It is hard to believe that a year has gone by since we presented last year’s Annual Review.

In keeping with this year’s AGM theme, 2017-18 was a year of stability as well as change. Stability came from the delivery of our core services of organisational development, volunteering support and voluntary sector leadership, networking, representation and influence.

With Merton Council and other statutory partners, we made good progress in the implementation of the Voluntary Sector and Volunteering Strategy; supporting voluntary organisations to raise significant funding for local services, forging partnerships such as Merton Accord, embedding social prescribing service in collaboration with GPs, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health etc.

Change was underpinned by our organisational review. As funding reduced over the previous three years, we dipped into our reserves to maintain services. The situation became unsustainable and we undertook organisational review and restructuring in the last quarter of 2017-18. As a result, we sadly said goodbye to a few long-standing and dedicated members of staff. I pay special tribute to them. Our services and activities detailed in this report is testament to them as well as those still in the organisation.

Because of these changes, 2018-19 and beyond will bring a new focus on streamlining our service offer and prioritising what we have capacity to do well. I am proud of the invaluable services provided by Merton’s voluntary and community organisations for residents and we will do our best to support them.

I acknowledge with pride and appreciation the hard work, dedication and achievements of MVSC staff, associates and volunteers. Special thanks also to our Trustees for their leadership and guidance.

I also acknowledge the support of our funders. The voluntary sector in Merton will be weaker without their funding.

There are challenges ahead and lots to do but I look forward to the future with optimism.

Khadiru Mahdi
Chief Executive Officer
On behalf of the trustees I am pleased to present our Annual Review for the year ended 31 March 2018.

This has been my first year as Chair of MVSC, taking over from Lola Barrett after last year’s AGM. During Lola’s tenure as Chair she ensured the voice of the Voluntary Sector was heard by all. She faced some significant challenges and also success with strength and determination and is a very hard act to follow.

This is a challenging time for organisations such as MVSC. Public funding for voluntary sector infrastructure bodies continues to be squeezed. This results in fewer, smaller grants and contracts to deliver services. Thanks to Merton Council for retaining its Strategic Partners Grant programme and for jointly funding the Social Prescribing service with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Charitable Trusts and Foundations have moved to shore up support for infrastructure bodies. Merton and London are fortunate to have generous and positive charitable funders such as the Wimbledon Foundation, City Bridge Trust and Trust for London which have contributed to MVSC’s funding. We are grateful for their help.

Nevertheless, it has been hard to maintain services. I have been continually impressed by the dedication and skills with which the officers and trustees of MVSC have risen to this challenge with Khadiru leading us all through a necessary but difficult restructuring of the organisation. This has focused our resources on creating an agile team for the future.

Thank you to my fellow trustees who have worked with me and supported me during the year. A special thank you to Alec Botten and Charles Lusack who are stepping down as trustees at this year’s AGM after many years of dedicated service. Alec, as Vice Chair stayed on an extra year particularly to support me in my first year as Chair. We wish them well in the future.

Thank you also to the staff and associates including those who are no longer part of the team. They all worked through the organisational changes with great professionalism and some have contributed to the organisation’s success for many years.

Finally I would like to thank all of the volunteers who have either passed through MVSC on their way to another organisation or who help us in one of our many activities. Volunteers are at the heart of our community and continue to enrich life in Merton.

We at MVSC look forward to a future of challenges but hope that our new structure will be robust in turning them to successes.

Sarah Wilson
Chair
Our **VISION**
— What We Aim For

‘A thriving Merton community where people’s lives are enriched by voluntary and community action’

Our **VALUES**
— Guiding Everything We Do

- Quality and commitment to continuous improvement and change
- Led by the needs and aspirations of individuals and organisations
- Empowering and supporting communities
- Promoting diversity and tackling inequality
- Embracing technology and innovation
- Promoting and demonstrating excellent leadership
- Embracing and promoting participation, partnership and collaboration
- Being enterprising

Our **MISSION and OBJECTIVES**
— What We Do

Inspire and develop an excellent voluntary and community sector in Merton by

- Providing support to voluntary, community, faith and social enterprise organisations
- Building social capital by supporting and developing volunteering and community action
- Identifying changing and emerging need and respond with development
- Promoting, supporting and developing liaison, advocacy, joint working and strategic partnership between sectors
- Promoting quality through standard setting
- Ensuring sustainability
How we did this in 2017-18

**Strategic Role**
Facilitated sector leadership and influence in high-level multi-sector partnerships and working groups, with statutory bodies and representatives of voluntary organisations. Led and contributed to reviews of strategies and programmes to inform priorities and the design and delivery of services.

