

THE TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31.03.22 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 on April 2020. The committee meets on the 28th of every month to discuss business of the charity.

The nursery, despite facing challenges during the lockdown period, was able to slowly but steadily rebuild, welcoming vulnerable families and children back to the setting.

Through highly trained nursery staff and knowledge built up over the years around infection control, minimising the spread of COVID and other illnesses, re-establishing relationships and nurturing children, we were successfully able to instil confidence in families and children up taking our services.

We were able to further support vulnerable and disadvantaged families by providing 420 food packs, 420 hygiene packs and 6 community meals and 6 cook and eat sessions. These were extremely welcomed by the families who felt respected with dignity maintained at the same time.

We continued to provide weekly home activity packs to continue learning at home containing new resources in addition to those previously identified. The nursery remains to be a key point of communication for countless families when seeking support in mental health, domestic abuse and those feeling isolated and lonely. The outdoors proved crucial to providing a variety of safe spaces for people to be able to make disclosures.

The nursery senior leadership team have noticed an alarming rise in the number of children presenting with speech and language delay. The team have developed a new approach to enable staff to implement early intervention strategies in partnership with parents and other professionals. The team continues to work closely with partners and parents to ensure that no child is left behind in education.

Staff and volunteers have regular monitoring and supervision meetings with the manager and professional development targets are agreed as well as training needs identified and implemented.

Stepping Stones supported more than 300 vulnerable families on a regular basis through a variety of projects and services. Through our work, we became aware of the challenges that they were facing in terms of affordability in relation to food, hygiene, clothes and utility costs. Furthermore, families were struggling with their mental health and well-being because of suffering financial loss, the inability to afford basic living essentials and being unable to have quality family time. Children were negatively impacted by this and as a result withdrew from extra curricula activities, social gatherings with friends and became isolated.

Women and pubescent young girls were struggling to meet personal hygiene needs where purchasing sanitary pads, underwear, etc simply became unaffordable. We have seen a dramatic increase in women and young girls requiring assistance with this since the pandemic.

We were able to deliver the following after receiving the Winter Fund from Stoke City Council:

1. Provided food parcels with additional recipe cards containing ideas in how to prepare meals on a budget, to local families with children and the elderly. Packs were also available for families with babies that included formula milk and baby food.
2. Provide personal hygiene packs were provided for women and pubescent young girls to include sanitary pads, underwear, and information about sexual health with help lines that can be accessed.
3. Cook and eat sessions where whole families learn how to make healthy and affordable meals and how to reduce food waste were delivered.
4. We hosted weekly community meals for vulnerable families to enjoy a meal and socialise whilst children engaged in arts and crafts.

Our organisation were delighted to have received funding from Reaching Communities, National Lottery Fund to deliver a Multi-Media Youth Project following the huge success of the Tea N Talks Project.

The project itself would deliver youth work, particularly around issues relevant to young people's lives. Stepping Stones supports vulnerable families, young adults who are NEET, and deals on a regular basis with sensitive issues such as domestic violence and forced marriage.

The project would seek to generate and support a more positive narrative about life in Stoke-on-Trent by empowering up to 40 young 'influencers' to play their part in promoting this, and by engaging Stoke's aspiring creatives (e.g. via Staffordshire University, Keele University and local colleges) to help make these influencers' ideas a reality through our Multi Media Project. The project consisted of three elements: Youth Journalist Project, Film Five Series and Theatre Production.

The youth journalist project engaged with approximately twenty young people who worked on different aspects of the project. Though this project we dealt with issues that young people faced in the city of Stoke on Trent which was identified by young people themselves working on the project but at the same time had a wider impact on the people involved through providing opportunities to upskill their knowledge in literacy communication and networking skills. Young people acquired new skills in the field of journalism and reporting relevant news to the locality and targeted audience as well as building on skills in photography and filming as well as learning how to conduct interviews with relevant parties. The magazine produced publish up to 1200 magazines per month that were distributed amongst schools colleges libraries and similar settings.

The films developed focused on a story or narrative about challenges that young people faced which would be produced to raise awareness of issues. These storylines for the films were identified through the young journalist project and monthly magazines that were produced.

