

CANVAS

SOCIAL IMPACT 2022

BY Saxton Bampfylde

EMBRACING TRANSITION

STRONG LEADERSHIP FOR
SOCIAL IMPACT ORGANISATIONS



WELCOME

Welcome to the 2022 Social Impact edition of CANVAS, the insights update from Saxton Bampfylde and its Panorama partners.

Our aim is to share interesting thoughts and perspectives on topics and issues that are relevant and current in your sector.

We welcome any thoughts, comments, or inputs you would like to share

We hope you enjoy this edition.

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ANNOUNCING NEW LEADERSHIP IN OUR SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICE

As we, at Saxton Bampfylde, celebrate our 35th year anniversary, it has been a proud moment for us to reflect on the important and interesting work we do to support many organisations. As the firm grows and evolves, we are excited to announce new leadership developments in our Social Impact practice.

Following 10 years of leading the Social Impact team and building on her extensive board work and interest in good governance, **Rachel Hubbard** will be moving to Saxton Bampfylde's Board practice. Rachel will continue to work closely with the Social Impact team, with a focus on Non-executive and Board roles, whilst bringing her excellent leadership expertise to a broader range of clients. Rachel 'hands the baton' to **Kat Mason** who has joined Saxton Bampfylde's Social Impact practice. Kat brings over 16

years' experience in the charity sector, including 10 years as a Chief Executive, most recently of UK-wide health and arts charity, MediCinema. From January Kat will step into a leadership role within our Social Impact practice group, driving its development and ensuring its continued success in placing the very best leaders across the sector. Kat's skills, passion and experience of the sector will be an invaluable asset both to the practice group and to our clients. Kat shares her vision and insights for the practice in a profile interview for this edition of CANVAS.

We very much look forward to supporting many of you this year and look forward to catching up with you soon.

✉ kat.mason@saxbam.com

✉ rachel.hubbard@saxbam.com



Pictured: Rachel Hubbard (left) and Kat Mason (right)

EDITION OVERVIEW

The wide-reaching and, in many cases, devastating impacts of COVID-19 will continue to be felt for many years to come, and perhaps by few organisations more so, than those on the front line in the charity, social enterprise and wider social impact sectors. We are all aware of the deep inequalities in our communities, yet the resourcing challenges for addressing the needs grow all more challenging, alongside a complex policy and regulatory environment and the constant of social media. Before March 2020, many organisations were already undertaking transformational change and embracing transition in their organisations, responding to a rapidly altering environment, including around the opportunities and challenges of digital.

Many leaders have told us of propelling transformational change forward at unprecedented speed, as the need and opportunity arose through the pandemic. Almost 2 years on, we have transformed and transitioned personally and professionally many times – we now need to transition out of this holding pattern. This will take resilient, adaptable leaders, able to support beneficiaries, teams and organisations through increased levels of uncertainty, with mission at their heart, and strong values as a guide. Where leaders need to point to and how they define and deliver that mission for the biggest impact has changed, and will continue to as we transition out of the pandemic.

We have also heard from leaders that they are reassessing their organisation's strategic direction for the future, but the huge challenges of continuing to lead, when the personal cost has been so great through these last two years. Many are looking for renewed energy, perhaps through a fresh challenge, having given so sacrificially. Prior to the pandemic, we had planned out this edition of CANVAS, to look at 'blue chip charities', being lead through transformational change. How fortunate perhaps not to know the future and the harsh realities of the months to come! I think we will all agree that the sectors driven by social purpose have never been more needed, but we hear from those we meet that the experience of leading has never been more challenging.

At Saxton Bampfylde we have the privilege of meeting the most exceptional and inspiring leaders. One such in **Steve Douglas CBE** (page 4), who was appointed in a virtual process and joined homelessness charity St Mungo's as CEO in 2020. He reflects on a very unusual first year in post, having taken on the role in the height of the pandemic. He speaks candidly, sharing his experiences of having stepped into a new leadership role at such a challenging point in time and setting a strategic direction for an unpredictable future. Steve explores the theme of inclusivity and diversity, highlighting the importance of lived experience and its vital role within St Mungo's, and discusses the concept of action learning: the art of taking lived

experience and learnings as a basis from which to shape plans for the future. We are indebted to Steve for finding the time to talk with us and share his experience, thank you so much.

In this edition, we are also pleased to welcome several new Partners to the Saxton Bampfylde team. Firstly, we hear from **Jonathan Whymark**, Occupational Psychologist (page 12), as he explores the complex balance leaders must strike to find a sustainable way forward for their organisation, delivering strong leadership to both their staff and service users.

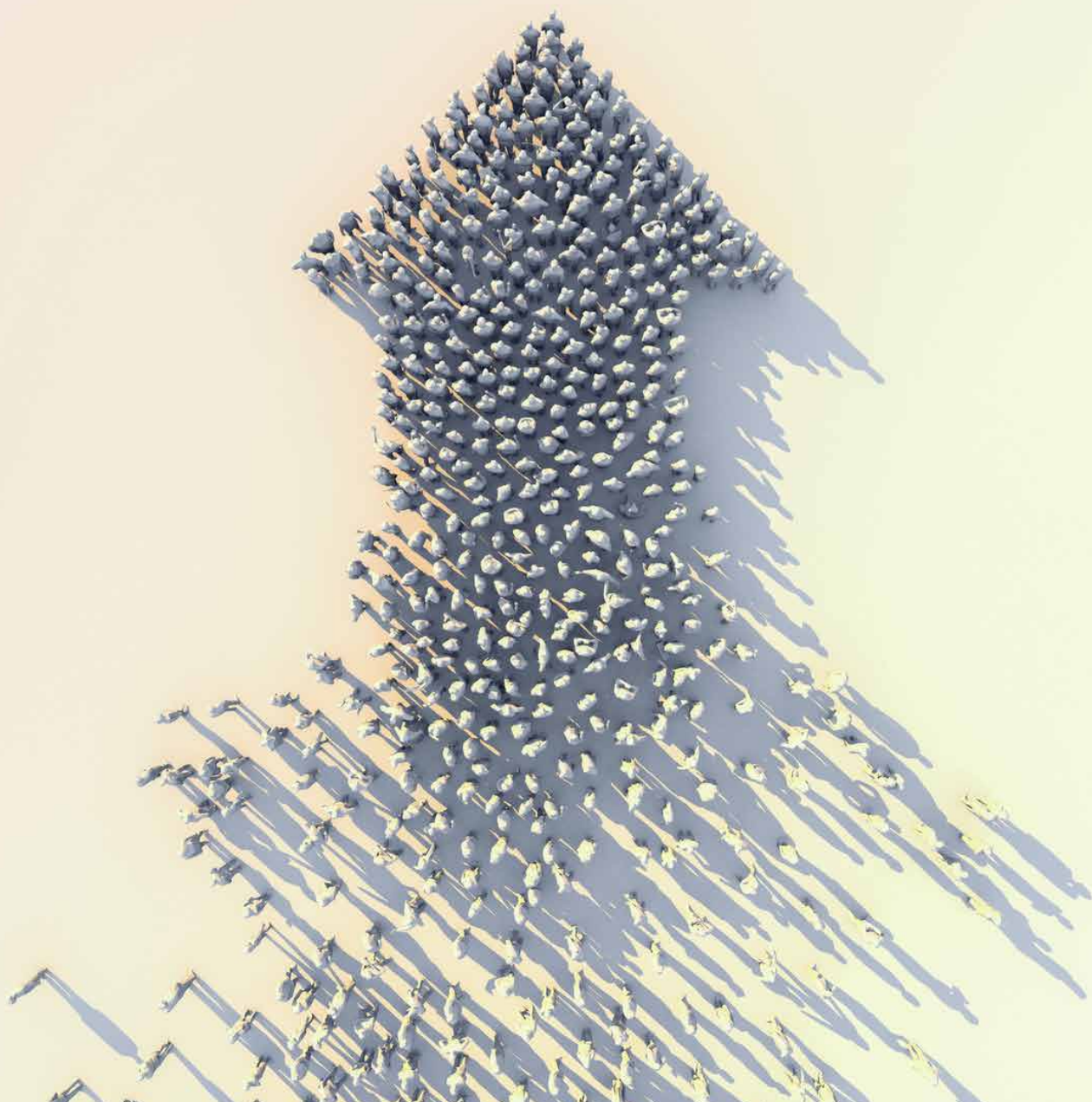
We are also delighted that **Vidhu Sood-Nicholls** (page 18), has joined us from Teach First, where she was Director of Fundraising, bringing us exceptional experience of sector leadership. Her wisdom and empathy for people and leadership is already being greatly appreciated by colleagues and clients alike, in social impact, as well as in other sectors.

