



# **Heart Wood CIO Trustees Report for the Year Ended 31 March 2021**

Charity number 1182889



## Charity Objectives

Heart Wood is a mental health charity based and operating in Northumberland, specifically South-East Northumberland and Tynedale.

We provide group counselling in a nature setting for people suffering with enduring and complex poor mental health.

We primarily work with vulnerable men who are unable to engage with existing services. They may be experiencing depression, suicidal feelings, loneliness, isolation, lacking in confidence or suffering with trauma from past life experiences. They are likely to be losing contact with themselves, friends and family and the communities around them.

We offer a safe space facilitated by two client-centred counsellors experienced in working therapeutically in a nature setting. We work with a small group size that is manageable to the participants. At the sessions, the men will check-in, prepare and light the fire, set up the parachute, clear woodland from rhododendron and other bushcraft activities, be part of group time and make group soup.

There is a regular structure to the sessions. However, how much and what the men engage with is dependent on how they are feeling on the day. Throughout the project we are asking the men how it is for them. We are in a constant process of evaluation and adaptation in order to meet their needs. The men that participate feel valued, heard and respected.

Our recent evaluation showed that participants have:

- increased in confidence
- had a reduction in loneliness
- felt 'valid and worth-while'
- continued connecting with each other beyond the project
- got back into employment
- resolved financial problems
- have engaged again within their local community
- improved relationships with families and friends
- learnt cooking skills resulting in an improved diet
- had an improvement in physical health
- learnt about nature and ecology
- and have continued to engage with the outdoors beyond the project in the knowledge that this helps with their wellbeing

## Charity Structure in the period of this report

Heart Wood is a CIO with four Trustees. There is one part-time freelance Project Manager and two freelance Lead Facilitators.



## Report from the Trustees

*For the purposes of this inaugural report from the Heart Wood Trustees, the initial period of the foundation of Heart Wood from April 2019 until March 2020 is also included.*

### April 2019 – March 2020

#### Objectives in this period from 3-year plan 2019 - 2022

- Charity Development
- Design Heart Wood logo & identity
- Create website
- Set up charity bank account
- Set three-year budget and plan
- Fundraising campaign for Men's Group 2020
- Increase stakeholder engagement and influence, to create champions of the projects and referral routes, by speaking to GP's and local mental health organisations (e.g. Cynus, NDAS, The Bridge Project, Men's Sheds)
- Create and distribute fliers for group projects
- Devise and implement marketing and social media campaign
- Generate local and regional press coverage
- Development time for new group working with adolescents (Active Survival)
- Site development at Thorneyford and Minsteracres

#### Key Achievements

Heart Wood was constituted in April 2019. Four trustees were engaged, and the following months saw a period of charity development, with networking from the charity founder, Chip Ponsford, attending local networking events such as VCS; a funding strategy formed, options, establishing the charity name, logo and brand, setting up the website, setting up the bank account, and drafting charity policies.

In this period, we secured funding as follows:

£2,000 Barbour Foundation

£1,250 Rothley Trust:

£1,000 The William Leech Foundation

£2,483 via JustGiving with our fundraising bike ride (now an annual event).

£2,960 via private donations





In December 2019, Heart Wood was awarded a considerable grant of £87,712 over 3 years (April 2020 – March 2023) from National Lottery Reaching Communities fund.

This enabled us to start planning to deliver the activity outlined in the three-year plan of:

- two 'Men In Woods' projects in Spring / Summer 2020
- a CPD weekend in June 2020
- a 'Lads and Dads' weekend in Autumn 2020



Fliers were created and distributed around local towns and villages, in GP surgeries, on community notice boards, libraries, shops, cafes etc. Referral partners were contacted again and recruitment began.

By the beginning of March 2020, eight men had signed up for the first Men's Group, due to run on Fridays from 17 April – 19 September 2021. The recruitment for the younger men's group had been less successful and the project was put on hold to allow time to think of other ways of engaging with younger men.

By the end of March 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic hit. An extraordinary meeting was called by the Trustees on 6 April and all activity was paused.





