

# Chairperson's Report

## September 2023



### 1. Introduction

I am pleased to present the Annual Chairperson's Report for the NCRA for the year September 2022 to September 2023.

Ordinarily this report would have covered the period from 02 June 2022, the date of the last AGM, however, as I was elected at a Special General Meeting (SGM) on 26 September 2022 (following the resignation of the previous Chair, Andrew Black) I am unable to report on that period personally as I was not in post.

At a meeting on 22 May 2023 the Committee also agreed to delay the 2023 AGM until September to allow time for a number of actions to be progressed.

I genuinely can't believe how quickly the year has gone since being elected as Chair. Your involvement, whether as a member, volunteer, or supporter, has been instrumental in our journey over the last 12-months. This update serves not only as a reflection of the past year's endeavours but also as an invitation to engage in our future plans.

Thank you for your continued commitment to the NCRA. I look forward to another year of collective growth and community impact.

### 2. Aim of the report

This report aims to offer a transparent and comprehensive overview of our activities, financial performance, achievements, and challenges during this period, as well as a brief roadmap for the months ahead.

### 3. Committee Changes

At the SGM, the committee accepted Andrew Black's resignation dated 08 September 2022.

The charity elected myself as Chair. No other changes were made to the Honorary Committee Members (Carrie Rutter as Deputy Chair, Laura Parry-Jones as Secretary, Jeff Davies as Treasurer, Paul Rutter as Maintenance).

Christine Sutton was elected as Community Liaison (a new role), however, Christine felt that she could not dedicate the time she wanted to the role and she chose not to accept the position. We were delighted that Christine wanted to stay on as a member. The role of Community Liaison was never reappointed.

As advised by Wem Rural Parish Council, and in line with our Constitution dated 05 January 2000, the charity also appointed additional members at the SGM. Those that volunteered and were elected were: Anne Lokier, Caroline Lay, Cayley Lay, Christine Sutton, Gareth Lay, John Lay, Rebecca Hanbury, Matt Brooksbank.

In November 2022, having not been involved in previous NCRA meetings, it was confirmed that Ben Crompton would represent Newtown School. He holds the only unique ex-officio member's role for the charity, meaning he serves the charity by virtue of his position as Headteacher.

The remaining positions are held by those appointed by the following organisations (again as per the Constitution) and were confirmed as:

The Parochial Church Council of King Charles the Martyr Newtown – Anne Lokier

The Governing Body of Newtown C of E Primary School – Pete Slack

Wem Rural Parish Council – Julia Goode

The Friends of Newtown C of E Primary School – Hayley Wilson

*(Newtown Millennium Committee as listed in the constitution is no longer in existence)*

All of the above organisations are now regular attendees of the NCRA committee meetings, either by those individuals listed above or another representative.

On 22 February 2023, our Secretary, Laura Parry-Jones sadly had to resign due to personal circumstances. Her position remained vacant for a period of time in case she was able to return. However, sadly that was not possible and we have tried to seek a new secretary by word-of-mouth and more recently by formal advertisement. Thank you to everyone who has shared the advert, including **Ben Crompton** and **Hayley Wilson** via the school network. We hope to be able to fill this position soon. Thank you also to **Carrie Rutter** and **Cayley Lay** who have stepped in to diligently take minutes at our last two meetings on 22 May and 03 July 2023.

#### **4. Challenges**

I think it's fair to say that this has been a tough year for the charity.

A number of matters had arisen prior to my election at the SGM that had caused great concern to the committee members in post at the time, and subsequently to members of the local community, which included the potential sale of the NCRA playing field to fund the car park extension works.

As a result of numerous matters coming to light, including conversations people had been unaware of, there was a lot of distrust and friction caused between members of the committee, (which included the school), Wem Rural Parish Council and the wider community.

The majority of this friction was centred around the project to extend the car park and fencing requirements. Whilst it is accepted there was a need to resolve the parking on the road through the village at school pick up and drop off times, and to ensure a safe environment, the project failed to secure sufficient funds to reach completion and matters around school fencing were not widely discussed and agreed. Come September 2022, the charity was in debt with no guaranteed funds or income to sustain it. (Further overview is provided under the Finance section).

