

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales · Charity number 1144729

Details

Status Registered

Legal form Other

Registered 2011-11-21

Register [View on the Charity Commission register](#)

Contact

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Activities

Objects: THE RELIEF OF ELDERLY PERSONS, BEING OVER 60 YEARS OF AGE, AND THOSE BELOW THAT AGE WHO HAVE A NEED FOR SUCH SERVICES, LIVING IN NOTTINGHAM AND THE SURROUNDING AREA BY SUCH MEANS AS ARE RECOGNISED AS CHARITABLE WITHIN THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES AS THE TRUSTEES SHALL DETERMINE AND PARTICULARLY BUT NOT EXCLUSIVELY BY: 1.THE PROVISION OF A BEFRIENDING AND VISITING SERVICE. 2.THE PROVISION OF ADVICE, INFORMATION AND SUPPORT FOR SUCH PERSONS AND THEIR CARERS. 3.THE TRAINING OF VOLUNTEERS.

Activities: Good Companions is a charity which covers the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham. Good Companions aims to reduce the isolation and loneliness experienced by the older residents in the area, by the provision of a Volunteer Visiting Scheme and weekly Friendship Groups.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, The Advancement Of Health Or Saving Of Lives, Amateur Sport, Economic/community Development/employment, Recreation
- **Who:** Elderly/old People, The General Public/mankind

Geography

- **Area of benefit:** LOCAL
- Nottingham City

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-12-31	£42,675	£59,224	-	-
2024-12-31	£42,993	£52,694	-	-
2023-12-31	£58,887	£45,872	-	-
2022-12-31	£61,179	£43,624	-	-
2021-12-31	£48,097	£31,831	-	-
2020-12-31	£27,582	£24,318	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
CLARE ASHTON	Chair	
Allan Breeton		2022-09-21
CHRISTINE BREETON		2017-02-01

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales - Charity number 1144729

Accounts



Registered Charity No: 1144729

Reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale

Good Companions Annual Report 2025

Sarah Cox, Operations Co-ordinator

Dee Stirland, Administrative Officer

Gwen Eyre & Wendy Finnerty, Co-ordinators

Clare Ashton, Chair, Management Committee

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Background

Good Companions was established in 2001 in response to a survey carried out within the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham by the Social Action Research Project. The survey identified many older people living alone and socially

isolated due to lack of available support from family, friends, statutory or voluntary services. A Health Action Group was set up by the local Nottingham City Council Area Committee, which undertook further consultation with older local people, statutory services and other interested parties. As a consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Home Visiting scheme for these areas to address this unmet need and Good Companions was established. It was supported by an initial 3-year grant to fund a part-time co-ordinator and set up costs. The visiting scheme arranged for volunteers to meet with service users in their own homes on a regular basis for conversation, friendship, and support.

In 2003, the Visiting Scheme was supplemented by the formation of a weekly friendship group. This was in response to requests from service users themselves, as well as the recognition that older people would benefit from making new friends outside their own homes, increasing their independence, self-confidence, and social interaction, thus reducing their social isolation. During August 2025, the Management Committee held a Strategic Planning meeting to ensure the future sustainability of the charity during which difficult decisions were made. Regrettably, these were to wind down the Home Visiting service and close one of our 5 weekly Friendship groups at the end of the year, based on a number of factors.

Aims of Good Companions

To reduce loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale. We do this by offering the opportunity for people to attend one of our friendship groups or by providing a home visiting service for those in our community who are housebound (but with no new referrals being accepted from September 2025 due to winding this service down).

Over-view of 2025

During the last year, Good Companions has focussed on its key activities of organising and running 5 weekly Friendship groups and its Home Visiting service. It has also organised a number of social and fundraising events for service users, their families and others in the local community to enjoy. At the beginning of 2025, the new structure, agreed the previous year, was implemented with a part-time Operations Co-ordinator responsible for 2 part-time Group Co-ordinators and a part-time Administrative Officer. Sadly, at the end of 2025, our Silverdale group closed, our Operations Co-ordinator resigned at the end of 2025 after 6 and a half years and one of our Group Co-ordinators went on maternity leave. Interviews were held and we were able to appoint a new part-time Operations Co-ordinator before the end of the year but not a Group Co-ordinator to cover maternity leave.

Management Committee 2025

Officers and Trustees

- Chairman Clare Ashton
- Vice Chair Allan Breeton
- Treasurer Christine Breeton
- Secretary Vacant

Members

- Cllr Andrew Rule Volunteer
- Cllr Kevin Clarke Volunteer
- Rebecca Ironmonger Volunteer
- Adrian Conway Volunteer

In Attendance

- Sarah Cox, Operations coordinator

The Management Committee met 4 times during the year in addition to the AGM.

Subgroups

To support the Management Committee, 2 subgroups have continued to meet regularly either in person or via Zoom, as follows:

- Events & Local Fundraising (led by Sarah Cox)
- Strategic Finance (led by Clare Ashton)

Events & Local Fundraising Subgroup

Members

- Sarah Cox (Lead)
- Clare Ashton
- Kevin Clarke
- Dee Stirland
- June Walker

The group met on 8 occasions in 2025 in order to develop and plan events and fundraising ideas for the benefit of Good Companions and our service users.

The table below shows all events planned by the subgroup in 2025. A total of £5,157.00 was raised through these events.

Month	Activity	Event type
January	Puzzle & book swap	Fundraiser
April	Ruddington Village Market	Fundraiser
April	Easter event including tombola & lunch	Social event & fundraiser
June	Fire service car wash	Fundraiser
July	Summer grand raffle	Fundraiser
August	Summer garden party for volunteers	Social event
September	Quiz & supper event including tombola	Fundraiser
November	Jigsaw & book swap plus lunch	Social event & fundraiser
	Pantomime	Social event
December	Clifton Lights switch-on (including tombola)	Fundraiser
	Christmas party	Social event & fundraiser
	Christmas grand draw (licensed raffle)	Fundraiser
	Christmas get-together for volunteers	Social event

Strategic Finance subgroup

Members

- Clare Ashton (Lead)
- Allan Breeton
- Christine Breeton
- Cllr Andrew Rule
- Andrew Price

This subgroup is to provide a strategic overview of the charities' finances:-setting the budget; monitoring its income and expenditure; producing a financial plan to support the ongoing and future activities to ensure sustainability; identifying opportunities for fundraising through grants and other sources and ensuring implementation of any agreed action; and ensuring compliance with Charity Commission requirements and with good financial practices and regulations. During the year, the group met formally approximately every 3 months. Its activities support both our Treasurer and Fundraiser.

Other Group Representation

Good Companions is represented on other Committees, as follows:

- Clifton Neighbourhood Board

- Clifton Advice Centre Management Committee
- Age Friendly Nottingham Steering Group (AFN)
- Volunteer Co-ordinator and Managers Network (NCVS)
- Clifton Together Steering Group (Collective Impact Initiative)
- Clifton Partnership group

Staffing

The official base for Good Companions is the Clifton Cornerstone in Southchurch Drive, located on the first floor. However, most of the Co-ordinators' and Administrator's time is spent in the local community or working from home. The desk phone is checked for messages four times each week by the Co-ordinators, and the mail is checked/collected at least once a week.

At December 2025, Good Companions employed three part time staff.

- **Sarah Cox** was Operations Co-ordinator, employed for 22 hours per week, and had been in post since May 2019. The role remit includes running the Rivergreen Friendship group, the Home Visiting Scheme, as well as being responsible for the 2 Group Co-ordinators and for the recruitment and support of volunteers, and events and activities. She resigned at the end of 2025 – we are very grateful to Sarah for all that she contributed over the time she was with us.
- **Delia Stirland** changed roles in January 2025, moving from Group Coordinator (16 hours per week) to Administrative Officer. She now works 25 hours per month on a flexible basis maintaining and updating all our administrative processes and requirements. She provides emergency cover for sickness at the friendship groups and continues to support Good Companions with fundraising as a volunteer.
- **Gwen Eyre** was employed as the new Silverdale Friendship Group Co-ordinator on 9 hours per week commencing in February 2024. From the beginning of 2025, her role is now to run the Silverdale and Parkgate Friendship Groups working 11 hours per week.
- **Wendy Finnerty** was employed from beginning of January 2025 on 10 hours per week to run the Clifton Community Centre and Simone Gardens Friendship Groups. She went on maternity leave in November and has since had a lovely daughter.

Volunteers

We commenced 2025 with 38 volunteers and ended the year with 34. At the end of the year, 3 of our volunteers who supported the Silverdale group, indicated their intention to step down with the closure of the group. We were very grateful for all they contributed to this group and were sorry to see them step down but wish them well in the future. We were pleased to welcome two new volunteers, Amber-Leigh Cross and Sara Comar.

All volunteers receive a Basic DBS check which is processed and paid for by Good Companions. This is re-checked every 3 years.

Support to volunteers includes twice-yearly volunteer meetings, periodic mini-meetings/debriefs within friendship groups, and social calls. We also organise two annual volunteer social events: a summer garden party and a pre-Christmas get-together with buffet. We believe that we offer a positive and supportive volunteering environment; our volunteers tell us that they find the experience enjoyable.

Recruitment

We continue to advertise for new volunteers through our Facebook page, on our website, inclusion in the 'Ask Lion' web pages, Nottingham Community Voluntary Service (NCVS) database, Nottingham Trent University student volunteering bulletin boards. In addition, our promotional leaflet invites people to contact us if they wish to volunteer. Good Companions is very grateful for additional volunteers who join us to support at special events; these are generally found through word-of-mouth or through their historical support.

All prospective volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview. This gives an opportunity to get to know each other and ask questions. Before they commence volunteering with us:

- Two references are requested,
- An induction meeting is arranged (volunteers are given an induction folder)
- The volunteer signs and returns a volunteering agreement and a confidentiality agreement
- Issued with an ID photo card

We continue with the use of a volunteers' WhatsApp chat group to which the Co-ordinators have admin responsibility for. This allows the volunteers to have informal contact with each other outside of the friendship groups should they wish it and enables Co-ordinators to inform volunteers of new events and check availability for specific activities. Email is used as the primary way to disseminate information to volunteers.

Training Volunteers

- **Adult safe-guarding** is compulsory for all volunteers every three years
- **Dementia awareness** is optional but actively encouraged. This was provided by Bev Pearson of the Radford Care Group

Staff

- **Emergency First Aid** Gwen Eyre and Dee Stirland attended this training course with St. John's Ambulance in 2024 and hold the Emergency First Aid Certificate which needs to be redone in May 2026
- **Dementia awareness** All Co-ordinators attend this awareness session alongside volunteers

Good Companions continue to be open to be providing such training to volunteers as is beneficial to the provision of our services.

Referrals

Referrals generally fall into 3 categories:

- Professional referrals (professional and health care workers etc)
- Self-referrals (when a person makes a decision to attend a group)
- Family and friend referrals

However a person attends a group, a form is required to be completed capturing information relevant to their attendance at the group. We currently have 2 forms in operation, one for a referral made by a professional and one completed by a person who comes of their own free will or when they have been encouraged to come by family or friends.

Referrals received (2025)

Referral submitted by	
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Professional Referrals (includes Social Services, Re-ablement, mental health, community care, Community Connector & Social Prescribers)	20
Relatives/family friends	9
Self-referral/walk-in at a friendship group	16
Total:	45

3 of these were for our home visiting service and were put on a waiting list for when volunteers were available to provide the support.

Receipt of referrals was reasonably even throughout the year with the exceptions of April and July when we received 9 and 6 respectively.

Breakdown of referrals by month (2025)

MONTH	Friendship Group	Home Visiting	Non-specific	Total
January	3			3
February	4			4
March	3			3
April	8	1		9
May	2			2
June	2		2	4
July	5	1		6
August	4			4
September	3			3
October	3			3
November	2	1		3
December	1			1
Totals:	40	3	2	45

Of the referrals received, 30 progressed to attending a group, although not all of them have remained with us. Some of the reasons for not continuing to attend include individuals changing their mind, no longer needing the support or lack of engagement by individuals or their families. In addition to this, 12 referrals declined the service after receiving further information and the 3 applicants for home visiting were removed from the list.

Friendship Groups

Our five Friendship Groups follow a similar format:

- Welcome, drinks served, chat and completion of quizzes or word searches
- Activity session, this might include seated health qi gong, crafting or attendance by a guest speaker
- Announcements including birthdays, raffle and quiz answers
- Bingo or Hoya called by one of the service users or volunteers

Taxi use for service users is booked via an account held with one of two local taxi firms - Southside Cars or NG11. We charge service users a subsidised fee of £3.00 each-way for this service, with the remainder being paid from general funds. The cost of attending the group is £3 per person and games such as bingo and hoya that have prizes awarded are charged at 50p per game.

In 2025 the friendship groups were open for 49 weeks; one closure week was due to the January planning week, one week for the Christmas party week, and the third for the Christmas week when staff take annual leave. The friendship groups do not meet on bank holidays.

All of our friendship groups are led by one paid Co-ordinator plus a number of volunteers. Good Companions would not be able to provide our weekly groups in the same format/cost without the support of these exceptional volunteers and their attendance, enthusiasm and support is very much appreciated.

Clifton Community Centre Friendship Group

The group meets weekly on Monday from 11am to 1pm and occupies the main room in the Community Centre. The location of the venue is excellent with both a regular bus service and tram stops directly outside.

In 2025, the group met 45 times, closure occurrences were all due to bank holidays and Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance was 19 which is a good level of attendance. We have 6 regular volunteers who work hard to make the group an enjoyable occasion for everyone attending. The group continues to generate a reasonable income from service users paying for refreshments, bingo etc.

For the main part of 2025, the group was run by coordinator Wendy Finnerty who was both popular with service users and volunteers as well as an efficient and effective coordinator. At the end of the year, Wendy went on maternity leave and it is hoped she will return to her post at some point in 2026.

Service users are actively encouraged to get involved with activities and they do so, particularly enjoying sessions involving music of any kind (groups or singers, music quizzes, and impromptu singing sessions). This is a lovely group with some real characters and a pleasure to organise and run.

Parkgate Friendship Group

This group meets weekly on a Friday at the Parkgate Community Centre from 11am to 2pm only closing for Good Friday and the Christmas break. At the start of the 2025 Gwen took over the role of co-ordinator on a weekly basis from the previous arrangement of alternating with Dee Stirland. The first hour is refreshments and quizzes, followed by a community lunch and a final hour consisting of Hoya or Bingo. There are also regular activities such as crafts, Qigong (Tai Chi) and occasionally live music.

At the start of 2025, the register for the Friendship Group contained 22 names which slightly increased to 24 over the year. An average of 12 attended each week. However, weekly attendance ranged from 6 during a period of very icy weather, up to 17 people in late August.

We have a close working relationship with staff and volunteers at the centre and as part of our collaborative activities, our service users join other members of the public for lunch, prepared and served by staff and volunteers from the Parkgate Community Kitchen. Good Companions volunteers assist with the serving of hot meals in between the group's activities on a Friday.

Rivergreen Friendship Group

This friendship group meets each Tuesday morning at the Clifton Methodist Hub, 10.00am to 12 noon in the main hall. The facilities are well maintained and in an excellent location with regular buses and the tram stopping directly outside. Along with Clifton Community Centre, this is an excellent location for larger group meeting and fundraising events and is regularly used for these. Good Companions has a very positive working relationship with the church staff.

In 2025, the group met 49 times, closure occurrences were all due to Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance was 23 throughout the year which is a good level of attendance and the group continues to flourish.

Due to staff changes at the location, we now have to set up and clear the room of tables and chairs for the group which is an additional task for the coordinator and volunteers. However, the friendship group continues to be very well supported by volunteers, with between four and eight assisting each week, the average number of volunteers is six.

Silverdale Friendship Group

The Silverdale group started in February 2022, with Gwen becoming the coordinator in March 2024. The group met every Monday afternoon at the Silverdale Community Centre, 1.15pm to 3.15pm only closing on Bank Holidays and during the Christmas break. The first hour was refreshments and quizzes with the second hour consisting of Hoya and Bingo compered by one of the service users. There were also regular activities such as crafts, singing, Qigong (Tai Chi) and occasionally live music.

At the start of 2025, the register for the Silverdale Friendship Group contained 19 names which remained the same all year. An average of 14 attended each week. However, weekly attendance ranged from 9 during a period of icy weather, up to 19 people in May 2025. The group ran with the help of 5 regular volunteers, plus an additional 2 who covered in the event of illness and holidays. The weekly average was 3 with an additional helper for setting up tables and tidying away at the end

The highlight of 2025 was, without doubt, the 100th birthday party for Ken G. We had live music from a 4-piece vocal group called "Songs4U" and a fish and chip lunch from the Cod's Scallops. Clare gave a short speech and when asked to give a few words Ken instead sang "My Way".

The decision to close the Silverdale group, after 3 years, was understandably met with sadness by our service users and their families as well as volunteers. However, several of the Silverdale regular service users already attended other groups across the week and some expressed an interest in attending the group at Clifton Community Centre on a Monday morning. Two of the volunteers were also already helping at other groups.

Simone Gardens Friendship Group

This group meets each Thursday morning, 10.00am to 12 noon, in the community room at the Simone Gardens complex. This is one of two assisted living complexes very close to each other, the other being Lakehead House.

Good Companions has a positive working relationship with the Independent Living Co-ordinator for both sites and we actively encourage attendance by people from both locations. We also promote services to each other for the benefit of residents at both complexes and Good Companions' service users.

In 2025, the group met 49 times with an average weekly attendance was 12. Closure occurrences were all due to Good Companions closures.

This remains the smallest of all of the friendship groups (attendance being limited by the size of the room) but this has the positive effect of creating a supportive and nurturing environment where all the service users are able to engage with each other. Nottingham City Council do not charge us for the use of the community room, which allows us to maintain the group with a lower income.

We also have a close working relationship with Clifton Manor Care Home who regularly bring residents from the home to the group. They are accompanied by an activity co-ordinator &/or care workers from the home, who remain with them throughout the morning.

Volunteer attendance at this group is between one and four per week. The weekly average number of volunteers present is two.

Home Visiting Scheme

The number of people requiring our home visiting service has fallen over the last few years. At the beginning of this year, we had 7 people receiving home visiting which fell to 5 during the first quarter.

With only 3 referrals during this year, one of which was outside of our area, the continuation of providing this service was raised at our Strategic Planning meeting held on 11th August 2025.

Discussion at this meeting considered a number of issues:

- falling demand for the service
- recruitment of volunteers to support the service being more difficult than for group activities
- income generated from this is zero
- during the year, all service users of the HVS were asked if they would like to make a donation to Good Companions, only 1 positive response was received

As a result of the discussion at the Strategic Planning meeting, the Management Committee agreed that this service would be wound down gradually. As each service user ceases to require the service for any reason, their place would not be filled and the volunteer would be asked if they wished to support other activities within the organisation.

It was also agreed that all current users of the service, anyone on a waiting list and those professionals who referred people to the service would be notified in writing.

Service User Feedback

Following discussions at the Management Committee meeting held 3rd April 2025, it was agreed that service user feedback would take place every 2 years from now on. The next review of this will take place at the end of 2026.

Marketing

Good Companions has continued to retain a presence on the 'Do It' website via the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) as well as on the Nottingham City Council's (NCC) 'Ask Lion' website. Our own Good Companions Facebook posts are regularly shared on local Facebook pages-'This is Wilford'; 'The Clifton Community Group'; 'NG11 Community Page'; 'Silverdale Wilford & Clifton'; and 'Clifton/Barton Green Community', updated by Kim Ward and Alma Davies. The website has been improved and is regularly updated by Adrian Conway. Regular articles have been produced and printed in our Clifton Local News, promoting our services and seeking new volunteers.

In addition, verbal reports on Good Companions have been given at meetings of the Clifton Neighbourhood Board and the AFN Steering Group, when the opportunities arise, which are held online via Zoom/Microsoft Teams or in person. It has also been promoted at various events including the annual conference organised by the UK

Network for Ageing Better, the AFN Event in Nottingham Market Square, the Nottingham Trent University Volunteer Fair, and at the AFN International Older Person's Day event, the Clifton 'Fun days' in the Clifton Flower Park, and at various fundraising events. Marketing materials used have included leaflets, a 'flag' for external use, and banners for internal use. In addition, the 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, located in a wide range of venues throughout the local community, have continually promoted Good Companions and raised awareness of our charity, organised by Alma Davies and Jacky Holmes.

A regular Good Companions newsletter is produced and circulated to all service users, volunteers, key stakeholders and individuals in the local community. This promotes our activities and keeps everyone informed of future events.

Funding

This has remained a constant area of concern, particularly with the increasingly difficult financial climate, with cuts to voluntary and social services and increases in rent and taxi fares. The charity is constantly looking at different ways of reducing our overheads as well as increasing income. Consequently, we have continued with monthly bulk purchasing for refreshments and other items for our Friendship groups, which was introduced 3 years ago. In addition, at its Strategic Planning meeting, the Management Committee considered its future financial situation, and amongst other important factors, took difficult decisions about its future service delivery.

We continue to be very grateful to those businesses in Clifton, who have regularly provided items for refreshments, raffles, tombolas and bingo prizes for our Friendship Groups and for use at fundraising events. Many of them have also taken a 'Keep the Change' donation collection box, which has raised a significant amount of money for Good Companions each year.

