

# Whalley Range Community Forum

## Annual Report 2020

Report compiled by Christine Ricard, November 2020

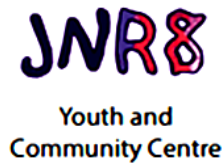


*Festive Feast at JNR8 December 2019*



*WRCF Health & Wellbeing and Age-friendly marquee at Celebrate*

*Elaine on International Older People's Day*



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**WRCF on Twitter** <http://tinyurl.com/8ywpocz>



WRCF Development Day 2019



Spreading the (positive) word: Older People's Day 2020

## CHAIRMAN'S REPORT [2019-2020]

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to all our officers, councillors, police, neighbourhood support officers, Manchester City Council, Forum workers etc who have helped the Forum to cope with the impact of COVID-19.

Pandemic crisis has impacted heavily on all our normal activities because our community centre has to close, and Forum workers have to work from home. We have to take up the challenge of adopting a new format to engage with residents and partners.

Forum workers worked very hard to secure funding to provide packages made up of sanitizers/directory [for important contacts] etc that might be needed by vulnerable people who were shielding. Residents in sheltered housing and older residents were appreciative of these packages.

Manchester City Council Neighbourhood Officers helped to facilitate provision for the packages.

We have to setup virtual meetings for the Forum and some of our partners.

Members of the wellbeing craft group have linked up via ZOOM.

JNR8 centre and offices have been made COVID safe after extensive assessment in compliance with government requirement.

All our funders have been very cooperative and understanding of the impact that the pandemic has forced to do.

Celebrate festival has been postponed till summer 2021.

We will continue to accept any new challenges that we face during this pandemic period.

Thanks,

**BILL WILLIAMS**  
[CHAIR]





Older People's Day



Clean and Safe packs



Liz at Festive Feast 2019

## **Report from Whalley Range Community Forum Development Worker**

It has been a difficult year for everyone in the voluntary sector - and the Forum workers have adapted to the many changes that the Covid-19 pandemic has brought about.

Our traditional face-to-face meetings and activities were suspended in February – and since then the focus has been on keeping connected and finding new ways to support residents, disseminate information and develop our partnership working.

To support our Whalley Range residents at the beginning of the pandemic, we successfully applied for funding from Forever Manchester, We Love Manchester and MCC to provide a free 'Clean and Safe' pack of non-food household cleaning products and personal care items for people in the community - carefully packed in line with safety guidance.

Some of our residents found it difficult to buy non-food essential items: maybe because they were a carer and shielding, maybe they couldn't go out to the shops as they were isolating, shielding or even too nervous to go shopping, some people struggled to pay for certain things – and some people were too embarrassed to ask people to get them personal items.

We worked with a range of partners to identify people who would benefit, with criteria loosely based around vulnerability, poverty, mental health issues, shielding, self-isolating.

Also, for people forced to live apart from friends and family who needed some extra care.

Packs were delivered safely by us, also via housing scheme managers, homeless support, schools, neighbours: more info in the report. We included a copy of the community directory which has phone numbers for a range of support: online version is at <https://goo.gl/w4ztS2>

See the short Clean & Safe Report here: <https://tinyurl.com/yypeozjj>



**Chorlton Bike Deliveries**

19 Jun •

Such a lovely collaboration yesterday! Whalley Range Community Forum has put together 'clean and safe packs' for residents receiving free cooked meals from [Tibetan Kitchen](#) and we were delighted to do the delivering!

[#neighbourshelpingneighbours](#)  
[#KindnessGoesViral](#)



Our current 3-year OMVCS core funding runs from April 2019-March 2021.

We have been given a short extension to June 2021 - and now need to look seriously at alternative sources of sustainable funding to continue our work.

We are very happy to have once again been chosen as a Co-op Local Community Cause: the amount of work we were able to achieve with the last round of £7623 was amazing!

See the Report here: <https://tinyurl.com/y2jljsal>

The Co-op payments will give us some leeway for planning a range of community led Covid-19 recovery activities.