As a result of various things that happened, our social media engagement via Facebook had to be reconsidered following negativity that was not helpful in trying to move the charity forwards. As such, the decision was taken to remove the ability for comments on posts to be made to protect the mental health and wellbeing of all involved.

We also faced criticism for not communicating clearly enough about the new fencing erected to reinstate the NCRA community garden and the Honorary Committee Members accepted this could have been much better in the circumstances. This is also noted later in this update.

It takes time to build trust, but very little time to break it as we have discovered. Lessons have been learned, and as we complete this last 12-months I personally feel that relationships have slowly started to be rebuilt within the committee and within the community as a whole. Thank you to everyone that has truly supported us through these challenging times and worked to rebuild relationships – it's not been easy – but I am hopeful, over time, things will get better. You have enabled a lifeline for this beautiful little rural charity to grow, develop and continue.

## **5. Achievements**

The purpose of this document is twofold: to provide transparency to our stakeholders and to celebrate the collective accomplishments that you have all contributed to. Whether you are a member, a volunteer, or a supporter, your role in the NCRA's journey is invaluable, and this report is a testament to the incredible work we have achieved together.

As you read through the following pages, I invite you to reflect on the milestones we've reached and to envision the exciting possibilities that lie ahead. Together, we will continue to uphold the values and mission that are the cornerstone of the NCRA, enriching the lives of those in our community.

### **a. Governance**

Following Andrew Black's resignation, I had hoped to receive a full handover as promised at the SGM. However, this was not forthcoming and therefore there was a lot of work to dissect and understand the charity and how it had been run in the past. On a positive note, this allowed a review of the charities governance.

#### ☐ **Constitution**

When I was appointed as Chair, the charity had been operating under a Constitution bought in by the previous Chair dated 14 July 2020. However, it soon became apparent through my own conversations with the Charity Commission that this in fact was void as due process had not been correctly followed at the time to update it and it had never been reported to, or agreed by, the Charity Commission. As such, we reverted back to the original Constitution dated 05 January 2000 as this is the only one that is recognised by the Charity Commission.

Further work was carried out and given how dated the Constitution is (in either its original or briefly revised form) it needs a complete update. We agreed as a management committee that we would transition to a CIO – Charitable Incorporated Organisation. Not only would this allow us to bring our Constitution up to date and bring the charity in line with more modern structures, it will also reduce the personal liability of the trustees as it is more akin to a limited company type structure. Unfortunately, despite best intentions, it has not been possible to advance this work as quickly as we had hoped given the time it has taken to work through everything else that has been done, and the fact we have been operating with a vacancy for Secretary. As we go into the next 12-months, this is a key priority for us.

#### □ **Paperwork**

The NCRA has a large box of files that has been diligently passed from Chair to Chair. In that time, this box has accrued a lot of paperwork and history, especially from 2000 – 2020, but with little attention being paid to it in terms of preserving this legacy information and ensuring it is appropriately filed. The honorary committee members also felt that there was a lot to learn from how previous Trustees had managed the charity. Therefore, myself, the Deputy Chair, Secretary, and Treasurer dedicated time to start to re-file all of this information. Lever arch files for each topic area – such as finance, minutes, health and safety, charity commission (etc) – have been created and a good start has been made to refile everything in date order. Whilst this has been a very time consuming task, it has also been critical in understanding the history of the NCRA – and also finding key information to make current decisions. This piece of work is ongoing and will be completed as time allows.

#### □ **Going Digital**

We were successful in our application for a Google Non-Profit account – which has the same benefits as a Google business workspace account but is free. This meant we have been able to move all of the NCRA computer files/documents to a central workspace that all of the Honorary Committee members are able to access. Prior to my appointment as chair, there had been no central digital workspace. This meant it was incredibly difficult to locate documents and establish what did/didn't exist. Not only has this allowed the charity to be better organised and more efficient, it has also put us in a better position to be compliant with the Data Protection Act and UK GDPR.

#### □ **NCVO – National Council for Voluntary Organisations**

The NCRA became a member of the NCVO (which was free of charge given our size). This has been a fabulous resource (as recommended by The Charity Commission) and we were able to use its resources to support the drafting of our forms & policies.