On page 8 we hear from **Kat Mason**, formerly the Chief Executive of MediCinema, as she steps into Saxton Bampfylde's Social Impact practice, preparing to take a more prominent role as Rachel Hubbard moves back to her roots of working predominantly on Board appointments in the Board Practice, across the commercial, public, as well as social impact sectors.

NEVER WASTE A GOOD CRISIS

CHARITY LEADERSHIP IN TIMES
OF CHALLENGE

Interview with **Steve Douglas CBE**,
Chief Executive, St Mungo's



Having taken on the role of CEO at homelessness charity, St Mungo's, in the midst of a global pandemic, we hear from **Steve Douglas CBE** about his hopes for the future, his highlights from his first year in the role and his ambition to end rough sleeping in the UK.

You stepped into the role of CEO at St Mungo's in July 2020. Can you talk about the challenges of taking on a leadership role in the midst of a global pandemic? How did you address these challenges?

I've been a chief executive at a number of different organisations over the course of my career. I was actually at Hackney Council during the last big global pandemic [the 2009 H1N1 'swine flu' pandemic], working as Executive Director of Housing and Regeneration. I saw the social care team respond to a pandemic through that time so I had a sense of the importance of getting the logistics and supplies right: you've got to make sure that those connections are all as strong as possible. The big difference with this pandemic was the social isolation. Everybody was suddenly expected to remain indoors. Meeting places were not the same, you were not expected to go to offices. Arriving at a homelessness charity – whose main purpose is about engaging and directly supporting clients – was a huge difference for me.

When I arrived in July, I was in awe of the work that our teams had already done. The pandemic had been going for two or three months and the teams within St Mungo's had already established IT connections, working from home protocols and how best to work with clients. For me, the big challenge was how to connect with 1,500 staff across so many sites. That actually had upsides! We work across London, Brighton, Bournemouth, Bristol, Oxford, Reading – to name but a few – and it meant that I was able to connect with all of our staff much more quickly because we were using technology and not having to travel across the country. It meant that I was able to connect with so many more people in a very short period of time than would have been the case in normal times. That was a real positive, however the challenge for me now is making sure that we still maintain the human contact, as we take the benefits of remote working and that becomes part of the way that we will work going forward.

What have been some of your key highlights from your first year in the role?

The highlights are actually not mine: they're our staff's. During the course of the last year, we've managed 30 hotels: something we've never done before. It was a huge shift in how we typically operate. Each night, we provide support to over 3,000 individuals, but throughout the duration of the pandemic, we supported over 4,000 people who were sleeping rough or in communal night shelters to isolate safely in empty hotels or other emergency accommodation. We also

managed to keep something like 93 per cent of our day-to-day services running. That level of response was a huge highlight for me.

Our recovery colleges – a digital and inclusive learning, training and employment service for clients – have been another significant highlight for me. The idea behind these is that we keep all of our clients connected and provide them with ongoing education, training, support and advice. We moved our Recovery College online during the pandemic, which had a number of benefits.

“The challenge for me now is making sure that we still maintain the human contact.”

Firstly, it kept all those clients that were involved in it connected, which made a difference to their health and well-being. Secondly, it allowed us to develop a whole set of new learning protocols, ideas and concepts. We'll be taking these learnings forward as part of our normal curriculum.

The other area I'm particularly proud of is our continued commitment to diversity and inclusion. This has always been really important to us, and in fact Saxton Bampfylde have helped us with the recruitment of new board members and executive team members who've joined us in the last few months so that we now have both a board and a top team that is truly diverse. We've always been strong on gender diversity, but now we're really strong in terms of ethnicity too: in fact, 50 per cent of our executive team are now BME, as are 30 per cent of our board. They're just incredibly talented individuals with a wide range of skills from sectors including commercial, charity, education, and housing.

How have you approached longer-term strategy setting in an environment of continuing uncertainty as we transition to the future, in light of the pandemic?

I chaired a social justice charity called Commonweal, and the big philosophy for that charity was around



action learning. The principle of that is that you don't just do research, stop, absorb and then put it out there for thought, rather you learn as you go. You take lived experience and learn, understand, and develop plans on that basis. That philosophy is one that holds true within St Mungo's. During the last year, we took learnings from all those elements we had to put in place very quickly: managing the emergency hotels, our agile way of working and the use of technology, connecting to clients in a different way. That is all now part of our future strategy.

We had a strategic plan in place that was coming to its end in 2021 and we spent a significant part of last year developing a new strategy, which is effectively an evolution of what we've been doing for the last 50 plus years, but it looks to build on all we've learned in the last year. For example, we know we're fantastic at services, but we know that there's more we can do on technology both for our staff and our clients. We've therefore created a new executive director role which has overall responsibility for people, culture and technology (which we see as a key part of our future strategy). Similarly, we know the work we do around accommodation is so important to our clients lives, well-being and prosperity so again we've given that real attention at the top of the organisation and we now have an executive director of housing services. We've now got a new strategy which runs from 2021 to 2026, which is hugely ambitious. We believe that rough sleeping can be ended during that period, which echoes what government has said as a manifesto commitment. But we're practical about what our contribution can be to that, and much of it will be about how we can support partners such as local authorities to deliver in the places where we work and how we can support influencing policy at a national level.

To what extent have you been able to apply learnings from your experience in other sectors, as you transitioned into a charity leadership role?

I've led or chaired perhaps eight or nine organisations through my career, ranging from tiny community-based organisations in the heart of East London, right through to national government agencies with an £8.4 billion budget. Through that, I've been able to see the broad range of challenges that different organisations face.

