

ALL SAINTS ACTION NETWORK (ASAN)

ASAN is a community based charitable company operating as a development trust and community enterprise in All Saints, Wolverhampton. Its Board of Management is made up of primarily local residents. Its ambitions to regenerate All Saints and its neighbouring communities stretch across a varied range of different activities including business development, sports, training, project development, managed workspace, crime reduction, housing management and property investment. ASAN aims to improve the quality of life for those who live and work in All Saints through the creation of jobs, provision of local services, training opportunities and the establishment of a community owned asset base. It was established in 1995, took on their first employee in 2000, and have been writing social accounts since 2002.



ASAN's mission is to:

“Work in partnership to create a sustainable organisation responsive to local needs through the development and management of enterprise, employment and environmental projects.”

Every year ASAN goes through a process of Social Accounting to determine what impact they are making on the people that they serve. This information is compiled into a document that is then independently audited. Social Accounting is a process which ASAN undertakes using its own resources. It is something that they are committed to do to demonstrate to those they work with how performance is developing and hopefully improving.



Social accounting is intimately linked to ASAN's business planning process. The accounts are completed in November and approved by AGM. In January they have a business planning event for the coming financial year - social accounts feed into their action plan. For example, should stakeholders highlight something not working, not living up to a particular value, ASAN would ensure that the business plan directly addresses this.

There has been emphasis on using the social accounting process to directly influence shaping the organisation's business planning, meaning that there is a tendency to see social accounting as a performance management tool. If done properly social accounting should be providing more feedback through engagement. This means ASAN is living up to what they're trying to achieve.

In the next social accounting/audit cycle ASAN plans to extend the stakeholder and engagement process to capture more feedback on outcomes, and not just on performance. They want to live up to their values and achieve wider outcomes rather than just service feedback.

Having done social accounting for so long, it means that it's become embedded in the organisation's practices, accepted by all staff. They collect data on performance indicators, consultation and engagement with stakeholders. This means that they encounter fewer difficulties with those stakeholders because there is an ongoing dialogue.

Social accounting is easier for a bigger organisation because more people to work on it; the only struggle is funding. ASAN has not been immune from the continuing economic downturn and funding cuts, which are affecting organisations serving communities in greatest need across the country. During their latest social accounting period they have lost funding for both the All Saints Children's centre and the Community Maintenance Service. ASAN has responded by using its own resources generated through enterprising activities to underpin the delivery of much needed community services.

ASAN has started to measure its economic value:

Total incoming resources: £788,548 Total resources expended £785,554

- ASAN employs 26 staff, 15% of which live in the local area.
- 70% of ASAN's income was generated through enterprise activity, which is an improvement on the 61% in the last social accounting period. The remaining 30% was grant funding – mainly to deliver Children's Centre services on behalf of the City Council in All Saints.
- 10% of the money ASAN spends goes to local businesses within the WV2 area of Wolverhampton. A further 21% is spent with Wolverhampton based businesses and another 25% on businesses located in the West Midlands but outside Wolverhampton

ASAN engages in social accounting on a year on year basis and as such has developed an approach to consulting with its stakeholders which enables them to understand better the relationship and how they can improve that relationship. Initially ASAN attempted to engage with all stakeholders in this social accounting cycle. However this proved not to be feasible and they started prioritising stakeholders, but are quite open about who was and was not consulted.

Further information can be found at ASAN's website www.asan.org.uk