reduce any repetitive requests on their time (e.g. looking at how standard information could be better shared in a timely way).

Alongside this policy work, the team offers direct support to groups getting ready for asset transfer or undertaking an asset transfer. This includes 1:1 support and training offers.
For many organisations, January to March is the final quarter of the financial year and the beginning of a frantic period of reckoning – assessing progress against annual targets and determining whether or not things are on track, behind or ahead of schedule, and what needs to be done in this final quarter to ensure the year as a whole can be regarded as a success. How often do we remark on the frenzy of road works that seem to start and pot holes that get filled around this time, for example? Many finance departments will be instructing colleagues to submit invoices and expense claims before the end of the year so that spending can be tied up, and monies due are gathered in before the final day of reckoning.

The need to have to pull all this information together into financial reports, monitoring and evaluation of projects etc. can feel like an irksome burden placed upon already overworked staff and volunteers by distant bureaucrats in ivory towers, with nothing better to do than shuffle paper and juggle data, rather than letting frontline, service delivery organisations get on with doing what they were set up to do.

Whatever your views on monitoring, evaluation and reporting though, it needs to happen. For many it is a direct consequence of their legal status – registered charities and companies for example will need to submit information for the public record to their relevant regulator in order to retain their status. So, given that it needs to be done, can we turn the negative into a positive? Can we view the annual reporting as an opportunity to create something of worth rather than a dry set of documents which will be filed away, never to see the light of day?

Well, the short answer is yes we can! If you operate in the public domain, lots of people will have an interest in how your organisation is doing – your staff, volunteers and beneficiaries for a start, but wider stakeholders too such as partner organisations, contractors, local authority, local councillors, local residents etc etc. Your stakeholder net could be spread further than you realise!
So, given that you need to pull all this information together, why not make it work for you? Go above and beyond the regulatory requirements and produce something that will wow your stakeholders, inspire your staff team, motivate your volunteers and impress your funders. Create a positive energy, celebrate your achievements, generate momentum for the following years. If your governing document says you need to hold an AGM – make it a celebration event rather than a dull affair where you force unwilling victims onto your management committee! If you don’t have to hold an AGM, have a celebration event anyway! Take the highlights from your reports to the regulators and turn them into a glossy brochure or think about how you could drip feed the information out via social media.

Your annual reports contain a great deal of valuable information which could really help promote your organisation – use it imaginatively. The hardest part is generally getting the information in the first place so it makes sense to maximise the value in it once you’ve got it.

Links to reporting requirements
Registered charities
www.gov.uk/send-charity-annual-return
www.gov.uk/guidance/prepare-a-charity-annual-return

Registered companies
www.gov.uk/file-your-confirmation-statement-with-companies-house
www.gov.uk/government/publications/confirmation-statement-cs01
www.gov.uk/government/publications/life-of-a-company-annual-requirements

CICs

Monitoring and evaluation
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/organisation/impact
https://knowhow.ncvo.org.uk/how-to/how-to-develop-a-monitoring-and-evaluation-framework
www.resourcecentre.org.uk/information/monitoring-and-evaluation/
FAST has been delivering community based support services in Cheetham Hill and Longsight since 1993. We provide advice, learning, employability skills and supported activities within the local community and have delivered a range of employment related and community capacity building support programmes since 2003.

We have supported participants with significant barriers to sustained employment. Working on projects such as: New Deal for Disabled People (NDDP), Community Task Force (CTF) for 18 – 24 year olds and a range of targeted interventions such as: Black Minority Ethnic (BME), Mental Health and Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) which consisted of paid placements for service users.

Having become a well-respected support organisation in the area FAST has seen increased demand for its services. It has now extended its provision to deliver confidence-building, language learning, understanding local services, socialising, ICT, employability, vocational skills and money management. Its remit has expanded to support an increased range of BME residents: people suffering poor mental health; victims of domestic abuse and trafficking; people at risk of poor health through poverty; people subjected to coercion and control; people caught in the poverty trap unable to take the first steps into employment or safety.

FAST contacted Macc to provide some clarity around governance and to do some work on their mission/objects as their governing document was very old and not fully reflective of who they are now as an organisation.

Macc ran some training on governance in general, including a brief look at different organisational structures. Macc also delivered a planning session around their objects with a focus on prioritising what was most needed by the local community.

We are now clearer about our structure and the relationship between trustees, officers, staff and volunteers, and we also have a renewed sense of purpose. Following the support from Macc we have been able to redraft our governing document to reflect who we are now and what we think we need to do in the future.

“It was brilliant – very good support. The training and planning sessions really opened our eyes as to how passionate we all are about the work we do and the way forwards for us.”

“Going over our governing document made things clearer for us regarding changes that had occurred over the years without us realising and gave us renewed vigour and sense of purpose for the future.”
Manchester Rape Crisis provides a range of confidential support services run by women for women and girls who have experienced sexual violence at any time in their lives.

The manager, who had been asked by a board member to present a 'business case' for creating a new staff post, contacted Macc for guidance on what this might entail.

Macc explained that ‘business case’ was a phrase much used in the public sector, less so in the third sector, and that it was about presenting a formal justification for some course of action, usually spending money or awarding funding.

Key questions to ask were:
- How much would this cost?
- What positive difference would this make?
- Would there be any negative effects?
- Could we achieve the desired results in some other way?
- What would be the cost of doing nothing?

We spent half an hour together round a flip-chart, and at the end of it we had a business case.

Having looked at the business case the board decided we could go ahead and recruit for the new post.