The Theatre Production element of the project where a piece of drama, based upon the findings from the Journalists project was created in order to use it as a mechanism to visit schools and perform the piece in order to raise awareness and reach out to those who may be suffering from issues portrayed through this piece.

The last part of the multimedia project has continued to build upon the success of the COVID-19 funded project by yourselves. There have been 15 episodes that have taken place with an additional 3 as practice sessions and training before going live. We can confidently say that we were able to engage with almost 2000 people with each episode via various social media platforms. We also used Zoom to enable those who do not have social media to engage. This was on average around 30 participants. An added benefit to the project was that we were able to engage with people beyond Stoke-on-Trent which resulted in young people in other areas wanting to replicate the project in their areas. This has been earmarked by our organisation as a potential extension of the project as part of our future plans.

Following the small references that has been made to existing work and the proposed project, it can be seen how the vast majority, if not all of the work we do, fits in with the three priorities of:

The project brought predominantly young people together in multiple ways. A key group of young people, who would essentially be influencers, came together and developed ideas, consultations, development plans and delivery by including their broader networks, community networks and social media platforms. They were able to ensure their voices were heard within their neighbourhoods, locality and the city by utilising the various strands to the project. This project proved to have a positive effect on how young people were perceived by their community and also provided key information to other organisations such as Stoke City Council, local colleges, universities and so on, that ultimately assisted them in tailoring their services in order to cater for young people more effectively. In turn, this strengthened relationships between generations, authorities and families, alongside empowering young people within their respective communities.

The work previously undertaken by Stepping Stones brought people together through youth clubs, coffee mornings, mother and toddler groups, study support sessions and most of the projects that has previously been mentioned. In addition, it brought people from all backgrounds together through the community events that we host as well as community lunches. Eating together always provides a platform that will enable discussions to take place thereby breaking down barriers. Before COVID-19, we hosted annual large scale theatre performances with additional family based fun activities that saw up to 400 people attend at the community centre, which is the heart of the community.

In addition to all the projects mentioned, it is important to note how Stepping Stones continues to bring organisations together through specific projects. For example, our involvement in the “Wider World Project” lead to us being asked to become a trainer after which we delivered training to over 50 early years settings and shared best practice. Being part of the Community First Panel enabled us to share our knowledge of groups who were doing fantastic work in the area and should be financially supported with grants. Working alongside numerous organisations on the Building a Better Britain Together enabled us to work alongside over 500 organisations across the country and help each other to provide key services to the community that we serve. These few examples will indicate the scope of this priority and how it is a fundamental key strength of our organisation.

Stepping Stones is seen as the heart of the community and is very well accessed by local people, families, communities and is now being used by other organisations and groups.

We were extremely successful in securing over £100K through the Community Investment Fund over 2 years that has been used in its entirety to improve the building and surrounding areas. For example, there used to be concerning levels of anti-social behaviour on Raymond Street, which is where we are located, during evening hours. This would include drug abuse and petty crime. Through the grant, we were able to install CCTV cameras that were clearly positioned to make people aware of their presence. The anti-social behaviour almost immediately stopped whereby the surrounding neighbours benefitted from the relief of having to deal with these issues. As a result, we have seen more people using the route to go on walks etc which was not the case before the cameras were installed.

Through the grant, we were able to fully refurbish the kitchen on the first floor which now enables healthy and nutritious food to be prepared for our nursery children, etc, but we have also created a brand new kitchen space on the ground floor. This new facility together with the brand new hall space created on the ground floor has enabled us to bring the community, professionals and families together in a beautiful, secure and welcoming space. The new kitchen on the ground floor has enabled community events to be run with the added value of being able to serve food and access refreshments more efficiently, whilst maintaining the security of the nursery on the first floor.

Prior to the funding, our main entrance was tucked away around the back of the building, resulting in reduced visibility, missed opportunities and lack of presence. The building resembled a row of houses rather than an organisation, where signage was also an issue. Following the grant, we were able to create a brand new, eye catching, modern and sleek fully secure entrance, to the front of the property. The wider door has enabled disability

access and security has been maximised whereby people can only enter the building if they are permitted access by a member of staff. This has ensured that children, young people and families are safe from intruders etc.

