

## Members

Cylch - Wales CRN  
Hillcrest Group  
Wai Yin Chinese Women Soc  
Anne Lythgoe  
Sue Sadler  
Roger Catchpole  
Social Enterprise Academy  
CBS Network Limited  
Survive  
Vof De Verandering  
Carlota Quintao  
Bedenoch & Strathspey CT Co  
Ian Atkinson  
Incredit  
Iftikar Karim  
Into Business Scheme  
All Saints Action Network  
Shared Interest  
CEiS  
Soft Touch Arts  
The Social Enterprise People  
Latitude  
Jane Gibbon  
Social Enterprise Outcomes  
Rubus Services  
Bette Baldwin  
Jack Deans – NDDO  
A3S  
Chaos Enterprises  
Anne Davies  
SEN  
CEU

## UK Social Auditors

Liz Allen  
Patrick Boase  
Teresa Butler  
Rosemary Collie  
Tricia Dinan  
Murdoch Gatward  
Mike Gordon  
Julie Harris  
Tor Justad  
Iftikar Karim  
Alan Kay  
Linda Lockwood  
Lawrence McAnelly  
Mary McGarry  
Lisa McMullan  
Kevin McDermott  
Philip Marks  
Helen Millne  
Kirk Outhwaite  
John Pearce  
Sean Smith  
Keith Stamp  
Debbie Stewart  
Mike Swain  
Katie Trent  
Graham Waterhouse  
Graham Worrell

## Directors

John Pearce (Chair)  
Mike Swain  
Alan Kay  
Mary McGarry  
Lorna Turner  
Kate O'Brien  
Sarah Germain  
Graham Waterhouse  
Keith Stamp (ret'd)  
Ian Atkinson (ret'd)  
Helen Vines (ret'd)

# Social Audit Network (SAN)

# Social Report

## ...Supporting the network...

1<sup>st</sup> January 2006 – 30<sup>th</sup> November 2007

This first set of social accounts reports on what SAN has done over the last two years. The consultations with stakeholders reported in these social accounts were carried out at the end of 2006 and consequently are somewhat dated, but are, we believe, nonetheless valid. Because of the time-line slip however SAN has taken the decision not to put these social accounts before a social audit panel. Instead a second set of social accounts will be prepared for the financial year 2008/09 and we would expect those to be both fuller and more up-to-date and to be ready for presentation to a social audit panel in the summer of 2009. This summary of the social accounts has tried to highlight the main findings included in the full set of social accounts which is available from our offices and on our website.

*John Pearce, Chair, SAN*

### History and Background...

The Social Audit Network (SAN) was established as an informal network in 2000 to facilitate the exchange of information and experience between practitioners of social accounting and audit. During 2003-2005 SAN was part of the Quality and Impact Project and in 2005 we published the SFEDI endorsed *Social Accounting and Audit Manual and CD*. We have developed an approval process for Social Auditors and organised and run a series of masterclasses throughout the UK. Our UK office is now in Devon but we are developing a Regional Strategy which seeks to appoint Regional co-ordinators to both represent SAN and to promote and develop social accounting practice in their areas. Since our incorporation in 2005 we have been self-financing with income coming from the sale of manuals, membership fees and income received from training and facilitation. In addition, our Directors do a considerable amount of un-paid work on our behalf.

### SAN's Mission is...

... to promote and support social accounting as the preferred means whereby organisations operating in the community, social economy and public sectors report on their social, environmental and economic performance and impact.

Our **Values** centre around democracy, accessibility, empowerment, partnership and transparency.

### Our key Stakeholders were identified as...

...Board Members; Social Auditors; Ordinary Members; recipients of the monthly Circulars; website users; Partner Organisations; Clients; attendees of training; attendees at events.

## Scope and methodology of the social accounts...

Using simple questionnaires and feedback forms we consulted our Social Auditors, Ordinary Members, recipients of the monthly Circulars; website users; Partner Organisations; Masterclass attendees and delegates at the 2006 conference. There was a high response rate from conference delegates but a disappointing one from other consultees.. The quantitative information used in these social accounts is derived from records kept by SAN and generally reported in the SAN Circular, or to Board meetings or in the Chair's report to the AGM. The social accounts have been structured around the Objectives and Activities which were adopted towards the end of 2006 as part of the SAN development plan.

