



ANNUAL REPORT 2022-2023



SPARC

Stockport Progress And Recovery Centre



**Welcome to our
Annual Report
2022 - 2023.**

**We would like
to thank
everyone
involved for
their
commitment
and
contributions
in supporting
our charity .**

A few words from our Chair:

It has been a good year for SPARC since the last AGM.

SPARC has resumed all its activities and groups, and the Centre is thriving and welcoming new members.

The Management Committee has supported Pete and Lynn in their efforts to make SPARC ready for the future, following the disruption caused by the pandemic.

I am honoured to have served as Chair of SPARC, but my thanks go to the Members, Staff, Volunteers and my Management Committee colleagues who work together to ensure that SPARC remains the most caring and supportive organisation within Stockport's Mental Health Community.

Andy Jones



CONTENTS

Page 4: Manager's report

Page 9: Impact Report

Page 10: SPARC4YoungAdults

Page 12: SPARClers & Music Group

Page 13: Horizons

Page 14: Health Walks

Page 15: SPARC4Wellbeing

Page 19: SPARC4ME

Page 20 : ABL - A Better Life

Page 22: Gardening Group

Page 25: Women's' Group

Page 26: Football Group

Page 30: Growing Together Project

Page 32: Arts & Crafts

Page 34: Computer Courses

Page 35: SPARC Café

Page 37: InReach Sessions

Page 39: Counselling Service

Page 44 : Community
Connections

Page 48: Relaxation

Page 49: Funding & Fundraising

Page 52: Volunteering at SPARC

Page 53: Member Comments

Page 57: Our SPARC Team

Page 58: THANK YOU

MANAGER'S REPORT

It's been another eventful year at SPARC: we've been busier than ever with more new members and more new projects and groups than in the past.

Our newer projects - SPARC4Change and SPARC4YoungAdults - have bloomed this year. These two projects began at the end of last year and have since come to provide vibrant, busy and unique services.

SPARC4YoungAdults fills a gap in provision for people who are hugely under-represented in the mental health system at the moment. Beth Jones, the Project Lead, has worked with young adults to create a safe space in which they can unashamedly be themselves, without judgment or feeling under pressure to do or be something that they are not. SPARC4YoungAdults provides opportunities to express feelings about the past and future, show vulnerability without fear, and - most importantly - have fun. We are proud to see SPARC4YoungAdults at the forefront of this provision by creating fertile ground where young people can grow in confidence and develop self-esteem.

SPARC4Change is probably the project that has transformed the most in the last year. Formerly SPARC4Healing Project Lead Ged Saundry has advanced the service towards more therapeutic and creative interventions that are constantly evolving and responding to the needs of both individuals and groups. SPARC4Change helps people to progress in a direction of their choosing with a clear aim of helping to improve their quality of life. SPARC4Change hosts several groups each week and is supported by one of our dedicated volunteers: Cathy Millward. SPARC4Change has taken a step forward - moving beyond a traditional, simplistic, view of mental and physical health in isolation and turning it into a more powerful and innovative approach. An approach in which therapeutic methods are used alongside key pillars of compassion, motivation and the understanding of human experience in order to help people identify and develop an aspect of their lives that they may not have been able to approach before.

SPARC4Change works closely with SPARC Counselling Service by co-producing two groups together. This is a clear example of the empowerment and care that our Counselling Service provides not only to the people that use the service, but to SPARC as a whole. With the guidance of our Counselling Service Coordinator David Richards, our therapists - Jenny Knowles, Ovanda Nicol and Paul Lake - work hard to provide 7 group workshops per week as well as providing truly bespoke 1:1 therapy to 58 people in the 12 months. SPARC's Counselling Service is a unique provision in the community in that it allows therapists to practice within a safe and compassionate organisation that truly puts the therapeutic relationship at its heart. Therapists work with members together to create a course of therapy that works for them and benefits them the most. SPARC Counselling Service prides itself on extremely high professional standards whilst never sacrificing open-mindedness and empathy.

The last year has also seen a great expansion in the Greenspace work that we do and our links to other Greenspace Projects in Stockport. James Campbell has built up a network of like-minded organisations that can support, and be supported by, SPARC's gardeners and environmentally minded members. We are happy to report that we now have links with The Landing in Merseyway, the Heaton Norris Peaceful Garden, The Olive Branch Woodland Garden in Shaw Heath, Grit Studios and the Women's Institute Community Bee Garden. Alongside these projects James and Marc Murphy facilitate our Allotment Group in Whitehill every Wednesday. This session operates in a peaceful environment outside of the centre where members can literally see the fruits (and vegetables) of their labours. Special thanks go to The Good Gym, Pure Innovations and SPARC member Alan McCabe who have helped maintain the plot in the last year.

In addition to his Greenspace work in the community James Campbell, with the help of volunteer Karen Bamforth provides our weekly gardening sessions. It goes without saying that this group is talented and dedicated, our garden always looks beautiful and is a place where our members can go to have a quiet moment, especially in summer when everything is in full bloom. As well as helping out in our Gardening Group Karen Bamforth facilitates a weekly Relaxation session which allows people in the centre 45 minutes of calm; this is especially welcome on a Thursday as this has been one of our busier days in the last year.

Our Horizons group runs on Wednesday evenings and takes on a collaborative, light hearted atmosphere. This thriving group is a key part of many people's week and, with the help of David Richards, Ken Hazeldene and Jim Whittaker; Horizons members have been able keep the group relevant with a variety of unique weekly activities.

Our Tai-Chi group, coordinated by Jim Whittaker, provides a point of stability and calm for people to engage in mindful, guided movement at the start of the week. During summer months Jim holds as many of these sessions outside as possible so that people can feel comfortable and experience a feeling of space and solace when they need it.

Our Women's group has continued to be a staple of what SPARC provides to the community. Sue Heaps and Amanda McClenaghan support our members to create a safe environment that people can rely on, year in and year out. SPARC's Women's Group has long been one of our best attended activities with new members joining and coming back week after week to build friendships, share experiences and gain confidence. With the help of our members, we hope to expand on what we already provide so that the group can continue to develop around the people that use it. Like our Women's Group SPARC's Football Group is consistently well attended and populated by passionate, dedicated members. SPARC's Football Group has gone from strength to strength over the years. This group shows the best of peer support though the compassionate and caring attitudes that the members have towards each other as well as their enjoyment of an activity that benefits their mental and physical health. Our Football group, with help of David Richard and Ged Saundry and the drive of SPARC's Football Committee, has become a very independent and varied group offering more activities and sessions that are decided on by the Football Committee and the group themselves.

Creativity is a key part of expression and can be instrumental in helping people to feel confident in themselves and their place within our community. Our Art Group, facilitated by Marc Murphy, is a group that helps people to create in the way that they want to, with advice and guidance from Marc. Many members who attend this group find that they are able to create art in a way that works for them; with encouragement and understanding people often flourish. Our Creative Expression Group, facilitated by Rob Hart, forms one side of a link between SPARC and Stepping Hill Hospital. Rob helps people both in SPARC and on Arden Ward to become more comfortable with their own creativity through a multitude of creative paper crafting projects that vary in style and method each week. This far reaching group helps people who leave the ward to feel comfortable and welcomed when they refer into SPARC.

Another extremely popular session is our Singing For Fun group. Facilitated by Lynn Barrett, this is a weekly session where members can go to have fun and enjoy being in the moment. Over the year this group has prospered and grown in popularity showing the need for people to be able to express themselves in the way that they want.

Earlier in the year Lynn pioneered our Warm Spaces Sessions which took place twice a week between November and March. These sessions provided a warm meal and a place to socialise during the winter months of the cost of living crisis.

In addition to all of these amazing groups and activities we have also consistently provided Sunday Social and Sunday Lunch Sessions. Staffed by Chris Platt, Marc Murphy and Rob Hart these sessions enable the centre to open on the weekend to provide a place for people to come to enjoy a healthy meal and have a place to go when many other services are not available. This service can be crucial in helping people get through the weekend which can, at times, seem very daunting.

Due to the hard work of our Café Worker, John Carrington and our extremely enthusiastic café volunteers, we are able to open our Café to our members on 4 days a week. The Café has become a staple of our day-to-day provision and something that improves the experience of members, visitors and workers.

Without volunteers we would not be the successful charity that we are. Our volunteers give their time and skills to facilitate groups, provide a listening ear for members, facilitate and lead trips and support staff in a huge variety of ways. Over the last year we have benefitted from the generous contribution of 26 volunteers who allow us to keep running the vast array of groups and 1-1 services that we do. Volunteers help to make SPARC what it is. I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who gave their time and energy to SPARC in the last year and know that the work you do is essential and ever appreciated.

I would also like to thank Lynn Barrett who has, in addition to maintaining several key aspects of the Centre, been putting a huge amount of time into funding and fundraising in the last year. Lynn's dedication to SPARC and insight into the mental health sector as a whole is invaluable; especially in such financially difficult times that we have experienced in the last 12 months.

Our Management Committee, Chaired by Andrew Jones, has continued to guide SPARC through some of the most economically tumultuous times in recent memory with integrity and pragmatism. Our Management Committee are all volunteers who serve SPARC with the same drive towards the continued flourishing of our charity. Thank you to all our Committee members for giving up your time, skills and intuition over the last 12 months.

Finally, and most importantly, I would like to thank our members. SPARC's members keep our charity relevant. It is their feedback and suggestions that we use to create groups and activities that are needed by our community. Our members constantly show the value of kindness and understanding. Despite their own troubles, past and present our members care for and look out for each other. At SPARC I am honoured to see how our members use healing, empathy and compassion to turn hardship into friendship, generosity and belonging.

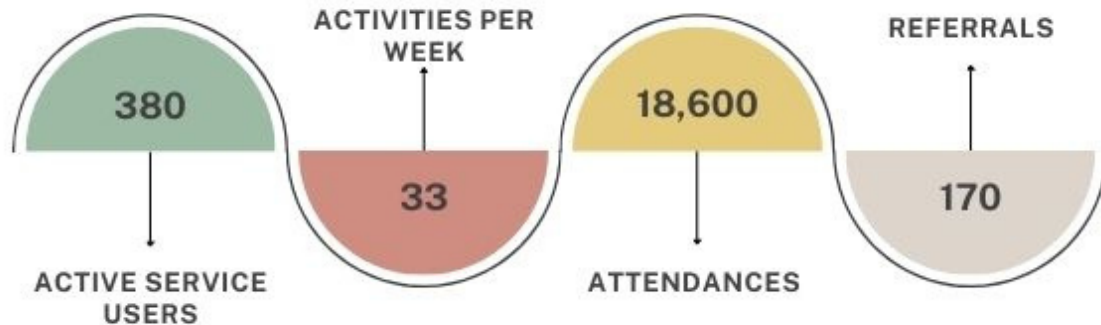
Pete Sherry-Wooldridge, Manager.

SPARC Impact Report

Stockport Progress And Recovery Centre provides enablement and recovery to people who live with severe and enduring mental health problems through social and therapeutic interventions.

OVERALL

The need for SPARC continues to grow with 15% more referrals, 10% more attendances and 20% more active service users compared to 2021-22.



26 VOLUNTEERS CONTRIBUTING 1900 HOURS OF THEIR TIME



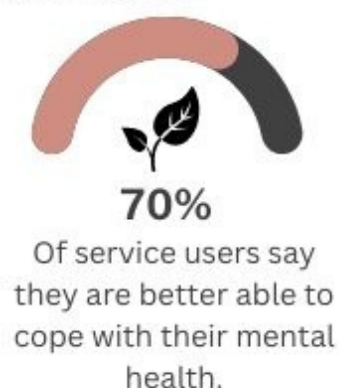
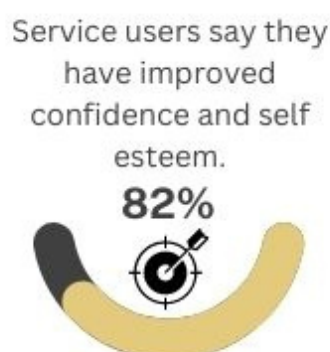
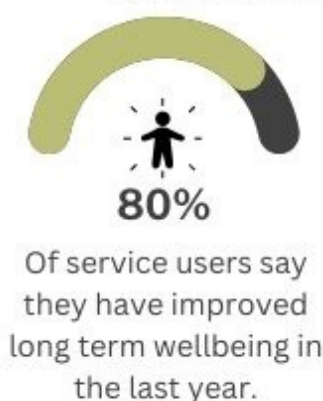
WHAT DO WE DO?

In 2022/23 there was a increase in demand for in-person group work. However there is still significant need for online and telephone support since covid.



MENTAL HEALTH OUTCOMES

Outcomes and monitoring are key to understanding needs and successes. We conduct regular reviews with our service users through the year to measure our impact and to ensure we are providing the right service.



SPARC4YOUNG ADULTS

My first year as Project Leader has brought a lot of excitement, and experimentation with group activities. It has been a great honour to have been trusted by all the people who continue to attend our various groups and workshops related to self-harm, confidence, communication and self-esteem. Some of these workshops sparked interesting discussions about how the mental health system needs reform, and how members feel mental health does not feel like a priority in wider society outside of SPARC.

Our "Cathartic Writing" group came to an end, allowing the Monday "Out and About" sessions to continue and flourish! We have visited Manchester Science and Industry Museum, Marple locks, and Etherow. Other activities have included: pottery painting, trampolining, a murder-mystery event, a Christmas party, yummy baking, cinema trips, and mini golf - with more to come! In our Friday "Social Hub" sessions we have focused on fun and relaxing activities such as biscuit decorating, wreath making, board games, and creating new year's resolutions. Plans are being made for more social activities in the future including a film club.

In 2023, SPARC4Young Adults have made a wonderful achievement, having their very own published poetry collection. Ella Otomewo came into SPARC, towards the end of 2022, for a number of weeks to deliver some poetry workshops focused on personal identity, relationships and finding your own voice. Several of the poems produced were published in Stockport Voices, called "Formation: A Poetry Collection for Embarking on Young Adult Life".

In February 2023, we began Yoga Workshops to explore relaxation, new skills and hobbies. Facilitated by Emma from Upward Frog, these gave people the confidence to explore what yoga has to offer. The sessions brought people together, and inspired people to try activities out of their comfort zone.

We have become part of Stockport Women and Girls Network - a collective across Stockport, focused on meeting the needs of local women. Inspired by this, and in keeping with SPARC's Women's Day, I have started a new Young Adult Women's Group to provide a welcoming place for women to feel heard, and free to express themselves. Over time I hope to deliver a range of activities promoting awareness on topics including domestic abuse and self-worth. SPARC4Young Adults was nominated by Stockport Women and Girl's Network for the Mental Health Champion Award 2023. Although we didn't win, it is fantastic to be recognized alongside other nominees such as Pure Innovations and Viaduct Care.

Here's to another year of SPARC4YA in which I will be expanding the therapeutic workshops, to provide more opportunities for the young adults to discuss their mental health, and life experiences in a safe space.

