The Spirit of Manchester Awards celebrate and highlight all the excellent work being carried out in Manchester’s voluntary, community and social enterprise sector. There are hundreds of charities and community groups all across the city and thousands of local people at work every day to support our communities.

Nominations are now closed and our judges are deciding the shortlist.

Thanks to everyone that made a nomination.

We will be announcing our shortlist very soon, please keep an eye on our website: http://bit.ly/SpiritofMcr
Chief Executive’s update

Thanks to everyone who’s sent in a nomination for our Spirit of Manchester Awards. This is the seventh annual awards programme we’ve run and it always reveals amazing stories of local volunteers, community action and creative, hopeful projects all across the city. I’m looking forward to reading all the nominations.

For once, however, I’m going to focus a little bit on Macc itself. We’ve been developing our Spirit of Manchester programme for all these years to celebrate Manchester’s wonderful voluntary, community and social enterprise sector but we rarely celebrate our own achievements as an organisation. So forgive me, but I have some great news to share: last month, Macc was shortlisted in four categories for the NAVCA Awards. NAVCA is the National Association for Voluntary and Community Action – the membership body for ‘infrastructure’ organisations like Macc. (I’m currently in my second term as a member-elected Trustee of NAVCA.)

We were shortlisted in four categories:
- Health Partnerships
- Telling the Story
- Campaigning and Advocacy
- Collaboration and Partnership Working

I’m delighted to say we won two awards! Our Spirit of Manchester programme won for ‘Telling the Story’ and our work with the Greater Manchester Older People’s Network won for ‘Campaigning and Advocacy’. This means a lot to us as Spirit of Manchester is something the whole Macc team is involved in: it’s not a ‘project’, it’s all of us. And the work with GM Older People’s Network holds a personal significance for me as advocacy and older people was what connected me to Macc in the first place (a good many years ago now). At the heart of all this work is putting forward other people’s voices: local groups from all across the city, older people, volunteers, people who are doing something to make more good things happen in Manchester.
In a few months time, it will be 100 years since the original ‘Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service’ was established – the forerunner to what are now Macc and Salford CVS. We’ll be looking back over a century of social action through recessions, wars and massive social change. I’ve had several conversations with people lately which have been about a feeling that we’re actually sliding backwards on some of the social progress we have made. I’ve noticed a lot of people saying they can’t bear to watch the news on TV any more. If it’s not endless political infights over Brexit, or Donald Trump’s latest twisted word salad, it’s stories of violence, fear and hatred on the increase at home and abroad. It’s easy to feel powerless in the face of all of this. That’s why things like Spirit of Manchester are so important: focusing on the good things - what we believe and what we’re doing about it. It shows that we’re not powerless, there is much that we can do.

I often think of the phrase “do not despair, do not presume” (I won’t go into the origins of it right now – Google it if you wish) as a reminder not to lose hope and to keep making the effort. Whatever lies ahead, we need to be able to make our voices heard: to call out racism and hatred for what it is, to challenge intolerance and abusive behaviour. Although the news focuses on preparations for this or that version of Brexit, the party politics of it is little more than a soap opera: whatever happens there will still be a running sore of social pain for years to come. As organisations with a social role, we need to make sure we’re able to be positive and active, even more than we already are. This is a tough ask of us. It’s not just that we’re already working far too hard with very little, it’s that our voices are often those of dissent and challenge, which can be a space where you feel isolated and vulnerable. We need to get better at supporting each other in this, I think. We can stand together. As always, it comes back to mission and purpose.

My friend Sally Young, the Chief Executive at Newcastle CVS, pointed me at a very powerful quotation: “There may be times when we are powerless to prevent injustice, but there must never be a time when we fail to protest.” (Elie Wiesel) Our positive protest is that taking action makes a difference, that support is needed and change possible. That message of ‘hope and help’ is as important now as it ever has been.

Mike Wild, Chief Executive
Voluntary Sector Assembly: A Meeting of Minds – The Voluntary Sector and Mental Health

Date & Time: Monday 3 June 2019, 1.30pm - 4.30pm
Venue: Band on the Wall, 25 Swan Street, Manchester, M4 5JZ

The Mental Health Foundation estimates that 1 in 6 people in the past week experienced a common mental health problem. There is still a taboo about discussing mental health and it can be hard for people to get the help they need in the places they need it. Over the last few years, there has been an increased demand for mental health services and support.

