



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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**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').

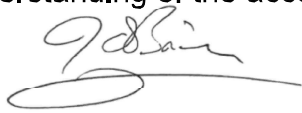
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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**

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