BETH JONES Young Adults Project Leader



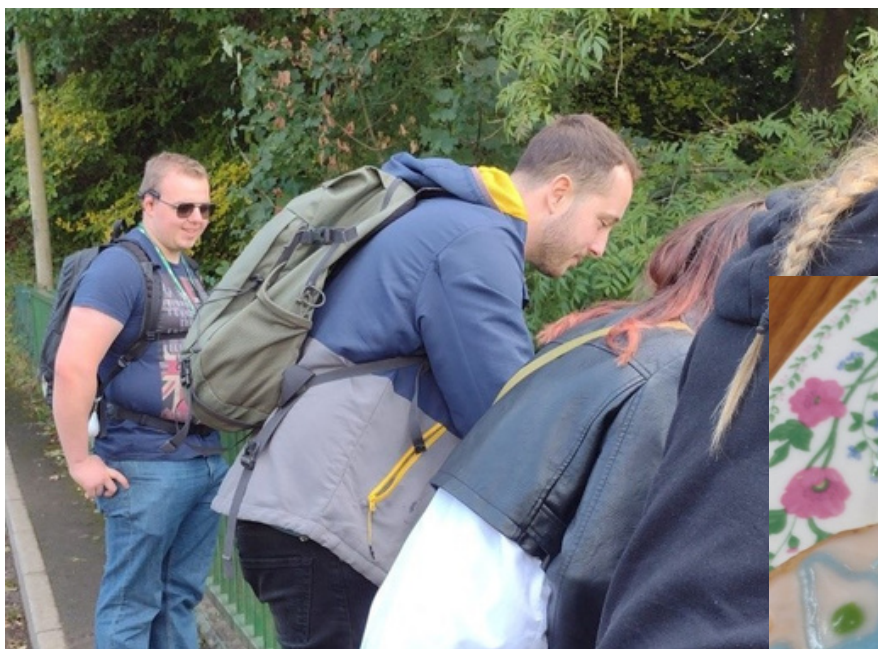
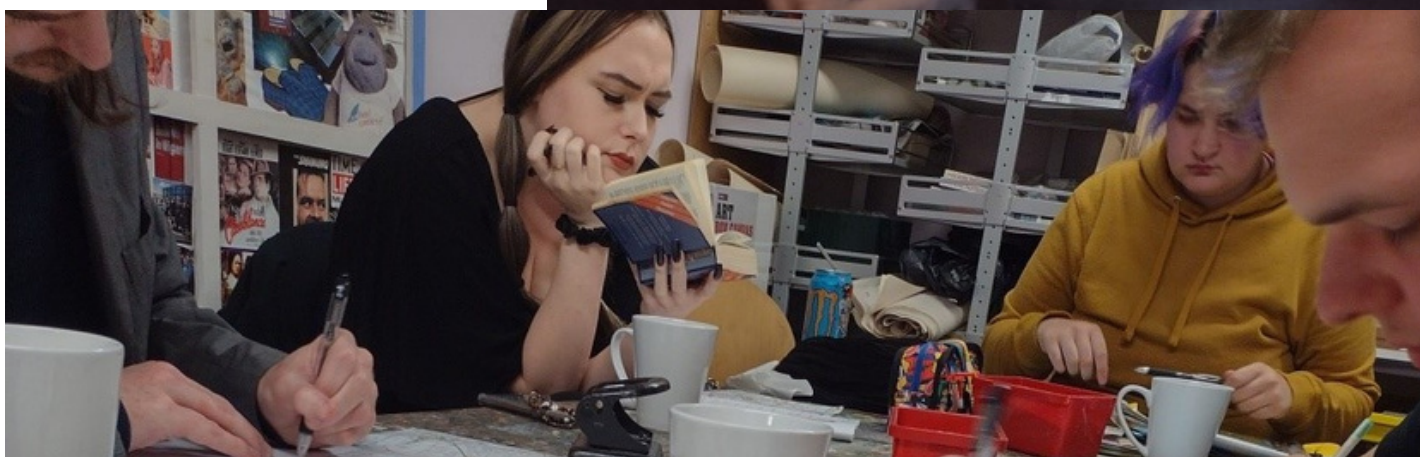
SPARC4YoungAdults



Pictured right: Exercising our competitive sides, playing darts at The Light Cinema, Stockport.



Pictured below: hard at work brainstorming poetic creations.



Pictured left: a well deserved break after a beautiful walk at Etherow Country Park.



Pictured right: Edible art! Friday afternoon biscuit decorating at the Social Hub.



SPARC4YoungAdults

The SPARCLERS!

SPARC now has a regular weekly singing group which we call 'The Sparclers Choir'.

This was set up last September with the initial help and support of the very lovely volunteer Sheila Gott who had been away for some time due to Covid restrictions and also ill health. With Sheila's direction, expertise and encouragement we were able to bring together a small number of members to get us started. Together we decided on a number of themes and work on songs to meet those themes such as Halloween and Bonfire Night. This was just the start; since then we have had themes of Christmas, Valentines, Manchester and Musicals.

The sessions are intended to be 'just good fun'. If we find that a chosen song is more difficult than we expected, we just choose another one that isn't and work on that one instead. We love singing 'a capella'. One of our regular favourites is 'Scarborough Fair', as is our warm up song 'I like the flowers' - the chorus to this song can often be heard around the centre all week long!

Our bright and breezy approach has encouraged people who were very nervous and apprehensive or thought they couldn't sing, to join in and we now have a regular group of around 8-9 people. All of our members are invited to join us. We meet every Thursday from 12:30 until 13:00.

So come along and give it a go.

Lynn Barrett, Deputy Manager

SPARC Music Group

We all know how valuable music is. And we know about the therapeutic powers it can bring to players, singers and listeners.

Since Covid we have, unfortunately, lost Kim who organised, taught and participated in our Music Group. That is why we have made the decision to re-start it as a Peer-Led activity. We are very lucky to have a number of talented members and, between we now organise and run our own sessions every Tuesday.

In the Music Room we have access to great facilities including:

- a drum kit - always set up and ready for use!
- a keyboard
- acoustic and electric guitars
- boxes of smaller instruments that you can just pick up and try out
- microphones for anyone who wants to sing
- a vast selection of music books, chords and lyrics

There really is something for everyone and music to suit all tastes.

The Music Group is open to everyone - we always welcome new people, even if they say they just want to come in and listen and enjoy the music. Who knows - 'just listening' might turn into 'joining in' and attending regularly. Because the Tuesday sessions are popular I am trying to persuade members to re-start our Friday sessions too!

Why not come along?

Jennifer Loynes, Group Member



Horizons Group

Horizons is the longest running group at SPARC, and I am proud to say that through all these years it has preserved its ethos and traditions of openness, welcoming, compassion, safe place, consistency, warmth for all these years. Where lots of new groups have brought with them new ideas, new ways of working and generally tried to re-invent the wheel, I very much believe Horizons' philosophy, its character, and its exceptional spirit is the very reason it works which is incredibly heart-warming to know.

Held every Wednesday evening from 7:00pm till 9:30pm at SPARC, Horizons is a social group for adults in the Stockport area who experience some form of mental health difficulty. The aim is to provide a friendly and supportive meeting place where people can make friends have fun and engage in therapeutic activities. We have our trusted weekly activities list which is regularly reviewed, renewed, and updated in consultation with our members. All the old favourite activities have been well supported, namely food nights along with old faithfuls such as the weekly favourite - bingo! - and quizzes never seem to age. In addition, to these we have introduced newer external activities which have gone down extremely well. Every now and then we hold special events that make us feel very honoured to know that our members take joy in celebrating their birthday with us at Horizons. This creates that "family feel" which makes Horizons special. An extra benefit has happily crept in: we have seen members motivating, encouraging, and supporting each other to participate which is an evident sign of the power of Horizons and its core value of socialising.

Horizons' members have stated that the reason for the continued popularity and success lie in its deep-rooted values, standards, and ethics and putting its members firmly at the centre of what we do. That its format works is a testament to the basic human need for social contact. I believe this is due to the "no frills" - what you see is what you get" approach of this client centred group. In Horizons SPARC offers a space for people to meet, share and socialise. A place in which to feel safe, talk openly with no judgements. Horizons is, basically somewhere to off-load the world for a couple of hours. - a place in which people feel they belong.

Thanks go to my colleague-in-arms Ken Hazeldine for his support and co-facilitation over the years. I feel we complement each other and work well as a team and on that note, long may it continue.

Appreciation goes to Jim our dedicated volunteer. He is always on hand to support, comfort and offer help and advice as well as call bingo and help out where needed.

Last, but not least; thank you to all our Horizons members for making Horizons a special place for everyone to feel safe, welcomed and wanted.

David Richards Facilitator



*Horizons Members
enjoying a social
evening of
Ten Pin Bowling*

Health Walks at SPARC

Walks on the Mild Side

It's now generally accepted that walking, whether it be a gentle stroll or a yomp across the hills, is an accessible and easy way to improve one's health and wellbeing.

Our "Walks on the Mild Side" sessions see a gentle stroll take place on Tuesdays and Fridays at 1pm. The stroll takes in Hallam Mill Gardens, the Davenport shopping area and Cale Green Park before returning to SPARC. The Tuesday walk goes in a clockwise direction and, to add variety, the Friday walk is anti-clockwise. These walks last around 45 minutes. If the weather is nice we may stop in the park, have a sit down and watch the world go by for 5 minutes.



Numbers taking part vary according to the weather and as the walks go on all year round can range between 2 and 9.

I've facilitated this walk with the support of SPARC volunteers Cathy Millward and Eddie Garry.

Walks on the Wild Side

While these more adventurous walks have been popular in the past, 2022-2023 has been a disappointing year due to lack of attendance and interest, which is a shame. We organised trips to The Roman Lakes, Bruntwood Park and the Marple & Romily Canal but these were not well attended - the highest number being 5 members.

If we don't get a sufficient number signing up to express interest and then committing to turn up, our "Walks on the Wild Side" sessions become an unviable proposition. Given that we have to plan our routes and options for public transport., and arrange for two full-time staff to be out of SPARC to facilitate these activities, we will have to assess the practicality of continuing to offer these walks.

JAMES CAMPELL Activities Co-Ordinator & Senior Support Worker

SPARC4CHANGE

Sparc4Change focuses on providing therapeutic based intervention, to help achieve desired changes that members wish to make, which supports their wellbeing. Research has shown that physical, emotional and social health are all interdependent, which is why this project looks at wellbeing as a whole. For example, a change somebody wishes to make may be centred on their emotional wellbeing, but the knock on impact of this change may see improvements in their ability to maintain relationships and physical activity. Through Sparc4Change we provide a time limited programme of one-to-one intervention lasting 12-24 weeks, and three (moving to four) weekly group sessions. We are open to primary and secondary mental health referrals.

In our first eight months, we facilitated four independent workshops: Repairing Motivation, Practical Soothing, Communication Skills and Addictive Coping. Across the four workshops we had 87 attendances and received warming feedback. However, member feedback raised the point that the time limited element to the group workshops limited members' ability to feel a sense of 'togetherness' within the group setting. As a result of this feedback we changed the model of group work to ongoing groups, where members could build group cohesion, and now operate a waiting list for new members wishing to join. Currently the project runs three groups per week: Dance and Movement, Relationships and, Expression for Depression. Addictive Coping will return as a fourth group on Tuesday afternoons during the summer of 2023.

As we approach the third year of the project, we aim to continue building on the foundation of sparc4change. Specifically, we are looking to further develop referral relationships with NHS primary care and most importantly, support the growth of SPARC'S core service and the members of the Stockport mental health community.

Dance and Movement group

Research shows that rhythmic movement significantly decreases anxiety and reduces risk of long term physical health issue development. This session aims to provide a safe environment in which members can move freely to the sound of basic rhythms and personalised music. I and my co-facilitator, Ovanda Nicol, wanted to provide a safe space for members to develop confidence in physical movement, awareness of physical and emotional strain, through the phenomena of dance and free movement. We are not dance teachers and there is no emphasis on dancing competency. The focus is in the other direction: creating a sense of freedom to move in whatever way that feels right, without the fear of judgement. We have had a total of 80 attendances so far, and have seen cases of increased mobility maintenance, and described improvements in physical and social confidence.

Relationships – Online Therapy Workshop (rotating topics)

Relationships are crucial to our state of wellbeing and, from research findings, are identified as the key factor in attaining 'happiness'. Most of our trauma or highlighting experiences of life revolve around relationships. Understanding the importance of this theme for our members led us to develop a weekly workshop that focuses on the many and varied aspects of relationships. This group is held online, via Zoom, and is co-facilitated by Jenny Knowles and myself. Each week we explore different strands of life and experience that impact our ability to develop relationships. Points of focus have included Shame, Attachment, Conflict, social Anxiety, Loss, Happiness, and Compassion among others. So far we have had 100 attendances and continue to grow in outreach each week. We tend to rotate focus topics in line with member feedback



Expression 4 Depression

The verb "to depress" means to push down or lower in value. This is what is generally experienced in the phenomenon of depression. Within depression, sufferers can feel numb, emotionless, meaningless or a constant state of negative emotion. The verb "to express" means to show or reveal. Exploring these definitions of depression and expression, Cathy - my co facilitator - and I developed the idea of expression as a relieving response to depression because it is the human function to which helps us dissolve depression.

We appreciate that expression doesn't just appear magically - a warm and safe environment must be present to encourage it - and we work every week to create this. We aim to offer a variety of expressive options for clients, including: talking, creative expression (drawing), narrative exercises and image probing. Image probing involves presenting a wide selection of words and images allowing clients to point and pick out whatever reflects how they feel. This process can be helpful because it uses less cognitive energy and usually bypasses depressive implications. So far we have had 90 attendances at our sessions.

Cathy Millwall [Co- Facilitator]:

When Ged first proposed the idea of running a new depression group called Expression for Depression I was very excited by the prospects and possibilities of what could be achieved, and was delighted to be a part of it. As a person that has suffered with depression on and off throughout my whole adult life, the idea of a group bringing together people from all walks of life to meet weekly and talk about their personal journeys, brought a lot of hope to me.

One of my main focuses for the group was not to be seen as trying to offer a 'quick fix' or make promises of being cured from depression, but instead to offer a safe, empathic environment for all where members are encouraged to discuss their feelings, their worries, their pain, their experiences and develop their own self-acceptance and self-discovery through their expression.

One of the worst feelings surrounding depression is the feeling of loneliness and isolation. Our group emphasises that, although each of us has our own different experiences, we are not alone - we have each other. This is a beautiful, unique, group and nothing brings me more happiness than seeing the members build relationships gradually with each other. It has been amazing spending quality time with so many inspiring, brave and interesting individuals.



External and Community Work

Over the past 14 months Sparc4Change has developed referral pathways with the Primary Care Network, Secondary services, Community Mental Health and Early Intervention Teams, and community charities such as Pure Innovations and A Better Life (ABL). With over 2600 activity engagements seen with Sparc4Change members across the first year, from a community viewpoint we are focused on developing service engagement for our clients.

Depending on client need, due to the time bound nature of one-to-one change intervention, we often make referrals to internal and external services. This has involved physical activity referrals to BOOST Sports and Activity in Stockport, counselling referrals for clients who require extended and in-depth therapeutic support, and Youth Service referrals for clients who need social and community activity engagement.

[One-to-one] Integrative Change Intervention

One-to-one work uses an integrative psychotherapy approach towards developing client change. This involves integrating physical (practical), narrative, cognitive and relational tools for activating change. At the beginning of the intervention clients express a desired change they wish to see and all subsequent sessions are developed in order to allow the space for clients to attain that change. It is up to the client whether they want the change to be psychologically, physically (behavioural activity, substance intake or routine) or socially based. We follow the biopsychosocial model of human development. Understanding how our social relationships, psychology and biology (physiology) all impact each other is an important value of the Sparc4Change service.

