



# ANNUAL REPORT



MAKING HOLBROOKS A BETTER PLACE  
TO LIVE, WORK AND PLAY.

## 2022/2023

Holbrooks Community Care Association  
115 Holbrook Lane  
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Coventry  
CV6 4DE



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## **Chairman's foreword - Alderman Ann Lucas**



Since the lockdown Holbrooks Community Care Association has shifted priority and focussed more specifically on the alleviation of poverty. Whilst HCCA has always provided services targeting those most vulnerable, it became apparent after the pandemic there were far more people in the area struggling with rising costs of food and utilities whilst having a static income.

The centre was able to be flexible and adapt, listening to the difficulties of local residents and making sure they were cared for, bringing in significant resources, working in partnership with statutory organisations and providing much needed help.

The centre pioneered, along with its sister organisation Holbrooks Community Centre, the warm safe spaces initiative in the city, opening its doors offering a warm drink and a welcoming environment to all. HCCA's work was integral in the development of the Community Café and Social supermarket both of which have been welcomed by the community.

This year also saw the recruitment of three new staff members, and this is my opportunity to formally thank them and all HCCA staff and volunteers on behalf of the management committee. They work enthusiastically and professionally at all times, we are all extremely proud of them and their commitment to Holbrooks residents.

I feel extremely privileged to have been at the helm of this organisation for the last 17 years, and although I would like to remain a trustee, I now feel that I need to step back and hand the responsibility to someone else so I will be stepping down as Chair.

I thank you for all the support and friendship.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Ann Lucas', written in a cursive style.

**Our Aim is “Making Holbrooks a better place to live, learn, work and play” We continue to do this by:**

**Encouraging residents to access information, advice, services, training and support**

**To identify and target our services to those living in disadvantage**

**To work with and encourage new partnerships to benefit the services and work of the organisation**

**To encourage local residents’ personal development, in a supportive environment, through experience, training and volunteering.**

**To perform our role as an active member of the community to deliver identified services and projects.**

## **Part 1: Overview of the year**

### **Advice services**

Coventry Independent Advice Services continues to deliver a weekly face-to-face session, these are running smoothly delivering welfare benefit and debt advice appointments from the centre. The adviser, Lorelle, is based at HCCA from 9:30 AM to 4:30 PM every Tuesday. Over 240 local people have been supported in the past year resulting in almost 100k of increased income to attendees.



### **Holiday And Food Children’s Activities**

HCCA was successful in our bids for the HAF funding to deliver the following activities:-

#### **Easter Holidays:-**

Trip to the Bradford Science and Media Museum including a visit to the IMAX theatre

#### **Summer holidays:-** in August we delivered the following activities:-

Tuesday- Arts and Crafts – Tie dye and fabric art

Wednesday- Coach trips to Skegness, National History Museum, Southport, and Liverpool Museum.

Thursday: Alternate between Pottery – Delivered by Master potter Andy Wilson and Street Art - Delivered by renowned artist Michael Batchelor

Meals were given to all the children who attended classes, Urban Goodies facilitated food preparation sessions where each child created their own wraps and fruit skewers, and packed lunches were provided for the trips. Holbrooks Morrisons agreed to provide fruit for all the children attending the summer scheme for the five-week duration. All meals are provided and comply with the DFE standards.

In total 424 people took part in the activities of which 278 were children, and all families were from low-income families.

**City of Culture work:-** Friday 22<sup>nd</sup> April at the Unicorn Social Club HCCA hosted the Yukon HO! Comedy show. As all of the other shows delivered as part of the Theatre Next Door project were for children, the decision was taken to offer something for adults in the area. The evening was supported by staff from the Albany Theatre and on the evening over sixty people attended.

**Community Digital Skills Pathway:-** Good Things Foundation is working in the West Midlands delivering Digital Skills Pathway Projects, funded by the UK Government through the UK Community Renewal Fund. It aims to test a model of digital skills support in local communities in the North of Tyne, West Midlands, and Great Manchester.

HCCA was recruited as one of 30 organisations per area to develop and test scalable digital skills and support pathways working across the community sector and the FE/Adult Education sector. This work gave us valuable insight into the interventions that are required to join up community organisations, with adult learning providers and with the Further Education sector to engage those residents who are digitally excluded. In the summer, we will be working with an external evaluator to produce a detailed report highlighting key findings from these projects.

