



Registered Charity Number: 1163913

Report of the trustees and
Financial statements for the year
ended

31 July
2023
For

Community Furniture Aid

REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Registered Charity number

1163913

Registered office

The
Gothic,
Alexandra
Road,
Pontycymer,
Bridgend,
CF32 8HB

Trustees

Mr J Cash – Chair	appointed- 1.8.15	
Mrs M Cash –	appointed- 1.8.15	
Secretary Mr M	appointed-	resigned-
Stirman – Treasurer	2.11.16	04.04.17
Mrs R Stirman	appointed-	resigned-
	2.11.16	04.04.17
Mrs A Dennis	appointed- 2.11.16	retired-7.2.20
Mr G E Adamson	appointed-	removed-
Mr M J Liddard	4.4.17	06.02.18
Mrs L Toy	appointed-	
Mrs S	22.6.17	
Heppenstall	appointed-	
Mr B Tiltman	7.2.20	
Miss R Davies	appointed-	
Mr H	7.2.20	
Marshall Mr	appointed-	
L Alleyne	7.2.20	
Mrs J Nott	appointed-	
	11.2.20	
	appointed-	
	7.2.20	
	appointed-	
	7.2.20	
	appointed	
	3.3.23	

Bankers

Santander
Bank Bridle
Road,
Bootle, L30 4GB

Bridgend Lifesavers Credit Union
LTD Lifelong Learning Centre,
Muirfield
Close, Sarn,
Bridgen
d, CF32
9SW

Our Aims and Objectives

Community Furniture Aid (CFA) aims to provide relief and assistance for people in need in the County Borough of Bridgend and surrounding area who are poor or in housing need, in particular by supplying them with furniture and household items.

Community Furniture Aid's objectives are to ensure that the right people are getting the help that they deserve and that will be enhanced by liaising with the agencies that cater for the homeless and the poorest in our society.

The focus of our work

CFA passes on donated furniture and accessories to people who have been allocated an empty property by one of the many agencies that we have links with. The small charges we make are to cover the cost of the van hire and fuel to collect and also to deliver the items as well as the general running costs such as insurances and fixing and cleaning anything that is not up to standard. All donated items are checked for suitability prior to sending out. Items cannot be reserved as our turnover of stock is swift and not every client will receive the same amount as we are solely dependent upon donations. Furniture packs are tailored to the individual and size of accommodation being furnished. Food parcels are also offered to clients via Fareshare and excess items from Foodbank. We now also add care packs for people running away from domestic abuse. These contain a few items such as perfume, make-up or aftershave etc, so as to help them feel better about themselves. We have stuck to this model because we know it works and have not added any other types of help because we feel that it would detract from our main aim.

Who uses and benefits from our service

It is very difficult to distinguish who needs the help of CFA and it was decided that referrals from agencies that deal with the homeless and the impoverished would take precedence. This ensures that the right group of people would get the help they needed rather than individuals wanting items for personal gain. CFA now works with the following agencies when they request help: all departments of Bridgend County Borough Council, Llamau, the Wallich, the prison service, SSAFA, Womensaid and many local hostels, Gwalia, Hafod housing, Wales and West, Hafal, Valleys to Coast, Age Concern and Gofal, the Sycamore Trust, Swansea Womensaid, South Wales police and CAB. More agencies have discovered our service and have referred clients to us within the last year including SSAFA Swansea, Mulligan centre, Victim support, Cyfle Cymru, Leonard Cheshire and the local hospital, the Care and repair team from the hospital and Housing First and POBL . The latest organisations to refer to CFA include the prison service, valley community support officers and Foodbank. Since its inception, CFA now only helps clients who have been referred by an agency as many self- referrals turned out to not need the items or would not be present when the van turned up to deliver. After five consecutive van loads returned because clients never turned up at the properties, the trustees decided that no more self-referrals would be helped as the charity had to bear the cost of the fuel and the volunteers wasted time. It was suggested that payment could be made in advance, but this would mean additional travel to collect it which would add to the overall cost.

