

THE 70'S

1973

- **Public meeting 24th January 1973 with interested parties resolved to set up a working group which led to the first working party of the Volunteer Bureau**

- Situated in the United Reformed Church, Sittingbourne
- Advert drafted for Organiser post in May
- Recruitment of volunteers starts
- 11 people interviewed for voluntary work
- First Organiser appointed in August
- Decorating Project initiated in November

1976-77

- **In the Queen's Jubilee year the bureau was a key partner in the Swale Silver Jubilee committee**

- Supported the newly formed Youth Company, play schemes for schools holidays, Action for Research in Crippling diseases for Children, Preschool Children Group, Lifeline of Friendship, The Murston playscheme, Job Creation Programme and Mothers Support Scheme
- Involved with the BBC 2 Social Studies for the Open University
- Involved in specific projects with offenders; Recidivists Anonymous (rehabilitation of offenders), Anti-Vandalism Working Party and Offenders Gardening Services
- 1977 AGM – speaker – 'The new breed of Woman as a volunteer'
- Moved to 1 London Road, Sittingbourne
- Closing balance of £2,681.85

THE 80'S

1980-81

- Became involved with the Kent County Volunteer Bureaux and attended their regular meetings

- **8th July 1981 – Mrs Sandra Thorne's first attendance at a board meeting**

- Projects; Sheppey Neighbourhood Scheme, Street Warden Scheme, Vietnamese boat people appeal
- Reduction in grant from KCC, Kent County Volunteer Bureaux meeting with KCC to discuss these cuts

1984

- **Increasing pressure on the bureau to raise funds**

- Contact made with local businesses in an attempt to raise funds
- 16p per mile for volunteer drivers
- Involvement in regional bodies eg The Thames Regional Health Authority
- Transport requests rose to 473

1985

- **Discussion started about Council for Voluntary Service provision in Swale**

- Partnership meetings between statutory and voluntary organisations
- Move to Central House, current residence
- Funding cut for transport scheme
- Began to help set up groups including a Victim Support scheme, self-help group for the bereaved, support group for mothers and a new group of volunteers for Milton Hospital

1989

- **Change from 1 year funding to 3 year funding from April 1989**

- Involvement with Association of Community Centres which is known today as Swale Community Centres (Phoenix House)
- Island Partnership formed – still in existence today
- Participation in the Sittingbourne Sector Team looking at Mental Health Services
- Participation in Sittingbourne Liaison group for the elderly
- Set up Retired Senior Volunteer Programme
- Involvement in UK Volunteers Week and attendance at the National Association of Volunteer Bureaux conference, showing involvement at national level
- Volunteer figures up 75% from previous year

THE 90'S

1990-92

- **Current Director Mrs Chris White started in Sept 1990 as Assistant Organiser**

- Redundancy fund was set up
- The Organiser, Mrs Sandra Thorne celebrates ten years in post
- Started the 'Get You Home' service in partnership with Medway hospital
- Exhibition of voluntary work held to celebrate UK Volunteers Week
- Development of bureau work plan

- **Mr Ian Whitehead became Chairman in 1991**

- 53% increase in volunteer recruitment since last year
- 28 volunteers recruited from the Sheppey office located in Hope Street, Sheerness
- Mobile volunteer bureau launched
- Transport journeys increase to 2452
- Involvement in consultation regarding community care
- Inaugural Companionship at Christmas, originally known as Caring at Christmas

1995-97

- **Recruited Mr Bryan Pringle as treasurer who stayed in post for 17 years and remains a board member**

- Moved the Sheppey office to The Foyer
- Supported the breast screening service in Sittingbourne and Faversham providing volunteers for their mobile units
- Improving technology led to new computers and mobile phones for all offices
- Began development as a community hub across the three towns of the borough
- Transport journeys increase to 11010
- Community Placement Officer for Sheppey employed
- During UK Volunteers Week the bureau along with all Kent bureaux held a garden party at Torry Hill, the home of Lord Kingsdown which was attended by 175 volunteers
- Early involvement with representation on Swale Housing Association and the Health Authority
- Created a volunteer help desk in the brand new Sittingbourne Memorial Hospital