With over 310 in person sessions and 100 telephone sessions, this part of the service has been very busy. As not all clients wish to engage in a weekly and focused form of intervention, we developed an ad-hoc service which allows clients to check in from time to time and book in sessions when needed. This part of the service has also been busy with 106 engagements.



Ged Saundry, Project Leader



SPARC4 WELLBEING

QUICKVIEW
FACTS
&
FIGURES

SPARC4CHANGE

Workshop sessions have had
87 attendances
in just 8 months.

DANCE & MOVEMENT

Total attendances to end of
March 2023:

80

RELATIONSHIPS WORKSHOPS

100 attendances

EXPRESSION4 DEPRESSION

90 attendances

INTEGRATE CHANGE INTEVENTION

**310 In-Person &
100 Phone
Sessions**

EXTERNAL & COMMUNITY WORK

2600 engagements
with the activities



SPARC4ME

Having been a part of the wonderful SPARC4ME bespoke package of support for three years, I have seen first-hand how giving people much needed one to one attention and support has created an environment for the person to, using horticultural language, grow, bloom and blossom. Through SPARC4ME we aim to tailor a holistic package that will meet the needs and wants of each member based around their world. At the forefront of this package, we offer enablement, recovery, autonomy, and tools to work towards independence.

Assessments are completed to identify needs and potential benefits; allowing us to allocate workers, organise work sheets, customer packs, and meet health and safety requirements. The range of support provided will be based on the needs of the individual as identified by the service users, their carers, and key workers. Services offered will be designed to meet the specific outcomes of each individual to enable them to lead a fulfilling life and role within the community based on their own hopes, dreams and wishes.

A sample range of support activities might include:

- Independent travel skills
- Support to shop and budget
- Providing assistance to access financial support and advice
- Supporting individuals to develop independent living skills
- Support to explore volunteering/educational/employment opportunities
- Access advice and information
- Help with accessing local community resources
- Promoting physical wellbeing and activity

Process

- Referral meeting with the person, carer and/or Key Worker along with a SPARC worker.
- Assessments of support plan, care plan, risk issues and most importantly the individual's needs/requirements,.
- Aims and goals identified.
- Support Worker identified and introduced to person.
- Support plan put in place with clear aims and goals.
- Process and progress will be recorded electronically and reports provided to service user and Key Worker.
- Risk assessments completed to support the interventions.

Feedback

- I love our days out, we get to go to some great places. [JB]
- I get to go to all sort of places with David. I've been to snooker, golf, swimming, and the gym. Also been on day trip to places like Blackpool and Buxton. Its great to be able to get out and about. [SA]
- I was nervous when I first came to SPARC. Since starting the one-to-one support sessions, I feel more positive about myself and have noticed my confidence grow. David listened to me whenever I had any problems that were getting me down and gave good advice to me. [DH]

David Richards



ABL Men's Health Group

SPARC's link up with A Better Life - ABL - continued with another programme of the regular group sessions during the middle part of the year which were open to men only, and as always these proved popular. Another series of sessions took place later in the year which were available to men and women as a mixed group, together with new one-to-one drop in sessions. Steven Greason [an Assistant Project Lead in Weight Management] led the sessions which started well enough but it became apparent that the 1:1 sessions were proving more popular than the group Session, the attendance of which became poor to the point of it being unviable.

We made the decision to cancel the group session and put all Steven's efforts into the one-to-ones and these continued to go well. After a bit of jiggling around with the timings of these, we arrived at a point where Steven would start his 1;1 sessions at Noon, support me on the health walk from 13:00 – 14:00 and then resume his sessions.

Once the new arrangement was in place it worked really well with regular and occasional attendees dropping by for health advice which covered exercise, healthy lifestyle, diet, BMI checks and weigh-ins. Steven also informed the attendees of health related events as he did various sessions at Life Leisure in Brinnington.

The SPARC/ABL link up has proved to be very good for those of our members who want to improve their physical health as many studies have shown a link between physical health and mental wellbeing.

James Campbell. Activities Co-ordinator & Senior Support Worker



*Clients waiting for their
12 week measures*



A busy Men's Health session

ABL Health and SPARC

ABL health and SPARC have a long-term partnership which started more than two years ago when we set up a group specifically for men to take a more active role in understanding their health and nutrition and lose weight during the process.

The first Men's Health Group ran for 12 weeks and was very successful – by the end of the initial course all men who attended had changed at least one measurement [weight, waist size, Blood Pressure or general fitness levels] and were taking a more active responsibility for their health. As most of the men lived alone they enjoyed attending the sessions as a group also gaining new friends along the way to help with isolation and a number began to regularly attend the walking sessions offered by SPARC. The weight loss they achieved gave them a strong sense of accomplishment and they looked forward to attending the group every Friday. By being part of this group they have gained in self-confidence and some have taken part in exercise sessions run by ABL at Brinnington Life Leisure.

Building on the success of the Men's Health Group we decided to develop a mixed group. This group was attended by 11 people and ran for 9 weeks. At the end of these sessions 8 of the 11 attendees had achieved weight loss.

At this stage James and I reviewed and evaluated the partnership, looking at ways in which we could increase engagement among SPARC members. We decided to trial the delivery of bespoke 1:1 sessions built around a health walk as a way of encouraging members to be more active. This has been a great success. Since it began we have managed to engage more clients than before and been able to support clients from previous groups to achieve meaningful weight loss.

As a direct outcome from these sessions both men and women have attended the Walking football sessions in partnership with Stockport Community Foundation and feel more confident in taking part in activities external to SPARC and report that they feel they are living happier and healthier lives. In summary, the total number of SPARC members who have benefitted from this partnership is 24. Of this number:

- 100% [24/24] have improved their levels of physical activity,
- 83% [20/24] have achieved weight loss
- 50% [12/24] have achieved meaningful weight loss [losing 3% or more of their starting weight]

This partnership between SPARC and ABL continues to grow and together we hope to inspire more and more members to begin to take a more active role in managing their health.

Steven Greason

Assistant Project Lead in Weight Management, ABL



Social and Therapeutic Horticulture [Gardening Group]

The year has seen lots of changes in the garden and lots of plans made for how the gardening group will develop.

2022/23 in the garden saw demolition and reconstruction in equal measure as one of our members, Alan McCabe, utilised his building skills in upgrading the garden buildings. The garden has 2 sheds, one of which was in a dilapidated condition and on the verge of collapse. Alan demolished this and recycled much of it to build a platform which, when complete, formed the floor of the other shed which was moved onto it. Due to the demolition this rebuilding we have been able to move the remaining shed into a more accessible position. Inspired by this success, Alan then turned his attention to the garden shelter. The new design is such an improvement and should last many years. I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Alan for all his hard work which was a huge undertaking.

Whilst all this work was going on, the day-to-day practicalities of facilitating the group sessions continued and in this I was again supported by SPARC volunteer Karen Bamforth as we sowed vegetable and salad seedlings in the Kitchen Garden, which was first laid out 11 years ago and has become a good source of produce for use in SPARC's Café.

Karen also organised a trip into Manchester enabling us to see the amazing work done at Mayfield Park near Piccadilly Station. This is a great piece of urban regeneration which has seen meadowland created around a stretch of the newly exposed river Medlock which had been culverted since the 19th Century. A great day out was had and we went on to explore other green space sites in and around the City centre. You can read more about this in Karen's piece. The trip was so successful and enjoyable, as it was good to be out and about checking what is happening in the wider world and have a change of scene, that we'll have to build such trips into the gardening year .

My thanks go to Karen Bamforth for supporting me - her suggestions and fresh insights have been very much appreciated. Thanks also go to Steve Elliot who, though not a gardening participant, makes sure that the garden and poly tunnel are kept watered throughout the week.

James Campbell, Activities Co-Ordinator & Senior Support Worker

Social and Therapeutic Horticulture [Gardening Group]



Sowing salad for use in the Café

*Alan and The new Garden
Shelter at SPARC*



*Members of the Gardening
Group on their visit to
Mayfield Park*

Volunteering in the Social and Therapeutic Gardening Session

I have been a volunteer in the Social and Therapeutic Gardening Session for over 2 years. During this time I have come to appreciate how gardening in green spaces is so important for mental and physical health. I retired from my job as a Support Worker in 2020 and initially I struggled to adjust to a new way of life. Volunteering at SPARC has helped to keep me motivated and has enabled me to maintain the skills that I have learnt throughout my career.

All our regular members say that they find the SPARC garden a safe and welcoming space, and a number have told me that they find it easier to talk about their own mental health issues while gardening.

In addition to maintaining the garden and planting vegetables for use in our café, I suggested that we start a cutting garden. My intention is that, hopefully, we will attract more members to participate in the session, especially those who are interested in flower arranging which can be both therapeutic and creative.

I also suggested, and helped to organise, a trip to Manchester city centre to visit some new Urban Gardens. We visited Mayfield Park, the small urban garden at Kampus and the Cathedral Gardens. Those who attended commented on how interesting it was to see how gardens can thrive among the new buildings in Manchester. We hope to have more garden visits in the coming year.

Karen Bamforth, Volunteer



Women's Group

This group runs every Wednesday, providing a safe environment for women only.

Looking back over the past year and with all remaining Covid restrictions now lifted it has been nice to see the return of many old faces and some new ones too.

We have been able to re-introduce the ever popular Prize Bingo which is always very well attended and helps me brush up on my bingo calling skills! It was also great to resume our outings by taking a trip with the ever popular New Horizons boat, run by Stockport Canal Boat Trust, from Marple to Poynton including a nice lunch at the Miners Arms in Poynton - this was a lovely way to spend a summers day with our ladies.

Birthdays are always exciting events within the Women's Group as regular members rally around and provide lovely gifts and flowers and always a scrumptious cake for the Birthday Girls.

December is always a busy month for us from an Xmas party at the Centre which includes lots of fantastic raffle prizes and a buffet as well as going out with the ladies to their favourite public house for a Christmas Carvery Lunch complete with crackers, jokes and wearing silly hats for a few hours.

In February 2023 we met with Maria Smallwood who was doing a skipping challenge throughout to raise monies for Cancer Research UK. Maria was visiting different locations each day in order to do 100 skips each time. I can categorically tell you this is blooming hard - I only managed no more than five on each attempt. Several of the ladies also enjoyed having a go and a very generously donated £30.00 to Maria.

Peer support has always played a vital part in this group and many friendships have been formed that have grown allowing the ladies to enjoyed theatre trips, shopping and lunches together away from the Centre

Lastly, but certainly not least, a very huge thanks to Scottie Anne for all her many years serving as a volunteer within Women's Group.

Amanda McClenaghan and Sue Heaps, Support Workers

Football Group

It's been quite a journey for SPARC's football group since its beginnings 20 years ago; and now it is one of the most successful groups at SPARC! I'm proud to say that its mind-blowing evolution over the last 10 years has been driven by the commitment, compassion, teamwork, and friendships of the members.

I am sure you are aware of the power of physical activity and the positive results it can have on promoting mental wellbeing. It is scientifically proven that exercise is not only good for the body but is healthy for the mind and this is illustrated by many of our members who play on Fridays who have stated that the football group is beneficial to their wellbeing. This stimulus has helped build their confidence, communication, and social skills. The physical exercise helps free the mind from stress, anxiety, and other worries for a few hours. We play with an element of competitiveness and friendliness with the emphasis on friendly.

All of our games are played between members of SPARC - you must be a member to play. We meet every Friday, at Brinnington Park Leisure Complex for a 2:00pm kick off. The games encourage fitness, team play, interaction skills, and tactical improvement. The players enjoy the sessions, stating that their physical and mental health have both benefitted along with the development of friendships, camaraderie, and social activity.

Giving praise where it is due, the commitment to and drive for this group and the game is magnificent. Members turn up every week, regardless of the weather - you'd be surprised how often it rains on a Friday - giving their all. As a facilitator I can see how your support and encouragement for each other has grown and the continuing benefits of this. You have created a bond and know how to bring out the best in each other. I have witnessed your empathy and compassion towards each other especially those who feel not as good or able as others, you guys instinctively know how to promote empowerment, which is an exceptional skill.



Our Trophies:

proof that teamwork, persistence & peer support can make champions of us all.

Football Committee

Having facilitated the football group for a number of years, I have directly witnessed progression and advancement in countless ways. But I must say that the standout development for me has been the creation of SPARC Football Committee. It is an outstanding moment in the football group's history and a personal wish that came true. The committee is a service user led group that is ran by a small number of the football players for the benefit of football group. They are a constituted group with a Chair person, Vice Chair, Secretary and a Treasurer meaning that they manage their own finances and bank account. Since the Committee was formed they have negotiated with likeminded businesses and organisations with great success and have raised several thousands of pounds. Our committee members are a dedicated and committed group with a shared vision.

Ability Counts

The Cheshire Ability Counts League, created by the Cheshire FA, is a one league structure providing opportunities for Under 12s, under 16s and adult[16 and above] male and female teams. Ability Counts focuses on people with pan disabilities such as sensory, physical, mental ill-health and neurological impairment and/or disability as well as sign communicators to get involved in playing football. The divisions are run on a round robin basis, for 6-a-side squad.

Since 2017 SPARC United has been playing in the league, with SPARC FC entering into the East Cheshire Ability Counts League. I am very proud to announce SPARC United have won it every season. We entered again last year, starting on the 7th October 2022, with the fixtures being played more or less on a monthly basis, and we are hoping to maintain our 100% success rate.



Both of our fantastic teams showing off their new kits at the Cheshire FA's Ability Counts Tournament

SPARC's Two Teams

The football group has grown large enough for the players to create and name two teams: SPARC United and SPARC FC. Both teams have entered and won several tournaments. The football committee raised funds to purchase bespoke football kits. The players have bespoke kits - purchased using money raised by the Committee - and, quite rightly, wear them with pride!

Kick It Out

We are proud to actively be part of the “Kick It Out” Campaign, which is an organisation which works to:

- tackle all forms of discrimination,
- promote awareness of the benefits of equality, inclusion, diversity policies and practices in football,
- expose and challenge all aspects of discrimination and unfair practices and conduct at all levels of football,
- share information about good practices being pursued to achieve equality and fair outcomes,
- support individuals, groups, clubs, and authorities to effect actions themselves to achieve equality and fair outcomes
- develop a wider awareness and acceptance of Kick It Out’s activities and its enabling and facilitating roles as a contributory force for good in football.

Etihad Stadium Tour

On 21st October 2022 we had been granted, with the help of our fabulous Patron Paul Lake, the opportunity to visit and tour the famous home of Manchester City: the Etihad Stadium. We have some Manchester United fans who came and showed great “restraint” ha ha! Everyone really enjoyed the day .

Well-Being Event

After successfully winning a fundraising bid from Sector 3, Stockport Local Fund, the Football Committee created SPARC’s first ever Football Event: SPARC’s Well-Being & Social Inclusion Friendly Football Event which took place at Stockport Power League on Thursday 22nd September 2022. The emphasis for this event was Well-Being and Social Inclusion. The event had three elements: Showcasing, Networking and a Football Competition.

This Showcase gave an opportunity for all locally based social care related organisations, charities, groups, and societies to help form a “Network event” at which everyone to share their expertise and promote what they do with a view to offering their services, while also sharing their love of football.

Our key aims were to:

- ·Create a greater sense of well-being, social inclusion, and hope
- Increase the emphasis on mental and physical health
- ·Showcase the services offered by local groups and organisations
- Create better working relationships through Networking
- ·Build stronger relationships within communities by supporting one another
- ·Work towards closing gaps in services
- ·Identify potential funding opportunities

The event was a huge success which ended on a high for our SPARC lads as they won premiership trophy and a team made up of patients on Arden ward at Stepping Hills Hospital’s mental health unit won the Championship trophy.

