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ANNUAL REPORT 1st APRIL 2020 - 31st MARCH 2021

This has been a most difficult year for everyone, with constant lockdowns and restrictions, meaning that most charities, like many organisations across the country, struggled to operate, provide services or raise funds. WCA was no different and, whilst our Project worker tried, when not furloughed or part-furloughed, to maintain services, this proved extremely difficult at times.

During 2020 - 2021, the Trustees continued to meet regularly throughout the year, however due to the restrictions imposed by the Government because of Covid-19, all the meetings were held on Zoom. At each meeting we received reports from both the Volunteer Project worker and from the Treasurer. My thanks to my fellow Trustees for their continuing support and commitment to the organisation – we are very fortunate to have such an excellent group of Trustees. We will, however, continue to look for additional Trustees who might have different skills which could be of advantage to the organisation. Any Trustees recruited will be inducted fully to the organisation, using best practice as shown by the Charity Commission.

One of the major activities stated in our constitution is that we will promote and market volunteering and provide a brokerage service to match people who wish to volunteer with organisations who need/use volunteers. During this year we were unable to undertake our 'normal' activities i.e. attending Student Fairs etc but we continued to provide the 'Lend a Hand' column to Berrow's Journal every week and we'd like to 'Thank' the Editor for their continued support. National Volunteers Week usually provides a very important focus for our promotional activities but this year we were unable to organise any events which was a great shame both for us and other organisations.

As in previous years, we continued to try to recruit volunteers, undertaking many interviews via video, as well as providing a brokerage service, referring volunteers to a range of organisations, whilst also working closely with both the City Council Community Engagement team and we tried to link up with the County Council 'Here2Help' team but this sometimes proved more difficult. Most services were linked to providing support to those in the community who were socially isolated or had been instructed to isolate due to their medical needs. Services such as telephone befriending, shopping, prescription collection and dog walking were much in demand, whilst the increasing utilisation of IT meant that volunteers who could support this for people in the community, were also needed. Many people wanted to develop their IT skills, so that they could communicate with their family and friends. The lockdowns meant that meetings with other organisations were often arranged via video and we met groups such as 'Behind the Smile', Age UK Worcester & Malvern (Men's Shed & Good Neighbour Network), LikeU, Sight Concern, and the Three Choirs Festival.

In addition, we continued to meet with the Chief Officers of the other Volunteer Centres / CVS's in the county and we started to work together on a funding bid to the Lottery to help all the organisations to grow and develop their services, whilst recognising that we are all very different with different needs. This became quite important as both Worcestershire Voices and Worcestershire County Council began to identify the importance of recruiting volunteers. This work wasn't completed during this year but we hope to submit a 3year funding bid later during 2021.

Our VOW (Voluntary Organisations of Worcester) network didn't meet during the early months of the year, due to the pandemic, but as the year progressed, members asked for a video meeting so that they could keep in contact with others. So, we organised a number of video meetings and these were well attended again with many members stating how pleased they were to meet again. As we weren't able to arrange our Volunteer Fair in June, members asked that we organise an event later in 2021, which we will do for October. We will have to ensure that we are Covid secure so arrangements will need to be arranged carefully but we are sure that we will have many organisations attend the event. We have continued to support some specific organisations through charity registration, governance issues and volunteer management usually using video which has its own limitations.

As we have increasingly worked as both a Volunteer Centre and a Local Infrastructure Organisation, we decided to apply to NAVCA for membership. By evidencing our activity, and with the support of two local NAVCA members, our application was successful. This has been very useful during the last year because meetings / events which they have organised, we have been able to attend via video, taking part in some very useful consultations and having a voice in national discussions. Membership of NAVCA and NCVO means that we have been able to engage in both regional and national discussions.

One of the services which we have continued to offer during the lockdowns is as an umbrella body for DBS checks. The DBS agreed that ID checks could be undertaken using video during lockdown, but we were very careful in following their rules to allow this to happen. When we weren't in lockdown, we were able to meet (socially distanced of course) to undertake this process. Being an umbrella body brings us in unrestricted funding which has been very important during this difficult time. The financial report presented by the Treasurer shows the different funders who have supported us and I would definitely want to 'Thank' them all especially the Co-op, the Edgar Lawley Foundation and local stores who have helped us.

