

Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre

Annual Report 2022-2023

Charity Number: 1148458

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Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre

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Chairpersons Report

Dear Friends

'There is strength in each of us'.

As I read through the Annual report from our Church Community Centre, I am continually impressed by the number of individuals whose combined contributions make our church community a working success.

There is a quiet altruism, a determination, a desire to help those in need, seeking nothing in return, this is fundamental to church and christian values and we know other faiths share this aim.

Our thanks extend to external organisations whose generosity is a mark of enlightenment and awareness of the problems our community centre faces. Unfortunately, we see the increase in Crisis Intervention rising at a disturbing rate. I urge you to examine these figures and in doing so you will see the extent of the area we serve.

We are a microcosm, however, we know that our problems can be seen on a national scale. If you pray, or even if you don't, please give a moment of your time, in thought or prayer, to thank those who deliver these services.

If you feel you can help us in any way, please do so, a prayer.....a thought.....

May God bless you and keep you.

Alderman John Lethbridge

Chairperson for the board of trustees

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The Management Committee have pleasure in presenting their report and the financial statements of the charity for the year ended March 2022.

Objectives and Activities

- a) Promote the benefit of the inhabitants of Woodhouse Close Estate and the Neighbourhood defined deprivation by Woodhouse Close Ward (hereinafter called the ('area of benefit') without distinction of sex, sexual orientation, race or of political, religious or other opinions, by associating together the said inhabitants and the local authorities, voluntary and other organisations in a common effort to advance education and to provide facilities in the interest of social welfare, with the objective of improving the conditions of life for the said inhabitants.
- b) Promote such other charitable purposes as may from time to time be determined.

We are a local charity situated in the middle of Woodhouse Close Central Ward within Bishop Auckland, which is statistically in the top 10% most deprived areas of England. Considering this level of socio-economic deprivation, community space, support and spirit is arguably more vital and contributes more significantly to the health and well being of our neighbourhood.

The purpose of Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre is to provide for all in the community, particularly those facing hardship or crisis situations and in need of welfare support.

We work alongside a myriad of organisations in a common effort to provide facilities, services and activities in the interest of social welfare, with the objective of improving quality of life and standards of living.

We offer activities and services for local people and the community based on need and interest.

We have a small dedicated staff team who understand and execute the ethos of the organisation throughout their work, understanding the value and importance of volunteers and supporting them to develop skills, abilities and aspirations that enables the centre and Church to continue supporting local people and the community.

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Foreword from Centre Manager

WOW!!!! What a year this has been, with so many people being supported through our Crisis Intervention Project (3519 in total, made up of 2245 adults and 1274 children, this shows an increase of 34.16% from last years analysis), partnerships with local supermarkets have increased—especially in relation to decreasing food waste and enabling local people and the community to have free fresh food that is too good to bin, continued support from local churches, charities, businesses and people, activities and services growing as a direct result of listening and responding to need and interest, fun filled holiday activities for children and families, a fabulous Queen’s Jubilee Celebration in partnership with Auckland Youth and Community Centre (AYCC), and successful funding allocated from various funders that has allowed the extending of staff hours and project/service longevity, such as Tudor Trust, Bishop Auckland and Shildon Area Action Partnership (BASH AAP), Scotto Trust and The National Lottery Community Fund.

There has been some very intensive and hard work carried out to gain funding and acquire a lease of the building to allow us to have our dream extension (to be built in the coming year) that will house all aspects of our Crisis Interventions food bank provision that will free up much needed space in the existing building.

Everyone across the country is finding it hard with the increase in fuel and food costs and as we are situated in an area consistently in the top 10% most deprived regions of the country we have seen a significant rise in numbers of those needing help and support on a daily basis, including the need for a warm space. **NEVER FEAR THOUGH**, we are all in the same boat and **WE WILL GET THROUGH THIS TOGETHER!!!**

Some highlights over the coming year to look forward to are:

- Building of extension
- Grief and Bereavement Support Group
- Death Café
- Becoming a Community Well-Being Hub in partnership with Well Being For Life
- Increased collaboration with Gaunless Gateway Big Local, The Auckland Project, Well Being For Life, AYCC, BASH AAP, Local Councillors and hopefully many others.

