

# The Needs of the Voluntary and Community Sector in Cornwall

A COLLABORATION BETWEEN: CORNWALL VSF,  
EAST CORNWALL CVS, PCDT AND INTERLINK

Tom Jane 2009

**cip**

**CORNWALL  
INFRASTRUCTURE  
PARTNERSHIP**

The partners behind this research  
(in alphabetical order):

### **Cornwall Infrastructure Partnership**

funded the design and printing of hard copies of this report.

### **Cornwall Voluntary Sector**

**Forum** funded the research in the Mid and West of Cornwall and in addition funded the mail out of over 2,500 letters to invite groups to take part. This funding was via the Take Part Cornwall project.

**East Cornwall CVS** funded the research in the East of Cornwall including staff time and an additional mail out to over 1,000 groups in the East of Cornwall.

**Inter-Link programme** printed, stuffed and posted 2,500 envelopes to organisation in the West and Mid Cornwall

**PCDT** funded the analysis, writing and production of the final survey report



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**The Needs of the  
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## WHY THIS RESEARCH AND WHY NOW?

### The Voluntary and Community

**Sector** In Cornwall it is estimated that there are at least 6,000 organisations which fall into the Voluntary and Community Sector and Social Enterprise categories. These are organisations that deliver a service for the social benefit of others. In addition, those few which make what could be possibly defined as a 'profit' plough this straight back into their work.

This work is incredibly diverse and ranging in size from Pre-Schools, WIs and Youth Clubs, up to the Hall for Cornwall and the Eden Project. It also includes small constituted groups to charities Limited by Guarantee and Community Interest Companies.

### Infrastructure Organisations

In addition to the organisations listed above, there is another kind of Voluntary and Community Sector Organisation. These are known as Infrastructure, or Second Tier Organisations. This is because they do not deliver a service directly to individuals; the service which they deliver is to other, usually smaller, community groups to help them in turn deliver a better service to the people of Cornwall. Examples of this include Volunteer Cornwall who support Community Groups by finding and training volunteers for them, also the

Funding Advisor at Cornwall Rural Community Council who helps groups to apply for grants from local and national funders and the trainers at East Cornwall Council for Voluntary Services who offer free training to Voluntary Sector Staff to help build their capability. There are many infrastructure organisations throughout Cornwall whose role is to support the sector in order to improve the services for the people of Cornwall.

Infrastructure organisations need to know what requirements there are in the Voluntary and Community Sector to best design their services in order to meet the needs.

2009 is an important year for the Voluntary and Community Sector. There are many things which are happening both locally, nationally and globally which will change the environment and thereby the sector over the next few years. Most of these will have a negative effect:

Crisis in traditional funding: many of the small grant pots are disappearing, the lottery funds are over subscribed and being plundered by the 2012 Olympics, government intervention is much more focused (Single Regeneration Budget and Neighbourhood Renewal Fund replaced by Working Neighbourhoods Fund); the more contracted approach of Convergence compared to its predecessor (Objective One); as this reduction of funding is not just impacting Cornwall, larger national organisations are making more approaches on the grants and contracts in Cornwall.

**The Credit Crunch** Fuel Costs have risen sharply causing some services to cost more; more individuals needing some services – such as Citizens Advice Bureaus, reductions on donations to the sector; and longer term the government will need to cut spending (including grants to VCS) in order to balance the books.

Unitary Council in Cornwall: This has been a long process and has meant that meaningful

dialogue with the Council has been slow due to a reorganisation of staff and a change in priorities. Three areas of the Council are now under special measures of which two areas (Adult Social Care and Children, Young People and Families) are areas with high support services offered in the VCS; in addition the localism agenda and the withdrawal of district level local strategic partnership has left a lot of voices with nowhere to be heard. The move from Funding to Commissioning is not only complicated but is made more so by the length of time it is taking the new council to arrive at a shared framework and agree a process and approach to this new way of working.

**Demography** We are living longer. More service for the elderly are needed, putting bigger strains on the voluntary sector (especially when considering the withdrawal of moderate care from Adult Social Care Directorate back in 2008).

## EXISTING WORK

### Valuing the Voluntary Sector, 2008

Some facts and figures about the voluntary and community sector in Cornwall:

**1 in 3** the number of adults do some kind of voluntary work in the county

**3,000** the number of voluntary and community groups in Cornwall and the Isles of Scilly

**17,120** the number of people now employed in Cornwall's voluntary and community groups

**£390 million** the combined income of voluntary and community groups in Cornwall

**£387 million** the value of volunteering to the county

**£45 million** the amount of Objective One money invested in Cornwall's voluntary and community sector

**20,000** the number of people who benefited from Objective One funded projects in the voluntary sector

**13%** the amount of Objective One funding given to voluntary and community groups in Cornwall.

Taken from "Valuing the Voluntary Sector", a report by Perfect Moment for the Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum

### Inter-Link Cornwall VCS Survey (Jan 2008)

**98%** would recommend Inter-Link to other groups

**84%** find the advice and information 'good' or 'very good'

**84%** find the Inter-Link Magazine 'useful' or 'very useful' to their group

**98%** find the Funding, Strategic, Other Group and Legislative information in the Magazine 'good' or 'very good'

**52%** go to Inter-Link locality meetings, with **41%** using them for networking

### Skills

**37%** want "How to fill in funding application forms"

**30%** want to know about "The Law and Community Groups"

**28%** want more challenging IT skills (basic IT is needed by 12%)

**28%** Want risk assessment training

**49%** said they had adequate resources/budget for training

**52%** did not have a budget to support their volunteers with training

### **Strategy**

**30%** said they had experienced “red tape” which prevented them from working with others

**76%** feel it was clear how they fitted strategically into the bigger picture

**46%** have not heard of the Compact and 29% said that they had heard of it but didn't know a lot really

### **Funding**

**38%** have trouble finding the right funders for their projects

**50%** are after grants under £5,000

**62%** are after capital grants

**74%** feel they would benefit from talking with a funding adviser

### **Governance**

**44%** have had training on governance issues

**52%** feel training on governance would be useful

### **LAA Stretch Targets**

**34%** agree that they were able to influence decisions of public services locally

**72%** agree that they felt a sense of belonging to their community

### **Equality and Diversity**

**53%** of the respondents have an Equality and Diversity Policy

**27%** of the respondents have an action plan to deliver their Equality and Diversity Policy

**52%** are interested in undertaking accredited e-based equality and diversity training

**60%** would be interested in conducting a full review of its Equality and Diversity policies

**55%** would be interested in working towards formal accreditation of its equality and diversity practices

## HOW THIS SURVEY WAS CARRIED OUT

**The evidence within this report was gathered using a questionnaire** which was written by the partners. The questions were a mixture of both 'closed' (tick boxes) and 'open' (those where one can write freely).

The questionnaire was designed to be an online survey which could be accessed by anyone who had the hyperlink. The system used was [www.surveymonkey.com](http://www.surveymonkey.com) this system not only asks the questions but collates the information.

