

**Waltham Forest Volunteer Centre**

**FIFTH ANNUAL REPORT AND ACCOUNTS FOR  
THE YEAR ENDED 30 SEPTEMBER 2005**

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## **WALTHAM FOREST VOLUNTEER CENTRE**

### **LEGAL AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAIL**

Waltham Forest Volunteer Centre is registered as a company limited by guarantee (without share capital), register number 4046049 and also as a charity registered with the Charity Commission, register number 1082426. Its governing instrument is the Company Memorandum and Articles of Association. In the event of a winding up of the Company each member undertakes to contribute up to an amount not exceeding £1. The Company also operates under the brand name 'Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest' under license from the national charity 'Volunteering England'.

**Registered Office:** Community Place, 806, High Road  
Leyton, London E10 6AE  
Telephone: 020 8539 8163; Fax: 020 8532 8521  
Email: info@volunteercentrewf.org.uk

**Objects and Trustees:** Details of these are shown on the following pages

**Company Secretary:** Trevor Moss

**Chief Executive Officer:** Trevor Moss ('Executive Director')

**Bankers:** The Cooperative Bank plc.  
1, Balloon Street,  
Manchester. M60 4EP

**Solicitors:** Russell-Cooke  
(The Charity Team- Sinclair Taylor Martin)  
2, Putney Hill, Putney, London SW15 6AB

**Auditors:** Michael Bell & Co  
56, St James Street, Walthamstow,  
London E17 7PE

## **Report of the Board for the year ended 30 September 2005**

The Trustees of the Centre, being Directors for the purposes of the Companies Acts 1985 and 1989, have pleasure in presenting their fifth Annual Report together with the audited financial statements for the Company in accordance with the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice, "Accounting and Reporting by Charities", first issued by the Charity Commission in October 2000 and revised April 2005.

### **1. Structure, Governance and Management**

**The Charity** – referred to hereafter as "The Centre" – is a company limited by guarantee, incorporated on 20 July 2000 and is governed by a Memorandum and Articles of Association. Waltham Forest Volunteer Centre was registered with the Charity Commission on 14 September 2000. The premises of the Centre have been at the Alpha Business Centre in Walthamstow, London E17. On the 29 September 2005, the Board signed an agreement for lease of new premises at Community Place, High Road Leyton. The Centre will relocate in December 2005.

**Trustees** are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Articles of the Company and with reference to the Centre's Governance Policy. The Governance Policy expressly requires the Board of the Company to "maintain a strong, skilled and suitably diverse Board". Necessarily this means an ongoing process of identifying people to serve the Company, and seeking and briefing possible candidates throughout the year. Trustees are briefed ahead of election or co-option to the Board. Special training is made available as required and requested. A Governance Report is submitted to the Annual General Meeting of the Company. The Policy was last reviewed at the AGM of June 2005. The AGM resolved to review the policy again together with any developments following from the Charities Bill announced in the Queen's Speech of 17 May 2005.

**The Trustee Board of Management** normally meets bimonthly and governs the business of the Company according to the Memorandum and Articles of Association with sub-committees meeting under terms of reference. The Trustee Board considers and approves the overall strategy and direction of the Centre, operational policy, annual budgets, staffing and any other major business decisions.

**The Executive Director** as Chief Officer is responsible to the Board for the overall operations of the Centre including human resources, operations performance, and governance administration and acts as Company Secretary. The Executive Director is also responsible for Business Development, which includes business planning, development, policy, funding, financial planning, external relations, partnerships and collaboration.

**National affiliation and quality accreditation** of the Centre is through the national volunteer development organisation for England – 'Volunteering England'. The Quality Accreditation of the Centre was first achieved in October 2002. This has allowed the Centre to operate by license from Volunteering England under the trademark 'Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest' since June 2005. Re-accreditation is due during 2006. Other affiliations, networks and partnerships are pursued in line with the Charity's general business interests from time to time at national regional and local level. These can include statutory bodies.

### **2. The Objects, Strategy and Plans of the Charity**

The object of the Charity as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association is the advancement of education and other charitable purposes including within these the specific provision of a centre and advice and guidance to persons wanting to volunteer and organisations involving volunteers.

The Charity undertakes strategically planned activities of primary public benefit to the citizens and communities of the London Borough of Waltham Forest. These activities include: marketing and promoting volunteering, “brokerage” (ie information to and referrals of volunteers to opportunities), developing volunteering opportunities, volunteering good practice development, policy response and campaigning on volunteering and strategic development of volunteering. These activities are the quality-accredited services of the nationally branded Volunteer Centre.

### **The 2002 Vision Statement of the Centre**

Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest is a local volunteering development agency providing and promoting advice, publicity, information, training and support to volunteers, potential volunteers and volunteer involving organisations. We strive as a **Centre of Excellence**, to operate to the highest standards of quality and best practice, effectiveness.

- Through all our activity, we seek, with others, to give chances and opportunity to those who most need it and so **help to build an engaged, inclusive and integrated community** in this Borough.
- We will **gain and maintain public recognition** of the Centre’s activity as a **valued public service** with a reputation for reliability, impact, and innovation.

### **The 2002 Mission Statement of the Centre:**

The Volunteer Centre serves the people of Waltham Forest. To achieve our vision, our overall task can be stated quite simply:

- Getting people volunteering in Waltham Forest.
- Promoting and enabling volunteering; working for individuals and organisations; working for the whole community of Waltham Forest.

Under the 2002 Business Plan for the Centre, **the four operational project elements** are:

- Centre promotion, marketing and operational cohesion; (“Centre in the Community Project”);
- Volunteer Recruitment, including personal interviews, support and follow-up; (“VolBank Project”);
- Development of opportunities for Volunteers; (“Opportunities and Organisations Project”);
- Recruiting, supporting, deploying and training volunteers as charity trustees or advisors; (“Community Leadership Project”).