Thank-You

Thank you to all the volunteers whose dedicated support for this group has been as always outstanding! Huge thanks go to our number one volunteer James 'Bambi' Bamgbose whose unfailing motivation, enthusiasm, and drive to develop people's passion for football and get out of them the best is simply exceptional! Also, to Mark Issacs and Steven Delahunt for their enthusiasm and investment in the group.

Wholehearted thanks go to Paul Lake, Manchester City Hall of Famer and SPARC Therapist, whose help and dedication has provided great networking avenues for the committee and helped us develop a link between SPARC Football Committee and Manchester City business partners.

Thank you to all the guys on the SPARC Football Committee for their hard work and dedication. For their unfailing work ethic, vision, and overall general support; "onwards and upwards!"

Thank you to Brinnington Life Leisure for the use of their Astro turf pitch and making us feel welcome. Their staff team are great and very helpful.

Lastly, to my co-facilitator Ged. His skills and knowledge are a magnificent asset to the football group. The way in which he has embraced our ethos which runs through his practice: he understands how our members may struggle with daily management of their mental ill-health, and yet he sees and appreciates the person behind the illness. I could not ask for a better co-facilitator!

On a personal note: no other SPARC group has given me more job satisfaction or has taught me the value of peer support and comradery than this football group. All the guys know my personal history and relationship with football; which has now completely changed and I honestly could not be prouder and more honoured to facilitate this group.

David Richards, Facilitator



SPARC
Football Group
in the changing room
during our Etihad visit

The Growing Together Project at Plot 50, Whitehill Allotments

The 2022-23 season at Plot 50 saw lots of changes with arrivals, departures, demolition and reconstruction. Pure Innovations joined us and have taken on the job of cultivating the bottom half of the plot. The Pure session – known as The Nurture Group - takes place on Tuesdays from 12:00 to 15:00, and, like SPARC's Wednesday session from 12:00-14:00, it provides time for the growing of crops such as salads, beans, carrots and potatoes. Alongside the practical and growing aspects of the sessions both SPARC and Pure offer a chance for people to socialise in the fresh air and benefit from being on a beautiful, peaceful site. All sessions are relaxed and encourage social contact and a supportive atmosphere. This has been aided by Pure providing a gas ring and a kettle, so that everyone can now enjoy a brew with their lunch.

It was very sad when we learned that, due to the project coming to an end, Man About A Dog would be giving up their section of the plot. Rachel and Chris had shared the top half of the plot with SPARC, and were dab hands at growing and cultivating courgettes and sweetcorn. They, and their green fingers, will be sorely missed. With the loss of Man About A Dog, SPARC now cultivates the entire top half of Plot 50.

SPARC's Wednesday sessions see attendances ranging from 3 to 7 people and all the produce is available for members to take home if they wish to, otherwise produce is taken back for use in SPARC's café. The sessions, due to their very nature, are weather dependent and some tasks [such as seed sowing] can be done at a table in the shed if the weather is bad. The space in the shed is limited and as it's attached to the greenhouse it's not ideal if it has to accommodate a large number of people.

A solution to this limited space came about when Alan McCabe, who has a background in building, suggested re-organising some of the workspace to reduce clutter in the shed as well as removing a dividing step between the shed and greenhouse which has always been an obstacle. During this process Alan found that the condition of the shed was poor, with the structure suffering from rot. Its condition was so bad that there was the possibility that during a winter storm the shed could collapse taking the attached greenhouse with it. At the end of the growing season in October, Alan stripped the shed down to its framework, secured it and then re-clad it. As an added bonus a clear plastic roof was added so the interior now blends seamlessly into the greenhouse, making it light filled, airy and generally more welcoming. It's a great piece of work and because the floor space is open with no obstacles it has changed the use of the shed as many more people can access it if the weather is bad. This timing of these improvements and renovations was fortuitously because if the shed and greenhouse had collapsed it would have been near impossible to fund any rebuild and possibly sessions at Plot 50 would have had to cease.

Many thanks to Alan for taking on this project with took many weeks and much effort on his part to complete. Alan has also done some rebuilding at SPARC which is detailed in the Social and Therapeutic Horticulture report.

James Campbell

Activities Co-Ordinator and Senior Support Worker



The Growing Together Project at Plot 50, Whitehill Allotments



ARTS and CRAFTS at SPARC

SPARC ART GROUP

It has been another great year for the art group.

Our Monday sessions have been very well attended and members have achieved a good standard of work. Because numbers attending are limited by the size of the room I am able to spend time with individuals developing their skills and offering one-to-one input and support. This means that many of those who attend have improved and are able to work with less input from me as facilitator.

It is our ongoing aim to provide a peaceful and supportive atmosphere in which our members can create artworks and develop their skills and confidence. in a calm and relaxed atmosphere. As a facilitator I continue to strive to meet the needs of individuals with a warm, caring and friendly approach. As a result of the success we have seen in our Monday sessions, we are exploring the possibility of offering a second session that would run on a Friday. This would allow those who regularly attend the art group more time to get creative and give more opportunities for even more members to join us and take time to develop their skills.

In her article "How Creativity Positively Impacts Your Health", for verywellmind.com, Barbara Field says, "Creativity helps us perceive the world in new and different ways. It helps us create works of beauty, problem solve, and refresh our bodies and our minds." In our sessions we accept the evidence from a growing body of research that activities like drawing and painting can relieve stress and depression as well as developing new skills and increasing self-confidence. Why not come and join us?

Marc Murphy



ARTS and CRAFTS at SPARC

The Crafty Crew at SPARC

This long running group has continued to meet each week at SPARC and our long time motto, "You can do it: try!" is still our mantra.

We create paper based art projects including greeting cards, home décor items and gifts.

The groups have, out of necessity, become smaller but are in the main well attended. Our participants enjoy practicing their basic paper crafting creative techniques and are often given tutorials where they can watch demonstrations of more difficult techniques carried out by the facilitator. These demos have proved popular over the past few months and are enjoyed as a social and educational event.

The Crafty Crew has forged a strong link with the work that SPARC does as part for the Inreach Programme at Stepping Hill Hospital, with new referrals from the hospital often remembering the groups at the hospital and opting to join the Crew.

Remember our motto: YOU CAN DO IT: TRY! can be applied to all aspects of your life.

Robert Hart



Computer Courses at SPARC

In October 2005 I began teaching computer courses in the SPARC Computer Room - and it have enjoyed my involvement in this project over the years.

For the first six years [or so] I was leading the Tuesday sessions as 'outreach teaching' on as a lecturer from Stockport College, then I enrolled with SPARC as a volunteer. In 2019 the course switched to Thursdays. Organising the courses on the 'College pattern' - offering one course per college term - was effective and seemed to work well for those attending the sessions. Many of my students re-enrolled for two or more courses - although I think the record is eight - spread over several years!

The main aim for the courses was to ensure that students would gain confidence in order to make better use of computers, but also that they should enjoy the experience of learning and practicing new skills. Our courses cover a range of skills from basic introductions to the use of mouse and keyboard through to more advanced applications such as use of spreadsheets, file management and desktop publishing packages. Working at SPARC allowed the luxury being able to ensure that each student followed their own individual learning plan and made progress at their own pace.

Over the last couple of years, demand for these courses has decreased considerably. Now it is very difficult to find enough SPARC members who want a course, could benefit from them, and can commit to attending the sessions. As the 2022/2023 SPARC year drew to a close, we struggled to find people for the upcoming 2023 summer-term course. Sadly, the feasibility of running further courses beyond that looks doubtful. Of course, I am not getting any younger, and as computers have developed the nature of personal computing has evolved radically since 2005 - meaning that new people with new ideas are needed to ensure that any future course offered will be fully relevant to the needs of SPARC members.

I would like to thank the wonderful team at SPARC who have given me encouragement, assistance, and considerable support running these courses during the past eighteen years. It's been fun!

Phil Hounsell Course Teacher

SPARC Café

Since I took over the running of SPARC Café we've seen some big increases in the cost of basics like food and utility bills, but with some careful budgeting we've managed to keep our menu varied and – more importantly – keep our prices very reasonable! A big part of what we do is designed to keep the Café self-funding: all the money that our customers put into our till is spent on the ingredients we use to make our meals.

We provide home cooked food alongside snacks and brews, all served in a welcoming and accessible space. Everything on the menu, from toast and toasties to omelettes and full breakfasts, is prepared fresh when it is ordered and our customers seem to enjoy what we make. I work in the kitchen every day and have support from Dean on Tuesdays. He is working well and together we can keep the hungry crowds well fed. And I do mean crowds – on average we serve around 60 meals every week!

Over my time here a good relationship between the Café and the Gardening Group has developed. We have worked with them to select seeds that can be planted and grown to produce ingredients such as lettuce that we can use in the kitchen.

In addition to the usual items on the menu, we provide a daily Special. These are prepared and cooked by my wife Janis. Janis makes sure that there is plenty of variety in these dishes – in Summer she provides delicious Ploughman's Lunches as well as Chicken Curries, Sweet and Sour meals, Fish dishes, Cottage or Shepherd's Pies, . These Specials are produced in limited numbers so that they are always fresh and, at £3.00, are a real bargain in terms of portion size and quality. If we know a particular meal is going down well, Janis will sometimes prepare extra meals to put in the freezer so that members can buy it to take home and enjoy later. Because they are limited in number they do sell out quickly – so you do need to be quick to enjoy them!

I have a team of members who volunteer to work as 'front of house' and keep everything running smoothly. Their roles include talking to customers, taking orders, dealing with payments and change, making brews as well as serving meals and clearing tables. So, I want to say a big thank you to Caroline, Chris, Dean, Hazel, Jan, Mark, Paul and Robert who give their time and work hard to keep the customers satisfied. We're all parts of a machine – and by working together we makes sure that everything runs smoothly.

It's hard to believe that I've been running the café for more than a year now – around 15 months in total – and I'm looking forward to working to continue building a successful venture that allows SPARC members to develop skills, increase their self-confidence and play their part in contributing to the business side of things.

John Carrington



*You reap what you sow!
SPARC Garden Group
supports the Café by growing
fresh produce that we can
use in our meals.*

*Everybody on the
SPARC Café team
works hard to keep the
customer satisfied.*



SPARC InReach Sessions

Runnymede Court Table top Gardeners

This session dates back to the Peoples Health Trust, Natural Progressions project from 2014/15 which saw me tasked with setting up community green space projects within local postcode areas. Current sessions runs fortnightly on Thursdays from 15:00 – 16:00.

Runnymede court is a Great Places Extra Care Housing Scheme which is a residential block of flats with a communal lounge. The scheme provides some social activities into which my gardening session fits . Initially, whilst being funded by the Peoples Health Trust I had more prep time to run the session there as a proper gardening session in which we grew things from seed. Due to the age and health of the participants which precluded them from doing heavy outdoor work, all the seed sowing and potting was done at a table in the lounge and so the 'Table Top Gardeners' were born. I created a large bed outside in the garden and, when they were big enough, transplanted flowers and salad crops there.

When the Natural Progressions funding ended it looked as though the sessions were going to have to finish. However, because the participants at Runnymede found the sessions rewarding and the staff saw how much participants looked forward to it, an arrangement was reached where SPARC would allow me to continue the sessions if the participants were willing to pay £5 per person per session to cover costs of resources and my time.

Over the years the group has evolved, due to lack of prep time to set up potting and sowing, into a flower arranging session with the participants creating displays to decorate the lounge. Everyone, myself included, enjoys the sessions because of the strong social aspect involved - that and the fact that we always have a brew and biscuits [or cakes] when the flowers have been arranged.

James Campbell. Activities Co-ordinator & Senior Support Worker



SPARC InReach Sessions

InReach at Stepping Hill Hospital

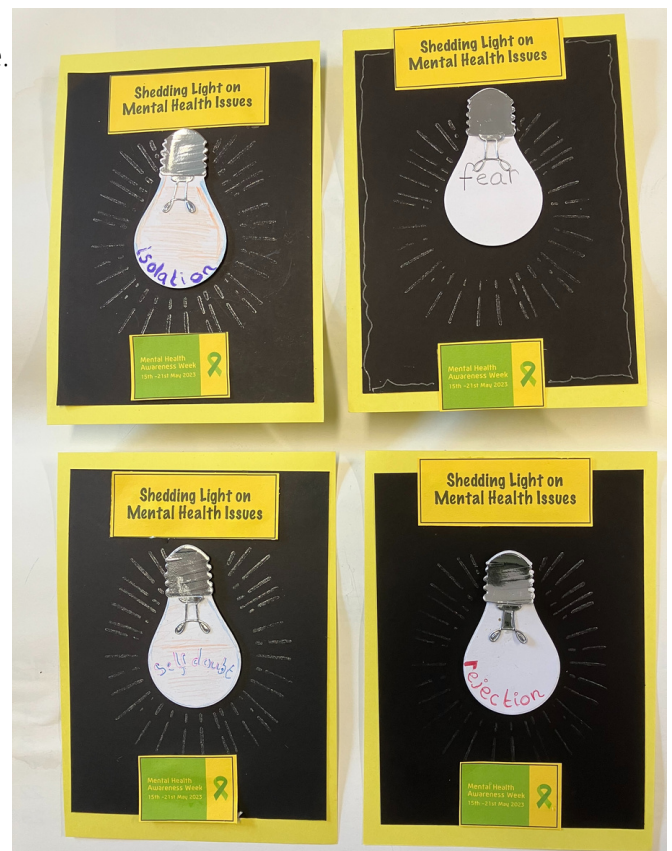
During the past 12 months we have continued to visit Stepping Hill Hospital to facilitate art and craft sessions on the wards of the Mental Health Unit. This relationship has been developed over some 9 years and continues to create a very strong bond between SPARC and the Mental Health Unit, resulting in continual referrals from the hospital.

On two mornings each week we visit the units and aim to provide therapeutic art sessions engaging the patients in a creative activity which explores both artistic ability and dexterity. All of the planned activities aim to give the participants a sense of achievement by making the projects suitable for most levels of artistic ability. We also encourage good social interaction between the patients and staff, breaking down the barriers that may be present on the ward. At present these groups are only provided on Norbury Ward, with the female patients, however there still remains a good relationship with the staff on Arden Ward, as well as Norbury Ward.

The groups focus on themes which are designed to coincide with landmark occasions and events during the year, such as Christmas and Easter, International Women's Day, Black History Month, Pride Festivals and international celebrations such as Holi.

We hope this valuable service will continue into the future.

Robert Hart



What is Counselling?

Counselling encourages and allows people to discuss their problems or issues and any difficult feelings they encounter in a safe, confidential environment. The term can mean different things to different people, but in general it is a process people seek when they want to change something in their lives or simply explore their thoughts and feelings in more depth. A Counsellor or Therapist is not there to sit you down and tell you what to do. Instead they will encourage you to talk about what's bothering you in order to uncover any root causes and identify your specific ways of thinking. The Counsellor or Therapist may then look to create a plan of action to either help you reconcile your issues or help you to find ways of coping.

What makes SPARC's Counselling Service unique?

