

## **ANNUAL REPORT**

The pandemic had a negative impact on the most vulnerable people especially within our BME community.

Our response was to quickly update our policies and procedures to meet the newly implemented, strict government guidelines. For example, regular and thorough sanitisation of our vehicles was introduced and we had to ensure that we had the correct Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) available for our colleagues - and some clients - while observing new rules regarding social distancing.

Although we had to function with reduced staffing levels, we were still able to act as an integral resource for disabled people and their carers by providing information, advice, guidance, help and practical support. During 2020/21, Community Transport provided approximately 415 journeys.

Initially, due to lock-down, we observed that our clients' focus shifted from attending educational and therapeutic sessions, including entertainment and leisurely activities, to more essential and urgent appointments.

We continued to work alongside other charitable organisations and adapted our services to help deliver medicines, essential equipment and food etc.

It is important, at this stage, to recognise the community spirit that ensued as a result.

## **CHERRYS HELPING HAND**

There were a number of government led COVID-19 grants made available to support local communities.

We made a successful application through the National Lottery Awards for All COVID-19 Response Programme. We named our project, **Cherry's Helping Hand** and concentrated on mental health and well-being.

We appointed a project coordinator, recruited volunteers and worked in conjunction with a company called Holistic Advantages and, with their expert knowledge, delivered an enhanced experience for our clients offering natural remedies.

Within six months we identified and understood the needs of our clients and created a 12-week program that consisted of the following:

- **Telephone Coach/Buddy 3x per week**
- **Emotional/Bereavement Support 2x per week**
- **Wellbeing Aromatherapy 2x per week**
- **One2One escorts for local outdoor leisure activities**

However, this was subject to change due to government guidelines.

Our volunteers were given the necessary training, resources, equipment and support. Communication was conducted virtually or via telephone.

We advertised on our social media platforms and collaborated with other organisations in order to reach a wider audience. By August 2020, we had also contacted all of our existing clients who have benefitted from some of our previous initiatives thus maintaining good, consistent customer relations.

**Cherry's Helping Hand** commenced in September 2020 with talking therapies. This was a success for at least two months. Clients were able to express their concerns and anxieties about the uncertainties they faced, not only due to COVID-19 but also how it affected their day to day life which, in most cases, was particularly challenging due to existing medical, mental and physical conditions.

We were able to provide solutions to alleviate those concerns by offering an understanding, listening ear making sure they did not feel alone.

But, due to the unprecedented and challenging times, we had to revise these plans in keeping with government guidelines. This meant we were unable to provide our planned face to face group sessions.

Instead, we hosted weekly online meetings where participants were welcomed and felt comfortable to join in the conversation and speak about subjects that were meaningful to them which, evidently, helped other members of the group. Again, this demonstrated a real community spirit, created solidarity and boosted morale amongst people who might not have been given the opportunity to meet (virtually) or speak to each other in such depth.

In order to provide a more tailored service, a health assessment managed by qualified staff from Holistic Advantages was carried out with our clients who expressed an interest in aromatherapy and other alternative treatments. As part of their package to assist well-being, Holistic Advantages provided natural oil inhalers and breathing techniques which aided the following:

- **Sleep**

- **Balance**
- **Grounding**
- **Uplifting**
- **Detox and Renew**
- **Pain Management**
- **Immune Boosting**

Clear instructions for use were given along with several interactive, lively demonstrations.

In addition, when it was deemed safe to do so, our volunteers paired up with clients to accompany them on socially distanced walks in the park, shopping and visiting other peaceful, interesting areas to combat overwhelming feelings of loneliness, anxiety and isolation.

Between November and December 2020 we sourced other qualified and experienced contributors to lead and present the following:

- **Nutritional Advice**
- **Well Being**
- **Mental Health**
- **Yoga**
- **Astrology**
- **Alkaline Dietary Information**

These sessions attracted a larger section of our community with varying abilities.