During this year, we have pursued these projects in line with the resources available to the Centre. We were pleased in March 2005 to receive news of success in funding the Opportunities and Organisations Project. This was announced at the Company AGM in June 2005 and we have since made arrangements for a project start.

## **The 2006/10 strategy for the Centre**

In August 2005, the Board commenced a formal process of strategy review. In particular, the Trustee Board will review the overall purpose of the Centre. The Board intends that a new Strategic Plan for 2006-10 with project plans will be approved in the coming year and presented to the Company at the 2006 AGM.

### **3. Objectives and plans for the year ending 30 September 2005**

The Board has continued to operate with the current Strategy and business plan approved in August 2002, delivered through the four operational projects and a business development function.

The Board has adopted the new national strategy for volunteering to support the vision and mission of the Charity. The national Volunteer Development Agency, Volunteering England, has developed a national framework for national, regional and local volunteering infrastructure. It published the first ever ten-year **“Strategy for Volunteering Infrastructure in England 2004 –2014”** entitled “Building on Success” in June 2004.

This development will have impact on the Charity as a whole. The Board sees definitive advantage and resource in working with new national and regional structures to reinforce our local impact. Quality accreditation and continual performance improvement is now a condition of Volunteer Centre Brand licensing. The new national Volunteer Centre Brand is a practical objective result – which aligns with our 2002 Vision Statement of “Centre of Excellence”. The Brand was announced and the license presented to the Company at our AGM in June 2005.

#### **We list our key objectives for 2004/05 below.**

1. To continue the delivery of the six quality accredited core functions of a branded volunteer centre - these now being: brokerage, marketing volunteering, good practice development, developing volunteering opportunities, policy response and campaigning, strategic development of volunteering;
2. To deliver our general level of brokerage at or above the level of the previous year;
3. To adopt the national Volunteer Centre brand under license with Volunteering England;
4. To fund and launch the Opportunities and Organisations Project;
5. To respond to new national external policy announcements – in particular having regard to the “ChangeUp” announcement of August 2004;
6. To campaign for the Volunteer Centre within the general policy agenda of the Local Authority – especially in regard to Voluntary and Community Sector infrastructure policy and funding through commissioning;
7. To develop Strategic Volunteering and Training within the objectives of the Community Leadership Project;
8. To investigate and pursue a refurbishment of Centre premises as part of a renewed occupancy strategy – the current lease on the Centre expiring in January 2006;

9. To contribute to local and national initiatives to bring the 2012 Olympics to London;
10. To commence the development of a New Centre strategy for 2006/10.

#### **4. Plans to achieve the objectives for the year**

**Delivery of core functions and general brokerage.** The team of staff and volunteer workers would deliver all functions required – but the level of activity depended not so much on marketing but on the development of quality opportunities for potential volunteer enquirers. For this year, it was key to ensure ongoing funding of the brokerage activity. We shall maintain the finances of the Charity at a break-even level during the year.

**The National Volunteer Centre Brand.** The new Brand is owned by Volunteering England. The initial brand license agreement raised concerns. Our plans were to discuss this with other Volunteer Centres in London and with Volunteering England so as to enable an agreement and branding within the year.

**The Opportunities and Organisations Project ('O+O').** We planned to place this Project to the Community Fund for funding, with Executive Director working with consultancy help as required. The plan was to secure funding and announce the project within the year if at all possible.

**External Policy Response and ChangeUp.** Government announced the ChangeUp in August 2004. It included volunteering within the national programme for infrastructure development. Executive Director was asked to pursue this as part of our strategic development and to ensure that we positioned the Centre to maximum effect. We understand that it does require new levels and means of partnership with local infrastructure agencies. It was expected that it would require considerable time and effort to build the relationships necessary.

**Local Campaigns: – The London Borough of Waltham Forest.** The Board is concerned that the Local Authority should understand the new and strategic role of the Centre and its potential and actual contribution to the Community. In late 2004, we shall tender for funding under a new commissioning programme for fiscal year 2005/6. We shall take all opportunity possible to promote and advance the cause of the Centre with the Local Authority.

**National Campaigns and Policy.** The Centre will respond and take all opportunity available to it through new programmes of modernisation (eg 'ChangeUp'). We will engage in consultations concerning the proposed merger of The Community Fund and the New Opportunities Fund. We plan to promote the mission of the Volunteer Centre and the new National Strategy for Volunteering published in June 2004.

**Strategic Volunteering.** We will press ahead strongly with the Community Leadership Project – and with the development of local Trustee training resources. We consider that deployment of skilled volunteers is critical to the health of the local Sector.

**Centre Premises.** During this year we will devise a plan to refurbish the Centre at the Alpha Business Centre. This will require substantial funding from some source as well as the agreement of the landlord to a new lease. The current premises are below the standards required for the delivery of a quality service and our ICT and telephony is obsolete or failing.

**The Olympic Bid.** We shall support and promote volunteering as an integral part of the London Olympic Bid in such ways as we may during the year.

**New Centre Strategy.** We are approaching the end of our 2002 plan cycle. The Board will launch a strategy review during the year covering a period to 2010.

## **5. Achievements and Performance in 2004/05**

### **REVIEW OF CHARITABLE ACTIVITY**

#### **5.1 Delivery of all of our core functions has continued with increased product.**

2004/5 has seen very considerable activity in Policy and Strategy areas and moves to establish the Opportunities Development and Good practice Functions.