The Counselling Service provided through has flexibility – we do not offer a “one size fits all” approach! We aim to adapt and tailor the process used so that it can meet the needs and demands of our clients as individuals. Unlike the NHS bodies and Improving Access to Psychological Therapies service who offer a fixed number of therapy sessions; service users accessing SPARC's Counselling service are initially given a set number of sessions which are then negotiated with the Therapist and tailored to their needs allowing an unspecified number of sessions. We at SPARC have found this flexible approach a positive way of fostering hope and empowering marginalised clients whose needs might otherwise not be met due to limited-service provision both locally and nationally. Clients often come with complex symptoms and multiple diagnoses; our team consists of specialist Therapists, allowing us to refer clients to the most appropriate Therapist for their needs. This has proven effective so far when working with clients with more complex mental health presentation where accessing talking treatments is notoriously poor e.g., schizophrenia, bi-polar and personality disorders. Towards the end of a course of therapy, we can (with the full consent of the client) invite a friend or key worker to join the session so that the key worker or friend can use information gained to continue the support element of therapy.



*David Richards,
oversees
Counselling Provision
here at
SPARC*



SPARC's Counselling Service

Since 2016 SPARC's Counselling Service has provided a physically and emotionally safe place where the people we work with are valued, listened to, and understood! Through SPARC Counselling I have the privilege of working with four wonderful Therapists who have brought their skills, knowledge, and talents into SPARC. Through their compassion and integrity and their genuine desire to help, they are encouraging and enabling people to achieve their goals and self-fulfilment.

Our Therapists endeavour to take a holistic approach in order to best serve and support our clients as they work towards making the necessary change they are aiming for. In order to achieve this our team work hard to keep their skills and knowledge of models and theories fresh and up to date so that they can be sure that the root cause of problems or distress to be attended to.

We pride ourselves on being an evolving provision - constantly adapting and changing to the ever-growing needs and demands of each individual we work with. Our Therapists are there on this personal journey with their clients: throughout the counselling process they see, feel and experience the growth and changes alongside the client they are working with. In order to achieve this we offer individualised face to face therapy, as well as online and telephone session and consultations. Additionally, we run in house and online workshops based on the demands of our clients. These workshops run weekly throughout the year and have included topics including, but not limited to: Hearing Voices, Exploring Relationships, Dance & Movement, Creative Writing, Exploring Emotions and Loss/Grief.

Every week we work with an average client group of 15 people all of whom present with a wide range of issues, problems, concerns, and matters. We work towards long lasting self-sufficiency and change, because we know that there is no such thing as "a quick fix".

**Here at SPARC
we provide
7 Therapy
Workshops
every week**

**Over the year 2022 -2023
58 people were helped
through our
1:1 Counselling Provision**



SPARC's Counselling Service

Our Referral Process

You can request referral forms for this service through SPARC. Once completed they are to be returned to the Counselling Co-ordinator. Your information will be entered into our database, in compliance with GDPR, and you will then be placed on our waiting list. Once a Therapist becomes available, they will conduct an initial assessment to determine suitability. Once you have been assessed and it is agreed that treatment is viable you will be offered therapy.

Let's hear from our wonderful Therapists

Jenny:

SPARC's Therapists work with people who have a very wide range of issues affecting their mental health, and I'm increasingly learning that at the heart of such diverse difficulties is shame and lack of compassion for self that limits connections with others. Having 1:1 therapy alongside the offer of therapy/healing groups works really well. The more I do this job, the more I feel it's all about connecting with others so it's brilliant having a vehicle for developing and healing attachments. I'm extremely proud to be part of a counselling team which provides sensitivity, empathy, and compassion for all who come into contact with our service.

Ovanda:

I'm acutely aware the majority of clients who access SPARC's counselling service are diagnosed with multiple and complex biological and psychological issues. Working with SPARC over the last few years has allowed me to identify that many clients's daily life challenges are due to their developmental trauma. It's safe to say that, current medical models do not focus their support in this area. I'm committed to further develop my trauma informed practice. I feel proud to continuously apply my blend of East and West holistic approaches to meet client and service demands. It was such a rewarding experience to hear my client reports back, that, they no longer access any emergency services because they know they've got the skills, knowledge and confidence to manage their daily trials and tribulations.



Ovanda [left]
&
Jenny [right]
pictured in our
Therapy Room



SPARC's Counselling Service

Paul:

Stockport Progress and Recover Centre is a truly unique, holistic, and dynamic place to work. All the staff who work at SPARC are trustworthy, dependable, and extremely motivated, which amplifies the caring attitude, which is palpable as you walk through the building.

The therapy team are both conscientious and creative, and implement a myriad of techniques across one-to-one and group sessions. The Centre is a safe space for members to receive therapy, either within the therapy room, or alternatively, in the 'therapy shed'. The psychotherapeutic counselling provided at SPARC ensures that all members have access to the relevant support, information, and guidance they require – in a timely fashion.

Diana:

I first heard about SPARC through working for the Community Mental Health Team. I knew it straightway that this place is full of people with passion, compassion, and readiness to help others. It was a huge privilege to join the Counselling team as a Trainee Counsellor and to be able to expand my skills and knowledge in such a supportive environment.

Although the work we do at SPARC challenges us every day due to the complexity of our client group, seeing the positive results makes it very rewarding. What I like the most about SPARC's Counselling Service is that the base of all our work is person-centred – we see every single person as an individual and we take as much time as is needed to fully understand and help the client. Also, the smell of wood in a Therapy Cabin works its magic.



Paul [left]
&
Diana [right]
pictured at our
Therapy Cabin



SPARC's Counselling Service

Who is our service for?

We aim to support all organisations who work with people who are, or have at some point in their lives been, in secondary mental health service. This includes, but is not limited to: Community Mental Health Team, Early Intervention Team, Recovery and Inclusion Team, Psychology Department, or other secondary mental health services [for example: Inpatients, Consultants, Supported Living Teams, Home Treatment Team etc, including people at point of discharge or on fast track from secondary services], clients of Pure Innovations, Horizons, Stockport & District Mind, and their groups such as Rendezvous & Thursday at One.

The range of topics, issues, problems, and concerns we cover is wide, complex, and far reaching. Due to our service being open to multiple models, we can offer support with a variety of experiences such as: anger, abuse, addictions/substance abuse, anxiety and panic attacks, behaviour (changing), bereavement and loss, depression, domestic violence, eating disorders, family issues, ill health/long term sickness, mental ill health, obsessive compulsive disorder and similar, panic, phobia, relationship issues/breakdown, self-esteem issues/low self-esteem, sexual issues, sleep issues, stress, suicide/self-harm, trauma, post-trauma and Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and work related issues.

We are very excited to be dipping our toes into a new venture based around "Exploring Spirituality." This group has been created in response to comments made by clients who have raised the idea that, at present, there is no place in which they can talk about spirituality or similar topics and that these topics have been disregarded by psychiatrists.

Partnership Working

Stockport Age UK has identified that hoarding has been an issue within Stockport and the wider community for some considerable time. In response we have jointly created a "De-Clutterers Group." Its aim is to tackle the psychological effects of hoarding. It is hoped that, in the near future, we can develop and grow this service further and accept referrals from Carers and other services. I would like to thank Sarah and Hazel from Stockport Age UK for their hard work and dedication to this project along with Annalisa Tommesello our therapist who left SPARC earlier this year but contributed so much to this project and many other aspects of our work during in her time with us. We look forward to building on this partnership over time.

Looking to the Future

We would like to expand the service and the variety of models we use by employing more Counsellors/Therapists . We are exploring the possibility of offering couples counselling, applying differing group work theories and topics, and the possibility of home visits. In addition to this we are looking into the possibility of providing a service for clients who are Neurodiverse.



Green Space Community Connections

Emerging from the Covid period, it became apparent that contact with nature - whether it be in a garden, park or other Green Space - is beneficial to Mental Health. The current zeitgeist, with it's concerns for sustainability, climate change and the environment, would seem to confirm this. At the start of 2023, based on the success of working with The Olive Branch which has been so enjoyable, I felt it would be good to expand SPARC's links and engagement with other organisations that support Green Spaces, The following rundown of the contacts made shows how widely SPARC contributes to the local community.

Olive Branch Woodland Garden, Shaw Heath:

It must be 5 or more years since we first started supporting the Olive Branch with The Woodland Garden area which faces the Greek St roundabout on Shaw Heath. The gardening group paid two visits to this green space during the year, our last visit being at the start of December 2022 to do a tidy up for Winter. The Woodland Garden is made up of mature trees and shrubs and lies behind a grass verge which is maintained by the highways department. We are free to plant anything behind the verge and over the last few years have planted lots of Spring bulbs. Usually we do bulb planting during the autumn which has resulted in the area looking lovely in Springtime. We usually pay 2 or 3 visits a year to plant bulbs, manage it and keep it litter free. Supporting the Olive Branch with this area has added an extra dimension to the gardening group as it's good to have a change of scene and perspective and has spurred me on to expand SPARC's green space contacts.



Heaton Norris Community Peaceful Garden:

I contacted the Love Heaton Moor group via Facebook and made contact with Maggie Jones. Maggie is involved with the Heaton Norris Community Peaceful Garden which was laid out a couple of years ago and which lies just off the A6 between the Midland and Magnet Public Houses. I was contacted by Phil Rowbotham and paid him a visit at the garden on 27th January to discuss how SPARC could fit into their project and what their plans were for this year. Phil was welcoming and keen to make a connection with us. I was invited to their monthly meeting at the Magnet on Tuesday 7th February to address the group and give an overview of what SPARC does. The first session that the gardening group did at the Community Peaceful Garden was on Thursday 23rd February. We spent a very productive and enjoyable hour or so weeding and tidying up. Maggie and a colleague Tony Ashurst joined us. The session went better than I could have wished, and I look forward to this connection thriving over time. My thanks go to Maggie, Phil and Tony for making SPARC so welcome - we look forward to working with you again.



Cale Green Women's Institute Community Bee Garden:

Commuting to and from SPARC, I noticed that near Johnson's Decorating Centre which is at the junction of Lyme Grove and Wellington Road South the W.I. had adopted a raised bed and planted it with Bee friendly plants to create a Community Bee Garden. Their changing and eye-catching seasonal and special occasion decorations encouraged me to make contact and suggest a possible link up between them and SPARC with a view to maintaining the Garden. My contact, Liz Luddington, got back to me and said she would bring my suggestion to her next committee meeting. This went well and a W.I member called Margaret who manages the Garden was informed of my suggestion. A possible gardening session link up will happen in May around decorating the Garden for the Coronation. It's my hope that throughout the year we will be involved in the planting and maintaining the garden with members of the W.I. The W.I. very kindly did some fundraising and made a generous donation of £300 to SPARC, for which we are very grateful.

Barnfield Road East Allotments, Davenport:

Elizabeth Luddington at Cale Green W.I. passed on my details to Lisa Davies who Invited me to see an allotment plot which they would like to offer to SPARC. Discussions are being had about how we at SPARC could manage this plot and the nature of sessions that might be held there should we be in a position to accept the offer.

The Landing, Merseyway Precinct:

I made contact with Nick Harlow who manages the Landing and is responsible for raising the exotic vegetables and herbs used by the Where the Light Gets In restaurant on Stockport market place. The gardening group visited the Landing on Thursday 23rd March and had a tour with Nick who explained the set up and its connection to Where The Light Gets In. Given its location on the roof of the shopping centre, it's amazing how big the allotment plot is and how much it grows. All the produce is grown in raised beds and pots as well as a small greenhouse and Polytunnel. Nick is more than happy for the group to visit the Landing and help maintain it. Anyone who volunteers with them has to sign up with MUD (Manchester Urban Diggers) and Nick ok'd it for me to sign up as I was representing the gardening group so they could attend under my name. Any of our gardening group members who would like to volunteer outside of SPARC's time there would have to sign-up individually. An added bonus is that if anyone volunteers there on Friday they are offered a free lunch at Where the Light Gets In as a thank you.





GRIT Studios, Canal St, off Hillgate :

Given the success of our teaming up with the Olive Branch Woodland Garden, I asked my contact at SMBC, Mark Calderbank (as a Neighbourhood Projects Officer with Stockport Council Mark supports the Olive Branch Woodland Garden Project) whether he knew of other sites in the area that could be adopted and worked on and he said he'd keep a look out for me. In response he passed on the contact details of an arts project called GRIT Studios.

Paying a visit there I met with Sophie Macauley who showed me around the workshops which do woodworking, stained glass and mosaic, amongst other things. They're also involved in green space activity such as making the surrounding area more attractive for both wildlife and local residents. Sophie was open to having a link-up with SPARC. The Gardening Group visited GRIT on Thursday 2nd March and were shown the studios and informed of the green space plans for the surrounding area which is to be cleared of undergrowth. GRIT had a 'Paint and Plant' weekend on 4th and 5th of March which was attended by a couple of SPARC members. Because a lot of GRIT's Green Space activity will happen at weekends and be of a more heavy duty nature it won't be suitable for all, but would be great for those who like hacking back and clearing overgrown areas. I've asked Sophie to keep in contact and send me information relating to further weekend projects planned for the year.

Outcomes:

In order to maintain our engagement with these groups, as well as keeping on top of our own garden at SPARC, I've arranged a rota of visits to the various organisations during the coming growing season so that the gardening group are aware when of these external sessions will take place. Hopefully a good year supporting other groups in the community will be enjoyed.

James Campbell, Activities Co-Ordinator & Senior Support Worker

Take time to Breathe and Relax...

Relaxation Sessions are held every Monday between 12:00-13:00. The sessions are well attended with numbers regularly ranging between 4 and 7.

We use Tai Chi style exercises which provide an opportunity to practice meditation in motion for those who wish to achieve deep breathing in time with gentle movement and are not so comfortable with seated meditation. The benefits of the exercises include reduced heart rate, lowered blood pressure and improved balance.

Once we have completed the Tai Chi we move on to a 20 minute seated relaxation called Progressive Muscle Relaxation. This involves a kind of 'body scan' which helps us to recognise tension in the body as it occurs and to deal with it in the moment.

If you like the sound of this, then why not come along and join us?

Jim Whittaker, Facilitator [VTCT in Complementary Therapies]

Every Thursday between 14:30 - 15:00 we hold a Relaxation Session in the Music Room. This is usually well attended, with up to 8 members in every session. It seems to be particularly popular with members who have attended other sessions during the day and want to take some 'me time' to absorb information and wind down.

The session begins with diaphragmatic breathing which helps us to focus. We then move on to a progressive relaxation - where we tense and relax parts of the body in order to become aware of any stress we may be feeling and be able to benefit more from relaxing.

In every session we build in some yoga-style exercises that can be done while seated, before moving on to standing exercises which focus on posture. This awareness of an open posture can help us to avoid the urge to let our muscles slouch and become tense. It also helps us to project a more confident attitude and feel more confident as a result.

To finish the session we return to our seats and, accompanied by a recording of natural sounds, we complete a visualisation exercise.

If you think this would be interesting - and perhaps useful to you - please drop in and try it out.

Karen Bamforth, Facilitator

Funding & Fundraising

As many will know the primary funding for SPARC comes via a commissioned contract with the Local Authority. This funding provides us with the monies to pay salaries, our utility bills, insurance and other necessary costs. Our lovely building and grounds, appreciated and maintained by so many of us, are also provided under the terms of this contract. Having this contract provides SPARC with the foundation needed to explore other funding opportunities such as sponsorships, donations and grants for particular programmes. During this year our MaaD (Man about a Dog) project also had funding from Stockport Public Health, although this sadly ended in October 2022. However we then became a part of the Community Hub Partnership with Pure Innovations.