The project will run until June 2022 and aimed to :

- support 6,200 people across to overcome barriers to getting online
- provide over 3,000 devices and data packages for those residents experiencing digital poverty
- Support 2,000 people to access adult education to help them reach their potential and progress onto further learning

In each area, the Good Things Foundation will be working with Further Education partners who will work with our community partners to provide a diverse range of interventions that support that progression. Thanks to the support they receive, beneficiaries will be able to go online to access health, care, and other services, to have a voice in decisions that affect their communities and to connect with others to make a positive difference to the well-being of those taking part in the project.

From this HCCA was able to bring in a weekly digital drop-in session every Friday to support residents with all aspects of online activity. An example of how the digital skills drop-in supported people locally is attached at **Appendix 3**

### **Other activities**

**Library:-** Maureen Lapsa, from the library service at Coventry City Council, is still providing support for the library on a Thursday each week and things are slowly returning to normal and Rhyme time on a Thursday is proving very popular. Viru Kansara supports the library every Thursday and has been a great help.

**Food parcels:-** Food parcels were given out to families that come into the centre every Thursday between 10:00 AM and 2:00 PM. Donations gratefully received. On average supporting 12 families a week plus several elderly residents from the Everdon Estate. We also have regular visits from local primary school staff who collect items for families. This service ended once the Social Supermarket started in September and the community fridge was set up.

**Community Fridge at HCCA:-** In partnership with Urban Goodies CiC, HCCA started to host a Community Fridge in the centre. The community fridge holds many fresh donated food items for members of the community to take. The aim is to reduce food waste and to support those who need food in the community. Each item that goes in the fridge is registered by weight, as is food that is taken out. Since August we have distributed over 900 KG of food from being wasted and fed over 45 people from over 300 visits to the fridge.

**Community Activities:-** The centre celebrated the Queen's Diamond and had planned to hold a Jubilee Picnic in the Park, and applied for the licence to have music etc but the weather was so poor the activity shifted into the centre. The staff and volunteers improvised and held a picnic in the community room, a resident brought an accordion along and a sing song ensued. Games were played, the tombola and raffle were a success, and a good time was had by all.

**Bands in the park:-** Due to our partnership with City of Culture HCCA was able to support two bands as part of the Coventry City Council 'bands in the park Scheme' These were the Dene River Jazz band. We offered tea and cakes

**Holbrooks History Club:-** The Centre was successful in securing the Heritage Lottery Fund to initiate and facilitate the Holbrooks History Club. This project will leave a lasting legacy for the residents of Holbrooks one that will teach future generations about local history, bringing them into the community and giving them a sense of belonging. This project will incorporate anecdotal information and factual information giving a rounded and engaging narrative. This project will promote community cohesion which will in turn improve mental health and general wellbeing, the community will be at the heart of this project owning its content.

**Commonwealth Games:-** – The centre was lucky to be chosen to have a sporting mural painted on the rear of the building facing Holbrooks Park as a lasting Legacy for the games in Birmingham. The mural was painted by local lad and renowned artist Michael Batchelor.

**Environmental Support** – staff and volunteers at the centre have organized and participated in several litter pick in the area. Both scout groups, 13<sup>th</sup> and 10<sup>th</sup> joined in and over 40 bags of rubbish were collected. Coventry city council supplies the bags and pickers and collect the rubbish. Locals have commented on how much cleaner and tidier the park looks.

**Wandering Trees** – The centre partnered with the Coventry Tree wardens and hosted a park walk with local residents to talk about the beautiful specimen trees. The wardens have applied for funding to plant more trees in the park and local residents and HCA staff helped with that too.

HCCA continues to be the Human Resource centre and continues to give a management support service to HCA in respect to the Community Centre and HCCA chose to contract Peninsular HR to give extra support to new staff members.

