

THE TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31.03.21 FOR STEPPING STONES COMMUNITY ORGANISATION, 75 RAYMOND STREET, HANLEY, STOKE ON TRENT, ST1 4DP. PLEASE SEE THE CHARITIES DATA BASE UPDATE 2011 FOR THE NAMES OF TRUSTEES.

The constitution for the charity was adopted on 10/10/2011 and amended on 01/12/2011.

OBJECTIVES OF THE CHARITY

For the benefit of the public in Stoke on Trent, in particular but not exclusively members of the Black and Minority Ethnic communities by:

- a. The advancement of education and training
- b. To advance in life and help young people by the provision of recreational and leisure time activities provided in the interest of social welfare, desire to improve their conditions of life and develop their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as mature and responsible individuals.

The charity is managed by three holding trustees and two to four elected trustees elected every three years by AGM. The next elections were held in April 2020. The committee meets on the 28th of every month to discuss business of the charity.

This year has proven to be one that has involved many challenges, obstacles and embedding the need to identify new ways of working due to the national and international pandemic that was Covid-19. As a result of this we had to overcome overwhelming issues that needed to be addressed and as an organisation, we had to follow national government guidelines in terms of what projects could legally continue and those that would have to stop during lockdown.

Our nursery provision, although initially closed for a short period during the first lockdown, opened its doors to keyworkers and vulnerable families, including to children with special needs. Before this could take place, a robust training and awareness program was implemented for all staff and volunteers in terms of the signs and symptoms of Covid-19 and what to do should they or family members present with any of these symptoms. As a result of this, we were able to manage the spreading of the virus well. Parents and families of children in the nursery were educated about the virus through regular contact with the manager and deputy manager who held live questions and answers sessions through "Zoom" and were always reachable to assist and provide advice and support wherever necessary.

As we opened up for all families, we had to implement a process of re-establishing confidence in the families that had not yet returned out of fear of the virus by focusing on the measures that we had put in place to reduce the spread of the disease. We invested in several contactless hand sanitizer dispensers that were mounted around the building, lavatories and entrances, having clear signs on the need to use hand sanitizers on entry into the building and after using the washroom facilities, social distancing tape where appropriate was used, contactless thermometers were purchased and new policies were developed and published for all parents and guests to become aware of. However, as we

were aware of some families who have English as a second language or do not understand English, some of our multi-lingual team spent time with families to explain the new procedures in their first language.

This led onto developing an informative film, where we approached a local paramedic, who had also featured on BBC's "Ambulance" to work with us. Together we produced a short documentary style film that explained what the virus was, and the steps required to stop the spread. This film was circulated across social media and went viral.

In addition to the above, home activity packs were created on a weekly basis to enable our nursery children to continue learning at home in some way, shape or form. The packs included sound boxes, phonics building blocks designed by our team, reading books, small arts and crafts activities and worksheets. Parents were regularly informed about how to use them and extended learning ideas. We also supported families who were economically deprived with food parcels and clothing through networking with other charitable organisations and also teamed up by volunteering with them to enhance their offer to the local community. The nursery became a key point of communication for countless families when seeking help. This help included but was not limited to support in mental health, domestic abuse and those feeling isolated and lonely. Children continued to develop and progress through the Early Years Foundation Stage and we used this time to identify more ways to improve the nursery and outdoor areas.

We were recognised for all the work that we were doing for the community in terms of raising awareness about the virus, after which we were contacted by the NHS and Councillor to help facilitate a local community testing service next door to Stepping Stones. We collaborated in providing this offer and utilised the power of social media to give a virtual tour of the what to expect. Live sessions were conducted where the Chair of Stepping Stones interviewed staff who were undertaking testing to explain the process where we also had a volunteer to undertake the lateral flow test to inform people in what to expect. This process resulted in the local uptake of testing increasing dramatically. We also provided broadband for 3 months of the testing process as there was no internet connection prior to the current arrangements.

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We will also be able to host community events where the gardens can also be used and have more choice for local people. Furthermore, a recording studio is being developed to create facilities for a future radio station for young people, recording podcasts, recording music, poetry and short stories. The intention is also to network with other organisations who may want to use the facilities too.

A series of shows were developed through DCMS funding, administered by the National Lottery Fund, to keep young people including young vulnerable adults, connected whilst in the Covid-19 pandemic through online “live shows” that were streamed via Facebook, Instagram and Zoom. The show was hosted by young people aged between 16 and 24, addressing key factors that young people may be suffering from through the pandemic such as depression, unhealthy eating, cyber bullying, feeling isolated and so on. Questions were asked via direct live calls and comments made on social media.

Local young people, mainly aged between 14 and 24 benefitted with an added focus on the Black and Minority Ethnic communities, residing in Stoke-on-Trent. The project provided a platform for people who were feeling disconnected, isolated, depressed and those are suffering emotionally, mentally and physically to connect with others and feel like there are people out there who care, are concerned, can help and are there for them. It ensured that young people who may have suffered some kind of abuse such as emotional, physical or domestic abuse could be identified and provided with the support that they required. As our Chair person, Fahmida Rahman, is now part of the “Early Help and Prevention Board” we have a wider scope of support to services than we have previously had. Stepping Stones was identified as a key organisation that can help shape the plans around Early Help for vulnerable families and was asked to join the board by Stoke City Local Authority. This places us in a key position both at strategic level and grassroots level to really make a difference in the city and be a voice for BAME communities.

Stepping Stones has a proven track record of successful engagement with the local community, young people and children. It has also been recognised by other organisations in the City, including the Local Authority and in particular the Community Cohesion Manager as well as the Education Department for being instrumental in engagement with BAME communities and families. We have developed over a decade of experience and our skills, knowledge and experience is being used by mainstream and other organisations to inform their planning and delivery of services. Our team of staff and volunteers reflect the ethnic make-up of the locality and have a diverse range of people behind our projects. Over the years, we have been able to build a strong relationship of trust with the community and have been very effective when delivering projects.