There are a couple of key learnings I always carry with me. Firstly, listen – listen and learn. Don't assume that you know everything. There are always differences in organisations, differences in culture; differences in the way that organisations think.



You've got to get to understand the organisation, and the best way to do that is to connect with as many people as you can: hierarchies can often get in the way of actually connecting. For me at St Mungo's, spending as much time with our clients and understanding our services, as well as with our staff throughout the organisation, was really important.

It's also important to keep your strategy as simple as possible. We're a complex organisation – we both deliver services and attempt to influence policy and create empathy and understanding amongst the public – but for us at St Mungo's, keeping it simple helps us to know what the most important things are that will help us to deliver the most difference. Keeping those messages as simple as possible makes it easier for people within the organisation to understand what it is that we hope to achieve and the contribution that they can therefore make.

How have you struck a balance in your leadership approach as you propel a long-established charity forward in an increasingly modern and technology-focused world?

The phrase "never waste a good crisis" springs to mind! If there's something that we can take from COVID, it's the opportunity to fundamentally look at the way that we do things. We took that opportunity even while we were delivering the services. The important thing for us now is that we capture that, and we're doing that both within St Mungo's through our focus on digital inclusion and promoting digital inclusion and ensuring that our clients – those with lived experience – are within every part of our governance structure. We have lived experience on the board and at executive level. Nothing we do with clients is tokenistic, that's why we have a client advisory board which is genuinely empowered and has influence within the organisation and the opportunity to hold us to account. This has really helped us to consider what our clients need from us in terms of support to fulfil their ambitions, which can be translated back into the strategy.

That opportunity to learn from the last year, to build on the things we do so well, has been so important for us. We are also doing it at a national policy level. We asked Lord Bob Kerslake, the former head of the Civil Service, former Local Government Association President and current chair of Peabody Housing Association to chair an independent commission – the Kerslake Commission on Homelessness and Rough Sleeping – to examine what worked

"The history that we have chosen to hold on to is our ambition and vision. The evolution is around our impact."

for people sleeping on the streets during the pandemic. He has worked with an Advisory Board of parliamentarians, politicians, practitioners and people with lived experience. We acted as secretariat to the Commission, which has just published its final report, and we hope that its recommendations will directly influence government and policy makers in the approach to ending rough sleeping.

You have openly spoken about the importance of lived experience in charities: to what extent has this impacted your approach to developing strategy and in decision making?

The challenge for us, and indeed the challenge for all charities, is establishing what impact you make. When we were developing the new strategy, we asked ourselves that question and that flows through everything now for us. When we're talking about impact, we're considering what difference we make. So for us, as a homelessness charity, we want to contribute to ending rough sleeping. We want to help support our clients to achieve their ambitions. If our clients have experienced being homeless and sleeping rough, we want them to have other options so they don't return to the streets.

Being able to talk to people with lived experience and get their direct feedback on what's worked, how long it takes, where the support might be: that's the work that our outreach teams, our volunteers, and our locums do pretty much every day. For us, it's then about bringing that learning into the organisation to make sure we're delivering the right services that make the difference.

Last year, we provided more than 200 different services, ranging from mental health support and advice, through to long-term care or very short-term advice on options; right the way through to those who need employment advice, skills or training. That's where the recovery colleges come

in: they focus on ensuring that our clients are able to get access to jobs and training. Understanding what services make the most difference is what is really crucial for us, and you only truly know if you are connecting and getting input from those you are supporting or working with.

Our new strategic plan has direct input from clients, and that gives me confidence that our strategy is focused on things that matter to our current and future clients.

In the last year we've evolved our established Client Advisory Board, to challenge us on performance, and also to help us in learning what works. Over 10% of our staff have lived experience of homelessness, and that experience is embedded across all levels of the organisation. I'm pleased they feel able to share their experiences and expertise to really add value in how we deliver services.

We see digital offering so much opportunity, but how can we prevent digital exclusion from increasing the challenges for those in our communities who are most disadvantaged? Is St Mungo's doing anything particular to combat this?

Our recovery colleges are now an important part of our strategy to tackle digital exclusion. Our colleges are non-statutory, so the way we develop them is through donations and support from funders. We have some significant funders who have been brilliant in offering support to us and our clients and helping us to tackle the disadvantages our clients may face through digital exclusion. That includes access to technology. The fact that many of our clients don't have mobile phones or access to the internet both means they can't access benefits – just getting into the system to understand what they might be entitled to is impossible without that connection – and that they can't contact friends and family or support networks. Making

“Though there are challenges, I’m optimistic because the last 15 months showed that street homelessness can be ended.”



sure that at the very start our clients have at least got access to technology is so important.

We’ve had huge support from organisations like Tesco Mobile and Clarion Housing Group. They provided mobile phones which we could then provide to the clients who needed them most, which made a huge difference. In terms of opening worlds and opportunities, mobile phones are so significant, and yet we now almost take them for granted.

Of course, the second area is knowing your way around the technology. That’s hugely important for things like accessing benefits, but also for employment skills for the future. We know that the world is now a digitally technological one, so making sure our clients are as well-equipped as they can be to work in that world, to operate in that world, is crucial for us.

In many ways, making a well-established organisation fit-for-purpose is more challenging than starting something from scratch. Are there ways you have found to change some of the legacy challenges into positives?

We are perhaps different as a charity in that we’ve been evolving continuously. The current incarnation of St Mungo’s is only about five years old and was the result of the coming together of two organisations: St Mungo’s and Broadway. Bringing those two organisations together culturally is what we’ve been working through over the last five years. The new execs bring a freshness culturally as they don’t know the historical and legacy differences and the integration that’s taken place over the last few years. They see the organisation as it stands today rather than its historic iterations.

The history that we have chosen to hold on to is our ambition and vision. The evolution is around our impact. We are now confident enough to ask ourselves; “have we made the biggest impact we can make and what can we do differently?”. And because we’re able to do that, we’re able to increase our contributions to partners on solutions.

I suppose this is part of my civil servant type experience, but I come with an inquisitive mindset. I always want to ask; “why?”. Why do we do that in that way, could we do it in a different way in 2021 to how we might have done it in 2018 or 2010? For St Mungo’s and homelessness charities more generally, the last time we got street homelessness down to a level where we felt that it was almost

eradicated was around 2010, so we’re now trying to look back and see what the ingredients of that time were that allowed us to get to that point. What’s happened in the last decade? What can we learn going forward? Our contribution to the Kerslake Commission is all about what we have learned and sharing the experience of our clients, our staff, and our many volunteers. We have to ensure that those lessons become part of the way that we collaborate and work together to address homelessness.

That is our philosophy. We have the experience of working with approximately 33,000 people every year, through the ‘Everyone In’ initiative bringing people off the streets during the pandemic; the lived experience of those individuals. We now need to take that with the shared learnings from across the sector to come up with something that together will help us to prevent homelessness. We see ourselves as a contributor, working alongside other organisations to prevent and ultimately end street homelessness.

Finally, what gives you most hope for the future and most optimism in your role leading St Mungo’s?