SPARC Counselling service has benefitted for many years with grant funding from Lloyds Foundation for England & Wales. Access to this grant during the past year enabled us to run a pilot project for the De-Clutterers Group. Grants of this nature are often time-limited and this year has been the last for this source of funding. Despite our many efforts we have so far not been successful in our bid to replace this funding for the next financial year. Our efforts to find funding continue, and we have been fortunate to have the experience of working alongside Age UK Stockport fundraisers which has enhanced our awareness of where funds can be applied for and sharpened our skills in making applications.

We have been successful in the continuation of our SPARC4Wellbeing Lottery funding. This provides another aspect of the counselling service along with the funds for our Health and Wellbeing Worker [SPARC4Change] and our Young Adults Workers [SPARC4YA]. The development that has taken place within our associated projects has been a joy to observe and the benefits for our members are clear to see.

Funds raised this year

Contract funding - £200K Grant funding - £93K

We do raise some funds via Café SPARC and the monies that our café customers invest in our café and would like to thank our café worker John and the café volunteers for the valuable contribution they make in this fund raising aspect of our service.

We have had donations over the past year from many supporters. These range from cake sale donations, to personal fund giving, to sponsored events and support from the local Women's Institute. In March we were the chosen charity of the Manchester Beethoven Society. They invited us to attend their feature concert and gave us the opportunity to speak to the audience about SPARC and the work that we do. It was a very grand and enjoyable affair which resulted in SPARC being the fortunate recipient of £500 donated by the audience.

In January a team of SPARC Staff and their families took part in the Three Halls Challenge, which you can read about in a separate item.

Our Football Group Committee have also taken responsibility for raising their own funds which has been very uplifting to observe. The commitment of the footballers to support and contribute to the running of their own group is amazing.

On behalf of SPARC I would like to thank each and every person who has donated time, money and kindness towards our charity. And I can assure everyone that every penny donated to SPARC is spent for the benefit and wellbeing of our members.

Funds raised this year

Donations and fundraising events - £9K





SPARC takes on the THREE HALLS CHALLENGE

Back in the cold dark days of winter - on Sunday 22nd January 2023 to be precise - a team of seventeen members of our SPARC family roused themselves from their beds at some awful hour in order to assemble at Stockport Georgians Cricket Club by 08:30.

What motivated us? A desire to raise funds to improve provision at SPARC by getting a Defibrillator and creating a pot of money to help improve and update the Computer Systems used by staff.

As you can see from the photo above, we were lucky with the weather. The day remained bright but cold as we navigated our way around the 10 mile course - although I'd swear we did more due to detours! Spirits remained high throughout the 3 1/2 hours we took to complete the course by calling at the sites of Poynton Hall and Hillbrook Grange before checking in at Bramhall Hall and making our way back to Stockport Georgians, where we were happily accepted the offer of hot drinks or cups of soup.

Was it worth it? Yes. 100% yes: we raised £3829!
And there's even been talk of doing it again in 2024...

Volunteering at SPARC

Our volunteers bring dynamics to our team, they are a very caring bunch and always have a willingness to listen to, interact with and help our members. They provide an integral support to our core staff.

Volunteers come from a very wide range of backgrounds, and it's interesting to note that a high percentage of our volunteers are either SPARC members themselves or are people who, as both Pathways Volunteers and regular volunteers, have family and friends who have personal 'Lived Experiences' of mental health.

Having been a volunteer myself, I'm aware of how much time and dedication it takes. You have to be both able and willing to commit yourself to being there for others – mentally and physically. Volunteers bring all sorts of skills to SPARC. Some of these may seem simple – such as listening, learning and remembering names, and showing friendship – while others may seem more 'professional' such as musical gardening, cooking and creative skills. But what makes a good volunteer is that willingness to be with people and support them in whatever they need in the moment.

Our volunteer team continues to grow and all relevant information available can be found online through our website or Facebook page, or by speaking to me directly. Given the success of our SPARC 4 YOUNG ADULTS project we are hoping to attract some younger volunteers.

I'm looking forward to working with Sector 3 Stockport's Volunteer Hub this coming year, with a focus on certain challenges faced by every organisation that is looking for volunteers: recruitment, advertising and also the stigma around volunteering which can be perceived as not being 'Cool' especially among younger people.

On behalf of all SPARC I would like to say a massive THANK YOU to all our current volunteers for their ongoing support and the time that they give so freely to either facilitate groups or work alongside our core staff team.

WE COULDN'T DO IT WITHOUT YOU!

Amanda McClenaghan, Volunteer Co-Ordinator

Member Feedback 2022 -2023

RUNNYMEDE COURT:

I am in the flower group with James which I enjoy and look forward to it every two weeks, it is about 8 years now I've been with him.

Mary G

Garden: TableTop with James. I have enjoyed our flower group for nearly 6 years since I moved to Runnymede Court. James always brings a good selection of flowers and greenery for our group to arrange in vases. Long may he continue. **Anne W**

I have been a resident in a flat at Runnymede Court, Edgeley, Stockport, for 9 months and am settling in. At first it was very hard to accept the change. We have a fortnightly flower arranging group which is really enjoyable. **Betty M**

I have enjoyed this year's flower arranging and look forward to continuing with further sessions. **Richard H**

SPARC Womens' Group

Women's Group is much appreciated and I am able to talk with other women.

You can be yourself, feel relaxed, feel supported and chat with likeminded women.

Very good company, feel safe, secure and supported.

Mix with friends and enjoy all activities.

I see friends I wouldn't see throughout the week, make new friends and go places together away from the Centre too.

Member Feedback 2022 -2023

FOOTBALL GROUP:

- I have been going to SPARC's weekly Football Group for many years and find it beneficial both for fitness & for my mental health! It helps my depression! Also, the tournaments we enter are a good challenge. We have done very well in them which is also very beneficial to mine & the others mental health!
- "I can honestly say that SPARC's football group has changed my life. The group allows me to be myself and not to worry about what people may think. It is a very relaxed environment. No matter what struggles I have faced during the week I know that I can play 2 hours of football with people who have similar problems.

VOLUNTEERS

- It gives me a focus and feeling of wellbeing and also being part of a team
- I really enjoy volunteering at SPARC as it is a big distraction from my normal thoughts
- I hope to make a difference by giving something back
- Volunteering with the Café means the world to me and I want to stay here forever
- I love volunteering at SPARC, it keeps me busy, feeling fulfilled and serving a purpose
- Working as a volunteer helps with my depression
- Volunteering brings routine to my day and distracts from my own physical ailments. I enjoy the social aspect and being able to put my skills to good use.

Zoom Therapy Sessions:

R.B. : I enjoy doing the zoom groups as it helps me to be in an understanding environment where I can safely express myself and know I'm not alone.

M.B. : The zoom groups through spark have been an eye opener that everyone struggles and copes in different ways, i always feel better after a zoom session, connecting and having that safe space is important to me and i feel most others will agree!

Anon: I'm extremely grateful for the Zoom Groups especially because I've not been able to get out much at all in the last few years. They feel like a lifeline to me sometimes, just having that connection, knowing I'm not on my own. They help to keep my anxiety more manageable. I'm glad the groups are there x.

Member Feedback 2022 -2023

HORIZONS

- I really like Horizons; I am made to feel very welcome
- There is a mixture of people to socialise with and always someone to chat to, I enjoy the variety of quizzes
- It's a great place to meet people and have a chat
- I miss Horizons when I'm not there, it's a great place to be. I am happy when I am with my friends who cheer me up when I am feeling down.
- To me Horizons means a lot to me. I am part of the Horizons' family; it has given me the opportunity to socialise and make friends and get involved too.

FOOTBALL GROUP:

- Since joining the football group, I have had made some very good friends
- I enjoy entering the tournaments meeting other teams and players and feel that all the weeks of football practice with SPARC means I can match others abilities.
- I loved every minute of it.
- I can get anxious every now and then but the players and staff are very friendly and welcomed me into the group
- Great place to meet up and socialising with other players.
- It is really beneficial to me and my mental health.

No matter how good or bad my week has been I know that come to Friday football and I am guaranteed to play a full game of football.

- Great mental health group
- We are all in it together and we can talk openly about our problems.
- It is a very relaxed atmosphere and all the other players seem to enjoy it too.
- I hope the football group continues to run for many years.

Member Feedback 2022 -2023

SPARC4YOUNGADULTS

"The group has helped me a lot to lessen my social isolation, and allowed me to connect with people my age, and with a range of different personalities and experiences."

"I've not been coming very long, but I've really felt at home when going to groups or 1-2-1 sessions at SPARC4Young Adults. I've been going through a few things in my personal life and the 1-2-1 sessions have been really helpful and supportive."

"I want to say without this group I would truly struggle. It has helped me socialise with people and made me feel somewhat normal; being with people with similar experiences."

"The groups have helped me with my confidence and getting me out of the house more. SPARC4Young Adults feels different to other services, it's nice we can joke and not take everything so seriously."

COUNSELLING

I just wanted to say that I have always felt ok talking to Jenny as she doesn't judge me for being emotional she is very empathetic and a great support.

The Therapist from SPARC helped me through a difficult time in my life. Through his support, I've been able to build my self-esteem, my self-confidence, and to move forward with my life. He has been consistent, caring and a good listener – all of which has been a vital component to my recovery. I cannot speak highly enough of the support provided by SPARC.

My therapist quickly and successfully gained my trust and respect and the caring; considerate; professional and proactive manner adopted, allowed me to feel comfortable for therapy to support. He enabled me to consider traumatic events that were affecting my self-confidence and my feeling of self-worth.

In a non-judgemental manner he actively listened and then helped me to process my anxiety linked to traumatic events and then helped me to process; cope; move on; accept and deal with the associated negative feelings and to think more positively and proactively. I have learnt to create a more positive outlook and move on from my former negative feelings. Over the sessions, my therapist enabled me to create a more positive and proactive way of considering issues moving forward through life.

I really look forward to my weekly sessions, I get a lot out of them. It's not easy talking about your feelings but I feel I have bonded with Jenny and she makes me feel really comfortable and able to open up. I've really enjoyed joining in some of the group sessions Jenny has invited me to, it's nice to feel part of a community that understands you.

Our SPARC Team: 2022 - 2023

TRUSTEES:

Andrew Jones
Chris Pringle
Lawrence Gill
Philip Davies
Joanna Parfitt
Janice Carrington
Jennifer Loynes
Paul Browne
Ged Murtagh
Karen Bamforth

STAFF:

Peter Sherry-Woolridge
Lynn Barrett
James Campbell
David Richards
Sue Heaps
Amanda McClenaghan
Chris Platt
Ken Hazeldine
Ged Saundry
Beth Jones
Rob Hart
Marc Murphy
Jim Whittaker
Jill Kirton
Malcolm Harding
Ria Richards
John Carrington

Therapists:

Annalisa Tommessello
Jenny Knowles
Ovanda Nicol
Paul Lake
Diane Darlak

VOLUNTEERS:

Marc Murphy
Rob Hart
Jim Whittaker
Karen Bamforth
Anne Traille
Phil Hounsell
Aled Evans
Steve Delahunt
James Bamgbose
Mark Isaacs
Cathy Millward
Eddie Garry
Sheila Gott

CAFE:

John Carrington
Janice Carrington
Wayne Joyce
Robert Gall
Caroline Fletcher
Dean McDonough
Jan Hosler
Lauren Beal
Mark Romagnoli
Paul Leyden
Hazel Howard

THANK YOU

to all of our supporters:

SMBC Social Services Pennine Care NHS Trust Pure Innovations Beacon Counselling Disability Stockport Barry Tildsley Sam Evans Rashida Bhim Jonathan Wilmott Judith Stroble Stockport Public Health Karen & John Spencer [Gravitas] APH CMHT Councillor Lane CMHT Baker Street North West Digital TNL Community Fund Lloyds Foundation for England and Wales Stockport Local Fund Stockport Community Champions Stockport ABL Signpost For Carers Making Space Mental Health Unit, Stepping Hill Hospital Cornerstone Resources Stockport Good Gym Cathal Sherry GMCVO Eden Planning Peter Jacobs Steve Flynn Life Leisure, Brinnington Age UK Stockport SPARC Football Committee Andrea Ferguson Victoria PCN Give As You Live Lee Wolstenholme The Ollerenshaw Family Christadelphian Church Cheshire Freemasons Synergy Stockport Sector 3 The Beethoven Society Margaret White The Alex Quiz Team Chris Penney Judith Pullen Cheryl Elford The Friends of Alexander Park M. Wood Community Accountancy Services The D'Oyly Carte Trust Everyone who sponsored us on The Three Halls Walk
and our Patron: Paul Lake

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Registered Charity No. 515832
Company Registration No. 1862257

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

INDEX

<u>PAGE NUMBER</u>	<u>CONTENTS</u>
1 - 6	TRUSTEES ANNUAL REPORT
7	INDEPENDENT EXAMINERS REPORT
8	STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES
9	BALANCE SHEET
10	STATEMENT OF CASH FLOWS
11 - 19	NOTES TO THE ACCOUNTS
FOR MANAGEMENT PURPOSES ONLY	
20	INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

Report of the trustees for the year ended 31st March 2023

The trustees present their annual directors' report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31st March 2023 which are also prepared to meet the requirements for a directors' report and accounts for Companies Act purposes.

The financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011, the Companies Act 2006, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, and the Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2019).

Objectives and activities

The purposes of the charity are as listed below and the main activities are as listed below.

The trustees confirm that they have referred to the Charity Commission's guidance on public benefit when reviewing the Charity's aims and objectives, in planning future activities, and setting the policies for the year.

Purposes and Aims

- ~ to reduce the likelihood of relapse by offering support to individuals with mental health needs living in the community or preparing to discharge from hospital.
- ~ to encourage individuals to feel a valued part of their community. Supporting individuals to make use of local resources.
- ~ to provide social, leisure and educational opportunities to help overcome the loneliness and isolation often associated with having a mental health problem.
- ~ to promote the active involvement of members in achieving the above through a combination of regular members meetings and member representation on the Management Committee, and through the provision of an environment of support and acceptance aimed at encouraging individuals to express their needs and interests.

Ensuring our work delivers our aims:

This is achieved through the implementation of effective monitoring systems throughout all aspects of our work. We gain valuable knowledge from having open communication with service users and other stakeholders to ensure a high quality of service provision.

The charity furthers its charitable purposes for the public benefit through enabling people to live full and active lives and thereby contribute to public benefit. By responding to the expressed needs of local stakeholders and working in partnership with other services from both the private/voluntary sector and statutory services we are able to provide a holistic and creative approach to supporting the needs of those people in society whom are most vulnerable.

The main aspect of the charity's activities, funded by Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council via the Stockport Mental Health contract and the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, is providing support and meaningful activities for our service users who are in the main residents in Stockport who are experiencing mental health problems. A variety of groups and therapeutic interventions are provided; aimed at supporting recovery through the participation of therapeutic activity. We have a staff team who are able to support people on a 1-1 basis both within the centre and out in the community.

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

We provide voluntary work opportunities and placements for social work students for which we receive a daily monetary rate for the duration of the placement. This work enhances the main activities provided by the charity.

We have continued to provide a variety of greenspace activities working alongside local community groups towards various aims such as the rejuvenation and maintaining of a piece of local land. We have supported the access for our service users in the use of Information and Technology equipment in order to participate in online sessions that remain a valued aspect of our service since their creation in response to the pandemic lockdown restrictions.

