

# PROMOTING LOCAL VOLUNTARY ACTION

## HORSHAM AREA COUNCIL FOR VOLUNTARY SERVICE SURVEY 2011



### **HORSHAM AREA COUNCIL** *for* **VOLUNTARY SERVICE**

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- **Company No:** 5999908
- A company registered in England and Wales

## **BACKGROUND**

Horsham Area Council for Voluntary Service (HACVS) exists to improve the quality and range of community services by supporting local voluntary action within Horsham Area and by facilitating links between the voluntary and statutory agencies and the business community.

HACVS identifies and responds to community needs by:

- Helping to establish new organisations
- Working with existing organisations to ensure viability
- Linking voluntary, public and private sectors to identify emerging needs

To assist in these aims, HACVS endeavours to provide the following local development and support services:

- Consultation / representation
- Training
- Events
- Organisational development for existing and emerging groups
- Recruitment of volunteers
- Communication news / information
- Resource centre and equipment loan

HACVS aims to provide a good quality service and therefore the views and opinions of our members on how we are doing are valued. Equally, our Members' perspective on what services may be needed over the next two years is an essential part of our planning process for future service delivery.

## **THE SURVEY**

The HACVS survey was completed on line via Survey Monkey; it was also published on the HACVS website and publicised via the HACVS newsletter and e-bulletin service; reminders were also sent out at intervals. In addition, a letter was sent to all our Members whose stated preference is to receive paper documents advising of the survey and letting them know that we will be contacting them in order to complete the survey over the telephone. A 'prize draw' of an iPod Nano 8GB generation5 was offered as an incentive for Members to complete the survey.

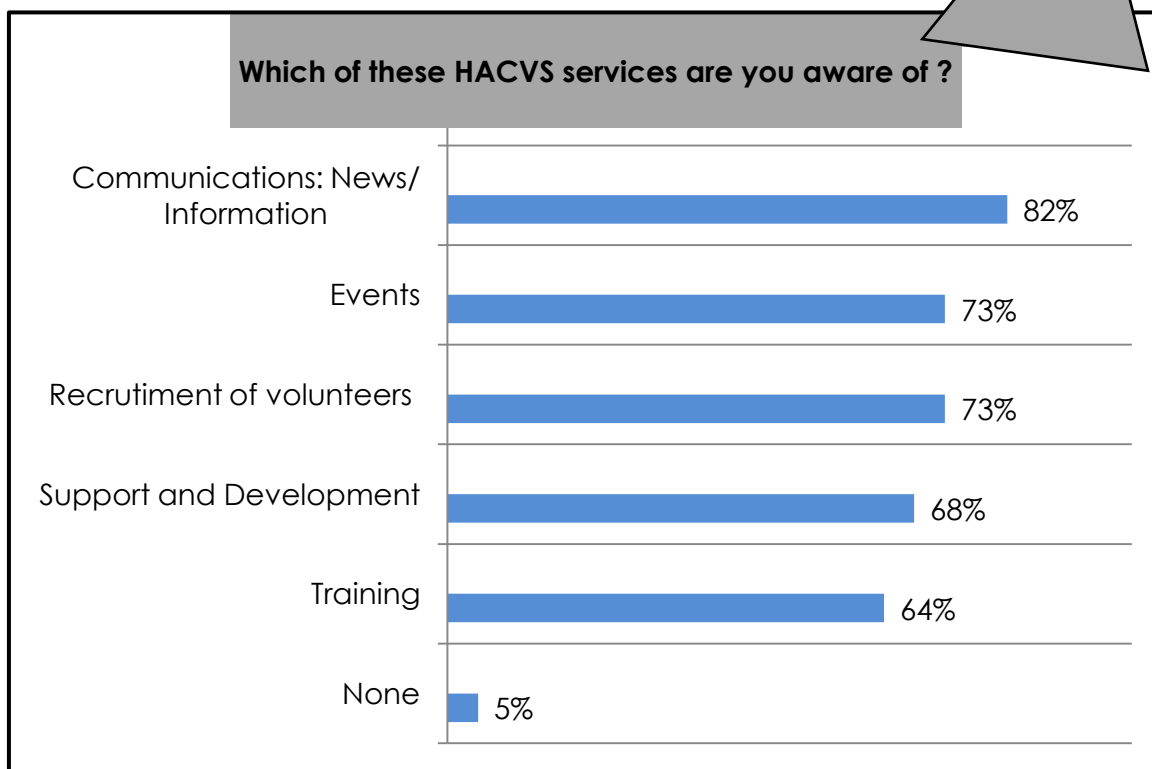
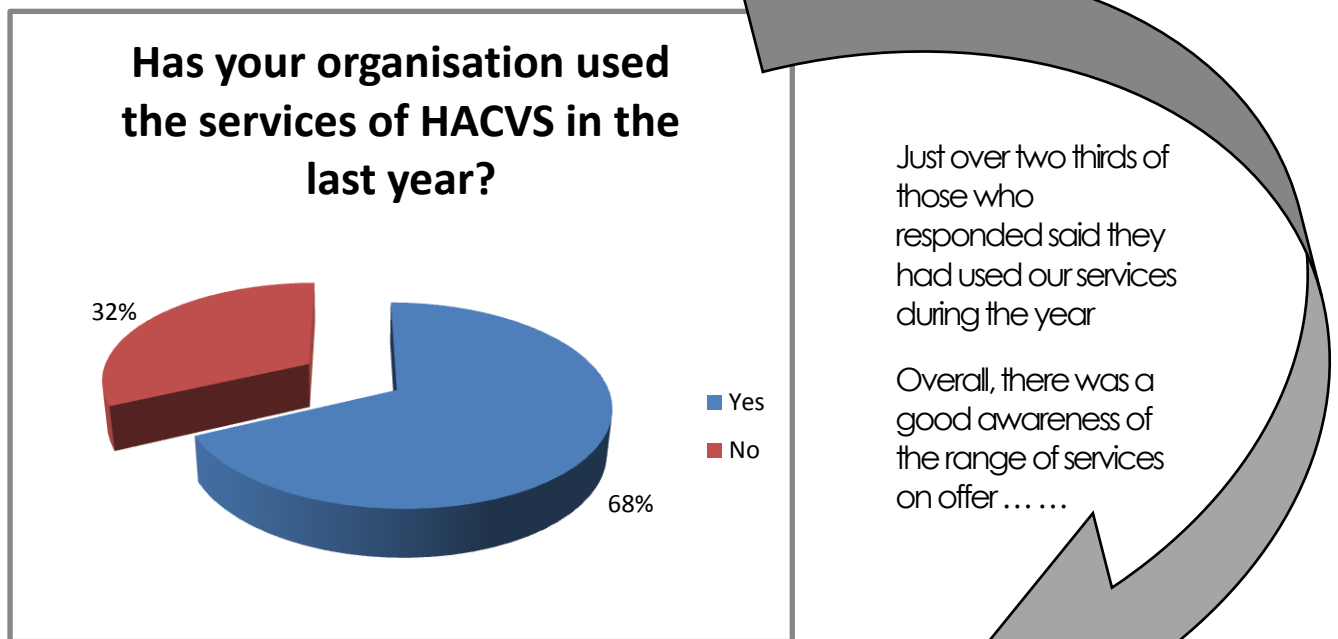
The purpose of the survey was to gather comments and feedback from our Members to help us find out if the service we provide is meeting their needs and being delivered effectively, to let us know of any improvements that could be made and what their needs may be in the future. The return rate was 17% and broken down as follows [please refer note (i)]:-