From the bottom of my heart I would like to say a huge thank you to all staff and volunteers for their support over the past year—**YOU** are what makes the charity continue to grow and thrive.

‘If someone listens, or stretches out a hand, or whispers a kind word of encouragement, or attempts to understand a lonely person, EXTRAORDINARY things begin to happen’

Lorietta Girzaitis’



Elaine from Sainsbury's donating refreshments to the warm room



One of many donations from LIDL

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Challenges, Progress, Achievements and Funding

2022-23 has been an amazing year in continuing to provide services and activities using a community development approach that has enabled our charity to develop and sustain inspiring projects that bring residents together and give people opportunities to socialise, learn and access key services. Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre (WHCCCC) serves a vital function in the community by providing a place to connect and socialise and offers unique and much needed and valued facilities.

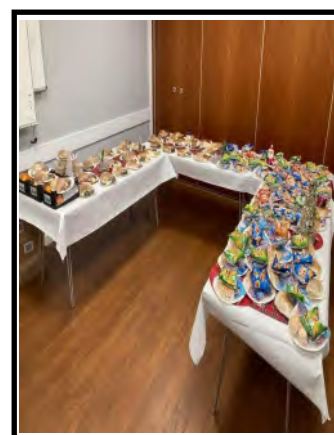
This years successes, challenges and good news:



Our new van is now in operation and is used by a dedicated team of volunteer drivers to collect food waste (that is too good to bin) from various local supermarkets as well as picking up donated household items for the Thrift Shop and collecting and dropping off donated items of large furniture to those we support through our Crisis Intervention Project.

We continue to increase our social media presence, putting out information for the local community and raising awareness of our work. Once again thank you to our social media genius Debbie.

Once again, we were successful in gaining funding from Durham County Councils Fun and Food programme which allowed us to provide free holiday activities with substantial packed lunches throughout the summer, October and Christmas holidays. We had trips to Edinburgh Zoo, Eureka Science Museum (Halifax), Big Sheep Little Cow (Bedale), Scarborough, Preston Park Museum and Butterfly World, Pumpkin Picking, Christmas Party and themed craft activities and even an old fashioned sports day.



The Day Club have very recently been successful in gaining funding from BASH AAP for salaries and resources to continue to provide social enrichment and meaningful ageing activities for older people. We have also listened and responded to need within the community and managed to obtain funding from BASH AAP to provide a Grief and Bereavement Support Group and Death Café, this is in its really early planning stages, so we are really looking forward to see how this grows over the coming year



We once again held a grand Christmas raffle in the centre raising £1,935. Thank you to Debbie for arranging the raffle and huge gratitude for all those who donated amazing prizes.

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Raising funds for all the salaries, activities and services is always a challenge, but we continue to try every avenue in order to continue our work for and with our communities and this hard work has paid off this year!!!! We have been successful in gaining the following funding:

- 3 years funding for the Centre Manager role from Tudor Trust that will enable the charity to continue to: manage and maintain existing projects, services and activities as well as develop more; increase community participation, engagement and involvement and focus on strengths and aspirations—listening to the needs and interests of the community and putting **PEOPLE** first, building upon what is working and continue to create an environment that invites co-operation and acceptance and building and keeping trust within the community.
- 2 years funding for our Crisis Intervention Worker for 40 hours per week from The National Lottery Community Fund (in partnership with AYCC as part of their building community resilience programme). The increase in hours will enable this role to support those who are facing financial hardship and crisis situations as well as allow the development of further partnership working with other support mechanisms and agencies within the area. This role will deal with intrinsic needs and issues affecting people using our Crisis Intervention Project and carry out project analysis and reports.
- 1 year funding for Day Club Co-ordinator from BASH AAP to continue to create, organise and communicate a varied programme of enriching social activities for older people and those who are at risk of social isolation. Empowering individuals and assisting with skills and abilities to allow participation in activities using a person centred approach and tailor activities to needs, interests and abilities. This will enable users to continue to develop and maintain friendships, reduce loneliness and isolation, increase health and well-being and ensure people feel included and valued in life.
- 1 year funding for Grief and Bereavement Support Worker to set up a grief and bereavement support group, this is a new project arising originally from the need and impact of the repercussions of Covid 19. This will allow those that have lost a loved one to share their struggles with others who have experienced a similar loss. It will help people process emotions through the 5 stages of grief and help focus on the positive aspects of their journey. The aim is to provide a safe and healing environment for people who are adjusting to a significant loss in their lives. This role will also set up a *Death Café* that will educate and help others become familiar with the end of life, reduce fear by talking openly about the inevitability of death and how talking about it can reduce the anxiety that surrounds it. The topic of death and dying is not an easy one, but this outlet can provide a path to objective and truthful conversations, especially helpful if you need to talk to children about death, or simply to seek comfort.
- £150,000 raised to enable us to build our dream extension that will house all food aspects of the Crisis Intervention Project. Grateful thanks to BASH AAP, Community Resilience Fund, The Auckland Project (through Garfield Weston) and very generous donations from people who fully believe in the charity's aims and objections.

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In June 2022 we held a very successful Queens Jubilee celebration in partnership with AYCC. Funding was granted through Believe Housing and Newcastle Building Society. Typical English weather on the day meant torrential rain whilst setting up gazebos, tables, chairs and activities, however, by the afternoon it was glorious sunshine and everyone said they had a wonderful day. It was great to see so many local people turn up to celebrate HER MAJESTY. Sadly later in the year she passed away but it was an honour to celebrate such a special day and it was great to collaborate with AYCC on this special event.



The annual Toy Appeal through the Church was a huge success and was supported by our Crisis Intervention Team. Very generous donations were received and we were able to provide over 200 children with bags of presents.



As a direct need due to the rising costs of energy and fuel the Centre Manager raised £1,500 to enable the Church to set up a warm room (housed in the community centre) that allowed people to come into the warmth, have refreshments, watch television, participate in activities, p.c. work or just to have company. This opened on October 12th and ran until the end of March 23. As of 13th March, 279 visits were made. Thank you to Community Foundation for funding this and to all the volunteers who supported by giving their time.

A HUGE THANK YOU TO ALL OUR SUPPORTERS

Lidl, Sainsburys and Elaine
 Morrisons
 Asda
 Tesco
 Spar
 Hathaway Roofing
 Currys Distribution Centre
 Spice Lounge
 St. Johns School
 Derrick and Susan
 Believe Housing

C.A.Group
 St. Wildrids School
 Cockton Hill Infants School
 Linthorpe Beds
 BA Ladies Football Club
 Local Churches
 St. Annes School
 The Tap and Tun
 Paul Simpson
 Spudfellas
 Equans

Aclet Close Nursery
 Lightfoots
 National Citizens Service
 BASH AAP
 Community Foundation
 Tudor Trust
 Numerous Donators
 The Auckland Project
 AYCC
 Gaunless Gateway
 St. Mary's and St. Wilfrids Church

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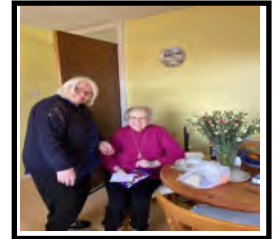
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Below is a summary of progress from each of our regular services and activities as well as a snap shot of some of the work relating to specific projects over the past year:

Meals on Wheels and Lunch Club

Our Meals on Wheels service continues to provide, hot, nutritious and low cost meals to those elderly people who are housebound/isolated or needing to maintain their independence on Tuesdays and Thursdays, £4.00 for a main and dessert. Our Lunch Club is now re-open on a Tuesday and Thursday at 12 noon.