SPARC have continued to maintain our partnership working with Pennine Care Trust in the provision of therapeutic activities with the Mental Health Unit at the local hospital.

SPARC4Wellbeing is a National Lottery- Reaching Communities funded project is the largest project outside of the core Stockport Council contract. SPARC4Wellbeing funds 3 therapists, and 2 project leads. This allows SPARC to provide SPARC4Counselling our bespoke counselling service, SPARC4Healing our mental and physical health service that promotes positive behaviour changes and SPARC4YoungAdults a service for 18-30 year olds suffering with the effects of mental ill-health as well as the existing pressures of their age group.

A review of our achievements and performance

Challenges this year have been increasing demand on our organisation. Both in terms of higher numbers of service users and financially, as the need to replenish existing funding was exacerbated due to the cost of living crisis and energy price increases. We work continually to gather data that proves the value of our service in order to provide that information to prospective future funding bodies. We have also strengthened our partnership working with Pure Innovations and endeavoured to become fully appraised of and enmeshed in the changes that are occurring in the social care and charity sector, both nationally and locally.

SPARC is busier with more varied projects and groups than in the past. This creates a situation where many of our service users are able to get many of their therapeutic and wellbeing needs met from our service alone.

The culture within SPARC remains one of empathy, open-mindedness and compassion.

SPARC continues to be successful in creating mutual partnership with local organisations. We continue our partnership with SMBC and Pure Innovations in the Mental Health Network contract. In addition we have entered into a joint project between our local Primary Care Network and BOOST, this forms a new drive towards integrating in a more efficient way with primary care. SPARC has also been attending Living Well Collaboration events, these form a network of voluntary and statutory organisations to guide the creation of new working practices throughout Stockport.

This year we have continued to build our group based activities which has necessitated an increase in the number of volunteers that support our service. We are now fully operational in comparison to the years of covid and continue to provide some services which were created in that time.

Targets for the coming year include: successfully completing the procurement process for our core council funding. Obtaining continuation funding for our Lottery funded SPARC4Wellbeing project. And analysing our service to ensure that we remain relevant for the people that we are here to help.

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

Financial review

The finances for SPARC have been consistent over the past 12 months monitored closely by Trustees and Management. We have continued to manage the funding under the Stockport Mental Health Contract and have met the standards required in partnership with SMBC. We have been able to show added value by adapting the range of our activities in response to gaps in service provision and the identified needs of our service users. We have continued to employ a manager, social worker, support workers, Peer Support Project Workers, administration and domestic staff enhanced by the recruitment of volunteers. We have also employed three therapists with funding from The National Lottery- Reaching Communities fund as well as one therapist with funding from Lloyds Bank Foundation and we have continued to provide in-reach creative sessions in partnership with the local hospital mental health unit. We have a Young Persons Project Worker and a Mental and Physical Health Practitioner funded by The National Lottery Community Fund and continue to fund SPARC Café. We are seeking top up funding for the coming year of SPARC4Wellbeing as well as new funding to enhance our Women's Group and Greenspace projects.

Investment powers and policy

Aside from retaining a prudent amount in reserves each year, most of the charity's funds are to be spent in the short term so there are few funds for any longer term investment.

Reserves policy and going concern

The balance held in unrestricted reserves at 31st March 2023 was £70,556 of which £67,682 are free reserves, after allowing for funds tied up in tangible fixed assets.

The trustees aim to maintain free reserves in unrestricted funds at a level which equates to approximately three months of unrestricted charitable expenditure. The trustees consider that this level will provide sufficient funds to respond to applications for grants and ensure that support and governance costs are covered.

The company's main source of income is grant funding and member's income. The directors consider that it is appropriate to prepare the accounts on a going concern basis and, consequently, the accounts do not include any adjustments that would be necessary if the funding should cease.

Risk management

The Management Committee has conducted a review of the major risks to which the charity is exposed. Where appropriate, systems or procedures have been established to mitigate the risks the charity faces. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, parents, children and visitors.

Plans for Future

The Management Committee in partnership with the staff team strive to develop the organisation to meet the needs of its service users and stakeholders. We will continue to provide a range of services via a contract with the Local Authority and continue to work with other partners in identifying gaps in service provision and ensuring efficiencies wherever possible. We will continue to develop the service in line with SPARC's current business plan. We will continue to develop the SPARC4Wellbeing project, Greenspace and Women's projects and continue to source funding for the maintenance of these projects and to establish new services in line with our Business Plan and gaps in provision as identified with our service users. We want to continue to grow our volunteer team

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

and host constructive student placements. We will continue to build resources into the main structure of the service as we move forward.

Covid-19 recovery

Since last year when restrictions were lifted SPARC has grown into a more complete service than ever before. With more on offer than in the past and more in person and online groups than before the pandemic. Covid-19 has left some indelible marks on the structures in social care and the charity sector as well as on peoples mental health. As we continue to support people in their lives a new challenge lies ahead as the challenges faced by the national and local economy are creating a contraction in available funding pots. With this comes more competition and greater time investment required to successfully obtain these funds.

Structure, governance and management

Stockport Progress and Recovery Centre is a company limited by guarantee governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association dated 8th November 1984. It is registered as a charity with the Charity Commission and is constituted under a trust deed dated 26th November 1984.

Appointment of trustees

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law and under the company's articles are known as members of the Management Committee. Under the requirements of the Memorandum and Articles of Association, members of the Management Committee shall hold office until the end of the Annual General Meeting next following their election appointment or co-option and shall be eligible for re-election or re-co-option.

Trustee induction and training

Most trustees are already familiar with the work of the charity as a result of longstanding connection with the organisation. Additionally, new trustees are invited and encouraged to attend the meetings and activities of the service to familiarise themselves with the work of the charity and the context within which it operates. The organisation has now produced a trustee induction pack in order to support and inform Trustees in their role.

Organisation

The board of trustees administers the charity. The board normally meets every 6 weeks. A Centre Manager is appointed by the trustees to manage the day-to-day operations of the charity.

Related parties and co-operation with other organisations

None of our trustees receive remuneration or other benefit from their work with the charity. Any connection between a trustee or senior manager with any service providers must be disclosed to the full board of trustees in the same way as any other contractual relationship with a related party. In the current year no such related party transactions were reported.

Reference and administrative information

Charity Name: Stockport Progress and Recovery Centre formerly known as Stockport Day Centre.
Charity Number: 515832
Company Registration Number: 1862257 (England and Wales)

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

Directors and trustees

The directors of the charitable company (the charity) are its trustees for the purpose of charity law. The trustees and officers serving during the year and since the year-end were as follows:

Key management personnel: Trustees and Directors

Directors:

Andrew Jones	Chair
Philip Davies	Company Secretary

Trustees:

Andrew Jones	
Philip Davies	Secretary
Paul Browne	
Joanne Parfitt	Members Representative
Lawrence Gill	Treasurer
Janice Carrington	
Jennifer Loynes	
Christopher Pringle	Vice Chair
Gerald Murtagh	
Karen Bamforth	
Kevin Brosnahan	

Senior managers

Pete Wooldridge

Registered Office

Progress House,
35a Adswood Lane East,
Stockport,
SK2 6RE

Independent Examiners

Community Accountancy Service Limited
The Grange
Pilgrim Drive
Beswick
Manchester
M11 3TQ

Bankers

Co-operative Bank plc
Balloon Street
Manchester
M4 4BE

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

Solicitors

Philip Davies & Company

Trustees responsibilities in relation to the financial statements

The charity trustees (who are also the directors of Stockport Progress and Recovery Centre for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting principles and then apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the applicable Charities SORP;
- Make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures that must be disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is appropriate to presume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

By order of the board of trustees

Andrew Jones

Chair

Date: 7th June 2023

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Stockport Progress and Recovery Centre

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out on pages 8 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The charity is required by company law to prepare accrued accounts and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act ;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
 - to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006, and
 - with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

AM King FCCA *A.M. King*
 Community Accountancy Service Ltd
 The Grange, Pilgrim Drive
 Beswick, Manchester, M11 3TQ

Date: 7th June 2023

STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31 MARCH 2023
(Incorporating Income and Expenditure Account)

		Unrestricted Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2023	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022
	Further Details	£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	(3)	1,834	4,875	6,709	10,765
Charitable Activities	(4)	181,000	189,767	370,767	244,893
Other Trading Activities	(5)	25,168	4,616	29,784	23,914
Investment Income		-	-	-	-
Other		1,075	-	1,075	5,044
Total		209,077	199,258	408,335	284,616
Expenditure on:					
Raising Funds	(6)	8,641	-	8,641	5,219
Charitable Activities	(6)	168,092	175,887	343,979	298,420
Other	(6)	1,947	-	1,947	1,626
Total		178,680	175,887	354,567	305,265
Net income/(expenditure)		30,397	23,371	53,768	(20,649)
Transfers between funds	(16)	(4,936)	4,936	-	-
Net movement in funds		25,461	28,307	53,768	(20,649)
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	(16)	45,095	101,923	147,018	167,667
Total funds carried forward	(16)	70,556	130,230	200,786	147,018

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses recognised in the year. All income and expenditure derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 11 to 19 form part of these accounts

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

9

BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2023

Company registration number: 01862257

	Notes	2023 £	2022 £
Fixed assets:			
Tangible assets	(10)	23,705	24,792
Total fixed assets		<u>23,705</u>	<u>24,792</u>
Current assets:			
Stocks	(11)	-	-
Debtors	(12)	9,930	49,301
Cash at Bank & in Hand		194,580	183,281
Total current assets		<u>204,510</u>	<u>232,582</u>
Liabilities:			
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year	(14)	27,429	110,356
Net current assets or liabilities		<u>177,081</u>	<u>122,226</u>
Total assets less current liabilities		200,786	147,018
Creditors: Amounts falling due after more than one year	(15)	-	-
Provisions for liabilities		-	-
Total net assets or liabilities		<u>200,786</u>	<u>147,018</u>
The funds of the charity:			
Restricted income funds	(16)	130,230	101,923
Unrestricted income funds	(16)	70,556	45,095
Total charity funds		<u>200,786</u>	<u>147,018</u>

For the year in question the company was entitled to the exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

- The members have not required The company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476.
- The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts.

These accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the trustees on 7th September 2023

Andrew Jones Chair

The notes on pages 11 to 19 form part of these accounts

Statement of Cash Flows for the year ending 31 March 2023

Reconciliation of net movement in funds to net cash flow from operating activities

	Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Net movement in funds	53,768	(20,649)
Add back depreciation	2,999	2,812
Deduct investment income	-	-
Decrease/(increase) in stocks	-	-
Decrease/(increase) in debtors	39,371	(46,175)
Increase/(decrease) in creditors	(82,927)	87,224
Net cash used in operating activities	13,211	23,212
Cash flows from investment activities:		
Interest	-	-
Purchase of fixed assets	(1,912)	(5,527)
Net cash provided by investing activities	(1,912)	(5,527)
Increase/(decrease) in cash and cash equivalents during the year	11,299	17,685
Cash and cash equivalents brought forward	183,281	165,596
Cash and cash equivalents carried forward	194,580	183,281

Notes to the accounts

1. Accounting policies**(a) Basis of preparation and assessment of going concern**

The accounts (financial statements) have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant notes to these accounts. The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Charities Act 2011.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS 102.

The trustees consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

(b) Funds structure

Restricted funds are funds which are to be used in accordance with specific restrictions imposed by the donor or trust deed. There are 22 restricted funds.

Unrestricted income funds comprise those funds which the trustees are free to use for any purpose in furtherance of the charitable objects. Unrestricted funds include designated funds where the trustees, at their discretion, have created a fund for a specific purpose.

Further details of each fund are disclosed in note 17.

(c) Income recognition

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Donations are recognised when the charity has been notified in writing of both the amount and settlement date. In the event that a donation is subject to conditions that require a level of performance before the charity is entitled to the funds, the income is deferred and not recognised until either those conditions are fully met, or the fulfilment of those conditions is wholly within the control of the charity and it is probable that those conditions will be fulfilled in the reporting period.

Interest on funds held on deposit is included when receivable and the amount can be measured reliably by the charity; this is normally upon notification of the interest paid or payable by the bank. Dividends are recognised once the dividend has been declared and notification has been received of the dividend due.

(d) Expenditure Recognition

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accruals basis. All expenses including support costs and governance costs are allocated or apportioned to the applicable expenditure headings. For more information on this attribution refer to note (g) below.

(e) Irrecoverable VAT

Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

(f) Allocation of support and governance costs

Support costs have been allocated between governance costs and other support costs. Governance costs comprise all costs involving the public accountability of the charity and its compliance with regulation and good practice. These costs include costs related to independent examination and legal fees together with an apportionment of overhead and support costs.

Governance costs and support costs relating to charitable activities have been apportioned based on type of expense.

The allocation of support and governance costs is analysed in note 8.

(g) Costs of raising funds

The costs of raising funds consists of costs required to generate income.

(h) Charitable Activities

Costs of charitable activities include governance costs and an apportionment of support costs as shown in note 7.

Notes to the accounts

(i) Tangible fixed assets and depreciation

All assets costing more than £500 are capitalised and valued at historical cost. Depreciation is charged on the following basis:

Furniture & Office Equipment	10% straight line
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(j) Realised gains and losses

All gains and losses are taken to the Statement of Financial Activities as they arise. Realised gains and losses on investments are calculated as the difference between sales proceeds and their opening carrying value or their purchase value if acquired subsequent to the first day of the financial year. Unrealised gains and losses are calculated as the difference between the fair value at the year end and their varying value. Realised and unrealised investment gains and losses are combined in the Statement of Financial Activities.

(k) Pensions

The charity currently administers contributions to an auto enrolment pension scheme on behalf of individuals. The charity has no liability beyond making its contributions and paying across the deductions for the employee's contributions.

(l) Debtors

Trade and other debtors are recognised at the settlement amount due after any trade discount offered. Prepayments are valued at the amount prepaid net of any trade discounts due.

(m) Creditors and provisions

Creditors and provisions are recognised where the charity has a present obligation resulting from a past event that will probably result in the transfer of funds to a third party and the amount due to settle the obligation can be measured or estimated reliably. Creditors and provisions are normally recognised at their settlement amount after allowing for any trade discounts due.

2. Related party transactions and trustees' expenses and remuneration

The trustees all give freely their time and expertise without any form of remuneration or other benefit in cash or kind (2022: £nil). Expenses paid for the trustees in the year totalled £nil (2022: £nil).