Though there are challenges, I’m optimistic because the last 15 months showed that street homelessness can be ended. The unprecedented collaboration between different agencies, including local government, health and housing associations, to provide advice, support and accommodation options was all there. It worked in spite of the system at times, and I believe that if we get the system right, and the funding to support it, that our ambition can be achieved. But we won’t do that on our own. We’ll do that supporting local, regional and national government. We’ll do that working in collaboration with other agencies and providing our support, our advice and our expertise where we can.

We’ll do it by working together, and in fact the Kerslake Commission’s first interim report is called “When We Work Together”, which is a philosophy we wholeheartedly endorse. We believe that society and our clients deserve to get rid of the scourge of a person who is homeless person having to sleep on the streets. That should not be the case in 2021. It’s tough for charities – the financial environment in which they’re working adds to that challenge – but we know that public support is so strong. We now need political will to support it, but I’m optimistic that the opportunity will be seized, because we know it can be done. **C**

STEVE DOUGLAS CBE BIOGRAPHY

After a long career in social housing, leading a number of housing associations, both as CEO and as a chair and vice chair of two of London’s g15 largest social housing providers, Steve took over as CEO of St Mungo’s in July 2020, having also been chair and Trustee of the social justice charity, Commonweal.

St Mungo’s is a leading homelessness charity, and each year provides services to almost 33,000 clients, and over 3,500 clients each day. During the pandemic the charity ran 30 hotels, supporting almost 4,000 clients, working with local authority and health partners on provision of accommodation and support to those who were rough sleeping or at risk of rough sleeping, across London, the South East and South West. Steve has also been the Chief Executive of the Housing Corporation, the predecessor to Homes England and the Regulator of Social, when the non-departmental public body had responsibility for both the investment and regulation of social housing provision.

Steve was awarded a CBE in 2019, for his services to housing and diversity.

INTERVIEW WITH

KAT MASON

**PARTNER AND HEAD OF SOCIAL IMPACT PRACTICE
AT SAXTON BAMPFYLDE**



We are delighted to introduce **Kat Mason** who has stepped into the role of Social Impact practice group head, taking the reins from Rachel Hubbard as she transitions into a more board search-focused role. Formerly Chief Executive at MediCinema, Kat will play a vital part in growing our knowledge and experience of the sector and further developing our work with social impact organisations.

Can you tell us a bit about your career prior to coming to Saxton Bampfylde and what attracted you to join the firm?

Having spent 16 years supporting mission-driven organisations in the not for profit sector, the final 10 as CEO, I have seen first hand the transformative value of high quality leadership in positioning organisations to best deliver their mission and grow their impact to make the difference they need to in society – and that is my driving passion.

I joined the charity sector straight out of university. After graduating with a degree in history and a dissertation on the challenges of running a large multi-national NGO in India and Pakistan, I landed in a very small organisation which was working to meet the needs of its beneficiary group on the ground. It was a huge learning curve as I was one of just three team members and within a month of me joining, my Exec Director had a stroke. Aged 22, I was completely thrown in at the deep end and found myself running this small charity. It was fascinating, and made it so clear to me how challenging it is to run an organisation when you don't have the background, experience or skills required. You might have passion for helping like I did, or know exactly how to do social care, or work with teenage offenders, but you probably don't know how to build a marketing plan, run the finances or plan for sustainability!

After that, my career focused on helping organisations to increase their impact, both in frontline organisations in health and mental health and an infrastructure organisation. I spent three years supporting charities and social enterprises across the sector at a charity called Pilotlight, which helps charities grow their impact by connecting senior business leaders in teams with charity leaders to coach them through the process of organisational strategic business planning. I loved working across the sector, supporting leaders and learning from the business leaders – it was much like doing an on the job mini MBA. I then stepped back into directly helping people and worked for three years with a mental health charity. That was the point at which I met Saxton Bampfylde who placed me into the role of CEO at Medical Aid Films, a small charity using technology and film

to support healthcare workers in low-resource settings with medical education. When I took it on, it was really a kitchen table kind of size, and I worked with the team and the trustees to build that into something that had real backbone behind it adding value through content and partnerships to the brilliant organisations working on the ground.

"Saxton Bampfylde brings together my interest in organisations and my passion for people."

From there, I moved to MediCinema, a health and arts charity which uses films and the shared cinema experience to improve the well-being and quality of life of patients in hospitals. Working with and between the health sector and the film and cinema industry for the benefit of patients and their families was hugely rewarding. Again, my role was to take an organisation that had good bones and a strong idea, and grow it into something able to make a real impact but that was also financially sustainable and with well-established partnerships. Doing that, setting the charity up for growth, building a fantastic team, quadrupling our annual impact and reaching over 174,000 patients during my time there are the things I am most proud of.

Saxton Bampfylde brings together my passion for supporting a vibrant social impact sector, my interest in organisations and how to support them to achieve the most for their beneficiaries, and my love for and interest in people. I'm fascinated by the question of how you become a good leader and how you bring the right people with the right skills, experience and values into the right organisations? Because the right leader in one organisation of course isn't the right leader in another or at a different time. It's about really getting under the

skin of an organisation and its people, and the amazing talent and leaders in the sector and from others, and making the right connections.

You spent your last year and a half as CEO of MediCinema working in the midst of a global pandemic. What measures did you put in place to ensure your team continued to feel connected?

It was a huge challenge, and something really alien. Everybody was experiencing this complete upheaval, both in practical and emotional terms. The challenge for MediCinema, which was mirrored in a lot of organisations, was that we had to close our services even before lockdown was imposed. We suddenly had part of the team working well above full time to pivot services and make sure we could continue to be there for our beneficiaries and that financially we would be able to weather the storm. And then we had the cinema managers, for example, who were immediately put on furlough once that became an option. We also had some people who were partially furloughed.

We had this combination of people who were working at the speed of light and juggling all sorts of priorities, balanced against people who desperately wanted to work but couldn't. There wasn't one solution, it was a variety of things, and what we did changed at different times. At the beginning, we were doing two weekly hour and a half meetings of the core team because the pace of change was so fast. At the start of those, I'd always give an update on what was happening in the world and what it meant for us to ensure nobody felt cut off or unsure about our direction. At the beginning of each of these meetings, I always included an agenda point for coffee. This was a half hour of just chat about life and what people were finding hard or fun or challenging. We shared TV recommendations and ideas for activities that had made people feel better or more connected.

I also started communicating much more regularly on email – possibly over communicating even! It felt so important not just for the team that was working, but also for the trustees and for the team that was off. Even though they weren't working, I wanted them to know what was going on as things were just moving so quickly.



“The tail of COVID is going to be really long and will encompass both health inequalities and economic inequalities.”

MediCinema obviously sits between healthcare, the film industry and the charity sector, so there were a lot of moving parts to keep track of to ensure we knew what each update meant for everybody. One of the things we did quite quickly was to introduce monthly ‘reflection meetings’, which were like team therapy! Nothing work related, just a real check in on what we were feeling, how we were communicating with each other.

We quite quickly realised that there were some people who were on meetings all the time, and others who really never needed to communicate with others to do their job. It was funny – we realised we’d forgotten how to use the phone and to communicate ad hoc, because it had all become so structured when you had to set up a video call. I made sure I was connecting directly with anyone who might be sat just at home with their computer.