	Sent			Responded		
	Electronic	Telephone	Total	Identified	Unidentified	Total
<b>Members</b>	150	48	198	17	15	<b>32</b>
<b>Non-members</b>				2		<b>2</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>48</b>	<b>198</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>34</b>

## **MEMBERSHIP SUPPORT (GENERAL)**

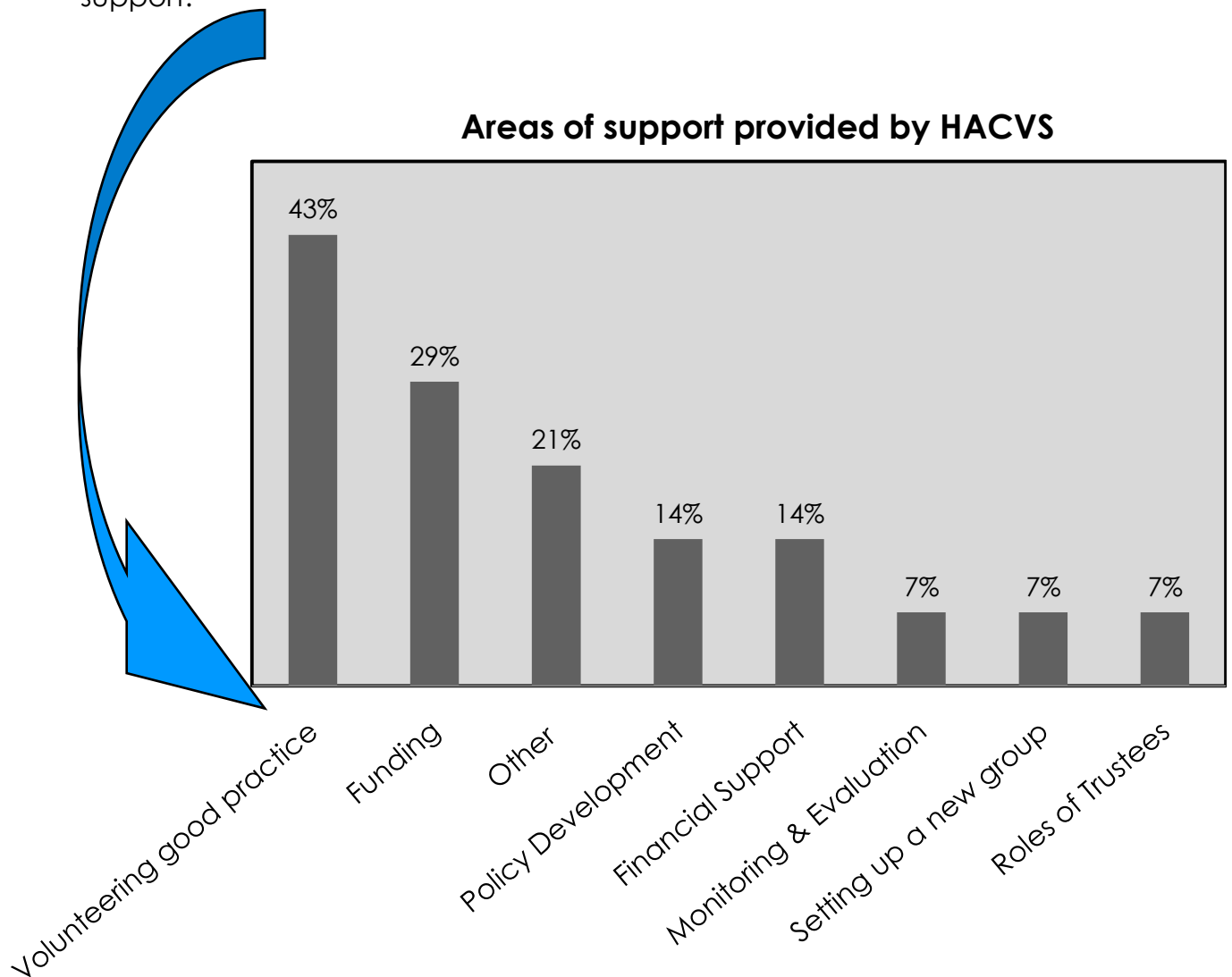
Of those HACVS members who completed the survey 73% said their organisation works across all of Horsham District and 27% said their organisation works in specific areas.

Where specific areas were mentioned they included Billingshurst, Colgate, Horsham Town, Shipley, Slinfold, and Steyning.



