

Impact Report

Celebrating 50 Years of Providing Local Support through Volunteers

An award-winning local charity, backed by incredible volunteers, enabling us to offer essential support to nearly 1,000 residents throughout Wokingham Borough.



Our Purpose

Our Charitable Objects are:

- The relief in need of vulnerable elderly and disabled people for the public benefit within, but not exclusively, the Wokingham Borough area in particular by the provision of basic, volunteer-based and subsidised, low cost services and signposting them to additional statutory and volunteer sources of help to enable them to continue living in their own homes and not require moving into care.
- To promote the efficiency and effectiveness in the charitable activities of not-for-profit organisations, voluntary groups and charities working for the benefit of the public in the fields of community health and social care.
- Activities in furtherance of this purpose will include the provision of a volunteer brokerage service to both potential volunteers and charitable/voluntary organisations wishing to recruit volunteer assistance.

Projects

Details

Outcomes

Volunteer Brokerage

Supporting local charities and voluntary organisations to attract new volunteers

- More volunteers for more charities
- Delivering greater impact for good causes

Community Transport Schemes

Supporting older residents to get to vital medical appointments and social events

- Narrowing health inequalities
- Living healthily at home for longer
- Reducing loneliness

Green 'n' Tidy Gardening Service

Supporting residents unable to manage or afford a commercial service to keep their gardens safe and tidy

- Enabling safe enjoyment of outdoor spaces
- Keeping residents safe from rogue traders

Chair's Welcome



Dr. Julian Thompson

It's my privilege to introduce The Wokingham Volunteer Centre's Impact Report for 2023-24. With it being our 50th anniversary, this has been a special year and has provided an opportunity for us to reflect on our journey and values as an organisation. From the very beginning, gardening, transport, and volunteering have been central to TWVC's mission and as you'll see, they remain key pillars of our work today.

In what likely reflects the broader challenges facing society, the demand for our services continues to rise, and so do our efforts to meet that demand. This report highlights those efforts, alongside our continuing commitment to the vulnerable residents of the Wokingham Borough area, and the crucial role that volunteering plays in our community.

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I would like to extend a huge thank you to our amazing volunteers, staff, donors, and partners. Your dedication makes everything we do possible, allowing TWVC to continue being a reliable source of support and care for our community.



Chief Officer's Report

Nick Fellows

Celebrating our 50th Anniversary this year gives great cause for celebration, not just for the fact that we've been around for so long as a local charity but also to mark the exceptional support we have been able to provide to so many residents, thanks to the efforts and commitment of such a large number of willing volunteers throughout that time.

Reflecting back on the origin and history of the centre has also highlighted the fact that the challenges to society that were prevalent in the 1970's are still with us today. Finding more volunteers to address issues of loneliness, transport challenges and support with gardening were all at the forefront of people's minds when The Wokingham Volunteer Centre began its work in 1974.



Since then, many more charities have sprung up and life has changed in so many ways, but still the fundamental challenges remain. Whilst we have been able to respond and grow our service provision, in the last few years in particular we have seen a new surge in demand from local residents in need. In the past year we have recruited, and supported the placement of more volunteers than ever before. We have expanded our capacity within our community transport schemes and have seen the number of drives completed grow accordingly, but we are still unable to fulfil all requests and have a growing waiting list. We have put in place resource to double the number of gardens we can tend on a fortnightly basis but, despite this, the waiting list has risen by half again!

Despite these challenges I am delighted to be able to report that the centre continues to flourish and adapt to the ever-changing world. Enabling us to do this is the terrific support we enjoy from our small army of volunteers, from our supporters, funders and other partners in what is a strong and thriving local voluntary and community sector. For this support we remain extremely grateful and we commit to continuing to bring a strong return on that investment and to tailoring our services according to demand as we move into the next half-century!

