



Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester

MEMBERSHIP POLICY

Aims and Scope of Policy

The policy reflects VAAC's Strategic Plan 22-25 and our vision.

To see a thriving, inclusive and strong VCSE that supports, inspires and empowers individuals and communities throughout Arun and Chichester

Delivering this via:

- Supporting and developing leaders and advocates across diverse communities
- Providing developmental support, advice and community engagement
- Partnership work – bringing together networks/working across sectors
- Volunteering – encouraging and developing opportunities

Organisational Principles

- Equity, inclusion and diversity
- Collaboration
- Innovation
- Impact
- Setting the 'bar'/expertise
- Catalysts

Nolan Principles

- Selflessness
- Integrity
- Objectivity
- Accountability
- Openness
- Honest
- Leadership

An innovative approach to membership is essential. By identifying our key audiences, the tools available to VAAC and the most important messages to share, VAAC can use our resources efficiently to engage audiences, build and widen our membership base.

This policy aims to capture the widest range of community activity and associated ways of operating, this ranges from informal social media based groups through to large scale charities. The scope of this policy covers this continuum and reflects the changing nature of community activity and work.



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The policy also reflects VAAC's equity, inclusion and diversity engagement work, with diverse and minority communities and groups in that this policy will ensure that the VAAC membership is inclusive and that we actively seek to increase our membership base.

The policy also reflects desktop research into membership policies and approaches across the sector and builds on the best practice.

This policy represents the rules of the charity as noted in section 32 of the Articles of Association of Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester.

Membership categories:

VAAC has six membership categories to enable as wide as possible base of organisations and individuals that are committed to positive work in Arun and Chichester that will benefit local residents.

Category	Description	Benefits to VAAC	Rights & Obligations
1. VAAC General Members	The group must be a not-for-profit charity, community group, Community Interest Company or national/regional charity whose aims and objectives are broadly charitable	Stronger VCSE sector locally in Arun and Chichester.	Voting rights - only members vote at meetings/AGM (ref mem & arts 32 (1))
2. VAAC Affiliate Members	Community groups and informal groups engaged in activities that benefit the community.	To reflect the increase in more informal community activity and acknowledges the changing VCSE sector	No voting rights
3. Friends of VAAC	Individuals and activities whose focus is to engage in community activity or are championing a specific local	Contribute to achieving our vision and works towards building community resilience and using local lived experiences. It supports advocacy, identifying key issues	No voting rights



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	issue benefiting the local community e.g. support for Ukrainian refugees or climate change	of local concern. It also can support connections and building networks.	
4. VAAC Partners	These may be statutory authorities and other organisations, which do not fulfil the above but with whom we work.	Collaboration and partnership work at a local, regional and national level. Working towards shared strong community outcomes and service improvements.	No voting rights
5. VAAC Corporate Partners	These are business organisations that provide pro bono support / reduced rates for their services for VAAC and its members.	Increased social value input into VAAC and its membership, including sharing skills, expertise and knowledge.	No voting rights
6. Individual Members	Individuals who are trustees or former trustees of VAAC	10.3 of Articles of Association refers that no one may be appointed as a trustee unless they are an individual member or an authorised representative of a General Member	Voting rights

Membership Eligibility

All members' activities and work must benefit the residents of Arun and Chichester. Where an organisation is outside of Arun and Chichester, they must demonstrate a link to the districts and to the advancement of the work of VAAC.

1. VAAC General Members

All organisations that approach Voluntary Action Arun & Chichester (VAAC) for support, are invited to become members. This is open to voluntary and community organisations, which meet the following requirements:-



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- The organisation must be a not-for-profit charity including CIOs, community benefit societies, community group or CIC whose aims and objectives are set up in line as identified by Social Enterprise UK and which is not permitted by their constitution to make a profit for private distribution.
- The organisation must support VAAC's equality and diversity policy
- The organisation must have met the criteria for membership set out in the membership form
- The organisation must deliver services within the Arun and Chichester Districts.

2. VAAC Affiliate Members

Open to any organisation or group of people meeting informally together that are involved in or participating in community activities that bring benefit to the local area within Arun and Chichester and social enterprises that do not qualify as a VAAC General Member.

3. Friends of VAAC

Open to individuals who are engaged in community activity or are championing a local issue in Arun and Chichester.

4. VAAC Partners

VAAC has a category of membership for Partners. These may be statutory authorities, funders and other organisations that VAAC collaborates with in order to address social issues and strengthen the VCSE.

5. VAAC Corporate Partners

Commercial and business organisations that provide goods and services to VAAC and VAAC members on a pro bono basis/charity rates, including sponsorship and volunteering. Supporting the commercial and business organisations to demonstrate the value of VCSE and VCSE also sharing their expertise to corporate organisations.

6. Individual Members

All trustees who are or have been previous trustees. Membership only terminated if individual dies, resigns or removed by special resolution at AGM.

Benefits of Category 1 Membership

VAAC General Member organisations will receive:-

- Regular information via e-bulletins on sector wide news and information
- Funding Focus monthly e-newsletter
- Opportunities to promote your organisation through VAAC communications
- Subsidised access to training and events where charges apply
- Access to networking opportunities and connections
- Priority referral for development support, project development and organisational support



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- Volunteer Plus – register your organisation and advertise your volunteer roles on our volunteer platform, opportunities to promote through the local press, VAAC communications and the Get Volunteering App
- Voting rights at the AGM
- Ability to nominate a person to the Board when a vacancy exists
- Resources including equipment to borrow (projectors, display boards etc.) subject to deposit for damages.