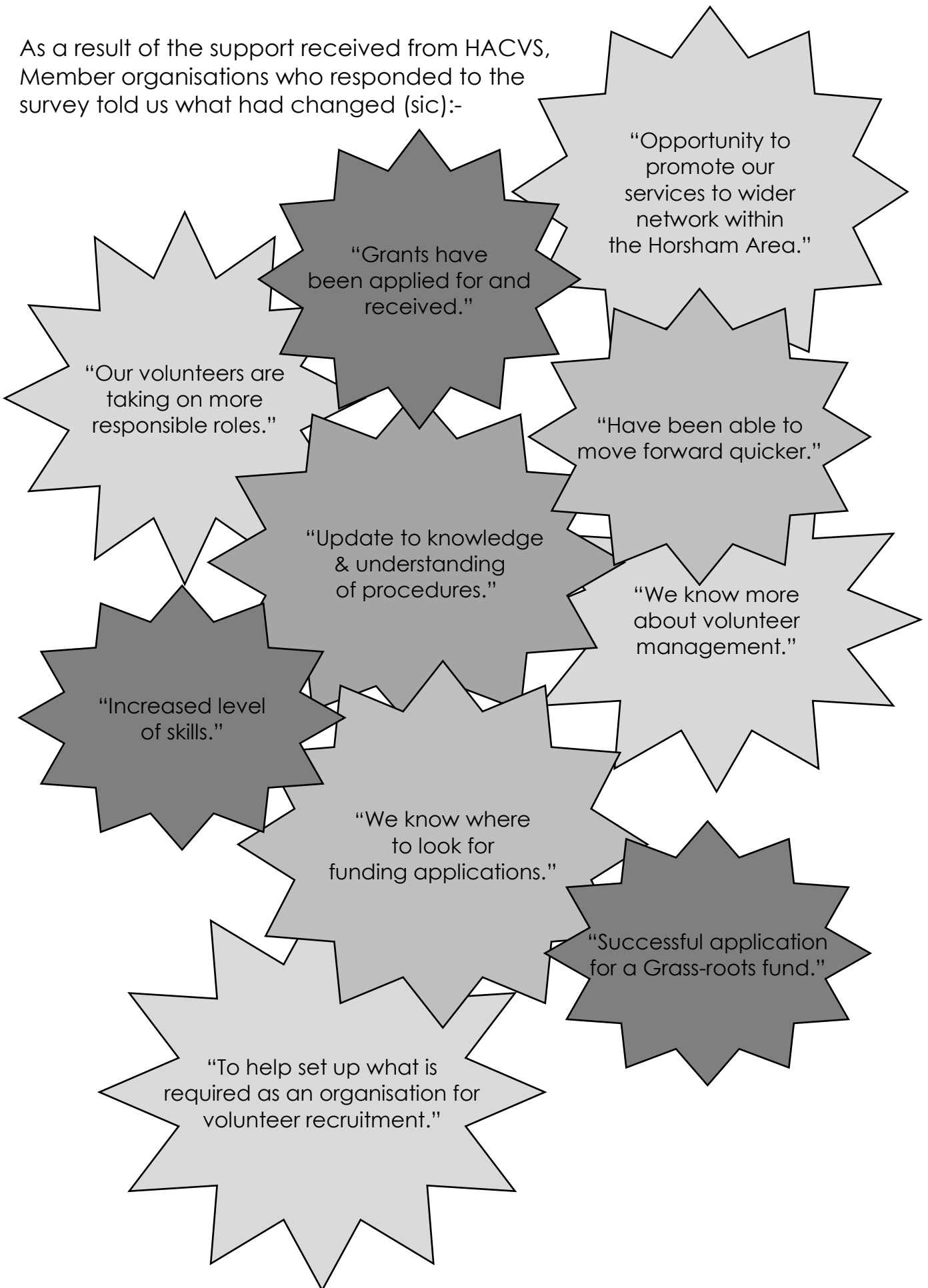
In order to drill down into the way in which HACVS had helped Members, the survey further asked if HACVS had supported in the development of their organisation, 67% responded 'yes' and 33% responded 'no'.

Those Members who felt HACVS had supported in the development of their organisation detailed the following as areas in which HACVS had provided support:-



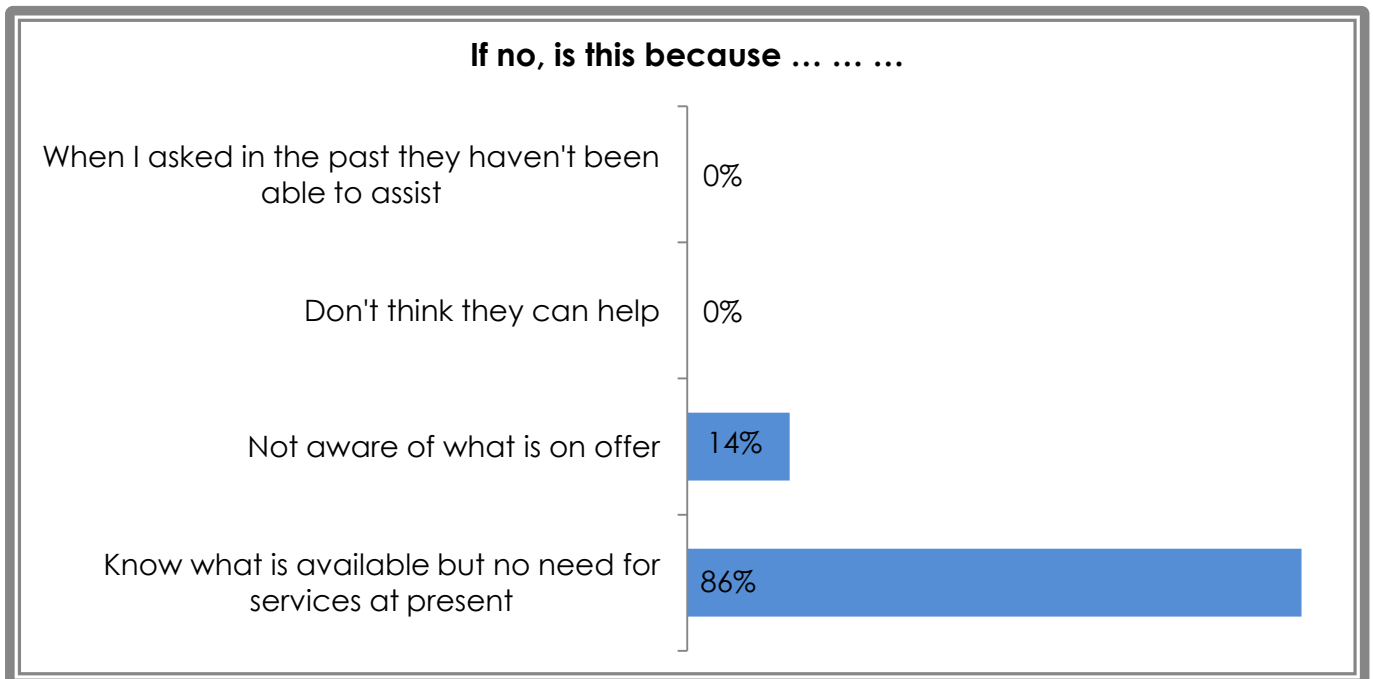
'Volunteering good practice' and 'funding' were the top two areas in which the service received from HACVS had supported the development of an organisation. Specified in 'other' were health checks, procedures and governance issues.