The questionnaire was promoted via:

- Partner's websites
- a reminder letter that was sent to over 3,500 organisations
- an email was sent to all Inter-Link contacts with an email address
- reminder emails were sent at key points during the 6 weeks whilst the survey was live
- emails, were sent to various networks to then pass on to their membership

Should anyone without internet access wish to answer the survey, then a hard copy of the questionnaire was sent to them on request with a stamped addressed envelope for them to return their completed survey.

Therefore, this approach should be classed as 'consultative', in that groups had to opt in and is therefore not a representational survey. This means that whilst this research had excellent uptake, it cannot be used to calculate the characteristics of the entire Voluntary and Community Sector population in Cornwall. It can however be used to give a good impression of the more proactive groups operating in the area.



Coastwatch: keeping a visual/radio/and radar watch on the coastline between Lands End and Cape Cornwall (and a little further north) for all commercial vessels through using the Traffic Separation System (TSS) and for all leisure craft users in the inshore waters in that area.

## **EXAMPLES OF RESPONSES TO ENQUIRIES REGARDING THEIR SINGLE MOST IMPORTANT AREA OF WORK.**

**This demonstrates the sheer diversity and worth of our sector.**

Youth work in a range of formal and non-formal settings with young people aged 11 - 20 yrs, targeted youth support, information, advice and guidance, work with young people not in education, employment or training, counselling.

We offer savings accounts and affordable loans to the local community, helping people to manage their money better and stay out of the hands of the loan sharks.

Teaching Sea skills from 7years old up to lifeguards.

Addressing the twin challenges of Peak Oil and Climate Change locally.

We produce a 12 page newsletter once every 2 months which we deliver to over 1300 homes in the area and leave in other locations for people to pick up. It includes community news from a range of groups as well as adverts and information about events in the area.

We are a choir. We sing mainly sacred music in churches, cathedrals etc.

Day care for the Elderly and Disabled.

Ensuring that individuals do not suffer through lack of knowledge of their rights and responsibilities or of the service available to them or through an inability to express their needs effectively and equally to exercise a responsible influence on the development of social policies and services, both locally and nationally.

To provide a safe and well maintained centre (Village Hall) where the inhabitants of the community can benefit from the association's facilities and where other organisations can meet in a common effort to promote education, social interaction & physical welfare, recreational & leisure time activities, thereby improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.

Support for Gypsies and Travellers.

Social and recreational meetings and events for the elderly.

The collection and display of artefacts, covering all aspects of Cornwall - mining, farming, trade & industry, transport, education, war, fire, ambulance, police etc. etc.

Providing a meeting place for residents particularly, but not exclusively, older people to enable them to enjoy social activities and keep in touch. Also for a youth group (age 11+) and for private hire for dance, yoga, film society, parties etc.

Parent and Toddler Group. Social meeting of parents/guardians etc and stimulating play for infants.

Bringing community news to elderly and isolated people living in clay country.

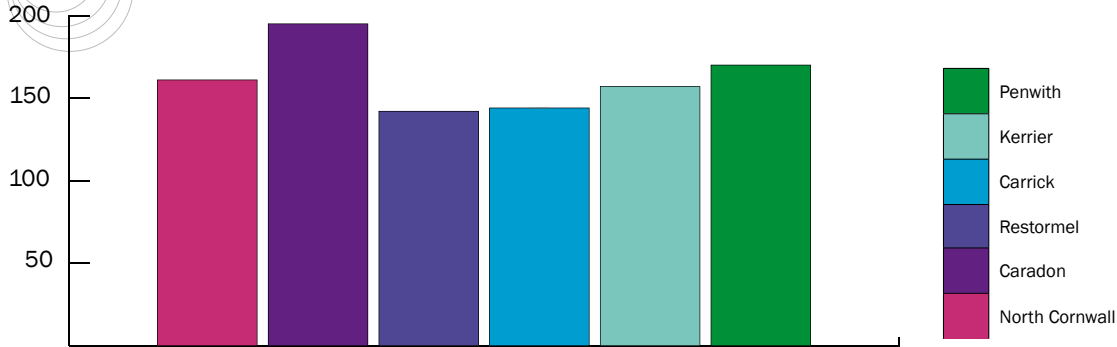
Demonstrating and raising awareness of the importance of public green space in the well-being of communities; particularly in developing inclusive environments that offer a good quality experience for people of all ages, backgrounds and abilities. Working with green space managers/staff and local community and disability groups to achieve this.



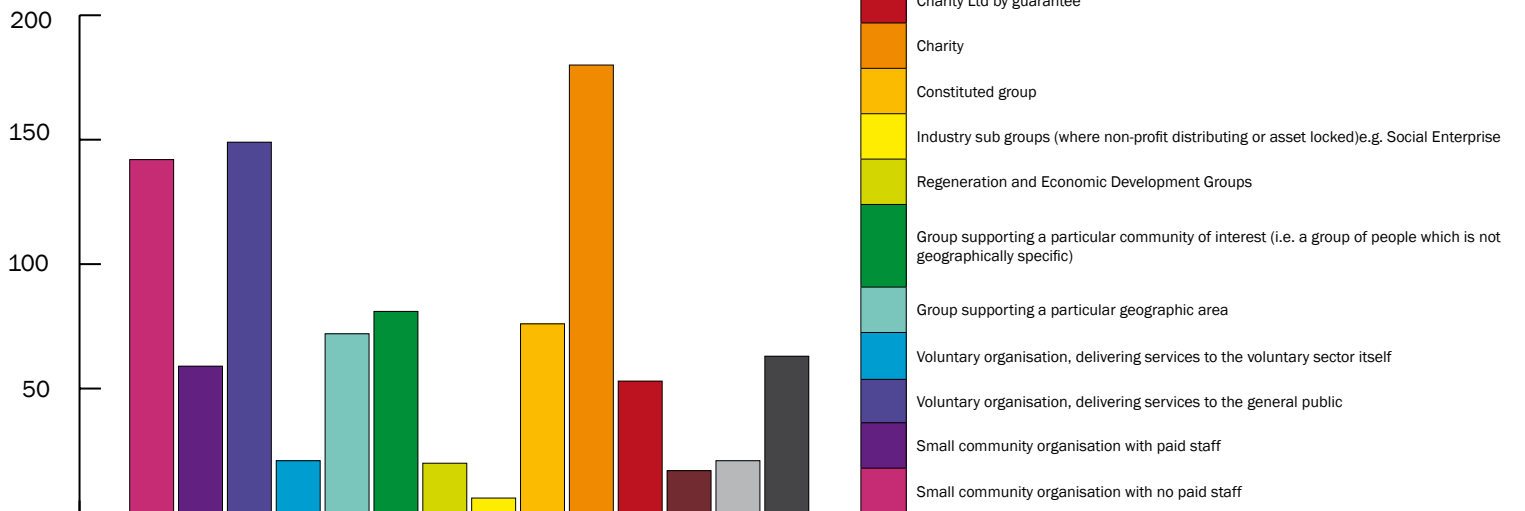
# THE RESULTS

There were 484 reponses to the survey, the results are as follows

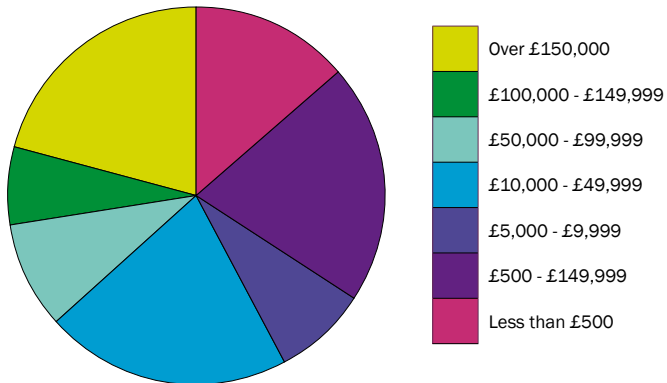
## Where do you operate in Cornwall?