**Development Service**
Strengthened the sector and supported some organisations to start up and some to grow or be stable. Distributed grants and helped organisations bid for and win funds. Linked organisations to businesses – and businesses to organisations.

**Volunteering Service**
Promoted volunteering to Merton residents and matched those individuals interested to local organisations requiring volunteer help. For young people and older people, for people with health issues and other disadvantages.

**Social Prescribing**
Provided NHS patients, who are referred by GPs and health professionals, with access to voluntary and community services: eg, bereavement support, befriending and help to reduce drinking. Improved their health - and reduced pressure on the NHS. Commissioned a thorough, independent evaluation of the service to assess its effectiveness and plan for the future.

**Healthwatch Merton**
Gathered the views and experiences of people across the community to shape local health and care services. Worked closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group and hospitals, and with Merton Council. Took part in decisions on the future of services in the borough, and influenced national decisions through membership of Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.
Impact and Highlights

Strategic Role

Convened the voluntary sector in quarterly INVOLVE and 15 thematic forums providing opportunities for sharing information and best practice and influencing public policy, priorities and resources. Stimulating issues covered at INVOLVE included: the CCG’s Integration and Older People’s Services and Commissioning priorities; Community Sponsorship programme for refugees (with a focus on Salvation Army’s sponsorship of a Syrian refugee family); Data Protection, Essentials of Good Governance; and How to Build ICT capacity.

- Facilitated sector leadership, representation and influence - MVSC Chief Executive and elected INVOLVE representatives contributed to range of multi-sector bodies including: Health and Wellbeing Board, Children’s Trust, Safer and Stronger Strategy Group, Safer Neighbourhood Board, Sustainable Partnership and Transport Partnership, Compact Board, Economic Wellbeing Group and the Wilson Development Programme Board. Work included initial consultation with the voluntary sector to launch a review of the Council’s Strategic Partnership Grants Programme and setting up a Collaborative Working Group to do so; the Economic Wellbeing Group’s revision of its priorities and delivery of key actions; the Health and Wellbeing Board’s Diabetes Truth Commission, informed by testimonies of people with lived experience; review of the CCG’s commissioning priorities and plans for Social Prescribing; and contribution to the plans for the Wilson Development.

- Supported partnership and collaboration between voluntary and public sector organisations: eg, Merton Accord, a consortium of organisations delivering health, social care and wellbeing services. This aims to extend their reach by securing contracts for service delivery. We also supported youth organisations working towards developing a Youth Partnership and we established a social prescribing service with voluntary organisations, GP Centres, Public Health and the CCG.

- Set sector standards though our NAVCA Quality Award, Volunteer Centre Quality Accreditation, Investors in Volunteers and London Living Wage and providing quality assurance training and support for organisations.

Development Service

Strengthened Merton’s voluntary, community and faith sector by providing capacity building advice and supported local organisations, helping them to thrive and survive in challenging times. We did this by providing assistance with strategic development, governance, improvement with policy and procedures, helping draft funding applications, as well as distributing funds on behalf of Merton Partnership.

- Nearly £1.2 million of external funding levered into borough – including grants from Big Lottery, BBC Children in Need, and Trust for London.

- Provided 239 one-to-one advice sessions to enable organisations to achieve stability and deliver services.

- With Merton Chamber of Commerce, connected 40 businesses with their communities, generating support worth £40,000.

- Distributed 38 small grants totalling £42,500 for Merton Partnership.

- Provided 10 small organisations with temporary office space to grow their services.

Merton Home Tutoring Service, is a local charity run entirely by volunteers, offering one-to-one ESOL tuition in residents’ homes or in small classes in a community setting. With our support, they secured two grants totalling nearly £100,000, from The Henry Smith Foundation & Awards for All.

Inner Strength. Maureen Bailey, Chief Executive of Inner Strength: ‘I was delighted when we received a small grant from MVSC. The grant enabled us to promote our new interactive website for members, and helps women who have suffered abuse receive advice in a confidential space through their membership.’
Volunteering Service

Provided support and assistance to both volunteers and volunteer-involving organisations; by recruiting volunteers who want to develop skills and give something back to the organisation and/ or their community. In 2017-18 we matched 592 volunteers to local volunteering opportunities and provided 44 volunteer-involving organisations with one-to-one guidance on finding and supporting volunteers.