### April 2020 – March 2021

#### Objectives in this period from 3-year plan 2019 - 2022

- Deliver Men's Group 1 18-25 year olds)
- Deliver Men's Group 2 (over 25 year olds)
- Planning and marketing CPD therapist course
- Planning and marketing Lads and Dads
- CPD therapist training weekend # 1
- Lads and Dads pilot programme

### Summary of Key Activity: April 2020 – March 2021

In April 2020, Heart Wood went through a process of responding and adapting in the face of the COVID pandemic. It was no longer possible to meet in the woods, but there was a duty of care needed towards the men who had signed up for the Men's Group project.

#### Reflections in Nature

The lead facilitators, Chip Ponsford and Rab Erskine, adapted the model that would enable Heart Wood to continue to engage with the men remotely. Additional funding was sought and secured from the National Lottery Covid fund.

The programme, *Reflections in Nature*, was a series of 12 weekly tasks set by the facilitators, which encouraged the men to engage with nature and respond. Their responses were shared anonymously with the other group members.

#### Men's Group Sessions

When the lockdown restrictions were lifted we were able to hold four in-person sessions in the woods between October and March, adhering to Covid guidelines.

#### Lad's and Dad's Pilot

Heart Wood received funding to pilot a programme working with fathers and sons. This was piloted with a father and son who had contacted Heart Wood expressing a desire to work together. Two sessions took place and whilst the feedback was positive from the participants, it was felt that the model couldn't be expanded to work with several groups of father and sons and therefore this project model would need rethinking.





## Governance

In this period three Trustees retired, and three new Trustees were appointed.

## Funding (April 2020 – March 2021)

£32,392	National Lottery Reaching Communities Grant
£250	Charity of the Month donation from Armstrong Watson
£50	Private donation



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## Men's bike ride launches mental health charity

Therapist hopes woodland work can benefit sufferers

By James Robinson  
jwc.robinson@newsquest.co.uk

A THERAPIST has cycled 49 miles to launch his new charity. Psychotherapist Chip Ponsford was joined by ten other men – nine from Tyndale and one from Australia – who rode the distance to launch Heart Wood.

The charity works to improve the mental health of people focusing on men, through woodland-based, person-centred counselling and therapy.

Every nine represents the age under which suicide is the biggest killer of men in the UK.

Chip formed the charity following the successful outcomes of pilot schemes completed by himself and fellow psychotherapist Rab Erskine, along with the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service (NDAS).

The model proposed by Heart Wood involves long-term work, building trust through by respecting each individual's experiences.

Originally from London, Chip moved his family to Tyndale in order to set up Heart Wood and provide the service.

He explained: "There's a large proportion of men who can't engage with traditional therapy. They're the men we want to reach out to."

"There's good research that shows men will engage more with something outside."

"We're answering a very real need. We did a pilot scheme in 2018 which showed this type of therapy is very successful."

"We're now a charity and we can raise funds. We're confident we can raise the money."

Chip Ponsford completed a bike ride in aid of the charity he's set up to provide woodland therapy for men struggling with mental health problems. Photo: HX062036

HEXHAM COURANT

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Psychotherapist and founder of the Heart Wood charity, Chip Ponsford. Photo: HX062036

## Boost for men's mental health

### £87,712 Lottery grant for charity

By James Robinson  
jwc.robinson@newsquest.co.uk

A CHARITY set up to improve men's mental health has received an £87,712 funding boost from the National Lottery.

Heart Wood was launched by Hexham psychotherapist Chip Ponsford in July, following the successful outcomes of pilot schemes completed by himself and fellow psychotherapist Rab Erskine, along with the Northumberland Domestic Abuse Service.

The charity works to improve the mental health of people, focusing on men, through woodland-based, person-centred counselling and therapy.

The charity has been awarded the grant from the National Lottery Community Fund, which Chip said would help the charity move forward.

"It helps us to consolidate what we've already done and build on that," he said. "We had real success in 2019."

"There's a mental health crisis going on, so this helps us reach people who don't engage with traditional services."

"Suicide is the biggest killer of men."

"They don't open up as easily as women, but they really respond to this sort of outdoor therapy."

The money will be used to run two ecotherapy groups a week, as well as training more therapists who will then be able to offer similar sessions.

"One is held in private woodland near Slaley for men aged over 25, while a second group for men aged between 18-25 is held in woodland near Ponteland."

Chip explained that the charity offered different therapy groups for men of different ages due to the fact that younger men found it more comfortable with people closer to their own age.

Duncan Nicholson, head of funding for the North-East and Cumbria at the National Lottery Community Fund, said: "We're delighted to be able to fund Heart Wood and the valuable, person-centred work that it does, striving to improve people's mental health."





CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
**Heart Wood**

No (if any)  
**1182889**

## Receipts and payments accounts

**CC16a**

For the period from	Period start date	To	Period end date
	01/04/2020		31/03/2021

### Section A Receipts and payments

	Unrestricted funds to the nearest £	Restricted funds to the nearest £	Endowment funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £	Last year to the nearest £
<b>A1 Receipts</b>					
Grant Funding	32,392	-	-	32,392	4,250
Private Donations	300	-	-	300	2,660
Just Giving	-	-	-	-	2,530
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total (Gross income for AR)</b>	<b>32,692</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,692</b>	<b>9,440</b>
<b>A2 Asset and investment sales, (see table).</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total receipts</b>	<b>32,692</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>32,692</b>	<b>9,440</b>
<b>A3 Payments</b>					
Core Costs	4,611	-	-	4,611	2,273
Younger mens project	867	-	-	867	1,311
Older mens project	3,158	-	-	3,158	1,161
Lads & dads project	888	-	-	888	-
Reflections in nature project	6,355	-	-	6,355	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>15,879</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,879</b>	<b>4,745</b>
<b>A4 Asset and investment purchases, (see table)</b>					
	-	-	-	-	-
	-	-	-	-	-
<b>Sub total</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Total payments</b>	<b>15,879</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>15,879</b>	<b>4,745</b>
<b>Net of receipts/(payments)</b>	<b>16,813</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>16,813</b>	<b>4,695</b>
<b>A5 Transfers between funds</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>A6 Cash funds last year end</b>	<b>3,445</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>4,695</b>	<b>-</b>
<b>Cash funds this year end</b>	<b>20,258</b>	<b>1,250</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,508</b>	<b>4,695</b>

## Section B Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the period

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B1 Cash funds</b>	Cash at bank	20,258	1,250	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
	<b>Total cash funds</b>	20,258	1,250	-
(agree balances with receipts and payments account(s))		OK	OK	OK

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £	Restricted funds to nearest £	Endowment funds to nearest £
<b>B2 Other monetary assets</b>		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-
		-	-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B3 Investment assets</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

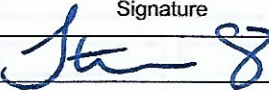
Categories	Details	Fund to which asset belongs	Cost (optional)	Current value (optional)
<b>B4 Assets retained for the charity's own use</b>			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-
			-	-

Categories	Details	Fund to which liability relates	Amount due (optional)	When due (optional)
<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

CCXX R2 accounts (SS)

Signature



2

Print Name

STEPHANIE ELLIS

Date of approval

25/1/22



**HEART WOOD**  
**INDEPENDENT EXAMINATION REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES**  
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

**Independent examiner's report to the Trustees of Heart Wood (the 'charity')**

I report to the charity Trustees on my examination of the accounts of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2021.

**Responsibilities and basis of report**

As the Trustees of the charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

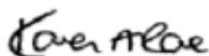
**Independent examiner's statement**

I have completed my examination. I can confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the 2011 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with such records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the applicable requirements concerning the form and content of accounts set out in the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair' view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawing in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

This report is made solely to the charity's Trustees, as a body, in accordance with Part 4 of the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008. My work has been undertaken so that I might state to the charity's Trustees those matters I am required to state to them in an Independent examiner's report and for no other purpose. To the fullest extent permitted by law, I do not accept or assume responsibility to anyone other than the charity and the charity's Trustees as a body, for my own work or for this report.



Karen Rae FCCA

Dated: 22 January 2022

**Armstrong Watson Audit Limited**  
Chartered Accountants  
Carlisle



CHARITY COMMISSION  
FOR ENGLAND AND WALES

Charity Name  
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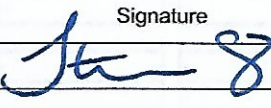
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			-	-

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<b>B5 Liabilities</b>			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	
			-	

Signed by one or two trustees on behalf of all the trustees

CCXX R2 accounts (SS)

Signature

  
2

Print Name

STEPHANIE ELLIS

Date of approval

25/1/22



**HEART WOOD**  
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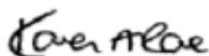
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Karen Rae FCCA

Dated: 22 January 2022

**Armstrong Watson Audit Limited**  
Chartered Accountants  
Carlisle