As a result of the support received from HACVS, Member organisations who responded to the survey told us what had changed (sic):-

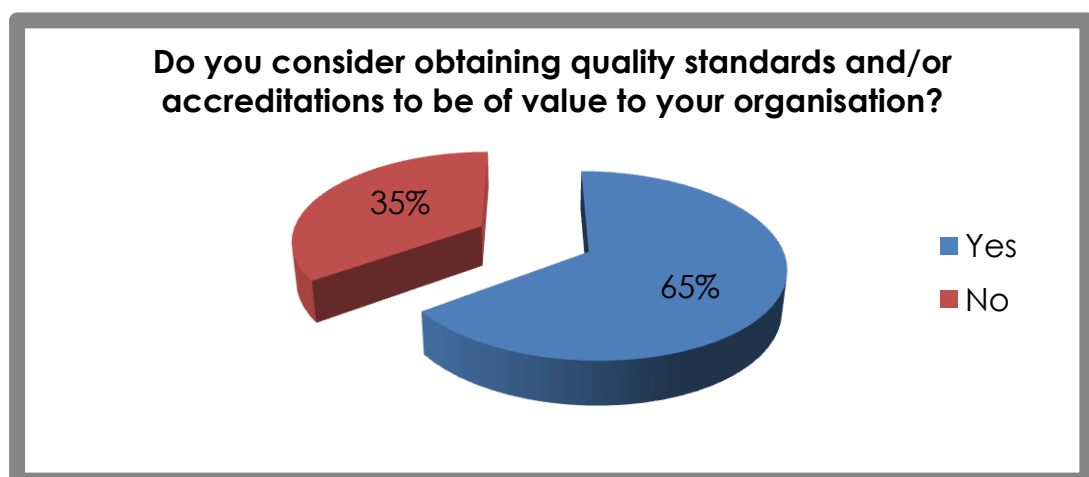


Member organisations were asked if they knew HACVS offers free equipment loan and room hire at affordable rates. 47% responded that they did know and 53% that they did not. This would indicate that further promotion and marketing is needed for these types of services.

Those organisations that had not used the services of HACVS in the last year gave the following responses as to why they had not done so, with only a small percentage not being aware of the types of services provided. Even so, we must be vigilant in ensuring our services are widely promoted:-

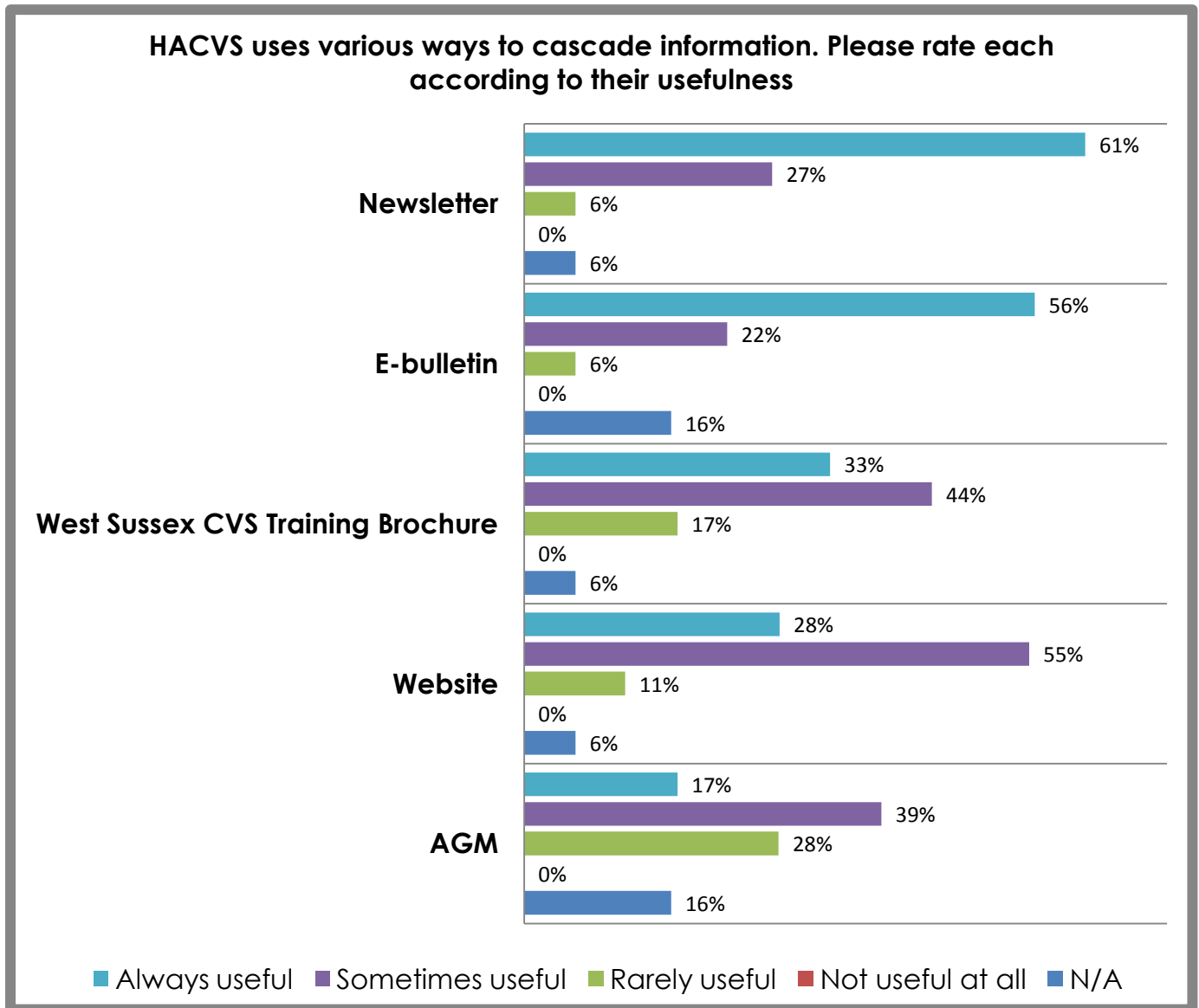


In November 2010 HACVS obtained the PQASSO level one quality award and will be working towards the NAVCA accreditation during 2011. We were therefore interested in our Members' viewpoint on the achievement of accreditation in order to further inform the type of support required in the future:-