THE 2000'S

2000-01

- Local Members of Parliament and local children show support for Companionship at Christmas
- Work with the local authority to develop New Opportunities Fund bids for the Faversham Community Café and the Sheppey Healthy Living Centre with capital monies in excess of £1million brought into Swale

- **Became an associate Council for Voluntary Service and began our local development agency role**

- In partnership with the NSPCC helped start the Sheppey Play and Learn Scheme
- Expansion of project management role to the Faversham Community Café, Milton Project, Westminster Project and the Swale Consortium of the Kent Children's Fund

2006-07

- New funding secured from SEEDA, Global Grants, Volunteering England and Swale Primary Care Trust
- £17,000 grant from Volunteering England, £25,000 from the ODPM through the North Kent Gateway Partnership for purchase of IT equipment for a Community Learning Centre

- **Gained Quality Accreditation from Volunteering England**

- 736 new volunteers recruited
- Setting up of Swale Seniors Forum
- Funding secured from Swale Health & Wellbeing Group for a part time community development worker to address the Health inequalities agenda
- Partners in a country wide BASIS infrastructure project funded by the National Lottery

2011-12

- 21st anniversary of Companionship at Christmas project
- Delivery of community services contract for SBC

- **Renewal of the NAVCA Quality Accreditation**

- Involvement in a pilot scheme with Kent Fire and Rescue Service to recruit community engagement volunteers
- Developed and delivered Pitch Perfect training programme for voluntary and community groups to become commissioning ready

- **Renewed Quality Accreditation from Volunteering England**

- Successfully gained preferred provider status for KCC Children's services
- Facilitated 'Starfish and Spiders' joint conversation events between voluntary sector groups and public sector commissioners
- 3814 clients being supported by volunteer transport scheme

1974-75

- **The Sittingbourne and District Volunteer Bureau officially opened on 10th September 1974, the fourth Volunteer Bureau to be established in Kent**

- Regular article in the East Kent Gazette and a slot on local radio
- £25 grant applied for to help support a transport scheme
- £450 grant from Kent County Council (KCC)
- Funding support from Rotary and Lions Club
- 300 copies of the annual report distributed to local organisations
- Management committee meets to discuss the need to extend bureau services to Sheppey and Faversham
- Information services offered to groups
- Requests from groups for the Volunteer Bureau to offer training
- Constitution agreed, the Volunteer Bureau to be called 'The Swale District Volunteer Bureau' and serve the whole of the Swale District
- 100 volunteers and 50 organisations supported
- End of financial year with bank balance of £111

1978-79

- It was decided that the future of the bureau would be to create an atmosphere of goodwill and understanding between volunteers, voluntary and statutory organisations and the general public
- A turbulent year where the existence of the bureau was in question. Thanks to the hard work of a few dedicated volunteers the organisation kept going
- Desire to build a popular and lasting organisation

- **Registered as a charity, No. 277523**

1982

- **Submission of funding applications to support the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) with equipment**

- Start to deliver volunteer training for VCS
- Finished the financial year with £7.00 in the current account – £2,236 in the deposit account – prudent with our money even all these years ago

1983

- Social Car Driving Scheme started with an Opportunities for Volunteering grant of £25
- Requests for volunteers on the increase
- Milton Hospital Volunteer Group formed in December

1986-88

- **Part time Sheppey Office opened**

- Support given to Medway Voluntary Services as they were no longer recruiting volunteers and needed our help
- By the end of the year the car scheme had received 231 transport requests
- Received grants from the health service for continued provision of transport
- Consideration given to obtaining funding for a Befriending Coordinator
- Working with a local group to provide a detached youth worker

- **Swale Volunteer Bureau became a formal member of Kent Association for Volunteer Bureaux**