**Coventry and District Credit Union:-** Their services have received the amount of recorded enquiries is 719 to date and have given 64 loans over the past 12 months. The credit union has continued to grow in membership, shares, and loans, due to a sensible and appropriate lending policy and sound financial education of our membership. They were successful in a funding Bid to AVIVA and received a £25K grant for an 18-month, project, this means they could employ a part-time worker and develop budgeting courses, it also means we can reach out to those groups who are most vulnerable in Holbrooks.

A case study of how CDCU supports its members is attached in Appendix 2.

Weekly 'surgery' for Holbrooks ward Councillor was conducted each Wednesday evening from 5-7 pm giving support to local residents on a range of issues.

**Our Trustees, volunteers, and paid staff have been active in all areas of the Organisation, ensuring we supported people in our community.**

Ann Lucas (Chair)	Tawakalitu Karimu
Joseph Clifford	Danielle Louise Garside
Debbie Jones	Bethany Freya Kitchener
Isabelle Osbourne	Michael Brendan Duggan

#### **Staff at HCCA during 2022/23.**

Rachel Lancaster – Management Coordinator – Part Time – Full year - Contractor

Emma Shiers – Funding Officer – Part Time - left in November 2022

Mark Graham – Community Development officer – Full time – started September 2022

Sue Murray – Volunteer Coordinator – Part-time – started September 2022

Michelle Williams - Project Support – Part-time - Full Year

#### **Volunteers at HCCA gave freely of their time to help support the delivery of services:**

Events and fundraising volunteers:-

Lawrie Womble-Lancaster	Kat Price	Ted Sutton
Meridith Womble-Lancaster	Garry Booth	
David Womble	Viru Kansara	

#### **General support and administration**

Ann Lucas	Rachel Lancaster	Maureen Lapsa	Susan Rylie
Mick Duggan	Dan Sabin	Malcolm Laydon	Viru Kansara
Tawakalitu Karimu			

### **Food delivery and food parcels**

TT Karimu	Michael Duggan	Lyn Rootham	Robin and Val Gloynes
Lynnette Kelly	Cllr Ed Ruane	Balvinder Dhanjal	

**A Special mention to all the other Holbrooks residents who helped donate money, personal hygiene items and food, collected prescriptions and generally were good neighbours to many in the community. Your efforts were very much appreciated.**

**During the last year, HCCA has worked with the following partners:**

#### **Coventry City Council**

Holbrook's Ward Councillors Rachel Lancaster and Joe Clifford

#### **Council Departments:**

Community Resilience Team	Parks, culture and leisure
City Development Directorate	Coventry City Councils Library Service
Community Development Team	#CovConnects

#### **Community Partners**

Cardinal Newman School	West Midlands Police
President Kennedy Secondary School	John Shelton Primary School
Holbrooks Community Centre	Feeding Coventry Network
Tesco - Arena	Morrisons – Holbrooks
Parkgate Primary School	Holbrooks Primary School

#### **Other Partnerships**

Coventry and District Credit Union	Coventry Independent Advice Services
Coventry Foodbank	Urban CIC
Gloria and Lil's at the Parkside Café	Evan's Cash and Carry
Purple Planet packaging	St Luke's Church
Papp's Café	Cannon Enterprise Ltd
Fairshare	

**A special mention should also be given to the support received from the Right Honourable Taiwo Owatemi, Member of Parliament for Coventry North West, who has helped to source funding donations, deliver parcels and given letters of support to the centre.**

## Finance

HCCA accounts are independently audited and a full statement of account can be found in Appendix 1. Detailed below is a breakdown of funds specifically awarded to support residents in Holbrooks over 2022/2023. The centre started the year with £112,634.00 in the bank a massive increase on the £66,000 the previous year and mainly due to the National Lottery funding. This is wholly due to the hard work of both Emma Shiers and Rachel Lancaster, who have spent many hours writing funding bids, and now the centre's finances are in a far healthier state. Total income for the year was £188,104.00

Grant income	
National Lottery	£79544.00
Heritage lottery	£10000.00
Heart of England	£2830.00
good things foundation	£3660.00
General charities	£4130.00
ESIF	£3950.00
Coventry City Council	£16717.00
City of Culture	£850.00
HAF	£23125.00
Amazon	£5.00
Feeding Coventry	£2000.00
Freemasons	£1928.00
Crowdfunding	£2184.00
	<b>£150923.00</b>