We have been fortunate to obtain a number of grants with the help of our Honorary Fundraiser, Andrew Price. However, these were fewer than the previous years but all have contributed to the general running costs of Good Companions, which have been much appreciated. These include grants from the Forever Notts (Nottingham Community Foundation) CRS Fund, A W Lymns, Skerritt Trust, NG11 cars charity golf day, and Snakes United FC. In addition, we have received generous donations from service users, volunteers, local individuals and businesses.

A number of planned fundraising events took place during the year, which have significantly contributed to our income with grateful thanks to the Events and Local Fundraising sub-group, our Co-ordinators and volunteers.

The experience of working with the Independent Examiners, CA Plus, to produce our accounts for the last 4 years made the process for the 2025 accounts so much easier – with thanks to our Treasurer supported by Cllr Andrew Rule.

Conclusion

The past year has been very busy as we have continued to focus on delivering what is clearly a much-needed service to people in our local community. It has also been a challenging year as the Management Committee decisions regarding the future direction of the charity were implemented in difficult circumstances during the latter part of the year.

The hard work and support of our Co-ordinators and volunteers, and many in our local community, has continued to be very much appreciated by our service users. It has enabled Good Companions to continue to support so many people, to enrich

lives and we hope, to make a positive difference to someone's day. Many of our service users have experienced serious health issues requiring hospitalisation yet it has been so worthwhile to welcome them back to Good Companions and to see how much it means to them.

Whilst our funding position has reduced again by the end of the year, we hope that decisions taken will enable us to be more confident about the future viability of Good Companions. However, we will need to explore other ways of raising funds to ensure our income is continued for the future.

We look forward to another year when we will be celebrating the 25th anniversary of Good Companions.

Good Companions
(Registered charity, number 1144729)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 December 2025

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**Good Companions
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 December 2025**

Full name Good Companions

Registered charity number 1144729

Principal address

Clifton Cornerstone
Southchurch Drive
Nottingham
NG11 8EW

Trustees

Clare Ashton, Chair
Christine Breeton, Treasurer
Allan Breeton, Vice Chair

Independent examiner

Eva Stevens, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 01/01/2000 and most recently amended 05/10/2011.

As set out in our governing document, membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations approved by the Trustees.

Objectives and activities

The relief of elderly persons, being over 60 years of age, and those below that age who have need for such services, living in the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area by such means as are recognised as charitable within the law of England and Wales as the Trustees shall determine and particularly but not exclusively by:

- The provision of a Befriending and Visiting Service;
- The provision of advice, information and support for such persons and their carers;
- The training of volunteers.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our main activities undertaken for the public benefit include:

1. Provision of a home visiting service and friendship groups;
2. Provision of activities, events and trips;
3. Recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers.

Good Companions

Public benefit statement

By reducing the social isolation and loneliness of vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area which improves their health and wellbeing.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Summary of the main achievements during the period

Following decisions taken towards the end of 2024, Good Companions introduced a new part-time Administrative Officer role (25 hours per month) and welcomed a new group Co-ordinator (at reduced hours) at the beginning of the year. By the end of the year, one of our 2 group co-ordinators had started maternity leave, our Operations Co-ordinator had resigned after 6.5 years, and a new Operations Co-ordinator was in place still leaving a vacancy for a group co-ordinator for maternity cover.

However, the charity has continued with it's key activities - organising a Home Visiting Scheme and 5 weekly Friendship Groups in Clifton, Parkgate and Silverdale Community Centres, Simone Gardens Independent Living Scheme and Rivergreen Methodist Hub. Service Users have enjoyed a wide range of activities including Health Qigong; 'pamper', craft and music sessions; talks from a variety of speakers - police, fire service etc; games, quizzes, adult colouring and word searches as well as the annual visit to the pantomime.

Referrals for our services have continued to be received from a wide range of sources particularly from social prescribers and community connectors. These have been followed up and potential service users assessed for either home visiting or attendance at a Friendship Group. However, referrals for home visiting were discontinued during the year due to a shortage of volunteer home visitors and then the service wound down from September 2025.

Volunteers have continued to be recruited throughout the year for the Friendship groups, and trained and supported by Co-ordinators. They were also invited to a Volunteers' garden party and Christmas gathering.

Fundraising activities have focussed on grant applications, raffles, donation appeals, tombolas, market stalls, table tops, a car wash in conjunction with the local Fire Station, and 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, as well as very successful and enjoyable social and fundraising events - A Quiz and Fish & Chip supper evening, a Christmas party, Easter and Harvest themed events, and jigsaw and book swaps with lunch.

Communication and promotion has been achieved through a regular newsletter (to service users and their family members, referrers, local community key individuals etc), leaflets, local Facebook pages as well as our own Facebook page and website, articles in the local Clifton News, Zoom meetings and WhatsApps groups. Promotion has also been facilitated through representation on a variety of local groups including the Clifton Neighbourhood Board and Age Friendly Nottingham.

Good Companions

The Management Committee has met regularly supported by a number of subgroups and has included a Workshop to review the Good Companions Strategic Plan and its' future.

A more detailed report with statistics will be produced for the AGM incorporating this information.

We are very grateful to all our grant funders, to those who support us in the local community financially with donations or gifts in kind or have one of our collection boxes, attend our fundraising events or give their time through a variety of volunteering activities as well as the invaluable hard work of our part-time staff and volunteers, all of which enable us to make a real difference to the vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale.

Financial review

Unfortunately, for a second successive year, our financial outturn was reduced. This was mainly due to reduced income from grants and increased expenditure due to increases in rent, refreshments, taxis and NI contributions.

During the last year, the Management Committee has undertaken a review of its Strategic Plan and considered the long-term viability of Good Companions taking account of falling service user numbers, reduced income, increased expenditure and suitability of venues. As a result, the difficult decision was taken, reluctantly, to wind down the Home Visiting Service (as from September 2025), to close the Silverdale Friendship Group (at the end of 2025) and to change the role and subsequently reduce the hours of the new incoming Operations Coordinator. In addition, taxi contributions from service users were increased during the year.

The charity's policy on reserves

We do have a reserves policy to provide cover should we be unable to attract grants or raise sufficient funds through fundraising activities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed CC Ashton Date 11.2.26
Clare Ashton, Trustee

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2025**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2025.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

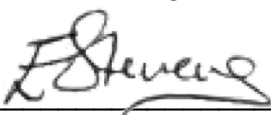
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 11/02/2026
Eva Stevens BSc, CPFA
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

Good Companions
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 December 2025

2024				2025
Total		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Funds		Funds	Funds	Funds
£	Note	£	£	£
	Receipts			
12793	Grants & donations	4862	4045	8907
5501	Fundraising	6018	-	6018
20784	Friendship Group income	25703	-	25703
-	Refreshments & Prizes	74	-	74
2967	Taxis	391	-	391
836	Bank interest	1480	-	1480
112	Sundry receipts	-	-	-
-	Parties / events	102	-	102
<u>42993</u>	Total receipts	<u>38630</u>	<u>4045</u>	<u>42675</u>
	Payments			
32929	Wages, NI & pension	35057	-	35057
916	Training	294	-	294
1260	Professional services	1431	-	1431
536	Insurance	500	-	500
987	Printing & stationery	1298	-	1298
907	Equipment, IT & comms	1943	-	1943
291	DBS & ID	754	-	754
4605	Friendship Group expenditure	5271	1220	6491
5255	Room hire	6575	-	6575
276	Sundry payments	104	-	104
4104	Taxis	4026	-	4026
628	Rent	751	-	751
<u>52694</u>	Total payments	<u>58004</u>	<u>1220</u>	<u>59224</u>
(9701)	Net receipts/(payments)	(19374)	2825	(16549)
<u>79362</u>	Cash funds at start of this period	<u>69661</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>69661</u>
<u>69661</u>	Cash funds at end of this period	<u>50287</u>	<u>2825</u>	<u>53112</u>

Good Companions
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2025

2024			2025
£	Cash assets	Note	£
69561	Bank accounts		53012
100	Cash in hand		100
<u>69661</u>			<u>53112</u>
	Other monetary assets		
1350	Prepayment- Insurance		417
<u>1350</u>			<u>417</u>
	Liabilities		
(612)	Creditors	4	(703)
<u>(612)</u>			<u>(703)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed _____

Christine Breeton, Trustee



Date 09/02/2026

Good Companions
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2025

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted £	Restricted £	Total £
Skerritt Trust	-	3000	3000
AW Lymn	-	585	585
Nottm CMFS CRS FUND	-	460	460
Sundry grants & donations	4862	-	4862
	4862	4045	8907

3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance £	Receipts (Payments) £	Closing balance £
Restricted funds			
Tai Chi activities	-	3000	(175)
Christmas parties	-	1045	(1045)
	-	4045	(1220)
Unrestricted funds			
General	50661	37130	(57116)
Reserves	12000	-	-
Restructuring	5000	-	-
Equipment replacement	2000	-	(888)
Snakes united FC	-	500	-
NG11 cars charity golf day	-	1000	-
	69661	38630	(58004)
	50287		

Tai Chi activities – Given for use of Tai Chi activities.

Christmas parties – These funds were to cover the cost of Christmas parties.

Good Companions

4. Creditors

	£
Independent examiners fee	636
HMRC	67
	<u>703</u>

5. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in this period.

6. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

7. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Debtors: These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales - Charity number 1144729

Accounts



Registered Charity No: 1144729

Reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale

Good Companions Annual Report 2024

Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator

Dee Stirland, CFP Co-ordinator

Gwyn Eyre, Silverdale Co-ordinator

Clare Ashton, Chair, Management Committee

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Background

Good Companions was established in 2001 in response to a survey carried out within the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham by the Social Action Research Project. The survey identified many older people living alone and socially isolated due to lack of available support from family, friends, statutory or voluntary services. A Health Action Group was set up by the local Nottingham City Council Area Committee, which undertook further consultation with older local people, statutory services and other interested parties. As a consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Home Visiting scheme for these areas to address this unmet need and Good Companions was established. It was supported by an initial 3-year grant to fund a part-time co-ordinator and set up costs. The visiting scheme arranged for volunteers to meet with service users in their own homes on a regular basis for conversation, friendship, and support.

In 2003, the Visiting Scheme was supplemented by the formation of a weekly friendship group. This was in response to requests from service users themselves, as well as the recognition that older people would benefit from making new friends outside their own homes, increasing their independence, self-confidence, and social interaction, thus reducing their social isolation. We now have five weekly friendship groups – four in Clifton and one in Silverdale.

Aims of Good Companions

To reduce loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale. We do this by offering the opportunity for people to attend one of our 5 friendship groups or by providing a home visiting service for those in our community who are housebound.

Over-view of 2024

During the last year, Good Companions has focussed on its key activities of organising and running 5 weekly Friendship groups and its Home Visiting service. It has also organised a number of social and fundraising events for service users, their families and others in the local community to enjoy. One of the key tasks undertaken by the Management Committee towards the end of the year has been the restructuring of the organisation to include 4 part-time posts- an Operational Co-ordinator responsible for 2 Co-ordinators, and an Administrative Officer. Interviews, as appropriate, were held in November for implementation of the new structure at the beginning of 2025.

Management Committee 2024

Officers and Trustees

- Chairman Clare Ashton
- Vice Chair Allan Breeton
- Treasurer Christine Breeton
- Secretary Vacant

In Attendance

- Sarah Cox Lead Coordinator

Members

- Alma Davies Volunteer
- Cllr Andrew Rule Volunteer
- Cllr Kevin Clarke Volunteer
- Jacky Holmes Volunteer
- Adrian Conway Volunteer

The Management Committee met 4 times during the year in addition to the AGM.

Subgroups

To support the Management Committee, 2 subgroups have continued to meet regularly either in person or via Zoom, as follows:-

- Events & Local Fundraising (led by Sarah Cox)
- Strategic Finance (led by Clare Ashton)

Events & Local Fundraising Subgroup

Members

- Sarah Cox (Lead)
- Clare Ashton
- Kevin Clarke
- Dee Stirland
- June Walker

The group met on nine occasions in 2024 in order to develop and plan events and fundraising ideas for the benefit of Good Companions and our service users.

The table below shows all events planned by the subgroup in 2024. A total of £5,225.88 was raised through these events.

Month	Activity	Event type
January	-	
February	-	
March	Easter event including tombola & lunch	Social event & fundraiser
April	Ruddington Village Market	Fundraiser
May	Film & popcorn afternoon at Holy Trinity Church Holy Trinity with St. Francis Church	Social event
June	Volunteers' Week 2024 – article in Clifton News	Promotion
July	Nottm Young Lawyers' Garden Party	Promotion & fundraiser
	Joint charity car wash at WB fire station	Fundraiser
	Jigsaw & book swap plus lunch	Social event & fundraiser
August	Summer grand raffle	Fundraiser
	Cllrs 'Summer in the Park' event (stall)	Promotion
	Summer garden party for volunteers	Social event
September	Table-top sale at Holy Trinity with St. Francis Church	Fundraiser
	Quiz & supper event including tombola	Fundraiser
October	Film & popcorn afternoon at Holy Trinity with St. Francis Church	Social event
November	Jigsaw & book swap plus lunch	Social event & fundraiser
	Pantomime	Social event
December	Clifton Lights switch-on (including tombola)	Fundraiser
	Christmas party	Social event & fundraiser
	Christmas grand draw (licensed raffle)	Fundraiser
	Christmas get-together for volunteers	Social event

Strategic Finance subgroup

Members

- Clare Ashton (Lead)
- Allan Breeton
- Christine Breeton
- Cllr Andrew Rule
- Andrew Price

This subgroup is to provide a strategic overview of the charities' finances- setting the budget; monitoring its income and expenditure; producing a financial plan to support the ongoing and future activities to ensure sustainability; identifying opportunities for fundraising through grants and other sources and ensuring implementation of any agreed action; and ensuring compliance with Charity Commission requirements and with good financial practices and regulations. During the year, the group met formally approximately every 3 months. Its activities support both our Treasurer and Fundraiser.

The function of the previous Social Media group was to use the reach and influence of social media for the benefit of Good Companions. Its focus was on maintaining and updating the Good Companions website and Facebook – highlighting forthcoming events, celebrating recent events and providing useful information. This has continued on an informal basis with Adrian Conway updating the improved website and the Facebook page being updated with the assistance of Kim Ward and Alma Davies.

Other Group Representation

Good Companions is represented on other Committees, as follows:

- Clifton Town Board
- Clifton Advice Centre Management Committee
- Age Friendly Nottingham Steering Group (AFN)
- Volunteer Co-ordinator and Managers Network (NCVS)
- Clifton Collective Impact Initiative

Staffing

The official base for Good Companions is the Clifton Cornerstone in Southchurch Drive, located on the first floor within the NCC Neighbourhood Team. However, most of the Co-ordinators' time is spent in the local community or working from home. The desk phone is checked for messages four times each week by the Co-ordinators, and the mail is checked/collected at least once a week.

At December 2024 Good Companions currently employed three part time staff.

- Sarah Cox is the Lead Co-ordinator, is employed for 22 hours per week, and has been in post since May 2019. The role remit includes running the Rivergreen and Simone Gardens friendship groups, the Home Visiting Scheme, as well as being responsible for the recruitment and support of volunteers, and events and activities.
- Delia Stirland is one of the Co-ordinators, is employed for 16 hours per week, and has been in post since January 2020. The role remit includes running the Clifton Community Centre and Parkgate friendship groups, events and activities and administration of the database.
- Louise Compton commenced as the Silverdale Friendship Group Co-ordinator at the end of January 2022 working 7.5 hours per week. Her remit was to run the Silverdale Friendship Group, cover for other groups as necessary and support with events and activities as part of the Events subgroup. She left this post towards the end of January 2024.

- Gwen Eyre was employed as the new Silverdale Friendship Group Co-ordinator on 9 hours per week commencing in February 2024. Her role is to run the Silverdale Friendship Group and to lead at the Simone Gardens and Parkgate Friendship groups on an alternate weekly basis.

Volunteers

We commenced 2024 with 36 volunteers, and ended the year with 39. Over the course of the year we said goodbye to volunteer Lisa Swaithe who sadly died in July 2024, and welcomed four new people to join the volunteer team: David Bainbridge, Adrian Conway, Villma James-Davis, and Joe Wilcox.

All volunteers who either support at a friendship group or offer home visiting receive a Basic DBS check which is processed and paid for by Good Companions. This is re-checked every 3 years.

Support to volunteers includes twice-yearly volunteer meetings, periodic mini-meetings/debriefs within friendship groups, and social calls. We also organise two annual volunteer social events: a summer garden party and a pre-Christmas get-together with buffet. We believe that we offer a positive and supportive volunteering environment; our volunteers tell us that they find the experience enjoyable.

Recruitment

We continue to advertise for new volunteers through our Facebook page, on our website, inclusion in the 'Do It' and 'Ask Lion' web pages, Nottingham Community Voluntary Service (NCVS) database, Nottingham Trent University student volunteering bulletin boards. In addition, our promotional leaflet invites people to contact us if they wish to volunteer. Good Companions is very grateful for additional volunteers who join us to support at special events; these are generally found through word-of-mouth or through their historical support.

All prospective volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview with two people - usually two of the Co-ordinators; this gives an opportunity to get to know each other and ask questions. Before they commence volunteering with us the following is undertaken:

- Two references are requested,
- An induction meeting is arranged (volunteers are given an induction folder)
- The volunteer signs and returns a volunteering agreement and a confidentiality agreement
- Issued with an ID photo card
- An agreement is made as to which part of our services the volunteer will be supporting within

We continue with the use of a volunteers' WhatsApp chat group to which the Co-ordinators have admin responsibility for. This allows the volunteers to have informal contact with each other outside of the friendship groups should they wish it, and enables Co-ordinators to inform volunteers of new events and check availability for specific activities. Email is used as the primary way to disseminate information to volunteers.

Training

Volunteers

Training was offered to volunteers in the following areas:

- **Adult safe-guarding** (Monday 3rd June 2024). The management committee have agreed that any volunteer who comes into contact with service users should attend this course every three years.
- **Dementia awareness** (March 2024). This was provided by Bev Pearson of the Radford Care Group.

Staff

- **Emergency First Aid** Sarah Cox, Gwen Eyre and Dee Stirland attended this training course with St. John's Ambulance in 2024 and now hold the Emergency First Aid Certificate. This is valid for two years.
- **Dementia awareness** All Co-ordinators attending this awareness session alongside volunteers.

Good Companions continue to be open to be providing such training to volunteers as is beneficial to the provision of our services.

Referrals

The Process of Making a Referral

All referrals receive an email acknowledgement to the referring professional, and an introductory phone call to potential service users, from the Lead Co-ordinator. In the event of a referral to the home visiting scheme, or when potential new service users have additional support requirements, a meeting at home is organised in order to more fully explain services and answer questions.

We received 61 referrals for services in 2024 compared to 68 referrals in 2023. This is comprised of 44 for friendship groups, 16 for home visiting, and 1 that was indeterminate. *Please see Table no.1 for the origin of these referrals.*

Receipt of referrals was not spread evenly throughout the year, with January, February and September seeing 44% of referrals for the year (44%). *Please see Table no.2 for a breakdown of referrals by month.*

Of the referrals received in 2024, 35 progressed to receiving a service (57%) and 26 did not receive a service (43%). Reasons for this high level of none take-up of services following the referral process include individuals changing their mind, individuals no longer needing the support, lack of engagement by individuals or their families, being out of area for home visiting, or potential new service users being too unwell or passing away during the period between the referral being received and services being put in place. *Please see Table no.3 for a breakdown of reasons for services not being put in place.*

Origin of referrals received (2024)

(Table no.1)

Referral submitted by	2024
Social Services (including Re-ablement, mental health, community care, Community Connector)	19
Social Prescribers	5
Nursing/home care agencies	7
Relatives/family friends	10
Self-referral/walk-in at a friendship group	18
Other (Age UK)	2
Total:	61

Breakdown of referrals by month (2024)

(Table no.2)

MONTH	REFERRALS RECEIVED				OUTCOME	
	Total	Categorised into:				
		Friendship group	Home Visiting	Non-specific	Services provided	Services not provided
Jan	10	8	2	0	7	3
Feb	9	6	3	0	5	4
March	6	5	1	0	4	2
April	6	4	2	0	6	0
May	4	3	1	0	2	2
June	3	3	0	0	2	1
July	3	3	0	0	1	2
August	4	1	2	1	2	2
Sept	8	6	2	0	2	6
Oct	4	3	1	0	3	1
Nov	3	1	2	0	1	2
Dec	1	1	0	0	0	1
Totals:	61	44	16	1	35	26

Breakdown of reasons for services not put in place (2024) (Table no.3)

MONTH	Categorised into:					
	Total	Service declined	Non-engagement	Out of area (for HV)	Not needed	Other
January	3	1				2 (1 x family felt group not suitable for parent) (1 x individual too frail to attend group, HV not suitable)
February	4	2	2			
March	2		2			
April	0					
May	2			1		1 (lives too far from a group)
June	1	1				
July	2		1			1 (moved into a care home)
August	2	1			1	
Sept	6	2	2		1	1 (too unwell)
Oct	1					1 (Didn't want HV, only wanted assistance to complete a form)
Nov	2	1				1 (deceased)
Dec	1					1 (wanted to attend a social group in Wilford)
Total	26	8	7	1	2	8

Friendship Groups

Our five Friendship Groups follow a similar format:

- Welcome, drinks served, chat and completion of quizzes or word searches
- Activity session, this might include seated health qi gong (aka tai chi), crafting or attendance by a guest speaker
- Announcements including birthdays, raffle and quiz answers
- Bingo or 'sticky 13s' called by one of the service users or volunteers

Taxi use for service users is booked via an account held with one of two local taxi firms - Southside Cars or NG11. We charge service users a subsidised fee of £2.50p each-way for this service, with the remainder being paid from general funds. Refreshments are charged at a nominal fee; whilst biscuits and cakes are provided by Good Companions, it is not unusual for service users to bring cakes or chocolates to mark a special occasion.