## Objective 1: To promote, facilitate and encourage the use of social accounting and audit, especially within the social enterprise, social economy and community organisation sectors, through the sharing of information and experience

### Key findings...

- Our email network is around 1,400, is still gradually expanding and receives the monthly Circular.
- SAN ran its first annual conference – “Prove, Improve and Account” in York in December 2006 and it was attended by 90+ people. The second conference – “Walk the Talk” – is being held in Birmingham in December 2007. There was considerable and very useful feedback from the first conference.
- The SAN website has been maintained throughout 2006 and 2007 by our volunteer website manager, Norry Boulting, to whom we are extremely grateful for all the hard work he puts in. Feedback on the website ranged from very complimentary to quite critical.
- The Manual and CD were published in 2005 but since then SAN becomes aware from time to time of new tools or “tricks of the trade” which practitioners use within their social accounting and which they are willing to share with others. These are flagged in the monthly Circular and lodged on the website in the “SA Tools” section (or an appropriate web link given). During 2006 nine new tools were added to the “kit” and during 2007 four. Feedback on the Manual was very positive.
- The Directory of Social Accounts was revamped during 2007 and now lists all the social accounts that we know have been prepared by social economy organisations with either a website or email address.
- During 2007 we have made considerable progress with the establishment of Regional SAN networks and the appointment of Regional Coordinators – Scotland, Wales, West Midlands, East of England and South West England are currently covered with the North West and Yorkshire and Humber in the pipeline.
- The Manual is SFEDI endorsed and is used on the OCN course Social Accounting and Audit for Community organisations and ILM endorsed course in Social Accounting and Audit.
- During 2006 we ran three “master-classes”: York, Wolverhampton and Manchester. In addition SAN ran master-classes on contract to Valuing the Difference (Newcastle), The Social Enterprise Academy (Edinburgh) and Cheshire County Council (Ellesmere Port). Over 75 people attended these classes.
- During 2007 SAN has run master-classes in Oldham and in Edinburgh and on contract to the Social Enterprise Academy and to a group of Finnish visitors. Some 35 people attended these master-classes. These masterclasses were generally well received.
- Other training, including “taster” sessions have been organised under the SAN banner but delivered by SAN's members.
- We deal with around 40 enquiries every month - often by those at the SAN office or through the “duty” Director.

## Objective 2: To lobby and influence other bodies and institutions on behalf of the Social Audit Network

### Key findings...

- We produced a wall-chart in 2007 which features case studies from Scotland, England and Wales. Copies have been available to members to use with regional and national contacts
- We have only made modest progress on meeting with key people and bodies largely due to the constraints of depending on volunteer time by Board members. Meetings were held with Capacity Builders and the national Neuro Muscular Campaign
- In the Regions where local networks are emerging SAN is developing a wider range of contacts



**Objective 3: To establish and administer a process to approve persons who are deemed competent to act as social auditors and to identify and arrange or provide appropriate training and continuing personal development for social auditors and social accounting trainers and facilitators**

**Key findings...**

- During 2006 seven new Social Auditors were approved and added to the Register and during 2007 a further three Social Auditors were approved.
- Throughout 2006 and 2007 SAN has attempted to co-ordinate the process of managing applications to become approved as a Social Auditor on a national basis. This has become increasingly difficult.
- Our quality assurance process involves a questionnaire sent to all organisations for whom a SAN approved Social Auditor has chaired a social audit panel. Questionnaires are considered by the Quality and Approvals Committee which was established in September 2007. During 2006 and 2007 the Committee had no critical issues to pursue.
- All Social Auditors completed annual returns and two were taken off the register for personal reasons which had led to their no longer being able to practice as a SAN approved social auditor.
- The Social Audit Panel checklist was reviewed and a new version issued in January 2007.
- During 2007 SAN has managed to arrange two CPD events for its social auditors; one in Birmingham in May and one in the form of a workshop at the 2007 conference.
- Our SAN in Scotland network holds quarterly meetings and at each of these allocates one hour as a CPD slot, when colleagues introduce a topic for discussion and, on some occasions, strenuous debate.