THE NCVO also provides free trustee training and the Honorary Committee members completed various courses. We also encouraged all NCRA trustees to make use of this resource.

#### □ **Trustee Information Pack**

Over the years, the basics have fallen behind in terms of ensuring that the charity is on top of its governance. Upon undertaking a comprehensive review we were required to start from the ground up. None of the required trustee checks appear to ever have been carried out. As such I created a new trustee pack that included a welcome letter explaining the purpose of the NCRA, the Constitution, the duties of a trustee (including a role description), training that is available and various mandatory declaration forms that allow us to carry out the required checks before we appoint a trustee. We also put in place a Data Protection Policy so that we are compliant with the Data Protection Act (2018) and UK GDPR, and a Conflict of Interest policy and adjoining declaration form. Again, this took a significant amount of time but has ensured that we are in a much better position in being on the road to compliance from a Charity Commission perspective.

□ **Charity Commission**

The Charity Commission has been incredibly helpful over the last year, although as I am sure everyone will appreciate, their advice can only go so far given their role as a regulator. We are aware we still need to update all trustees on the Charity Commission website – however, as a minimum we have ensured that since the end of 2023 that all of the honorary committee members (who are responsible for all the day-to-day activities) have been registered as trustees – prior to my appointment to the role, this was only the Chair and the Deputy Chair. We will complete this exercise – along with all the other ongoing governance that we have to get through – including updating our CIO – as time allows us to. However, I am sure you will agree that in 12-months we have come an enormously long way to the position we were in before.

□ **HM Land Registry**

The land owned by the NCRA is currently held in trust by the trustees. At this moment in time, the Land Registry has the trustees recorded as the original NCRA trustees from 2001. To update this, we need to provide the full trustee history (from 2001 to present day). As we completed the filing exercise, we have been able to identify some of this list but we are still mindful this is an exercise we would like to complete. I was also able to track down the original solicitor who completed the purchase on behalf of the NCRA and he has offered to act pro-bono on our behalf to complete this registration with the Land Registry – which is wonderful news! We would like to complete this task alongside the transition to moving to a CIO.

□ **Site Survey**

In April 2023 Shropshire County Council undertook a periodic land survey of the school. As the school uses the NCRA playing field a survey of the land owned by the NCRA is also included in this survey and Ben Crompton shared this file with us on 23 May 2023. As such, we now have an up-to-date survey that defines the boundaries of the NCRA land and clearly marks the playing field, community garden, playpark and car park. This is a helpful file for the NCRA in terms of having an accurate site survey and keeps our records current.

**b. Activities**

**Barking of Tree Beds**

One of the first activities undertaken in this year was to tidy up the two large tree beds in the car park that looked a bit sorry for themselves. After weeding the area, I covered it with weed suppressor and John Lay kindly donated and delivered bark chippings to cover both areas. This was a great job that made the area look much softer and welcoming. Thanks to **John Lay** for donating and helping with the bark chippings.

**Autumn Walk**

This was a lovely opportunity for people to come together for an autumn walk in the local area, and we are considering repeating it this year.

**Meeting with the Church**

In taking up my position of Chair, I met with Rev. Adam Clayton and it was agreed following this meeting that **Anne Lokier** would act as trustee to represent the Church. On 24 November

2022, **Laura Parry-Jones** and **Carrie Rutter** met with Shirley Clorley and Margaret Fox to offer help and support with the annual Christingle.

### **Tornado Clear Up**

On 24 November we also got hit by a Tornado! Sadly some of our trees in the car park were damaged. **Matt Brooksbank** and myself undertook a tidy-up to clear the debris.

### **Winter tidy up**

On 02 January, I was joined by a number of volunteers as we had a really good winter tidy-up of the car park and surrounding areas. Collecting leaves, clearing the gullies, unblocking the drains and litter picking were just some of the activities we undertook to freshen the area up. Paul Rutter was also able to fix one of our lighting bollards for us and did some chainsaw work. Thanks to **Carrie Rutter, Paul Rutter, Jeff Davies** and **Laura Parry-Jones**.