In 2024 the friendship groups were open for 49 weeks; one closure week was due to the January planning week, one week for the Christmas party week, and the third for the Christmas week when staff take annual leave. The friendship groups do not meet on bank holidays.

All of our friendship groups are lead by one paid Co-ordinator plus a number of volunteers. Good Companions would not be able to provide our weekly groups in the same format/cost without the support of these exceptional volunteers and their attendance, enthusiasm and support is very much appreciated.

Clifton Community Centre Friendship Group

The group meets weekly on Monday from 11am to 1pm in the more relaxed bar area of the Community Centre. The location of the venue is excellent with both a regular bus service and tram stops directly outside.

In 2024, the group met 45 times, closures were due to bank holidays and Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance at the group was 22 service users, which is an increase on previous years. We also have 5 regular volunteers who work hard to make the group an enjoyable occasion for everyone in attendance. The register for 2024 contained 45 names, of which 24 attended regularly. The group continues to generate a reasonable income from service users paying for refreshments, bingo etc.

This year we have put in place Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) for all service users who may require assistance when an evacuation situation arises. We also used this opportunity to look at individual needs and make any adjustments that were required in the groups to better support people.

Service users are actively encouraged to get involved with activities and the group do so, particularly enjoying sessions that involve music of any kind (groups or singers, music quizzes, and impromptu singing sessions). This is a lovely group with some real characters and a pleasure to organise and run, and I confirm this again this year.

Parkgate Friendship Group

This group meets weekly on a Friday at the Parkgate Community Centre from 11am to 2pm. For 2024, between 12th January and 13th December, the group met 48 times closing only for Good Friday and Good Companions holidays. Other dates of closure were due to public holidays and Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance was 20 service users, 3 volunteers and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2024 contained a total of 46 names, of which 22 attend regularly. The group continues to generate a reasonable income from service users paying for refreshments, bingo etc.

It continues to be a lively and very friendly group, participating in fundraising, social events, trips, celebration and activities organised by Good Companions as well as Parkgate Community Kitchen. Personal Emergency Evacuation Plans (PEEPS) are in place for all service users attending this group.

We have a close working relationship with staff and volunteers at the centre and as part of our collaborative activities, our service users join other members of the public for lunch, prepared and served by staff and volunteers from the Parkgate Community Kitchen. This enables them to meet up with other friends and family members who live in the area. Good Companions volunteers assist with the serving of hot meals in between the group's activities on a Friday.

There has been some level of uncertainty about the centre remaining open due to cuts in council support. Discussions are taking place about how to move forward with the possibility of council support ceasing completely and local users taking over the running and financial management of the centre but these plans are still at an early discussion stage.

Rivergreen Friendship Group

This friendship group meets each Tuesday morning at the Clifton Methodist Church, 10.00am to 12 noon. Good Companions continue to liaise closely with the church staff and we have a positive working relationship.

At the start of 2024, the register for the Rivergreen Friendship Group contained 38 names; by the end of 2024 there were 37 on the register, with 28 service users regularly attending. Weekly attendance ranged from 15 during a week of snow in November, up to 32 people during the summer. Rivergreen friendship group continues to be very well supported by volunteers, with between four and eight assisting each week. The average number of volunteer attending was five.

An example of the positive impact which Rivergreen friendship group has on attendees would be that of Mrs H and Mrs R; they were introduced to each other at this group and always sit together. The ladies have subsequently formed a close friendship and regularly socialise outside of the friendship group.

There are no recurring issues or concerns with this friendship group.

Silverdale Friendship Group

The Silverdale group has been running since February 2022, with Gwen becoming the coordinator in March 2024. The group meets Monday afternoon at the Silverdale Community Centre, 1.15pm to 3.15pm. The first hour is refreshments and quizzes with the second hour consisting of Hoya and Bingo compered by one of our service users. There are also regular activities such as crafts, singing, Qi Jong and occasionally live music.

At the start of 2024, the register for the Silverdale Friendship Group contained 24 names; currently there are 20 service users on the register with an average of 16 attending each week. However, weekly attendance has ranged from 9 during a period of icy weather, up to 18 people in April 2025.

Silverdale friendship has a brilliant group of 5 regular volunteers, plus an additional 2 who cover in the event of illness and holidays. The weekly average for volunteer attendance is 3-4 with an additional helper for setting up tables and tidying away at the end.

There are some challenges to sharing the space with the pre-school including balancing the needs of the children with the needs of our service users and the temperature of the building. However, the bus service for Silverdale is limited and many of the residents are reluctant to leave the estate to access other groups so for many of the service users this is the only group they consider accessible.

A highlight of the group is the "men's table". This regularly has 6 service users on it and strong friendships have been formed.

Simone Gardens Friendship Group

This group meets each Thursday morning, 10.00am to 12 noon, in the community room at Simone Gardens complex. Good Companions has a positive working relationship with the Independent Living Co-ordinator for this site, Rob Hickling. Nottingham City Council do not charge Good Companions for the use of the community room. We continue to promote services to each other for the benefit of both Simone Gardens residents and Good Companions' service users. The register for the Simone Gardens friendship group started the year with 17 names; by the end of the year, we had 23 names on the register, with a regular attendance of 12 people. Weekly attendance ranged between 6 and 18 over the course of the year. We also regularly have support workers and/or care workers from the local care homes attending with one or more of their residents.

Historically this has the smallest of all of the friendship groups. Attendance is limited by the size of the room but this has the positive effect of creating a supportive and nurturing environment which all service users are able to engage with each other. Simone Gardens' and Lakehead House residents are encouraged to attend the group, by placing posters on the main corridor notice board, and leaflets being posted through the mailboxes of individual flats. This is done in conjunction with the ILC, Rob Hickling.

Volunteer attendance at this group is between one and four per week. The weekly average number of volunteers present is two.

An example of good practice would be our support of Mrs F; she started to attend this friendship group after a long period of convalescence. Initially very anxious, she settled well into the friendship group but remained reluctant to attend our other groups. After around 9 months of attendance Mrs F said that she felt brave enough to try another group.

Home Visiting Scheme

Our home visiting scheme provides a regular visiting volunteer for people who are not easily able to leave their own home. The usual expectation is that a volunteer will visit the service user once a week, for around 60-90 minutes. Since mid-2022 we have operated a 'one out/one in' approach to new referrals; this is due to a reduction in the number of volunteers available to undertaking visiting. Consequently the scheme consequently has a waiting list.

After a referral is received, the new service user will be visited for the initial assessment paperwork to be completed. Due to the frailty or confusion of some potential service users a family member is often present for this meeting. Once a volunteer has agreed to a new visiting arrangement, an introductory meeting is set up between the service user, the volunteer and the Co-ordinator. This provides an opportunity to discuss expectations and arrange the first visit.

Volunteers complete a report each month which details the number of visits and the main discussion points but they are instructed to report concerns to Co-ordinator immediately. The Co-ordinator contacts volunteers on alternate months (by phone call, email or text) to discuss the service user they support and concerns are passed on as appropriate.

The table below shows statistics of the home visiting scheme in 2024 in comparison to the years before.

Fourteen service users were supported by the home visiting scheme in 2024. We received a total of 16 referrals for this service, of which four were set up. See the second table for reasons why the service was not set up in the other cases.

Good Companions' Home Visiting Scheme	2022	2023	2024
No. of people who received Home Visiting support	19	17	14
No. of volunteers providing the service	10	6	7
New referrals to the Scheme	17	14	16
No. of these new referrals who received a service:	9	8**	4
Waiting list at end of the year:	4	4	6

Reasons for non-set up of home visiting:

**Out of the 16 referrals home visiting referrals in 2024 who did not receive support, the reasons for non-carry through comprised of:

Referred service users who did not receive HV support by the end of the year	12
• Individual wished to attend a friendship group rather than home visiting	3
• Deceased or became too unwell between receipt of referral and setting up home visiting	2
• Individual changed their mind regarding receiving a volunteer visitor (only required assistance to complete a form)	1
• Individual lived outside the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale area	1
• Added to waiting list	5

Service User Feedback

In January 2025 we distributed feedback forms to service users at all friendship groups. This asked for views on the services and support which they had received from Good Companions in the preceding year, 2024.

Approximately 85 forms were distributed, with 43 completed responses being received; this represents a 51% return rate. A report was then produced which collated the responses to each of the seven questions.

The following questions were posed:

- Q1 Please could you tell us what we are doing well in the friendship groups.
- Q2 Are there any areas of our service which you feel could be improved upon?
- Q3 Please let us know what you thought about our 'big' events in 2024.
- Q4 Any ideas for other activities within friendship groups?
- Q5 Suggestions for events or talks in 2025.
- Q6 The aim of Good Companions is to reduce loneliness and social isolation. If you wish to share, please tell us a little about whether receiving our services supports you in this area and, if so, how.
- Q7 Anything else to add?

Overview of the 2024 report

- There has been some useful feedback received as part of this audit process; it is great to hear that Good Companions continues to be seen as being so positive and enjoyable an experience in the lives of our service users. Some of the 'areas of improvement' are ongoing (lower temperatures experienced by service users at a couple of our venues during the colder months; the need for announcements to be louder).
- Where suggestions have been made for other activities within the friendship groups these are generally requests for an expansion of activities that are already in place. For example, more crafting activities, other exercise/ movement events in addition to the existing health qi gong sessions, more live entertainment.
- Having service users taking the time to explain how much the friendship groups positively impact on their mental health and lives generally is lovely to read and a wonderful reminder of the benefit of our friendship groups to those who attend.
- Service users taking the time to tell us about how they feel our services support their mental health is a helpful reminder of the benefit of what Good Companions provides. Responses indicated that regular attendance at a friendship group can give service users the motivation to get out and about, reduces loneliness and provides a forum to socialise with friends, as well as giving an opportunity to interact with friends on an equal footing outside of the confines of being 'cared for'.

Just a few of the quotes from service users:

- 'Group is very good, I come for a cuppa and a natter. Staff are friendly and helpful. I find the group great'. JR 2024/37
- 'Everything is always done with feeling and consideration for our needs'. FM 2024/33
- 'Get's me out of the house. It's the only thing that does'. RA 2024/02
- 'Best thing that's ever happened. Look forward to it – near my home. Relaxed, welcoming and have a laugh. Not sitting at home feeling sad and lonely. Something to look forward to'. AB 2024/06
- 'I live on my own and I enjoy the group, it's nice to talk and have a laugh'. JR 2024/37
- 'Attending Good Companions really does help with loneliness and isolation. I look forward to going every week'. SH 2024/26
- 'Meeting other people twice a week is good for me'. KB 2024/05
- 'Major support, helps with loneliness, Alzheimer's – remembering things in quizzes. Friendships develop'. PB 2024/08
- 'Attending Good Companions really does help with loneliness and isolation. I look forward to going every week'. SH 2024/26
- 'Brilliant club, helps to get us out and socialising'. MN 2024/35
- 'It gets me out and allows me to have time with friends on my own!!' TA 2024/03
- 'Gives me a chance to keep in contact with other people outside the family'. JH 2024/25
- 'Making friends. Nice to get out on your own'. IJ 2024/28
- 'Thank you for all you do'. TG 2024/23
- 'Keep up the good work'. WEW 2024/43

Marketing

Good Companions has continued to retain a presence on the 'Do It' website via the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) as well as on the Nottingham City Council's (NCC) 'Ask Lion' website. Our own Good Companions Facebook posts are regularly shared on local Facebook pages – 'This is Wilford'; 'The Clifton Community Group'; 'NG11 Community Page'; 'Silverdale Wilford & Clifton'; and 'Clifton/Barton Green Community'. Our website has been improved and is regularly updated.

Regular articles have been produced and printed in our Clifton Local News, promoting our services and seeking new volunteers. In addition, verbal reports on Good Companions have been given at meetings of the Clifton Town Board and the AFN Steering Group, when the opportunities arise, which are held online via Zoom/Microsoft Teams or in person. It has also been promoted at various events including the annual conference organised by the UK Network for Ageing Better, the AFN Event in Nottingham Market Square, the Nottingham Trent University Volunteer Fair, and at the AFN International Older Person's Day event, the Clifton 'Fun days' in the Clifton Flower Park, and at various fundraising events. Marketing materials used have included leaflets, a 'flag' for external use, and banners for internal use. In addition, the 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, located in a wide range of venues throughout the local community, have continually promoted Good Companions and raised awareness of our charity, organised by Alma Davies and Jacky Holmes.

A regular Good Companions newsletter is produced and circulated to all service users, volunteers, key stakeholders and individuals in the local community. This promotes our activities and keeps everyone informed of future events.

Funding

This has remained a constant area of concern, particularly with the increasingly difficult financial climate, with cuts to voluntary and social services and increases in rent and taxi fares. The charity is constantly looking at different ways of reducing our overheads as well as increasing income. Consequently, we have continued with monthly bulk purchasing for refreshments and other items for our Friendship groups, which was introduced 2 years ago.

We continue to be very grateful to those businesses in Clifton, who have regularly provided items for refreshments, raffles, tombola's and bingo prizes for our Friendship Groups and for use at fundraising events. Many of them have also taken a 'Keep the Change' donation collection box, which has raised a significant amount of money for Good Companions each year.

Whilst the significant grant from People's Health Trust came to an end during 2023, we have been fortunate to obtain a number of grants with the help of our Honorary Fundraiser, Andrew Price. However, these were fewer than the previous year but all have contributed to the general running costs of Good Companions, which have been much appreciated. These include grants from the Peoples Health Trust, the Grocers Hall charity, Co-operative Local Community Fund (Members Choice), Nottingham Community Foundation (CRS Fund), A W Lymns, Nottingham Junior Law Society, HSKS Accountants and the Clifton Community Family Support Group. In addition, we have received generous donations from service users, volunteers, local individuals and businesses.

A number of planned fundraising events took place during the year, which have significantly contributed to our income with grateful thanks to the Events and Local Fundraising sub-group, our Co-ordinators and volunteers.

The experience of working with the Independent Examiners, CA Plus, to produce our accounts for the last 3 years made the process for the 2024 accounts so much easier – with thanks to our Treasurer supported by Cllr Andrew Rule.

Conclusion

The past year has been very busy as we have continued to focus on delivering what is clearly a much-needed service to people in our local community.

The hard work and support of our Co-ordinators and volunteers, and many in our local community, has been very much appreciated by our service users. It has enabled Good Companions to continue to support so many people, to enrich lives and we hope, to make a positive difference to someone's day. It is a privilege to hear how much Good Companions means to people who may be struggling to manage with health issues, with social isolation and with loneliness.

Whilst our funding position has reduced by the end of the year, we are still in a good financial position to take us into 2025 due to all those involved with raising funds. However, more will need to be done to ensure our income is continued for the future, particularly with the demand for grants from so many charities like our own.

We look forward to implementing the new Management Structure in 2025 and the impact this will have on Good Companions in the coming years.

Good Companions
(Registered charity, number 1144729)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 December 2024

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2 - 4	Trustees' annual report
5	Independent examiner's report
6	Receipts & payments account
7	Statement of assets & liabilities
8 - 9	Notes to the accounts

**Good Companions
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

Full name Good Companions

Registered charity number 1144729

Principal address

Clifton Cornerstone
Southchurch Drive
Nottingham
NG11 8EW

Trustees

Clare Ashton, Chairman
Christine Breeton, Treasurer
Allan Breeton, Vice Chairman

Independent examiner

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 01/01/2000 and most recently amended 05/10/2011.

As set out in our governing document, membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations approved by the Trustees.

Objectives and activities

The relief of elderly persons, being over 60 years of age, and those below that age who have need for such services, living in the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area by such means as are recognised as charitable within the law of England and Wales as the Trustees shall determine and particularly but not exclusively by:

- The provision of a Befriending and Visiting Service;
- The provision of advice, information and support for such persons and their carers;
- The training of volunteers.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our main activities undertaken for the public benefit include:

1. Provision of a home visiting service and friendship groups;
2. Provision of activities, events and trips;
3. Recruitment, training and supervision of volunteers.

Good Companions

Public benefit statement

The charity reduces the isolation and loneliness of vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area which improves their health and wellbeing.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Summary of the main achievements during the period

The charity has continued with its key activities - organising a Home Visiting Scheme and 5 weekly Friendship Groups in Clifton, Parkgate and Silverdale Community Centres, Simone Gardens and Rivergreen Methodist Hub. Service users have enjoyed a wide range of activities including Health Qigong, pamper sessions, 'sing alongs' and talks from the police and fire service, events, trips, including a Cinema afternoon at a local church, and the annual visit to the pantomime.

Referrals for our services have continued to be received from a wide range of sources but particularly from social prescribers and community connectors. These have been followed up and potential service users assessed for either home visiting or attendance at a Friendship group.

Volunteers have continued to be recruited, trained and supported, and invited to a Volunteer's garden party and Christmas gathering.

Fundraising activities have focussed on grant applications, raffles, donation appeals, tombolas, market stalls, a car wash in conjunction with the local Fire Station, and 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, as well as very successful and enjoyable social and fundraising events - a Quiz and Fish & Chip supper evening, a Christmas party, Easter and Harvest themed events, and jigsaw and book swaps with lunch.

Communication and promotion has been achieved through a regular newsletter, leaflets, local Facebook pages, as well as our own Facebook page and website, articles in the local Clifton news, Zoom meetings and WhatsApp groups. Promotion has also been facilitated through representation on a variety of local groups.

The Management Committee has met regularly supported by a number of subgroups.

A more detailed report with statistics will be produced for the AGM incorporating this information.

We are very grateful to all our grant funders, to those who support us in the local community financially with donations or gifts in kind or have one of our collection boxes, attend our fundraising events or give their time through a variety of volunteering activities as well as the invaluable hardwork of our part-time Co-ordinators and volunteers, all of which enable us to make a real difference to the vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale.

Good Companions

Financial review

Despite the increase in the cost of living and increases in rent and taxi fares, we have managed to maintain our income although we have not received as many grants as we have done in the past.

The charity's policy on reserves

We maintain a designated reserve of £12,000 to provide cover should we be unable to attract grants or raise sufficient funds through fund raising activities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed CC Ashton
Clare Ashton, Trustee

Date 24/2/25

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

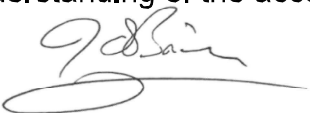
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 25/02/2025
John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

Good Companions
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 December 2024

2023				2024	
Total			Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Funds			Funds	Funds	Funds
£		Note	£	£	£
	Receipts				
27919	Grants & donations	2	8169	4624	12793
7496	Fundraising		5501	-	5501
20132	Friendship Group income		20784	-	20784
2350	Taxis		2967	-	2967
648	Bank interest		836	-	836
342	Sundry receipts		112	-	112
<u>58887</u>	Total receipts		<u>38369</u>	<u>4624</u>	<u>42993</u>
	Payments				
27873	Wages, NI & pension		29125	3804	32929
141	Training		-	916	916
985	Professional services		1260	-	1260
477	Insurance		536	-	536
1395	Printing & stationery		987	-	987
1077	Equipment, IT & comms		907	-	907
350	DBS & ID		291	-	291
4780	Friendship Group expenditure		1902	2703	4605
4788	Room hire		5255	-	5255
116	Sundry payments		276	-	276
3890	Taxis		4104	-	4104
-	Rent		628	-	628
<u>45872</u>	Total payments		<u>45271</u>	<u>7423</u>	<u>52694</u>
13015	Net receipts/(payments)		(6902)	(2799)	(9701)
<u>66347</u>	Cash funds at start of this period		<u>76563</u>	<u>2799</u>	<u>79362</u>
79362	Cash funds at end of this period		69661	-	69661

Good Companions
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2024

2023			2024
£	Cash assets	Note	£
79271	Bank accounts		69561
91	Cash in hand		100
<u>79362</u>			<u>69661</u>
	Other monetary assets		
306	Debtors	4	1350
<u>306</u>			<u>1350</u>
	Liabilities		
(552)	Creditors - Independent examination fee		(612)
<u>(552)</u>			<u>(612)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed CBreton Date 22.2.25
 Christine Breeton, Trustee

Good Companions
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2024

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
Grocers Hall Charity	-	3720	3720
Nottingham CM NCF	-	465	465
A.W. Lymn	257	389	646
Rivergreen Medical Centre	50	50	100
Co-operative	1970	-	1970
Nottingham Junior Law Society	625	-	625
Gift Aid	522	-	522
CCFSG	400	-	400
HSKS Accounting Ltd	280	-	280
Sundry grants & donations	4065	-	4065
	8169	4624	12793

3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance	Receipts (Payments)		Closing balance
	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds				
Clifton Friendship Project	1000	-	(1000)	-
Wellbeing	1799	-	(1799)	-
Lead Co-ordinator salary	-	3720	(3720)	-
Christmas parties	-	904	(904)	-
	2799	4624	(7423)	-
Unrestricted funds				
General	57563	38369	(45271)	50661
Reserves	12000	-	-	12000
Restructuring	5000	-	-	5000
Equipment replacement	2000	-	-	2000
	76563	38369	(45271)	69661

Good Companions

The Clifton Friendship Project – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Clifton Friendship Project.