Our work has complimented the Local Authorities’ and national strategy to support vulnerable people and provide the essential services needed.

We have remained connected with the community via social media, our whatsapp group, zoom conference calls, phone calls, etc. Our young people, parents and people who have contacted us via social media, who have been mainly from BAME backgrounds, have expressed how disconnected they felt and the impact of being isolated from those whom they are friends with, family and their social circles has affected them. We have had to

support young people who have fallen into depression, having frequent fall-outs with their parents, feeling trapped at home and having a sense of hopelessness. We have also had to support young people who have a bereavement. All of these factors resulted in a discussion around what we can do as an organisation that will provide a safe, effective and consistent platform to support. This would also need to be culturally appropriate and consider any issues that would require a more sensitive approach. Young people informed us that social media is the way that they will feel connected due to all the restrictions and fear of contracting the virus. It was then suggested that we run a “live” talk show style project that will empower, give young people the opportunity to feel connected, ask questions and feel part of something.

As a result we engaged with over 1000 young people every week through the pandemic offering support, help and advice. Added value to the project was that several jobs were created, young people directly involved in the project were given training, new skills acquired, access to professional consultancy, experience in media, widening networks and so much more was achieved.

In addition to the live shows, we also created a series of children’s shows that was delivered and hosted by younger children, throughout the lockdown. Fun arts and crafts activities were shared, short stories, and small Covid-19 awareness messages were shared. As a result, young people from all across the UK engaged with the show which resulted in our children’s show being aired in national television.

Adult health and social care had to take alternative forms given the situation. Sports sessions had to temporarily cease following national guidelines, which resulted in people feeling isolated and becoming unfit. Our sports team decided to try and support people at home to continue to remain fit utilising Zoom sessions as a way to keep in contact with one another and share badminton drills, circuit training using resources available at home and sharing healthy eating ideas. As restrictions began to lift, we organised socially distanced walks and outdoor activities.

As an organisation, we continued to grow our networks, partner with other organisations to enhance services, become involved with boards and represent BAME communities, improve our building and undertake further improvements, train our staff and volunteers, helped to raise awareness of Covid-19, benefits of testing and continued to provide support for vulnerable families, children and young people.

Stepping Stones Community Organisation
75 Raymond Street, Hanley, Stoke on Trent, ST1 4DP
T: 01782 499430 E: info@steppingstones.uk.com

Receipts and Payments Account April 2020-March 2021

Receipts

Stoke on Trent City Council	£73,775.00
Donations	£9500.00
Department for Digital, Culture, Media & Sport(Managed by National Lottery)	£81,810.00
Community Investment Fund	£25,000.00
Staffordshire Police and Crime Commissioner	£3000.00
Staffs Community Foundation	£3000.00
Tutor Assessment Centre Fees	£2416.00
Total Receipt	£198,501.00

Expenditure

Rent (Inclusive of water rates, business rates and insurance. £10,800 budget used from DCMS rent allocation)	£19,960.00
Resurfacing front	£8,500.00
Resources	£9,640.00
Repainting Interior, maintenance and repair	£12,500.00
Garden equipment	£9,960.00
Utilities	£9,980.00
Sundries	£5,000.00
Restreaming fees	£660.00
Sessional Staff	£19,700.00
Project workers	£7,200.00
Website	£1500.00
Secure Intercom Supply & Installation	£1680.00
Assessment administration	£1450.00
DCMS Covid-19 Project Breakdown:	
3 Professional Cameras	£6000.00
Switch Board	£2500.00
Graphics Enabled Desktop	£1670.00
Laptops	£6600.00
Lighting	£600.00
Cables	£270.00
Condenser Mics and Stands	£1044.00

Scene Set Props	£1000.00
Stationery	£600.00
Interactive Screen	£1999.00
Hosts	£10,800.00
Project Manager	£7200.00
Set Technicians	£7200.00
Project Workers	£4800.00
Guest Speakers and Consultancy	£2400.00
Social Media Support Workers	£4800.00
Social Media Platforms Production	£1100.00
Marketing & Promotion	£3600.00
Phone, Mobile and Broadband	£660.00
Project Staff Resources	£7500.00

Total Expenditure	£180,073.00
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Balance carried over to April 2020	£18,428.00
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Restricted Funds £18,000 remaining for CIF project

Unrestricted funds remaining of £428.00.

Date	Electronically Signed
21/05/2021	F Rahman
21/05/2021	S Jahangir
21/05/2021	A Sajed
21/05/2021	R Hossein
21/05/2021	F Noor

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name Stepping Stones Community
Organisation

On accounts for the year
ended

March 2021

Charity no
(if any)

1145346



Independent examiner's report on the accounts

Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Set out on pages

3 and 4

**Respective
responsibilities of
trustees and examiner**

The charity's trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The charity's trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the Charities Act 2011 (the Charities Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the Charities Act,
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission (under section 145(5)(b) of the Charities Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

**Basis of independent
examiner's statement**

My examination was carried out in accordance with general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair' view and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

**Independent
examiner's statement**

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention

1. which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in, any material respect, the requirements:
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 130 of the Charities Act; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and comply with the accounting requirements of the Charities Act have not been met; or
2. to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Signed:

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Joynal Abedin".

Date:

08/06 /2021

Name:


Joynal Abedin

Business owner with over 15years experience of financial accounting, management accounting, business finance, payroll and understanding markets and marketing.

31 Station Road, Sheffield, S35 2XE

Disclosure

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.



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