## COMMUNICATIONS

The HACVS survey asked Member organisations to rate the various ways in which information is cascaded:-



The newsletter and e-bulletin service were rated highest within the 'always useful' category, with the website and West Sussex CVS Training Brochure being rated highest in the 'sometimes useful' category. In general, the various methods of communications are well received with none of the methods being rated as having no use at all. The AGM received the lowest overall rating.

When asked if information received from HACVS is shared with colleagues, 71% of respondents said they did and 29% said they didn't. A positive statement suggesting information received is shared could be included in the e-bulletins and newsletter to reinforce the added value of doing so.

**Member organisations were asked what benefits had the information from HACVS brought to their organisation?**

**Responses included (sic):-**

“Information to act on that we have not discovered elsewhere.”

“Awareness of events, courses, activities, opportunities etc in the Horsham area.”

“Grant awareness, assistance in obtaining funding.”

“Keeping up to date with what is going on with the voluntary sector.”

“Increased knowledge, increased funding.”

“Some funding opportunities and local events / highlights.”

“Information on events and other organisations.”

“Information about courses and grants.”

**When asked what information would Members like to see included/ disseminated in the future, we received the following feedback (sic):-**

“Level of content is good. The e-bulletins are so very useful for disseminating information and finding out about developments in the county so I would hope they continue.”

“More survival techniques in these tough financial times.”

“Trends in volunteering.”

“Further training opportunities.”

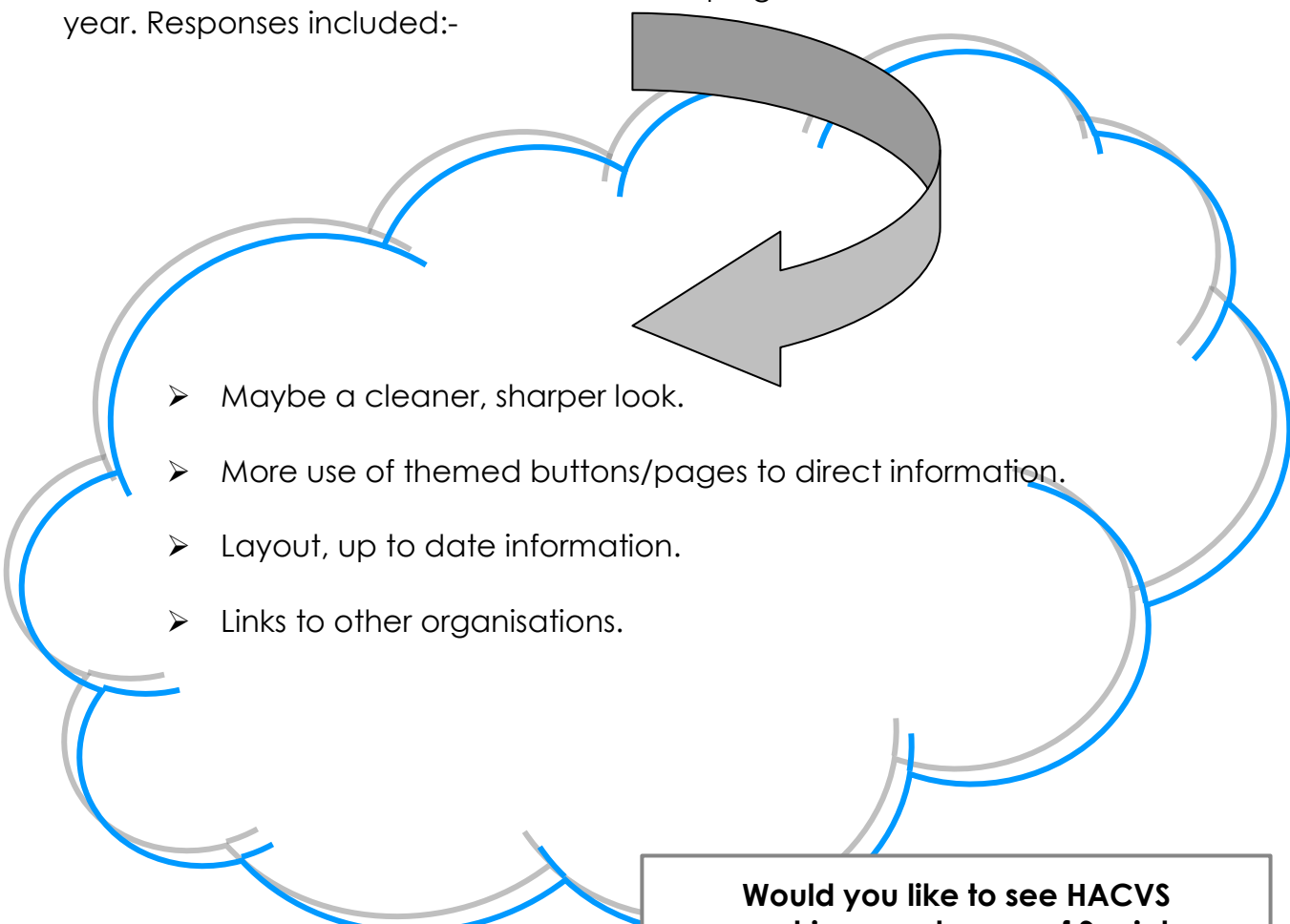
“The balance is right as it is.”

“That volunteers with experience of deafness are urgently needed.”

“More of the same.”