Other grants we applied for and used to run our projects over the past year:

### **Manchester Wellbeing Fund**

Creative Conversations tutor and materials, laptops for community classes, yoga mats, funding for the 3<sup>rd</sup> edition of the Whalley Range Map (in progress), Time to Change mental health and wellbeing group: laptops for the group members.

### **OPeNS (Older People's Neighbourhood Support Fund) <https://tinyurl.com/y43ofuzq>**

As the result of the pandemic, it has been difficult to plan and facilitate the 2 year OPeNS projects - (WRCF are the lead organisation working in partnership with Chorlton - Chorlton Good Neighbours and Fallowfield's The Place - to address isolation and support marginalised groups) - which for Whalley Range are Alexandra Park Heritage Group, Asian Elders Men's Group, Health Pride on the Range, Food & Nutrition group and Young at Heart I.T classes. A couple of the groups have part-achieved their aims - and others have managed to put plans in place for when the groups can meet again. OMVCS funders have said the money can be carried over - so at least we have guaranteed funding for those projects.

For most organisations including the Forum and our Age-friendly Steering Group, Zoom has been a useful way to continue to hold group meetings.

Zoom has also been adapted by our communities – holding online exercise, art, and history sessions. Churches, Mosques and Temples have been holding services via Zoom: many of the older people who attend Manley Park church have been attending services – giving people who have moved out of the area the chance to re-join their friends.

The local community mutual aid groups and WhatsApp chat groups have been a fantastic way to get neighbours together to support and inform each other.

### **Admin Report November 2020**

Over the last 12 months I have continued to support the Forum worker with admin and the regular monitoring that we provide to our funders. Since March that has been difficult, but the funders have been flexible in their approach to the COVID crisis.

This has meant less or different monitoring for two reasons - either the class or event was unable to take place - and because we were using funds in a different way/the funder required different information. I have also been working from home for the vast majority of the last year, with only occasional trips to JNR8 needed. However even though I was working from home, I was kept busy...

In April 2020 we were meant to launch the OPeNS grant working with a diverse range of projects funded over 2 years from MCC and NHS Manchester CCG.

I created the documents for each organisation to sign and use, from payment schedule records and payment claims forms to partner declaration document. As this was the first time this fund was available all these had to be created from scratch. These were then completed by our partners. Creating template documents means I can change and adapt them for future uses.

### **Whalley Range Health and Wellbeing Map**

The aim of the map is to let people know what there is in Whalley Range to support them both physically and mentally. This is quite a long process as we ask for information to be sent to us to ensure the mapping of the document is correct. This has been hindered by the first lockdown as organisations were not always operating as they usually do. We are basing the layout and design of this 3rd map on the same design and layout of the second one. Just the information to be added will change or be updated.

### **Policies and Procedures**

During the initial part of lockdown, I took the opportunity to look at WRCF policies and procedures. I found that they were quite old and not very robust, so I created some new and robust ones, that should mean they will not have to be changed for the medium to long term. I have sent these to the current Chair for proposal and sign off at forum meeting.

### **Risk assessments**

These risk assessments are required before we can operate at JNR8. I created assessments for the following groups (which were approved in principle by the church council):

- Office use and general building usage.
- Afternoon tea group.
- Computer Class
- Creative conversations
- ESOL in the classroom and ESOL in the Hall
- Keep Fit, Yoga and Tai Chi classes
- Other language lessons

And for more general meetings:

- Meetings of more than 6 people
- Walk ins

Our classes are safe to open and we can start to use JNR8 again once we are allowed.

### **Zoom meetings**

As you are all aware, we are now holding meetings virtually to enable work to continue. This creates an amount of admin. We have been holding meetings for projects like OPeNS and the Whalley Range Health and Wellbeing Map, as well as regular meetings for Age friendly Whalley Range and Chorlton. We have also been able to support other local groups by hosting their zoom meetings. All in all, it has been a busy year!

*Nathalie Mullen*





Community Garden, MPMC/JNR8 grounds



### Hello Neighbours!



This is our **helpline** number for Cromwell Avenue, York Avenue and Milton Grove.

You can text/call this number to ask for support from this group, to join our WhatsApp chat group - or get involved in other ways.

