



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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**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.

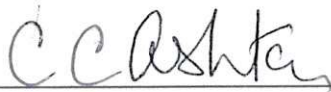
We are very grateful to all our grant funders, those who support us in the local community financially with donations or gifts in kind, attend our fundraising events or give of their time through a variety of volunteering activities as well as the invaluable hard work of our part-time co-ordinators, 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 _____
Clare Ashton, Trustee



Date 1/7/2022

**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').

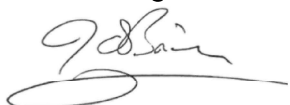
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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**

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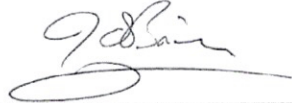
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Signed



Date 01/07/2022

John O'Brien MSc, FCCA, FCIE

Employee of Community Accounting Plus