Two significant tranches of funds came from the National Lottery – the first was to aid the development of different ways of enhancing the VOW network, using modern technology, whilst also working to liaise with new organisations, many of whom were started during the pandemic. This project has proved difficult to fully implement during this financial year but we will endeavour to make sure that we develop this further during the next year. The second funding was to help with the establishment of a Good Neighbour Network and, although we had a good start through developing a 'Feed the Birds' initiative, the funding had to be spent in a very short period of time, not enabling us to continue the development of this initiative.

The Towns Deal Board has continued to have meetings, as the plan to develop the Worcester Towns Deal application was formulated. Whilst many of the projects in the plan revolve around capital investment, there is a significant aspect around developing skills and supporting communities which are socially deprived. This is an area of activity where the voluntary sector can have a very important role. Therefore, it has been important to have our Project Manager as a member of the Board and she has regularly contributed to the discussions and plans. The final submission was for nearly £28m and the Board is waiting for the decision by the Government before any further activity can be undertaken.

Future plans

As this report is for the year which ends on March 31st 2021, we find ourselves still in lockdown without any real certainty about how to plan for the future. We will continue to do our best to promote volunteering, to recruit volunteers, to provide a brokerage service to the sector, to arrange VOW meetings, to support organisations as necessary / required, to continue providing a DBS umbrella service, and hoping to work with other organisations developing services i.e. the Men's Shed project, which has been in abeyance during the past year.

Finally, on behalf of all the Trustees, I'd want to 'Thank' our Project Manager, Sally, and to Jan, her volunteer. They are both the reason WCA is so successful, so we are extremely grateful for their work, and their commitment, which has been with us from the start. We do need some more help in the office – hopefully we can find the right person next year.

Worcester Community Action - Charity 1172121

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March

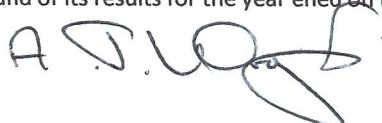
			2021	2020
	Restricted	Unrestricted	Total	
INCOME				
Worcestershire CC Divisional Payments		1000	1000	1700
Donations:				
Edgar E Lawley Foundation		1500	1500	1500
Co-op, Asda & Waitrose		6677	6677	0
Worcester Lottery		485	485	315
Sundry		125	125	30
DBS Fees		2793	2793	4331
Room Hire Contribution		337	337	620
Volunteer Event		0	0	623
First Aid / Food Hygiene Course		0	0	385
Lottery Funds	11300		11300	0
Open Box Development	<u>2254</u>		<u>2254</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>13554</u>	<u>12917</u>	<u>26471</u>	<u>9504</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Sessional Worker	1310	1826	3136	6125
Room Rental	448	900	1348	2472
Office Costs	487	354	841	765
Telephone/Broadband	136	407	543	547
Heating and Lighting	89	71	160	256
Printing, Advertising and Publicity	180	60	240	395
Open Box Expenses	540	0	540	0
DBS Costs	0	1783	1783	2615
Training - Worcs CC	0	345	345	1459
Miscellaneous	0	0	0	83
Repayment to Worcs CC	0	0	0	<u>513</u>
	<u>3190</u>	<u>5746</u>	<u>8936</u>	<u>15230</u>
EXCESS OF INCOME (EXPENDITURE)	<u>10364</u>	<u>7171</u>	<u>17535</u>	<u>-5726</u>

Balance Sheet 31st March 2021 2020

Cash at Bank		30887	<u>13312</u>
Less Creditor		<u>40</u>	
		<u>30847</u>	
Restricted Funds			
National Lottery Community Funds (2)	8650		
Open Box	<u>1714</u>	10364	0
Unrestricted Funds			
Balance at 1st April 2020	13312		
Excess of Income	<u>7171</u>	<u>20483</u>	<u>13312</u>
		<u>30847</u>	<u>13312</u>

Worcester Community Action - Charity 1172121

I have examined the accounts of Worcester Community Action shown on the attached sheet and checked them against the books and records produced to me, together with explanations given and I am satisfied they show a true and fair view of the position of the charity at 31st March 2021 and of its results for the year ended on that date.



A J Wright FCA

31st May 2021

Worcester Community Action - Charity 1172121

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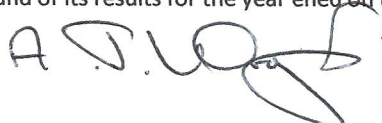
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