#### **5.2 Marketing Volunteering and Brokerage: the people we helped.**

This has continued at the maximum levels permitted by existing staffing. We have had a year of some growth and consolidation. We have seen our core work of interview and referral keep to target.

**ENQUIRIES/INTERVIEWS:** Enquiries exceeded 1100 and all were offered interview. 514 people attended for interview – a rate of 45% of those who enquired. Enquiries from electronic sources are rising – and we expect this to exceed 50% in 2006. We also receive enquiries from outside Waltham Forest. We are able to re-direct some of these to other agencies closer to the enquirer, and assist the others.

**AGE of interviewees:** 30% were under 26 years old; 33% were between 26 and 34; 25% were 35–44 years old and just 10 % were 45 and over. This pattern is much as last year.

Last year we reported that we had no problem in attracting people to the Centre. The constraint now lies absolutely in working with organisations, groups and agencies to develop the good quality opportunities that match the volunteers' agenda. The funding and launch of the planned Opportunities and Organisations Project has had top priority.

**PLACEMENTS:** Last year we also reported a placement ratio apparently falling below 20%. As planned, we commenced monitoring of volunteers achievement after referral. This year we report a placement ratio of 28% - some 145 placements in the reporting year- nearly double last year.

**Socio-economic status:** On interview, 27% are employed, 25% are registered unemployed, and 25% are students. With placement, 34% are employed, 27% are registered unemployed and 22% are students.

**ETHNICITY and BME Impact:** We record some 60 different nationalities in our 514 interviews. On placement the majority of service users are from Black African and Black Caribbean communities with 37%; white British were 28%, and 6% Pakistani. We note other white communities at 11% - representing mostly the rise in white European post EU accession. **This does mean that the BME communities achieve the majority of our placements.**

**DISABILITY:** on interview 9% self-classify as disabled.

### **BROKERAGE TRENDS – and PRODUCT**

We are pleased to see our placement ratio approaching 30%. We want to follow-up more in the coming year on the 'Volunteer Experience' and in 2006 we want to resource a programme of Volunteer Impact Assessment.

Up to now, our targeted volunteer programmes have been limited to BME focus and some pilot schools contact. **The age analysis shows major demand from young people and especially those needing chances for pathways in employment and training.**

We also see a 'parallel offering' from the '**employed community**' wanting involvement as 'contributors' to their community. Just over a third of placements go to these 'contributors'. This **balance** of pathway-seeker /community-contributor is an interesting and healthy phenomenon. **We would emphasise that we see both volunteering agendas as 'builders of community'.**

The BME analysis shows that VCWF is **effective for the BME communities** – with around 70% of service users being such. This is a constant figure. '**New arrivals**' in the community are increasingly present in this category.

With 23% of placements being achieved by those under 26, 64% by those under 35 and 89% by those under 45, the age analysis makes it clear that VCWF is seen as an **opportunity organisation**. This does leave us with questions as to the involvement of older people. They are not excluded, but the present untargeted marketing strategy leaves us to explore inclusion/involvement of older people in the new strategy for 2006 –2010.

In acting fully on over 1100 enquiries this year, VCWF is performing a substantial and important role for people, the voluntary and community organisations and communities of Waltham Forest. In promoting community engagement and participation VCWF is an agent of community cohesion – and we watch trends and attitudes within the communities of Waltham Forest.

We emphasise and uphold the four key 'Compact' principles of volunteering: CHOICE, DIVERSITY, MUTUAL BENEFIT AND RECOGNITION. The first three principles are clearly evident in our brokerage outcomes.

### **5.3 The national Volunteer Centre Brand**

The Board determined to adopt the brand in April 2004. It did take time for Volunteer Centres and Volunteering England to agree on the appropriate form of license. Both wished to see key principles of quality and continuous performance improvement within the national network of branded Volunteering Development Agencies. It is VITAL that the brand is recognised, and that quality of service is evident to the people we serve.

At the same time, it was important to draft the license so as to allow freedom for adequate local expression of how local agencies work to reflect local conditions in the national network. SO – it is a network – not a 'franchise'. We are grateful to Volunteering England for taking care to listen to concerns and for the leadership shown in this year. The Board were thus pleased to adopt the license for the Company and the Borough in early 2005.

We are now entitled to the new operating name of the Company as 'Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest' ('VCWF'). With the brand come new brand materials including a nationally recognised trademark and the consequent branded letterhead and other office materials.

**In the AGM of June 2005, Councillor Clyde Loakes, Leader of the Council, London Borough of Waltham Forest, received and presented the license to the Company.** “Volunteer Centre Waltham Forest” is the first branded Volunteer Centre in North London.

#### **5.4 Developing Volunteer Opportunity and Good Practice: The Opportunities and Organisations Project.**

This project is a vital part of our 2002-2006 strategy. There is no lack of people wanting to volunteer – but we need to identify and grow the quality opportunity base for them. Without encouraging good quality opportunities, we cannot satisfy the demand –and we cannot grow our service.

The “Opps and Orgs Project” (‘O+O’) was conceived in 2002. In October 2004, Volunteering England announced its new Investing In Volunteer Programme (‘IiV’). This gave us the both the context and the vehicle for good practice development for the project.

The ‘O+O’ project plan was prepared with targets of 35 local volunteer involving organisations being helped to Investing In Volunteers kite mark in the next three years by a Good practice and Standards Officer. Alongside this we have an opportunity development officer. The project was presented to the last round of Community Fund bids in 2004.

We also negotiated a small grants facility with O-Regen as our partner for this project to provide funding at the level of £1000 for each of the 35 organisations for external accreditation fees.

In March 2005, we had a positive result from the Big Lottery Fund. The project was launched at the June 2005 AGM. Jane Curbishley, IiV Manager from Volunteering England spoke at the AGM about IiV and the Big Lottery Fund presented cheques for the project. We expect to recruit staff at the end of 2005 for a 2006 start-up.