Wellbeing – These funds are for covering the cost of Health & Wellbeing events.

The Lead Co-ordinator salary fund - These contribute toward the Lead Co-ordinator salary.

Christmas parties – These funds were to cover the cost of Christmas parties.

4. Debtors

	£
Insurance - prepayment	343
HMRC - Employment Allowance claim	1007
	<u>1350</u>

5. Related party transactions

There were no related party transactions in this period.

6. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

7. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Debtors: These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2024**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2024.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

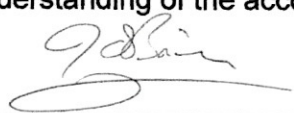
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2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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Signed  Date 25/02/2025
John O'Brien MSc, FAIA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales - Charity number 1144729

Accounts



Registered Charity No: 1144729

Reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale

Good Companions Annual Report 2023

Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator

Dee Stirland, CFP Co-ordinator

Louise Compton, Silverdale Co-ordinator

Clare Ashton, Chair, Management Committee

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Background

Good Companions was established in 2001 in response to a survey carried out within the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham by the Social Action Research Project. The survey identified many older people living alone and socially isolated due to lack of available support from family, friends, statutory or voluntary services. A Health Action Group was set up by the local Nottingham City Council Area Committee, which undertook further consultation with older local people, statutory services and other interested parties. As a consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Home Visiting scheme for these areas to address this unmet need and Good Companions was established. It was supported by an initial 3-year grant to fund a part-time co-ordinator and set up costs. The visiting scheme arranged for volunteers to meet with service users in their own homes on a regular basis for conversation, friendship, and support.

In 2003, the Visiting Scheme was supplemented by the formation of a weekly friendship group. This was in response to requests from service users themselves, as well as the recognition that older people would benefit from making new friends outside their own homes, increasing their independence, self-confidence, and social interaction, thus reducing their social isolation. We now have five weekly friendship groups – four in Clifton and one in Silverdale.

Aims of Good Companions

To reduce loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale. We do this by offering the opportunity for people to attend one of our 5 friendship groups or by providing a home visiting service for those in our community who are housebound.

Over-view of 2023

During the last year, Good Companions has focussed on its key activities of organising and running 5 weekly Friendship groups and its Home Visiting service. It has also organised a number of social and fundraising events for service users, their families and others in the local community to enjoy. One of the key highlights in 2023 was an event to celebrate the King's Coronation. The more streamlined Management Committee, implemented after the last AGM, and supported by 3 subgroups, has worked well, with a Vice Chair now in post and with the Lead Co-ordinator in attendance at each meeting.

Management Committee 2023

Officers and Trustees

- Chairman Clare Ashton
- Vice Chair Allan Breeton
- Treasurer Christine Breeton
- Secretary Vacant

Members

- Alma Davies Volunteer
- Cllr Andrew Rule Volunteer
- Cllr Kevin Clarke Volunteer
- Jacky Holmes Volunteer

In Attendance

- Sarah Cox Lead Coordinator

The Management Committee met 5 times during the year, including an extraordinary meeting, and in addition to the AGM.

Subgroups

To support the Management Committee and to involve more volunteers, 4 subgroups have continued to meet some in person and others via Zoom, and some more regularly than others. These are as follows:-

- Policies & Procedures (led by Dee Stirland)
- Events & Local Fundraising (led by Sarah Cox)
- Social Media (in abeyance)
- Strategic Finance (led by Clare Ashton)

Policies & Procedures subgroup

Members

- Dee Stirland (lead)
- Sue Foster
- Sue Hands
- Allan Breeton

The group was put in place to formalise some working policies for Good Companions. Much of the work is research based and often time consuming so we have no formal structure of meetings in place. Active policies are:

- Confidentiality
- Finance
- General Data Protection
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Website privacy

This year the group has been less active in producing policies due to the work load of the group leader and the complexities of the policies being looked at (Health & Safety and Equality & Diversity). However, following discussions with some members of the Management Group, it is hoped that significant progress will be made on these policies during the next few months.

Events & Local Fundraising Subgroup

Members

- Clare Ashton
- Kevin Clarke
- Sarah Cox (Lead)
- Dee Stirland
- Louise Compton (stepped down in spring 2023)
- June Walker

The remit of the Events & Local Fundraising subgroup is to create an events calendar for the year, and then to plan and execute this. Some of the activities are purely social or promotional, some purely fundraising, and many are a combination. The subgroup meets via Zoom and convened on 10 occasions in 2023. In between those full group Zoom meetings the Co-ordinators met to finalise details for the larger events.

We aim to build on the event successes of previous years and so continue to hold an annual afternoon tea, quiz & supper event, pantomime trip and Christmas parties. We have also begun a tradition of large seasonal events to

which all Good Companions' service users are invited; these are an Easter event, end of the summer party, and Harvest-themed session. The amount raised through the activities of this subgroup in 2023 is £6,529.03. For full details of the 2023 Events calendar, please see *Appendix A*

Social Media subgroup

This group was originally set up to use the reach and influence of social media for the benefit of Good Companions. Its focus was on maintaining and updating the Good Companions website and Facebook - highlighting forthcoming events, celebrating recent events and providing useful information. Unfortunately, this group has continued in abeyance until a new lead can be found. However, the Facebook page has been updated fairly regularly during the past year with the assistance of Kim Ward and Alma Davies. Our website has also been updated with the assistance of Gary Breeton and this remains in progress.

Strategic Finance subgroup

Members

- Clare Ashton (Lead)
- Allan Breeton
- Christine Breeton
- Cllr Andrew Rule
- Andrew Price

This subgroup is to provide a strategic overview of the charities' finances- setting the budget; monitoring its income and expenditure; producing a financial plan to support the ongoing and future activities to ensure sustainability; identifying opportunities for fundraising through grants and other sources and ensuring implementation of any agreed action; and ensuring compliance with Charity Commission requirements and with good financial practices and regulations. During the year, the group met formally approximately every 3 months. Its activities support both our Treasurer and Fundraiser.

Good Companions is represented on other Committees, as follows:

- Clifton Volunteer Forum(Area 7)
- Clifton Advice Centre Management Committee
- Age Friendly Nottingham Steering Group and Core Group (AFN)
- Volunteer Co-ordinator and Managers Network (NCVS)
- Clifton Collective Impact Initiative

Staffing

The official base for Good Companions is the Clifton Cornerstone, Southchurch Drive, located on the first floor within the NCC Neighbourhood Team. However, most of the Co-ordinators' time is spent in the local community or working from home. The desk phone is checked for messages 3 times each week by the Co-ordinators, and the mail is checked/collected at least once a week.

- Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator, is employed 22 hours per week and her remit includes running the Rivergreen and Simone Gardens friendship groups and the Home Visiting Scheme, as well as being responsible for the recruitment and support of volunteers, and events and activities.
- Delia Stirland, was employed 16 hours per week as the Clifton Friendship Project Co-ordinator for the last 2 years, with her salary being paid for

from a grant from the People's Health Trust. As this grant ended in July 2023, she has continued as a Co-ordinator, running the Clifton Community Centre and Parkgate Friendship groups, as well as undertaking various administrative tasks including the maintenance of our database, and events and activities.

- Louise Compton commenced as the Silverdale Friendship Group Co-ordinator at the end of January 2022 working 7.5 hours per week, with the first year of her salary funded by Boots Charitable Trust. During the past year, her hours were reduced to 6 hours per week. Her remit was to run the Silverdale Friendship group, support events and activities, and stand in at the Clifton Community Centre Friendship group as necessary.

Volunteers

We commenced 2023 with 32 volunteers, and ended the year with 34. Over the course of the year we said goodbye to four volunteers and welcomed six new people to join the team. We also secured the attendance of three Nottingham Trent University students as one-off volunteers on our stall at Ruddington Village Christmas Market.

All new volunteers who provide support within the friendship groups will be processed for a Basic DBS through Good Companions. Those who volunteer as part of our Home Visiting Scheme have a new Basic DBS check every 3 years.

Support to the volunteer team includes a once or twice-yearly volunteers' meeting, regular phone calls from one of the Co-ordinators, and periodic mini-meetings/debriefs at the end of friendship groups. We also organise a volunteers' summer garden party and a pre-Christmas get-together with buffet. We believe that we offer a positive and supportive volunteering environment; our volunteers tell us that they find the experience enjoyable.

Recruitment

Our recruitment of new volunteers progresses at a consistent pace. We continue to advertise through our Facebook page, inclusion in the 'Do It' and 'Ask Lion' web pages, Nottingham Community Voluntary Service (NCVS) database, Nottingham Trent University student volunteering bulletin boards. In addition, our promotional leaflet invites people to contact us if they wish to volunteer. Good Companions is very grateful for additional volunteers who join us to support at special events; these are generally found through word-of-mouth or through their historical support.

All prospective volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview with two people - usually two of the Co-ordinators; this gives an opportunity to get to know each other and ask questions. Before they commence volunteering with us the following is undertaken:

- Two references are requested
- An induction meeting is arranged and they are given an induction folder
- The volunteer signs a volunteering and a confidentiality agreement
- Issued with an ID photo card
- An agreement is made as to which part of our services the volunteer will be supporting within

We continue with the use of a volunteers' WhatsApp chat group for which the Co-ordinators have administrative responsibility. This allows the volunteers to

have informal contact with each other outside of the friendship groups should they wish it, and enables Co-ordinators to inform volunteers of new events and check availability for specific activities. Email is used as the primary way to disseminate information to volunteers.

Training

Training for volunteers has been offered in the following subject areas:

- **Emergency First Aid:** (last provided in early 2020). It was decided that Co-ordinators rather than volunteers will attend Emergency First Aid at Work courses; staff will be booked onto a course with St. John's in 2024.
- **Dementia awareness:** (last provided in October 2023). This was provided to our volunteers by the Radford Care Group in October 2023 and was attended by 18 volunteers. It is next booked for March 2024.
- **Food Hygiene:** (last provided in early 2020). We are currently looking into the feasibility of providing this for volunteers who have a specific role within the friendship groups
- **Adult Safeguarding:** The Management Committee have decided that all volunteers need to complete this training within each three year period. This is next booked for June 2024.

Good Companions continues to be open to providing such training to volunteers as is beneficial to the provision of our services.

Referrals to Good Companions in 2023

All referrals receive a phone response from the Lead Co-ordinator and services are arranged at that point. Copies of the referral form and notes from Good Companions' initial assessments are then sent to the relevant friendship group Co-ordinator. For referrals which appear to be more complex cases (for instance where the individual has a diagnosis of dementia, mental health support needs, or requires Home Visiting) a meeting will be set up to gather further information. This is necessary in the field of community work where our aim is to provide a person-centred approach to support.

We received 68 referrals for services in 2023. This is comprised of 40 for friendship groups, 25 for home visiting, and 3 that were indeterminate. Of these, 32 had progressed to receiving a service (47%) and 36 did not receive a service (53%).

- See table 1 for a breakdown of referrals by month
- See table 2 for a breakdown of reasons for non-provision of service by month
- See table 3 for a breakdown of origin of referrals in 2023

We categorise the origin of the referral as being: (i) walk-ins into a friendship group, (ii) self-referrals, (iii) family/friends, and (iv) case holders/professionals. In 2023 our 68 referrals comprised of:

- 13 walk-ins into our friendship groups (19%)
- 4 self-referrals (6%)
- 10 referrals from family/friends (15%)
- 41 referrals from case holders or other professionals (60%)
-

Table 1. Breakdown of referrals to Good Companions by month 2023:

MONTH	REFERRALS RECEIVED				OUTCOME	
	Total	Categorised into:				
		Friendship group	Home Visiting	Non-specific	Positive outcome (service in place)	Negative outcome
January	6	2	3	1	3	3
February	10	9	-	1	8	2
March	9	5	4	-	4	5
April	7	4	2	1	3	4
May	3	3	-	-	2	1
June	7	1	6	-	3	4
July	6	6	-	-	2	4
August	6	1	5	-	1	5
Sept	1	1	-	-	1	-
October	4	3	1	-	2	2
November	7	4	3	-	2	5
December	2	1	1	-	1	1
Total	68	40	25	3	32	36

Table 2. Breakdown of reasons for services not put in place for 2023:

MONTH	Total	Categorised into:				
		Service declined	Non-engagement	Out of area (for HV)	No longer required	Other
January	3	-	1	1	1	
February	2	-	1	-	1	
March	5	1	3	-	-	1 (service not suitable)
April	4	1	2	-	1	
May	1	1	-	-	-	
June	4	1	1	-	2	
July	4	-	1	-	1	2 (ongoing health issues)
August	5	-	2	2	1	
Sept	-	-	-	-	-	
October	2	1	1	-	-	
November	5	2	2	-	1	
December	1	-	1	-	-	
Total	36	7	15	3	8	3

Table 3. Breakdown of origin of referrals to Good Companions in 2023:

Origin of referral		Number	Percentage
Walk-ins		13	19%
Self-referrals		4	6%
Family/friends		10	15%
Case holders/ professionals		41	60%
	Age UK	(3)	
	Care agency	(1)	
	Clifton Advice Centre	(2)	
	Community Connector	(10)	
	Hospice	(1)	
	Independent Age	(2)	
	Mental Health teams	(2)	
	Re-ablement Team	(3)	
	Social Care teams	(2)	
	Social Prescribers	(11)	
	Social Prescribing Care Navigator	(4)	
Total:		41	100%

Friendship Groups

All of our five Friendship Groups follow a similar format:

- Welcome, drinks served, chat and completion of quizzes or word searches
- Activity session; Qi Gong (tai chi), crafting or a guest speaker
- Announcements, birthdays, quiz answers.
- Bingo or Hoya called by one of the service users or volunteers

Taxi use for service users is booked via an account held with 1 of 2 local taxi firms. We charge service users a fee of £2.50p each-way for this service, with the remainder being paid from general funds. Refreshments continue to be served at a nominal cost; whilst biscuits and cakes are provided by Good Companions, it is not unusual for service users to bring cakes or chocolates to mark a special occasion.

In 2023 the friendship groups were open for 49 weeks; 1 closure week was due to the January planning week, one week for the Christmas party week, and the third for the Christmas week when staff take annual leave. The groups do not meet on bank holidays.

All of our friendship groups are lead by one paid Co-ordinator plus a number of volunteers. Good Companions would not be able to provide our weekly groups in the same format/cost without the support of these exceptional volunteers and their attendance, enthusiasm and support is very much appreciated.

Rivergreen Friendship Group

This friendship group meets each Tuesday morning at the Clifton Methodist Church, 10.00am to 12 noon. Good Companions continue to liaise closely with the church staff and we have a positive working relationship.

At the start of 2023, the register for the Rivergreen Friendship Group contained 42 names, of which 30 regularly attended. By the end of 2023 there were 38 on the register, with 28 regular attendees. Our highest attendance at a regular friendship group was on 28th February with 34 service users being present and the lowest recorded attendance was on 28th August with only 19 people at the group; temperatures this week had been very high. We also had quite low number of attendance figures for two weeks when the temperature had been close to freezing. The average weekly attendance over the course of the year (including increases for special activities) was 27.

Rivergreen friendship group continues to be well supported by volunteers, with between 3 and 8 supporting each week, the weekly average was 5.

An example of the positive impact which Rivergreen friendship group has on attendees would that of Mr C and Mr L. They were introduced to each other at this friendship group and usually sit together; Mr L now regularly collects Mr C in his car and they travel to a couple of friendship groups together each week. There are no regular issues or concerns with this friendship group.

Simone Gardens Friendship Group

This group meets each Thursday morning, 10.00am to 12 noon, in the community room at Simone Gardens complex. We have a good working relationship with the Independent Living Co-ordinator for this site. Nottingham City Council do not charge Good Companions for the use of this venue. We continue to promote services to each other for the benefit of both Simone Gardens residents and Good Companions' service users.

The register for the Simone Gardens friendship group started the year with 24 names, and 16 people regularly attending. By the end of the year, we had 23 names on the register, with a regular attendance of 12. The highest group attendance was on 16th March with 20 service users being present and the lowest attendance was on 26th October with 8 people present. We regularly have support workers and/or care workers from the local care homes attending with their residents. The average weekly attendance over the course of the year (including increases for special activities) was 13.

Historically this has been the smallest of all of the friendship groups. Attendance is limited by the size of the room but this has the positive effect of creating a supportive and nurturing environment where all service users are able to engage with each other. Simone Gardens' and Lakehead House residents are encouraged to attend the group, by placing posters on the main corridor notice board, and leaflets being posted through individual flats. This is done in conjunction with the ILC.

Volunteer attendance at this group is between 1 and 4 per week. The weekly average number of volunteers present is 2.

An example of good practice would be our support of Mrs S. She is a resident of Simone Gardens and, until recently, attended the group independently. A number of falls at home caused a stay in hospital and she now uses a wheelchair for the ease of mobility outside of her home. When she is ready to attend the group, she will phone me and one of the volunteers will go to support her attendance in her wheelchair.

There have been occasional issues with the heating in the communal area not working. This has been resolved with the ILC.

Parkgate Friendship Group

This group meets weekly on a Friday at the Parkgate Community Centre from 11am to 2pm. For 2023, the group met 47 times, having been closed for 2 weeks in April, Good Friday 7th and Friday 14th due to the venue being closed, the other dates of closure were due to public holidays and Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance was 23 service users, 3 volunteers and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2023 contained a total of 46 names, of which 25 attend regularly.

The funding from People's Health Trust ended this year but the group continues to generate a reasonable amount towards its expenditure. The income comes from service users paying for refreshments, bingo etc.

It continues to be a lively and very friendly group, participating in fundraising, social events, trips, celebration and activities organised by Good Companions as well as Parkgate Community Kitchen. We have a close working relationship with staff and volunteers at the centre and as part of our collaborative activities, our service users join other members of the public for lunch, prepared and served by staff and volunteers from the Parkgate Community Kitchen. This enables them to meet up with other friends and family members who live in the area. Good Companions volunteers assist with the serving of hot meals in between the group's activities on a Friday.

Clifton Community Centre Friendship Group

The group meets weekly on Monday from 11am to 1pm in the more relaxed bar area of the Community Centre. The location of the venue is excellent with both a regular bus service and tram stops directly outside.

In 2023, the group met 43 times, the other 9 dates being missed due to bank holidays and Good Companions closures. The average weekly attendance at the group was 20 service users, 5 volunteers, and the co-ordinator. The register for 2023 contained 44 names, of which 24 attended regularly.

As with the Parkgate group, the funding from People's Health Trust ended this year but the group continues to generate a reasonable income from service users paying for refreshments, bingo etc.

Service users are actively encouraged to get involved with activities and during the year we have had poetry written and read by them and a significant increase in the number of people taking part in different games. This is a lovely group with some real characters and a pleasure to organise and run.

Silverdale Friendship Group

The Silverdale group has been running since February 2022. It meets weekly at the Silverdale Community Centre on Monday afternoons from 1.15pm to 3.15pm in the main hall. The group is organised by a Co-ordinator supported by up to 6 volunteers. The volunteers also help to support individual service users with additional one to one interaction so that they are able to join in with all the activities such as the bingo, our weekly singing session, quizzes and the other games and activities that we offer.

The bus service in Silverdale is very minimal, and many of the service users are in their eighties and nineties and therefore this is the only accessible group for the majority of them.

Service users are encouraged and helped to make choices within the group and to achieve this we consult with them regularly on what kind of things that they enjoy and what they would like to introduce/ change. The group is very friendly and welcoming and service users' feedback indicates that they enjoy coming to the group and have made many new friends.

Home Visiting Scheme

Our Home Visiting Scheme provides a regular visitor for people who are not easily able to leave their own home. The usual expectation is that a volunteer will visit the service user once a week, for around 60-90 minutes. Since mid-2022 we have operated a 'one out/one in' approach to new referrals. This is due to a reduction in the number of volunteers available to undertake visiting; the Scheme consequently always has a waiting list.

After a referral is received, the Lead Co-ordinator will visit the new service user in order to complete initial assessment paperwork. Due to the frailty or confusion of some potential service users a family member is often present for this meeting. Once a volunteer has been identified, an introductory meeting is set up between the service user, volunteer and the Co-ordinator. This meeting provides an opportunity to discuss expectations and set up the first visit.

Volunteers complete a report each month. This report details the number of visits and the main discussion points but they are instructed to report concerns to Co-ordinator immediately. The Co-ordinator contacts the Home Visiting Scheme volunteers on alternate months (by phone call, email or text) to discuss the service user they support and concerns are passed on as appropriate.

The table below shows statistics of the Home Visiting Scheme in 2023 in comparison to the years before.