The last year review

This last year has been very challenging as one of our main volunteers moved on to get a full time job. This left the charity in a difficult position as we were still asked for help and offered numerous donations but could not operate at full capacity due to a lack of physically fit bodies to help move everything. The Chairman also had multiple health issues which started with fluid leaking from his brain and then he had to fully furnish a flat on his own as a volunteer let him down at the last minute and he could not leave the person without furniture. So he did the job on his own but managed to break two ribs in the process. Julian Cash, chairman, collected his MBE from the King at Windsor Castle at the end of November 2022 and the charity was astonished as they won at the National Recycling awards in the Social Value category in December.

The charity has been trying to get help and have approached the prison service but no help has been forthcoming, so we will continue to help those when we have people available, but our service has had to slow down.

We have found someone who is willing to do us an up to date website as our previous one disappeared. Our friendly cameraman will also come and do some filming as we want to show people how easy and simple it is to run our charity. This is off the back of multiple councils approaching us at the awards ceremony asking us to mentor them in setting up similar ventures in their areas.

CFA won at the FSB small business Wales awards in April 2023 and was recognized as a joint winner in the National small business awards, in Birmingham, in May.

Due to the cost of living crisis, Foodbank have stopped donating us their excess food stocks as they literally do not have enough to provide for their own clients. We have applied to the council for funding but will have to wait and see. As of 31.7.23 we have just been awarded a grant of £3200 to purchase food for our clients until April 2024.

It has been an expensive year for the charity as we have tried to raise our profile by attending large events. The founders paid for the travel costs and accommodation costs out of their own pocket so as to keep the costs to the charity to a minimum.

We did apply to the National lottery for their cost of living grant, but they refused to accept our application unless we had all of our policies, website and social media in dual language (ie English and Welsh). We explained that we have never had an issue with Welsh speakers in the nine years of operation, however, they insisted that we had only one month to get everything converted, which was impossible, so we lost out on that funding.

Due to a lack of volunteers and poor health we did not do as much as previous years but still part furnished 13 properties and fully furnished another 13. 65 collections were done which included 8 full house clearances and 12500 tonnes of items were recycled.

Organisational structure

CFA has a board of trustees that consists of nine members. Two trustees are active on a daily basis whilst three trustees help out on a regular basis. There are also ten members that have an input on the day to day running of the charity.

Reserves policy

CFA now has a reserves policy as we have become more recognized and donations and small grants are logged, in the accounts section, so as to separate the funds from the general day to day income. These funds will be used as match funding to pay for the electric installation in the church and general maintenance of the building. Plus a small reserve will be kept for the general upkeep of the van, insurances and any unforeseen expenditure.

Risk management

The trustees and management have conducted a review of the main policies that are in place (Health and safety, conflict of interest, financial control, equal opportunities, volunteer policy) and check them on an annual basis. It is recognized that there is a need for a handling complaints policy which will be written up shortly and added to the file.

Principal funding sources

We are proud to say that CFA is self-sustaining and although we have had some small grants, these have been used for the general upkeep of the building and to help us advertise our service so that we can reach more people.

Trustee Induction and Training

Two of the trustees have been involved with the day to day running of the charity from the beginning and have had input into which direction we should be heading. All trustees are also kept up to date with regular meetings and contact via social media. All trustees have also been on various jobs so as to see first-hand what the charity does, so that they can deal with any questions that may arise, in the future.

Any new trustees will be appointed from the existing member base and so no extra training will be necessary as they already have hands on experience with the general running of the charity. They will be given the Memorandum and Articles and a copy of the latest accounts.

However, after a meeting with the Coalfields Regeneration Trust, it has been advised that we should seek a wider range of trustees with different skill sets that would enhance the charity and make us more sustainable, if one of the core trustees became ill and was unable to continue. Meetings have been arranged with BAVO to discuss this and the possibility of mentoring the younger generation to ensure the continuation of the charity for future generations.

Structure, Governance and Management

The organization is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation registered on 9th October 2015.