We also tried lots of social things, always including those who were on furlough, and what we landed on that worked really well for my team was cook-alongs! We’d all get together and someone would put forward a recipe for us all to cook together. We had teams based all over the country and some abroad, so it actually worked as a really nice leveller, bringing everyone together.

What lessons have you taken away from your experience leading a charity through such an unparalleled time?

The key lesson for me is that the sector – and the leaders and people within it – is incredibly resilient. More so than I think a lot would think. My experience of organisations within the voluntary sector that work well is that, because they are there to meet a very specific need, you can guarantee that relatively quickly they will find a way to get in and act to meet that need. COVID really showed that: mission-driven organisations recognised that the people we were supporting had a heightened need and the delivery method had to change overnight. So it just did!

The flip side to that is that across a lot of the voluntary sector – and for healthcare too – burnout has become a real issue. There was a need to move at a million miles an hour to support the people in need of our services, but at some point you have to turn that into something more sustainable. Holidays, breaks, boundaries, exercise: the balance has to be there. They’re not things I didn’t know before, but COVID has definitely crystallised my thinking.

What are the key challenges you anticipate charities will face as they look to re-establish and develop services post-pandemic?

The social impact sector is so vast and encompasses so many different organisations working in so many different spaces and at different scales that there are impacts that have

been felt across the board and others that are very specific. Some organisations have really thrived, where others have faced more of a struggle; but all of us are dealing with uncertainty and multiple transitions, all of which need us to be hugely adaptable and resilient as leaders and people.

Each organisation’s set of challenges is naturally going to be specific to them, however across the board we are seeing increasing need thanks to both the economic and health impacts of COVID. The tail of COVID is going to be really long and will encompass both health inequalities and economic inequalities. Stepping up to meet that increasing need is going to be the key theme as charities look to move forwards.

Alongside that will be funding and ensuring financial sustainability. Whole funding models have changed, sources have dried up, new ones are emerging. Organisations that can be nimble, innovative, and forward-thinking about their income streams are the ones that will come out stronger.

The third area of challenge will be people. There is huge value in the people who work in the sector, they are passionate and committed and go over and above: especially in the last 24 months. However they are exhausted from continual change and stepping up to the challenges of the pandemic, both professional and personal. Leaders need to bring the balance back for their teams and really look after them and make sure well-being is there. It needs to be proactive pastoral care. We lean on our people a lot, especially when funding is tight and the need is high: that will always be there in a sector that is driven by mission, but it needs to be tempered and balanced against looking after our people.

What are your top line ambitions for Saxton Bampfylde’s Social Impact practice as you move forward?

The big thing for me is that the practice already does what it does incredibly well, but I think our aim now needs to be to do that even better and bigger for our clients, and deepen both our individual relationship as well as our partnership with the sector as trusted advisors on leadership. The search part – finding the right leaders at the right time – is of course a big part of what we do, but it’s broader than that. It’s about supporting organisations for the long term on their senior level issues, whether that be the board, Chief Executive/Chair relationships, convening and connecting leaders to share experience, expertise and knowledge, leadership roles, to proactively supporting the next generation of diverse leaders, and so on.

Having sat on the other side of Saxton Bampfylde, I have seen the true value of this in transitioning Chair roles and building a high functioning board for growth. And one of the things that the firm does uniquely well and the value of which we want to real dial up for our clients and candidates is truly working across sectors and practice groups. It goes without saying that every social impact organisation touches other sectors. You can’t be a social impact organisation and sit in a silo. The value that Saxton Bampfylde brings is in understanding these sectors and their networks, enabling out of the box thinking, broadening horizons and helping clients to think more about organisational problems in the round rather than in the light of a particular sector.

Over the course of your career, you have been a Saxton Bampfylde candidate, client and now consultant. What insights do you think this will allow you to bring to your role?

I think it's really important to understand the pressures a client is facing - timewise, people-wise, reporting-wise - and really consider where Saxton Bampfylde can add value. Having seen the other side, I hope this will help me deliver a greater depth of awareness of that right from the start. That will help me bring forward a way of working that is exactly suited to the needs of each client.

Client and candidate care are at the heart of what Saxton Bampfylde does, but the journey for a candidate can be tricky. You have times where you're wobbly and things might not go in a linear way. Having sat as a candidate, I have an understanding of what that process looks like from the other side and the emotional aspect of it as well as the practical or process-driven aspect.

Do you see digital transformation more as a challenge or an opportunity for charitable organisations? What can leaders do to ensure the transition is as smooth as possible?

Digital transformation is a huge driver for change in the social impact sector. It has huge opportunity for the sector, but it is also a challenge. As with any change management piece, it all comes back to focusing on what the reason is for the change. Leaders must clearly envision the impact of digital transformation and what that means for their organisation in a way that is both aspiration and visionary, while also being tangible. They have to consider both how digital can enable delivery of the overall mission alongside what it means for their team's day-to-day jobs.

Getting the right skills around the table is crucial here. It's impossible to deliver in an area like digital if you don't know what your options are! That has to be led right from the top down: boards need at least one person who understands digital, has it part of their remit and is thinking consciously about it. Digital also needs to be embedded in all workflows at all levels of an organisation: it must go beyond just working remotely or providing services remotely.

What can be done to ensure that the talent pool in the social impact sector is as diverse and representative of the communities it serves as possible?

Lived experience - the beneficiaries that the organisation is working with and for - have to be at the heart of everything that is done including feeding back and planning for the future. There are many ways of achieving this within an organisation, but having that as an ethos is crucial. Charities don't exist to help and save others, they must work with and support their beneficiaries.

I always think that with charities your aim - if you can get to it - is to become defunct! You want to have done your job so well that it is no longer required. Ideally, you want to end up obsolete. Most organisations won't get anywhere near that in their lifetime, but it's a journey towards that goal. Diversity is hugely important to achieve that. At Saxton Bampfylde we recognise the need for future leaders to be supported to



“Mission-driven organisations recognised that the people we were supporting had a heightened need and the delivery method had to change overnight.”

enable this, and that is why the STEP and REACH programmes we have set up and run to proactively play a part in that journey are so important.

Can you share a lockdown learning with us?

I had an interesting set of lockdowns, having only come back from maternity leave with my second child a few weeks before the first national lockdown was announced! Letting go was a big thing for me, that and the fact that you can fit a lot into a day if you have to! Juggling childcare with work and family life was a real balance. The key thing that got me and my husband through was working as a team and establishing clear boundaries, delineating between work time and leisure time. It was helpful that everyone was in the same position, so we were all cognisant of each other's situations.

My children were 9 months and just under 4 when we went into lockdown, so they weren't really aware of what was going on externally. The beauty of that

was that I got chance to really connect with my inner child and leave all the doom scrolling behind. It was really good to get some proper family time together.

What is your favourite way to de-stress or take time away from work?

Back in January, I did a half marathon in aid of MediCinema, and while the timing wasn't great - I ended up having to do my training in the depths of winter, going for runs at 6am with a head-torch - it became my time in a house where I had no time or space. It was my zen time, the time I'd carved out for myself.

Where I live is in a town, but close to the countryside. One of my key runs is along the canal and you see herons and swans as you go along. Or I'll go through the woods and get to see birds of prey and all sorts of wildlife there. Connecting with nature is really key for me.