## The Future

The focus for the next year is to continue and build on the financial security of the organisation to ensure the sustainability of services past the current funding streams already in place. We will do this by:

- Constantly monitoring and reviewing the existing work to ensure that outcomes and targets are being met, therefore increasing opportunities for continuation funding
- Continue to work closely with the community to identify the ever-changing needs and ensure that services implemented by HCCA are still meeting those needs.
- Applying for a larger, longer-term grant, i.e... £500,000 over 5 years, to ensure that both the existing services are sustainable and continue after the existing funding period expires in September 2024, and to provide HCCA with opportunities for future Developments.
- Continuing to apply for smaller project-based funding to enable immediate needs to be met.
- Lead on and contribute to community cohesion and development projects, working with other local and national organisations to enable us to meet the needs of the community.
- Develop and increase the membership of the Management Committee focusing on diversity and skills held by current and future members, as required by the organisation.

It is an aspiration to further develop the building and garden area to expand services and look towards making the centre more financially stable, increasing the area of the garden and introducing a café to serve the park behind the centre which will generate income.

## Conclusion

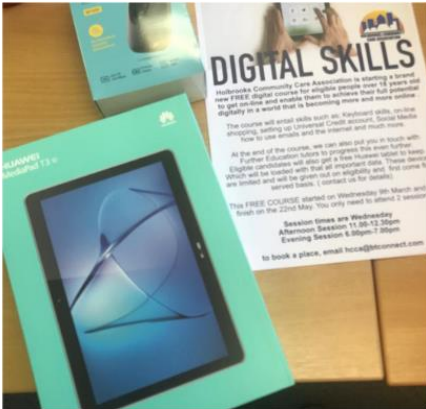
The centre continues to listen to its community, identifies gaps in services and aims to provide good quality services to meet the needs of its community.

It is a testament to the hard work of long-term volunteers and local residents, coordinating a response to support the community in very difficult times, and bringing local people together to make a real difference; they have made Holbrooks a better place to live, learn, work and Play.



# 2022-2023

A YEAR IN PICTURES





## Appendix 1

### Holbrooks Community Care Association

#### Receipts and Payments Account 1st April 2021 to 31st March 2023

##### RECEIPTS

Income including Grants, Funding, Donations, etc	188,104.79
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##### PAYMENTS

Wages (inc. NIC, Pension costs, Casual, etc)	10,478.80
Prof Services/Fees (inc. Management)	7,719.62
Cleaning and Maintenance	1,090.00
Rent, Rates & Services	280.54
Repairs, Renewals, Equipment ,etc	789.19
Printing, Postage, Stationery & Marketing	1,065.60
IT Costs	11,629.00
Insurance	1,745.52
Telephone & Broadband	353.60
Accountancy and Payroll	712.50
Utilities	4,238.33
Bank Commission & Charges	91.56
Misc. (inc. Travel, Food, HAF, Lottery, etc)	42,348.98
Restricted Funds	59,696.96
	<u>142,240.20</u>

##### EXCESS OF RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)

45,864.59

### Holbrooks Community Care Association

#### Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023

##### ACCUMULATED FUND

Brought Forward	66,972.63
Excess of Receipts / (Payments)	<u>45,864.59</u>
	<u>112,837.22</u>

Represented by:-

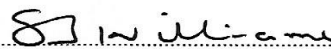
##### CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at Bank	112,634.48
Cash in Hand	202.74
	<u>112,837.22</u>

Prepared from the books, records, and information supplied and certified to be in accordance therewith.

Note Please note Cash at Bank of £112,634.48, £93,715.75 is Restricted Funds

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P J WILLIAMS & CO

June 2023

## **Appendix 2**

Suzy presented at the Credit Union in June 2022; she was looking for an instant loan.

When we began to speak with Suzy, we established she already had an account with us – it had been set up some years ago when she was a child, we discussed re-activating the account and she agreed.

We explained our Credit Union had no means of offering instant access to cash and that any potential borrower is required to save for 13 weeks.

Suzy accepted this but there was something about her demeanour that bothered us. We then engaged in a casual conversation with her. She seemed timid, anxious, and close to tears when we began talking. We explained anything said to us is confidential and if anything was bothering her, we may be able to help.