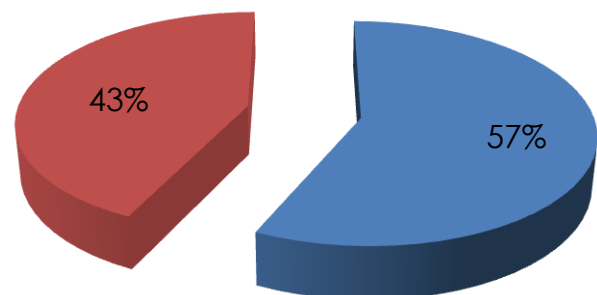
“Helpful to promote projects that have an interest to people and services in West Sussex.”

The survey asked HACVS member organisations if there was anything they would like taken into account when developing our website over the next year. Responses included:-

- 
- Maybe a cleaner, sharper look.
  - More use of themed buttons/pages to direct information.
  - Layout, up to date information.
  - Links to other organisations.

The HACVS survey did not provide conclusive feedback from our Members on the use of Social Media and therefore further assessment will be required:-

**Would you like to see HACVS making greater use of Social Media such as Facebook and Twitter?**



■ Yes ■ No

## TRAINING

62% of those who responded to the survey stated their organisation had accessed training courses organised and promoted by the West Sussex CVS training brochure and 38% had not.

12 training courses were run and hosted by HACVS at Lavinia House.

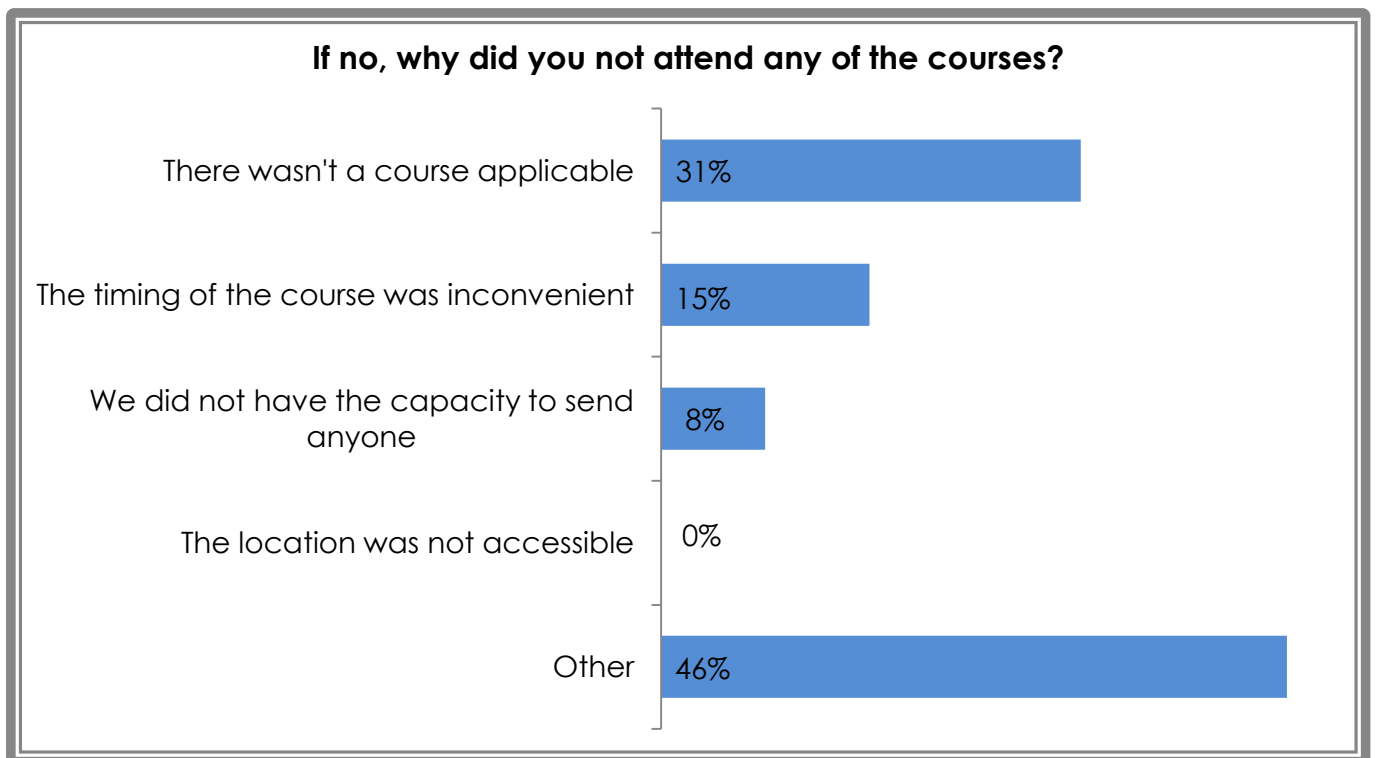
Attended by 99 individuals representing 78 different member groups

A further 26 training courses were held in other partner locations which HACVS Members could also access

Those who had utilised the training opportunities provided by the West Sussex CVS training brochure were asked what one thing had their organisation changed as a result of attending a training course?

- Update to safeguarding procedures
- Written a health and safety policy
- Increased our overall skills
- Established a website
- Introduced a lone working policy
- Volunteer recruitment

**Those organisations which had not used the HACVS training opportunities (38%) gave the following responses as to why they had not done so:-**



**Included in the 'other' category:-**

- Unaware of courses
- Didn't feel the need to attend any course
- In-house training available
- Didn't know about this

Although the take up of training opportunities provided by HACVS is excellent overall (62%, page 10), from the feedback of those who did not access any training courses there is clearly the need to do more work on marketing and promoting the training brochure. The 31% who felt there were no applicable courses on offer were further asked to specify their needs for the future, see page 12.

We should also consider the timing of the courses, although there is evidence that courses offered in the past in the evening and at weekends have not been well attended.