If you could spend 24 hours in any city in the world, where would you go, and how would you spend the time?

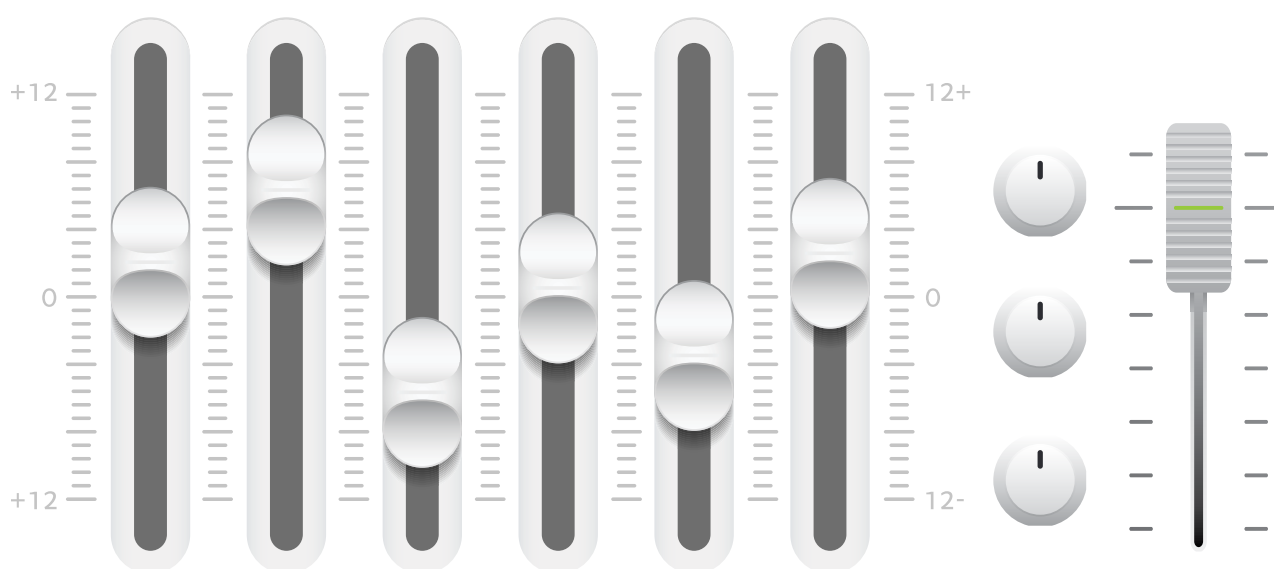
I love travelling and grew up all over the world. We moved every three years when I was a child and it's left a real love of travel in me and certainly made me the person I am today. If I could go anywhere at all right now I think I'd go somewhere like Istanbul. Somewhere I've not been before, which has a hugely rich cultural history. It's a place that for me represents a real coming together of lots of different cultures, and I think I'd just want to walk around the streets, pop into mosques and churches, travel along the river and explore the food. I've always wanted to go, and I'd love to just wander the streets without too much of a plan. **G**

GET IN TOUCH WITH KAT

✉ kat.mason@saxbam.com

DIALLING UP THE MIX

PERFECTING THE LEADERSHIP SKILLS



By **Jonathan Whymark**
Occupational Psychologist,
Saxton Bampfylde

The last two years have been incredibly challenging for most organisations, but none more so than for those operating in the not-for-profit sector. Organisations have had to adapt quickly to continue providing essential services and support as need has continued to accelerate. Across the board, leaders have worked tirelessly just to ensure their organisations are in a shape fit for the future, driven by a need to minimise impact to those they exist to help and support.

Over the duration of the pandemic, leaders have been challenged to the very limits of their capacity and have been forced to draw on previously untapped reserves.

There are several useful models of leadership that help to capture the essential behaviours associated with a high performing leader. The language may differ from one model to another, but the behaviours and qualities they capture are largely the same.

To be an effective leader, one needs to be able to demonstrate the following broad behaviours:



EFFECTIVE THINKER AND DECISION-MAKER

- An efficient information gatherer who keeps up to date with developments that impact on their organisation.
- Gathers information from a variety of sources, casting their net widely and enabling others to do likewise.
- Uses that information as the basis for informed decision-making.
- Demonstrates conceptual agility or the ability to review multiple viable options before reaching a conclusion.



INSPIRING AND INFLUENTIAL

- The public face of their organisation, leaders must inspire and influence staff and volunteers as well as external stakeholders, donors, and the media.
- Engenders confidence both in their own abilities and in those around them.
- Possesses the ability to communicate with a wide audience in a style that is relevant, informative, clear and honest.



INVOLVED AND ENGAGED

- Establishes a culture of openness, collaboration, and honesty linked to an expectation for mutual respect.
- Ensures people feel valued for expressing ideas and concerns.
- Actively promotes development, engaging with the workforce and fuelling organisational growth.
- Encourages cross-organisational collaborating, ideas sharing and interaction.



PROCESS-DRIVEN AND OUTCOME-FOCUSED

- Balances people-centric skills with the ability to get the job done.
- Enables objective delivery by identifying and removing barriers.
- Sets clear expectations that contribute to the overarching strategy of the organisation.
- Establishes systems and processes to support this, including planning for future-proofing.

Balancing the dials: getting the mix right

One way of visualising these behaviours is to think of a music producer's mixing desk: each behaviour is represented by one of the many dials. Depending on the situation, some dials will need to be turned down, whilst others may need turning up. If a leader is fixed in their views about how to lead, the organisation risks stagnating and becoming immobile and unable to react quickly to changes.

The ability of leaders to make quick and clear decisions and to bring those around them along on that journey are crucial factors in whether an organisation thrives or just survives. To use another metaphor, if the only tool in your toolbox is a hammer, every problem tends to look like a nail. The key is flexibility. Flexibility in how a leader adapts their behaviours, flexibility in how they help teams to develop, and flexibility in terms of how they engage with people. Rigid, mistrusting, directive styles of leadership are inclined to create problems in the new hybrid working environments.

Leaders who would score highly for conceptual agility, openness, honesty and enabling action are inclined to adapt relatively easily to new and diverse models of working and the ever-changing nature of the space in which they operate. For example, the adoption of more flexible ways of working brings challenges for leaders. Aside from the logistical issues, a movement away from a traditional command and control working environment is challenging for many.

The leaders who will succeed will be those who balance their passion for the organisation's aims and objectives with a genuine concern for those they work with. They will create an air of confidence, positivity and engagement that permeates through the organisational culture. They will embrace change as a permanent feature and will role-model openness, trust, humility, and transparency as well as a firm commitment to embracing diversity in all its forms.

For leaders to enhance their chances of success in the future, there are three key steps to follow:

Know yourself: reflect honestly on your strengths and weaknesses and invite feedback on what is successful and where improvements could be made.

Encourage reflection across senior teams: understand how your skills as a leadership team complement one another. Identify and potential gaps in skills or behaviours.

Model and communicate best practice behaviours: clearly set expectations and use to inform development initiatives such as individual coaching, team development and leadership development.

If you are interested to hear more about how we can work in partnership with you and your organisation, please get in touch with Jonathan in our Leadership Services team.