Benefits of Category 2 - 5 Membership

- Regular information via e-bulletins on sector wide news and information
- Funding Focus via e-bulletins
- Opportunities to promote your organisation through VAAC communications, approval required for corporate members promotion
- Access to networking, connections and training opportunities
- Development support for categories 2-4 of this policy
- Volunteer Plus – register your organisation and advertise your volunteer roles on our volunteer platform, opportunities to promote through the local press, VAAC communications and Get Volunteering app
- Resources including equipment to borrow (projectors, display board etc.) subject to deposit for damages

VAAC reserves the right to change its membership and services as deemed necessary for the proper conduct and management of the charity.

VAAC responsibilities

VAAC will:-

- keep and use all records in accordance with Data Protection requirements.
- we aim to respond to members queries within 10 working days
- engage with members to help set the strategic direction of VAAC and its services
- inform members of consultation and representational opportunities that are open to the VCSE
- advise members at the earliest opportunity of any changes taking place within the organisation that might impact the service VAAC provides

Membership responsibilities

It is the responsibility of members to:-



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- update VAAC on funding / activities and positive impact of VAAC support
- highlight VACC support logo on all associated promotional material / web site etc.
- respect confidentiality, data protection, equality, diversion and inclusion
- general members and individual members can attend VAAC's AGM and nominate one person to exercise their voting rights. All other membership categories can attend VAAC's AGM but do not have voting rights.
- provide feedback on VAAC services when requested as this gives us vital information to demonstrate our outcomes to our funders and the wider membership and general public as well as continually to improve our services
- inform VAAC of any significant changes to their organisation
- share your success stories and experiences with us. We like to use this information appropriately to promote VAAC, the work of the sector as well as your organisation

Breach of Membership

- Members agree to act promptly to address any serious issues identified through VAAC support services.
- Members must not through any action bring VAAC's credibility into disrepute which may result in cancellation of membership.
- VAAC operates a zero-tolerance policy. We will not tolerate aggressive or violent behaviour towards our staff.
- VAAC commits to raising any concerns about the conduct of an Individual/organisation with that individual/organisation in the first instance. If our concerns are not addressed, VAAC may suspend the organisation from membership, until such time as the issues that have been identified are resolved. In such circumstances, the Board of Trustees will receive a report from the Chief Executive outlining the circumstances and agree an action plan to address the issue. This will include providing the organisation with an opportunity to respond to any concerns and appeal their suspension. If the action plan fails to resolve the issues in question the Board of Trustees may enact clause 20.1.4 Termination of Membership from the VAAC Articles of Association.

Members Code of Conduct

To treat VAAC staff and volunteers with courtesy and respect.

VAAC is committed to the principles of equality of opportunity in the way it provides its services.



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- Clearly many organisations are set up to serve the needs of specific groups of people. However Member groups should not otherwise discriminate in such a way as would breach VAAC's Equality and Diversity Policy
- Members must not discriminate against anyone on the grounds of age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, race, religion or belief, or disability

To complete all agreed actions.

- We have to be fair to everyone who asks for support and may ask you to do some things before we can help you further. If you have any problems with doing this, or have not had enough time, please let us know so we can either provide additional support or alternative arrangements.

To attend any agreed meetings/training, or if you cannot attend to let us know.

- Ideally 48 hours in advance unless the cancellation is due to illness, an emergency or inclement weather. This is to help us make alternative arrangements if necessary. If you fail to turn up, or give notice for a training event an administration fee will be issued.

When working together VAAC Members must work in the spirit of cooperation with others in the sector and share expertise and knowledge where they are able to do so. Members will:

- Allow people to disagree
- Try not to repeat what has already been said or make long statements or speeches
- Challenge the issues not individuals and make sure that any criticism is constructive
- Stick to one speaker at a time and not interrupt each other
- Not use language which could be viewed as discriminatory or offensive to others
- Not doggedly pursue individual agendas at the expense of others
- Not conduct themselves in a way that could cause harm or distress to any guest, Member or VAAC staff or volunteers
- Treat all colleagues with dignity and respect and value other people
- Encourage the participation of other people
- Respect confidentiality: in general, Members may leave the meeting and repeat what was said, but not who said it, unless specifically requested not to
- Use words in full and not use acronyms or jargon



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- Put mobile phones on silent (but participation via social media is encouraged)

When attending VAAC general meetings, Members will:

- Abide by relevant organisational policies and procedures
- Respect the authority of the Chair in her/his role as meeting leader
- Engage in debate and voting according to procedures, maintaining a respectful attitude towards the opinions of others while making their voices heard
- Accept a majority vote as decisive and final

Complaints against VAAC

VAAC is keen to hear and deal with any complaint/concern a member or partner might have about the organisation and/or services, and would want the chance to address this, before it's taken elsewhere – please refer to VAAC Complaints procedure, which can be found on our website membership page

<https://www.vaac.org.uk/membership>

Date of endorsement of policy October 2024
Date of next review October 2026
Equality Impact Assessment Sharon Westcott