### **Thanking the NFU**

In January 2023 Carrie Rutter and I met with representatives of the Wem Branch of the NFU, who had donated over £6,000 in July 2022, to show them the projects that their donation had contributed towards in the previous year. We also took some photographs – with a giant cheque - so that they could share this on their social media and in their marketing.

### **Ramp from car park to field**

With the high kerbs in the carpark, it was very difficult to access the playing field and community garden for maintenance purposes (such as grass/hedge cutting). The school had also requested access for a fire engine to attend their school fête. In June, **Andrew Kirk** and myself dropped a number of kerbs to create an access point and Andrew was able to create a ramp up from the car park to the garden using road plannings donated by **John Lay**. **Paul Rutter** then added the finishing touches taking the edges off the kerbs to make it safer and more aesthetically pleasing. We are now able to access the garden and playing field more easily to carry out our maintenance works.

### **Community Garden**

Over the Easter holidays, a small army of volunteers put down their Easter Eggs and picked up their tools to help reinstate the community garden. This involved the erection of new post and rail with stock fencing and the planting of a hedge along the fence. Thank you to everyone that worked so hard on such a professional finish - **Paul Rutter, Matt Brooksbank, Anne Lokier, Mark Lokier, Jeff Davies** and **Laura Parry-Jones**. Thank you also to Mark Lokier for the use of his tractor and fencing equipment too.

This project was agreed in principal at our meeting in January, however, it is accepted that this was not communicated well enough at the time and therefore the erection of the fence caused friction – particularly with some school parents. This was really disappointing as this was never intended to be the case. The abuse that was subsequently received by committee members, and a local business, on social media and via email caused a great deal of distress and mental anguish. As Chair, I can only apologise again for the lack of communication during this time. Now that subsequent works have taken place, it has been really heart-warming to hear all the positive feedback over the last few weeks about how much nicer the area is and how it has all come together. Thank you to everyone for sticking with the vision and riding the wave on this. It wasn't easy and I take that on board.

## Community Consultation

On the evening of 19 April 2023 a community meeting was held and open to anyone to attend following the work on the new garden. The meeting was really well attended, predominantly by locals from the Newtown area, and it was great to be able to talk about the plans for the area and receive feedback too.

A general discussion took place on the work that had been carried and for ideas and suggestions going forward. There was a brief overview given in respect to the charities financial status and the debt that the charity was in following the works in the park – which residents hadn't been aware of. Residents put forward their concerns about the car park surface and their objections to it being a Tarmac surface, as such it was requested the charity consider instead a more sustainable surface in keeping with a rural area. Paul Stevens – who had previously lived in Newtown – asked if it would be possible to sponsor a tree for the garden in memory of his mum – this was felt to be a great idea and one that we have taken forward for others to do too. Residents recognised the efforts of the NCRA and what was trying to be achieved especially as those less mobile residents who walk to the area now have somewhere to sit in the garden.

## Meeting with the School

On 15 June 2023, Carrie Rutter, Ben Crompton, Hayley Wilson and myself got together to discuss how we could move forward and find a way to communicate around the activities of the NCRA. From this, a newsletter was created (see below).

## Newsletter

In July we produced a detailed newsletter to update all members of the community. The purpose of the update was to inform everyone about the charity, what we did, the projects we had completed and the projects we were working on. It was also to inform people about the costs of running the charity and keeping the playpark open. I was joined by **Anne Lokier** to deliver these too all Newtown/Wolverley residents. A copy of the newsletter, updated to account for works over the summer, was also posted on our Facebook page and sent to all parents/carers at the school at the start of the new term in September. Thank you to **Ben Crompton** for enabling this and to **Rebecca Hanbury** for printing the newsletters for distribution to residents.

## Path

Over the summer, the path around the playpark (that joins the new path to the school) was completed. It was agreed with the school that this would be covered under works being carried out by a contractor who would be on site doing works for the school during the summer holidays.

## Playpark gate

Once the new path was finished, we were able to get on and move the entrance gate to the playpark to the opposite side. This meant that access and egress was no longer directly from/to the car park. Instead, access is now from the path that runs along the park by the community garden. This has made the area so much safer. It also allows for visitors to enjoy both the playpark and community garden at the same time. With thanks to **Paul Rutter** and **Jeff Davies** for making this happen.