This year we have catered **3912** main meals and **3112** desserts and our annual Christmas lunch catered for 100. Thank you once again to our 2 amazing cooks, Catherine and Victoria and our dedicated volunteer drivers, Tess, Alan, Janice, Liz, Tony and Geoff.



Thrift Shop

The Thrift Shop continues to play an integral part in supporting our Crisis Intervention Project and the local community to enable them to purchase essential household and clothing items at a very low cost.



Reducing Landfill and Food Waste

We continue to work in partnership with Morrisons, Sainsburys, Lidl, Asda, Tesco and Spar in their food waste scheme. We continue to be overwhelmed by the support given from our local supermarkets, donating surplus food (that is too good to bin) that would otherwise have gone to landfill.

Local people and the community continue to benefit from this scheme and have feedback to us how this has helped them to eke out their income or benefits over the weeks and with the rising cost of food and fuel this has been a godsend to

them.

The Auckland Project

We continue to work with the Auckland Project in relation to their focus on supporting Woodhouse Close estate regarding health and well being and using an arts focus to reduce mental health and confidence issues. They also support us by providing fresh fruit and vegetables that helps with our meals on wheels and lunch service as well as the local nursery, who pick up some of the fruit for the children.



The Creative Families group on a Monday afternoon continues to grow and the walking group on a Thursday morning.

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D. Kett toddler Group



A total of 378 visits have been made by children this year with numbers of adults attending increasing (sometimes 2 parents with a child or a grand parent). New members continue to join. It has been a lovely year, watching the group expand and grow back into a normal environment for children to interact with each other, without restrictions in place (forced by Covid 19 rules and guidelines). We have also seen an increase in the number of father's coming along to the group, without stigma attached, and joining in activities and play. It has been fantastic to see.

Day: Wednesday Time: 2.30p.m. to 2.30 p.m. Cost: £1.00 per session

Credit Union

Unfortunately we have had to close our satellite point. Covid greatly reduced the numbers of those visiting to deposit money and it wasn't deemed to be viable any longer. Thankyou to the volunteers for their support and commitment over the years, we greatly appreciate it.

Chooseday Tuesday

Day: Tuesday

Time: 9.30 a.m. to 1.00 p.m.

Cost: Donations Welcome

This group was a slow starter, but has now found it's feet and has grown steadily. 3 members have joined from our Thursday group so now benefit from twice weekly activities within the centre. Sue joined us as a volunteer last year and is a popular member of the group , bringing a diverse range of activities and games to sessions that are really fun.

Activities tend to include colouring sheets, quizzes, dominoes, card games, board games and craft activities. We have participated in armchair aerobics which was well received and a good laugh.

Laughter plays a huge part of this group, especially when the cards are out. At Christmas this group joined with the Thursday group for a visit to the Darlington Hippodrome to see the pantomime Peter Pan. Plans are underway for a day trip via train when the warmer weather arrives.

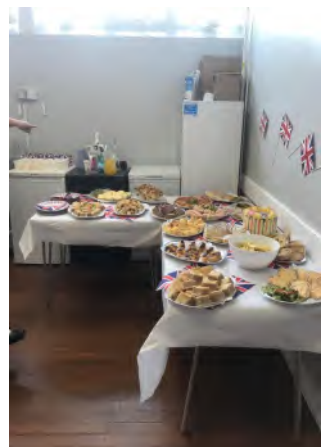
Day Club

Day: Thursday. Time: 9.30 a.m. to 2.30 p.m. Cost: £10.00 per session (includes lunch)

The Day Club continues to grow in numbers with a group of four who attend once per month which adds to the rich tapestry and diversity of the group. We have held a couple of themed days—a carnival and Hawaiian day— and a celebration for the Queen's Platinum Jubilee.



Making fridge magnets



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Trips out have included a day out to Redcar and the Darlington Hippodrome to see the pantomime Peter Pan.

