

Whalley Range Community Forum

Annual Report 2021

Report compiled by Christine Ricard, WRCF Development Worker



International Men's Day at JNR8

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WRCF on Twitter <https://twitter.com/WhalleyRangeorg> and <https://twitter.com/agefriendlywr>

Find us on Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/WhalleyRangeCommunityForum>

WHALLEY RANGE COMMUNITY FORUM



CHAIRMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT [2021-2022]

The last two years have been the most challenging years Whalley Range Community had to adjust to because of the impact of Covid-virus on all our activities.

Firstly, we had to undertake rigorous assessment to make our centre Covid virus compliant. Secondly, we had to ensure that our residents continue to benefit from our services, albeit through virtual contact [ZOOM], helped to set up what sap at different locations. Hence residents were able to share information.

Residents were encouraged to attend the centres to be vaccinated. Leaflets were distributed locally at all local shops, pharmacies and posted on our websites/Facebook page, with information to dispel false negative facts about vaccines as per social media.

Our Forum worker worked very hard to secure funding for packs containing materials that the residents could use to minimise chances of being infected and to prevent transmission of the virus and our Whalley Range Directory with information and contact details about various organisations that are able to offer their services to residents during the pandemic period. Residents were very appreciative of those packs especially those that were shielding and those in supported residential homes.

I must express our sincere gratitude to Manchester City Council and BUZZ for their contributions financially and physically for helping to make up the packs.

We were also able to continue our Age Friendly activities with our partners in Chorlton and Fallowfield by ensuring that we maintain our objectives of looking after the older people as expected through the OPeNS [older people network support] funding.

We held a Mini week-long Celebrate festival last year because of pandemic restrictions. We managed to distribute health and wellbeing and creative art packs locally to the residents and they were well appreciated. We also supported artists and musicians who were able to perform at various locations around Whalley Range including music performances for isolated residents and more people were involved than would have at one venue.

We are grateful to Manchester City Council for allowing us to alter the format of our services to cope with the impact of pandemic, and for extending the expiry date of our core funding and OPeNS funding.

The extension will allow us to sustain our services to reassure our workers that their services are appreciated, and their jobs are safe.

Our Mental Health and Wellbeing sub-group have been able retain their membership and have resumed physical meetings recently. This is highly commendable.

I must express our sincere gratitude to all partners, our councillors, Manchester City Council, neighbourhood officers, BUZZ et al. We missed the lack of contact with the police because they were not allowed to attend ZOOM meetings for security reasons.

We are looking forward to resumption of all activities this year.

Thanks,

BILL WILLIAMS. [CHAIR]



Time to Change Friday night freshly cooked meal together at JNR8/ Celebrate bike w/shop

Health and Wellbeing activities

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.

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, music, games, Tai Chi, 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, to provide information and contact.

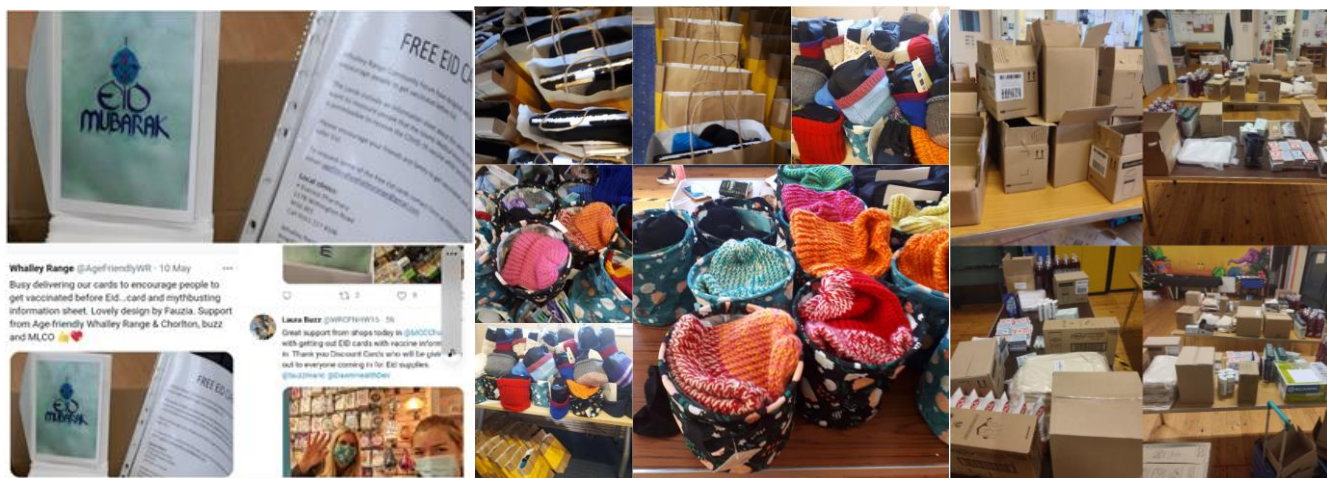
The Forum has also been working with the Primary Care Partnership Neighbourhood team, supporting local activities to tackle diabetes and encourage healthy eating (through the Real Food WR Project), and been instrumental in the development of the new ward map which for this third edition will have an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

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

We have worked with the WR Climate Action Group and have been included as a Build Back Greener anchor organisation.