The voluntary, community and social enterprise (VCSE) sector has a vital role in both mental health service provision and wider support that enables people in the community to keep well. Amongst other factors, the growth of social prescribing has brought this role to the fore.

This Voluntary Sector Assembly will look at current mental health service provision across Manchester and examine 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.

There will also be a range of participative workshops looking at how we can lead the way in addressing these issues. Please join us for what should be an interesting afternoon of discussion and information sharing.

Book your place here
Hi, I'm Aleena and I've recently joined Macc as Active Communities Worker. I'm excited to be taking on a new challenge and I'm looking forward to working with and for the people of Manchester to do better for our city. My role is to support the Active Communities' projects and services with administrative support, marketing and promotional activities. So far I've been working on responding to Volunteer Centre enquiries, navigating the database and preparing marketing materials for Skill Givers.

So far this year we've been working towards improving the delivery and efficiency of our front-facing projects and services. Some of the exciting developments over the last few months include:

- The **Skill Givers** project is now well underway, linking local clubs and groups who support their community to get active with organisations wanting to embrace employer supported volunteering. If you would like to get involved, head over to the website [www.skillgivers.org.uk](http://www.skillgivers.org.uk) or contact Hayley on 0791 225 9255, or email: hayley@skillgivers.org.uk Twitter: @SkillGivers

- **Volunteers’ Week** is just around the corner and we’ve delivered a series of workshops to get organisations ready to celebrate the week in style - *(read more about this a little later!)*

- In early April, a number of ACT staff participated in Community Reporting Facilitator Training delivered by **People’s Voice Media**, learning more about the power of storytelling and how to package stories through various forms of media. This training will be factored into our planning for future community reporting activities.

We’re looking forward to more collaboration, training and meet-ups later this year – watch this space for updates!
The Greater Manchester Older People’s Network has had a great few months, starting with us winning the NAVCA award for Campaigning and Advocacy. We submitted a short video entry featuring some of our network members talking about the work that the GMOPN does. Following this, we were shortlisted for the award and invited to the awards ceremony in London. Elaine Unegbu from the Action Group, along with some staff members from Macc, attended the ceremony and received the award on behalf of the network. This is great news for the GMOPN and something for us all to be really proud of.

Our health, transport and housing working groups have also been successful so far and each group is starting to develop its own agenda. An outcome of the first Housing Working Group was an official response to the GM Spatial Framework, developed by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. We have now had our second set of meetings for each group and are looking forward to seeing what else develops out of these groups in the future.

Along with concentrating on our new working groups, the network held two events ‘Championing Older People’s Voices in Greater Manchester’ on 9 May in Leigh and 23 May in Manchester.

The events will be an opportunity for us to meet with our network members from different areas of Greater Manchester to find out what helps to make older people feel valued. We will then be using the findings from the event to create a guide for participation and co-production with older people.
Following a long period of time, the GP video for Didsbury Good Neighbours is finally nearing completion. Certain aspects took a lot longer than I had first anticipated, which has been a valuable learning experience going forward. I am however, able to look back on what I’ve done and be happy with how things turned out in the end.

Things are well under way on materials for the 100 years celebration event between Macc, Salford CVS and the Gaddum Centre, titled A Tale of Two Cities; A Century of Civic Action. A key image for the event is being finalised, and I’ve started work on some further collaged imagery, combining photographs of Manchester and Salford from 100+ years ago and the present day.

There’s plenty more work to be done however, on a 2 minute short film to be shown during the event, and a series of display panels showing a timeline of the last 100 years since the formation of the Manchester and Salford Council of Social Service (MSCSS), and the major points in time that led to the establishment of Salford CVS and Macc respectively.

One of the main themes of the event that I want to carry through in the visual work is that as much as things in and around the cities have changed, circumstances are still very much the same for a lot of people.
Volunteers' Week is a chance to be part of the UK's biggest celebration of volunteering, recognising the contribution of 23 million people who volunteer in their communities across the UK.

**Volunteers’ Week** takes place from 1–7 June, and to coincide with it, Volunteer Centre Manchester will be sharing your volunteer stories to help demonstrate and showcase the outstanding work done every day by volunteers and organisations in our region. VCM are holding a week-long campaign, in which we will be sharing your stories to celebrate the difference volunteers make in your organisations and our communities every day.