The funds have also allowed us to create a more attractive front with raised flower beds, alongside getting the community involved in planting flowers and plants to ensure that they feel involved in the local environment. The back garden space has also been improved upon and is a beautiful space for our children, young people and families to access.

Stepping Stones works closely with the community police officers, whereby we are regularly asked about recommendations in how to deal with certain community issues. We have been involved with developing plans in how to improve the locality and work with local people and are seen as a pinnacle presence. In addition to this, we have also worked with Shelton Environmental Awareness Campaign to assist them to undertake environmental projects. This has been through providing a meeting space and volunteering wherever possible too. Our young people have undertaken community litter picks and have carried out projects around environmental issues.

The project was able to impact on places and spaces through raising awareness of local issues through the journalism and film production. Through group research, interviews and collaborative work, young people, with the support of mentors, highlighted positive things happening in the locality as well as raising awareness of issues of concern. Through the existing improvements already made at Stepping Stones, young people proved to benefit from the beautiful and safe environment already created together with the recording studio that was developed with the support of the Community Investment Fund from Stoke City Council.

The Multi-Media Project will continue to run for a few more months in the new financial year, after which it is our intention to reapply in order to continue the amazing work that we have been able to achieve through the support of Reaching Communities.

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 2021-March 2022

Receipts

Stoke on Trent City Council	£53,302.10
Reaching Communities (National Lottery)	£117,533.00
Childcare Grant Payment Services	£51,806.24
Exam Fees	£5250.00

Total Receipt **£227,891.34**

Expenditure

Rent (Inclusive of water rates, business rates and insurance.	£19,800.00
Resources	£15,380.00
Garden maintenance	£2300.00
Utilities	£10,250.00
Sundries	£7,500.00
Sessional Staff	£19,700.00
Assessment administration	£1450.00
Phone & Broadband	£600.00
Food & Hygiene Packs	£10,000.00
Total	£86,980.00

Multi-Media Project Breakdown (Upto March 2022):

Magazine Element

Magazines	£4200.00
Stationery	£700.00
Refreshments	£280.00
Volunteer expenses	£500.00
Website	£2000.00
Project Workers	£14,880.00
Total	£22,560.00

Film & Show

Stationery	£700.00
Refreshments	£280.00

Volunteer expenses	£500.00
Film Developer & Producer	£7440.00
Broadcasting Technician	£7440.00
Hosts	£22,320.00
Social Media & Marketing Support Worker	£7440.00
Props and Costumes	£3000.00
Total	£58,560.00

Capital Costs

Black Magic Hyperdeck Studio	£900.00
Canon Camcorder 4K	£5600.00
Professional Camcorder Tripod	£290.00
Professional Camera Slider Motorised	£1050.00
4K Drone	£2400.00
Storage Cases	£150.00
Lights	£340.00
HDMI & SDI Cables	£24.00
HDMI to SDI Converters	£170.00
Set Stage	£5000.00
Antibacterial Hand Sanitiser	£150.00
Training	£1200.00
Total	£17,270.97

Total Expenditure	£185,370.97
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Balance carried over to April 2020	£42,520.37
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Restricted Funds £19,142.03 remaining for Multi-Media Project

Unrestricted funds remaining of £23,378.34

Date	Electronically Signed
18/01/2023	F Rahman
18/01/2023	S Jahangir
18/01/2023	A Sajed

18/01/2023

R Hossein

18/01/2023

F Noor

Report to the trustees/
members of

Charity Name Stepping Stones Community
Organisation

On accounts for the year
ended

March 2022

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:

12/12 /2022

Name:

Joynal Abedin

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

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

Address:

31 Station Road, Sheffield, S35 2XE

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight material problems.

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

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The project was able to impact on places and spaces through raising awareness of local issues through the journalism and film production. Through group research, interviews and collaborative work, young people, with the support of mentors, highlighted positive things happening in the locality as well as raising awareness of issues of concern. Through the existing improvements already made at Stepping Stones, young people proved to benefit from the beautiful and safe environment already created together with the recording studio that was developed with the support of the Community Investment Fund from Stoke City Council.

The Multi-Media Project will continue to run for a few more months in the new financial year, after which it is our intention to reapply in order to continue the amazing work that we have been able to achieve through the support of Reaching Communities.