3. Donations and Legacies

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Donations	1,834	4,875	6,709	10,765
	<u>1,834</u>	<u>4,875</u>	<u>6,709</u>	<u>10,765</u>

Previous reporting period

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Donations	10,765	-	10,765
	<u>10,765</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>10,765</u>

4. Income from charitable activities

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Restricted and Unrestricted grants:				
Stockport MBC Alliance Funding	180,000	-	180,000	183,325
Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention	-	-	-	11,000
Stockport Community Champions	-	-	-	11,650
Stockport MBC Adult Social Care	-	11,000	11,000	-
Stockport SMB Warm Spaces	1,000	-	1,000	-
10GM	-	36,900	36,900	-
Community Hub	-	10,208	10,208	-
The Screwfix Foundation	-	-	-	3,700
Big Lottery Fund	-	115,102	115,102	24,998
Lloyds CBT	-	16,557	16,557	10,220
	<u>181,000</u>	<u>189,767</u>	<u>370,767</u>	<u>244,893</u>

Notes to the accounts

4. Income from charitable activities

Previous reporting period

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Restricted grants:			
Stockport MBC Alliance Funding	183,325	-	
Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention	-	11,000	11,000
Stockport Community Champions	-	11,650	11,650
The Screwfix Foundation	-	3,700	3,700
Big Lottery Fund	-	24,998	24,998
Lloyds CBT	-	10,220	10,220
	<u>183,325</u>	<u>61,568</u>	<u>61,568</u>

5. Income from other trading activities

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Student Placement Fees	-	-	-	2,800
Training Income	-	-	-	150
Activities and Events	25,168	4,616	29,784	20,964
	<u>25,168</u>	<u>4,616</u>	<u>29,784</u>	<u>23,914</u>

Previous reporting period

	Unrestricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Restricted Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Student Placement Fees	2,800	-	2,800
Training Income	150	-	
Activities and Events	20,964	-	20,964
	<u>23,914</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>23,764</u>

Notes to the accounts

6. Expenditure

	Activities £	Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Expenditure on raising funds:			
Food and Drink	8,332	8,332	4,793
Events and Activities	-	-	8
Licences	309	309	418
	<u>8,641</u>	<u>8,641</u>	<u>5,219</u>
Expenditure on charitable activities:			
Employment Costs	217,357	217,357	173,185
Training	2,678	2,678	2,897
Pensions	492	492	492
Staff Supervision	193	193	-
DBS Checks	186	186	214
Payroll Bureau Fees	1,882	1,882	1,702
Recruitment	154	154	-
Sparc4me Expenses	2,776	2,776	987
Sessional Workers	35,045	35,045	40,385
Equipment Leasing	2,962	2,962	2,625
Staff and Volunteer Expenses	2,116	2,116	1,118
Group Activities and Equipment	5,416	5,416	5,990
Growing Together Expenses	-	-	32
Inreach Sessions	2,729	2,729	2,953
Heat, Light & Water	12,918	12,918	7,496
Subscriptions	165	165	333
Equipment and Maintenance	1,117	1,117	1,878
Telephone	3,572	3,572	4,157
Computer Costs	5,242	5,242	6,388
Domestic Supplies	597	597	751
Website	21	21	-
Insurance	2,264	2,264	1,755
Governance and Support Costs	39,506	39,506	38,046
Post, Printing & Stationery	1,592	1,592	2,224
Depreciation	2,999	2,999	2,812
	<u>343,979</u>	<u>343,979</u>	<u>298,420</u>
Other expenditure:			
Sundry Expenses	1,947	1,947	1,626
	<u>1,947</u>	<u>1,947</u>	<u>1,626</u>
	<u>354,567</u>	<u>354,567</u>	<u>305,265</u>
Restricted funds		175,887	80,530
Unrestricted funds		<u>178,680</u>	<u>224,735</u>
		<u>354,567</u>	<u>305,265</u>

Notes to the accounts

7. Allocation of governance and support costs

The breakdown of support costs and how these were allocated between governance and other support costs is shown below:

	General Support	Governance	Total 2023	Basis of apportionment
Professional Services	4,151	-	4,151	type of expense
Employment Costs	34,580	-	34,580	percentage of work performed
Accountancy Fees	-	775	775	type of expense
	<u>38,731</u>	<u>775</u>	<u>39,506</u>	

Previous reporting period

	General Support	Governance	Total 2022	Basis of apportionment
Professional Services	3,700	-	3,700	type of expense
Employment Costs	33,596	-	33,596	percentage of work performed
Accountancy Fees	-	750	750	type of expense
	<u>37,296</u>	<u>750</u>	<u>38,046</u>	

8. Analysis of staff costs

	Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Wages and Salaries	241,602	192,296
Holiday Pay Accrual Adjustment	(4,144)	4,144
Social Security Costs	11,992	8,221
Pension Costs	2,979	2,612
	<u>252,429</u>	<u>207,273</u>
Charitable activities	217,849	176,678
Support costs	34,580	30,595
	<u>252,429</u>	<u>207,273</u>

The average number of employees during the year was 17 (previous year: 15).

The charity considers its key management personnel comprises the trustees and Senior Managers. The total employment benefits, including employer pension contributions of the key management personnel were £50,525 (previous year: £49,863). No employee has benefits in excess of £60,000 (previous year: none).

Notes to the accounts

9. Independent Examiner Fees

	Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Independent examination fees	775	750
	<u>775</u>	<u>750</u>

10. Tangible Fixed Assets

	Furniture & Office Equipment £	Total £
Cost		
At 1st April 2022	85,761	85,761
Additions	1,912	1,912
At 31st March 2023	<u>87,673</u>	<u>87,673</u>
Depreciation		
At 1st April 2022	60,969	60,969
Charge for Year	2,999	2,999
At 31st March 2023	<u>63,968</u>	<u>63,968</u>
NET BOOK VALUE		
At 31st March 2023	<u>23,705</u>	<u>23,705</u>
At 31st March 2022	<u>24,792</u>	<u>24,792</u>

11. Stocks

The charity did not hold any stocks at the year end.

12. Analysis of debtors

	2023 £	2022 £
Debtors	7,459	46,680
Prepayments	2,471	2,621
	<u>9,930</u>	<u>49,301</u>

Debtors and prepayments comprise £7,753 restricted funds and £2,177 unrestricted funds (2022: £769/£48,532).

13. Creditors: amounts falling due within one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Creditors	7,008	2,582
Short-term compensated absences (holiday pay)	-	4,144
Other creditors and accruals	1,829	1,401
Deferred income	15,000	99,304
Taxation and social security costs	3,592	2,925
	<u>27,429</u>	<u>110,356</u>

14. Deferred income

Deferred income comprises grants invoiced in advance for periods after the year end.

Balance as at 1st April 2022	99,304
Amount released to income earned from charitable activities	(99,304)
Amount deferred in year	<u>15,000</u>
Balance at 31st March 2023	<u>15,000</u>

15. Creditors: amounts falling due after more than one year

	2023 £	2022 £
Provisions for liabilities	-	-
	<u>-</u>	<u>-</u>

Notes to the accounts

16. Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in unrestricted funds

	Balance at 1st April 2022	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Balance at 31st March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	45,095	209,077	(178,680)	(4,936)	70,556
	45,095	209,077	(178,680)	(4,936)	70,556

Previous reporting period

	Balance at 1st April 2021	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Balance at 31st March 2022
	£	£	£	£	£
General Fund	57,465	223,048	(224,735)	(10,683)	45,095
	57,465	223,048	(224,735)	(10,683)	45,095

Name of unrestricted fund:

General Fund

Description, nature and purpose of the fund

The "free reserves"

Analysis of movements in restricted funds

	Balance at 1st April 2022	Incoming Resources	Resources Expended	Transfers	Balance at 31st March 2023
	£	£	£	£	£
Daytrippers (Member's Forum)	2,555	-	(34)	14	2,535
Horizons	3,811	1,004	(700)	-	4,115
Growing Together	468	-	-	-	468
Stockport MBC - Refurbishment	12,052	-	(156)	-	11,896
Peoples' Health Trust - Natural Progressions	196	-	(182)	-	14
Big Lottery Fund (1)	306	-	(306)	-	-
Big Lottery Fund (2)	1,396	-	(464)	-	932
Reablement Funding	48	-	(48)	-	-
D'Oily Carte	-	-	(2,827)	2,827	-
Restricted Donations	-	4,875	-	-	4,875
Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention	13,115	11,000	(23,476)	-	639
Stockport MBC Local Fund	13,550	-	(4,154)	21	9,417
Stockport Community Champions	6,774	-	(8,848)	2,074	-
10GM	-	36,900	(9,190)	-	27,710
Community Hub	-	10,208	(8,436)	-	1,772
CRH Charitable Trust - Young Person's Project	5,019	-	(80)	-	4,939
The Screwfix Foundation	3,756	-	(417)	-	3,339
Big Lottery Fund	14,601	115,102	(79,270)	-	50,433
Awards for All	4,022	-	(1,093)	-	2,929
Lloyds CBT	17,911	16,557	(33,386)	-	1,082
Equity Foundation - Suicide Prevention	730	-	(91)	-	639
Pennine Care NHS Trust (Inreach Sessions)	1,613	3,612	(2,729)	-	2,496
	101,923	199,258	(175,887)	4,936	130,230

Notes to the accounts

16. Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Previous reporting period

	Balance at 1st April 2021 £	Incoming Resources £	Resources Expended £	Transfers £	Balance at 31st March 2022 £
Daytrippers (Member's Forum)	2,555	-	-	-	2,555
Horizons	3,586	-	(409)	634	3,811
Growing Together	479	-	(32)	21	468
Stockport MBC - Refurbishment	12,208	-	(156)	-	12,052
Peoples' Health Trust - Natural Progressions	196	-	(184)	184	196
Big Lottery Fund (1)	614	-	(308)	-	306
Big Lottery Fund (2)	1,860	-	(464)	-	1,396
Reablement Funding	96	-	(48)	-	48
Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention	12,449	11,000	(15,414)	5,080	13,115
Stockport MBC Local Fund	13,550	-	-	-	13,550
Stockport Community Champions	-	11,650	(4,876)	-	6,774
CRH Charitable Trust - Counselling	17,510	-	(17,520)	10	-
CRH Charitable Trust - Young Person's Project	5,019	-	-	-	5,019
The Screwfix Foundation	-	3,700	(418)	474	3,756
Big Lottery Fund	-	24,998	(10,397)	-	14,601
Awards for All	4,589	-	(567)	-	4,022
Lloyds CBT	33,053	10,220	(25,362)	-	17,911
Equity Foundation - Suicide Prevention	2,118	-	(1,388)	-	730
Pennine Care NHS Trust (Inreach Sessions)	320	-	(2,987)	4,280	1,613
	110,202	61,568	(80,530)	10,683	101,923

Notes to the accounts

16. Analysis of charitable funds

Analysis of movements in restricted funds

Name of restricted fund:

Daytrippers (Member's Forum)
 Horizons
 Growing Together
 Stockport MBC - Refurbishment

 Peoples' Health Trust - Natural Progressions
 Big Lottery Fund (1)
 Big Lottery Fund (2)

 Reablement Funding

 D'Oily Carte
 Restricted Donations
 Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention
 Stockport MBC Local Fund
 Stockport Community Champions
 10GM
 Community Hub
 CRH Charitable Trust - Young Person's Project
 The Screwfix Foundation
 Big Lottery Fund

 Awards for All
 Lloyds CBT
 Equity Foundation - Suicide Prevention
 Pennine Care NHS Trust (Inreach Sessions)

Description, nature and purpose of the fund

to facilitate activities of the member's forum
 for the purchase of equipment and sundry items for the Horizons group
 to facilitate the activities of the Growing Together Project
 for purchase of equipment and sundry items for refurbishment of building
 to facilitate the activities of the Natural Progressions Project
 for the purchase of equipment
 for the purchase of musical equipment and provision of workshops for SPARC Music Project
 to provide additional organisational support for the development of an Enablement and Recovery Service
 for Greenspace development
 for the purchase of a defibrillator and new equipment
 for the Suicide Prevention project
 for the new Café Project
 to work with residents at risk of Covid 19
 for engagement with local Primary Care Network
 for community mental health support in partnership with Pure Innovations
 for the Young Person's Project
 for a therapy shed
 to create a physical and mental health wellbeing package to support people accessing secondary care for mental health conditions
 for the Counselling Service
 to support the Suicide Prevention project (Man About a Dog)
 for the Suicide Prevention project
 to provide therapeutic activities to patients in the Mental Health Unit at Stepping Hill Hospital

17. Analysis of net assets between funds

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	2,874	-	20,831	23,705
Cash at bank and in hand	92,934	-	101,646	194,580
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	(25,252)	-	7,753	(17,499)
Creditors of more than one year	-	-	-	-
Total	70,556	-	130,230	200,786

Previous reporting period

	Unrestricted funds	Designated funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022
	£	£	£	£
Tangible fixed assets	1,743	-	23,049	24,792
Cash at bank and in hand	64,043	-	119,238	183,281
Other net current assets/(liabilities)	(20,691)	-	(40,364)	(61,055)
Creditors of more than one year	-	-	-	-
Total	45,095	-	101,923	147,018

18. Financial Instruments

The charity only has financial assets and liabilities of a kind that qualify as basic financial instruments. Basic financial instruments are initially recognised on a transaction value and subsequently measured at their settlement value with the exception of bank loans which are subsequently measured at an amortised cost using the effective interest method.

STOCKPORT PROGRESS AND RECOVERY CENTRE

20

Income and Expenditure Account

	Year Ended 31st March 2023 £	Year Ended 31st March 2022 £
Income		
Donations	6,709	10,765
Restricted and Unrestricted grants:		
Stockport MBC Alliance Funding	180,000	183,325
Stockport MBC Suicide Prevention	-	11,000
Stockport Community Champions	-	11,650
Stockport MBC Adult Social Care	11,000	-
Stockport SMB Warm Spaces	1,000	-
10GM	36,900	-
Community Hub	10,208	-
The Screwfix Foundation	-	3,700
Big Lottery Fund	115,102	24,998
Lloyds CBT	16,557	10,220
Student Placement Fees	-	2,800
Training Income	-	150
Activities and Events	29,784	20,964
Investment Income	-	-
Other	1,075	5,044
Total Income	408,335	284,616
Expenditure		
Food and Drink	8,332	4,793
Events and Activities	-	8
Licences	309	418
Employment Costs	217,357	173,185
Training	2,678	2,897
Pensions	492	492
Staff Supervision	193	-
DBS Checks	186	214
Payroll Bureau Fees	1,882	1,702
Recruitment	154	-
Sparc4me Expenses	2,776	987
Sessional Workers	35,045	40,385
Equipment Leasing	2,962	2,625
Staff and Volunteer Expenses	2,116	1,118
Group Activities and Equipment	5,416	5,990
Growing Together Expenses	-	32
Inreach Sessions	2,729	2,953
Heat, Light & Water	12,918	7,496
Subscriptions	165	333
Equipment and Maintenance	1,117	1,878
Telephone	3,572	4,157
Computer Costs	5,242	6,388
Domestic Supplies	597	751
Website	21	0
Insurance	2,264	1755
Governance and Support Costs	39,506	38046
Post, Printing & Stationery	1,592	2224
Depreciation	2,999	2812
Sundry Expenses	1,947	1626
Total Expenditure	354,567	305,265
Surplus/(Deficit) for the Year	53,768	(20,649)

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of Stockport Progress and Recovery Centre

I report on the accounts of the company for the year ended 31st March 2023, which are set out on pages 8 to 19.

Respective responsibilities of trustees and examiner

The trustees (who are also the directors of the company for the purposes of company law) are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed. The charity is required by company law to prepare accrued accounts and I am qualified to undertake the examination by being a qualified member of The Association of Chartered Certified Accountants.

Having satisfied myself that the charity is not subject to audit under company law and is eligible for independent examination, it is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act ;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the general Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

Basis of independent examiner's report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the general Directions given by the Charity Commission. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from you as trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a 'true and fair view' and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

Independent examiner's statement

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- (1) which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements
- to keep accounting records in accordance with section 386 of the Companies Act 2006; and
 - to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records, comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the Companies Act 2006, and
 - with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities have not been met; or
- (2) to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

AM King FCCA *A.M. King*
Community Accountancy Service Ltd
The Grange, Pilgrim Drive
Beswick, Manchester, M11 3TQ

Date: 7th June 2023