Send us your volunteering good news stories and we’ll help spread the word!

Stories will be published on our website and shared to our thousands of followers via our social media platforms, so this really is your chance to shout about how great your volunteers are and what a difference they make.

Email any good news stories to info@volunteercentremanchester.co.uk or tweet them to @volunteeringmcr and we will do the rest.

We will be using the hashtags #peopleofgreatermcr #volunteersweek to help spread the message regionally and nationally.

If you would like more information about Volunteers Week 2019 you can visit: https://volunteersweek.org/ where there is lots of information and really useful resources and guides to help make sure your Volunteers Week celebration is a great success!
Sincere thanks to those who have completed the Training Needs Analysis – there is still time for those who haven’t to tell us what training you are looking for.

We rely on the results from the TNA to inform us as to what the sector is looking for and helps us understand what stops people from participating.

Please think about completing the survey – it will only take 5-10 minutes of your time and feel free to share with colleagues and networks.

Complete our survey here: https://bit.ly/2DdiJSt

Training Coming Up

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<tr>
<th>Understanding Social Value</th>
<th>29 May, 10am – 1pm</th>
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<td>This workshop helps you understand what social value impact you are making and how to measure it.</td>
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<th>Choosing Your Structure</th>
<th>6 June, 10am -1pm</th>
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<td>This workshop will help you understand the differences between all the structures available and help you make the right decision.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Trustee Roles and Responsibilities</th>
<th>11 June, 5pm – 8.30pm</th>
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<td>This workshop looks closely at the role of a trustee and highlights the key areas all trustees should be aware of.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Understanding Community Development Work</th>
<th>13 June, 10am – 3pm</th>
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<td>This workshop is open to those who want to know and understand more about community development and how they can improve practice within their own work and organisations.</td>
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<th>Budgeting for your organisation</th>
<th>18 June, 1pm – 4pm</th>
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<td>Finance Consultant Gurj will take attendees through a journey of real life budgeting exercises and help you understand budgeting and ensure that your budget works for you and your organisation.</td>
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<th>Bid Writing</th>
<th>19 June, 10am – 1pm</th>
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<td>This workshop looks at how to successfully write a funding bid, key elements needed in funding applications and a realistic look at what it takes to be funded.</td>
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<th>Committee and Meeting Skills</th>
<th>20 June, 10am – 1pm</th>
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<td>This is ideal for anyone who is new to joining a committee and starting an organisation and will be holding meetings in the future.</td>
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<th>Funding Your Project</th>
<th>26 June, 10am – 1pm</th>
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<td>Aimed at voluntary and community groups new to funding this workshop is ideal for those needing a little support and guidance.</td>
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<th>Gathering Stories</th>
<th>10 July, 10am – 4pm</th>
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<td>This workshop is great for anyone looking to tell a story with their work.</td>
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For some of you, this is a recurring topic that we keep banging on about and you may be tired of it; for some, it may be just another way of describing what you are already doing and for others it might be new altogether. Stick with me all of you, there’s something in here for everyone.

Manchester is full of amazing groups delivering excellent and much-needed services and projects. Trustees, directors and management committees work hard and for free.

Why do we keep flying the flag for good governance? Governance is the most frequent support request we receive from you! It’s because good governance is the glue that should enable and support your work. If you can get the governance bit right then it should make life a little bit easier in the long run but, more importantly, it makes you the kind of organisation that is resilient to change and let’s face it, there’s a lot of that about.

Good Governance is managing your organisation in the best way possible to:

- **Achieve your organisation’s objects/goals**: Do what you set up to do
- **Identify and manage risk**: Know what might go wrong and how to plan for it or avoid it
- **Use resources well (financial and otherwise)**: Make sure the money and other resources you have help you do what you set out to do and nothing else
- **Plan effectively**: Know what you do and why, know what you want to do and how you will get there

- **Be prepared for change**: You can’t prepare for everything but with the above in place, you will be in a stronger position to manage change and move with it

**Already doing it well?** Give yourselves a pat on the back and well done! It’s always good to reflect on performance as a board/committee so why not test yourselves using our [Board Self-Appraisal tool]?  