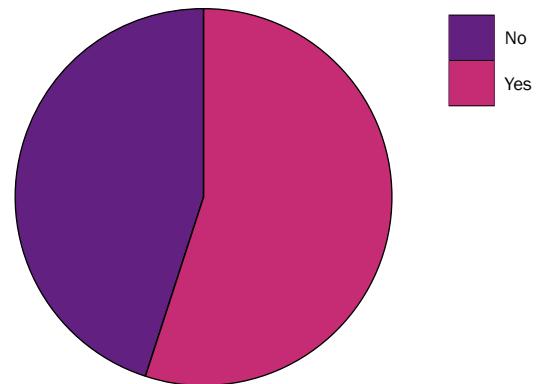
## What Catagories best describe your organisation?



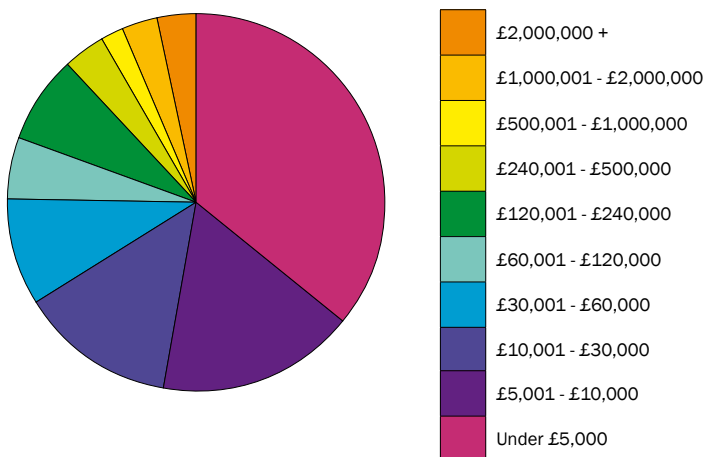
**Roughly how much is the biggest project  
your organisation has ever managed?**



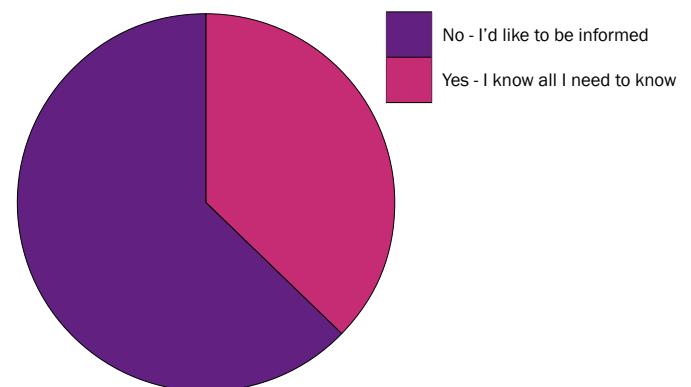
**Do you feel you can influence service locally?**



**Roughly what is your annual turnover?**



**Do you feel as though you know enough  
about those things that will impact your  
work?**





## Have you ever used any of the following services?

|   | Yes         | I've heard of them but I haven't used them | Never heard of them before |
|---|-------------|--|----------------------------|
| Volunteer Cornwall – formerly: Cornwall Centre for Volunteers(CCfV), (including – Volunteer Bureaus)                          | 36.7% (151) | 44.0% (181)                                | 19.2% (79)                 |
| Cornwall Community Foundation   | 24.2% (92)  | 30.8% (117)                                | 45.0% (171)                |
| Cornwall Council, including old District Regeneration Teams & Grants Officers   | 66.7% (273) | 25.4% (104)                                | 7.8% (32)                  |
| Cornwall Towns Association  | 6.5% (24)   | 32.3% (120)                                | 61.2% (227)                |
| CRCC – Cornwall Rural Community Council   | 39.4% (156) | 40.4% (160)                                | 20.2% (80)                 |
| CN4C – Cornwall Neighbourhoods for Change   | 16.1% (62)  | 39.1% (150)                                | 44.8% (172)                |
| VSF – Cornwall Voluntary Sector Forum   | 18.4% (72)  | 39.1% (153)                                | 42.5% (166)                |
| East Cornwall Council for Voluntary Service (ECCVS)   | 23.9% (90)  | 35.8% (135)                                | 40.3% (152)                |
| Penwith Community Development Trust (PCDT)  | 20.7% (79)  | 26.8% (102)                                | 52.5% (200)                |
| Inter-Link – including Inter-Link Locality Meetings, Inter-Link Magazine  | 41.0% (166) | 26.4% (107)                                | 32.6% (132)                |
| LINK in Cornwall – Local Involvement Network – existing to inform, develop and improve local health and social care services. | 19.4% (74)  | 37.7% (144)                                | 42.9% (164)                |



**Are there any services that aren't available at present that you would like to see offered locally to support the work of your group?**

We are concerned about the vagueness surrounding Cornwall Council grants and the apparent reduction of funding available.

A defined route for both advice and funding

A group to enhance partnerships and understanding of all the voluntary/community organisations in your area

A list of local property maintenance companies with customer rating

A music group involving young people who could link with us on occasions

A pool of Professional advisers that an organisation could get advice from, short term and free of charge

A safe and inclusive community centre offering broad-spectrum services for lesbian, gay, bisexual and trans people who live or work, holiday in Caradon, and our families.

A specific funding office/space for all groups to seek funding (with advice) to use freely

A way of giving help, support and advice to music groups

A whole county suicide group - which could focus on various groups within the county e.g young people

Action Hampshire run a brilliant consultation network. Something like that - giving lots of direct input into consultation, rather than relying on informal, "Who you know"-type networks, would be a big improvement in VCS relations in Cornwall.

