



Third Sector Summit

Communities First in a Transformed West Lothian

WEDNESDAY 3RD NOVEMBER 2021

Chair

Alan McCloskey

CEO

Voluntary Sector Gateway West Lothian



Keynote Speaker

Anna Fowlie

CEO

SCVO



*The role and value of the
third sector in the economy*

Speaker

Cllr Kirsteen Sullivan

West Lothian Council



Past, Present and Future

SHOWCASING THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

FIREFLYARTS
Enriching young lives...

Silence Chihuri

CEO

Fair Justice System for Scotland Group



Equalities for All

49

attendees representing third sector organisations across West Lothian, as well as elected members of Scottish, UK, and Local Government

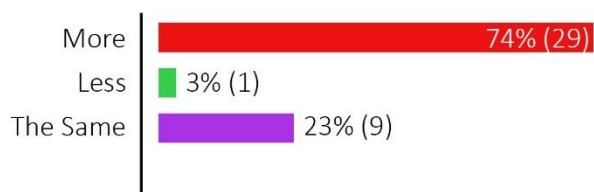
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themed breakout sessions discussing:

Poverty: Covid Response and Recovery | Improving Mental Health in West Lothian | Role of TSIs During the Pandemic | Growth and Capacity Building | Adapting Services During COVID | Community Wealth Building

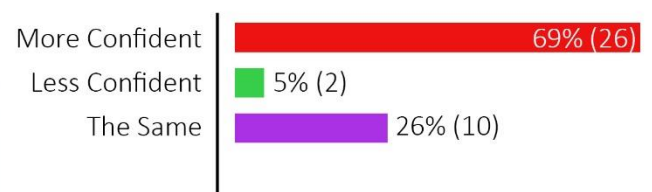
POLL 1 RESULTS (39 ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN POLL)

- 1 In comparison to 12 months ago, does your organisation collaborate effectively with other organisations:?



POLL 2 RESULTS (38 ATTENDEES PARTICIPATED IN POLL)

- 2 In comparison to 12 months ago, how confident do you feel that your organisation is equipped to recover from the pandemic?



SHOWCASING THIRD SECTOR ORGANISATIONS

FIREFLYARTS

Enriching young lives...

Firefly offer theatre skills, film and drama activity for children and young people aged 5 to 25 years across West Lothian. They aim to deliver quality and equitable arts activity to build confidence, aspiration, social and creative skills. They're always pleased to meet new people and develop new partnerships to generate greater arts opportunity for all.

[VIEW VIDEO](#)

FJSS GROUP

The Fair Justice System for Scotland Group (FJSS Group) is a grassroots-led legal charity based in West Calder, West Lothian. The organisation works towards creating greater equality and diversity in the Scottish justice system.

[VIEW VIDEO](#)

Key Speakers



Anna Fowlie

[VIEW VIDEO](#)

Kirsteen Sullivan

[VIEW VIDEO](#)

Summary of Summit Breakout sessions

Report into the roles of Third Sector Interfaces (TSIs) during Covid

This workshop was based on a recent Evaluation Support Scotland report which looked at the role TSIs played during Covid-19. The discussion focused on the report's fourth recommendation 'Build on the opportunities that have come out of Covid-19,' and looked at three questions:

- What has the West Lothian third sector learned from its Covid experiences?
- What new opportunities has Covid created (e.g. digital, improved relationships)?
- What do you need from the TSI, and others, to embrace these opportunities?

It was noted that some third sector organisations were much better prepared for the digital challenges presented by the pandemic than others, but everyone was impressed by how well many organisations had coped with a move to online delivery. During Covid, organisations had proved to be surprisingly resilient, and high levels of trust had developed between different partners.

Two new opportunities were discussed, digital and food. Regarding digital, there is a need to build on the digital upskilling that has taken place across the sector, while recognising that many people remained digitally excluded (including some younger people.) Covid had changed the landscape regarding the provision of food to vulnerable people. Some organisations have responded very well to food issues, but they require on-going funding to allow them to continue to meet that need, and to maintain dignity in service provision.

To embrace the opportunities there is a need for additional training, with mental health and emotional intelligence raised as topics. Further digital upskilling, and funding for replacement and upgrading of technology is also required.

Lesley Kelly, Midlothian Voluntary Action



[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

Poverty: Covid response and recovery

The contents of the presentation was: -

CAB service and its existing poverty related projects.
Impact of COVID on clients
Further challenges clients face
What works well?
What can we do better?