**Room for improvement?** Don’t know what you don’t know? You too can use the Appraisal tool above, and below are suggestions of the support you might want to ask us for. You can contact our friendly team on 0333 321 3021 or at info@mcrcommunitycentral.org.
Starting a Group: The sector is always growing with new ideas and groups. If you are starting out and setting up, check out our recently revised resources on [Starting a Group](#).

We also run an informal Tuesday Drop-In 2pm-4pm every week for community groups who are:
- Brand new / starting out
- Have never accessed support from Macc
- Or are not sure how we can help you

Check out upcoming training [here](#): it’s well worth starting on the right foot by attending our low-cost quarterly Trustee Roles and Responsibilities training. Our Choosing a Legal Structure, Registering as a CIO and Funding Your Project workshops are all FREE!

Board Development: For newly established or for well-established boards and committees, it can be a good time to:
- Set or renew your vision and strategy
- Refresh and update your knowledge on roles and responsibilities
- Manage change and risk
- Identify what skills you need in your organisation
- Induct new trustees

Our quarterly Trustee Roles and Responsibilities training is now open to trustees and chief officers/senior management. Bespoke sessions and Board Development days can be arranged at a reasonable cost and free one-to-one support is available. You can browse our online resources [here](#).

If you want to see some of the work we have done, read our [Case Studies](#).

Whatever stage of governance you are at, you will be working hard for your organisation and community. Who knows, someone may even have nominated you for our new category [Trustee/Committee Member of the Year](#) in our [Spirit of Manchester Awards 2019](#)!
Europia

Europia is the only Registered Charity (No 1161453) to work for the benefit of European expats in Greater Manchester. Europia aims to empower, support, train and represent individuals and their communities.

Europia provides:
- Welfare advice
- Hate crime reporting centre and support
- Support in applying for EU settlement and rights of EU citizens
- Over 50s drop in sessions
- Over 50s research
- Art collective
- Community and cultural events

For a couple of years Europia have tried to build better relationships with the extended European expat community groups. They are often very busy with full time jobs or just not trusting of other groups and organisations. In an effort to better serve the community Europia decided to start a peer to peer support network for leaders of not for profit European expat community groups and also included training for anyone from these community groups (not just leaders).

Using an asset based community development approach the leaders group was set up. But the expertise to conduct training is why Europia contacted Macc. Europia had no funding to do this event and were keen to get professional training to upskill the community leaders.

Europia received support in crafting a training session on how to set up a not for profit group, different structures, and governance and how to access funding. Macc helped in the promotion of this training session. Stuart, an Organisational Development Worker at Macc, was also available to chat with community groups in an informal atmosphere, which helped the community members to feel comfortable and ask questions.

Europia had a fantastic training session with 70% of the participants saying they enjoyed it and 90% saying they will return.

Two groups have had follow up meetings with Macc to access further support and to apply for funding. This is a massive success!

Participants of the session said:
“I really enjoyed this session, thank you for organising.”

“A newly emerging community group has received a massive confidence boost by this training session.” (Lithuanian community)

“Another group striving hard to create an identity for themselves have gained some momentum through this training Session.” (Slovak community)
Sheba Arts (Manchester) has been running as an unincorporated Arts organisation with four committee members for a few years. They wanted to create a new legal structure that would enable them to deliver a high-quality Arts service to various target beneficiaries.

The workshop involved attendees considering their options around choosing a legal structure and the benefits of incorporation. They did this by asking themselves a number of questions including:

- Are we likely to own land, buildings or investments or enter into leases?
- Will we have paid staff?
- Will we have long term financial commitments?
- Will we carry out activities or services which carry a financial risk?
- Is there the administrative capacity to deal with the extra paperwork and requirements?

Fereshteh, attended our Choosing your Structure workshop on behalf of Sheba Arts in order to gain more knowledge of the various legal (charitable and company) structure and decide what is the best option for her organisation.