Administrative funding to further work

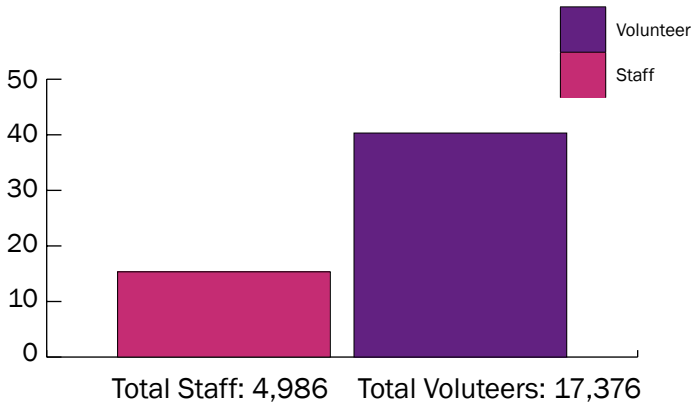
## What would help you decide to go to an event?

|  |        |
|--|--------|
| Relevant Content?  | 76.30% |
| Opportunities to meet with people/services that can help your group? | 57.10% |
| Opportunities to meet with funders?                                  | 55.20% |
| Being emailed in advance?  | 49.20% |
| Giving you plenty of notice (more than 5 weeks)?                     | 46.20% |
| Opportunities to meet with peers and network?                        | 41.90% |
| Closeness to home/work?  | 36.10% |
| How long the event lasts?  | 33.20% |
| Timings through the day?   | 30.50% |
| Offer to pay travel expenses?  | 16.90% |
| Being emailed more than once, as a reminder?                         | 16.90% |
| Being posted an invite in advance?                                   | 16.70% |
| Free Lunch/refreshments?   | 13.10% |
| The time of year/season?   | 12.10% |
| Certificate of attendance?   | 9.00%  |
| Being invited face to face?  | 5.80%  |
| Being invited by phone in advance?                                   | 5.60%  |
| Whether it clashes with the school holidays?                         | 5.30%  |
| Childcare Support?   | 3.40%  |

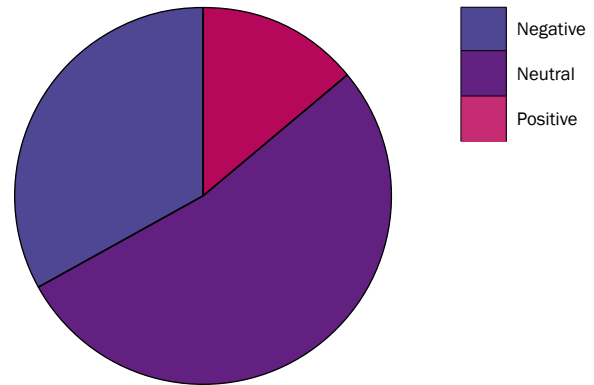
## **Biggest Challenges**

|  |     |
|--|-----|
| Not enough grant income  | 58% |
| Not enough volunteers  | 38% |
| Accommodation/Building is too small or needs significant repairs/renovation/investment | 23% |
| Local Government policies and approaches   | 20% |
| Not enough donations/philanthropic giving  | 19% |
| Not enough self generated income (via trading and contracts)                           | 18% |
| Not enough engagement with the community   | 18% |
| Not enough staff   | 17% |
| Communication  | 17% |
| Location and geographic restrictions/accessibility                                     | 15% |
| Lack of transport for our beneficiaries  | 12% |
| To many legal issues/restrictions  | 10% |
| Lack of identified/available Community Space(s)in which to work                        | 7%  |
| Lack of training   | 6%  |
| Too much competition   | 3%  |

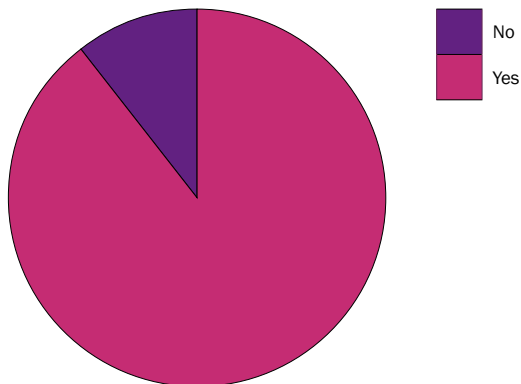
### Average number of people per organisation



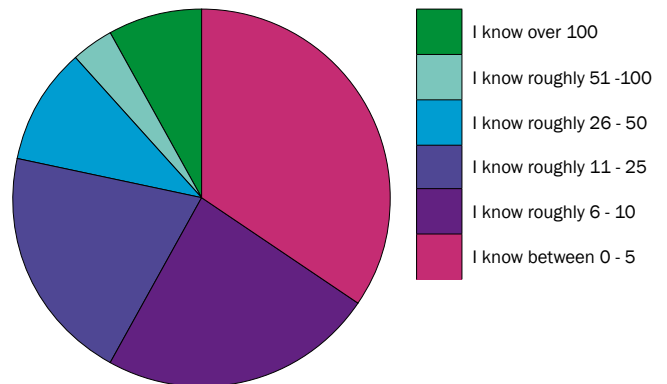
### How do you feel the change to Cornwall Council will affect (or already has affected) your Group?



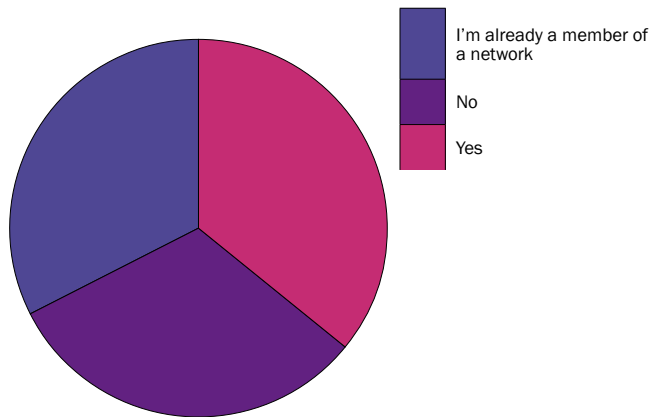
### Do you find talking to other organisations useful?



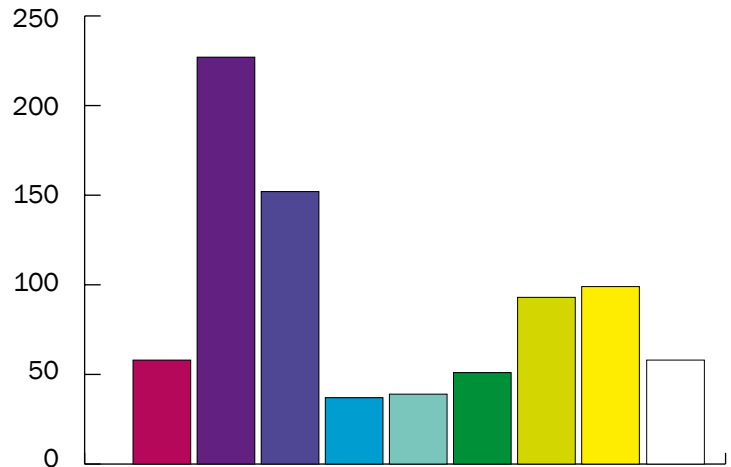
### Do you know many Community Groups or Voluntary Organisations?