✉ leadership.services@saxbam.com



STEPPING IT UP

Saxton Bampfylde's
STEP programme

At Saxton Bampfylde, our mission is to change the world by changing the leaders in interesting and important organisations. We have always been passionate about creating a fairer and more representative society, and recognise the positive contribution we can make in Supporting, Transitioning, Elevating and Promoting inclusive and diverse leadership in the social impact sector and beyond.

Our STEP programme was founded with the ambition of leveraging the firm's unique expertise and networks to deliver a holistic coaching and development programme, designed to support leaders from under-represented groups. The programme particularly focuses on those operating (or recently operating) in a leadership position who will likely be considering significant career progression at executive and non-executive level.

Since the programme launched a year ago with a pilot cohort, it has paired a number of coaches and mentors with leaders looking for support with personal and professional development as they move towards executive or non-executive level roles. STEP was designed to build on existing skills and talents as individuals embark on the next stage of their career.

Following on from the success of the first cohort on the STEP programme, we are delighted to have reopened the programme for a second year. If you would be interested in the STEP programme – for yourself or your organisation – please get in touch. Email us at step@saxbam.com or visit our website at www.saxbam.com/step.

The STEP Programme is broken down into four core components



ASSESSMENT

Participants undertake psychometric assessments to give a clear and defined insight into natural strengths and areas for development.



COACHING

Across six coaching sessions, participants work with an experienced coach or mentor to develop their leadership skills, working through specific topics and priorities.



CONSULTANT GUIDANCE

Participant receives one-to-one access to Saxton Bampfylde's consulting team, working on mock interview situations, presentation technique and delivering advice and guidance.



NETWORKING

Participants gain exposure to a broad network of like-minded individuals from a diverse range of backgrounds.

STEP COACH INSIGHTS: RORY CAMPBELL

BOARD AND LEADERSHIP ADVISOR, AND
CO-FOUNDER OF NEW VANTAGE CONSULTING

What do you think is different about STEP? What prompted you to become involved?

STEP is confidently leaning into a pragmatic need: providing high quality development to the next generation of executive leaders from diverse backgrounds. It's doing more than just talking about the 'talent pipeline', it's helping it to flourish. Knowing the calibre, ethics and quality of Saxton Bampfylde gave me confidence that this is a programme delivered with belief and purpose. I want to play my part in creating more inclusive businesses – and that involves diverse and inclusive leadership.

What advice would you give people who are looking for a coach?

Be open to learning, welcome the support to think in a way that you may seldom have the opportunity to in your busy day-to-day working life. Expect to be stretched – not because the coach is stretching you, but because you're reaching even further and deeper into your potential.

It takes commitment and an appetite to grow, along with a willingness to put in the work. You might come to coaching looking for answers; you'll

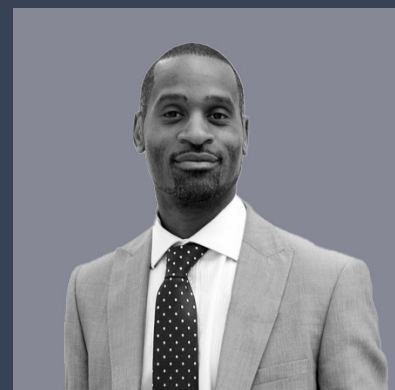
leave realising you are limitlessly resourceful and that you can surface the answers from within.

Can you describe a big change you have gone through or helped a client through?

I recently worked with a newly appointed CEO who had risen through the organisation in a blaze of glory and praise, only to find they struggled with the demands of the top job. We worked together to recalibrate their measures of success, reconnect their driving passion, elevate their inner sense of purpose, and to have the resolve when restructuring their executive team with vision and aspiration. I was deeply inspired by their leadership and courage.

What has the last year taught us about the need to have more diversity at the leadership level?

Through this last year, the nature and scale of inequality has been visible for all to see. We've seen that it pervades every aspect of society – well-being, community, work etc. Businesses have operated at the human scale, not the abstract, and reckoned with the powerful impact we can have. It's reminded us all, that our leadership is better for diversity, both to lead with inclusion by



design and to account for the many potential paths to recovery and shared growth.

What are the barriers to getting more minority ethnic individuals to a leadership level?

We are making progress; it's just glacially slow. Why? For two key reasons: 1) The seats are already occupied. It takes time for opportunities and minds to open. 2) Many organisations are compelled to act by legislation and governance, not by self-determined motivation.

To make faster and deeper progress, we need to elevate our diversity conversation, to explore how we can inspire authentic progress by establishing clearer links to organisations' purpose and be consistently demanding of accountability for outcomes.

KEY LEADERSHIP APPOINTMENTS

Saxton Bampfylde and its global partners advise many leading organisations around the world. We are delighted to share with you a selection of some of the roles that we have been privileged to work on recently across the Social Impact sector.



CHARLOTTE HILL
The Felix Project, CEO



ELAINE HINDAL
The British Nutrition Foundation, CEO



NATASHA CLAYTON
Blue Ventures, Managing Director



SARAH PUGH
Whizz-Kidz, CEO



HELEN ROWBOTHAM
Access Sport, Chief Executive



LAURA KERBY
Prostate Cancer UK, Chief Executive



ALISTAIR FERNIE
The Elders, Chief Executive



SHAUNA LEVEN
Twins Trust, CEO



MARIA NOVELL
Marie Curie, Chief Fundraising, Communications and Marketing Officer



ENRIQUE RESTOY
Hope for Justice, International Programme Director



CLAIRE KNIGHT
Heathrow Community Trust, CEO



PAUL TENNANT
Abbeyfield, Chief Executive Officer



If you would like to keep up to date with all of Saxton Bampfylde's latest appointments, visit our website at **www.saxbam.com/news** or follow us on **Twitter @saxtonbampfylde**.



DR RIMA MAKAREM
Sue Ryder, Chair



LT GEN SIR NICHOLAS POPE
COBSEO, Chair



NAZIR AFZAL
CSSA, Chair



DR ANUSHTA SIVANANTHAN
Samaritans, Trustee

DIABETES UK: CHAIR AND TRUSTEES



DR CAROL HOMDEN
Diabetes UK, Chair



PROF. LINDA BAULD
Diabetes UK, Trustee



ALEXANDRA LEWIS
Diabetes UK, Trustee



DR ASIYA YUNUS
Diabetes UK, Trustee



MICHAEL GIBBS
Diabetes UK, Trustee



CATH BIDDLE
Methodist Homes (MHA),
Trustee



DENISE SANDERSON
Methodist Homes (MHA),
Trustee

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St Mungo's, Executive
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St Mungo's, Executive
Director of Finance



TEDDY NYAHASHA
St Mungo's, Trustee



DARREN JOHNSON
St Mungo's, Trustee



STEPHEN SMITH
St Mungo's, Trustee

VIEW FROM THE RIVER: TEAM INSIGHT

VIDHU SOOD-NICHOLLS

PARTNER AND CONSULTANT

Meet **Vidhu Sood-Nicholls** - Saxton Bampfylde's new Consultant who has joined us in a multi-practice group role. Formerly Director of Fundraising at Teach First, Vidhu's multi-sector experience has spanned the commercial, not-for-profit and public sectors.