#### **5.5 National Policy Developments 2004/05**

This year has seen major initiatives announced for Volunteering and the Voluntary and Community Sector.

##### **5.5.1 ChangeUp**

In August 2004, Government announced a national programme of modernisation arising from the Treasury Cross Cutting Review of 2002. It is called ‘ChangeUp’.

The ChangeUp investment supports schemes that are: in England, within constituted bodies which are either charities, voluntary or community organisations, social enterprises or community interest companies and providing infrastructure/second tier support and development services to frontline organisations, their workers and trustees (i.e. schemes for the provision of direct services to members of the public will not be eligible).

Its main spending programme is called “Embedding quality and improving reach”. It has a key objective - to ensure frontline organisations have better access to high-quality support in the key areas of organisational need identified in ChangeUp - namely: performance improvement, governance, workforce development, volunteer recruitment and management, ICT and income generation.

The programme for volunteer recruitment and management at a national level has been quickly assimilated within the new structures in Volunteering England. Locally, there has been opportunity to propose investment in all the six areas targeted – including volunteering.

The Centre assisted in partnership to advance the local ChangeUp Core steering group with Voluntary Action Waltham Forest (VAWF) in early 2005. We gave input to the local strategy and proposed a project for new Volunteer Centre premises as the volunteering segment.

### **5.5.2 The Russell Commission**

The then Home Secretary, David Blunkett, and the Chancellor of the Exchequer, Gordon Brown, established the Russell Commission in May 2004 to develop a new national framework for youth action and engagement. The Commission launched a nationwide consultation in October 2004. The Commission engaged a wide range of stakeholders including young people, the voluntary sector, business and the media. VCWF has responded to this and attended meetings.

The Commission reported final recommendations to the Chancellor and Home Secretary in March 2005, setting out a series of measures to deliver a step-change in youth volunteering in the UK. Government welcomed the recommendations, and Gordon Brown subsequently announced a £100 million investment, to recruit 1million new young volunteers. It is hoped that an additional £50 million funding will be drawn from private sector sources. The Centre has attended a briefing and day workshops. We are now waiting for announcements of strategic importance for Waltham Forest and the Centre.

### **5.5.3 Year of the Volunteer 2005**

In another announcement late in 2004, Government designated 2005 as ‘Year of the Volunteer’ (‘YOV05’). Volunteering England and Community Service Volunteers were asked to lead on the national planning and delivery. VCWF has been involved in promoting YOV05, and in particular we have chosen to link it with the new developments around the new Centre premises during 2005, presenting ‘New Centre, New Opportunities’.

### **5.5.4 Capital Volunteering – London**

Another Government announcement in early 2004 has led to investment by the Treasury under its Invest to Save Budget in 11 London Boroughs for a programme around Volunteering for people with problems of enduring mental ill-health. Waltham Forest is one those Boroughs – having 2,500 people who are on a Care Plan Approach (CPA) to their treatment. By introducing access to supported volunteering opportunity to some service users, Capital Volunteering will promulgate a recovery plan approach.

The Volunteer Centre has contributed to the work of the Waltham Forest Steering Group for Capital Volunteering. Depending on commissioning decisions late in 2005, we will consider tendering for projects that are aligned with our vision and mission.

## **5.6 Policy of the Local Authority and funding of local Voluntary Sector Infrastructure**

With the announcement last year by LBWF of the introduction of funding by commissioning the voluntary sector, the Centre has been successful in ensuring the inclusion of a local volunteering development agency in the Council’s voluntary and community sector commissioning portfolio. A tender was presented in late 2004 on a ‘contribution’ basis for the supply of a Local Volunteer Development Agency suggesting an investment of around £47,000 per annum. We were successful in obtaining a contribution of £35,000 towards to the totality of the provision of a Centre for the year from 1 April 2005.

The total cost of the Centre’s activities in 2005/6 could approach £250,000 depending on the timing of certain activities and programmes. LBWF will therefore fund around 15% of the budget, and be one of our larger investing stakeholders. Our Auditor has advised that the LBWF commissioning funding should be classified as unrestricted funds within our statutory accounts under the revised provisions of the Statement of Recommended Practice 2005.

We are aware that the Council will review the commissioning strategy during 2005/06. We do regard the contribution of LBWF as a critical 'signal investment' so that we can build up our ability to attract multiplier income. Thus we have to ensure that the Centre enjoys support from the Council. Other potential investors/funders view any withdrawal of funding to organisations such as ours by any Local Authority as a very negative step.

Major external funders see Local Authority support as indicative of local priorities and a healthy voluntary organisation. In most funders, the loss of statutory support will disqualify requests for funding. Generally, funders will not 'subsidise' a Local Authority that chooses to disinvest in organisations within the local voluntary sector. The Board considers that it is important that local Voluntary Sector infrastructure policy is designed for maximum external infrastructure investment capture.

During 2005, we were aware that other parts of the umbrella Voluntary Sector infrastructure in Waltham Forest were critically weak. This had impact on the Sector and the Council was naturally concerned. We expect the Council to review its voluntary sector infrastructure strategy. We have also presented our views to other infrastructure partners as to how we might work better together.

We believe strongly, that in Waltham Forest, the Volunteer Centre can best serve its charitable object, vision and mission as an independent Centre acting strategically and working with partners who have track record and sound business plans. The strength and product of VCWF over six years bears witness to the power of independent action and investment achievement.

