

Annual Report, 2022-2023

It's fair to say that, although the Covid crisis now seems a somewhat distant memory, we are still experiencing some fallout from the pandemic. This was seen at the start of the year with some of our volunteers being more reluctant to participate in our activities than in the past. However, I feel we are now past that and are virtually back to normal. Having said that, "normal" doesn't mean it's easy recruiting volunteers – that remains a critical activity.

Organisations like ours depend on key individuals, not only those who complete the day-to-day tasks, but those who manage the delivery of our services and take on additional responsibilities. Our challenge this year will be to ensure we have backup for our Treasurer and other team leaders who enable us to provide our broad range of services.

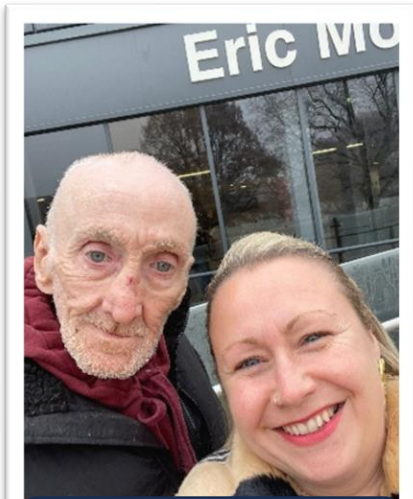
This year we changed our door-to-door collection away from December to spring. This was because of the intense activity around Christmas with Lights-Up (Santa's Sleigh and collection) and our Singalong. Having the door-to-door too was one activity too many. Holding it in spring was a success but on reflection we should avoid the Easter break in future. We are delighted that the Harpenden Rotary have generously agreed to make WCG one of their supported charities when holding their Classics on the Common event in July.

We are seeing an increase in the number of people being referred to us for support – this is across all activities from delivering transport for medical appointments to the provision of financial and personal support. This year we will again support pupils transitioning to secondary education by providing a stationery pack and scientific calculator.

Our Community Secretary **Bel Bluemel** personally meets individuals and families that contact us and are in need of help. These may have been referred by one of the dozen or so organisations we have built a relationship with. Many of our clients self-refer and for some it is more than the first time they've needed help.

Bel assesses each case and recommends how best we can help. This year has seen a growing need in the community because of the financial situation with families in particular struggling to make ends meet. As in the past, we help through the provision of food vouchers and purchasing household items such as beds, white goods, shoes, floor coverings, fuel bills and so on. We also have a demand for gardening support for those unable to manage – often the elderly or disabled. Unfortunately, this is one area we struggle to meet the growing need.

John Gladwin runs the Wheathampstead Dementia Wellbeing Group who are delighted to have joined the WCG this past year. The Group meets twice a month in the Memorial Hall except August and December (when they go out for a Xmas lunch). The group is made up of both carers and people with dementia and has a strong team of helpers. The first meeting in the month is café style and often has professional visitors to contribute to the demands on members. The second would normally have a speaker, music group, drama etc. Once a quarter the club goes out to lunch at a local pub, garden centre or places that can meet their needs. It has its own small Committee which settles the programme and the arrangements for each gathering.



Resident Tony befriended by Michelle

Caroline Cordery manages the Companionship Service which continues to offer support to lonely people across the village. At present there are 8 individuals matched with befrienders – but this number varies according to need and the availability of volunteers. All the befrienders do an amazing job, offering their time and support to a vulnerable or lonely person. They make a real difference to somebody's life often resulting in a genuine friendship across the generations. Caroline works closely with our sister group the Wheathampstead Friends.

Mary Walsh has taken over the management of our Transport Service with Dexter Ghelfi continuing to provide IT support. This year we've helped local residents with 444 lifts to medical appointments and the demand continues to grow. These lifts are mainly provided to elderly

residents going to Hertfordshire hospitals but also to doctors' surgeries, opticians and dentists.

We have 40 wonderful volunteer drivers with each driver able to volunteer for as few or as many journeys as they like. There is also an equally essential small team of 5 who take the calls and match drivers to the journeys.

Peter Woods leads our Thursday Club supported by a band of volunteers. The Thursday Club provides companionship and support to residents over 60, unable to access other activities without support, or need day to day care either from a carer or family member. The Club, which meets every Thursday, in the Mead Hall in East Lane in term time, provides friendship and entertainment, with lunch, tea and coffee. **Val Hughes** will be taking over from Peter next term. I'd like to thank Peter for all the hard work he has put into the club having taken over from David Law and restoring it to pre-Covid operation.

Louise Canfield with **Lucinda Pilkington** organises and runs our Santa's Sleigh collection and



the grotto held at the village's lights-up ceremony. This is an important source of revenue to the organisation, and we are grateful to Louise and all of her supporting volunteers for all the effort they put in at this very busy time of the year. Picture shows Santa preparing for a trip around the village. Louise also helps with our marketing along with **Morwenna Ellis**.