**Objective 4: To undertake research and consultation to develop agreed common standards which may be applied in respect of i) the content of a set of social accounts; ii) the processes used in gathering information for and preparing social accounts; and iii) the methods by which social accounts can be verified as trustworthy**

**Key findings...**

- SAN believes that it is time to reflect on the social accounting experience of the past ten years in order to ensure that it is fit for purpose for the next decade. That is the main aim of the "Social Accounting and Audit Research Programme" which has just started and is focusing on the North East of England (including Cumbria), on the Merseyside sub-region of the North West and on Scotland.
- The Made to Measure Framework approach which is now being developed, helps organisations to pick and mix, by looking at what elements of particular tools can meet specific needs. The framework has been awarded a 'Supporting Performance Prize' in 2007 by the Performance Hub

**Objective 5: To promote, establish and operate other projects, schemes and programmes which advance the understanding and practice of social accounting and audit**

**Key findings...**

- We facilitated in association with the Cheshire Social Enterprise Network a training programme with four organisations who wished to prepare social accounts for the 2006/07. By September 2007 three of the four organisations had successfully prepared social accounts and had them audited.
- SAN in association with our regional network in the West Midlands is working with a cluster of 12 organisations preparing their social accounts
- SAN has been asked by the Merseyside Social Enterprise Network to co-ordinate a social accounting programme on Merseyside and the first taster sessions were held in late summer/early autumn 2007

**Objective 6: To ensure that SAN can be financially self-sustaining in terms of administrative overheads by the end of 2007**

**Key findings...**

- We have 32 ordinary Members and a register of 31 Social Auditors
- We intend that all Masterclasses and our conferences should make a profit
- We are seeking funding to strengthen our core work

**Other findings...**

- We asked our Partners and Clients a number of questions about the nature of working with SAN and there was general agreement that working with SAN was both useful and successful
- Our office in Exeter is administered by CEU who have a robust environmental policy
- No attempt has been made by SAN to explore what economic impact it might make
- As an organisation with no staff and with an office hosted by another organisation SAN has not yet required to prepare the traditional policy statements usually required. However as SAN develops the Board will be keeping this closely under review

## Action points, conclusions and recommendations to emerge from the Social Accounting and Audit process...

### Objective One

- ✓ A consultation about the SAN Circular should be re-run in 2008, aiming to get a wider response.
- ✓ Workshops at the conference should be better tailored to specific interests and levels of understanding of SAA.
- ✓ Conference workshop presenters should be better briefed.
- ✓ More networking time should be allowed for at the conference.
- ✓ The range of views about the website from highly complimentary to quite critical should be acknowledged and taken into consideration when it is possible to undertake a further revamp of the website.
- ✓ The best way of making social accounts available to interested parties should be reviewed.
- ✓ SAN should press ahead with building the regional networks and identifying co-ordinators for all the remaining regions.
- ✓ SAN should develop a recording mechanism for inquiries received in order to monitor both volume and quality of response.

### Objective Two

- ✓ As a matter of urgency SAN must devote more time and resources to building contacts with key agencies and people.

### Objective Three

- ✓ SAN should a) develop and improved system of managing the approval process for social auditors and implement it as matter of urgency and b) consider introducing a feedback process for mentees so that where there is dissatisfaction in a particular instance it can be dealt with.
- ✓ SAN should introduce routine peer review of social audit panel notes.
- ✓ As soon as resources permit SAN should introduce a process of random attendance at social audit panel meetings by members of the Quality and Approvals Sub-committee.
- ✓ SAN should try and ensure that at least three CPD events are arranged each year for SAN approved social auditors.

### Objective Six

- ✓ SAN should review its strategy for recruiting ordinary members.
- ✓ SAN should take all necessary steps to ensure some core funding is received before the end of 2008.

### Environment

- ✓ SAN should develop an environmental policy, especially in respect of its travel footprint.

### The Social Accounting process

- ✓ SAN should explore how to better generate stakeholder response to consultations in its next social accounting cycle, including more face to face consultation and a facility on the website.

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...supporting the network...supporting the network...