

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

For the year 2023/2024



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 02/04/2024.

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

Better Together Community Support Group® for Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme – Annual Update

Following a challenging yet successful year, Better Together has continued to grow, evolving to a more established organisation. Our services are in high demand, providing essential support to residents across the region. We offer free children's playgroups, parental support, a community fridge, food and hygiene provision, assistance with form filling, a youth club, and more.

One of our key achievements this year was establishing a Foodbank at the Royal Stoke University Hospital at the request of the hospital chaplaincy. This initiative ensures that hospital staff, who often cannot access our community fridge due to work commitments, still receive the support they need.

Despite facing initial challenges, including changes in funding structures, staffing adjustments, and operational hurdles, we have remained committed to our mission. Thanks to the dedication of our trustees, staff, and volunteers, we have continued to provide much-needed services in a professional, respectful, and inclusive manner.

As awareness of our charity grows, so does the demand for our services. The rising cost of living has made poverty relief and financial hardship support more critical than ever. Through strong partnerships with local supermarkets, schools, and organizations, we have been able to provide food, hygiene products, household essentials, baby items, and befriending services to those in need.

Our Community HQ in Trent Vale serves as a welcoming hub, offering a safe space and a variety of activities for people of all ages. Additionally, our ongoing engagement with community members—through social media and phone support—has helped prevent social isolation, in line with our mission.

As we look ahead, Better Together Community Support Group remains committed to expanding our services and strengthening our impact within the community. The increasing demand for our support only reinforces the importance of our work, and we are determined to continue making a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

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 over 6000 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 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 and every one of the team 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 often give back by supporting our work and referring others due to the impact we had on them.

The charity is expanding with support and activity groups within the catchment area and have move into the additional property next door in spring 2024, 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 incredible acknowledgement on social media, written media, radio, and in person multiple times. Further, Better Together won the "Breakthrough Award" from VAST and our CEO was nominated and runner up as "Alumni of the Year" at the Business Award of the University of Staffordshire.

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.

We also confirm that all statements and figures are correct as per our knowledge.

Birgit Allport
(CEO and Founder)

Chair of the charity
Adam Colclough

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 2024 – 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 / 2024.

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:



Date: 24/07/2025

Name: Jenna Rowley Dip.MA MAAT FIOS

Address: 25 Harpfield Road, Stoke-on-Trent, ST4 5QJ

Receipts and payments accounts

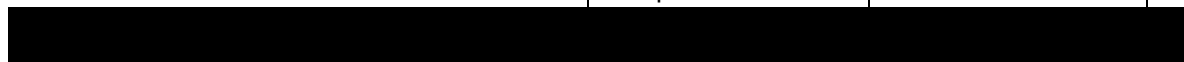
NAME OF CHARITY

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

Charity number: 1193906

1st April 2024

1st April 2023



Total funds

Total funds

to the nearest £

to the nearest £

Receipts

Grants	140,145	85,194
Donations	2,277	4,652
Refunds	234	852

Total receipts

142,656

90,698

Payments

Items for Clients	11,767	7,563
Advertising and PR	787	731
Legal & Professional	4,120	9,856
Items for Parcels and Food Bank	16,225	2,601
Travel costs	3,635	3,932
Salary costs	48,987	23,442
Office expenses and equipment	3,995	9,249
Foodbank Royal Stoke Hospital	8,683	0
Costs for HQ	17,874	14,824
Community Café/Garden	7,594	3,245
Volunteer Expenses	7,920	8,466
Utility and internet	£6,563	0
Van	18,660	0
Repairs and Maintenance	9,981	0

Total payments

166,791

83,909

Net of receipts/(payments)

909

6,789

Bank Adjustment from Previous Year

0

0

Cash funds last year end

11,613

4,824

Cash funds this year end

909

11,613

Receipts and payments accounts-continued

NAME OF CHARITY

Better Together Community Support Group® for
Stoke-on-Trent and Newcastle-under-Lyme

Charity number: 1193906

Categories	Details	Unrestricted funds to nearest £
Cash funds	Cash at Bank	909
	Total cash funds	909

	Details	Amount due (optional)
Liabilities	0	

Signed on behalf of all the trustees

Signature:



Position: Chair

Date:

28.01.2025