Both those who had responded 'yes' and those who had responded 'no' to accessing training opportunities provided by HACVS were asked what training needs did they think their organisation/volunteers will have in the next two years? The responses included:-

- Trustee training
- How to use mobile and web technology for fundraising\*
- How to continue to deliver quality services in time of economic recession
- How to apply for Trust funding\*
- Mental Health specific
- Volunteer management\*
- Quality standards
- Commissioning and funding opportunities
- IT\*
- Customer related training, for example call handling
- Project management\*
- Basic IT training for volunteers\*
- First aid\*
- Food hygiene\*
- Understanding implications of Localism Bill/Act
- I do not know now but when I do I am aware that HACVS has a wide range of training opportunities

It is clear there is an increasingly diverse range of training needs for the Voluntary and Community Sector. It is pleasing to note that some of the above are included in the next West Sussex CVS training brochure for the period September 2011 to March 2012 and indicated thus \*.

However, there are some interesting suggestions/topics for HACVS to pursue. We must also bear in mind that the provision of external training courses is not the only way of delivering training, for example e-learning.

## **EVENTS**

HACVS organises events on topical issues of interest to Members and the wider Voluntary and Community Sector, for example funding, volunteering good practice, mental health etc. The survey asked if Members had attended any of these events, 43% responded yes with 57% responding no.

When asked what type of events would you like to see in the future, there is some excellent feedback for HACVS to consider, including suggestions made by those who had not attended any events:-

- ✓ More of the same range of events
  - ✓ Volunteer management
- ✓ Engaging with the business community
  - ✓ Networking with other charities
  - ✓ Volunteers' week events
- ✓ More events with local key speakers including HDC and health
- ✓ Shows where local people can see what's available – we like to have a stand at such events as deafness is such a hidden disability
- ✓ Bringing together potential volunteers and voluntary groups where you could attend and talk to potential volunteers about your organisation and what you were looking for

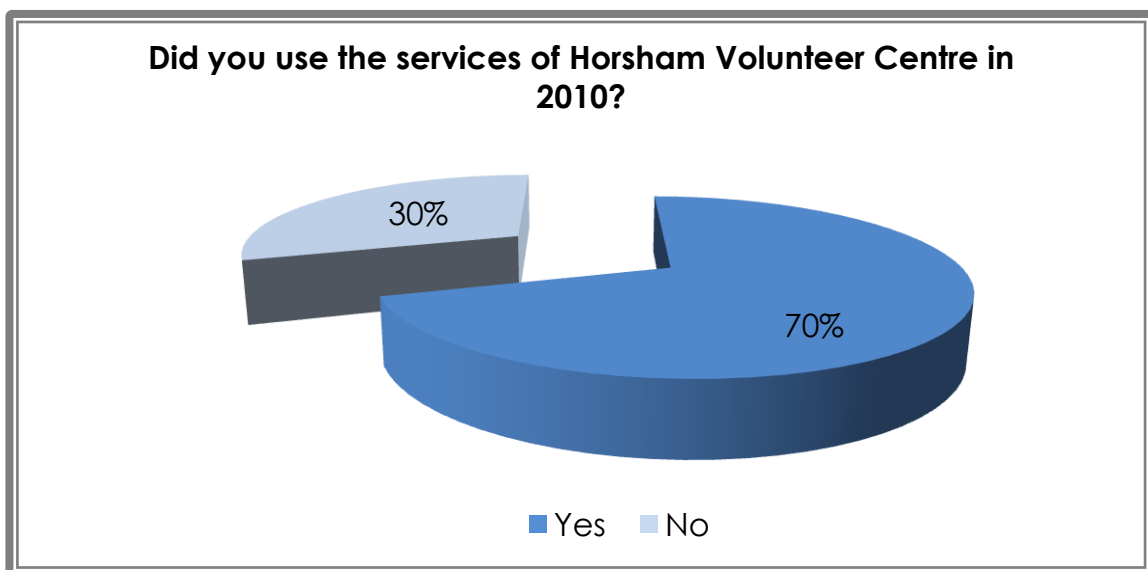
From attendance records, it is clear that participation at events is encouragingly high, ranging between fifty and one hundred plus at any one event. These events are always offered countywide, therefore reflecting on the Member participation rate from the survey (43%) this could indicate that there are a significant proportion of local organisations not attending events. Therefore, there is a need to do more work on marketing and promoting events in order to encourage participation from the local communities.

The following were detailed as the benefits to organisations in attending HACVS events:-

- Networking invaluable
- Getting a better understanding of skills and opportunities
- Increasing profile
- Publicity
- Meeting with other organisations
- Volunteer recruitment
- General information about what is going on

## **VOLUNTEERING**

The volunteering service connects potential volunteers with organisations requiring people. Potential volunteers and organisations requiring volunteers can register either personally by visiting the Volunteer Centre or by telephone or e-mail. Potential volunteers can also access the system via the national Do-It website. Volunteers are registered on the V-Base database and referred to organisations as appropriate. The survey asked if members had used the services of the Horsham Volunteer Centre:-



Where the response was 'no' (30%) the feedback included the following:-

- No need for volunteers currently
- Have been able to recruit ourselves
- Other parts of the organisation may have used the service
- Didn't think it would be appropriate

Where the response was 'yes' (70%) the survey asked if recruitment of volunteers had been successful:-



The survey further asked what difference had the volunteers made to their organisation? The responses included:-

- Made the process of our changeover from local office to locality management smoother
- Help run the activities
- Enabled us to be more efficient
- Increasing our Trustees and capacity to deliver services
- They have made a significant contribution to our Peer Mentoring Service
- Remove admin burden from the paid staff in order to prioritise other work

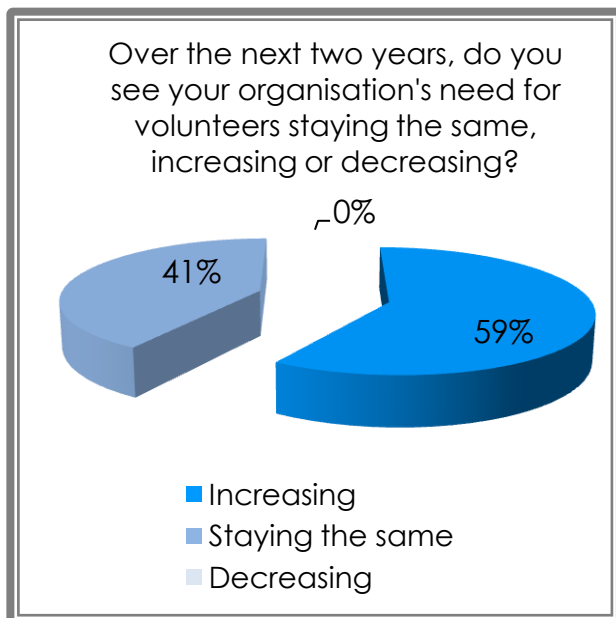
Where recruitment of volunteers had not been successful, the survey asked if there was anything that could have been done differently that may have improved the outcome. The responses included the following and provide no significant cause for concern:-