### **All weather area**

On Sunday 17 September I was joined by volunteers to put in the new all-weather section of the community garden. The purpose of this area was to allow the park and garden to be enjoyed all year round and allow people a place to sit and picnic with friends and family when they visit. This new gravelled area is situated outside the new entrance to the playpark and includes two new wooden picnic benches. In addition to laying the new surface, we also created two large garden beds with reclaimed railway sleepers that were kindly donated by the Lokiers. These beds will be used for our new edible garden. We have had wonderful feedback on the area and it has been a delight to see it being used already. Thank you to **Paul Rutter, Matt Brooksbank, Anne Lokier** and **Jeff Davies**. Thanks also to **Andrew Kirk** and **Mark Lokier** for the use of their machinery too.

### **Grass Cutting**

Our new community garden is looking great and I would like to thank **Matt Brooksbank** and **Phil Harvey** who have kept on top of the grass cutting over the summer and continue to do so. Thanks also to Matt for cutting the grass on the playing field too.

### **Weeding**

Many thanks to everyone who has taken time to undertake weeding on the NCRA grounds. This is one of those forever ongoing tasks. Particular thanks to **Christine Sutton** and **Rebecca Hanbury** for their recent efforts.

## **6. Fundraising**

### **Christmas Eve 2022**

On Christmas Eve Carrie Rutter organised a wonderful time with Brass Buttons brass band in the Church with sing-a-long carols. Afterwards, at the school creative studio, mince pies and mulled wine were enjoyed, with children partaking in craft activities. After the church's Christingle service, **Jeff Davies** kindly arranged for the Rotary Club to bring Santa round on his sleigh. This was a lovely festive event and overall raised **£62.50** for the charity. With thanks to **Laura Parry-Jones** and **Anne Lokier** for donating the mince pies and mulled wine, **Carrie Rutter** for organising the Brass Buttons and children's crafting activities and **Ben Crompton** for allowing the NCRA to use the creative studio at the school, and **Rebecca Hanbury** for opening the creative studio up for us.

### **Easter Raffle 2023**

In April 2023, **Caroline Lay** put together and donated a wonderful raffle prize – an Easter bunny glass jar filled with an array of chocolates. Unsurprisingly, this was a very popular raffle that a lot of people wanted to win and it raised **£453** for the charity. With thanks to Caroline and also **Anne Lokier** who both stood in the car park on a number of wet afternoons to sell tickets after school.

### **Lottery**

In the year September 2022 to September 2023, the lottery raised **£168** (after winnings were deducted).



During the charity's governance review, the chair observed that the operation of the "100 Club" did not comply with the Gambling Commission's rules for such clubs. Its functioning resembled a lottery. Consequently, to avoid confusion, the name of the "100 Club" had to be changed and is now known as the NCRA lottery.

Furthermore, the application form and the rules failed to cover essential basics, such as the NCRA's registered charity number, how the money raised would be split (profit versus prize fund), the chances of winning and UK GDPR provisions – to name but a few. The authorised officer named on the rules was also not a Trustee of the charity. The application form was redesigned and the rules were updated to ensure compliance with the Gambling Commission and our Small Society Lottery Licence (issued by Shropshire Council).

We have always held a Lottery Licence for running the '100 Club' and this was renewed for a further 12-months in January 2023, and continues to cover the Lottery as it now stands.

Previously, the 100 Club had run for 12-months from September each year. This only allowed the charity to sell tickets in September and not at any other times of the year. It was felt that this was restrictive in respect of being able to raise vital funds throughout the year and gain new membership. It was agreed on 22 May 2023 that tickets would be sold throughout the year and each ticket would be valid for 12 consecutive monthly draws.

The lottery was relaunched on 18 September 2023. Thank you to **Christine Sutton** who volunteered to step forward to lead on the running of it.

Prior to its launch, it was decided to increase the amount per ticket from £12 to £15 and it was still felt that the price represented good value for money as each ticket is still valid for 12 draws. If 50 tickets are sold, the annual income generated will be £750. Once the annual prize fund of £180 is deducted this leaves us with a profit of £570 per annum. This equates to around 25% of the annual costs needed to keep the playpark open – so the more tickets we can sell the better!