Call the number above to join our friendly WhatsApp group to chat and get to know your neighbours!

“The Whalley Range Covid-19 mutual support group has at least 45 street groups set up across the whole of the ward. Over the past few months, residents have been spreading awareness of their street group via word of mouth and leafleting (huge thanks to WRCF for help spreading the word and for printing leaflets).

Every group is different, but lots are being used to:

- \*Share news and information
- \*Offer help and advice
- \*Plan street activities and events
- \*Help each other with errands and shopping
- \*Think about how to make the local area even nicer

Our street group on York/Cromwell/Milton has been used to organise a small community garden on the grounds of Manley Park Methodist church (with huge thanks to WRCF for advice, introductions, and funding). We are also thinking about how to make our streets safer from speeding” *Jack Hunter of Whalley Range Mutual Aid groups*

**A big concern to come out of the pandemic is the digital divide: many of our residents cannot afford or do not have skills to access the internet.**

Most information is now circulated via email or on Facebook/websites – and the WhatsApp groups as above. Luckily, the mutual aid groups promote the sharing of information between residents – including those without devices/internet access.

The Forum printed notes to post to neighbours with a dedicated mobile number set up by the WhatsApp Admins for support for people without internet access, displayed in windows.

Some of the attendees of the Forum daytime classes are socially isolated and/or have been shielding - and we spend many hours on phone calls reassuring and sharing information with people who find the latest covid-19 rules and news very confusing.

As part of our future ‘Covid recovery’ plans we will look at funding for reconditioned pre-loaded devices and more basic training to make sure people can connect with others.

A representative of our Age-friendly Steering Group is on the panel of the community steering group for the new LGBT affirmative extra care scheme on Russell Road in Whalley Range.

Read more here: <https://tinyurl.com/y4nhcwqu>

Prior to lockdown, we hosted the Whalley Range Dementia Action Group meetings at JNR8, and the group produced a fantastic booklet to support those living with and with experience of dementia. (Really happy our hall and lovely mural appears on the front page too!) The project was meant to launch just before lockdown but will hopefully happen in the new year. See the link to the booklet: <https://tinyurl.com/y58vm5d4>

We hope to welcome all our groups back as soon as we (safely) can: our admin support worker has produced risk assessments for each class/activity – and we have ordered Perspex screens as part of our work to make the building covid-secure. Also launched prior to the lockdown was Real Food Community Whalley Range: <https://tinyurl.com/y4yt4x7b> who will be accessing part of the OPeNS food and nutrition funding to run a project to tackle diabetes.

Be Well were using our building for one-to-one sessions with residents before the building closure - meetings were changed to phone support but hopefully return soon.

AFWR/CH Calendar project: WRCF/AF are distributing 75 Alexandra Park calendars (featuring winners of the park photography competition) to Chorlton Good Neighbours and Together Dementia Support. This continues on from the Alexandra Park Heritage Group OPeNS work with older isolated people which included giving out the Alexandra Park book to residents, as the 150-year celebration is on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.



Dear Chris

Thank you so much for helping us distribute the Alexandra Park Heritage books. It is a huge help to us. We have had so much support and help in achieving this from you and from the other local care groups. I hope that we can devise an imaginative project for 2021. With best wishes and thanks

Angela Downing Secretary of the Alexandra Park Heritage Group



**Age-friendly  
Whalley Range and Chorlton  
celebrate the energy, creativity,  
positivity, and resilience of  
older people - in Whalley Range,  
Chorlton and beyond!!**



### **Age-friendly projects, events, and social groups**

Towards the end of 2019 we held our traditional Festive Feast – bringing isolated people and friends together to enjoy a hot festive meal prepared by Good Mood Food.

Our weekly meetings continued leading up towards Christmas and our regular projects resumed - along with the launch of a new chair-based exercise group – but sadly, due to the Covid-19 pandemic, the classes are on hold for now.

To acknowledge and celebrate International Older People's Day on October 1<sup>st</sup> 2020, members of the age-friendly steering group and friends held a socially distanced timed walk, visiting some of the Whalley Range age-friendly benches – meeting others on the way to say hello. Photos were taken by the group and Mary Duncan.