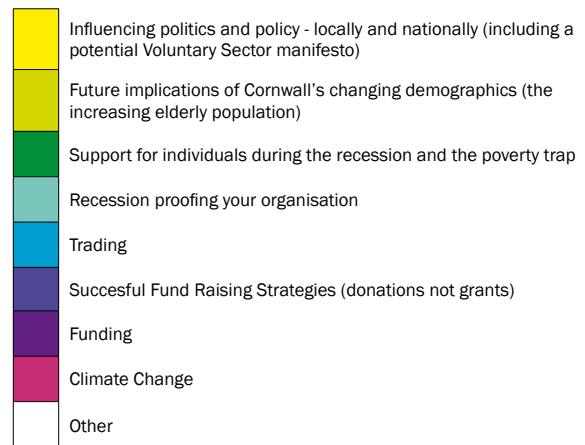
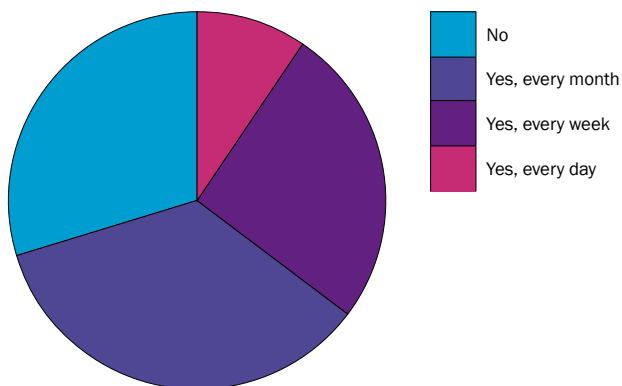
**Would you like to join an organised network of Community Groups?**



**The Voluntary Sector Forum are interested to learn if there are any subjects in which you would be interested in attending future forum meetings. Please tick those subjects in which you have an interest:**



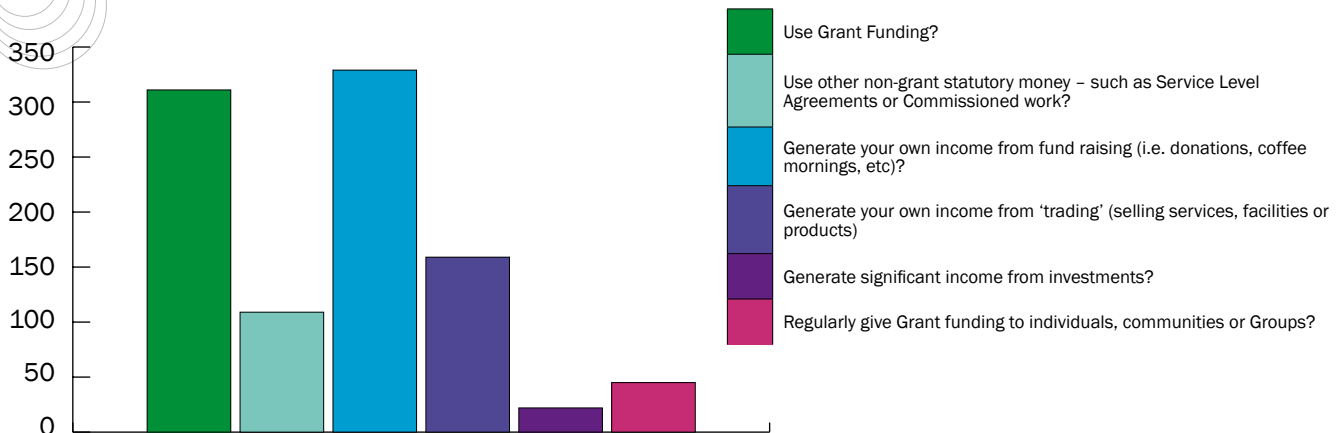
**Do you talk to other Community Groups or Voluntary Organisations often?**



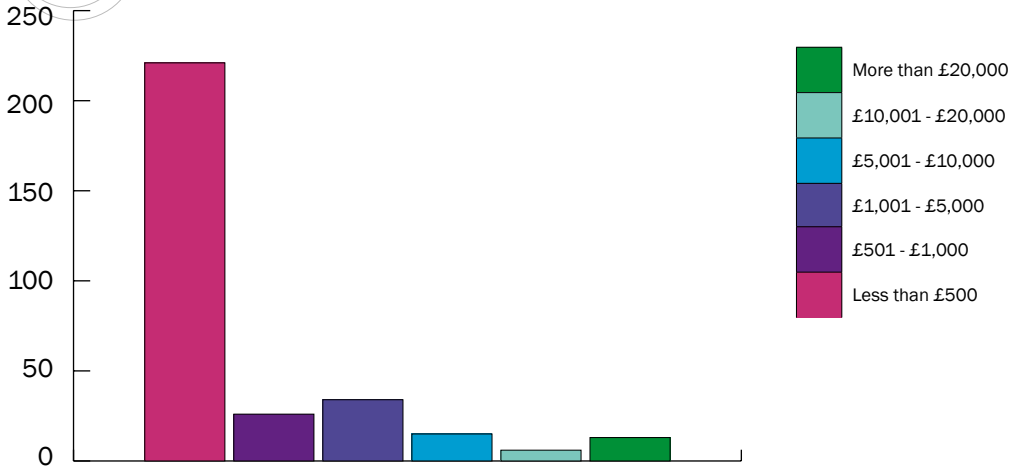
## Partnership Working

|   |        |
|---|--------|
| Yes – we work closely with other Voluntary and Community Groups               | 55.50% |
| Yes – we work closely with organisations from the Public and Statutory Sector | 38.00% |
| Yes – we work closely with businesses   | 13.10% |
| Yes – our partnership work is all done informally                             | 29.90% |
| Yes – we have formal partnership agreements in place                          | 20.10% |
| Yes – all our partnerships are going well                                     | 18.20% |
| Yes – but we could do with some partnership support to improve them           | 10.20% |
| Yes – but it is having a negative impact                                      | 0      |
| No – we have never worked in partnership                                      | 19.70% |
| No – but we would consider it if the right opportunity came along             | 9.50%  |
| No – potential partners are all competitors                                   | 1.50%  |
| No – but we successfully worked in partnership in the past                    | 1.80%  |
| No – we've worked in partnership before and it had a negative impact          | 0.70%  |

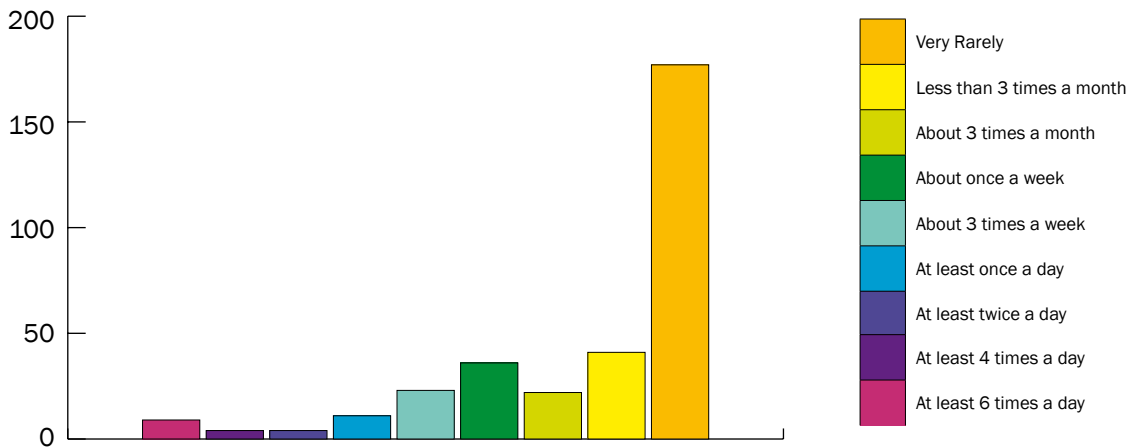
## Do You...?