Treasurer's Report



Martin Jeater

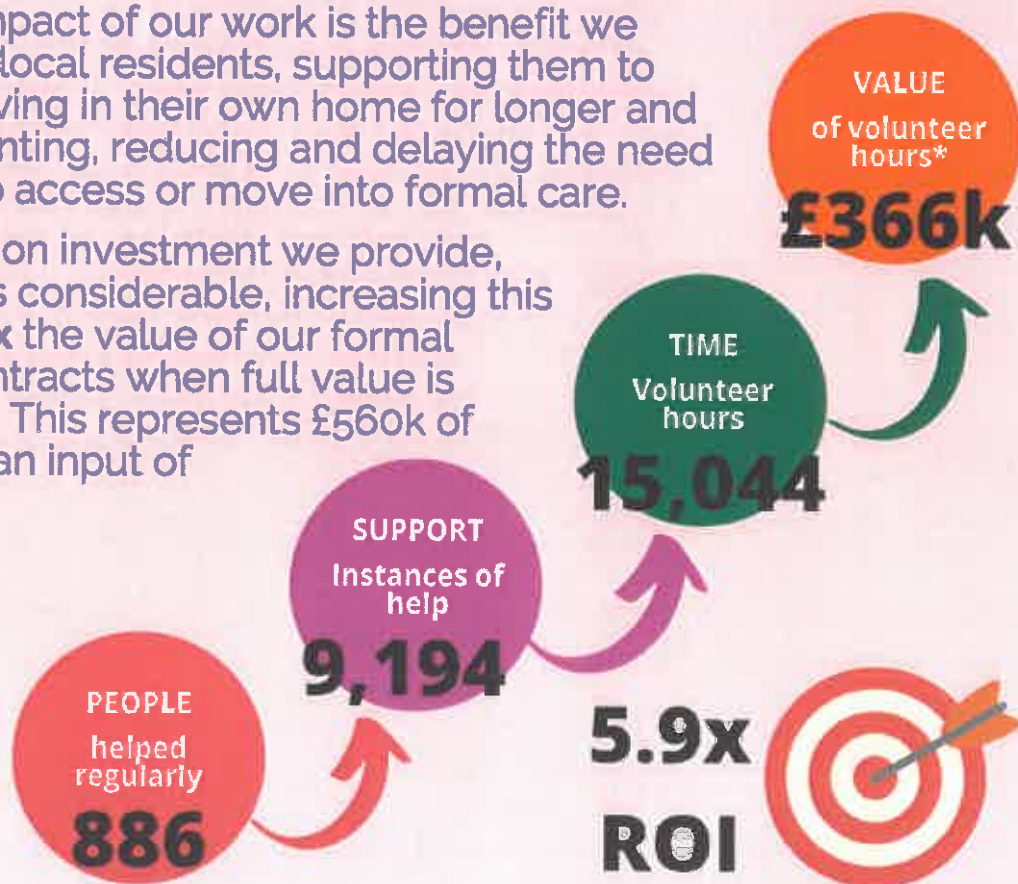
During the last financial period the charity was dependent on service contracts and grants from local councils for more than half its income. The Charity was well supported by Wokingham Borough Council. The charity showed a small surplus for the year. Trustees have again approved a small deficit budget for 2024-25 with a medium-term plan to meet breakeven. The Reserves remain strong and the financial situation is robust.

Our Impact

IMPACT IN NUMBERS

The real impact of our work is the benefit we provide to local residents, supporting them to continue living in their own home for longer and thus preventing, reducing and delaying the need for them to access or move into formal care.

The return on investment we provide, however, is considerable, increasing this year to **5.9x** the value of our formal service contracts when full value is calculated. This represents £560k of output for an input of just £95k.



* Measured at LG median salary

Volunteer Services

The Volunteer Brokerage scheme continues to provide support to those who live in and around Wokingham Borough to find the right role for them. We work closely with community, voluntary and charitable groups across the Borough to help them recruit volunteers.

Helena Badger

Volunteer Fairs

As part of the invaluable service we provide, we hold Volunteer Fairs to enable as many people as possible to access as many charities as possible on a face-to-face basis. During this period, we held a number of Volunteer Fairs at various libraries across Wokingham Borough and our two main Saturday Fairs at Wokingham Town Hall in October 2023 and February 2024. Across all five Fairs we held during this period, we helped support over 300 potential volunteers into a volunteering role and over 40 different charities and voluntary organisations to recruit volunteers.