Seventeen service users were supported by the Home Visiting Scheme in 2023. We received 14 referrals for this service, of which eight were set up. See the second table for reasons why the service was not set up in these six cases.

Good Companions' Home Visiting Scheme	2022	2023
No. of people who received Home Visiting support	19	17
No. of volunteers providing the service	10	6

No. of visiting hours provided in total since	274	282
New referrals to the Scheme	17	14
No. of these new referrals who received a service:	9	8**
Waiting list at end of the year:	4	4

Reasons for non-set up of Home Visiting Scheme support:

******Out of the six referrals who did not receive support from the Home Visiting in 2023, the reasons for non-carry through comprised of:

Referred service users who did not receive HV support by the end of the year	6
Individual changed their mind regarding receiving a volunteer visitor	1
Services from other agencies in place before they reached the top of our waiting list.	2
Added to waiting list	3

Service User Feedback

In late January 2024 we distributed feedback forms to service users at all friendship groups. This asked for views on the services and support which they had received from Good Companions in the preceding year, 2023.

Approximately 95 forms were distributed, with 52 completed responses being received; this represents a 55% return rate. A report was then produced which collated the responses to each of the seven questions.

Overview of the 2023 service user feedback

- There were some great comments received as part of this auditing process. It continues to be gratifying that our friendship groups are regarded as being so valuable within the lives of those who attend.
- There is a sense that Good Companions is regarded as being a community.
- Respondents appeared willing to share their honest view of services - both positive opinions and areas for improvement. There was a trend in responses to request more exercise-type activities in addition to our current monthly schedule of health qi gong. Additional talks have also been requested.
- Service users taking the time to tell us about their mental health in responses is a helpful reminder of the benefit of catch-up chats with service users within the friendship groups. The vast majority of respondents state that their attendance at the friendship groups and the knowledge that we are there to offer support is a positive factor in their lives.

Just a few of the quotes from service users:

- *Friendship and making you feel part of a group.* TA 2023/03
- *It gets me out of the house. I love meeting people and it gives them confidence to come here.* LB 2023/09
- *Keeps brain and body active "needed to enjoy old age".* JE 2023/15
- *I receive a very warm welcome which is lovely, especially if you come alone and maybe [feel] anxious. It gets us out of the house.* RE 2023/16

A copy of the full report is available on request.

Marketing

Good Companions has continued to retain a presence on the 'Do It' website via the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) as well as on the Nottingham City Council's (NCC) 'Ask Lion' website. Our own Good Companions Facebook posts are regularly shared on local Facebook pages – 'This is Wilford'; 'The Clifton Community Group'; 'NG11 Community Page'; 'Silverdale Wilford & Clifton'; and 'Clifton/Barton Green Community'. Our website is being updated.

Regular articles have been produced and printed in our Clifton Local News, promoting our services and seeking new volunteers. In addition, verbal reports on Good Companions have been given at meetings of the NCC Area 7 Clifton Volunteer Forum and the AFN Steering Group, held online via Zoom/Microsoft Teams or in person. It has also been promoted at various events including the annual conference organised by the UK Network for Ageing Better, the AFN Event in Nottingham Market Square, the Nottingham Trent University Volunteer Fair, and at the AFN International Older Person's Day event, the Clifton 'Fun days' in the Clifton Flower Park, and at various fundraising events. Marketing materials used have included leaflets, a 'flag' for external use, and banners for internal use. In addition, the 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, located in a wide range of venues throughout the local community, have continually promoted Good Companions and raised awareness of our charity.

Funding

This has remained a constant area of concern, particularly with the increasingly difficult financial climate, with cuts to voluntary and social services and increases in rent and taxi fares. The charity is constantly looking at different ways of reducing our overheads as well as increasing income. Consequently, we have continued with monthly bulk purchasing for refreshments and other items for our Friendship groups, which was introduced the previous year.

We continue to be very grateful to those businesses in Clifton, who have regularly provided items for refreshments, raffles, tombola's and bingo prizes for our Friendship Groups and for use at fundraising events. Many of them have also taken a 'Keep the Change' donation collection box, which has raised a significant amount of money for Good Companions each year.

Unfortunately, the grant from the People's Health Trust ended in July and the grant from the Boots Charitable Trust ended at the beginning of 2023. However, with the help of our Honorary Fundraiser, Andrew Price, we were awarded a number of grants which have contributed to the general running costs of Good Companions, which have been much appreciated. These include grants from the Peoples Health Trust, the Thomas Farr Charity, the Jones Charitable Trust, Bridges Trust, the Co-operative Local Community Fund, The Helen Hamlin Trust, J.N.Derbyshire Trust, The McCarthy & Stone Foundation, Notts RTC Fund, A W Lymns, Warburtons Charitable Foundation and the Masonic Lodge (Clifton). In addition, we have received generous donations from service users, volunteers, local individuals and businesses.

A number of planned fundraising events took place during the year, which have significantly contributed to our income with grateful thanks to the Events and Local Fundraising sub-group, our Co-ordinators and volunteers.

The experience of working with the Independent Examiners, CA Plus, to produce our accounts for the last 2 years made the process for the 2023 accounts so much easier – with thanks to our Treasurer supported by Cllr Andrew Rule.

Conclusion

The past year has been very busy as we have continued to focus on delivering what is clearly a much needed service to people in our local community (in a year without the impact of the pandemic).

The hard work and support of our Co-ordinators and volunteers, and many in our local community, has been very much appreciated by our service users. It has enabled Good Companions to continue to support so many people, to enrich lives and we hope, to make a positive difference to someone's day. It is a privilege to hear how much Good Companions means to people who may be struggling to manage with health issues, with social isolation and with loneliness.

Thankfully, our funding position has been maintained thanks to all those involved but more will need to be done to ensure our income is continued for the future, particularly given the current financial pressures and the end of two of our grants during 2023. We are committed to rising to this challenge.

APPENDIX A

Good Companions' Events & Local Fundraising subgroup 2023

Membership: Sarah Cox (Lead), Clare Ashton, Kevin Clarke, Dee Stirland, June Walker

MONTH	ACTIVITY	LEAD
January	'Winter warmer' soup & pudding events Donations	All groups
February	-	-
March	Luncheon event Tues 7 th March, Rivergreen friendship group	Sarah
April	Easter fun day Tues 4 th April	Sarah
	Grand Easter raffle	Dee
May	Jigsaw & book swap + lunch Tues 2 nd May	Sarah
	Coronation afternoon tea Sat 13 th May	Dee
June	Jigsaw & book swap + afternoon tea Mon 5 th June, Silverdale friendship group	Louise
	Stall on Clifton market (outside Iceland) Fri 23 rd June	Clare
July	Jigsaw & book swap + lunch Mon 2 nd July	Dee
	Mob picnic Wed 19 th July, cancelled	Sarah
August	Summer garden party for volunteers Sat 19 th August	Clare
	Summer party for GC service users Mon 21 st August	Dee
Sept	Clifton Market (outside Iceland) Sat 2 nd September	Clare
	Quiz & supper evening Thurs 14 th September	Sarah
	Jigsaw & book swap + lunch Tues 26 th September	Sarah
October	Harvest festival fun day Tues 10 th October	Sarah
	Jigsaw & book swap + lunch Mon 23 rd October	Dee
Nov	Cinema & popcorn event Wed 1 st November, cancelled	Clare
Dec	Grand Christmas raffle	Dee
	Clifton Christmas lights 'switch on' Friday 1 st December	Dee/Clare
	Ruddington Village Market Sat 2 nd December	Sarah
	Nottm Playhouse panto Wed 13 th December	Sarah
	Christmas parties for service users (w/c 18 th December)	Dee/Sarah
	Christmas get-together for volunteers Fri 22 nd December	Dee

Good Companions
(Registered charity, number 1144729)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 December 2023

Page	Contents
2 - 4	Trustees' annual report
5	Independent examiner's report
6	Receipts & payments account
7	Statement of assets & liabilities
8 - 10	Notes to the accounts

**Good Companions
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

Full name Good Companions

Registered charity number 1144729

Principal address

Clifton Cornerstone
Southchurch Drive
Nottingham
NG11 8EW

Trustees

Clare Ashton, Chairman
Christine Breeton, Treasurer
Allan Breeton, Vice Chairman

Independent examiner

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 01/01/2000 and most recently amended 05/10/2011.

As set out in our governing document, membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations approved by the Trustees.

Objectives and activities

The relief of elderly persons, being over 60 years of age, and those below that age who have a need for such services, living in Nottingham and the surrounding area by such means as are recognised as charitable within the law of England and Wales as the trustees shall determine.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our main activities undertaken for the public benefit include:

1. the provision of a befriending and visiting service;
2. the provision of advice, information and support for such persons and their carers;
3. the training of volunteers.

Good Companions

Public benefit statement

The charity reduces the isolation and loneliness of vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area which improves their health and wellbeing.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Summary of the main achievements during the period

The charity has continued with its usual activities - organising a Home Visiting Service and 5 weekly friendships groups in Clifton, Parkgate and Silverdale Community Centres, Simone Gardens and Rivergreen Methodist Hub. Service users have enjoyed a wide range of activities, events, trips, including a monthly visit to a local pub and the annual visit to the pantomime.

Referrals for our services have continued to be received from a wide range of sources, particularly from social prescribers and community connectors. These have been followed up and potential service users assessed for either home visiting or attendance at a friendship group.

Volunteers have continued to be recruited, trained and supported, and invited to a volunteers' garden party and Christmas gathering.

Fundraising activities have focussed on grant applications, raffles, donation appeals, tombolas, market stalls and 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, as well as very successful and enjoyable social and fundraising events - a Coronation afternoon tea, a Quiz and Fish & Chip supper evening, 2 Christmas parties, and Easter and Harvest themed events.

Communication and promotion has been achieved through a regular newsletter, leaflets, local Facebook pages, as well as our own Facebook page and website, articles in the local Clifton news, Zoom meetings and WhatsApp groups.

The Management Committee has met regularly supported by a number of subgroups.

A more detailed report with statistics will be produced for the AGM incorporating this information.

Financial Review

Despite the increase in the cost of living and increases in rent and taxi fares, we have managed to maintain our income. This has been achieved through the number of grants and donations received, the number of fundraising events held and the generosity of service users, local people and businesses.

Good Companions

The charity's policy on reserves

We maintain a designated reserve of £12,000 to provide cover should we be unable to attract grants or raise sufficient funds through fund raising activities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed _____
Clare Ashton, Trustee

CC Ashton

Date 29.3.24

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

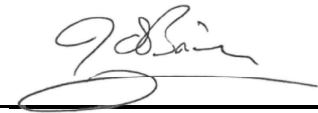
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 02/04/2024
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

Good Companions
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 December 2023

2022			Unrestricted	Restricted	2023
Total		Note	Funds	Funds	Total
Funds			Funds	Funds	Funds
£			£	£	£
	Receipts				
39196	Grants & donations	2	4869	23050	27919
938	Fundraising		7496	-	7496
19872	Friendship Group income		20132	-	20132
-	Taxis		2350	-	2350
215	Bank interest		648	-	648
958	Sundry receipts		342	-	342
<u>61179</u>	Total receipts		<u>35837</u>	<u>23050</u>	<u>58887</u>
	Payments				
26255	Wages, NI & pension		6677	21196	27873
162	Training		141	-	141
1271	Professional services		985	-	985
355	Insurance		477	-	477
1831	Printing & stationery		1395	-	1395
2239	Equipment, IT & comms		-	1077	1077
249	DBS & ID		350	-	350
6857	Friendship Group expenditure		302	4478	4780
4182	Room hire		4788	-	4788
223	Sundry payments		116	-	116
-	Taxis		3490	400	3890
<u>43624</u>	Total payments		<u>18721</u>	<u>27151</u>	<u>45872</u>
17555	Net receipts/(payments)		17116	(4101)	13015
48792	Cash funds at start of this period		59447	6900	66347
<u>66347</u>	Cash funds at end of this period		<u>76563</u>	<u>2799</u>	<u>79362</u>

**Good Companions
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2023**

2022			2023
£	Cash assets	Note	£
66247	Bank accounts		79271
<u>100</u>	Cash in hand		<u>91</u>
<u>66347</u>			<u>79362</u>
	Other monetary assets		
<u>207</u>	Debtors and prepayments	4	<u>306</u>
<u>207</u>			<u>306</u>
	Liabilities		
<u>(492)</u>	Creditors	5	<u>(552)</u>
<u>(492)</u>			<u>(552)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed CBreton Dated 28.3.24
Christine Breton, Trustee

Good Companions
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2023

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
People's Health Trust	-	7276	7276
Thomas Farr	-	3720	3720
Jones Charitable Trust	-	3700	3700
Bridges Trust	-	2600	2600
Cooperative Community	-	1799	1799
The Helen Hamlin Trust	-	1000	1000
JN Derbyshire Trust	-	1000	1000
The McCarthy & Stone Foundation	-	655	655
Notts RTC fund	-	500	500
AW Lymn	-	400	400
Warburtons Charitable Foundation	-	400	400
Masonic Lodge (Clifton)	900	-	900
Sundry grants & donations	3969	-	3969
	4869	23050	27919

Good Companions

3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance	Receipts	(Payments)	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
Silverdale Friendship Group	400	1500	(1900)	-	-
Lead Co-ordinator salary	4400	8420	(12820)	-	-
Clifton Friendship Project	2100	7276	(8376)	-	1000
Taxis	-	400	(400)	-	-
Wellbeing	-	4399	(2600)	-	1799
Christmas parties	-	1055	(1055)	-	-
	6900	23050	(27151)	-	2799
Unrestricted funds					
General	47447	35837	(18721)	(7000)	57563
Reserves	12000	-	-	-	12000
Restructuring	-	-	-	5000	5000
Equipment replacement	-	-	-	2000	2000
	59447	35837	(18721)	-	76563

The Silverdale Friendship Group – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Silverdale Friendship Group.

The Lead Co-ordinator salary fund - These contribute toward the Lead Co-ordinator salary.

The Clifton Friendship Project – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Clifton Friendship Project.

Taxis – These funds are specifically for covering the costs of taxis for our group members.

Wellbeing – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of a Health & Wellbeing event.

Christmas parties – These funds were to cover the cost of Christmas parties.

4. Debtors

	£
Prepayment - insurance	306
	306

5. Creditors

	£
Independent examination fee	552
	552

6. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

7. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Debtors: These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2023**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2023.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

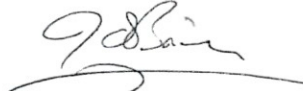
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 02/04/2024

John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales - Charity number 1144729

Accounts



Registered Charity No: 1144729

Reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale

Good Companions Annual Report 2022

Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator

Dee Stirland, CFP Co-ordinator

Louise Compton, Silverdale Co-ordinator

Clare Ashton, Chairman, Management Committee

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Background

Good Companions was established in 2001 in response to a survey carried out within the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham by the Social Action Research Project. The survey identified many older people living alone and socially isolated due to lack of available support from family, friends, statutory or voluntary services. A Health Action Group was set up by the local Nottingham City Council Area Committee, which undertook further consultation with older local people, statutory services and other interested parties. As a consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Home Visiting scheme for these areas to address this unmet need and Good Companions was established. It was supported by an initial 3-year grant to fund a part-time co-ordinator and set up costs. The visiting scheme arranged for volunteers to meet with service users in their own homes on a regular basis for conversation, friendship, and support.

In 2003, the Visiting Scheme was supplemented by the formation of a weekly friendship group. This was in response to requests from service users themselves, as well as the recognition that older people would benefit from making new friends outside their own homes, increasing their independence, self-confidence, and social interaction, thus reducing their social isolation. We now have five weekly friendship groups – four in Clifton and one in Silverdale.

Aims of Good Companions

To reduce loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale. We do this by offering the opportunity for people to attend one of our 5 friendship groups or by providing a home visiting service for those in our community who are housebound.

Management Committee 2022

Officers and Trustees

- Chairman Clare Ashton
- Vice Chair Allan Breeton
- Treasurer Christine Breeton
- Secretary Vacant

Members

- Alma Davies Volunteer
- Cllr Andrew Rule Volunteer
- Cllr Kevin Clarke Volunteer
- Jacky Holmes Volunteer

The Management Committee met 3 times during the year, including a workshop to discuss the way forward for Good Companions including the Trust's Strategic Plan. This was based on an earlier workshop with the Co-ordinator's and 2 Trustees, which resulted in a more streamlined Management Committee membership. Following the AGM, the new Committee agreed to meet every 3 months in addition to the AGM.

Subgroups

To support the Management Committee and to involve more volunteers, 4 subgroups have continued to meet some in person and others via Zoom, and some more regularly than others. These are as follows:-

- Policies & Procedures (led by Dee Stirland)
- Events & Local Fundraising (led by Sarah Cox)

- Social Media (led by Kevin Bowles)
- Strategic Finance (led by Clare Ashton)

Policies & Procedures subgroup

Members

- Dee Stirland (lead)
- Sue Foster
- Sue Hands
- Clare Ashton (to Oct 2022), Allan Breeton (from Nov 2022)

The group was put in place to formalise some working policies as there are very few in existence and none have been reviewed since 2011. Much of this work is research based and often time consuming and although we have no formal structure of meetings in place, we have been active in producing a number of policy documents setting out guidance for, and expectations of those involved with Good Companions. Active policies are:

- Confidentiality
- Finance
- General Data Protection
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults
- Website privacy

Policies currently being worked on:

- Health & Safety
- Equality & Diversity

We have also put in place a structure of review to ensure the policies remain up to date and relevant.

Events & Local Fundraising Subgroup

Members

- Sarah Cox (lead)
- Dee Stirland
- Louise Compton (from February 2022)
- Cllr Kevin Clarke
- Pat Matts
- Clare Ashton

The remit of this subgroup is to create an events calendar for the year and to plan and execute each of the events. Some of the events are social or promotion, some fundraising, and many are a combination.

The subgroup meets via Zoom and convened 7 times in 2022 between January and November. In addition to the full group meetings the Co-ordinators met additionally to finalise details for the larger events. The membership of this subgroup fluctuated throughout the year but the core remained as Clare Ashton, Kevin Clarke, Sarah Cox and Delia Stirland. Volunteers Deana Ball-Wood, Pam Matts and Ted Kaczmarek joined us intermittently and Co-ordinator Louise Compton joined in Feb 2022 and a volunteer joined in Dec 2022.

We have largely aimed to hold one event every other month of the year. We aim to build on the event successes of previous years and so continue to hold an annual afternoon tea, quiz & supper event, pantomime trip and Christmas parties. We have also begun a tradition of large seasonal events to which all Good Companions' service users are invited; these are an Easter, Summer and Harvest-themed session. For the events calendar, please see *Appendix A*

Social Media subgroup

Members

- Kevin Bowles (Lead)
- Kim Ward (until August 2022)
- Ted Kaczmarek
- Vikki Hann (until on Maternity Leave)
- Clare Ashton

This group was set up to use the reach and influence of social media for the benefit of Good Companions. Its focus is on maintaining and updating the Good Companions website and Facebook - highlighting forthcoming events, celebrating recent events and providing useful information. The group met about 5 times usually via Zoom. Unfortunately, due to the resignation of both Kim and then Kevin, (due to family/work commitments), this group is now in abeyance until a new lead can be found. Meanwhile

Strategic Finance subgroup

Members

- Clare Ashton
- Sarah Cox (till September 2022)
- Dee Stirland (till September 2022)
- Allan Breeton (from October)
- Christine Breeton
- Cllr Andrew Rule
- Andrew Price

This subgroup is to provide a strategic overview of the charities finances- monitoring its income and expenditure; producing a financial plan to support the ongoing and future activities to ensure sustainability; identifying opportunities for fundraising through grants and other sources and ensuring implementation of any agreed action; and ensuring compliance with Charity Commission requirements and with good financial practices and regulations. During the year, the group met formally once with several informal meetings but now meets 3 monthly. Its activities support both our Treasurer and Fundraiser.

Good Companions is represented on other Committees, as follows:

- Clifton Voluntary Group (Area 7)
- Clifton Advice Centre Management Committee
- Age Friendly Nottingham Steering Group and Core Group (AFN)
- Volunteer Co-ordinator and Managers Network (NCVS)
- Admiral Nurse Steering group (till September 2022)
- Clifton Collective Impact Initiative

Over-view of 2022

Following the Covid pandemic, 2022 has been a more 'normal' and stable year and we have been able to provide a similar service to pre-Covid times, outlined in this report. We were delighted to welcome Louise Compton as the Co-ordinator of the new Silverdale Friendship group, which commenced in February 2022. This new group has settled in well and compliments our other Friendship groups and Home Visiting Service. A more streamlined new Management Committee was implemented after the AGM. We were particularly pleased that the Vice Chair position role was filled by Allan Breeton, who brings a wealth of knowledge and experience to Good Companions.

Staffing

The official base for Good Companions is the Clifton Cornerstone, Southchurch Drive, located within the NCC Neighbourhood Team. However, most of the Co-ordinators' time is spent in the local community or working from home. The desk phone is checked for messages regularly by the Co-ordinators, and the mail is checked/collected at least once a week.

- Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator, is employed 22 hours per week and her remit includes running the Rivergreen and Simone Gardens friendship groups and the Home Visiting Scheme, as well as being responsible for the recruitment and support of volunteers.
- Delia Stirland, is employed 16 hours per week as the Clifton Friendship Project Co-ordinator and for the last 2 years, her salary has been paid for from a grant from the People's Health Trust. Her remit includes running the Clifton Community Centre and Parkgate Friendship groups, Phone Befriending and various administrative tasks including the creation and maintenance of our database.
- Louise Compton commenced as the Silverdale Friendship Group Co-ordinator at the end of January 2022 working 7.5 hours per week. The first year of her salary was funded by Boots.

Volunteers

We commenced 2022 with 33 volunteers, and ended the year with the same number. Through the course of the year we said goodbye to five volunteers (Marie Cooper, Ian Malcolm, Pam Matts, Marie McGoldrick and Jeni Sherratt), and welcomed five new people to join the team: June Argyle, Kevin Callaghan, Christine Dalby, Tina Lee and John Tuson.

All new volunteers who provide support within the friendship groups are processed for a Basic DBS through Good Companions, and all of those volunteers who participate in our Home Visiting Scheme have a Care Check Basic DBS done every 3 years.

Support to the volunteer team includes a twice-year volunteers' meeting, regular phone calls from one of the Co-ordinators, and periodic mini-meetings/debriefs at the end of friendship groups. We also organise a volunteers' summer garden party and a pre-Christmas get-together with buffet.

Recruitment

Our recruitment of new volunteers continues at a modest but consistent pace. We continue to advertise for new volunteers through our Facebook page, inclusion in the 'Do It' and 'Ask Lion' web pages and Nottingham Community Voluntary Service (NCVS) database. In addition, our promotional leaflet invites people with an interest in volunteering to contact us. Good Companions are also very grateful for additional volunteers who join us to support at special events; these are generally found through word-of-mouth or through their historical support.

All prospective volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview with two people - usually the Lead Co-ordinator and CFP Co-ordinator. Before they commence their volunteering with us, the following is undertaken:

- Two references are taken up by Good Companions
- An induction meeting is arranged and they are given an induction folder.
- They are issued with a photo ID card

We continue with the use of a volunteers' and Co-ordinators WhatsApp chat group which allows us to inform volunteers of new events and check their availability for specific activities, as well as disseminate information.

Training

Whilst we previously aimed to offer a rolling training programme, training has largely been offered in a sporadic manner. The topics felt to be necessary are:

- Emergency first aid (last provided in early 2020)
- Dementia awareness
- Food hygiene (last provided in early 2020)
- Adult safe-guarding (two sessions were provided in 2022)

The gap in training offered is mainly due to the cancellation of training opportunities from March 2020 to summer 2021 as well as Co-ordinators working part-time. We continue to look for suitable training opportunities and it is our aim to provide the above four training opportunities to volunteers in 2023.

As a small charity, Good Companions relies on the existing charity network to access free or low cost training opportunities rather than providing funding ourselves. The Bridges Community Trust have offered free training in previous years but this is no longer available to us. NCVS have also offered us free or low cost training which we hope will still be available in the future. Our 2022 adult safe-guarding was provided by an independent trainer, Paul Hughes and funded by Peoples Health Trust. This was attended by the majority of our volunteers and will become a regular session moving forward. Trustees have also attended webinars organised by People's Health Trust, AFN and NCC Public Health.

Referral Statistics

Number of referrals received by Good Companions (Figure 1)

Referral submitted by	2019	2020	2021	2022
Social Services	16	2	4	6
Community Connector (including social prescribing)	32	15	25	23
Nursing staff (including nursing social prescribing)	14	7	6	10
Relatives/self-referral	6	12	15	15
Good Companions volunteer	4	1	3	0
Other	5	4	6	0
Walk-in at a friendship group				27
Total:	77	41	59	81

Social Services: includes Social Care Reablement, Nottingham City Council Social care, Community Care Officers, Adult Safeguarding Team and social workers.
Nursing Services: includes District Nurses, Social Prescribers, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists.
Other: includes Age UK, Red Cross, Nottingham City Home scheme managers, hairdresser, support workers from various organisations, Parkgate Community Kitchen staff and other service users.

Outcome of referrals (Figure 2)

Outcome of referrals	2019	2020	2021	2022
Friendship Group (pre-pandemic services, Jan- March 2020)	40	11		48
Home Visiting Scheme (pre-pandemic services Jan – March 2020)	16	6		10
Phone befriending (pandemic outreach support April – Dec 2020, Jan – May 2021)	-	12	6	
Monthly newsletter parcel (pandemic outreach support April – Dec 2020, Jan – May 2021)	-	12	2	
Friendship Group (post-pandemic services, June- December 2021)			32	
Home Visiting Scheme (post-pandemic services (June – December 2021)			9	
Phone befriending (post-outreach support June – Dec 2021)			0	
Declined help/no response to initial contact	21	0	10	23**
Total	77	41	59	81

Reasons for refusal of Good Companions' support: (Figure 3)

** Out of the 23 'declined' referrals in 2022, the reasons for non-carry through comprised of:	
The potential service user declined our support	14
Did not meet criteria	4
Died during our initial assessment process	1
Good Companions unable to engage with the individual	4

Referral by gender (Figure 4)

Gender	2019	2020	2021	2022
Male	27	13	14	27
Female	50	28	45	54
Total	77	41	59	81

Overview of referrals in 2022

Our total referral figures for 2022 are comparable to – and slightly exceed - the pre-pandemic full year of 2019.

In the **referral statistics table (figure 1)** we can see that the two primary means of referral are from the local Community Connector/Social Prescribers (23 referrals in 2022) and from those we term 'walk-ins' to our friendship groups

(those who arrive through word-of-mouth, 27 in 2022). We have not monitored this category before, hence their previous non-recording. The next two volumes of referral are from local nursing staff (10 in 2022) and families/self-referral (15 in 2022). Self referral is differentiated from 'walk-ins' in that people might have a greater level of support or anxiety and so phone through to enquire about our services/discuss their needs; these people might therefore receive a visit from the Lead Co-ordinator to carry out an initial assessment

Compared to 2019, we can see a decline in referral rates from both the Social Services route and from Social Prescribers. One reason for this could be that the criteria for individuals to access either support route has changed over the years and so families are being told about Good Companions by a support worker rather than a formal referral being made.

In the referral outcome table (figure 2) we can see that 48 of the referrals (60%) successfully started to attend one of our friendship groups, 10 referrals (12%) were supported by our Home Visiting Scheme, and 23 referrals (28%) were identified as being 'declined'. **Figure 3** gives more specific reasons or explanations as to reasons for this. It can be difficult to obtain explanations as to why an individual would tell a social prescriber that they like Good Companions' support, but then clearly tell the Co-ordinator that they don't want a service (14 people). It might be that individuals feel a pressure to agree to services once a professional has visited them, or their own anxiety is too much for them to make a change to get out and meet new people. Some individuals simply do not respond to our initial phone calls or letters to set up support.

Figure 4 (gender delineation of referrals in 2022) show that referrals broken down by gender are very similar to pre-pandemic levels. In 2022 we received 27 referrals for males (representing 33% of the total), and 67 referrals for females (67%). This compares to 35% of the 2019 referrals being for males, and 65% of the referrals for females in 2019. It is positive to see that more males are now accessing our services.

Friendship Groups

Our five Friendship Groups follow a similar format:

- Arrival, either on their own or via a subsidised taxi
- Drinks served by volunteers, chat and a puzzle type activity
- Activity session, (this could include things like health qi gong, crafting or attendance by a guest speaker etc)
- Raffle drawn and puzzle answers given and discussed
- Announcements or information passed on
- Bingo or similar called by one of the service users or volunteers
- Departure

Groups are lead by a paid Co-ordinator who is supported by volunteers. Their support includes setting up/clearing rooms, making/serving refreshments, joining in with group activities and socialising with the service users. Good Companions would not be able to provide our weekly groups in the same format/cost without the support of these exceptional volunteers and their attendance, enthusiasm and support is very much appreciated.

All of the groups' offer support to a range of people with diverse physical and mental health issues and where appropriate, alternative format documents are provided to facilitate participation in the activities. Our cultural diversity is dictated by the population of our service area which remains at a high level of white, British people. There are no age restrictions for attendance at groups.

Whilst we strive to provide and maintain a high level of uniformity across the groups, all of them have established their own identity, with some more lively than others depending on the service users who attend. This gives people the opportunity to select a group that fits their personality and needs.

In 2022 the friendship groups were open for 46 weeks. The groups do not meet on bank holidays and we have a number of closure weeks, details of which are:

Week Commencing	Activity
3 rd January	Planning
18 th April	Planning
29 th August	Planning
12 th December	Christmas parties - no groups during this week
19 th December	Christmas, staff take annual leave
26 th December	Christmas, staff take annual leave

Planning weeks are to allow Co-ordinators to plan forthcoming group activities and to catch up with administration.

A subsidised taxis service is provided for users who are unable to get to the group as a result of some form of disability. The service is provided by local taxi firms Southside Cars or NG11. Service users pay £2.50p each way for this service with the remainder being paid from general funds.

Rivergreen Friendship Group

This friendship group meets each Tuesday morning at the Clifton Methodist Church, 10.00am to 12 noon. Good Companions continue to liaise closely with the church staff and we have a positive working relationship.

At the start of 2022, the register for the Rivergreen Friendship Group contained 42 names, of which 29 regularly attended. By the end of 2022 there were 46 on the register, with 28 regular attendees. Our highest attendance was on 22nd November with 35 service users being present and the lowest recorded attendance was on 19th July with only 16 people at the group. This latter figure can be explained by there being a heat wave that week.

Rivergreen friendship group continues to be well supported by volunteers, with between 3 and 7 supporting each week. The weekly average for volunteer attendance was 5.

An example of the positive impact which Rivergreen friendship group has on attendees would be Mrs A. This lady is in her late 80s and regularly comments that the friendship group is the only activity which she attends for herself each week. Family sit with her husband to enable her to join us; sadly he is no longer able to attend due to issues of poor physical health and dementia.

Simone Gardens Friendship Group

This group meets each Thursday morning, 10.00am to 12 noon, in the community room at Simone Gardens independent living complex. Good Companions has a productive working relationship with the manager of Simone Gardens. Nottingham City Housing do not charge for the use of this venue.

The register for the Simone Gardens friendship group started the year with 25 names, and with 15 people regularly attending. By the end of the year, we had 26 names on the register, with a regular attendance of 14 people. The highest group attendance was on 11th August with 20 service users being present and the lowest attendance was on 7th July with 8 people present. We also usually have one support worker present for part of the group.

Historically this has the lowest number of attendees of all of the groups. Attendance is limited by the size of the room but this has the positive effect of creating a supportive and nurturing environment which all service users are able to engage with each other. Volunteer attendance at this group is between 1 and 3 per week. The weekly average number of volunteers present is 1.

Parkgate Friendship Group (Funded by People's Health Trust, PHT)

This group meets weekly on a Friday at the Parkgate Community Centre from 11am to 2pm. For 2022, the average weekly attendance was 25 service users, 3 volunteers and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2022 contained 40 names, of which 19 attend regularly. It continues to be a lively and very friendly group, participating in activities organised by Good Companions and Parkgate Community Kitchen including fundraising, social events, trips and celebration.

We have a close working relationship with staff and volunteers at the centre and as part of our collaborative activities, our service users join other members of the public for lunch, prepared and served by staff and volunteers from the Parkgate Community Kitchen. This enables them to meet up with other friends and family members who live in the area. Good Companions volunteers assist with the serving of hot meals in between the group's activities on a Friday. 2022 funding has mainly come from the People's Health Trust. However, the group generates income from service users through their paying for refreshments and bingo etc. In 2022, this amounted to a total of £2,997.

Clifton Community Centre Friendship Group (Funded by PHT)

This group started the year at the Highbank Community Centre but due to the closure of this venue, on 14th February we moved to new premises at Clifton Community Centre (The Shed). This proved to be a very positive move with the venue having far better facilities which were maintained to a much higher level.

The group meets weekly on Monday from 11am to 1pm in the more relaxed bar area of the Community Centre. For 2022, the average weekly attendance at the group was 20 service users, 4 volunteers, and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2022 contained 37 names, of which 17 regularly attend. Whilst funding support has mainly come from PHT, the group generates income from service users which for 2022, amounted to a total of £2,083.

We are required to submit reports twice yearly for both groups funded by PHT. In 2022, all reports were submitted in a timely manner and both resulted in the appropriate money being paid into Good Companions bank account. The final report for this funding will be required by the end of June 2023 when we should receive our final payment and the funding support will come to an end.

Silverdale Friendship Group

The Silverdale group has been running since February 2022. There are 23 group members in total; 18 people attend regularly and 3 people attend occasionally. .

We have 6 regular volunteers at the group who are able to support individual service users with additional one to one interaction so that they are able to join in with all the activities such as the bingo, our weekly singing session, quizzes and the other games and activities that we offer.

The bus service in Silverdale is very minimal, and many of the group members are in their eighties and nineties and therefore this is the only accessible group for the majority of them.

We support the service users to feel that they are able to make choices within the group and to achieve this we consult with them regularly on what kind of things that they enjoy and what they would like to introduce/ change. The group is very friendly and welcoming and service users' feedback regularly that they enjoy coming to the group and have made many new friendships

Telephone Befriending

Our telephone befriending was put in place in response to the Covid pandemic and served an excellent purpose at that time. Post pandemic and throughout 2022, our success has been in encouraging people to return to groups. As a result of this, we no longer have anyone requiring this service.

Home Visiting Scheme

Our Home Visiting Scheme provides a regular visitor for people who are not able to leave their home. Typically, a volunteer will visit the service user once a week, for around one hour. Due to a reduction in the number of volunteers available to undertake visiting, since the second half of 2022 we have operated a 'one out/one in' approach to new referrals. There can also be a time lapse before a match can be made so the Scheme has a waiting list.

After a referral is received, the Lead Co-ordinator will visit the new service user to complete an initial assessment, at which a family member is often present. Once we understand the needs, the Co-ordinator will match the service user with a suitable volunteer. Following this, an introductory meeting takes place which provides an opportunity to discuss expectations and to set up the first visit.

Volunteers complete a report each month. This report details the number of visits and the main discussion points but they are encouraged to report concerns to Co-ordinator immediately. The Co-ordinator contacts the Home Visiting Scheme volunteers on alternate months (by phone call, email or text) to discuss the service user they support and concerns are passed on as appropriate.

Statistics of the Home Visiting Scheme in 2022 in comparison to 2021.

Good Companions' Home Visiting Scheme	2021	2022
No. of people who received Home Visiting support	14	19
No. of volunteers providing the service	8	10
No. of visiting hours provided in total since	156(June-Dec)	274
New referrals to the Scheme	9	17
No. of these new referrals who received a service:	7	9**
Waiting list at end of the year:	4	4

Reasons for refusal of Home Visiting Scheme support:

** Out of the 8 'declined' referrals for Home Visiting in 2022, the reasons for non-carry through comprised of:	
Referred service users who did not receive HV support	8
• Did not meet criteria/out of area	3
• Died during our initial assessment process	1
• Individual changed their mind about receiving a volunteer visitor	3
• HV referral made for an individual who was a friendship group attendee. The referring professional was not aware a volunteer was visiting informally during group time	1

Whilst the Home Visiting Scheme does not provide support to large number of people at any one time, it has supported 19 individuals over the course of the year (including one couple). The arrangements are usually home-based wherein the volunteer visits the service user in their home. However, the support can be community-based to give the individuals greater confidence in specific settings.

This table shows how the hours of the Home Visiting Scheme were used in 2022.

Uses of volunteer hours within the Home Visiting Scheme	No. of people
Number of people who received Home Visiting support	19
• Within the service users' own home	14
• Community-based	2
• Specified limited number of weeks to support/encourage attendance at a friendship group	2
• Within a care home setting where the individual did not receive visitors due to not having living family members	2
(Please note that one person received community-based support with a time-limited aim of them attending a friendship group, hence the above entries totalling 20, not 19).	

Service User Feedback

In late autumn 2022 we sent out a feedback form to all service users to find out their views on the services and support which Good Companions provides. We sent out 108 forms and received 64 completions responses; this represents a 64% return rate.

Overview of the 2022 Feedback report

- There are some really lovely comments of appreciation for services which Good Companions provide. It is gratifying to hear that our friendship groups are seen as being so valuable within the lives of people who attend.

- Respondents appeared willing to share their honest view of services - both positive opinions and areas for improvement.
- It is valuable that so many ideas and suggestions have been put forward for activities within the friendship groups, and also for trips which all service users would be invited to attend. Whilst some of these are not practical in terms of the variety of needs/ability of our service users or the hours available to staff, some could be organised.
- Two questions regarding mental health support were not included in previous years:
 - **Q5: If you feel that you are able to share, please could you tell us a little about if/how receiving our services positively impacts on your emotional health or mental health.**
 - **Q6: How might we improve upon emotional support or mental health support that is provided.**
 - These questions were included in the 2022 audit in order to attempt to ascertain how our services support the mental health of service users.
 - Responses were really positive regarding the ways in which our provision positively supports mental health. It is also helpful to find that, generally speaking, service users do not have expectations that Good Companions would further bolster their mental health. The support to mental health that is experienced as part of the friendship group provision is found to be both helpful and sufficient.

See *Appendix B* for an overview of responses for each of the six questions.

Marketing

Good Companions continues to retain a presence on the 'Do It' website via the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) as well as on the NCC 'Ask Lion' and, as well as our own Good Companions Facebook, has regularly appeared on local Clifton, Silverdale and Wilford Facebook pages.

Our new website has been updated from time to time, co-ordinated through and by the Social Media sub-group.

Regular articles have been produced and printed in our Clifton Local News, promoting our services and seeking new volunteers. In addition, verbal reports on Good Companions have been given at meetings of the NCC Area 7 Clifton Volunteer Forum and the AFN Steering Group, held online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. It has also been promoted at various events including the annual conference organised by the UK Network for Ageing Better, the AFN Event in Nottingham Market Square, the Clifton Jubilee 'Funday' and the NCC/Good Companions 'Winter Wellbeing' day.

Funding

Funding remains a constant area of concern for any organisation, particularly with the increasingly difficult financial climate and cuts to voluntary and social services. The charity is constantly looking at different ways of reducing our overheads as well as increasing income. To try and increase awareness of our services and generate additional funds, staff gave a presentation to a local Trust.

As there had been difficulties in producing our independently examined accounts for 2020, the decision was taken at the AGM in 2021 to change our Independent

Examiner to CA Plus, based in Nottingham. This created a huge amount of work to enable the 2021 accounts to be produced particularly for our Treasurer, but resulted in a thorough examination of our finances and facilitated improvements in our procedures. As a result, costs to service users across all Friendship groups were harmonised and monthly bulk purchasing for refreshments and other items was implemented reducing our costs.

We continue to be very grateful to those businesses in Clifton, who have regularly provided items for refreshments, raffle and bingo prizes for our Friendship Groups and for use at fundraising events. Many of them have also taken a 'Keep the Change' collection box, which not only raises money for Good Companions but raises awareness and promotes our charity.

A further grant (for another 2 years) from the People's Health Trust has supported the continuation of the Highbank (Clifton Community Centre) and Parkgate Friendship groups, and a one year grant from Boots enabled the Silverdale Friendship group to be set up and supported for the first 12 months.

With the help of our Honorary Fundraiser, Andrew Price, we were awarded a number of grants which have contributed to the general running costs of Good Companions, which have been much appreciated including the Jones Charitable Trust, the Inman Charity, the Mary Robertson Trust, the Albert Hunt Trust, NCC, Founders for Good, Nottingham RTC Fund, Jesse Spencer Trust, A W Lymns, Warburtons, and ASDA. In addition, we have received generous donations from service users, individuals, volunteers and local businesses.

A number of planned fundraising events took place during the year, which have significantly contributed to our income and are listed on Appendix B – with grateful thanks to the Events and Local Fundraising sub-group and our Co-ordinators and volunteers.

Conclusion

The past year has been very busy but stabilising as we have settled down post pandemic.

The hard work and support of our Co-ordinators and volunteers, and many in our local community, has been very much appreciated by our service users. It has enabled Good Companions to continue to support so many people, some of whom are still affected by the impact of the pandemic.

Thankfully, our funding position has improved thanks to all those involved but more will need to be done to ensure our income is continued for the future, particularly given the current financial pressures and the end of two of our grants during 2023.

Good Companions
(Registered charity, number 1144729)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 December 2022

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5	Independent examiner's report
6	Receipts & payments account
7	Statement of assets & liabilities
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**Good Companions
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

Full name Good Companions

Registered charity number 1144729

Principal address

Clifton Cornerstone
Southchurch Drive
Nottingham
NG11 8EW

Trustees

Clare Ashton, Chairman
Christine Breeton, Treasurer
Allan Breeton, Vice Chairman (from 21/09/2022)

Independent examiner

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 01/01/2000 and most recently amended 05/10/2011.

As set out in our governing document, membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations approved by the Trustees.

Objectives and activities

The relief of elderly persons, being over 60 years of age, and those below that age who have a need for such services, living in Nottingham and the surrounding area by such means as are recognised as charitable within the law of England and Wales as the trustees shall determine.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our main activities undertaken for the public benefit include:

1. the provision of a befriending and visiting service;
2. the provision of advice, information and support for such persons and their carers;
3. the training of volunteers.