The morning sessions have seen more activities introduced ranging from colouring, word searches, making fridge magnets, tree decorations and stone decorating. Not only are these activities and crafts fun, they help with cognitive and fine motor skills as well as developing friendships through encouraging and complimenting each other on creations.



Afternoons are filled with Prize Bingo which is a firm favourite with all members.

We also have a new volunteer on board who has settled in easily and works really well with Betty, welcome on board Iris.



Unfortunately, this past year has seen us lose 2 of our members. Evelyn has moved into a care home at Billy Row and Rita very sadly passed away, both were valued members and are greatly missed.

Volunteer Night

We were fortunate to gain £2,000, over a 3 year period, from The Tudor Trust to be put towards activities that would benefit and have a positive impact on staff, volunteer and trustees well being. Everyone agreed it would be good to have a Christmas Party and quiz night. A fun night was had by all who attended this bash at Bishop Auckland Football Club. Thank you to Roger for compiling and hosting the quiz and Jason Grimes—Ultimate Disco.



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Christmas Lunch



Once again we held a scrumptious Christmas Lunch for our Meals on Wheels customers, volunteers, trustees and users of the activities and services within the community centre. Elaine from Sainsbury's very kindly held a raffle in store (for staff) and donated the proceeds to this. Thank you so much Elaine for your continued support and kindness.



Barber—Mo

We now have a Barber coming into the centre every Tuesday from 10.00 a.m. to 2.00 p.m. offering free haircuts. This has been well received by local people. Thank you to Mo who has kindly given up his time to offer this to the community.

Donations and Support

Over the past year we have been overwhelmed by peoples' kind donations and support that has enabled us to continue to provide our much needed and valued activities and services., here are just a few!!!



AYCC young people donating food to our Crisis Intervention Project



CA Group—Evenwood donating food to our Crisis Intervention Project



Edith wanted to buy something for children who may not have anything—she picked sweets and toys



Charlotte from the Auckland Project donating fresh fruit and veg for Meals on Wheels and Lunch Club

Elaine from Sainsbury's donating refreshments to our Warm Room



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Donation from Hathaway Roofing for our Crisis Intervention Project



St. Wilfrid's Primary School



Etherley residents



Jackie and Joanne
Currys Distribution
Centre Spennymoor



Lidl Toy Appeal



Morrisons



Sainsbury's Food Bank
collection point



Lidl



Linthorpe Beds



Securicorp NE Ltd



SPAR



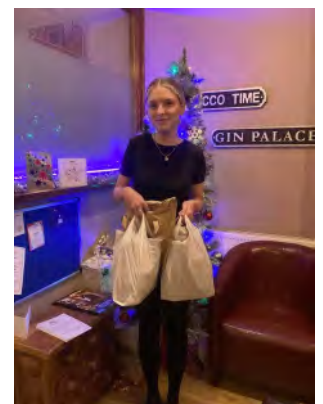
Sin Ann's Deli



Paul Simpson
Bishop Auckland Art & Nostalgia



Bishop Auckland Ladies
Football Club



Spice Lounge



Beyond Limits

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Woodhouse Art Group: Daisy Arts

"The primary benefit of practising any art, whether well or badly, is that it enables one's soul to grow." Kurt Vonnegut Jr.

When: Tuesday 6pm – 8pm

Cost: £3 per week

Ages: 18+

A weekly group for learning and enjoying the calmness that doing art brings. Delivery practitioners share their knowledge of different art techniques, guiding those attending to find their own unique style. Our sector is all about collaborating, and locally we work alongside a great number of organisations to support the provision of opportunities far-and-beyond these weekly 2-hour sessions; art exhibitions and encouraging entrepreneurship. And as Romero Britto says, *"Art is too important not to share."*

Daisy Arts contact: Jane Crawford

E: info@daisyarts.org

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM: [@daisyartscic](#)

www.daisyarts.org

W.A.S.H. Youth Theatre: Daisy Arts

"To have a place where young people can come & share ideas, work together as a team, form friendships and expand in knowledge, not only of the world around them but also of themselves as individuals."

