

## **Annual Report January to December 2021**

### **St Thomas' Community Project (CIO registration 1170109)**

#### **Principal Office and Trading address**

St Thomas' church and community centre  
239 Garretts Green Lane  
Garretts Green  
Birmingham  
B26 2SA

#### **Trustees**

Revd Paul Bracher (chair)  
Revd Susan Larkin  
Sue Round  
Jo Holyoak  
Michele Twelftree  
Linda Nugent

#### **Structure, governance and management**

St Thomas' Community Project became a Charity Incorporated Organisation in October 2016 but has existed as a constituted body since 1992.

There has been no change in our board of trustees during 2021.

The easing of Covid restrictions from the beginning of 2021 enabled activities to open and over the year they have expanded and by the end of the year are mostly back to normal practice and flourishing.

We continue to operate in St Thomas' Church hall and St Thomas' Community Centre.

#### **Financial Review**

The turnover for this year was £44,465 and at the end of the financial year we have reserves of £41,878. All expenditure has been made for the delivery of activities in line with the aims and objectives of the charity. The Statement of Financial Activities will show the funders and the balance of funds at the end of the year.

With a turnover of under £100,000 the charity does not require an audit but the accounts have been independently examined.

#### **Funds held as custodian trustee on behalf of others**

No funds are held on behalf of others.

## **Public benefit statement**

In planning and delivering our activities for the year the trustees kept in mind the Charity Commissions guidance on public benefit. There have been changes in the services provided and the way they are delivered because of Covid guidelines and restrictions throughout the year ending December 2021.

## **Main activities undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.**

### 1. Working with local families

- Our weekly stay and playgroup has remained closed throughout 2021. As demand for this provision remains high, we have revised the way we operate, recruited new volunteers and formed a firm plan to re-open in 2022. This plan has been implemented successfully.
- Fox Hollies Children's Centre are delivering their services on 3 days a week. The programme varies but includes ante natal classes, breast feeding, speech and language and play sessions.

### 2. Working with local children

- Our weekly provision of two youth groups during term time resumed and has become well established with new times on Monday evenings. From 4.00 till 5.30 we run activities for 6-11 year olds and from 6.00 till 7.30 for ages 11-16. The sessions include social time, organised games, crafts, activities and challenges. Numbers have increased throughout the year but we have not promoted the provision widely in order to be more effective, build relationships and remain Covid safe.
- In addition to the work we deliver directly we host a musical drama group for children and young people and a Dance Academy.

### 3. Working with local young adults

- Our Monday provision for young adults has continued; a small group aged 19-23. These are young people experiencing mental health issues, unemployment and social problems so it remains a small exclusive group.

### 4. Working with the older people and vulnerable adults

- This aspect of our community work is flourishing. We now employ two part time workers to engage with people in the 50+ age group; the purpose of this work is to keep people in this age group active and involved in the local community. Over the summer of 2021 we invited small groups of 6 to meet together for tea and chat. We

now have a whole day set aside for 50+ activities that includes exercise in the mornings and more social activities and crafts in the afternoon with the opportunity to bring a packed lunch and stay all day. One popular activity is our gardening project in a small patio area to the side of the church hall. During the summer months we grew beans, salad, tomatoes, cucumber and courgettes along with summer flowering plants in tubs and baskets. During the autumn the tubs were planted up with spring bulbs.

Knitting, crafts, jigsaws and a book exchange are also popular activities.

More specialist activities have developed; a local Art Club and Xpress Yourself Dance. A weekly men's group resumed during the year. There was a trip to Lichfield Cathedral Illuminations just before Christmas and a Christmas party.

Alongside this there is a social get together every 6 weeks for people aged 50+ who work and are unable to join the mid-week activities.

- A couple of community events ran; MacMillan Coffee Morning, Tear Fund Quiz Night and a Christmas Bazaar. These were successful and well attended.

## 5. Relief of Poverty

- Access other provisions on site e.g. shower and laundry facilities, use of telephone and internet and help with completing applications continues on an ad-hoc basis.
- Our independent Food Bank has remained open every week on Wednesday mornings throughout the whole of 2021. Procedures have changed to be Covid safe for volunteers and clients. Usage has increased as have donations from the local community, schools and churches. We operate with 4 regular volunteers

## **Achievements and performance .**

- A total 28 children have attended our children's club during 2021, total attendances is 426 giving an average weekly attendance 14.
- A total of 35 teenagers attended our youth club, total attendances 182 representing an average weekly attendance 7 with a significant increase towards the end of the year.
- A total of 13 young adults have joined in weekly activities with a weekly average attendance of 8.
- 40 people are on the register for our 50+ activities, total of 426 attendances with a regular weekly attendance 15
- 322 food parcels were issued to 100 people
- We currently have 16 volunteers plus our volunteer trustees. We have 4 part time paid workers and 2 paid cleaners.

## **Public Benefits**

The focus of our children's and youth work is the planning and delivery of a varied programme of activities and events to stimulate and develop them physically, mentally and emotionally. This benefits the children and young people by developing their self-confidence, self-esteem, social skills, increased resilience and raises aspirations.

We welcome all children and young people and we believe the experiences and opportunities they have enriches their personal lives which then impacts on their family, their school life and the wider community.

Our provision for older and more vulnerable people has increased as Covid restrictions were lifted. The aim is to maintain their physical, emotional and spiritual well-being and reduce social isolation.

Our work to address and combat poverty contributes towards physical and social well-being helping people towards more independent living.

Our work with volunteers of all ages utilises skills from within the local community and further develops and equips people.