We printed and laminated positive descriptions of growing older and wore them on our walk.

When we can meet in larger groups again, we will hold regular walks around Whalley Range: watch this space! We are also thrilled to have been given a few pairs of Nordic Walking poles by Manchester Wellbeing Group/Buzz.

**Cromwell Community Cuppa:** Our regular Wednesday over 50's social group had to close in February - which was devastating for many of the members who attend the group for weekly company, trips out – and just for a face to face chat over a cuppa.

We are keeping in contact – and 2 group members (Joyce and Sue) planned our age-friendly walk for Older People's day – as they have walked every day since the group closed.

In a socially distanced way of course!



**Vital Not  
Vulnerable!**



**Ageing Not  
Ancient**



**Experienced  
Not Elderly!**



**Positive Not  
Past-it!**



**Knowledgeable  
And Wise**

*(Positive placards worn on Older People's Day)*





*Time to Change: Tariq's birthday cake in Alex Park, social gathering and Magical Woodland sound and light show*

## **Health and Wellbeing activities**

The Forum is continuing to support the Time to Change mental health group, which continued to meet weekly at JNR8, providing volunteer led social activities, and bike repairs, and the preparing, cooking and eating of a vegetarian meal.

During the lock down the group has relied on weekly emails, and phone calls, meeting in the park for walks and food, and a Covid safe trip to a Magical Woodland for a sound and light show, and pizza.

The Forum has also been working with the Primary Care Partnership Neighbourhood team, as part of the Mental Health working group, and supporting local activities to tackle diabetes and encourage healthy eating (through the Real Food WR Project), and been instrumental in the development of the new ward map which for this third edition will have an emphasis on health and wellbeing.

Forum representatives have been active in the W/R Walk Ride group, encouraging people to reduce car use, encourage cycling and walking.

We have worked with the WR Climate Action Group, hosting their monthly meetings, and contributing to the discussions on Building Back Greener in Whalley Range, last winter saw us facilitating the planting of 5,000 trees in several places in Whalley Range.

The Celebrate festival day was postponed until June 2021, but we continued to post information about local artists and musicians, traders on the WRCF website and Celebrate Facebook page. <https://www.facebook.com/CelebrateFestivalWhalleyRange>

As a result of the growing emphasis on mental health, wellbeing and reducing social isolation we have continued to support and develop health and wellbeing activities through the Forum.





**Creative Conversations:** This a small group of local people aged 50 and over who come together as a supportive wellbeing group each week. Some members started attending the group as they were feeling isolated and lonely - and some members live with long-term health conditions. The aim of the weekly group is to provide a relaxed and informal supportive environment, an opportunity to meet with others over a cuppa, to chat, to learn and participate in a craft activity and to share lunch. The group have participated in craft fairs, raising funds and have been meeting via Zoom. They are working towards creating a record of their 'Covid journey' to share at the Celebrate festival 2020

## Future work of the Forum

We will continue to support and work in partnership with the local groups and service providers we have built relationships with during this past year to increase our resilience for stronger community and to work with residents to help them to access information about the pandemic and support them by addressing local priorities.

"Chris,

On behalf of the trustees at the church I would like to say to your committee how impressed we have been by the energy with which people have taken on the problems presented by the covid-19 virus. Not just the necessary paperwork ...

But welcoming and explaining if visitors come, Marking out the floor

Notices, photocopying, Networking, keeping up the flow of information... and giving the building a 'lived-in' feel.

The work with the WRYOA in sorting the many problems of splitting the office facilities was not easy but as the 'property person' I was gratified not to be involved in it so much!

I think you have had a formal thank you for the rent payment, but I can re-iterate.

The payments we have had in - and the Tibetan Kitchen joining us will help - will enable the church to stay afloat for at least a year and hopefully, with the new vaccine, we can look longer term.

Keep up the good work"

Russell Kirby (Property Steward)



WE'RE MAKING  
GREATER MANCHESTER  
**AGE-FRIENDLY**

2019



**MANCHESTER**  
CITY COUNCIL

**FOREVER MANCHESTER**

**For Funding and Support**