Suzy confided she was in debt and could see no way out of it. We told her not to worry and asked her what she felt was her most pressing debt she said Energy. Suzy showed us a bill for £18K.

We then set time aside and listed all her issues and gathered information from her. We discovered she had mental health issues, severe anxiety, and borderline personality disorder. She had overclaimed benefits (failing to update the DWP), she had housing benefits and council tax benefit arrears (failing to update the City Council), water arrears and energy arrears.

Suzy had fallen off the radar during covid – losing contact with family and then getting to a stage where she rejected family interventions.

We thought the best course of action was to refer her to a debt councillor, set her up with a basic bank account instead of her post office account (Suzy was going the cash point on benefits day and removing all the cash) and encourage her to visit her GP, she agreed but asked if one of us could support her with all this we agreed.

The debt councillor rang Suzy, we were present for the first call and all subsequent calls thereafter. Suzy would sometimes look bewildered so we would stop the consultation and explain the situation or ask for clarification – we included 2 agencies in advice for Suzy. Citizens Advice and Coventry Independent Advice one dealt with debt the other dealt with the benefits. We emailed and kept records of correspondence for Suzy and a credit union worker was present at all meetings. We chased Suzy for correspondence, meter readings and general updates.

Suzy's GP referred her to the mental health unit and a volunteer took her to her appointments and waited to take her home, she has now had a medication review and some counselling and in January 2023 she began attending the hospital on her own.

Regarding the debt the Energy bill was reduced to £1K, the water bill is now in receipt of a Severn Trent trust fund payment, the DWP have adjusted the benefits – so Suzy is in receipt of her correct entitlements. The council tax and housing benefit has at this time not been escalated so the debt councillor is hoping to negotiate this in 9 weeks. A Debt Relief Order (DRO) has been prepared for all outstanding overpayments and the energy – the fee for the DRO has been paid by a local charity.

Going forward the credit union has helped Suzy with a budget and a basic bank account, we have helped set up standing order payments, so Suzy pays her bills and does not incur further debt.

### **Conclusion**

All of Suzy's debt was "accidental" She thought the energy was being paid from benefits – this has been set up in a previous property, and she thought this would follow on to her new property. The energy bills were arriving in the previous tenant's name and Suzy had returned the bills to sender. The energy company never visited the property they just let the bill accrue for 7 years – then decided to send it for collection alerting Suzy to the problem.

Regarding the benefit overpayments Suzy thought when the children left education at 18 it would stop automatically. The housing benefit and council tax, concern non dependants again Suzy thought this would automatically cease when the children reached 18.

Suzy has started to build relationships with her family much to their relief.

Suzy is one of those people who all too frequently falls through the net. She was signposted to various places by agencies but never acted on it – that is why we refer so the onus is on the agency to contact the client. She felt alone and overwhelmed – we made her feel included – she was encouraged to take control of her situation and included in every decision about her future.

Suzy has agreed her story can be used but would like to say the following. “The credit union have changed my life I can function again thanks to the correct medication. I used to dread getting up in the morning and I was on the verge of doing something silly when I approached the credit union – I literally has nothing to live for, it just goes to show there are people who care about me and want me to have a good life.

### **Appendix 3**

Clive is a 60-year-old male who has basic digital skills learned through the online digital skills training run via Holbrooks Community Care Association in the summer of 2022. While he learned the basics, he felt he needed a refresher and an increase in his existing skills.

He reported that he found the tutor extremely good, and he felt that she broke down things he felt were difficult enabling him to fully understand the content of the course, especially the internet safety, which he always found confusing to understand how he could tell whether a website was safe or not.

Clive now feels a lot more confident using the internet and feels safer now he has a better understanding of what sites are safe to use and what is not.

Clive said:

“Having an actual person has been a godsend for me. While I can manage, often with a struggle, she made everything so clear and easy to understand. With my illness, I find internet shopping a real lifeline for me, but I am always worried about where is safe to use my bank details. I now feel more confident in doing so and can’t wait to learn more in the future. I would love to learn about using Word and excel.”



Registered Charity no: 1059903

**Holbrooks Community Care Association**

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