“I felt really listened to and understood. I was nervous about the process of writing a business case as I have never written one before. Rick de-mystified the whole process and helped me to clarify what I needed to think about when writing a business case and how to structure and write one in the future. He then provided me with a document to present to the board which enabled me to successfully make a case as to why we needed the new post.”
The start of a new year in the training world at Macc can only mean one thing…
time for our annual training needs survey.

Training is an important element to any successful community organisation with
investment in the learning and development of staff and volunteers key
to ensuring that an organisation is well run, up to date and sustainable.

With a number of ways to access learning from traditional classroom based
sessions to the wide variety of opportunities available via online platforms
whichever method is preferred we want to ensure that what we offer is reflective of
the sectors training needs.

The survey aims to show us

- Are we meeting your training needs?
- What training are you looking for?
- Where are the barriers?
- What can we be doing differently?

I make this ask every year and say the same thing but it really is true that your
feedback really helps us scope out a programme of learning and ensures that the
training calendar hosts opportunities relevant to the sector.

Access to the survey is via this link or alternatively a hard copy can be made available.

All responses will be treated confidentially and no details will be passed on. The
survey should take no more than 5-10 minutes and your help in completing the
survey is much appreciated.

Please do feel free to pass this on to any colleagues and networks that you work
with and if you have any questions please give me a call on 0333 321 3021 or
email: training@mcrcommunitycentral.org
5 key ideas in health and social care you need to know to write funding applications
We have developed and run a new workshop which distils some of the core health and social care service design ideas that voluntary and community sector organisations need to know if they are both going to succeed in making bids and, just as importantly, in creating really good services. The five ideas covered in the course are: strength-based approaches to individuals including strength-based conversations; working with community assets; social value; population health approaches; and co-production. Many organisations are doing some of these already but may be using different names, not recognising that what they are doing is co-production, but it's rare to find an organisation doing all of them. The next workshop is on 11 March. Click here to book a place

OPeNS and First Thousand Days Funds
A significant amount of time over the last quarter was spent working with Manchester City Council on two new grant funds each for about £1 million: OPeNS and First Thousand Days. We acted as a (non-voting) independent chair for both assessment panels ensuring that the assessment panels were properly briefed and the assessments were carried out robustly and fairly. The decisions from both funds have been announced.
Gathering stories
We recently ran a number of story training sessions to help people to tell their stories as well as those of their service users, volunteers, organisations and projects. Stories are a powerful way for us to get information across, show the outcomes of a certain project and inspire people to take action. These stories can be in written, audio or video format and we shouldn’t forget the power of photographs to convey a lot of information. If you are interested in attending this one day training course, please keep an eye on our training page for the next date which should be in April.

Voluntary Sector Assembly
The last Voluntary Sector Assembly (VSA) event was held in November and discussed volunteer involvement. The VSA was well attended and people reported that they got lots of information from it and were able to connect with others in similar roles. We have now started planning for the next VSA entitled Social Prescribing – the role of the voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. It will be held on 30 March and if you are interested in attending this free event, more details will be posted soon on our website here.

Systems Leadership
We have recently been appointed to coordinate and deliver a systems leadership and workforce development approach with partners from across GM for GM Moving. This will be for current and future leaders to help achieve the shared ambitions of GM Moving, and will explore the culture, behaviours, skills, knowledge and capabilities of the GM workforce to address the challenge of inactivity and to increase people’s confidence in leading system change. This year we will also be working with Manchester Local Care Organisation to lead and facilitate the futures waves of the Nesta 100 Day Challenges, and we’ll be looking at VCSE sector leadership to explore the sectors collective leadership role in the city. More information is on our website here.

Nesta 100 Day Challenge
In the last quarter, we spent a considerable amount of time working as a catalyst on the Nesta 100 Day Challenge for the Gorton and Levenshulme Neighbourhood. The Manchester Local Care Organisation (MLCO) have collaborated with a charity called Nesta and their People Powered Results team to deliver three waves of the 100 Day Challenge. This gives each of the twelve Integrated Neighbourhood teams (INTs) in Manchester 100 days to rapidly test innovative ideas that tackle a specific health and social care issue. Team GLOW (Gorton and Levenshulme Optimal Working) focused on testing methods to reduce low mood in the female, South Asian population. Here is a link where you can find a presentation and films that show what we got up to.
Community Explorers
In 2020, you are most likely to find us facilitating Community Explorers meetings, bringing together an Action Group comprising of partners from the VCSE sector and Manchester Foundation Trust to work on how we develop stronger relationships.

Manchester VCSE Health and Wellbeing Leaders group
We will also be convening the Manchester VCSE Health and Wellbeing Leaders group who are looking at taking a coordinated approach to VCSE representation across the city.

Social Value Network
As part of our work with the Social Value Network, we recently produced the latest edition of the Greater Manchester Social Value Network Newsletter, which highlights the fantastic examples of social value in Greater Manchester and beyond. We aim for this to be a quarterly newsletter going forward. We are working to update our website so those interested in social value, who want to promote the message or simply learn more about social value, can access information easily. We also update our members with news, information and relevant training.

Representation
We are working on a piece of work to increase our understanding of the level of VCS representation at strategic meetings across the city. We will be engaging with voluntary and community sector colleagues as well as colleagues at Manchester City Council to start to build a picture of the involvement and reach that Manchester’s voluntary and community sector has at a strategic level across the city. We will write up our findings and present these later this year to VCS organisations and groups, as well as public sector colleagues.
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