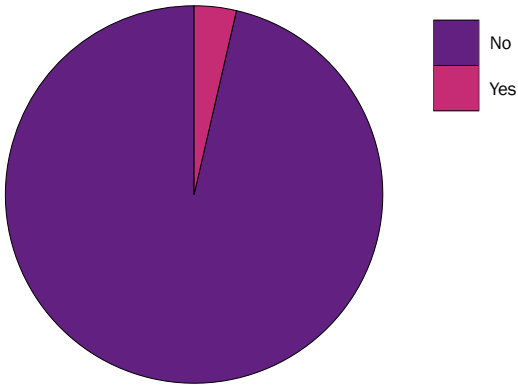
**How much a year does your organisation spend on travel?**



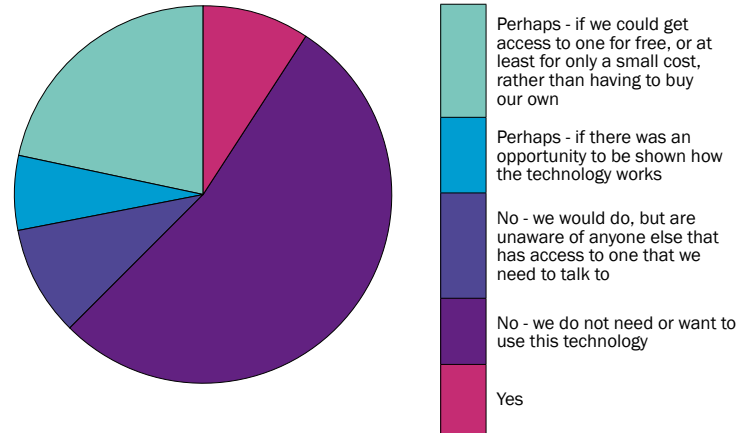
**In total, how often do people (either as volunteers, or as staff) have to travel more than 30 minutes (each way) to go to meetings or conferences?**



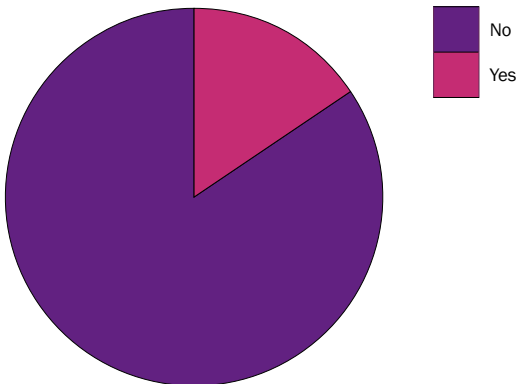
**Do you have a video conferencing suite?**



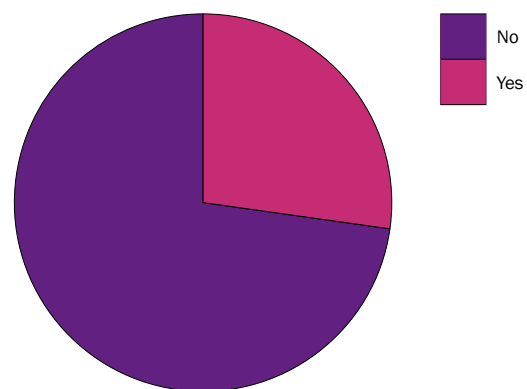
**If you do not have a conferencing suite, if you had access to one, would you use it?**



**Have you ever had any staffing issues which you felt could have been better handled with more knowledge of Employment Law?**



**Would your organisation be interested in accessing free HR (Human Resources and Personnel) advice?**

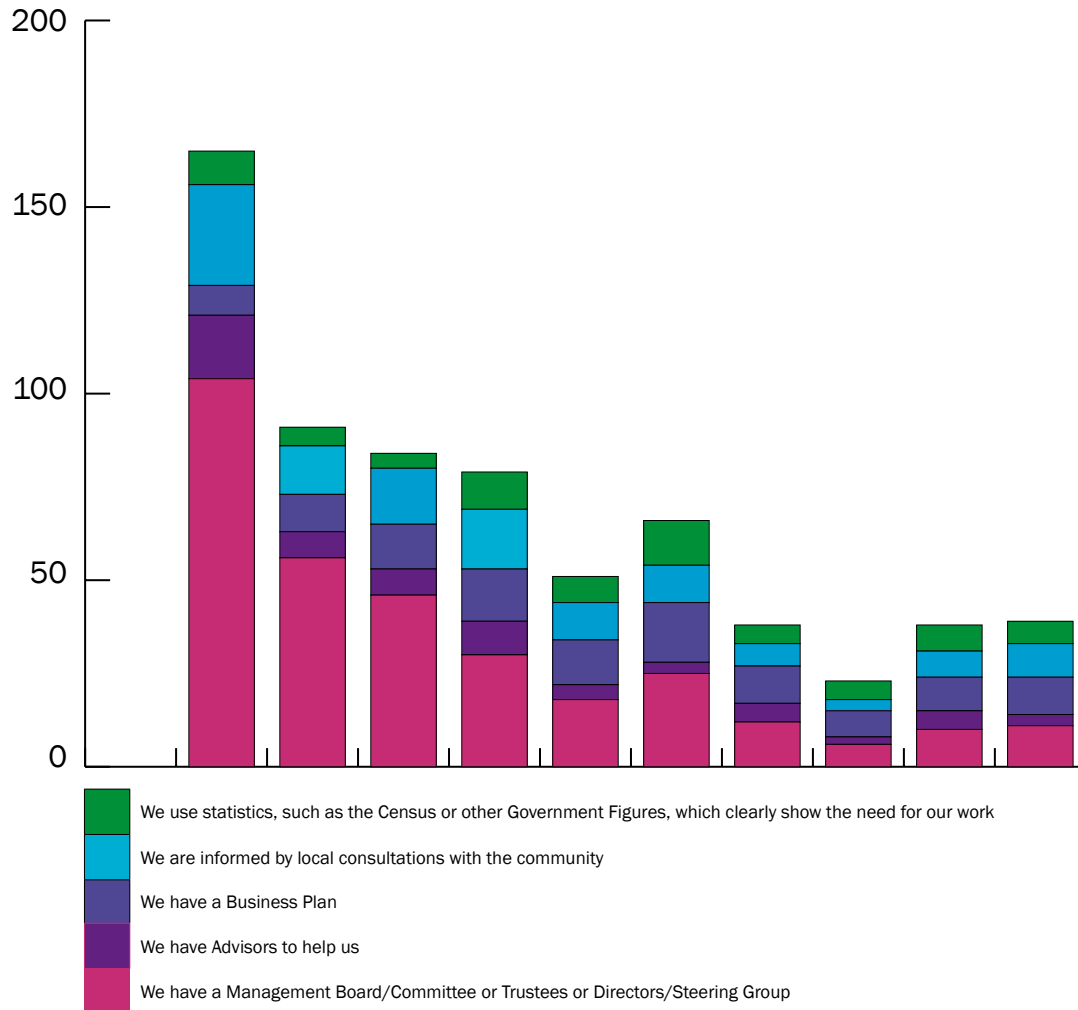


## FURTHER ANALYSIS

This is why you need a business plan and diversify your income.