Good Companions

Public benefit statement

The charity reduces the isolation and loneliness of vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area which improves their health and wellbeing.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Summary of the main achievements during the period

Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic and the increasing cost of living and energy costs, the charity commenced the New Year with all its usual activities - organising weekly Friendship groups, Home Visiting and Phone Befriending, and these continued throughout the year. Service users have enjoyed a wide range of activities, events and trips, including a monthly visit to the pub, a Health & Wellbeing event and the annual visit to the pantomime.

A significant event in February 2022 was the launch of a new Friendship group in Silverdale, which is now well established in the local community.

Referrals for our services have continued to be received from a wide range of sources, particularly from social prescribers and community connectors. These have been followed up and potential service users assessed.

Volunteers have continued to be recruited, trained and supported, and invited to a Volunteers Garden party and Christmas gathering.

Fundraising activities have focussed on grant applications, raffles, donation appeals, tombolas, market stalls and 'Keep the Change' donation collection boxes, as well as very successful and enjoyable social and fundraising events - a Platinum Jubilee afternoon tea, a Quiz and Fish & Chip supper evening, 2 Christmas parties, and Easter and Harvest themed events.

Communication and promotion has been achieved through a regular newsletter, leaflets, local Facebook pages as well as our own Facebook page and website, articles in the local Clifton news, Zoom meetings and WhatsApp groups.

The charity is managed by a Management Committee supported by subgroups, and the activities organised by 3 part-time Co-ordinators supported by volunteers.

A more detailed report with statistics will be produced for the AGM incorporating this information.

We are very grateful to all our grant funders, those who support us in the local community financially with donations or gifts in kind, attend our fundraising events or give their time through a variety of volunteering activities as well as the invaluable hard work of our part-time Co-ordinators, which enable us to make a real difference to the people of Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale and the surrounding areas.

Good Companions

Financial Review

Despite the ongoing impact of the pandemic, and the increase in the cost of living and energy costs, we have managed to maintain our income. This has been achieved through the number of grants and donations received, the number of fundraising events held and the generosity of service users and local people and businesses.

The charity's policy on reserves

We maintain a designated reserve of £12,000 to provide cover should we be unable to attract grants or raise sufficient funds through fund raising activities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed

Clare Ashton, Trustee



Date

20/2/23

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

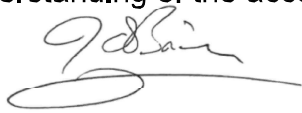
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 21/02/2023
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

Good Companions
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 December 2022

2021				2022
Total		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
Funds		Funds	Funds	Funds
£	Note	£	£	£
	Receipts			
97	Bank interest	215	-	215
7095	Fundraising	938	-	938
34032	Grants & donations	2 6686	32510	39196
6470	Friendship Group income	19872	-	19872
403	Sundry receipts	958	-	958
<u>48097</u>	Total receipts	<u>28669</u>	<u>32510</u>	<u>61179</u>
	Payments			
21084	Wages, NI & pension	-	26255	26255
-	Training	162	-	162
2540	Professional services	1271	-	1271
713	Printing & stationery	1831	-	1831
-	Equipment, IT & comms	678	1561	2239
49	DBS & ID	249	-	249
1891	Events	-	-	-
-	Taxis	-	2755	2755
1400	Hire costs	288	3894	4182
352	Insurance	355	-	355
1042	Sundry payments	223	-	223
2760	Friendship group expenditure	-	4102	4102
<u>31831</u>	Total payments	<u>5057</u>	<u>38567</u>	<u>43624</u>
16266	Net receipts/(payments)	23612	(6057)	17555
32526	Cash funds at start of this period	35835	12957	48792
<u>48792</u>	Cash funds at end of this period	<u>59447</u>	<u>6900</u>	<u>66347</u>

Good Companions
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2022

2021			2022
£	Cash assets	Note	£
48417	Bank accounts		66247
375	Cash in hand		100
<u>48792</u>			<u>66347</u>
	Other monetary assets		
595	Debtors and prepayments	4	207
<u>595</u>			<u>207</u>
	Liabilities		
(696)	Creditors	5	(492)
<u>(696)</u>			<u>(492)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed CBreeton Dated 20.2.23
 Christine Breeton, Trustee

Good Companions
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2022

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
People's Health Trust	-	18190	18190
The Jones Charitable Trust	-	3500	3500
The Inman Charity	-	2500	2500
The Mary Robertson Trust	-	2300	2300
The Albert Hunt Trust	-	2000	2000
NCC	-	1170	1170
Founders for Good	-	1000	1000
Notts RTC Fund	-	500	500
Jesse Spencer Trust	-	500	500
A W Lymns	-	450	450
Warburtons	-	400	400
ASDA	400	-	400
Sundry grants & donations	6286	-	6286
	6686	32510	39196

Good Companions

3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance	Receipts (Payments)		Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
2021 Clifton Friendship Project	3493	-	(3493)	-	-
Silverdale Friendship Group	5400	-	(5000)	-	400
Lead Co-ordinator salary	2000	11300	(8900)	-	4400
Click Fund	2064	-	(2064)	-	-
2022 Clifton Friendship Project	-	18190	(16090)	-	2100
Rivergreen Groups	-	1000	(1000)	-	-
Taxis	-	400	(400)	-	-
Wellbeing	-	1170	(1170)	-	-
Christmas parties	-	450	(450)	-	-
	12957	32510	(38567)	-	6900
Unrestricted funds					
General	29835	28669	(5057)	(6000)	47447
Reserves	6000	-	-	6000	12000
	35835	28669	(5057)	-	59447

The Clifton Friendship Project – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Clifton Friendship Project.

The Silverdale Friendship Group – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Silverdale Friendship Group.

The Click Fund & Lead Co-ordinator salary fund - These contribute toward the various group co-ordinator salaries.

Rivergreen Groups – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of the Friendship Groups in Rivergreen.

Taxis – These funds are specifically for covering the costs of taxis for our group members.

Wellbeing – These funds are specifically for covering the cost of a Health & Wellbeing event.

Christmas parties – These funds were to cover the cost of a Christmas party.

The transfer from the General fund to the Reserves fund represents the increase in the value of reserves held as agreed by the trustees this year.

Good Companions

4. Debtors and prepayments

	£
Prepayment - insurance	207
	<u>207</u>

5. Creditors

	£
Independent examination fee	492
	<u>492</u>

6. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

7. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Debtors: These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2022**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

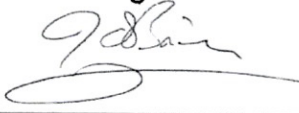
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Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 21/02/2023
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

GOOD COMPANIONS

England & Wales - Charity number 1144729

Accounts



Registered Charity No: 1144729

Reducing loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale

Good Companions Annual Report 2021

Sarah Cox, Lead Co-ordinator

Dee Stirland, CFP Co-ordinator

Clare Ashton, Chairman, Management Committee

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Background

Good Companions was established in December 2001 in response to a survey carried out within the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham in 1999 by the Social Action Research Project. The survey identified many older people living alone and socially isolated due to lack of available support from family, friends, statutory or voluntary services. A Health Action Group was set up by the local Nottingham City Council Area Committee, which undertook further consultation with older local people, statutory services and other interested parties. As a consequence, a decision was taken to set up a Home Visiting scheme for these areas to address this unmet need and Good Companions was established. It was supported by an initial 3-year grant to fund a part-time co-ordinator and set up costs. The visiting scheme would arrange to meet with service users in their own homes on a regular basis for conversation, friendship, and support.

In 2003, the Visiting Scheme was supplemented by the formation of a weekly Friendship Group. This was in response to requests from service users themselves, as well as the recognition that older people would benefit from making new friends outside their own homes, increasing their independence, self-confidence, and social interaction, thus reducing their social isolation. The Group provided a regular meeting point at a venue where service users could socialise and enjoy interactive activities. This group, now referred to as the 'Rivergreen Friendship Group', was followed in 2009 by the 'Lakehead Friendship Group' following the request for visitors from several residents.

In 2018 (and later in 2021), Good Companions were successful in applying for funds from the People's Health Trust, using money raised through the Health Lottery in the East Midlands. This was for a project, entitled the 'Clifton Friendship Project' (CFP), to set up 2 additional Friendship Groups with funds to cover set up costs and for a part-time co-ordinator for 2 years. The project requires service users to be involved in the design and delivery of the project and to develop stronger connections between people, enabling friendships between service users and improving their social networks. In August 2018, the 'Parkgate Friendship Group' was launched and the second, the 'Highbank Friendship Group' in January 2019.

When the Government introduced the lockdown in March 2020 due to the COVID 19 pandemic, all Friendship Groups and Home Visiting ceased and an Outreach Support Scheme was implemented which continued to June 2021. The Friendship Groups were gradually reopened, Home Visiting was recommenced, and Phone Befriending was continued for those service users who no longer required home visiting or attendance at a friendship group. Towards the end of the year, plans for a new Friendship group in Silverdale were implemented with a grant for 1 year from the Boots Charitable Trust.

Aims of Good Companions

- To provide a voluntary visiting scheme for the vulnerable and older person in the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham
- To offer support and friendship
- To offer some clearly defined and practicable support for the vulnerable and older person

Management Committee 2021

Officers and Trustees

- Chairman Clare Ashton
- Vice Chair Vacant
- Treasurer Christine Breeton
- Secretary Vacant

Members

- Sarah Cox Lead Co-ordinator
- Delia Stirland Clifton Friendship Project Co-ordinator
- Alma Davies Volunteer
- Pat Stevenson Service User representative–Rivergreen FG
- Chris Walker Volunteer
- Sue Hands Volunteer
- Cllr Andrew Rule Volunteer
- Cllr Kevin Clarke Volunteer
- Alan Darby Service User representative-Parkgate FG
- Vacant Service User representative – Highbank FG
- Vacant Volunteer

The Management Committee met once during the year.

During 2020, in order to support the Management Committee during the pandemic, a Managers group was set up which met monthly. In addition, to further strengthen these arrangements and involve more volunteers, 4 subgroups were set up and met regularly via Zoom, as follows:

- Policies & Procedures(led by Dee Stirland)
- Events & Local Fundraising (led by Sarah Cox)
- Social Media (led by Kevin Bowles)
- Strategic Finance (led by Clare Ashton)

A WhatsApp group was also set up for all groups to facilitate communication.

All these groups continued throughout 2021 and on Zoom.

Good Companions is represented on other Committees, as follows:

- Clifton ABG Partnership (Area 7)
- Clifton Advice Centre Management Committee
- Age Friendly Nottingham Steering Group and Core Group (AFN)
- Volunteer Co-ordinator and Managers Network (NCVS)
- Clifton Wilford & Silverdale Community Partnership (to co-ordinate COVID activities) from November 2020 to October 2021 (including Loneliness/Mental Health subgroup).
- Admiral Nurse Steering group

Over-view of 2021

Good Companions commenced 2021 still in lockdown, with all its' activities replaced with an Outreach service, detailed elsewhere in this report. Once restrictions were lifted, our friendship groups were gradually reopened according to the availability of the venues from June onwards with the last reopening in August. Service users previously receiving Home Visiting were transitioned over to this service over a period of time although some still preferred to continue with phone befriending. In addition, social and fundraising events recommenced.

Staffing

The official base for Good Companions is the Clifton Cornerstone in Southchurch Drive, where our Co-ordinators are located on the first floor within the NCC Neighbourhood Team. However, most of the Co-ordinators' time is spent in the local community or working from home.

Sarah Cox, in post as our Lead Co-ordinator since January 2020, increased her hours to 22 hours per week by the end of 2021. Her remit includes running the Rivergreen and Lakehead House (moved to Simone Gardens in August 2021) Friendship Groups and the Home Visiting Scheme, as well as being responsible for the recruitment and support of volunteers. Delia Stirland, in post since January 2020 as the Clifton Friendship Project Co-ordinator, increased her hours to 16 hours per week when we received a further grant for 2 years in July 2021 from the People's Health Trust. Her remit includes running the Highbank and Parkgate Friendship groups and Phone Befriending.

Volunteers

By the end of 2021, 33 people (listed below) were volunteering with Good Companions. All volunteers supporting the Friendship Groups and the Home Visiting scheme have an Enhanced DBS, renewed every 3 years through Good Companions; this is apart from two volunteers who have been taken on as 'casual volunteers' supporting the Rivergreen Friendship Group once a month. This year, we were very fortunate to have welcomed ten new volunteers, their names underlined on the full list of volunteers below

Two of our long-standing volunteers 'retired' at our volunteers' garden party in August 2021. These were Erika Palfrement and Ruth Spiller; their support of Good Companions over the years has been very much appreciated. One other volunteer left in 2021: Gerry Floyd.

In 2021, we recruited an additional 4 volunteers to join our team. These were: Marie Cooper, Esther Hepple, Jacky Holmes and Nita Jepson. We were very pleased to welcome them to the team.

Below is a list of 36 volunteers who supported Good Companions during 2021. The following key is relevant to our services:

- * indicates that they are part of the Home Visiting Scheme
- ** indicates that they participated in our Phone Befriending Scheme - part of the extra-ordinary Outreach Support Scheme.

Clare ASHTON**
Deana BALL-WOOD**
Andrew BOWLER***
Kevin BOWLES
Allan BREETON
Christine BREETON**
Lois BROUGH*
Lynne BUXTON**
Kevin CLARKE
Marie COOPER
Alma DAVIES**
Gerry FLOYD **
Sue FOSTER***
Sarah HAMLYN**
Sue HANDS**
Victoria HANN***
Sue HARVEY**
Anna-Marie HEMMING***

Esther HEPPLE**
Jacky HOLMES
Ted KACZMAREK**
Nita JEPSON
George KING***
Marie McGOLDRICK***
Ian MALCOM
Pam MATTS* **
Erica PALFREMENT
Andrew PRICE
Margaret REEVE
Andrew RULE
Jeni SHERRATT***
Ruth SPILLER*
Lisa SWAITHE***
Doreen TUSON
Christopher WALKER**
Kim WARD**

Recruitment

We continued to advertise for new volunteers through a variety of mediums; including our Facebook page, inclusion in the 'Do It' and 'Ask Lion' web pages, and Nottingham Community Voluntary Service (NCVS) database for prospective volunteers. In addition, our promotional leaflet also invite those interested in volunteering to contact us. A request for potential new volunteers is also included in news articles that we write, for instance Clifton News (a monthly newssheet which is distributed to all households in Clifton). Good Companions are also extremely grateful for additional volunteers who join us to support at special events; these are generally found through word-of-mouth or through their historical support.

All prospective volunteers complete an application form and attend an informal interview with two people - usually the Lead Co-ordinator and CFP Co-ordinator. This gives an opportunity to ask questions. They are supported in their role with Good Companions by

- An induction pack
- Volunteers' meetings; these are usually held quarterly.
- Quarterly catch-up conversations or phone calls to ensure that the volunteer is happy and feels supported in their role with Good Companions.
- Inclusion in trips for service users (where space and need allow).
- A Good Companions ID photo card
- A volunteers' Christmas get-together and a Summer Garden Party.

Our support to volunteers had to be amended during the various 'lockdowns' of the COVID-19 pandemic. These changes included:

- Interview packs being emailed out to prospective volunteers
- Interviews with both Co-ordinators held via Zoom (video calling)
- Induction discussion carried out via Zoom
- Volunteers' meetings held via Zoom (held in March 2021)

- The Co-ordinators phoned specific volunteers each month to check-in with them and any support needs they might have.
- The creation of a volunteers' group chat on WhatsApp to keep volunteers connected with each other, as well as with the Chair and Co-ordinators.

This allowed us to inform volunteers of new events and check their availability for specific activities, as well as disseminate information in a timely manner.

Training

Our rolling training programme was planned for volunteers in 2021. This included:

- Emergency first aid
- Dementia awareness
- Food hygiene
- Adult safe-guarding

As a small charity, Good Companions relies on the existing charity network to access training opportunities rather than always direct-funding training ourselves. Agencies that have provided training opportunities in previous years have included The Bridges Community Trust and NCVS.

Some training opportunities were available to us over the course of 2021 however these were all of an on-line nature rather than our preferred medium of face-to-face. Whilst we have supported and encouraged our volunteers to attend our own meetings via Zoom and participate in WhatsApp communication, we recognise that volunteers' time is precious. There has been a feeling among volunteers and staff that there is a preference to retain volunteer morale and continue with our services, rather than attempt to oblige volunteers to attend online training in the isolation of their own homes whilst other activities might be more pressing.

It is our intention that a face-to-face training programme will be re-introduced in 2022.

Some on-line training has taken place attended by the Chair on behalf of Good Companions covering such topics as bid writing, falls prevention and finance and accounts.

Referral Statistics

Number of referrals received by Good Companions

Referral submitted by	2019	2020	2021
Social Services	16	2	4
Community Connector (including social prescribing)	32	15	25
Nursing staff (including nursing social prescribing)	14	7	6
Relatives/self-referral	6	12	15
Good Companions volunteer	4	1	3
Other	5	4	6
Total:	77	41	59

'Social Services' includes Social Care Reablement, Nottingham City Council Social care, Community Care Officers, Adult Safeguarding Team and other social workers

'Nursing Services' includes District Nurses, Social Prescribers, Occupational Therapists and Physiotherapists.

'Other' includes Age UK, Red Cross, Nottingham City Home scheme managers, hairdresser, support workers from various organisations, Parkgate Community Kitchen staff and other service users.

Outcome of referrals

Outcome of referrals	2019	2020	2021
Friendship Group(pre-pandemic services, Jan-March 2020)	40	11	
Home Visiting Scheme(pre-pandemic services Jan – March 2020)	16	6	
Phone befriending (pandemic outreach support April – Dec 2020, Jan – May 2021)	-	12	6
Monthly newsletter parcel (pandemic outreach support April – Dec 2020, Jan – May 2021)	-	12	2
Friendship Group(post-pandemic services, June-December 2021)			32
Home Visiting Scheme(post-pandemic services (June – December 2021))			9
Phone befriending (post-outreach support June – Dec 2021)			0
Declined help/no response to initial contact	21	0	10
Total	77	41	59

Referral by gender

Gender	2019	2020	2021
Male	27	13	14
Female	50	28	45
Total	77	41	59

Friendship Groups

All of our four Friendship Groups follow a similar format:

- Arrival, either on their own or via a subsidised taxi
- Welcome drinks served by volunteers, chat and completion of quizzes or word searches
- Activity session, this might include seat health qi gong (aka tai chi), crafting or attendance by a guest speaker
- Quiz answers called out; raffle drawn. Any announcements or information passed on to those present
- Bingo or 'sticky 13s' called by one of the service users or volunteers
- Departure

Taxi use for friendship group service users is booked via an account held with one of two local taxi firms (Southside Cars or NG11). Service users are charged a fee of £2.50p each-way for this service. The remainder of the taxi fee is then paid from general funds. Refreshments continue to be served at a nominal cost; whilst biscuits are provided by Good Companions, it is not unusual for service users to bring a cake to mark a special occasion.

The friendship groups transitioned their post-pandemic opening from March to June 2021. During the planning period for the groups' re-opening, we took the opportunity to re-format the costs of the friendship groups in order to reflect some increases in pricing and also to standardise the provision across the four friendship groups. The costs for refreshments and a raffle ticket stayed the same at £1 each, and the bingo costs altered from £1 for 6 games of bingo (with prizes) to £2 for 4 games of bingo (with prizes).

People ceasing to attend a friendship group may be explained by their support needs increasing, using other services, moving into a care home, moving out of the area to be closer to family, their passing away, or feeling that the group simply isn't for them anymore.

Rivergreen Friendship Group

The Rivergreen Friendship Group meets each Tuesday morning at the Rivergreen Methodist Church in Clifton, 10.00am to 12 noon. In 2021, the group re-opened after the pandemic on Tuesday 29th June and had the final session of the year on 14th December. The group was closed due to planning or annual leave on Tuesday 31st August. Good Companions liaises closely with the staff of the Methodist Church, and we have a very supportive working relationship.

Initially after re-opening, attendance at the friendship group was a little slow. This was due to some service users clearly articulating that, whilst they were happy that 'the club' had re-opened, they felt a little hesitant at mixing in groups again. For the first 12 weeks after re-opening, we operated a socially distanced room, with our usual pairs of tables being set 50cm apart with reduced numbers sat at each table; a hand sanitising station at the entrance and exit doors into the main hall, and all service users and volunteers wearing face masks.

By the end of 2021, the register for the Rivergreen Friendship Group contained 42 names, of which 29 regularly attended.

Simone Gardens Friendship Group

Before the pandemic, our Thursday morning friendship group met at the Lakehead House Independent Living Scheme in Clifton. Due to the offer from a local housing warden of a change of venue, the group moved to Simone Gardens Independent Living Scheme (also in Clifton) and re-opened in May 2021. The group opens for the same period – Thursday mornings, 10.00am to 12 noon.

The average weekly attendance at the group is 15 service users. In addition, one or two support worker always attend. Other family members often attend the group.

Good Companions liaises closely with the warden of the venue; we are not charged for use of the communal room. Simone Gardens' and Lakehead House residents are encouraged to attend the group, by placing posters on the main corridor notice board, and leaflets posted through the mailboxes of individual flats.