In July 2005, we were approached by the Council and briefed on Central Government policy to involve an element of the Voluntary and Community Sector in 'Local Area Agreements'. Government in June 2005 selected Waltham Forest as a 'LAA' Borough. We have been pleased to explore targets for this to the benefit of our service users and the people of the Borough within the scope of our Charitable Object and with finance to match.

### **5.7 Developing strategic volunteering and training**

Since the Centre appointed the manager for the Community Leadership Project in February 2004, there has been significant development. The project aim is to identify those people who come to Centre with strategic leadership skills – notably for trusteeship of Charities – and to recruit, support, deploy them and offer sources of training.

The Centre's partnership with WF College in 2004 developed governance training under the name of "Equipped to Govern". The College and the VCWF have jointly marketed this – and we hope that this will develop further in 2005.

We are grateful to Lloyds TSB Foundation for providing additional resource alongside that of the main project funder – Bridge House Trust. Over this year, we have seen response from nearly 50 organisations to various mailings as we launched promotional materials. For organisations, we sent out leaflets "The Can do Challenge". The main request back from organisations seems to be much broader than governance – and we have found a lot of questions coming to us about funding and planning – arising from the commissioning exercise by the Council. It has been hard to balance our planned 'governance activity' with requests for strategic assistance and advice – especially when organisations face crisis.

We have seen over 60 individuals exploring "Prepared to Govern" this year and made referrals in a majority of cases.

Strategic volunteering is a vital element for the health of the Sector. The announcement of the formation of the 'Governance Hub' as part of ChangeUp will mean that we will review how we take our work forward -and what elements of partnership are necessary to bring about best results. The brokerage headline report above shows that we have a strong 'community contributor' element in terms of our employed volunteers. We need to deploy these skills to strengthen the voluntary and community sector.

Issues do arise. Organisations are naturally hesitant about new people, new patterns of governance, new skills – that can expose weakness. It will take time. The business of strategic Volunteering must always be 'on our menu', emphasised and an integral part of who we are and what we do. Strategic Volunteering will always be -in part - a campaign. At the end of 2005, we will review the project and plan for the third year.

### **5.8 Centre Premises.**

At the beginning of the year we planned to refurbish the Centre at the Alpha Business Centre. The funding for this was uncertain – and we expected to explore business sources. We also needed agreement of the landlord to a new lease. The current premises are below the standards required for the delivery of a quality service and our ICT and telephony is obsolete or failing.

In May 2005, an initial meeting with the Landlord revealed that might anticipate a rental level not much different from that we currently enjoyed of £15 per sq foot. At the same time, the ChangeUp programme offered a source of funding and we prepared plans for refurbishment.

On 6 July 2005, the Olympic decision for London in 2012 was announced. In early August, when we approached the landlord for formal renewal of tenancy ahead of the refurbishment, we were informed that the rent would be £24 per sq foot and this was not subject to negotiation.

This decision by landlord threw us on to a whole new strategy. The current premises were no longer financially viable and now certainly not the right investment location. Refurbishment was now "relocation". In the last weeks of August we commenced discussions with the Alert Group Ltd about a lease at Community Place, 806 High Road Leyton. HM The Queen had visited Community Place in March 2005. The building was in good shape and there was space to develop the facilities we needed for both staff and service users in two units – one for the staff team of 907 sq feet and a volunteer reception facility of 221 sq feet.

The Board instructed solicitors and proceeded with negotiations. At the same time, we re-bid the refurbishment proposals and got permission from the local ChangeUp core group and the London ChangeUp Consortium for £30,900 of funding for relocation.

The Board met twice in August and September to decide on the premises issue. Terms were finally agreed and an agreement to lease drawn up. This was signed formally on 29 September 2005 in the presence of the Leader of the Council, Cllr Loakes. Solicitors advised that we could give notice to our former landlords effective 30 September 2005 so that we could than plan for removal in December 2005 and set up of the New Centre in January 2006.

The premises' planning has been a large project. It does meet the core outcome of the Centre for the Community Project – which contains plans for new facilities for the Centre by 2006. The removal from Alpha Business Centre and the set up of new facilities will cause a

temporary lowering of our brokerage capacity at the end of 2005/early 2006. Numbers will reflect this.

### **5.9 The Olympic Bid.**

Our support to the London Olympic Bid has been naturally nominal rather than functional. The bid team wanted to demonstrate support for the bid and we indicated that VCWF would play its part. We were presented with a certificate signed by Lord Sebastian Coe at the June 2005 AGM for our support.

With the news of the successful 2012 bid, we see an important role for the Centre. It has already propelled us into an unplanned relocation and to a new Centre about one mile away from the Northern boundary of the proposed Olympic Park. We look forward to new developments in the coming year.

### **5.10 New Centre Strategy.**

We are approaching the end of our 2002/06 plans. The Board met with staff for day on 21 August 2005 to commence strategy review for the period of 2006 -2010.

The Board will propose new statements of vision, mission, aims, objectives, and functions for early 2006. It is hoped that project planning will commence in first quarter of 2006. It will dovetail with the existing plan. It will provide logical extensions to both core functional performance and response to key issues that the Strategy sub-Group identifies to Board and Company.

## **6. External factors affecting the Charity**

### **6.1 Specific External Factors**

In 2004/05, developments with Volunteering England and with Central and Local Government have continued to have major impact on the fortunes of the Centre. Our core business remains to be done within this new and emerging structure – and this business is much the same. People want to volunteer and they want good quality opportunities.

Volunteering England has further secured its position operating as the National Volunteering Hub. It will continue to accredit and offer branding to Volunteer Centres. VCWF enjoys a good relationship with our national partner – in terms of regional and national support, ‘Investing in Volunteers’ and branding. We will develop this further in 2006.