- Policy and campaigning – involvement in a response back to the county re 'Plans for Kent's Elderly'. The voluntary sector would become a provider of services
- Involvement in Sittingbourne Crossroads committee, administration of a holiday playscheme for disabled children
- Provision of IT equipment at the bureau for voluntary organisations to use
- Working with the 'Islands Initiative' Project – a project for 18 – 25 year olds unemployed on Sheppey
- Sub-committee set up looking at the future of the bureau
- Involvement in the Trinity Project – turning a school into a community centre which was the forerunner to Phoenix House

1993-94

- **Opening of a Faversham office located in the Alexander Centre**

- Possible 25% reduction in the car scheme grant provided by Swale Borough Council (SBC)
- Health For All project started
- New Connections Befriending scheme started and continues to this day
- The Sittingbourne Health For All Group published their local profile of the area including information on environment, education, housing, care and voluntary organisations
- Create an access guide for disabled people in Swale in partnership with SBC, Sittingbourne Community College, the Freedom Centre and the Sittingbourne Health For All group
- Transport journeys increase to 2850
- Helped to set up the Elmley Prison Visitors Centre
- Involved in setting up CRUSE Bereavement Care
- Open meeting held to explore the development of Homestart Sittingbourne and Sheppey
- 327 volunteers recruited, an increase of 27% from the previous year

1998-99

- Following on from community lunches, the setting up of the Voluntary Sector Forum

- **National Lottery Charities Board grant received for a three year project to deliver voluntary sector training**

- Community placements offered that enable trainees to complete NVQ qualifications
- Provided two conferences for the Swale voluntary sector in partnership with SBC
- Supported Rushenden Community House and The Murston Project and employed their workers
- Inception of Sheppey Youth Action as a direct project
- An end of year balance of £70,000
- Transport journeys increase to 17928
- Involvement in Building Skills in Kent Charities, a capacity building programme for the voluntary and community sector (VCS)
- Arranged a trip with Member of Parliament, Derek Wyatt for Swale VCS groups to visit the House of Commons
- Production of a community services directory for the whole borough

2002-03

- 580 new volunteers recruited
- Received quality accreditation from the National Association of Volunteer Bureau
- **Began working towards becoming a full Council for Voluntary Service**
- Set up of Swale Youth Projects

2004-05

- 590 new volunteers recruited
- **22nd July became a full Council for Voluntary Service**
- Success with a bid for Community Enterprise Hubs across the North Kent Thames Gateway funding secured for Swale £825,000 from the then Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM)
- Development of the first Swale Compact
- **John Baker joined as Chairman, taking over the role from Ian Whitehead**
- **August 2004 – Chris White appointed as Director**

2008

- Set up of Local Children's Services Partnership, where Chris White become chair of the local group; the only voluntary sector chair in Kent
- Retirement of Mrs Sandra Thorne
- A reform of the Swale Voluntary Sector Forum into the Swale Community Empowerment Network (SCEN)
- Our first Apprentice

- **Gained Quality Accreditation from National Association for Voluntary and Community Action (NAVCA)**

2009-10

- New young people's volunteering project funded through Aiming High – The Mustard Project
- Partnership project with Kent Adult Education to recruit learning champions
- Commissioned by Swale Borough Council to undertake a complete audit of the sector
- Supported the Leader of Swale Borough Council, Councillor Andrew Bowles, in his participatory budgeting events
- Commissioned by the Local Strategic Partnership to undertake community development in five priority wards within Swale
- Transport Journeys undertaken 25326

2013

- **Supporting our community since 1973...**



- **Come and be a part of our future**

2013

LOOKING FORWARD

Leading by example

Robust governance

Improving our community and the lives of those within it

Leadership

Spearheading the future ways of volunteering over time

Competence, capability and commitment of our people

Influencing decision making

Experts in community matters

Professional

- Innovative
- Creative
- Flexible
- Adaptable

Entrepreneurial

Partnership & collaboration

Strategic thinkers in the voluntary sector

Growing our contribution in a managed way

Social Enterprise approach

National presence, local delivery

Aspirational