Volunteer Services

continued

"I really value these events, not only because they are a great opportunity to showcase what ABC do, it also provides us with an amazing chance to speak to other charities and network. I took over 30 email addresses for potential volunteers on the day. Brilliant event, brilliantly advertised and organised - thank you!" ABC to Read, following the February Volunteer Fair

"I think I'm going to be busier in retirement than when I was working, as there are so many great causes here and I want to help them all!" Volunteer who attended the October Volunteer Fair

Volunteer Brokerage

Working with charities and organisations to recruit volunteers; working with volunteers to find the right role for them.

The volunteering portal (www.volunteerwokinghamborough.org.uk) continues to be our main source of volunteers and the best way for most charities to advertise for what they need. We continue to promote volunteering extensively; through the weekly column in the Wokingham Paper, social media, Parish newsletters and local publications such as the Wokingham Word. I also take the opportunity to advertise what we can do to support both charities and volunteers throughout the year when it has tied in with events on a local and national level.



Volunteer Services

Business and Charity Networking Event

In Partnership with WBC, we hosted a Corporate Volunteering Network Event at Wokingham Town Hall on Wednesday 8th November. The event was aimed at how businesses could support local charities through volunteering. We had 10 charities in attendance, all of which had the opportunity to present and then to network. It proved to be a successful event. Positive feedback was received from both the charities and businesses and we hope to hold similar events in the future.

Positive feedback

Our most recent survey of charities attending our Volunteer Fairs returned many positive comments:

- 100% of respondents said the Fairs were extremely/very effective/somewhat effective for networking opportunities.
- 90% of respondents said either some or all their volunteers had contacted them due to the Volunteer Centre's help or support.
- 100% of respondents said rated our support as helpful or very helpful.
- 90% of respondents said the Portal was extremely/very effective/somewhat effective for their volunteer recruitment.

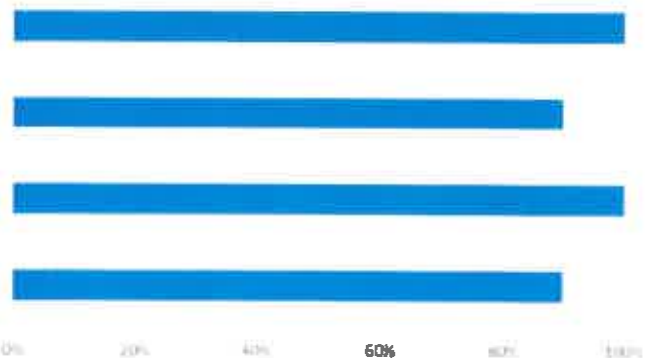
continued



"A huge thank you to The Wokingham Volunteer Centre for putting together a networking event for charities in the local area. It was great to talk to businesses & other charities that want to contribute to our community and help out". - Me 2 Club



Measures of satisfaction



Green 'n' Tidy Gardening Service

Our basic gardening service is aimed at helping to keep gardens looking tidy and usable throughout the year and supports residents who have often loved spending their time tending their gardens for themselves.

Changing circumstances may mean they are no longer able to do this and have no one close by who can take over for them. In turn, their pride and joy can become a worry, as well as a dangerous and overgrown space so our volunteers come to the rescue and make sure their outdoor haven can continue to be enjoyed all year round, whilst deterring potential rogue traders and other criminal activity.

In November we responded to the ever-lengthening waiting list by purchasing a second van and recruiting new volunteer teams, along with all the equipment required. We were supported financially by generous grants from the National Lottery, Earley Charity, Berkshire Community Foundation, Wokingham Community Safety Partnership, Wokingham Lions Club and Easthampstead Rotary Club and we are extremely grateful for all their support and confidence in the value of our project.

Paul King



Our biggest challenge remains the recruitment of more volunteers and Team Leaders to enable us to keep up with escalating demand but the return for volunteers is the opportunity to build friendships within the team as well as helping others.



GnT Impact

4 Green 'n' Tidy Performance Measures



Thank you to all our wonderful volunteers: "adding life to years and years to life".