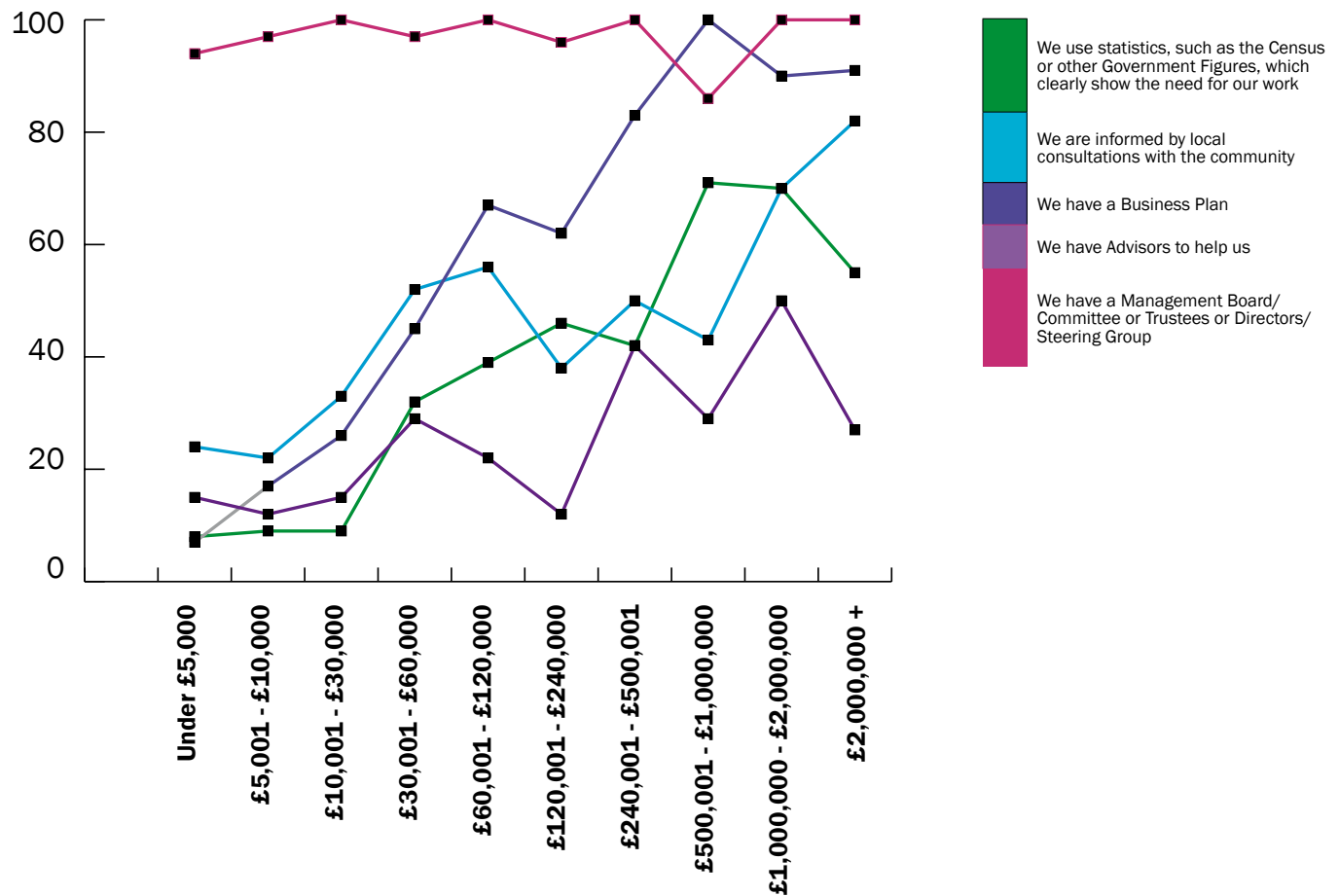
The Needs of the  
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Roughly how much is the biggest project  
your organisation has ever managed?