Feedback from participants: -

There has been significant growth in the sector which has assisted more people at a time they really needed it, but the challenge now is how we sustain that - the client need is still there but the funding is not.

We need to better understand what each other does and how we better make referrals (some have found Fort disappointing in terms of how many referrals they get).

Better communication from the sector on services they offer – this will help to avoid duplication of work

All noticed an increase in mental health of their users/clients

A concern that vulnerable client have not had access to services (virtual and phone contact is not suitable to them) – more needs to be done to help these clients.

A suggested event on sharing information – each organ getting a few mins to explain what they do/offer – very important as the strength during COVID is that we have developed services but no everyone will get the benefit of these services is we don't know what is going on.

Karen Nailen, Citizens Advice Bureau



[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

Improving Mental health and Wellbeing in West Lothian

An innovative project is being driven by WLSen to improve health and wellbeing in West Lothian. This pilot, managed by WLSen, will develop and deploy a new referral service. This service will be for West Lothian residents aged 18 years and over. The referral service will connect individuals with specialist 3rd sectors orgs who are experienced in offering advice and support for those experiencing low to medium mental health issues.



The Project has grown from a recognition that the third sector plays a vital role in providing advice and support to individuals across West Lothian to help them live well. West Lothian's Health & Social Care Partnership through their Mental Health Strategic Commissioning Plan 2019-2023 want to help the Third Sector to grow and through funding support develop a range of community supports across West Lothian. In West Lothian, clients can wait an average of 18 weeks to see a counsellor. In many cases it can be longer. We know that lockdown and the physical and emotional challenges brought by COVID restrictions have exacerbated the mismatch between service provision and demand for services.

This new referral service is person-centred by helping to identify an individual's needs and, through discussion, find a mental health pathway that empowers individuals to build self-confidence and achieve personal outcome goals. We want people to have information to make the right choices at the right time for them as individuals. WLSen are optimistic that funding will be provided for a further year. We want to see the project evolve in the light of challenges and opportunities.

We are confident that with the support and enthusiasm from our 16 partners and allies, we can find a way around unexpected obstacles. We see WLSen as the caretakers of this pilot project. WLSen, and the new Mental Health Coordinator will be encouraging development of a new consortium to take responsibility for the project going forward. We are ambitious to see the project grow, by scaling up in terms of project partner collaboration and support offered across West Lothian. We're excited about this pilot project evolving into a strong, collaborative 3rd sector force which will impact positively upon individuals and communities across West Lothian.

We are delighted to have the support of partners, and allies like SENScoT and Community Enterprise to help drive this project forward.

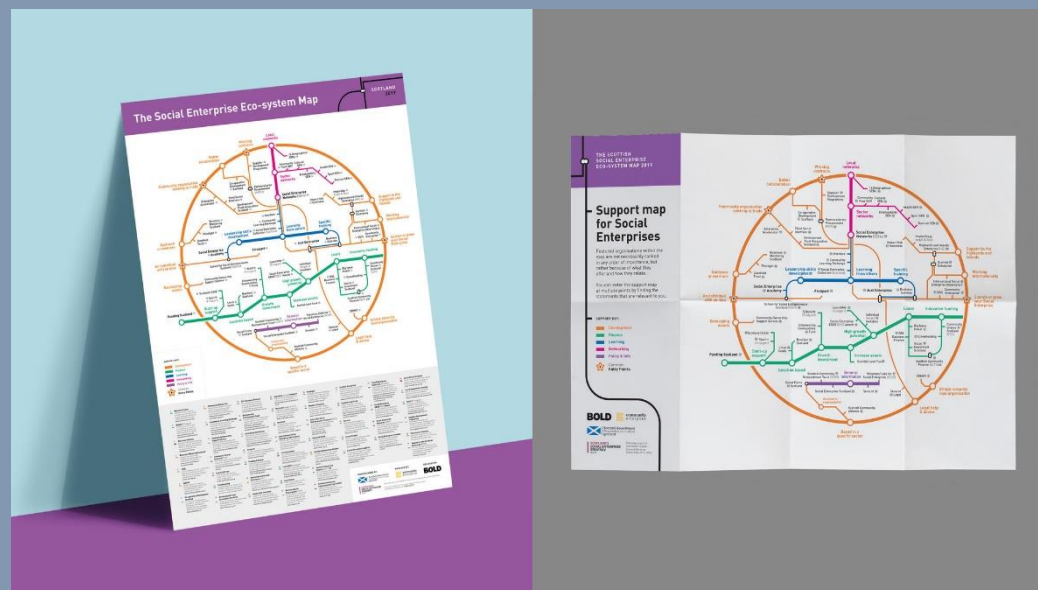
Linda White, WLSen

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Growth and capacity building in the Sector: Priorities and Thoughts

