

Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL

Charity number: 1193906

Accounts for the year 2021/2022

Trustees Report

The Trustees of Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL are pleased to present their annual report and financial statement for the year 2021/2022. Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL is governed by its constitution which was adopted on 23/11/2020. There are now currently 8 Trustees who will be appointed/reappointed at the next Annual General Meeting in Summer 2023.

The Trustees bring with them a range of skills and qualities relevant to the charity and its objectives and during the financial year.

Overview

Following a very successful first years as community group, Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL has become a registered charity in March 2021. Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL continued to be run in an organised and positive way, supporting the community and its members. This is due to the continued support and professional approach provided by its Trustees and Volunteers. Awareness of the charity continues to grow along with its objectives.

Following a truly challenging time, due to the COVID-19 and its restrictions, the charity met its objectives, although in different ways. The prevention or relief of poverty or financial hardship in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire seems to be more challenging than ever, but due to our close connections with local supermarkets, schools and other organisations, we were able to provide food and hygiene provision, occasionally needed household or baby items and befriending services to individuals or families in need. Further the continuing interaction with community members via social media, phone or social distance visits prevented people from becoming socially excluded.

In April 2021 the charity joined the Adult Social Care department of the Stoke City Council in a pilot programme. Adult Social Care outsourced care aspects, such as shopping visits, social visits, accompany residents to appointments, etc. It was funded by the Council with £10,000 per area. Better Together covered Stoke South and Central, which led to buy a car, and a huge increase in fuel costs and car maintenance. In conclusion, this project for the charity is not feasible as it requires a huge amount of physical and monetary commitment.

As Better Together is the only organisation who provide the delivery of food provision, which is especially vital for elderly and for people with mobility issues, it was noticed that the ever increasing fuel costs take a lot of the finances.

Birgit Allport, the founder of the charity is the first fulltime employee and CEO and after her securing funding from Staffordshire County Council, the first apprentice, Sammie Lown started in April 2022. Sammie was involved in the activities throughout the organisation as very reliable volunteer along with her 2 daughters. The main tasks in the office are writing funding bids and support people with their needs, which are not related to activities, such as help with form filling. Therefore, to provide a professional surrounding and adequate working environment, an office in Newcastle was rented, after the chair of the trustees agreed and permitted the CEO to authorise financial decisions of the value up to £5,000. The charity has 6 regular volunteers, including a Social Worker, IT specialist, a Midwife and a GP.

During the last year, the demand for the Infant Feeding Support has increased and the charity is now running up to 5 groups throughout Stoke-on-Trent and NuL. Also, the need of free

playgroups is increasing and the charity is running 3 free play groups in different locations, including the Community Garden in summer month. The garden project evolved through the partnership with a local primary school, which offered the garden to the charity for free usage of growing produce and education on sustainability and environmental awareness. This links up with the Community Café, which uses fresh produce, either collected from supermarkets or grown in the community garden to provide a free lunch to tackle loneliness. The café provide work experience for college students in hospitality from Regent College and Stoke-on-Trent College. The students have the opportunity to gain food related and social skills.

The Charity's ongoing contact with Stoke City Council to establish a permanent community hub as outlined in the constitution paid off and finally led to the opening of the Community HQ in October 2022, located in the Council owned property at 4 Woodberry Close, Trent Vale, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 6LU. The Lord Mayor of Stoke-on-Trent and the Deputy Lieutenant of Staffordshire kindly opened the Community HQ and the event was featured in local media outlets.

Throughout the year the CEO was regularly on the radio, interviewed for articles in newspapers and even appeared on Sky News. This raised the profile of the organisation. Further, one of the Patrons, Jo Gideon MP, mentioned the Better Together Community Support group at a session in the House of Parliament. Brigit and Sammie also attended the Food Summit, hosted by Jo Gideon MP. This was a great opportunity to network with other organisations and gain a better understanding within various aspects of the food sector. Sammie and Brigit also attended the Lord Mayor's Charity Ball to network and support his chosen causes.

Further Brigit Allport was invited to the Queens Garden Party at Buckingham Palace in May 2022 as well as Sammie and Brigit were invited to the Staffordshire County Show to represent Stoke-on-Trent voluntary groups and afternoon tea with the Lieutenant of Staffordshire.

Beside this, the charity has expanded their reach through the partnership with various NHS departments, local schools, colleges and universities.