### Charity Collection Boxes

The NCRA has a number of charity boxes located in businesses around Wem. With grateful thanks to those businesses and their customers, we have raised **£302.88** over the last 12-months. We are due to undertake another collection shortly and it is hoped that this amount will steadily continue to increase. Thank you to **Carrie Rutter** and **Anne Lokier** who have supported me in the collections and counting of the monies. We also created Thank You certificates to present to each business to show our appreciation and most importantly let them know how much has been raised in their store. Thank you to **Cayley Lay** who helped to distribute these.

### Wonderful.Org

We have now been approved by Wonderful.Org to use their platform for donations. Wonderful Organisation doesn't charge any fees or generate profit from charity fundraising like many other platforms (such as Just Giving). It is a non-profit organisation funded by philanthropic businesses. As a result, we are now able to accept online donations with absolutely no cost to the charity and 100% of the donation being received from the donor. Over the coming weeks we will start exploring how we can make best use of this resource – especially through the use of QR codes which could be used on our signage to encourage donations for example.

Individuals, or groups, will also be able to set up a fundraising page on behalf of the charity if they want to do a sponsored event for example. More news to follow soon.

## **7. Financial Overview**

This report provides an overview of the narrative in respect to our financial situation. Further financial detail is available in the Treasurer's report.

Upon taking on the position of Chair the financial position of the charity has been a concern. Had it not been for a significant private donation and the awarding of a grant then the charity would have ended our 2022-23 financial year in debt. This debt being due to overspend on the car park extension where funds had not been secured in advance of spending. For the year ending 2023, our income was £30,861 and our expenditure was £34,184.

### **Independent Audit of Accounts**

In July 2023 an independent Chartered Account was appointed to review our year end 2023 accounts. This is a requirement of the Charity Commission when our income exceeds £25,000 in a financial year. This was the case for our financial year 2022-23 due to works on the car park extension.

The review is still to be formally finalised and initial recommendations will be presented at the AGM on Wednesday 27 September 2023.

### **Monetary Donations**

In addition to the fundraising, we were very fortunate to receive two significant individual donations and a donation from local business **SciQuip**.

The donations received amounted to £4,295. At the donors' request, the monies were ringfenced to sustainable activities, the community garden and playpark. As such, the donations have allowed us to reinstate the community garden and maintain the play park (see Activities section above). We are so very grateful to have received these donations to be able to complete the works we wanted to do this year. Without this investment, we would not have been able to make such progress. Special thanks to SciQuip and the individual donors.

### **Grant Applications**

At the point of taking up the position of Chair, there were six grant applications in progress. Unfortunately, only two applications were successful – Connexus and the Bernard Sunley Foundation.

We were awarded £1,500 from **Connexus** in November 2022 after submitting further information to support our application. This grant application had been submitted by the previous chair for the provision of metal fencing, car park surfacing, lighting, landscaping, trees.

The grant from the **Bernard Sunley Foundation** came with strict criteria. The application was for car park surfacing and metal fencing and was for £5,000. This is valid for 2-years from the date of outcome (03 October 2022) and we have to have all outstanding funds in place to be able to draw down on this grant. It could be unlikely that we are able to take advantage of this grant given that we have no requirement for metal fencing, and the estimated cost to complete

the car park is in excess of £20,000. I am keen to explore how we may be able to consider options that mean we don't lose this grant.

In December 2022, we applied for a grant from **Wem Rural Parish Council** towards lighting. With many thanks to WRPC, we were awarded £500 on 30 June 2023. This will be used for solar lighting on the path and in the car park area and it is hoped this can be done prior to dark nights setting in.

In January 2023, we applied to the Tesco Community Fund for funds towards an edible garden. We were very grateful to **Tesco Whitchurch** for selecting us to be a part of their instore vote. At the end of the vote we were awarded £500 towards an edible garden. We hope to be able to put this towards some fruit trees in the garden and also edible produce/herbs in the new planted sleeper beds.

We are keen to source other grant opportunities, however, it is important that we are clear as to what our priorities are so that we chose the right ones and maximise a successful outcome.