National Government has offered VCWF opportunity in Year of the Volunteer 2005 and with other investment developments like Capital Volunteering and ChangeUp. VCWF will continue to extract the best for Waltham Forest out of such initiatives and position the Charity for further development.

Local Government has offered both opportunity and challenge. We enjoy support from leading members of the Council. However, we are aware that officers of the Council do see problems with ‘Voluntary Sector Infrastructure’ bodies. It is important that that the contribution made by VCWF to the community is more fully understood by senior officers of the Council. These are early days in the reform of local volunteer development agencies nationally. We will continue to ensure that officers and members of the Council are given the

information they need. Support from of Local Government is critical for the success of VCWF.

The reform of the National Lottery Charities Board and the formation of the Big Lottery Fund offer the same mix of opportunity and challenge. Beyond doubt, the new investment programmes of 'BLF' due to be announced in 2005/06 will largely determine the immediate financial future of the Charity. We have committed time to the two BLF consultations over the past 18 months, and the initial reports are favourable to our cause. We await the important details in the next months.

Centre Premises. In 2004/05, the major problem that Trustees had to face was a sudden rent rise signalled for 2006 – resulting we believe in part at least from the Olympic decision of July 2005. The Centre will now move to Leyton and will re-open in January 2006. The Trustees believe that we have we have encountered this problem at the right time - when ChangeUp resource was available. We face the challenge and opportunity of a move in early 2006.

## **6.2 Securing our independence within a collaborative infrastructure and sector**

The pressures for partnership and collaboration within a competitive environment were emphasised during this year with the ChangeUp programme. Competition for limited resource within the Voluntary Sector has always been a factor. We observe that parties can be pressed to collaborate under competitive pressures that can compromise trust and transparency. We are sometimes unsure of the 'real agenda' of others, especially those who are experiencing substantial operating risk and naturally unsure of their future. We observe that some Voluntary Sector infrastructure groups in the Borough have had difficult times this year. We have had to question how we work best together and for what outcomes.

VCWF is a strong proponent of collaborative action with appropriate structures. Equally, this Charity represents the interest firstly of people who wish to contribute to Community. This Centre was born out of a desire to achieve for people and community.

We note a pattern of some disinvestment in the Voluntary Sector over the past five years by Local Government. We are aware that the quality-accredited Volunteer Centre is a very recent development. Many in the Voluntary and Statutory Sectors are used to the older concept of Volunteer Bureaux or 'Volunteer Service'. These are most often 'a hosted part' of a larger entity and better viewed as a project subject to funding and other variables.

We believe that there is no evidence to show that this arrangement has or would in any way lead to a better result for those we serve and for the sector at large. If anything – we believe that the evidence points the other way. The distinct mission and purpose of the Charity could easily be lost within another structure and volunteers and the community would be the losers. The failings of organisations are not solved by automatically by merger or by forced collaboration – but by strategy, planning and performance.

The Board believes that the Charity needs to maintain independence to best perform for its prime duty to local residents wanting to explore volunteering. An independent branded Volunteer Centre is still a very new concept. VCWF is the only one in North London – and we hope that our community will come to value the services we present. We will continue to explain the principles and advantages of 'independence and brand' - as well as our conditions for collaborative action - in the coming year within the overall strategy review.

### **6.3 Risk management**

Risk assessment over all operations of the Centre is an ongoing function.

As we approach the end of the 2002/06 plan, we see risks to be managed in the transition to new strategy. In particular, we have seen delays in the announcement of new programmes for the Big Lottery Fund. Under normal circumstances we would have expected our three-year funding to continue if the Community Fund had continued. 2006 will be a transition year – and risk of moving to new projects will bring manageable exposure.

With the replacement of the Community Fund, we see a familiar mix of challenge and opportunity. Funding the marketing and brokerage of the Centre remains an unknown until the new funding programmes late in 2005. All indications are that we should find the means of investment. The major risk is timing and the general competition for funds.

We also anticipate that our budgets 2005/06, 2006/07 will need to be reshaped according to new full cost recovery funding policies of the Big Lottery Fund. We expect to address this by introducing a new financial model for existing and new project costing based on full cost recovery. In particular, we expect to encounter some challenge in distributing the occupancy costs of the Centre, so far born by the Centre for the Community Project, which expires in April 2006. Fortunately Trustees have some additional discretionary powers even if overall funds are limited, in that the new commissioning by LBWF is not a restricted fund- being applied to the performance of the overall charitable object.

We will have attendant risks of relocation – taking on a new lease and a new building with all the changes that come with it. The trustees have taken legal advice as required and are satisfied with the arrangements made with the Alert Group Ltd for Community Place at Leyton. The project planning for the physical move and internal building works started at the end of the year.

As ever, sudden loss of trustees and/or managers could deprive the charity of direction or control. We are satisfied that we can recruit to strengthen the Board but there could be delay in re-building a new board of management. We have taken steps to strengthen the board during 2005 and these will continue. Similarly we pursue employment, recruitment and remuneration policies to ensure that our staff team has the quality and leadership needed ‘to be the best’.

In 2006 we must reaccredit the Centre with Volunteering England to maintain the Volunteer Centre Brand. The new premises are a key part of this – as the existing facilities at Alpha Business Centre were unlikely to have met the standards required.

There are general risks to growing an organisation in terms of ensuring good governance, good business and financial controls and high standards of executive management. With the 2006/10 strategy, we aim to see these areas reviewed and costed to fit any proposals for growth.

The Board see potential risk in adverse or negative reaction and/ or publicity from volunteer placement – but we apply best practice to mitigate risk and we expect to appoint a Good Practice and Standards Officer in the new year who will review policy to minimise risk.