1

People:

360 regular clients visited once per fortnight, keeping their garden tidy & safe and below the radar for crooks.
48 active volunteers contributing 3770 hours of work and enjoying fun, fresh air and exercise in a truly worthwhile way.



2

Activity:

Operating six days per week throughout the year, with fortnightly grass and hedge cutting in the summer and one-off visits and leaf clearances in the winter.

3

Outcomes:

1710 visits to older, sicker and vulnerable residents means regular contact, a friendly face and looking out for any changes or challenges that may require onward referral.



4

Progress:

Growing number of volunteers and introduction of second van helped to reduce waiting list by 34 people and rounds extending across Wokingham Borough.

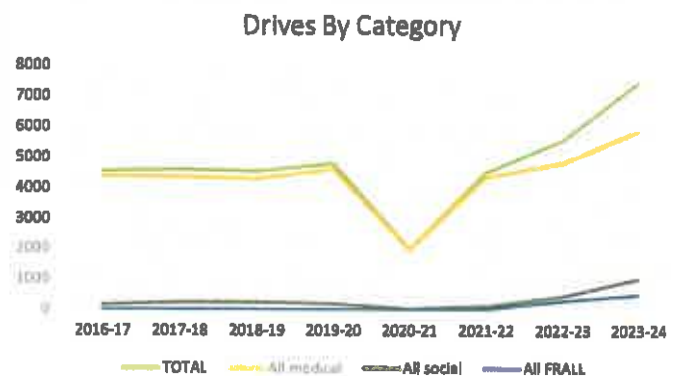


Community Transport Schemes

The Wokingham Transport Scheme has been running for many years and provides a vital service to help older residents to get to essential appointments with the support of a friendly volunteer driver taking them from their home to the appointment and back home again.

- A low-cost volunteer dependent transport scheme for elderly and disabled residents in Wokingham, Wokingham Without, Winnersh, Arborfield, Barkham, Woosehill and Finchampstead as well as a scheme covering the Earley area too.
- Over 700 clients supported by more than 100 drivers - and a growing waiting list!
- Providing transport to more than a dozen hospitals as well as GP surgeries, dentists and opticians, as well as social drives and shopping trips. Supporting Friendship Alliance activities and events specifically to help reduce loneliness.

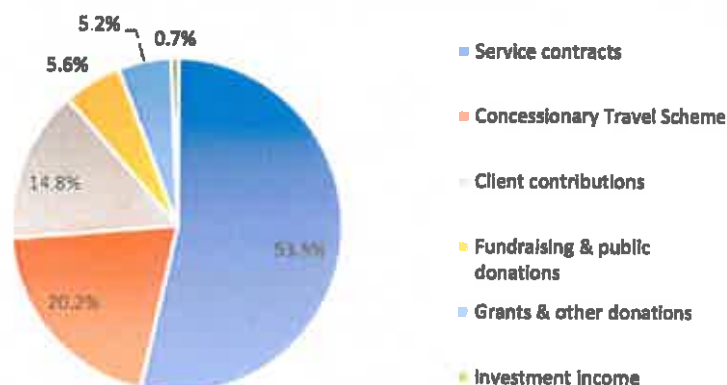
As the graph illustrates, demand has increased significantly this year and we have seen a further rise in the number of drives completed, by an incredible 34%. We continue to recruit more drivers than ever before to create additional capacity but, despite this, transport remains a critical issue for many Borough residents who cannot drive or use public transport and need additional support.



Sources of income

We are fortunate to have some diversification in our income streams although, in reality, we are heavily dependant upon the public sector. Our service contracts comprise just over half of our income but client contributions, fundraising, grants, interest and donations now make up 26%.

Sources of Income



We are very grateful for the regular support we receive from Wokingham Borough Council and our Town & Parish Councils as well as Wokingham United Charities, Easthampstead Rotary Club, Wokingham Lions Club, Berkshire Community Foundation and many generous individuals.

Thank you to all our volunteers, donors and supporters. We couldn't have managed the last 50 years without you!



✉ volunteer@wok-vol.org.uk

🌐 wokinghamvolunteercentre.org.uk

📍 Charity & Community Hub,
Waterford House, Erftstadt
Court, Wokingham RG40 2YF
☎ 0118 977 0749