Our biggest problem remains finding volunteers. As with previous years, we still need new drivers for hospital visits, befrienders for lonely individuals or handymen to help an elderly person, this remains a major challenge. Everyone involved in the Community Group is a volunteer. So apart from those already mentioned, a special thanks also to my Vice-Chair, **Anne Howie**, our Secretary, **Sarah Millac** and our Treasurer, **Mike Greensmith** whose report follows below.

Here is a brief summary of our recent activities:

- The Provision of **financial assistance** for families in difficulty to help buy furniture and appliances, and support with household costs and school expenses. There was a 34% increase in financial assistance this year over last year.
- Supplying **120 Tesco food vouchers and 26 Foodbank vouchers** for those-unable to afford basic groceries.
- Helping 15 residents with their **gardening and home maintenance**
- Completing **396 return trips** to medical appointments.
- Through our volunteers, befriending **14 lonely or isolated residents**.
- Enabling **22 residents** unable to access other activities **to attend our Thursday Club**



The picture shows Sarah presenting a donation to MacIntyre home in the



Mike is shown presenting stationery packs to primary school leavers.

- Providing a **stationery pack** to every St Helen's and Beech Hyde school leaver in 2022.
- Supporting **Ukrainian refugees** by funding English language classes and providing school equipment.
- Funding a **meeting place** for Dementia and Mother and Toddler Groups.
- Purchasing a piece of **Exercise equipment** for use by both able bodied and disabled people at Wheathampstead's Chapel Gym.

- Organising a **monthly lunch club** for elderly residents.
- Funding the installation of the **defibrillator in the High Street**.
- **Supporting our two primary schools** with funds for essential projects.
- Organising **Santa's Grotto and 5 Sleigh Runs** in our village.

Finally, I would like to thank the residents of Wheathampstead for their financial support and special thanks to the volunteers who help us with our work. Without either, there would be individuals or families in the village who would suffer unnecessarily.

David Johnston (Chair)

Financial Summary for Financial Year 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023

Our financial position continues to remain very strong. Total funds at the end of the financial year were approaching £ 80,000. Despite record breaking levels of direct charitable expenditure, very successful fund-raising efforts resulted in a £ 5,170 gain in the year.

Income totalled £ 35,855 and reflected:

- The decision was made to change our Annual Appeal from Christmas to Spring and was very successful again when viewed with other donations made over the Christmas period.
- £ 6,682 was received from the transfer of the assets of Wheathampstead United Charities.
- Donations from Individuals were £ 5,684, included £ 3,115 received around Christmas that would previously have been part of the Annual Appeal totals.
- Gift Aid of £ 4,896 reflecting a return to a full fundraising programme.
- The Santa Sleigh runs raised £ 3,823 before Gift Aid, 20% up on 2021.
- With the end of lockdown, fundraising events took place once again, raising £ 2,103.

Expenditure of £ 27,858 included:

- £ 21,215 spent in the Direct support of clients and the community, a 62% increase. Many of the stories being these donations are covered elsewhere in this report.
- With the full fundraising programme, Fundraising costs rose to £ 1,140
- Expenditure in replacing the technology to support our Transport operations and Social media/marketing accounts for the majority of the £ 5,503

Numbers shown on next page.



Pupils making use of the Jigsaw teaching aide we funded for Beech Hyde school.

Wheathampstead Community Group

Financial Year 1st May 2022 to 30th April 2023

		Financial Year:	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2021/22</u>			Financial Year:	<u>2022/23</u>	<u>2021/22</u>
INCOME	Collections & Donations	Annual appeal	5,659	12,028	EXPENDITURE	Direct Charitable Expenditure	21,215	15,867	
		Santa Sleigh Collections	3,823	3,172		Fund raising costs	1,140	806	
		Collection box proceeds	135	259		Charity running costs	5,503	4,208	
		Donations from individuals	5,684	1,136		Total Expenditure	<u>27,858</u>	<u>20,881</u>	
		Client Contributions	2,304	1,594		Excess Income over expenditure	7,997	970	
		Donations from Organisations	6,917	79		Gain on Investment Valuation	(2,828)	2,706	
		Grants - from:	Wheathampstead Parish Council	-		900	Total Gain in Year	<u>£ 5,170</u>	<u>£ 3,676</u>
			Other	1,480		-			
		Events - Proceeds from:	Village Day Plant Stall	294		-			
			John Bunyan Charity Day	1,353		-			
		Carol Singalong	456	-					
		WTC Fund Raising	370	202					
		Other	-	115					
	Other Income	Gift Aid	4,896	547		ASSETS	Cash in Hand and at Bank	30,584	28,108
	Investment Income	2,484	1,819		Investments	48,962	46,269		
Total Income		<u>£ 35,855</u>	<u>£ 21,851</u>	Total Assets		<u>£ 79,547</u>	<u>£ 74,377</u>		

As at: 30-Apr-23 30-Apr-22

Mike Greensmith (Treasurer)