We see risk from external Sector reforms and changes – resulting in loss of support from local government and requiring the Charity to review its arrangements with Government. We will work hard to ensure that LBWF officers and members are fully aware of our work and

plans. The Board will also ensure that the increasingly evident need for Sector collaboration does not coerce or divert the Charity into unsound plans or arrangements.

## **7. Plans for future periods**

### **Plans for 2005/6**

The Board has started a strategy review for new plans 2006-2010. It is expected that the major strategy will be signed-off at the end of March 2006 and project planning will start in early 2006.

We expect to introduce one or two new projects the first part of 2006. The Opportunities and Organisations Project will commence. It is likely that with a successful tender to Capital Volunteering for a mental health supported volunteering project – that this work would commence in the first part of 2006.

We anticipate that there will be a new approach to brokerage in 2006 – involving volunteer inputs. This will extend into our new strategy for marketing and brokerage in the plans to 2010.

We move to Community Place in December/January. The lease is for four years with costs per sq foot somewhat lower than we currently have at Alpha Business Centre. With new premises and a new team – there will be a period in 2006 when we explore the opportunities of the new location. We plan to develop a new website and the new Centre will be completely re-equipped with new telephony, ICT and furniture.

In the new strategy and new project planning 2006/10 we expect to see proposals for targeted volunteer streams – eg for young people, people with disabilities, and increasing focus on worklessness, and those seeking opportunity to advance in training and experience.

Reaccreditation of the Centre with Volunteering England must be achieved by October 2006. We will submit our portfolio of evidence in March 2006. The Quality Mark addresses the core functions of our operations as:

- Brokerage
- Marketing volunteering
- Good practice development
- Developing volunteering opportunities
- Policy response and campaigning
- Strategic development of volunteering

We will pursue the Investing in Volunteers kite mark in 2006.

We expect to understanding our Olympic role better during 2006.

We expect to monitor the Charities Bill and review governance arrangements thereafter.

The Board will work through its subcommittees: Strategy Planning and Outcomes ('SPO'); Finance, Funding and Outputs ('FFO') and Human Resources, Policy and Board Development ('HRPBD'). The Board will focus on ensuring performance, achievement and sustainability for the Centre.

## **8. Funders, supporters and partners**

**We are grateful to the Big Lottery Fund (operating the Community Fund)** for its continued three-year support to the Centre for the Community Project. This commenced with staffing on 1 May 2003 and this will continue up to the end of April 2006.

We are pleased to report the continued application of the three-year funding for the Community Leadership Project from the **Bridge House Trust**. The project will achieve its two-year point at the end of 2005, and we will review the project investment plans at this stage.

We are pleased to welcome **The Nationwide Foundation** as an investor/stakeholder to our VolBank brokerage operations in this Year of the Volunteer 2005.

We are grateful for the support for Community Leadership from **Lloyds TSB**, applied to the project support needs.

We have been pleased to receive support from **TimeBank** for Volunteer brokerage in respect of Young TimeBank and a BME initiative.

**The London Borough of Waltham Forest** continued to provide for the funding of the Director post up to April 2005, After this time, the grant funding ceased and we were successful in our tender for commissioning of the Centre. We understand that this may continue to 2007 and that there will be a review for future years in 2005/06.

**Central Government** funding was secured through the **London ChangeUp Consortium** for the development of new premises. This allowed us to sign the agreement for lease on Community Place.

**To all of the organisations named above, the Board expresses thanks on behalf of the Company.** Without this investment, we cannot deliver our ambitious plans for the people of this Borough – and beyond. We are determined to succeed.

## **9. Financial Review**

The Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet are appended, together with the report of the Auditors.

The financial statements disclose incoming resources for the period of £158,695. Total expenditure was £158,667. Our reserves at 30 September 2005 stand at £31,336. The surplus of £28 reflected successful execution of the break-even plan for 2004/05.

The Centre's main income in the period was received from the Community Fund, The Bridge House Trust, and The London Borough of Waltham Forest together with smaller one-off grants and a donation. These are reported in note 2.

We operated within the scope of our new project development funding, together with partnership funding gained in the period. This is analysed in note three to the accounts under the cost headings of Business Development, Centre for the Community Project, VolBank Development Project, Opps and Orgs Project and The Community Leadership Project. Management and administration of the Charity itself was £3,667.

### **Tangible Fixed Assets for use by the charity**

Details of movements are set out in the financial statements. Small additions have been made during the year.

### **Reserves policy**

In 2004/05, we planned to break even financially. Our current policy is to maintain £30,000 of reserves as a minimum with anything over £50,000 having to be designated. The £30,000 as a minimum, reflects three months operating expenses.

The trustees recognize that in some way we need to increase reserves if we are to expand activity as we look at the sustainable future of the Charity. There could be opportunity for this in the next year and perhaps later in 2009 if we succeed in assisting LBWF with achievement under the forthcoming Local Area Agreement due to be signed in 2006.

## 10. Trustees

The fourth AGM was held 14 June 2005. Currently all Directors and Advisors to the Board are elected/appointed annually. The names of those who were Trustees at any time during the period are listed below together with the names of non-voting advisors who assisted the Board. Names are included with any date of formal cessation of service, including such dates after the reporting period.

