

ANNUAL REPORT 01.04.2021 – 31.03.2022

This has again been a most difficult year for everyone, with 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. We have been very grateful to the Angel Centre, our landlords, for the significant help they have provided, by giving us rent free periods due to the minimal use of the offices during lockdown and the grants that they received from the Council / Government.

During 2021 - 2022, the Trustees continued to meet regularly, initially, due to the restrictions imposed by the Government because of Covid-19, these meetings were held on Zoom but we were able to meet 'in person' by August and this then continued for the remainder of the year. 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 were very sad when one of our Trustees, Richard Menzies, sadly passed away in August – his quiet but thoughtful comments will be much missed. We will 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.

Trustees, in recognising their responsibility to develop Strategic plans for WCA, organised a small sub-group to meet to look at what work should WCA be undertaking, and how to ensure that local statutory bodies recognised the value of local infrastructure. Unfortunately, due to a number of circumstances, this work has not progressed as quickly as hoped and will therefore be continued in 2022 / 2023. However, one area which members felt might be important, is developing a membership structure for the organisation and we would hope to implement this in the near future. Trustees know that in doing this, they have to ensure that WCA offers members an increased level of activity in some areas of our work and this has been difficult to agree.

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 we were unable to organise any events during this week in June, which was a great shame both for us and other organisations. However, we were able to organise our Volunteer Fair in October, which again was very successful, with positive evaluation from most attendees.

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. In December we underwent a DBS Compliance assessment which we were delighted to pass at our first session.

Volunteer recruitment continued to be quite slow during the year, mainly due to Covid and the lockdowns, as well as an individual's reluctance to undertake social interaction during these difficult times. However, we have continued to undertake our informal chats with new volunteers either via Zoom or, later in the year, face-to-face. We have also met with many organisations who were keen that we help to promote their volunteer opportunities – i.e. Parkinson's, Behind the Smile, Like U, Street

Pastors and the Talking Newspaper for the Blind. The VOW network also continued to meet, visiting different venues around the city, with very good attendance at each meeting. The opportunity for networking and sharing information was much appreciated by all attendees, with some positive outcomes and partnerships being developed.

One of these partnerships was between WCA and Age UK Worcester & Malvern Hills. We worked together on a 3month, public health funded, project on developing a Good Neighbour Network (GNN). We were fortunate to be able to recruit a project worker very quickly and the work focussed on areas of the city where there were very limited activities taking place, such that there were many individuals suffering from loneliness and social isolation. Our first activity concentrated on Lower Wick where we were able to arrange a 'Meet Your Neighbour' Tea and Cake afternoon which, to everyone's surprise, was very successful and generated many positive comments. We would like to apply for further funding to enable us to develop this initiative.

Our Project Manager continued to work with the other Local Infrastructure Organisations (LIO's) across the county. This resulted in the submission of a funding bid to the National Lottery to develop the services across the county, and ensure that people all across the county would be able to access a similar service from LIO's where ever they lived. In addition, the group began having meetings with the County Council Here 2 Help staff to try to ensure a better working relationship and the development of clearer pathways for volunteers. Again, this work will continue in 2022/2023.

The upcoming changes in the NHS, with the development of Integrated Care Services and the Integrated Care Board and District Collaboratives, has meant that the VCSE in Worcestershire has looked to develop a VCSE Alliance, to ensure the meaningful involvement of the voluntary sector at all levels of these new arrangements. It was agreed that the Officers from LIO's would be members of this Alliance, so our Project manager has been involved in this development. 2022 / 2023 will see significant activity in the health and social care world as the impact of Covid continues to impact on communities.

The Town's Deal Board has continued to meet, having been successful in obtaining funding from Government for the 6 projects which had been identified by the Board. We have maintained our involvement with this work and hope it will have a significant impact on the city and our communities. Subsequently, the Board also submitted a funding application to the Levelling Up Fund which will be for approximately £15m, and for 3 themes – Transport, Town Centre Regeneration & Heritage. The outcome will be known in 2022/2023.

Future plans:

- a) Continue with Volunteer Recruitment, Volunteer Brokerage, VOW network meetings, organise the Volunteer Fair and aim to enhance our Infrastructure support services including organisational development.
- b) Continue to offer DBS and similar services to organisations
- c) Funding applications for GNN, Training
- d) Complete the Strategic plan for WCA including our membership offer.

Finally, I would like to express the sincere 'Thanks' of all the Trustees to our Project Manager, Sally, and to our volunteer Jan. They are the reason that WCA continues to be successful, so we are extremely grateful for their hard work and continued commitment. Sally has had a difficult year but has continued to ensure her commitment to the organisation, for which we are very grateful. It would be useful if we could find more help in the office but we do need to ensure that they have the skills which are beneficial to the organisation and our services.

Worcester Community Action - Charity 1172121

Income and Expenditure Account for the year ended 31st March

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2022 Total	2021
INCOME				
Donations:				
Neighbour Network	500	525	1025	0
Worcester Lottery	0	468	468	485
2021 not repeated	0	0	0	9,177
Good Neighbourhood Network	4500	0	4500	0
Fee for contribution to Family Law Commission	0	120	120	0
DBS Fees	0	4801	4801	2793
Room Hire Contribution	0	233	233	337
Volunteer Event	0	450	450	0
Sundry Donations	0			125
Lottery Funds	0			11300
Open Box Development	0		0	2254
	<u>5000</u>	<u>6597</u>	<u>11,597</u>	<u>26471</u>
EXPENDITURE				
Sessional Worker	5472	3312	8784	3136
Room Rental	281	1123	1404	1348
Office Costs	483	495	978	841
Telephone/Broadband	107	486	593	543
Heating and Lighting	13	96	109	160
Printing, Advertising and Publicity	331	59	390	240
Open Box Expenses	1714	0	1714	540
DBS Costs	0	2961	2961	1783
Training - Worcs CC	237	0	237	345
Miscellaneous	96	22	118	0
IT Products	1440	0	1440	0
Feed the Birds	190	0	190	0
Donation - Knife Angel	500	0	500	0
GNN Project Worker	<u>3837</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>3837</u>	<u>0</u>
	<u>14701</u>	<u>8554</u>	<u>23255</u>	<u>8936</u>
EXCESS OF INCOME (EXPENDITURE)	<u>-9701</u>	<u>-1957</u>	<u>-11658</u>	<u>17535</u>

	Balance Sheet	31st March	2022	2021
Assets				
Cash at Bank			19309	30887
Less Creditor			<u>120</u>	<u>40</u>
			<u>19189</u>	<u>30847</u>
Reflected in				
Restricted Funds				
National Lottery Community Funds				8650
Open Box				1714
Good Neighbourhood Network			<u>663</u>	<u>0</u>
			663	10364
Unrestricted Funds				
Balance at 1st April 2021		20483		
Excess of Expenditure		<u>-1957</u>	<u>18526</u>	<u>20483</u>
			<u>19189</u>	<u>30847</u>

I have examined the accounts of Worcester Community Action shown on the Income and Expenditure Account and Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2022 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 2022 and of its results for the year ended on that date.

A J Wright FCA

24th August 2022