- Our Youth Action Volunteering befriending service supported 55 very vulnerable young people. These included those involved with the Youth Offending Service, referred by social services and transforming families’ services. Significant improvements reported: 72% in wellbeing, 66% in communication, 55% in hopes and dreams, 55% in education.

- Fayre and Square is MVSC’s shop that provides volunteering places for adults with learning disabilities and/ or mental health issues. They learn confidence, self-esteem and -belief; develop the ability to work in a team, and skills including communications, and numeracy. In 2017-18, we supported 38 learners, 12 of whom moved on to paid employment, with a further 20 currently in full or part-time education or training. One learner to assist in delivering basic British Sign Language training for staff and local businesses. Fayre and Square was runner up in the Best Business in Wimbledon category of the 2017 Merton Best Business Awards.

- Our 15 regular Team Merton Volunteers contributed some 400 volunteering hours supporting 11 community and public events including the Mayor’s Ball, Light up Merton, Merton Fireworks displays, Phipps Bridge Community Day, Prudential Ride London and healthy schools celebration event.

- Our health champions provided over 100 volunteering hours across 20 events in different settings, including, local schools and libraries. Engaged with over 340 adults and young people, providing referrals to health trainers to improve self-care, including smoking cessation.

- We held the prestigious and well-attended annual Merton Partnership Volunteer Awards for volunteers in categories including best volunteer and young volunteer of the year

- Over 30 volunteers in the Home Visits Library Service made 2,800 deliveries of library books to 320 housebound residents. In February this year, the Service celebrated its tenth anniversary. Over that decade, over 450 housebound residents have continued to enjoy a library service, and the Home Visits service received a Special Award from Merton Council.

Eighty-nine-year old Patricia Brackenridge is housebound and has been using the Home Visits Library Service since June 2014. Talking books are delivered to her house each month, by Volunteer Driver Anthony Gubbins. Anthony has been a volunteer with the service since its inception in 2008. He delivers books to 15 other individual clients and the residents of four care homes.

Mrs Brackenridge said:
—‘The talking books which the Home Visits Library Service brings to me provide me with a continuous source of entertainment, which I find very stimulating. If I didn’t have it, I would need another way of finding books to entertain me, which would be very difficult and I don’t know what I would do. I thoroughly look forward to and enjoy Anthony’s visits to me with the books. I very much appreciate it and it makes a real difference to my life.’
Social Prescribing

- Many patients benefit greatly from treatments such as more exercise and time in green space, as well as smoking cessation and counselling. This also relieves pressure in the NHS. This ‘social prescribing’ has been piloted in areas of Merton.

- Findings of the independent Evaluation of the pilot in two East Merton GP centres showed:
  - 316 GP patients were referred to the social prescribing project from to GP practices, Wideway and Tamworth
  - 77% of patients/service users referred experienced improvement in their wellbeing
  - 33% reduction in GP attendance after 3 months
  - 55% reduction in A&E attendance after 6 months.

- The service was rolled out all nine GP practices in East Merton and four in West Merton. There is a thirst for Social Prescribing in the borough. The surgeries that have it say what a difference it makes to both patients and surgery.

- The Community Navigation Service west of the borough connected 363 people across the Holistic Assessment Rapid Investigation (HARI) Team and the GP Practice (both located at the Nelson Health Centre).
  - Out of the 181 referrals to the Community Navigation Service, 105 connections were made with over 25 different organisations and services.
  - 92% of patients interviewed as part of the evaluation said without the intervention from the Community Navigation Service they would not have come across the services and activities on their own.
  - 85% of patients rated the Community Navigation Service as excellent or good.

A patient drank heavily, often passing out with strangers, and had a troubled lifestyle. Working with the Social Prescriber, the patient reduced her drinking significantly, and ate better. She put on healthy weight. Her general health improved and she took back control of her life. She now volunteers at the New Horizons Centre and agreed to share her positive experience in a film about social prescribing.

GP Dr Mohan Sekeram

- ‘We have 10-minute appointments and we are currently geared up towards a medical model where we give something to the patients to take away. When patients raise social issues, we can now capture that and really make a difference. I say I know someone who can help with that.’
Healthwatch Merton

Gathered the views and experiences of people across the community to shape local health and care services. Took part in decisions on the future of services in the borough, and influenced national decisions through membership of Healthwatch England and the Care Quality Commission.

- Supported young volunteers to run workshops for their peers on Mental Health issues at the New Wimbledon Theatre Healthy Minds Day.

- Helped local people feed into the Epsom and St. Helier 2020-2030 plans and priorities by hosting an event and linking the Trust with local people.