Parkgate Friendship Group (Funded through People's Health Trust)

This group meets weekly on a Friday at the Parkgate Community Centre from 11am to 2pm during which service users enjoy social conversation over refreshments, games, and other organised activities. We have a close working relationship with staff and volunteers at the centre and as part of our collaborative activities, our service users can join other members of the public for a 3 course lunch prepared and served by staff and volunteers from the Parkgate Community Kitchen. This enables them to socialise over a meal and to meet up with other friends and family members who live in the area. Good Companions volunteers assist with the serving of hot meals in between the group's activities on a Friday.

In 2021, the group re-opened after the pandemic on Friday 11th June and had the final session of the year on 17th December, when we closed for the Christmas holidays. All groups were closed due to planning/annual leave on the week beginning Monday 30th August.

For 2021, the average weekly attendance at the group was 19 service users, 3 volunteers and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2021 contained 39 names, of which 17 attend most weeks.

Whilst funding support has mainly come from the People's Health Trust, the group generates income from service users through their paying for refreshments and for bingo etc which for the 27 weeks of attendance in 2021, amounted to a total of £2069. It continues to be a lively and very friendly group, participating in other activities organised by Good Companions, including fundraising and social events as well as trips and celebration parties.

Highbank Friendship Group (Funded through People's Health Trust)

The group meets weekly on Monday from 10am to 12 noon at the Highbank Community Centre. Although the format follows that of the other 3 Friendship Groups, this group meets in the more relaxed bar area of the Community Centre, which creates quite a different atmosphere. The funding structure is the same as all other Good Companions' Friendship Groups.

Post pandemic, the group met from 2nd August until 29th November 2021 and shortly after the start, we changed the format to similar to that at Parkgate which allowed service users to have a hot meal in the middle of the day. Unfortunately, we were not able to provide as many group meetings at Highbank as at other groups as they opted not to reopen post pandemic until August 2021 and they also closed early for the Christmas break at the end of November. The average weekly attendance at the group was 17 service users, 3 volunteers, and the Co-ordinator. The register for 2021 contained 42 names, of which 16 regularly attend.

Whilst we strive to provide and maintain a high level of uniformity across the groups, all of them have established their own identity, with some more lively than others depending on the service users who attend. This has been very positive as it gives people the opportunity to select a group that fits their personality and needs.

Home Visiting Scheme

Our Home Visiting Scheme provides a regular visit from a friendly face for people who are not easily able to leave their own home. Nine new referrals for the Scheme were received between June and December 2021.

Once a referral form is received, the Co-ordinator visits the potential new service user in order to assess their needs and to determine their interests and availability. Family are encouraged to attend this meeting as it allows for the Scheme to be explained and any questions answered. The Co-ordinator then will endeavour to make a match with a suitable volunteer; matches between service user and volunteer are made according to the interests/hobbies of the service users, their stated wish for a particular gender of volunteer, plus when they are available to meet with a volunteer – several referrals to the Scheme have regular hospital appointments or other necessary meetings.

There can be a time lapse before a match can be made and so the Scheme always has a waiting list. The usual expectation is that the volunteer will visit the service user once a week, for around one hour. Once a match is made the Co-ordinator will arrange an introductory meeting between the service user and volunteer; this is to support their first meeting and for the Home Visiting Agreement to be completed. The date of the first home visit is arranged during this meeting.

Volunteers complete a report each month which details the number of visits and the main discussion points but they are encouraged to report concerns to Co-ordinator immediately. The Co-ordinator contacts the Home Visiting Scheme volunteers once a month (by phone call, email or text) to discuss the service user they support and concerns are passed on as appropriate.

No. of people receiving the Home Visiting Scheme in 2021 (since June 2021)	14
No. of volunteers providing the service	8
No. of visiting hours provided in total since (June 2021)	156
New referrals to the Scheme in 2021	9
No. of new referrals who commenced the Scheme:	7
Waiting list at December 2021:	4

Telephone Befriending

As a result of our Outreach Service (see information below), we established a telephone befriending service for those service users, who felt unable to return to normal activities post pandemic, although the aim was to encourage them back into face to face and group activities as soon as possible.

This consists of a small number of volunteers telephoning service users on a weekly or fortnightly basis to have a chat and check on their wellbeing. The number of service users who received a weekly call was 7 although there were 3 more who received calls less frequently at their request. They were looked after by 6 volunteers.

Outreach Support Service

Following the establishment of our 'Outreach Service' in March 2020 as an immediate response to the needs of service users during lockdown, we continued to provide this service well into 2021 when Government allowed the meeting of groups in public places again.

Under the guidance of the two Co-ordinators, volunteers continued to support our 120 service users and 30 volunteers with the following:

- Regular social phone calls to catch up and check on their well being
- Shopping for those who were unable to get out due to health problems or who were 'shielding' due to health conditions
- Collection and delivery of medicines
- Signposting service users to appropriate places for support when needed
- Providing a monthly parcel of activities, information and treats to help keep spirits up
- Loan of equipment such as wheelchairs
- Loan of jigsaw puzzles, books, and other items to keep people entertained
- We continued to receive referrals from case holders and family members during the course of our Outreach Scheme.
- Utilising social media with fortnightly Zoom 'coffee chats' with service users
- Sharing of news and general chat via our WhatsApp group

A newsletter parcel continued to be delivered to all volunteers and services users which allowed Good Companions to continuing supporting and remain in contact with everyone. As well as our newsletter, these included:

- Leaflets about maintaining good health
- Adult mindfulness colouring pictures and pencil crayons
- Quizzes (including picture and dingbat quizzes)
- A variety of crosswords, puzzles and games
- Hand drawn pictures from children
- Getting to know your volunteers
- Information sheets
- Poetry
- Recipes
- And those all-important edible treats!

Service User Feedback

As a requirement of our funding from People's Health Trust, we provide annual feedback on the 2 groups they fund, Parkgate and Highbank. Although we had been in lockdown for a significant period of the funding, in July 2021, Good Companions undertook an audit of the opinions of users at the Parkgate Group only as the Highbank was still not open. The form was of simple format and was designed to establish the views on the Outreach service.

Figures relating to distribution of feedback forms, and their receipt

Number of forms distributed to service users	38
Number of completed forms received	17

An over-view of responses

1) Please tell us what you like about the group at Parkgate		
Welcoming	Good range of activities	Friendly atmosphere
Good Company	Good company	Nice staff & volunteers
Catching up with friends	Friendship	Enjoy meeting people
Involved in activities	Everything	Friendly
Very relaxing	No pressure	Easy going
2) Please tell us what you would change about the group at Parkgate		
Not always a quiz	Speed meet	Nothing, its brilliant
Mix people up so they don't always sit at the same table	It's a bit noisy at times	Nothing
3) Give us your ideas for new or different activities in the group at Parkgate. This can be something every week, once a fortnight or just occasionally. It can also be a visit from someone to talk about something of interest.		
Tai Chi every week	Raffle with a fresh produce prize	Card games
Occasional speakers	Film show with popcorn/ice cream	Crafts
Board games	Musical activities/groups to visit	Time to get to know people without activities

Trips and Visits

Every year we organise a number of activities and trips with all the groups. These are a few of the things we have organised in the past, please tick if you would be interested in attending these again

Garden Centre	8	Pantomime	10
Boat trip on the Trent	12	Christmas Party	15
Afternoon Tea	13		

4) Tell us the places you would like to visit with the group. This can be anything from a trip to a local pub or café for lunch to a day out at a local stately home. However, it cannot be more than a day trip and no more than a 1 hour drive from Clifton.		
5 or more people	3 -5 people	Less than 3 people
Lunch at a local pub	Theatre	Zoo/City Farm/ Sanctuary
Lunch out	Cinema	Gypsy museum
Visit to a cafe/coffee shop	Arboretum	Dog Rescue
Coffee morning	Wollaton Hall	Newstead Abbey
Dovecote Farm & Cafe	Cherry Lane Garden Centre	Matlock
Go for a walk	Highfields Crazy Golf	Crich tramway museum

Fundraising

All of the groups run by Good Companions are done so using funds from one of our supporters, collected in the group or raised at fundraising activities. We are always looking to see what activities you enjoyed or for new ideas.

Tell us the activities you have attended and what you thought about them													
Attended and enjoyed all of them Afternoon tea (most popular)													
Do you have any ideas for fundraising activities													
<table border="1"> <tr><td>More raffles</td><td>Picnic</td></tr> <tr><td>Charity walk</td><td>Jumble sale</td></tr> <tr><td>Dance</td><td>BBQ</td></tr> <tr><td>Tombola</td><td>Bring & Buy Sale</td></tr> <tr><td>Cake Competition</td><td>Weekly Lottery</td></tr> <tr><td>Car Boot Sale</td><td></td></tr> </table>	More raffles	Picnic	Charity walk	Jumble sale	Dance	BBQ	Tombola	Bring & Buy Sale	Cake Competition	Weekly Lottery	Car Boot Sale		
More raffles	Picnic												
Charity walk	Jumble sale												
Dance	BBQ												
Tombola	Bring & Buy Sale												
Cake Competition	Weekly Lottery												
Car Boot Sale													

Good Companions

The main aim of Good Companions is to reduce loneliness and isolation for vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale.

Tell us what you think about the service you have received from us. Have we reduced loneliness and isolation for you?

This is a selection of some of the comments:

I don't think I would have got through lockdown without the regular contact from GC, you saved me, thank you.	BM
Thank you all for all your input	ST
Wonderful	BB

The support throughout the pandemic was exceptional. The phonecalls and gifts were lovely and much appreciated. It really gave me something to look forward to.	FMc
Personally I am not lonely or isolated as have family close by but I really look forward to the weekly outings to Good Companions	KB
Afternoon tea excellent and lovely for family and friends to attend and share the occasion	FM
We were very well looked after during lockdown and did not feel abandoned.	MH

Conclusion to Service User Feedback

All of the feedback has again been very positive and we have received some lovely comments as well as some good suggestions for activities moving forward. It is interesting to note that there is still a strong feeling of concern about moving outside of familiar areas which has come across in the suggestions of where to go for trips. Previously, service users had been a little more adventurous in their suggestions but it is noticeable that since Covid, the suggestions for outing has very definitely moved towards keeping close to home and re-establishing links with friends and the local community.

It was agreed that a full audit would be carried out later in the year to establish how people felt about returning to groups and other activities and obtain their views on what and how we are doing.

Marketing

Good Companions continues to retain a presence on the 'Do It' website via the Nottingham Council for Voluntary Services (NCVS) as well as on the NCC 'Ask Lion' and, as well as our own Good Companions Facebook, has regularly appeared on local Clifton, Silverdale and Wilford Facebook pages.

Our website has finally been updated, co-ordinated through the Social Media sub-group, who regularly update this site.

During and since the pandemic, the importance of highlighting the work of Good Companions was essential as a mean of reaching out to those who were even more lonely and isolated. Regular articles have been printed in our Clifton Local News, promoting our services, which resulted in several new referrals as well as volunteers. In addition, verbal reports on Good Companions have been given at meetings of the NCC Area 7 Committee, the Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale Community Partnership and the AFN Steering Group, held online via Zoom or Microsoft Teams. It has also been promoted during a virtual conference organised by the UK Network for Older People entitled 'Decade for Healthy Ageing' and at the AFN Ageing Well Day in Nottingham Market Square.

Following lockdown, our leaflets were made available at our friendship groups and social and fundraising events as well as being widely distributed throughout the local community. Leaflets were also provided at the venues where collection boxes are situated. Our banners were displayed where and when appropriate.

Funding

Funding remains a constant area of concern for any organisation, particularly with the current financial climate and cuts to voluntary and social services. With the continuation of lockdowns at the beginning of 2021, the fundraising we were able to do ourselves was restricted. In addition, we lost the income generated from the Friendship Groups. To offset this, donations were requested from our service users who were very generous, an extra special Christmas raffle had been organised and additional collection tins were distributed to various businesses.

We are also grateful to those businesses in Clifton, prior to and after the lockdowns who regularly provided items for refreshments and raffle and bingo prizes for our Friendship Groups. Many businesses and voluntary organisations also contributed to our monthly parcels for service users and raffle prizes as part of our outreach service for which we are very thankful.

Our grants from the People's Health Trust have supported the continuation of the Highbank and Parkgate Friendship groups and our Outreach service to the service users of those groups. With the help of our Honorary Fundraiser, Andrew Price, we were awarded a number of grants which have contributed to the general running costs of Good Companions, which have been much appreciated including the Thomas Farr Charity, the Co-op Central England, the Skerritt Trust, the Lord Barnaby's Foundation, the Lady Hind Trust, and Sir John Eastwood Foundation. Further funds were raised through Aviva and the ASDA fund, and the Clifton Community & Family Support group raised funds through their online auction – which have been very gratefully received.

Once COVID restrictions were lifted, a number of planned fundraising events took place including an Afternoon tea on 17th July and a Quiz and Fish & Chip evening on 22nd September.

Conclusion

The past year has been very challenging with the continuation of the World pandemic and our Outreach Support Service during the first half of the year. However, with the reopening of our Friendship groups, and the resumption of our Home Visiting service and social and fundraising events, we look forward to a more 'normal' and stable period of time in the months to come.

The hard work and support of our Co-ordinators and volunteers, and many in our local community, has been overwhelming and very much appreciated by our service users. It has enabled Good Companions to continue to support so many people, many of whom have been affected by the increased loneliness and isolation experienced during lockdowns.

Thankfully, our funding position has been maintained thanks to all those involved but more will need to be done to ensure our income is continued for the future, particularly given the current financial pressures.

Good Companions
(Registered charity, number 1144729)
Financial statements
for the year ended 31 December 2021

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2 - 3	Trustees' annual report
4	Independent examiner's report
5	Receipts & payments account
6	Statement of assets & liabilities
7 - 8	Notes to the accounts

**Good Companions
Trustees' annual report
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

Full name Good Companions

Registered charity number 1144729

Principal address

Clifton Cornerstone
Southchurch Drive
Nottingham
NG11 8EW

Trustees

Clare Ashton, Chairman
Christine Breeton, Treasurer

Independent examiner

John O'Brien, employee of Community Accounting Plus, Units 1 & 2 North West, 41 Talbot Street, Nottingham, NG1 5GL

Governance and management

The charity is operated under the rules of its constitution adopted 01/01/2000 and most recently amended 05/10/2011.

As set out in our governing document, membership is open to individuals over eighteen or organisations approved by the Trustees.

Objectives and activities

The relief of elderly persons, being over 60 years of age, and those below that age who have a need for such services, living in Nottingham and the surrounding area by such means as are recognised as charitable within the law of England and Wales as the trustees shall determine.

Summary of the main activities undertaken for the public benefit

Our main activities undertaken for the public benefit include:

1. the provision of a befriending and visiting service;
2. the provision of advice, information and support for such persons and their carers;
3. the training of volunteers.

Public benefit statement

By reducing the isolation and loneliness of vulnerable and older people in Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale areas of Nottingham and the surrounding area which improves their health and wellbeing.

The Trustees confirm that they have complied with the duty in section 17 of the Charities Act 2011 to have due regard to the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit, 'Charities and Public Benefit'.

Good Companions

Summary of the main achievements during the period

Due to the pandemic, the charities main activities - home visiting and organising meeting places for vulnerable and older people (friendship groups), organised by 2-part time co-ordinators and supported by volunteers - were curtailed in March 2020. These were replaced by an Outreach service which included regular telephone contact, assistance with shopping and medical supplies, and the hand delivery by volunteers and co-ordinators of a monthly parcel containing a newsletter and a variety of theme based activities and treats. Communication with and between co-ordinators and volunteers was maintained via Zoom meetings and WhatsApp with a WhatsApp for service users to communicate with each other.

Once restrictions were lifted, our friendship groups were gradually reopened according to the availability of venues from June 2021 onwards with the last opening in August. Referrals for our services continued to be received throughout the period and followed up as well as the recruitment, support and organisation of volunteers. Fundraising activities also continued throughout the period with raffles and donation appeals, and once restrictions were lifted by very successful social and fundraising events - afternoon tea, a quiz and fish & chip supper, and 2 Christmas parties, as well as the annual visit to the pantomime. Home visiting recommenced in the summer and phone befriending continued for some of those who no longer required home visiting or attendance at a friendship group.

We are very grateful to all our grant funders, those who support us in the local community financially with donations or gifts in kind, attend our fundraising events or give of their time through a variety of volunteering activities as well as the invaluable hard work of our part-time co-ordinators, which enable us to make a real difference to the people of Clifton, Wilford and Silverdale.

The charity's policy on reserves

We maintain a designated reserve of £6,000 to provide cover should we be unable to attract grants or raise sufficient funds through fund raising activities.

Signed on behalf of the charity's trustees:

Signed CC Ashton Date 1/7/2022
Clare Ashton, Trustee

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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

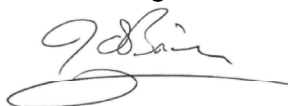
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

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

1. accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. the accounts do not accord with those records.

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

Signed  Date 01/07/2022
John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE
Employee of Community Accounting Plus

Good Companions
Receipts & payments account
for the year ended 31 December 2021

			2021
	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	Funds	Funds	Funds
Note	£	£	£
Receipts			
Bank interest	97	-	97
Fundraising	7095	-	7095
Grants & donations	2 6845	27187	34032
Friendship Group income	6470	-	6470
Sundry receipts	403	-	403
Total receipts	20910	27187	48097
Payments			
Wages, NI & pension	2630	18454	21084
Professional services	2540	-	2540
Printing & stationery	23	690	713
DBS & ID	49	-	49
Events	721	1170	1891
Hire costs	1065	335	1400
Insurance	352	-	352
Sundry payments	868	174	1042
Friendship group expenditure	-	2760	2760
Total payments	8248	23583	31831
Net receipts/(payments)	12662	3604	16266
Cash funds at start of this period	20917	11609	32526
Transfers between funds	2256	(2256)	-
Cash funds at end of this period	35835	12957	48792

Good Companions
Statement of assets and liabilities
at 31 December 2021

		2021
Cash assets	Note	£
Bank accounts		48417
Cash in hand		375
		<u>48792</u>
 Other monetary assets		
Debtors and prepayments	4	<u>595</u>
		<u>595</u>
 Liabilities		
Creditors	5	<u>(696)</u>
		<u>(696)</u>

These financial statements are accepted on behalf of the charity by:

Signed Christine Breeton Dated 1.7.22
 Christine Breeton, Trustee

Good Companions
Notes to the accounts
for the year ended 31 December 2021

1. Receipts & payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts contain a summary of money received and money spent during the period and a list of assets and liabilities at the end of the period. Usually, cash received and cash spent will include transactions through bank accounts and cash in hand.

2. Grants & donations

	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total
	£	£	£
People's Health Trust	-	12087	12087
Boots UK	-	4400	4400
The Thomas Farr Charity	-	3000	3000
Co-op Central England	-	2700	2700
Skerritt Trust	-	2000	2000
Lord Barnaby's Foundation	-	2000	2000
The Lady Hind Trust	-	1000	1000
Sir John Eastwood Foundation	2000	-	2000
Clifton Community & FS Group	750	-	750
Aviva	637	-	637
ASDA Fund	300	-	300
AW Lymn	280	-	280
Thomas Cullen	50	-	50
Sundry donations	2828	-	2828
	6845	27187	34032

3. Funds analysis

	Opening balance	Receipts	(Payments)	Transfers	Closing balance
	£	£	£	£	£
Restricted funds					
Clifton Friendship Project 2018-2020	4969	-	(2713)	(2256)	-
Clifton Friendship Project 2021	-	12087	(8594)	-	3493
Silverdale Friendship Group	-	5400	-	-	5400
Lead Co-ordinator salary	-	9700	(7700)	-	2000
Click Fund	6640	-	(4576)	-	2064
	11609	27187	(23583)	(2256)	12957
Unrestricted funds					
General	14917	20910	(8248)	2256	29835
Reserves	6000	-	-	-	6000
	20917	20910	(8248)	2256	35835

Good Companions

The Click Fund contributes toward the group co-ordinator salaries.

The transfer from the Clifton Friendship Project 2018-2020 fund to the General fund reflects the release of any restrictions on the use of these funds.

4. Debtors and prepayments

	£
Employment Allowance backdated claim	402
Prepayment - Insurance	193
	<u>595</u>

5. Creditors

	£
Independent examination fee	480
Room hire	180
Professional services	36
	<u>696</u>

6. Trustees' remuneration

Trustees received no expenses, remuneration or benefits in this period.

7. Previous period comparison

The previous period's figures have not been included for comparison because the layout used in the previous period was substantially different and does not lend itself to clear comparison.

8. Glossary of terms

Creditors: These are amounts owed by the charity, but not paid during the accounting period.

Debtors: These are amounts owed to the charity, but not received in the accounting period.

Prepayments: These are services that the charity has paid for in advance, but not used during the accounting period.

Restricted funds: These are funds given to the charity, subject to specific restrictions set by the donor, but still within the general objects of the charity.

**Independent examiner's report to the trustees of
Good Companions
for the year ended 31 December 2021**

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Good Companions (the charity) for the year ended 31 December 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

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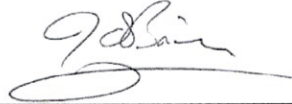
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Signed



Date 01/07/2022

John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE

Employee of Community Accounting Plus