

Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL
Charity number: 1193906

For the year 2022/2023



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 ending 02/04/2023. 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 currently five Trustees who bring with them a range of skills and qualities relevant to the charity, its objectives and meet quarterly during the financial year.

Overview

Following a very successful year, Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL has become an ever-growing organisation. From a small organisation to a registered charity, supporting residents throughout Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme. Our activities are in high demand as we provide free children play groups, support for new parents and a community fridge, as well as food provision. We also set up a Community Garden, which encourage outdoor activities and provide free, homegrown food for the community. 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, staff and volunteers who ensure everyone can participate and being treated with respect and kindness. Awareness of the charity continues to grow along with its objectives. The prevention or relief of poverty and/or financial hardship in Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire seems to be more challenging than ever, especial with the continuously raising costs of living. To mitigate this, due to our close connections with local supermarkets, schools and other organisations, we were able to provide food and hygiene provision, needed household or baby items and befriending services to individuals or families in need. In October 2022 we finally opened our Community HQ in Trent Vale, which provide a safe space for all community members. With a variety of activities for all ages, the HQ is a buzzing hub in the centre of the community.

Further the continuing interaction with community members via social media or phone prevented people from becoming socially excluded as outlined in the constitution. Further, the demand for the services offered by Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and NuL keeps increasing and the charity looks forward to continuing the project and growing its success.

The charity will continue to focus on the 3 main objectives and to 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 and 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.
 - This can be achieved through providing free food, clothes, toiletries, free craft sessions, free play groups and much needed social interaction.
- 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."
 - We aim to facilitate this with free activities, such as community walks and our community café. These are suitable for all ages, improve physical and mental wellbeing, as well as improving community cohesion.

- 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.
- Our community garden is an incredible space to benefit local residents of all ages as there are many possibilities to explore nature with all senses as well as encourage education and community unity.

In furtherance we will establish or secure the establishment of a community centre and to maintain or manage or co-operate with any statutory authority, such as the trustees, council and safeguarding board, in the maintenance and management of such a centre for activities promoted by the charity in furtherance of the above objects.

We also aim to improve and developing of the trustee base by identifying the gaps and looking for support in these areas, the timescale of trustee meetings, ie every 10 weeks and increase our fundraising efforts by improving our bid writing and marketing to become more sustainable for the future.

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, partly because of secured funding to cover the costs of an apprentice and 1 part time staff member.

The charity is expanding with support and activity group within the catchment area and aims to move into the additional property next door by the end of 2023, to expand our capacity to host activities, tailored to the needs in the community, e.g. a youth group.

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

We would like to take this opportunity to thank once again everyone who had helped us throughout the year, going that extra mile and make a difference to the lives of those who are facing hardship and isolation.

Birgit Allport
(CEO and Founder)

Secretary of the charity
Paul Deakes

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 2023 – Charity Number 1193906

Set out on pages 5-6

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended 02 / 04 / 2023.

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: *Debbie Wellecomme*

Date: 21/03/2024

Name: Deborah Wellecomme

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

NAME OF CHARITY

Better Together Community Support

Group for Stoke-on-Trent and NUL

Charity number: 1193906

1st April 2023

1st April 2022



Total funds

Total funds

to the nearest £

to the nearest £

Receipts

Grants	85,194	50,654
Donations	4,652	18,188
Refunds	852	1,302

Total receipts 90,698

70,144

Payments

Items for Clients	7,563	10,930
Advertising and PR	731	674
Legal & Professional	9,856	9,998
Items for Parcels and Food Bank	2,601	6,161
Travel Costs	3,932	4,561
Salary	23,442	12,665
Office expenses and equipment	9,249	3,253
Donations to other Charities – funding received	0	15,600
Costs Allocated to New HQ	14,824	0
Community Café/Garden	3,245	0
Volunteer Expenses	8,466	3,485

Total payments 83,909

67,327

Net of receipts/(payments) 6,789

2,817

Bank Adjustment from Previous Year 0

0

Cash funds last year end 4,824

2,007

Cash funds this year end 11,613

4,824

Receipts and payments accounts-continued

NAME OF CHARITY

Charity number:

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £
Cash funds	Cash at Bank	11,613
	Total cash funds	11,613

	Details	Amount due (optional)
Liabilities		

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature:



Position: Secretary

Date:20/03/2024