“Sheba Arts chose a structure because:

- a CIO foundation structure offers important benefits of having separate legal personality, limited liability for trustees
- it was cheaper than company registration and easier to set up (registration via the Charity Commission or gov.uk website)
- finally it felt that it was easier to run than a company limited by guarantee

The workshop helped Sheba Arts work through the pros and cons of being a CIO foundation. As well as attending the Choosing a legal structure workshop. Sheba Arts also attended our how to register your charity workshop. This was a very practical session showing them how to register a charity. They learnt so much about getting registered and what they need to do and how they need to be gathering their organisational information in advance of their online registration.”
The Policy and Influence team's role is about making sure the Manchester VCSE sector is informed about, and involved in, making decisions about things that affect its work and the people it works with. We do this in lots of different ways, such as producing and sharing information and briefing notes, running training, attending meetings to represent Macc and the wider sector, and providing support, advice and a ‘critical friend’ role to other sectors about working well with VCSE organisations.

Last year we had an independent evaluation of our work, which, as well as a lot of positive feedback, identified changes we could make. So we did! We made changes to our website, produced more regular communications including a quarterly newsletter, social media and blogs, and started a policy workers’ network. We’ve just had a team away day to review our progress.

We previously told you about the work that we are doing to look at representation in the city and how we as a team, and Macc as an organisation, can help the VCSE’s voices to be as loud as possible! We’ll be building on this over the next few months and would like to thank everyone who’s already helped, by completing our survey or giving their time to help us build up a fuller picture of this work.

If you’d like to be kept up to date with this, please sign up for our P&I bulletins and updates.

Welcome to Danielle!
Our new Health and Care Development Worker, Danielle Conway, joined us at Macc on the 16 April. She’s dived head-first in to her induction and is already out and about attending meetings, getting to know people, and finding out what goes on in Manchester, so if you haven’t met her yet, you soon will! Danielle’s work will include working with MHCC to facilitate the Community Explorer meetings, looking at active signposting and social prescribing and making links between the VCSE sector and work in hospitals. You can read her first blog here.

Greater Manchester Devolution
We are still involved with the GM Devolution VCSE Reference Group which is working with the GM Health and Social Care Partnership and the GM Combined Authority. We’re now doing some work on ‘inclusive economy’, looking at things like jobs paying the real Living Wage, the role of the VCSE sector in the economy as an employer and how we can encourage more businesses to be socially responsible.
Poverty
Building on work done in Leeds, Salford and other parts of the country, we’re supporting the setting up of a Poverty Truth Commission in Manchester. This will bring together people with lived experience of poverty and people with civic leadership roles to explore what we can all do to tackle the causes of poverty and its impact on individuals and families. Macc is also a principal partner in GM Poverty Action which brings together a wide range of organisations to build collaboration and innovation and to maximise efforts to address hardship and deprivation across Greater Manchester. GMPA carries out research and campaigns for changes in policy both locally and nationally so that the structural and systematic causes of poverty are addressed.

North Manchester Inquiry
For some time now, we’ve known that North Manchester does not receive a fair share of the funding that goes in to the sector, and that there are lower numbers of VCSE organisations here than in other areas of the city. We have been working closely with the North Manchester Inquiry, which has been set up to investigate this and develop recommendations for ‘how to develop a more vibrant, stronger and more thriving voluntary and community sector’ in the area.

Working with hospitals
We’ve been working with the Community Partnerships Manager at Manchester Foundation Trust to think about how we change the relationships between the hospitals and the wider community in Manchester. We want to look at ways of helping prevent people needing to go to hospital in the first place, make sure they get support as well as medical care whilst they’re in hospital, help them go home more quickly and make sure they have all the support services they need so they won’t have to come back again! We’re working to put together a small cross-sector action group with a diverse range of people to start to look at how we can make this work. We’ll also look to agree a memorandum of understanding outlining the principles, shared purpose and common values of this work.

Events
Voluntary Sector Assembly - A Meeting of Minds
This will look at current mental health service provision across Manchester and focus on the sector’s role in identifying and supporting mental health issues in our workplaces and our communities. There will be speakers, case studies and interactive workshops - 3 June at Band on the Wall

A Tale of Two Cities – A Century of Civic Action
Macc and Salford CVS are both 100 years old in 2019 and we will be hosting a celebration and reflection event in July, at the People’s History Museum.

HOUR Manchester Launch
Join us for the launch of Manchester’s new approach to bring together people across Manchester with an interest in mutual support, Timebanking and community economies. Book here
Do you want your own copy of this newsletter?

If you’re reading this in a library or at another organisation and you would like to receive your own copy of the newsletter then email us at: info@mcrcommunitycentral.org