Plans for the future

Although the charity is as busy as ever, there is as significant lack of support from councils, politicians and other large organisations. Meetings have been held with the council and heads of local housing associations with no action taken. So, although the trustees will continue to give talks to anyone who will listen, the main focus will be to continue to do what we do best and that is to help the local community. The aim over the next year will be to continue to help as many people as possible and try and reduce our stock levels so that they are more manageable. We will also assess whether the service is still required as it has become more noticeable that referred clients are becoming extremely picky about what products we provide as we have had numerous cases where we have turned up with a van full of furniture, only to return with half a van load as the clients are wanting brand new or modern items, which we have previously stated are always going to be second hand.

We will be looking for new volunteers to train up and hope to help many more people next year. We are coming up to 750 properties being furnished and already have 3 talks booked with different organisations so as to raise our profile.

Public Benefit

The charity Commission's guidance on public benefit has been noted and adhered to as CFA deals solely with helping the poorest in society to furnish their homes. After discussions with multiple agencies, our charges have been approved as no-one else can provide the same service for anywhere near the cost that we charge. By providing this service, the clients not only gain a house full of furniture, they also regain their dignity and self-esteem. Not only do we provide furniture for clients but we also provide sympathetic house clearances for those suffering with bereavement. By being non-judgemental and empathetic to everyone has led to CFA's name being known further afield and the need for re-cycling is being accepted more and more.

Impact statement part 1

Community Furniture Aid approach to impact measurement.

Community Furniture Aid, have various methods in which they study the impact they have on the community around them and the approach to impact measurement. In the most traditional manner they keep records of all of the collections they make and deliveries to clients. As well as the number of hours the volunteers give to the charity each month as CFA recognise that time is a precious commodity. These are outputs and these alone do not make up our sole impact measurement. The impact the Community Furniture Aid has on the community on a wider scale is of equal importance. We are proud that our volunteers come from a varied background some are ex-offenders, others physically or mentally disabled older people and long term unemployed or have been homeless and previous service users. We recognise that being an active part of the community is important and those who donate to us have told us that they appreciate that items are going to help those within the local community rather than being sold for profit. Our storage facility is a Grade 2 listed building in the heart of the village and the local community is pleased that we are working so hard to try to renovate it. These are examples of our positive approach to community inclusion. We actively review our impact measurement and ask the public via online surveys on Facebook & Twitter and face to face when helping our clients & working with agencies & social services to gather up to date information in a casual and more natural way to determine whether they feel the service is functioning in a way that best serves its purpose. If there are areas that need attention we review it and if need action is taken to improve the service.

Impact statement

How Community Furniture Aid involve our beneficiaries in understanding what impact we are making.

Community Furniture Aid beneficiaries understand the impact that we are making in several ways. Firstly, they can see the record we have of fully furnishing up to 100 homes each year & part furnishing lots more and that their clients never have to come back to us for a second time as we provide such an excellent handpicked service and for them value for money and expertise from a team with over a decade of knowledge. They know they are in "safe hands" with us. We have a County wide reputation for being the most honest charity and with a "can do" attitude we help those who are the most in need. Those too poor to buy from a charity shop. With a diverse board of trustees and volunteers we represent those who are often on the fringes of society and this is seen by the clients and agencies who comes to us and see the impact we make.

Community Furniture Aid have used information about our impact to re-design or adjust the way we deliver our service.

Community furniture Aid used the information from our impact measurement to change the way we delivered our service and the number of days that we worked.

After short surveys on social media & chatting face to face with clients & service users & volunteers & trustees we found it was necessary to streamline our service to create “packs”. This meant that rather than clients coming to pick & choose what they wanted we decided what they needed from available stock ensuring it was clean & fit for purpose this reduced wastage considerably and enabled all able-bodied volunteers to be involved in more aspects of the charity. We also decided to stop taking and offering large white goods as the local council required them to be Pat tested and have a warranty. This was not cost effective for a small charity. This was also a burden on volunteers to carry heavy items to upper floor flats, which we found to be unfair on our impact evaluation. To date we have received no complaints about this new service. To date we now save on average 30 tons per year from going to landfill

How Community Furniture Aid measure what might have happened to our beneficiaries without our intervention.

