



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

INDEX

Background	3
Aims of Good Companions	3
Overview of 2023	3
Management Committee	3-4
Sub-groups	4-5
Staffing	5-6
Volunteers	6
Recruitment	6-7
Training	7
Referrals	7-9
Friendship Groups	9
• Rivergreen	10
• Simone	10-11
• Parkgate	11
• Clifton Community Centre	11
• Silverdale	12
Home Visiting Scheme	12-13
Service User Feedback	13
Marketing	14
Funding	14-15
Conclusion	15

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
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual changed their mind regarding receiving a volunteer visitor 	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Services from other agencies in place before they reached the top of our waiting list. 	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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').

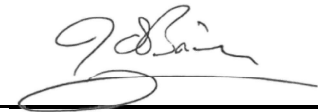
I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

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**

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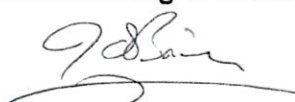
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Signed  Date 02/04/2024

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