Vidhu has a passion for excellent people leadership and uncovering the best, if not always most obvious, talent and will utilise her 18 years' experience to support a range of different Saxton Bampfylde clients and organisations to do just that. We are delighted to introduce Vidhu as she shares her insights and experiences from three different career paths and highlights the common threads which bring them all together.



Past, Present and Future – can you give us a brief history of you and how you came to be at Saxton Bampfylde?

The reason I am here is a firm belief in equality and justice and a restless curiosity about why, reflecting on it these are themes that tie my career together. Growing up in Zambia, very early on in my childhood I had this sense that the world wasn't fair. I wanted to understand why and have a distinct memory of asking my mother that question when I was about eight or nine and getting an answer that I wasn't entirely satisfied with. She did say that it is within all of us to do something about it, and I think for me that was quite a defining moment.

I have a degree in law, spent time at the UN, taught in an inner-city school, worked in banking and then in a charity including in a senior fundraising role. And, now I am here at Saxton Bampfylde. As my career has progressed, I have become more acutely aware of the impact that the right leaders and leadership can make on an organisation. The reason I am here is because I am excited about the prospect of finding people who will accelerate the pace and impact of some of the most significant organisations, ultimately making society fairer.

With that broad portfolio of sectors in your career, which areas will you focus on at Saxton Bampfylde?

With my varied background, I am delighted that my focus is across many different areas, helping to identify interesting, innovative, and vibrant new leaders. Some of the areas I will be working with include: Social Impact; Schools; Higher Education; Arts and Culture; Commercial and supporting the Board practice.

I am looking forward to bringing my perspectives and experience to the team, and to making a difference in finding the leaders who will bring change and fresh perspectives to their organisations.

New to executive search, but certainly not new to leadership, how can your experience bring different perspective to candidates and clients?

I wouldn't describe myself as a fundraiser, but I lead a successful fundraising team; I wouldn't call myself a teacher, but I would like to think I changed a few lives along the way; I would never call myself a banker, but I really enjoyed working in the commercial world. I have had all those jobs, thoroughly enjoyed them and learned how to and equally how not to lead along the way. I think that does give me a different view of leadership, finding the things that have emboldened me and the things that have surprised me. I have also regularly asked who are the people who brought the best out in me and how do I bring the best out in people I meet and work with.

I like to think about what I can add. What do I offer that brings a new way of looking at something or someone's experience. I have always had a natural sense of curiosity, and I believe that is really important in this job. I don't believe in always appointing the obvious candidates. In my view it is important to listen and understand where an organisation is at a point in time and consider who is the best person to take that

organisation, its people and its customers or beneficiaries with them as they journey to the next point. I am keen to build and share my sense of curiosity and how that informs my perspective.

From your cross-sector perspective how can organisations be more inclusive? Are there those who are doing well and can be a lesson to others?

Most organisations do need to be doing much more to address under representation but the need for inclusivity goes much further, organisations need to approach both diversity and inclusivity thoughtfully and intentionally. Having a wide breadth of policies and plans to implement and measure their progress is a good place to start but I believe it has to come from the leaders. You can have inclusive teams and departments, even organisations, but if the person who fundamentally heads it all up isn't inclusive it doesn't matter what there is in place.

What in your view makes the best leader?

While I know and don't underestimate the importance of technical knowledge and skills, my belief is that these can be deepened and honed in a job. The values, behaviours and characteristics of leaders are much harder to learn. I was once given advice to hire for values and behaviors over technical skills; it is advice that has served me well.

Leadership at its very heart is about people. It is also about progress, and in leadership there is something about collectively lifting the world. I think it is about people who lead for the world rather than achieving the status of a leader. Fundamentally a good leader will help people thrive. Being kind is such an understated value. Kindness is being able to say well done, and giving feedback when things aren't going right. It is vital that leaders are able to articulate the direction of an organisation and keep people on that path. They also need to be able to be honest when people veer off the path and work to bring them back.

There is certainly an importance of timing and finding the right leader at the right moment in an organisation's life-cycle, which will not always remain constant nor the same person. That is the joy of my work now – working with clients to understand who is right for their organisation at this point in time and then being mildly obsessed with finding the person who is going to accelerate the pace and impact of the organisation.

The concept of leadership has definitely changed in my view. I think the organisation where a leader is put on a pedestal and as the face of an organisation has become quite outdated. People are looking for humility in their leaders. One of my work heroes talks about 'servant leadership' – that a leader is there to serve an organisation and to deliver its purpose and not to focus on themselves. I think I can get behind that sort of leader and it's the sort of leader I aspire to be.

Does cross-sector movement happen enough? Should more be done to encourage it?

In my experience I would say probably not. It does feel like a generational difference however, with more people of my generation

gaining a professional qualification early in their career and while they moved organisations, they wouldn't really move profession, or even sector, readily. However, this has been an evolution from previous generations where people didn't move organisation at all.

I do believe that future generations will think differently and there will be more movement – well I hope so – as I believe that it does bring interesting diversity of thought to organisations and sectors. At the end of the day people are people, many of the work pressures are similar and they all need to build an empathy with their colleagues and teams. The benefit of cross sector exposure is you see the similarities in organisations and you can build on those. Where things worked somewhere else you can ask how would it apply in this context – what would it need to look like if we wanted it to work in this setting.

To quote another one of my work heroes "We live in a world full of complex problems. These problems cross boundaries. Yet most leaders do not." That is where cross sector experience comes into its own.

What have you been most proud of in your professional career to date?


Genuinely, I am most proud to have had four different careers so far, and I reckon I have at least 15 years left to work so I am excited about what those will hold. I have achieved things in each of these roles of which I am proud but being able to move across sectors and build on what I have learned in my last job is something that makes me most full of pride.

Have you discovered anything new in lockdown?


I have developed my baking skills with my daughter. We make a mean brownie, but ensure they are made in small batches as it is just too tempting to eat them all!

On a slightly less sugary indulgence level, I have learned to meditate. I've practiced yoga for years but proper meditation eluded me as I wasn't able to be still long enough. However, without the commute to contend with during the earlier months of the pandemic I found I had more time to really learn the art and skill of meditation, and I love it. I don't have as much time for it now that we are moving to a more hybrid model of work, but I will keep it going as it has really helped me to be aware and present in everything I do.

With the choice – pop on a podcast or bury your nose in a book? And please share any good recommendations!

I love podcasts, and I listen to meditation ones regularly too, but for me it is always going to be a book. *A Little Life* by Hanya Yanagihara. I am a fan of a challenging subject matter – my favourites are those that have me in tears until two in the morning! 

GET IN TOUCH WITH VIDHU

 vidhu.ood-nicholls@saxbam.com

Saxton Bampfylde

OUR MISSION

We exist to change the world by changing leaders in interesting and important organisations. At the same time we aim to create an environment wherein all members of our community can grow to their fullest extent emotionally, intellectually and spiritually.

Saxton Bampfylde is an employee-owned company.

LONDON

9 Savoy Street
London
WC2E 7EG
+44 (0)20 7227 0800

EDINBURGH

46 Melville Street
Edinburgh
EH3 7HF
+44 (0)131 603 5700

www.saxbam.com

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