- Undertook visit under Enter and View power to Jupiter Ward at Springfield Hospital. Listened to users, carers and relatives. Reported significant improvements in care since previous visit and some areas still needing attention.

- Managed NHS England’s Grass Roots Fund in Merton.

- Organised and facilitated Merton input to the Epsom and St Helier University NHS Trust plans for 2020-30.

- Contract for MVSC to deliver Healthwatch extended for 2018-19.

Thank you to MVSC Team of staff, volunteers and associates
Key Aims for 2018-19

As the key local infrastructure agency we will continue to promote, develop and support local voluntary action through our core activities. We will promote the sharing of learning and resources across the sector and between sectors. We will also review the scope and level of our services for 2018/19 and beyond according to our reduced resources.

Priorities for 2018-19 include:

1. Embedding MVSC’s new organisational structure and refining our service offer for the local voluntary, community and faith sector.
2. Working with the Local Authority to review and implement its Strategic Partnership Grants Programme for the next three years.
3. Expanding Social Prescribing Service to more GP practices in Merton and working in collaboration with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Council’s Public Health to finalise plans for the Wilson Health and wellbeing Hub.
4. Working in partnership with Merton Chamber of Commerce and Merton Council to revitalise and grow the Merton Community Fund for the voluntary and community sector.
5. Growing MVSC’s enterprise acumen and activities.
6. Strengthening partnerships to scale up service delivery through Merton Accord and other partnerships.
7. Supporting the growth and recognition of volunteering in Merton.
8. Ensuring that the sector has strong and effective strategic leadership, representation and influence.
9. Quality Assurance - strengthening our ability to measure and demonstrate our impact and better support the voluntary sector to do so.
10. Strengthening the role of Healthwatch Merton.

Every year brings new challenges and a new focus.

2018-19 is no exception.

MVSC has the plans in place for this and will rise to the challenge.
Our Accounts

The information contained in this summary has been extracted from the Annual Report of the Trustees and Financial Statements for the year ended 31st March 2018. A full copy of the Annual Report of the Financial Statements is available at mvsc.co.uk or on request from the Company Secretary. These accounts have undergone an Independent Examination by Hartley Fowler LLP.

Susanette Mansour  
Honorary Treasurer  
For and on behalf of the Trustees of MVSC

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<th>Unrestricted 2018</th>
<th>Designated 2018</th>
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<th>Restricted 2018</th>
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<td>Gross transfers between funds</td>
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<td>Net movements in funds</td>
<td>(67,372)</td>
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<td>14,000</td>
<td>(28,750)</td>
<td>(94,122)</td>
<td>(49,615)</td>
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<td>(106,000)</td>
<td>34,595</td>
<td>(47,332)</td>
<td>46,790</td>
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OUR TEAM

Chair
Lola Barrett (until 24th November 2017)
Sarah Wilson (from 24th November 2017)

Vice Chair
Alec Botten

Honorary Treasurer
Sarah Wilson (until 24th November 2017)
Susanette Mansour (from 24th November 2017)

Other Trustees
Barbara Price
Ben Wilkins (appointed 2nd July 2017)
Charles Lusack
Charmaine Bennett (to 5th September 2017)
Ian Petherbridge
Nuzhar Ali (appointed 2nd October 2017)

Employees
Khadiri Mahdi - Chief Executive
Amy Szott (until 31st of March 2018) - Volunteering Coordinator (Youth)
Angela de Leon (until 30th of April 2018) - Administration Officer
Beau Fadahunsi - Head of Development
Clara Jones - Community Navigator
Dave Curtis - Manager, Healthwatch Merton
Debby Brooker - Recruitment and Placement Support Worker
Erin Cowhig-Croft - Information and Outreach Officer – Healthwatch
Jeyanthi Satkunapalan - Finance Officer
Jon Stone (to 9th February 2018) - Head of Operations
Marcella Meloni (to 14th June 2017) - Volunteering Coordinator (Mental Health)
Nana Apprey-Abraham (from 7th April 2017) - Project Officer, Healthwatch
Ray Hautot - Project Coordinator (Merton Social Prescribing)
Sally Mcgarvey - Database Administrator
Sarah Hannigan (until 30th April 2018) - Head of Volunteering
Sophie Matthews (until 31st March 2018) - Marketing and Communications Officer

Associates
Bec Yusuf, Rob Mobile, Manuela Gouveia

Volunteers
Cresso Scarlet, Iris Hacker, Jackie Hinton, Mervin Eubanks
Michael Belford, Shane Dye, Shawn Woodward