### **Frank Vernon Plant**

In December 2022, **Caroline Lay** and I met with Frank Vernon to discuss the outstanding amount owed to Frank (£2,362.50) following works he carried out on the car park. Frank very kindly agreed that he was willing for this amount to be paid off in instalments as and when the charity could afford it. It was agreed at the meeting on 22 May 2023 that we would offer to pay £1,000. Frank was delighted by this offer and this payment is in the process of being made to Frank. We are conscious that there is still an outstanding amount of £1,362.50 which the charity has as a debt in its accounts. A plan will need to be discussed as to how we raise this money in order to be able to pay this off.

### **Barclays Bank**

We have had a really difficult year with our banking provider, Barclays. Our Treasurer, Jeff Davies, has spent many hours on hold to them to try to resolve issues (which still includes us not being able to access statements for example), and paperwork has been completed by us numerous times. This has prevented us from updating our banking mandates in a timely manner which has caused issues in terms of being able to have enough people approved to access our banking. This has now increased to three again (after Laura Parry-Jones resigned). Those currently authorised to access the bank are Jeff Davies (Treasurer), Carrie Rutter (Deputy Chair) and myself as Chair - however, due to further reviews on the account taking place again a card and card reader has yet been sent out to me so I am still unable to access the account.

### **Gift Aid**

In December 2022, HMRC confirmed that we were recognised for Gift Aid. Further work still needs to be carried out on this as part of our accounts process to ensure that we are able to claim gift aid on donations received from individuals who are UK tax payers. We hope to seek further advice on this in due course to ensure we maximise the donations that we receive.

### **Wayleaves**

**Anne Lokier** kindly contact Scottish Power in August 2023 on behalf of the charity to enquire as to whether any wayleave payments are owed to the NCRA for the three electricity poles and struts that are on NCRA land. From this enquiry it was established that these wayleave payments have never been claimed for, and the charity is eligible to receive a one-off back payment to

cover the previous 10-years (the maximum back pay allowed) which equates to £345.10. Going forward, the NCRA will receive an annual payment from Scottish Power in May each year – this is currently £34.51 per annum.

### **Record of non-monetary Donations**

Throughout the last 12-months, we have been incredibly grateful to those that have been able to make non-monetary donations to the charity. (A record of which is provided below). These donations have saved us a significant amount of money and the generosity is not unnoticed.

We would also like to thank everyone that has given up their time in the last 12-months to work on the projects to make them a success - we understand just how important time is to everyone – especially on Christmas Eve, Easter holidays, Father's Day and weekends. I am so proud of what you have all achieved – I hope you are too.

John Lay	Bark chippings
Zoë Grant	Weed suppressor for tree beds in car park
Brass Buttons	Performance
Anne Lokier	Mince Pies – Christmas Eve
Laura Parry-Jones	Mulled Wine and Mince Pies – Christmas Eve
Carrie Rutter	Children's Crafts
Carrie Rutter	Thank-You Gift for Laura Parry-Jones (Secretary Services)
Andrew Kirk	Mini-Digger hire (x2) and labour
John Lay	Road planings
Laura Parry-Jones	Hinges/ironmongery for gate in community garden
Anne & Mark Lokier	Rail sleepers for community garden
Mark Lokier	Telehandler use and labour
Jewson's of Wem	Gravel board and weed suppressor for the all-weather garden

## **8. Upcoming Activities**

### **Quiz Night – Friday 13 October 2023**

We are looking forward to hosting our first Quiz Night (plus raffle). Tickets are £5 each and includes some nibbles. Bring your own bottle (we don't have a licence so we can't sell alcohol but you're more than welcome to bring your own). Maximum of 6 per team (older children welcome). Please let us know in advance if you can make it so we can manage numbers. With thanks to **Ben Crompton** for allowing us to host the event at the school, and to **Julia Goode** for making the arrangements. Please also let us know if you can donate a raffle prize.

### **Sponsored Trees/Tree Planting**

We have enough people interested in sponsoring a mature tree for the garden and car park following Paul Steven's suggestion at the community meeting on 19 April 2023. We are hoping to complete donations and purchase these in the coming weeks and have these planted before winter.