When: Monday 6pm – 8pm

Cost: £2 per week

Ages: 10 – 16

"Youth Theatre is for everyone; it's about a community, it's about being supported by your peer group. You learn skills, not just acting but all the other sides needed for [life] I know if we get young people involved in the sector, it's going to pay dividends in the future" Sam Heughan

... the quote above says it all. Participation in cultural or art activities offer amazing experiences for those taking part and we are proud that we have been able to be able to offer a regular weekly session for over 25 years based at the heart of Woodhouse Close – our aim; to share our specific expertise of working with young people to provide regular weekly sessions to help in combating loneliness, anxiety and poor mental health: story development, improvisation, creative writing, music and performance. Through the development of a meaningful and fun delivery package, we provide a safe space where young people can develop skills, share thoughts and ideas, and share of themselves; an amazing experience for those taking part.

"We have a role, to help young people become like themselves instead of more like everyone else."

Daisy Arts contact: Jane Crawford

E: info@daisyarts.org

FACEBOOK & INSTAGRAM: [@daisyartscic](#)

www.daisyarts.org

Spotlight on a Volunteer



Tess is a local person from Toft Hill (about 3 miles from Woodhouse Close Church Community Centre). She came to us in May 2022 through the Gaunless Gateway Volunteer Broker service to help us make sandwiches for our fun and food activities for families through holiday periods.

Since then, Tess has become an invaluable member of the team, supporting our Meals on Wheels service by delivering meals and helping out in the kitchen to prepare food for meals on wheels and lunch club on a Tuesday and Thursday.

Tess spent 30 years as a civil servant and took early retirement to enjoy life.

When asked what she gets out of volunteering with us Tess said *'This is one of the friendliest places I have ever worked/volunteered. It has a strong sense of community where everyone is welcome and treated equally. I feel like I am a part of something and I can give back. After*

doing 2-3 jobs most of my life—THIS IS EASY!!!!



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Our Crisis Intervention Project (which includes food provision) supports in a wide variety of issues for those facing financial hardship and crisis situations. We do not expect any gratification and deal with each person on a case by case basis depending on the need and issue. Below are a few examples of our daily work.

Case Studies

1. A local young girl—19 years old had taken on responsibility of her 2 teenage siblings due to the family breakdown and associated issues. We initially supported her with food parcels, a family Christmas hamper and Christmas presents from an anonymous donor who really wanted to help the family. We supported in gaining a tenancy with Believe Housing, Thrift Shop for furniture and found avenues with funders to purchase a brand new double bed and carpets for the living and dining rooms. We also advised a relative on which benefits she could help her to apply for to top up her part time wages.
2. A local woman came in to access a food parcel as her pension was not enough to see her through the month, it soon became apparent that she was not in receipt of pension credits as someone had told her she was not entitled to it. We worked with her to complete the forms as she did not feel confident to complete them herself. After a couple of weeks, pension credit was given and backdated the maximum of 3 months. She knew it wasn't right not being able to receive the credits, however, she did not know what to do. She was overwhelmed with the support and the outcome and was truly grateful for our help.
3. A homeless man—due to his relationship breakdown, looked up on line somewhere he would be able to charge his mobile phone. He contacted us by email and we told him to come in and see us. He came every day for a week—staying all day—where we allowed him to charge his phone, access the internet and social media, be in the warmth and have a hot meal or sandwiches and hot drinks each day. We paid for a hotel for 1 night so he could have a good nights sleep and a shower. We gave him access to the washing machine and dryer for his clothes and paid for a phone top up. Over this week we worked tirelessly to eventually source a place at Cornerstone Housing (for homeless men) and paid the administration fee to secure the room. He told us *'I cant thank you enough for everything you have done, I don't think I would still be here if it wasn't for you'*.