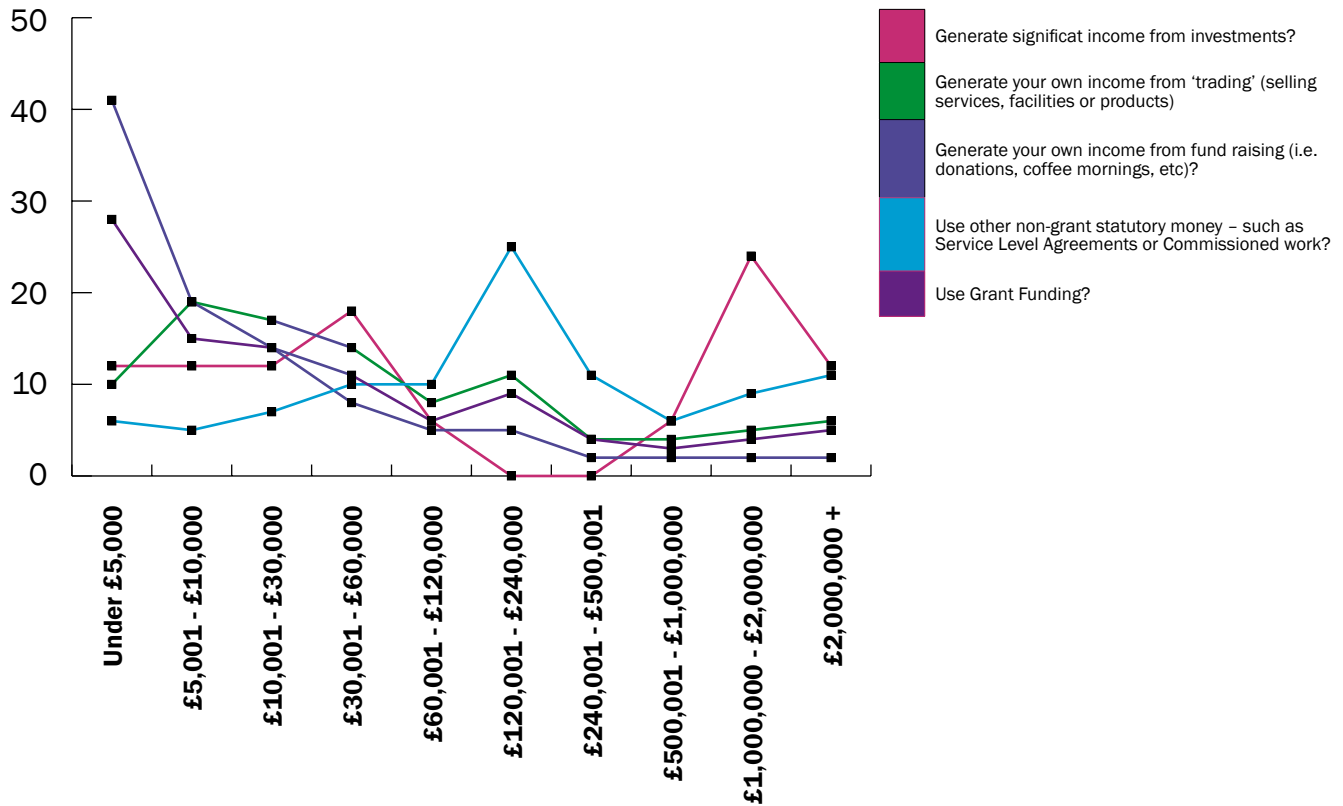




## Roughly how much is the biggest project your organisation has ever managed?



**Roughly how much is the biggest project  
your organisation has ever managed?**



## RECOMMENDATIONS

Whilst there are many services out there, it cannot be denied that there is far more demand on services compared with current levels of support provision. These recommendations suggest which areas are priorities to increase support levels:

- 1.** More Funding Support is needed; this should be seen as a priority by VCS support services.
- 2.** Help is needed for groups so that they can find and keep more volunteers. Existing training programmes and services could be realigned to support this need; as well as securing additional resources.
- 3.** Explorations into support for groups who fund raise should be conducted. There is little support of this kind in Cornwall and as this is the most common income technique, more help is needed; especially as it is likely that more groups will turn to this method as grants dry up.
- 4.** More support for groups that trade is needed as this is a growing area and the law and regulations are complex; and again, as grants dry up, this is seen as an alternative.
- 5.** Support is needed to help groups communicate with their community as some groups feel a lack of engagement and interest in their work from local people.
- 6.** Continue and improve local networking services to help more groups learn from others and feel less isolated.
- 7.** Support groups with their partnership working, this is another tactic to address depleted funding levels; by either working in partnership to access larger funds or to cut overheads and back office costs.
- 8.** Take advantage of the fact that nearly 50% of respondents are amenable to adopting Video Conferencing technology in some way and start to increase its use within the sector.
- 9.** Develop Human Resource/Personnel Support for those groups that employ, or are thinking of employing staff.
- 10.** More support for Community Buildings and Village Halls.
- 11.** Better communication with the sector – they feel they need to be better informed, reassure them that there are people with their finger on the pulse.

- 12.** Better promotion of existing support services is needed so that more people are aware of what help is out there to help them.
- 13.** Better promotion of the valuable breadth and depth of working going on in the VCS with particular focus on building awareness of Councillors and key staff at Cornwall Council. This should also be done as part of the Compact.
- 14.** Circulate this report widely so that those who answered the survey know what is going to happen now.

## **CONCLUSION**

The Voluntary and Community Sector provides a huge wealth of activities which improve their community's quality of life. These activities include clubs where people can share their hobbies and leisure time; services which catch people before their predicament gets worse and would need more intensive statutory provision; and niche and intensive services to support those at the margins of our communities and individuals that face crisis.

This work needs to be better promoted to everyone in Cornwall so that it can be celebrated, respected and used fully.

Funding continues to be the chief concern of the voluntary and community sector, as does finding volunteers to support their work. There are services to support groups to find funding, more volunteers - and much more, but there is still a long way to go in making groups aware that these services exist. A more regular quantity of promotion is needed for all support services.

It is also worth acknowledging that demand for these Support Services still overwhelms and outstrips the current levels of provision and more work needs to be done to increase support services and find more efficient ways to deliver a higher quantity of service throughout Cornwall.

The role that these Support Services (also known as infrastructure organisations) play in supporting the Voluntary and Community Sector should not be overlooked nor undervalued and these organisations are faced with the same funding challenges as the smaller organisations within this report. There is a real possibility that support from infrastructure organisations will be lessened if funding for this work is reduced.

During the same year, Cornwall Council conducted a Place Survey\*. One of the questions included in the survey was "Do you agree or disagree that you can influence decisions affecting your local area?" of which 27% of respondents either "Tended to Agree" or "Definitely Agreed". In comparison, this

survey's question "Do you feel you can influence services locally?" received over 55% of responses stating "yes". Whilst this is not a reliable direct comparison, it would tend to suggest that those involved in their community have been supported to feel more able to influence locally than the wider general public. This needs to be celebrated and acknowledged formally.

There seems to be much confusion and uncertainty about the new Unitary Council, with over 50% suspecting a lack of impact or clarity with the new council and 33% fearing that the transition to a Unitary will ultimately impact negatively on their group. Much of this is concern is due to the lack of any clear new funding arrangements as yet. There would seem to be a role here for both the Council and the Support Services to proactively get information out to the voluntary and community sector so that they can prepare, or at least feel assured that they are plugged in to the right communication channels and will know as soon as decision are made.

The survey suggests a link between the success (in financial terms) of groups and the amount of effort they are able to dedicate. Organisations that know significantly more groups, work in partnership, have business plans, consult with their community, use the available services, diversify their income streams, join networks,

and are aware of their knowledge gaps – and try to meet them, have more income than those organisations that don't. Income is certainly not the only (or best) method with which to measure the success of a group and there is a growing amount of evidence that proves that small community groups can make a very significant impact to their communities with only a small amount of money. However, via the Compact\*\*, the Voluntary and Community Sector has committed itself to become 'fit for purpose', in other words, to have all the documents, systems, knowledge, procedures and practices in place to make sure it reliably gives a high standard service to everyone – beneficiaries, volunteers and funders. This report suggests that the sector is making moves in the right direction, but there is still a long way to go and much more support is needed from Support Services.

\* "Assessing Cornwall's performance, Results of the Place Survey 2008/09 for Cornwall Council and partners", Ipsos MORI, August 2009.

\*\* More information on the Compact can be found on the Cornwall Strategic Partnership website: [www.cornwallstrategicpartnership.gov.uk](http://www.cornwallstrategicpartnership.gov.uk)

## DISCLAIMERS AND THANKS

This report is intended to be an accurate overview of the research carried out between July 2009 and August 2009. Full details (including all the free text answers) can be obtained upon request. The graphical representations of the results are purely to give a visual representation of the data and are not intended to be a 100% accurate reflection of the data in graphical form.

The quotes within this report are from respondents and are in the main a 100% accurate representation of their views, however occasionally the quote has needed alteration to give the reader some additional context and understanding. Effort has been made to hopefully demonstrate the wide a varied view from respondents.

Partners should not be seen to condone any particular view point.

## THANK YOU

I would like to thank everyone who contributed to this report and survey and those who will work together to complete the action plan.



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