- Growth is often too much of a focus, particularly linked to social enterprise. With covid, Brexit etc, there is a need to focus on survival and consolidation rather than growth
- Net zero, Brexit, covid and other drivers such as community wealth building mean that there is a context of change in the sector. Capacity building support should be focussed on supporting people through that change.
- There is a lot of support in Scotland but it can be hard to find. Important to highlight the support map (www.sesupportmap.scot) which will become a repository of all support in Scotland and a complement to funding Scotland.
- The importance of Just Enterprise and Accelerate were noted in supporting the growth and capacity building towards sustainability.
- Finally the co-ordinated support in West Lothian between VS Gateway, WLSN, Community Enterprise and Business Gateway was noted as a positive model.

Douglas Westwater, Community Enterprise



Adapting to New Ways of delivering services:

- orgs adapted well, at the beginning of the Pandemic; now this change continues with adapting to face to face as well as online, hybrid approach.
- equipment to work in this way is needed though and that's costly for some
- there's more demand, people are expecting both face to face and online support
- this puts more pressure on the staff team, so orgs are having to design this new service delivery, helping staff and clients to find the solution that's right for them but managing expectations that we can't offer everything
- there is some reluctance to engage virtually; may be due to digital exclusion, lack of IT skills or tools; lack of appetite for digital and therefore a challenge to engage with clients (in what might have already been a difficult environment asking people to come forward for help)
- anxiety about going out and about which makes it difficult for orgs to reinstate face to face groups
- costs and capacity to deliver hybrid service delivery is an issue
- people have additional priorities and more complex needs
- people need support more often; so increasing demand and complexity of need impacts on orgs in being able to deliver what's needed in a difficult funding environment
- impact on staff teams –
 - for those who've started with a company during Lockdown, it may increase stress with people not meeting team mates, getting full training and support when they start the job
 - also impact on staff with increased demand and having to support people with really difficult needs whilst they are on their own, without other staff to support them – impacting on wellbeing of staff
 - equipment is also needed to ensure safety for staff who are home working/coming into an office – hybrid working patterns
- next steps:
 - constant need to continue to adapt
 - need to develop the hybrid working pattern (for staff) and service delivery
 - real focus on listening to what people need from us in this new way of working



Alison Wright, Carers of West Lothian

Community Wealth Building (CWB)

The Community Wealth Building breakout session briefly explored the five principles of Community Wealth Building in relation to Third Sector activities. The West Lothian Council Community Wealth Building team and Rachel Bentley – Associate Director of the Centre for Local Economic Strategies – spoke about the ongoing work to develop an action plan or this economic approach in West Lothian, and discussed the ways that the approach integrates with lots of brilliant, existing efforts within the voluntary sector.

After a presentation and update from the team, we held a question and answer session with valuable discussions regarding awareness-raising and communication surrounding Community Wealth Building, whilst also looking at the role and impact that third sector organisations will eventually have in the implementation of West Lothian's forthcoming **Community Wealth Building (CWB)**

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Brenda Cumming, Community Planning Officer

[VIEW PRESENTATION](#)

I LIKED

"I liked having the platform to hear from others"

"I appreciated the range of well connected speakers offering their experience and insight into the sector"

"Loved the conversations that have been started and connections that have been built"

"Thought it was all great, really well structured, great speakers, videos and interactive discussion"

I LEARNED

"There is such a range and diversity of third sector organisations in West Lothian - we are very fortunate"

"Great to hear more about the amazing work happening across the region"

"Range of well connected speakers offering their experience and insight into the sector"

"Good spread of topics and very useful information"

I WILL COMMIT

"to continue to reach out to HSCP, funders and allies to make effective collaboration a reality"

"To maintain the recovery momentum we have achieved by working together!"

"To inter-organisational communication, cooperation and collaboration!"

"To continuing to look for opportunities for collaboration to help us provide more support for our service users; we can do more by working together"