### Trustee Board of Management

Liz Williams	(Chair, formerly Vice- Chair, re-elected 14/6/05)
Lucy French	(re-elected 6/4/04, retired 14/6/05)
Amarjit Virdi	(re-elected 6/4/04, retired 14/6/05)
Tengiz Machutadze	(Treasurer, re-elected 14/6/05)
Sanjiv Lingayah	(co-opted 17/11/04, re-elected 14/6/05)
Jessica Adkins-Michelson	(elected 6/4/04, retired 14/6/05)
Paul Canal	(re-elected 14/6/05, retired 20/9/05)
Fiona Doctor	(elected 6/4/04, retired 25/1/05)
David Henig	(re-elected 14/6/05)
Susan Rich	(co-opted 8/7/04, retired 14/6/05)
Kenneth Titmuss	(co-opted 8/7/04, retired 14/6/05)
Lucy Reed	(elected 6/4/04, retired 4/11/04)
Gina Pathan	(co-opted 17/11/04, retired 14/6/05)
Karen Whitehead	(elected 14/6/05)
James Sarginson	(Vice Chair, co-opted 23/03/05, retired 19/7/05)
Deborah Marshall	(co-opted 23/3/05, retired 25/8/05)
Gemma Wood	(co-opted 30/8/05)
Donna Feeney	(co-opted 30/8/05)
Ed Cook	(co-opted 30/8/05)

### Advisors to the Trustee Board of Management

Sanjiv Lingayah	(Apptd 6/4/04, co-opted to Board 17/11/04)
Winnie Kalifa	(Finance Advisor apptd 14/6/05)
Rebecca Bird	(Human Resources Advisor appointed 3/12/02)
Ernest Kofi Nkrumah	(Apptd 6/4/04, retired 14/6/05)
Gina Pathan	(Apptd 6/4/04, co-opted to Board 17/11/04)
Fiona Doctor	(Apptd 25/1/05, retired 14/6/05)
Joan Nicholson	(Apptd 6/4/04)
Julia Carmichael	(Apptd 30/8/05, retired 17/10/05)
Ransford Fiti	(Apptd 14/6/05)
Jessica Adkins-Michelson	(Apptd 14/6/05)
Sue Rich	(Apptd 14/6/05)
Amarjit Virdi	(Apptd 14/6/05)

The Board wishes to acknowledge the advice and guidance given from time to time by those without a formal office of advisor.

### **Secretary to the Board of Trustees**

Trevor Moss, the Executive Director, was re-elected as Secretary to the Board at the AGM of 14/6/05.

### **Statement of Trustees' Responsibilities**

Company law requires the Board of Management to prepare financial statements for each financial year, which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the Company and of the surplus or deficit of the Company for that period.

In preparing those statements, The Board is required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards and statements of recommended practice have been followed subject to any departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the Company will continue in business.

The Trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records, which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the Company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 1985. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the Company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

### **Relationship with Funders**

No trustee had any relationship with any of the main funders other than as a Trustee of the Centre, excepting:

Miss Jessica Adkins-Michelson (elected 6/4/04) being an employee of the London Borough of Waltham Forest, duly declared such interest for registration and shall as lawfully required restricted her voting and presence on any business that may from time to time involve LBWF or matters that could imply such involvement.

Mr James Sarginson (co-opted 23/3/05) being a retired employee of The Big Lottery Fund duly declared such interest for registration and shall as lawfully required restricted his voting and presence on any business that may from time to time involve The Big Lottery Fund or matters that could imply such involvement.

Other Trustees, being employees of other voluntary organisations, from time to time can have had routine contact with the funders of the Centre in fulfillment of these employment contracts. Trustees avoid the appearance of a conflict of interest by declaration to the Board and any such declarations are recorded. No other such declarations were recorded during this year.

### **11. Volunteers**

Volunteers have assisted at The Centre itself in a number of ways: casual and specific administrative tasks; tasks involving specific professional expertise (eg finance); and governance/ advisory roles. The Centre seeks to optimise effectiveness by creating volunteer opportunities in the Centre within terms of best practice and as exemplars to the community we serve.

**We are very grateful to all who have served at the Centre over the year.** In addition to those who have held governance or advisory roles named above, the following have acted in other volunteer roles during the year:

Winnie Kalifa  
Stephen Anthony  
Trish Black

In this the **Year of the Volunteer 2005**, The Company was pleased to recognise special volunteer service to the Company since its incorporation in 2000. YOY05 certificates were presented to Officers of the Company, advisors and other volunteers who had given particular service:

Barbara Bishop (former Company Secretary)  
Dot Gray (Chair of the VC Steering Group)  
Joan Nicholson (Steering group, Board and now Advisor)  
Jowanna Lewis (Steering group – Treasurer)  
Charles Woolnough (former Chair of the Company)  
Linda Samways (former Vice Chair)  
Fiona Fanthome (former treasurer)  
Liz Williams (Chair)  
Tengiz Machutadze (Treasurer)  
SanjivLingayah (Advisor and Board member since 2002- strategy)  
Rebecca Bird (HR Advisor since 2002)  
Stephen Anthony (Special YOY Award for service to Centre)  
Tengiz Machutadze (Special YOY Award for Finance development of Centre)  
Winnie Kalifa (Special YOY Award for Finance mgt, controls and planning)  
Trish Black (Special YOY Award for Volunteer Experience Research)

**The Board – (consisting of volunteers too) - wishes to acknowledge the service given by all above and any others who are not named above.**

**The impact of volunteer resource cannot be understated.** Without it, the Centre simply would not function. We estimate that in approximate terms, the volunteer time contributed to the Centre this year amounts to:

Over 500 hours of clerical and administrative task hours;  
Over 600 hours of professional task hours;  
Over 1000 hours of governance and advisory task hours.

## **12. Auditors**

Our Auditors, Michael Bell & Co were reappointed at the AGM of 14 June 2005 to audit the affairs of the Company under standard letters of engagement. The Board will ask the Company to consider appointment of the Auditors for a further specified period at the forthcoming AGM.

**This Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 6 April 2006 and signed on their behalf.**

**By order of the Board,**

**Trevor Moss  
Company Secretary**