- We introduce clients to voluntary work through HACVS rather than look for volunteer workers.
- Did not need any more volunteers
- The volunteers we need for drivers are needed for a very specific area

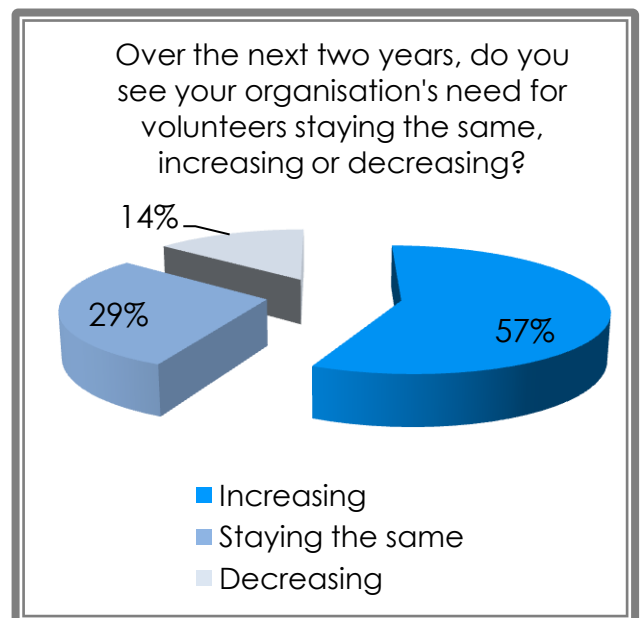
However, when asked if they were aware of the website 'Do-It' which promotes volunteering opportunities [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org) 59% said yes and 41% said no. This would indicate a need to further promote this website in order to increase awareness.

Overall, Members see the need for volunteers increasing over the next two years:-

**Those that had recently used the services of HACVS**



**Those that had not recently used the services of HACVS**



The survey has reinforced the value of the volunteering service to our Members and the community we serve and the increased need for this service over the coming years.

## **REPRESENTATION**

HACVS provides opportunities for Member organisations and the wider VCS to input into various pieces of consultative work, or to represent the organisation's views at various events/consultations. In addition, HACVS can raise issues on their behalf if organisations cannot attend such meetings.

The survey asked if they were aware of this with 72% responding 'yes' and 28% responding 'no'.

For both the 'yes' and 'no' responses the survey asked if there were any particular issues/topics on which they felt their voice is not being heard. The responses included the following:-

- Funding and commissioning, especially health
- None
- Nothing at present

It is encouraging to note that representation is on HACVS Members' radar but we must continue to raise the profile, especially in the current economic climate when more is being expected of the Voluntary and Community Sector coupled with the contracting of potential funding.

## **TOP THREE FUTURE NEEDS**

The survey asked what Members saw as their organisation's top three needs in the future? The responses included:-

### **(1)**

#### Those that had recently used the services of HACVS

Maintaining level and quality of service

Fundraising

Increased funding/more funding in 3-4 years' time

Volunteers

Targeted volunteer recruitment

Training

Opportunity spotting for growth and development

Management

#### Those that had not recently used the services of HACVS

Volunteers

Fundraising

Sustainability

Taking forward a new action plan

## **(2)**

### Those that had recently used the services of HACVS

Developing services to meet increased demand

Health and Safety

Volunteers

Greater recognition of volunteer input

Training

More technology aware volunteers

Funding and commissioning

Increased resources

Team work

### Those that had not recently used the services of HACVS

Funding

Recruiting more volunteers

Staying abreast of technological advances

Marketing opportunities

## **(3)**

### Those that had recently used the services of HACVS

Recruiting volunteers

Effective measures of volunteer involvement

Training

Continuing to identify hidden carers and reach them early in their caring role

Higher profile

Lobbying of WSCC

Local networking events with senior reps from district and county

More robust organisation

Corporate support

Awareness

### Those that had not recently used the services of HACVS

Funding

Volunteer recruitment

Social media and website construction

## **ACTION POINTS and REFLECTIONS**

- Throughout the survey funding, volunteering management, volunteer recruitment and training were high on Members' needs for future support and appear in all top three needs for the future.
  
- As a priority we must consider how the delivery of the Volunteering Service, including the management of volunteers, can better support Members' future increased needs.

- The volunteering website [www.do-it.org](http://www.do-it.org) should be further promoted in order to increase awareness.
- We should drill down further into the training needs of our Members and act upon suggestions for training opportunities [please refer note (ii)].
- Information should be researched and disseminated on other options available to Members in the delivery of training.
- Development of the funding page on the HACVS website should continue as a priority.
- Consideration must be given to the suggestions received for future events; events must be publicised more robustly locally.
- The facilities offered by HACVS at Lavinia House must be further publicised.
- Drill down further into the 65% who consider obtaining quality standards and/or accreditation is of value in order to better support that aspiration.
- Act upon suggestions for improving the HACVS website and promote its use as a method for our Members to access information.
- Add a positive statement to the e-bulletins and newsletter suggesting information received is shared in order to reinforce the added value of doing so.
- Act upon feedback on what information Members would like to see included/disseminated in the future.
- Carry out further assessment on the use of Social Media
- Write to thank those who kindly completed the HACVS survey\*, including a copy of the survey report.
- Inform members of the outcome of the HACVS survey via the newsletter and e-bulletin service. Post the survey report on the HACVS website.

*\*and who shared their details*

## Notes

(i) Although the overall response rate of 17% was not as high as we would have wished, nevertheless statistically this is considered to be a creditable response rate for qualitative data.

(ii) It should be noted that training opportunities on funding, fundraising for small groups, Awards for All Big Lottery briefing, supporting, supervising and motivating volunteers are included in the September 2011 – March 2012 edition of the West Sussex CsVS training brochure published in August 2011 and currently in the VCS domain.

**Janet Brown – HACVS Manager  
August 2011**