



Barking Owl: Impact reporting

At the April Barking Owl meeting, we explored how local infrastructure can communicate impact. We looked at new tools including plinth, a CRM system that brings together everything from surveys to grant management, and the Social Value Engine, which helps calculate social return on investment.

We also looked at a new interactive mapping tool, ways to balance stats with stories, and the challenge of gathering meaningful case studies from busy member organisations.

You can join the conversation on this topic by using the discussion forums on the NAVCA website: <https://www.navca.org.uk/posts/cwva-impact-report-2024>

New tools to explore

Ryan from [CWVA](#) talked us through Plinth – a single system that manages CRM, events, surveys and grants – and Social Value Engine, which helps organisations show how much value they generate from public investment, including how funders are responding positively to this evidence-based approach.

We all agreed that numbers matter, but stories bring them to life. Real experiences, testimonials and personal journeys show the real-world difference we make. We discussed how important it is to gather stories from our communities.

Plinth: <https://www.plinth.org.uk/>

Social Value Engine: <https://socialvalueengine.com/>

The challenge of collecting stories

We know it's tough to get comms content from members, especially when they're short on time and resources. Some NAVCA members are trying video, others are visiting organisations directly. Members also use WhatsApp groups and social media to prompt organisations for responses.

Lorna from [Slough CVS](#) shared the questions that they ask to get information from local groups:

- What is the problem/issue that your organisation addresses and what change do you want to see?
- How are you tackling the problem?
- What activities and services do you deliver?



- What are your numbers? e.g. number of service users, number of volunteers, number of sessions delivered.
- What changes result from your activities, and for whom?

Getting people to respond

We also swapped tips on improving member survey response rates. Ideas included prize draws to simplifying questions. Some are experimenting with 'temperature checks', e.g. quick/single question polls to keep things light and engaging.

Member examples

Cumbria CVS: <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/about-us/annual-review/>

Cambridge CVS: <https://cambridgecvs.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/Annual-review-2324.pdf>

Cumbria CVS member survey: <https://cumbriacvs.org.uk/news/cumbria-cvs-survey-reveals-money-is-biggest-challenge-facing-sector/>