If we had not changed the way that we delivered the service Community Furniture Aid would have been forced to close. Due to the amount of wastage we were having and the huge cost of having over 30 tons per year if taken to landfill and multiple trips to the same clients for odds and ends as not all items would be in stock at the same time. We have also saved multiple tip runs by refusing white goods such as cookers, washing machines and fridge freezers. However as a direct impact to our beneficiaries we have located grants they can apply to for new white goods to replace those they may have previously received from us.

How Community Furniture Aid communicates and use our impact findings both internally and externally.

Community Furniture Aid Is a small Charity we have regular meetings with our trustees and volunteers to discuss our impact findings and to discuss where we need to improve and grow. We also are very active on social media, facebook and twitter and discuss the most recent finding of our impact findings so that those who donate, to our service as well as benefit from it can see how we are growing and changing as new challenges present themselves. We hold an AGM as well and quarterly meetings. Volunteers are welcome to make suggestions and we encourage new ideas and are always looking for new ways to improve our service as the need is constantly growing. Our Chairman & Secretary have recently begun to give talks to the local community councils across the County borough and church groups including the South Of Wales Diocese Church of Wales annual meeting to discuss Community Furniture Aid and the impact it has on the community across the region and on those people who use the service and who may need to use it or wish to donate to it.

Balance Sheet as at 31 July 2023

Income

Deliveries	£2110
Sales	£70
Donations	£273
Other	£93.49
TOTAL	£2546.49

Expenditure

phone/internet	£480
Vehicle costs	
Fuel	£290
Awards events	£1314
van tax	£320
van insurance	£395.56
Van MOT & service	£319.49
public liability	£685.8
insurance	
admin, paper, ink	£586
etc	
website	£99.84
TOTAL	£4490.69

Profit Year 1 £561.05 plus £2713.15 carried over from year 2 plus £4536.29 from last year plus profit from year 3 of £4325.75 so running total is £12136.24. In 2018 to 2019 we spent a lot of the grant monies and so ran at a loss of £5163.98 so the total in reserve was £6972.26. 2020 to 2021 we made a loss of £128.40, so the total reserves stand at £6843.92. 2021 to 2022 we made a profit of £1719.08, so the total reserves stand at £8603 which will be set aside in reserve for future bills and match funding. This year we made a loss of £1944.2 so our reserves are now £6656.

	Aug-22	Sep-22	Oct-22	Nov-22	Dec-22
Revenue Costs					
phone/internet					
Vehicle costs					
Big van tax					
Big van ins					
Big van fuel		50		60	
Big van MOT & service			102		
PLI					
Admin					
Green apple awards					
FSB awards					
NRA awards		924			
Website					
Income	190	90	130	150	140
Donations	33				
ebay & sales	10				
Bing					
profit/loss	233	-884	28	90	140
running total	8836	7952	7980	8070	8210
Bal in Santander	8561.56	7641.56	7641.56	7701.56	7791.56
kitty	274.44	310.44	338.44	368.44	418.44
Income	233	90	130	150	140
Expenditure	0	974	102	60	0

Jan-23	Feb-23	Mar-23	Apr-23	May-23	Jun-23	Jul-23	
						480	480
				320			320
				395.56			395.56
			60		60	60	290
	147.49				70		319.49
						685.8	685.8
			586				586
						180	180
				210			210
							924
99.84							99.84
	90	120	145	300	655	100	2110
		20				220	273
20		10	10	20			70
			93.49				93.49
-79.84	-57.49	150	-397.51	-605.56	525	-1085.8	-1944.2
8130.16	8070.67	8220.67	7823.16	7217.6	7742.6	6656.8	
7791.56	7644.07	7644.07	7317.56	7022	7227	6361.2	
336.6	426.6	576.6	505.6	195.6	515.6	295.6	
20	90	150	248.49	320	655	320	2546.49
99.84	147.49	0	646	925.56	130	1405.8	4490.69