

Bradford Community Broadcasting (BCB) is a volunteer-led, community organisation that uses Community Radio as a tool for personal development, community empowerment and social change.

BCB provides the Community Radio station for Bradford, BCB 106.6fm and has successfully worked at the heart of communities for over 25 years, supporting local people to be active in their community, the district - and to have a voice in the media.

Tell us about your organisation –

BCB uses radio to bring people together, celebrate our diversity, encourage participation and bring about social change. We have a small staff team that supports around 230 volunteers, most of them actively involved in broadcasting. We provide training and support for local people, encouraging them to gain the skills and confidence to have a voice in the media. Our city centre premises provide a vibrant hub for people from different neighbourhoods, ages, life experiences, and backgrounds to come together to work together and contribute to their community radio. We welcome anyone within the community sector to come and speak to us on the radio about what they are up to, promoting their projects, services, events to everyone across Bradford.

Why was the organisation founded (what was the initial aim/need) –

We set up originally in 1992 as Bradford Festival, a radio station for the Bradford Festival. We quickly recognised the potential for community radio in Bradford, and how we could use radio to bring people together - in fact creating community over the airwaves. We also recognised the real need for diverse local people to have a voice within their community and the media, an accessible media that they had control over and was right for Bradford.

In 1994 we changed our name to Bradford Community Broadcasting, took on premises, built studios and started running regular training courses. We successfully campaigned for full time community radio licences and have been broadcasting full time for 17 years.

How has that changed if at all? –

Our basic aims have stayed very much the same. Although there has been an explosion in communications tools, people still want to stay connected locally and feel that they belong to their community. BCB provides a space to share experiences, opinions and information.

What are you most proud of about your organisation –

The ongoing commitment of our volunteers is really outstanding. They really reflect Bradford, coming from all different communities, backgrounds and life experiences.

What is your greatest challenge in the industry and how could others help you overcome it?

Finding funding and keep going is a massive struggle for any community organisation including ourselves. It takes up so much time to find, apply for and to maintain, time that could be used for better things. Without core funding we're always having to find new projects to keep going. We are actively trying to find new ways to bring in money, so if anyone has any ideas then we would love to hear from you.

Have you received any support from Community Action along the way?

Clive (the VOSO) has worked with us to develop an application to become a charity which has been a great help. We also send people on CABAD training courses when there are relevant ones. Bfunded is really good; it's so helpful to have funding available all in one place with a breakdown that is easy to understand. We use it regularly.

Do you have anything you would like to let others know about?

'Ten Today' project launching in April; We'll be broadcasting exercises on the radio encouraging over 50's to do exercise, just 10 mins x three times a week which keeps them fit and encourages a healthier lifestyle

#iwill Social action and Children in Need projects, providing training and volunteering placements for children and young people, to help them gain new skills and confidence, contribute to a community project and have a voice on radio.

Radio Venus - International Women's Day broadcast on Mar 8th. Women will again be taking over the airwaves on BCB106.6fm We are looking for any new women and girls to get involved. We're holding Women's Radio workshops on Thursdays 2-4pm at BCB and on Saturdays.

New Volunteers sessions are held on the first Tuesday of month at 12 noon. And our community engagement project works with community groups to encourage them to use radio – do get in contact if you want to develop your own community radio programme.!

This building we are currently in, is going to be knocked down so we will have to find and move into new premises over the next few years so that will be a large project for us. Watch this space!