### **RoSPA Inspection**

Our annual RoSPA inspection of the play park took place in July 2023 and we now have a number of advisory actions to undertake. Volunteers are needed to support this critical activity. Please let us know if you are able to join a small sub-committee for this.

### **Solar Lighting**

We are keen to ensure we have our solar lighting installed before the dark nights take hold. If you can spare some time to help research appropriate lighting this would be a huge help. We can then purchase it and get it installed.

### **Hedge Cutting**

The hedge cutting will be taking place over the autumn - weather permitting for the playing field as it is subject to how wet the ground is and being able to get machinery on the field. This should not be a problem for the hedging in the car park.

## **9. Conclusion**

I hope from reading this report it is recognised just how much has been achieved by a small group of volunteers in 12-months.

It has been an honour to chair the charity and I am incredibly proud of how such a small a community, with limited financial resources, has come together, given up their free time, faced several challenges and continued to deliver. **Thank you all.** I hope you are encouraged to continue with us for the next 12-months where our aim is to concentrate on our fundraising efforts, continue with our governance activities, have some fun and most importantly – enjoy the beautiful space that has been created for the benefit of everyone!

Finally, I would like to extend special thanks to Carrie Rutter (Deputy Chair) and Jeff Davies (Treasurer) who have supported on all the day-to-day activities behind the scenes in terms of keeping the charity moving forward. Again, it's not been easy. Also to Laura Parry-Jones who was an excellent Secretary and is very much missed – we value Laura's ongoing support to the charity even though she has now had to step back.

Thank you all again for your ongoing support and commitment to Newtown Community Recreation Association. I look forward to another year of meaningful collaboration and shared successes.

**Zoë Grant**  
**Chair**

*25 September 2023*



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY AND RECREATION  
ASSOCIATION

1083905

CC16a



## Receipts and payments accounts

For the period from	01/02/2022	To	28/02/2023
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### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds	Restricted funds	Endowment funds	Total funds	Last year
	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £	to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grants	-	22,000	-	22,000	2,259
Donations	1,337	6,879	-	8,216	270
Fundraising events	212	-	-	212	412
100 Club	361	-	-	361	1,036
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	1,910	28,879	-	30,789	3,977
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total receipts</b>	1,910	28,879	-	30,789	3,977
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Car park project	-	29,530	-	29,530	10,578
Insurance	316	-	-	316	295
Annual maintenance costs for park	1,274	-	-	1,274	-
100 Club	175	-	-	175	350
Professional fees - -playground inspection	105	-	-	105	103
Gifts	81	-	-	81	-
Computer sundries	22	-	-	22	-
General sundry costs	230	-	-	230	406
Donations	-	-	-	-	150
<b>Sub total</b>	2,202	29,530	-	31,732	11,883
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Total payments</b>	2,202	29,530	-	31,732	11,883
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	- 292	- 651	-	- 943	- 7,906
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	- 651	651	-	-	-
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	6,197	-	-	6,197	14,103
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	5,254	0	-	5,254	6,197

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Current account	5,254	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	<b>5,254</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
	(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))	OK	OK	OK
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>	Details			
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
	Car park project	2363	2,363	
	100 Club	30	30	
			-	
			-	
Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees		Signature	Print Name	Date of approval
			Zoë Grant	27/12/2023
			Carrie Harper	27/12/2023



**Section A**

**Independent Examiner's Report**

**Report to the trustees/  
members of**

Charity Name

NEWTOWN COMMUNITY AND RECREATION ASSOCIATION

**On accounts for the year  
ended**

28 FEBRUARY 2023

**Charity no  
(if any)**

1083905

**Set out on pages**

2 - 3

(remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets)

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 28/02/2023

**Responsibilities and  
basis of report**

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

**Independent  
examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

*\* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.*

**Signed:**

*S. Lea*

**Date:** 26/12/2023

**Name:**

STACEY LEA (FCA)

**Relevant professional  
qualification(s) or body  
(if any):**

ICAEW (1365629)

**Address:**

THE CROFT, ABBEY GREEN, WHIXALL, SHROPSHIRE, SY13 2PT