The demand for the services offered by Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL continues to increase in enormous pace, which also requires more funding to be secured. Currently the charity is looking into the possibility of local businesses become sponsors and of course all possible funding opportunities. However, the charity looks forward to continuing the project and growing its success.

The charity will continue to focus on the 3 main objectives and serve the community.

Objectives

As detailed in its constitution, the objectives of Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL are:

- 1) The prevention or relief of poverty or financial hardship in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire, by providing items and services to individuals in need and/or charities, or other organisations working to prevent or relieve poverty; 2) To promote social inclusion for the public benefit in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society. For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or part of society, as a result of being a member of a socially and economically deprived community." 3) To further benefit the residents of Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire and its adjoining areas, without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions by associating together the said residents and the local authorities, voluntary and other

organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure time occupation with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the residents.

In furtherance of these objects but not otherwise, the trustees shall have power: To establish or secure the establishment of a community centre and to maintain or manage or co-operate with any statutory authority in the maintenance and management of such a centre for activities promoted by the charity in furtherance of the above objects.

Activities

Throughout the year we have supported individuals and families, likewise, tackling food and hygiene poverty, social isolation and supported the mental wellbeing during lockdown with activity packs, books, and telephone befriending service.

The charity continues to signpost to other organisations who can help with other areas, i.e. counselling, financial support, etc.

Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL is funded charity with grants, fundraising and donations contributing to 100% of its income. Although the challenges during this year, the generosity and support of the public has been incredible. People's continuing kindness, generosity and belief in the charity is still greatly appreciated. The trustees are all truly grateful for this.

The success of the charity would not be possible without the support of our volunteers who work tirelessly for the charity. They can't be thanked enough for their help.

Achievements

Community members who needed support are now supporting others due to the impact we had on them.

We widened our outreach and established additional partnerships with various organisations, such as the Harland Hospital, Maternity Ward at Royal Stoke Hospital, etc.

The charity is expanding with support and activity groups moved into the community hub in late 2022.

Our CEO has been invited to the Queens Garden Party at Buckingham Palace and to the Queens Jubilee Garden Party of HM Lord-Lieutenant of Staffordshire.

The charity was able to reach out to many vulnerable members of the community and received lovely comments on social media and via post.

As the founder of the charity, I would like to take this opportunity to thank once again everyone who had helped us throughout the year. I'm so proud to be part of a charity where we can go that extra mile and make a difference to the lives of those who are facing hardship and isolation.

Birgit Allport
(CEO and Founder)

Chairperson of the charity
Chantal Johnson

Report to the trustees/members of Better Together Community Support Group for Stoke-on-Trent and NUL

On accounts for the year ended 2nd April 2022 – Charity Number 1193906

Set out on pages 6-7

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity (“the Trust”) for the year ended 02 / 04 / 2022.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (“the Act”).

Independent examiner’s statement

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

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

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

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

Signed: *D Wellecommme*

Date: 01/02/2022

Name: Deborah Wellecommme

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body: FMAAT, AATQB, BA(Hons)

Address: Support Staffordshire, Stafford Civic Centre, Riverside, Stafford, Staffordshire
ST16 3AQ

Receipts and payments accounts

Better Together Community Support
Group for Stoke-on-Trent and NUL

Charity number: 1193906

2nd April 2022



	Total funds to the nearest £	Total funds to the nearest £
Receipts		
Grants	50,654	
Donations	18,188	
Refunds	1,302	
Total receipts	70,144	
Payments		
Items for Clients	10,930	
Advertising and PR	674	
Legal & Professional	9,998	
Items for Parcels and Food Bank	6,161	
Travel Costs	4,561	
Salary	12,665	
Office expenses and equipment	3,253	
Donations to other Charities – funding received	15,600	
Volunteer Expenses	3,485	
Total payments	67,327	
Net of receipts/(payments)	2,8167	
Bank Adjustment from Previous Year	0	
Cash funds last year end	2,007	
Cash funds this year end	4,824	

Receipts and payments accounts-continued

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for Stoke-on-Trent and NUL
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Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £
Cash funds	Cash at Bank	4,824
	Total cash funds	4,824

	Details	Amount due (optional)
Liabilities		

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature:

Position:

Treasurer

Date:

31.01. 2023