Unfortunately, we were faced with some barriers. Some people who we contacted did not want to engage with our volunteers or simply changed their minds at the last minute which was mainly associated with the pandemic. However, in some cases, this also could have been an indication of depression/anxiety and others were unable to take part due to a lack of equipment, lack of IT knowledge and/or the absence of physical support.

However, for those who did take part, below are some examples of feedback we received upon completion:

- ***"I signed up for some online courses in my community. Overall, I thought it was very nice and helpful to have cultural support and I felt very comfortable with the volunteers allocated."***

- *“It made me think about things more differently. In a more positive way. If I was able to have more face to face interaction and therapy treatments, I feel that would have helped my confidence more but we were restricted because of the rules”.*
- *“It helped but I would like to suggest more bereavement support in future projects”.*
- *“I was able to go out on a few occasions for a walk and even did some shopping which helped me a lot”.*

## MEMORIAL

Due to the restraints caused by the pandemic, the planning and construction of the **Cherry Groce Memorial Pavilion** impacted the contractors and it was decided to postpone the actual build. However, we continued with our fundraising strategy to maintain momentum.

Our GoFundMe page, created in September 2019, meant that the historical and devastating events from the unlawful shooting of Cherry Groce remained fresh in the minds of our older generation but also acted as a reference point for our younger generation keen to learn about history. The plans for the pavilion were given further exposure through Lee Lawrence’s speaker events, the release of his award winning memoir, *The Louder I will Sing*, videos, local and national press articles and social media posts.

Our original plan was to mark the 28th September 2020, the 35th year of this catastrophic event, with the unveiling of the pavilion but again we faced more challenges that we needed to overcome.

Through continued and robust support, commitment and communication from board members such as, Adjaye Associates, Lambeth Council, Bespoke Concrete Products and the contractors, we were able to set a new date for its unveiling, but this time we incorporated the 10th anniversary of the passing of Cherry Groce.

2020-2021 was a challenging year but we made the necessary adjustments in order to maintain our vision thus completing the unveiling of the **Cherry Groce Memorial Pavilion**.

## IMAGES AND CAPTIONS TO GO ON THE LAST PAGE

Using some images provided by Bespoke Concrete Products, along with our own, we created a storyboard detailing the progression of the build.



The ecavation



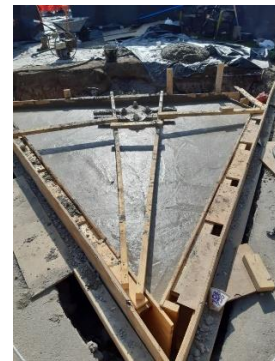
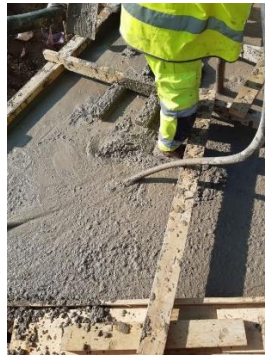
Securing the foundation



Family viewing the process



Concreate pour



Foundation set

The foundation was left to set whilst the structure was built in the factory by Bespoke Concrete Products. Due to the restrictions of travel and working environments BCP provided communication and a story board so we could understand the intricate details that went into the structure of the Memorial. Here are a couple of examples of behind the scenes.



Roof structure

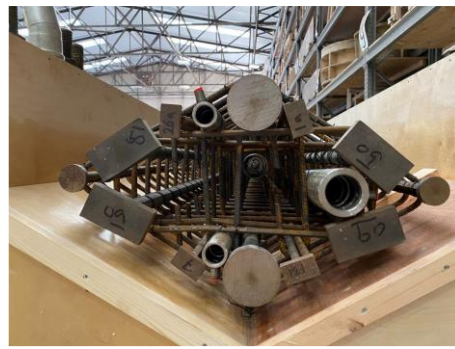


Detail of Reinforcement





Base mould



Reinforcement of column



Test casting of text



Text template of quote

Around the perimeter of the construction site, information boards were erected and a QRT code was placed on its exterior which kept our community up to date with factual information.