The Celebrate festival day, postponed in 2021, was replaced with a week of ward wide street-based activities. A grant from the PCT allowed us to provide music in sheltered accommodation and outside the homes of people who were shielding, as well as running wellbeing groups. In addition, wellbeing, arts and greening packs were produced and distributed throughout the ward for those who were socially isolated

<https://www.facebook.com/CelebrateFestivalWhalleyRange>



Report from Whalley Range Community Forum Development Worker

For a second year we are holding our AGM during the Covid-19 pandemic - and this Annual Report reflects how the Forum has continued to adapt our services to enable us to continue to support our community.

We were unable to hold our annual Festive Feast meal for isolated residents at JNR8, at the end of 2020, but managed to provide essential welfare and wellbeing packs to the regular attendees - and to keep in touch with all our service users, via telephone calls and socially distanced visits.

The Mutual Aid WhatsApp groups continued to expand – and feedback from the group in the JNR8 area was that it was a lifeline to residents: sharing trusted information, exposing scams, shopping and support for isolated and shielding residents – and regular motivational messages between a diverse group of neighbours. In November 2021 members of the Cromwell Avenue, York Avenue and Milton Grove group near JNR8 were interviewed by a Reporter for the Guardian: see <https://tinyurl.com/mvnrrrekj>

Covid vaccination hesitancy was an issue - particularly amongst Whalley Range BAME groups - and at one of the Whalley Range Community Forum meetings, we discussed with the BMHC representative the possibility of a pop-up clinic in the BMHC grounds. The suggestion was fed back and discussed with the neighbourhood health team: the clinic went ahead and was very well attended. A women-only clinic at Whalley Range Cricket & Tennis Club was also a great success - as some women were reluctant to attend mixed clinics.

The Age-friendly Whalley Range & Chorlton steering group worked in partnership with buzz, NHS and MLCO - who had a small budget to promote the benefits of the vaccine. A local artist designed the front of an Eid greeting card which had a message inside recommending getting vaccinated for Eid to keep friends and family safe – and included a Covid vaccination myth-busting sheet from buzz. These beautifully designed cards were distributed throughout Whalley Range (and other Wards) during Ramadan, via Mosques, shops and community venues – and given out at the pop-up clinics.

Classes restarted at JNR8 in June 2021, following the rule of 6 guidelines, ventilation and mask wearing. Some of our older residents struggled with masks so we purchased clear visors which worked well for people with hearing challenges, as the visors made lip reading easier. We also purchased Perspex screens to divide the tables safely for some of the classes.

Forum Meetings

The Forum continued to meet bimonthly throughout 2021, via Zoom - with representatives of Whalley Range community groups, councillors, and trustees, to discuss local issues and hear reports and updates from groups. The WRCF Worker provided reports at the meetings, with news and updates about Forum activities, news and events.

Forum Events

We were restricted of course due to the pandemic during 2021 – but still managed to hold two successful events towards the end of the year.

On International Day of Older People Climate Action we planned a walk around 10 of the age-friendly benches route - with [messages on banners for COP26](#) - followed by a Covid-safe relaunch open day at JNR8 with stalls, flu jabs and health checks, chair exercise, music, art and Whalley Range Climate Action Group workshops - and lunch.

For International Men's Day on November 19th, we organised a range of health and wellbeing activities to address priorities around men's mental and physical health. The event featured stalls, including a men's support group, health checks, cancer awareness, Tai Chi and lunch. Positive outcomes as a direct result of the event: Directions for Men is looking to work with buzz in Chorlton where there will be a men's peer support group set up. Also, discussions are in place for buzz to look at dyslexia support in Whalley Range, Chorlton and other local areas.

[Answer Cancer](#) has entered a service level agreement with Directions for Men to provide information, talks and advice on all aspects of Cancer to Manchester men's groups.

Support for Residents and Groups

We managed to stretch out our funding to provide over 500 packs – for older residents who usually attend our Festive Feasts, the older Asian men's group, Celebrate wellbeing packs, to people who attend our mental health and social groups - and people who receive support from other organisations e.g. homelessness charities, foodbanks and hot meal providers for residents in need. We also worked in partnership with Barakah Food Aid to give 6 x £100 Asda vouchers to families who were struggling financially over the festive season.



International Men's Day



Age-friendly Celebrate bench signs




Term time classes and activities at JNR8 from Whalley Range Community Forum
Monday: Admin, Advice and Signposting – call 0161 881 3744
Tuesday
 10-12 Women's ESOL (female teachers) Women with low-level English skills
 10-12 Monthly Positive Living Group Call Chris on 0161 881 3744 to find out more
 2:15-3pm Chair-based Exercise Fitness for people with low mobility
Wednesday
 10-11am Keep Fit for Women only (female instructor)
 11:30 – 1:30pm Conversation & Crafts Over 50's crafts and wellbeing
 (Back soon! call 881 3744 for details)
 2-3pm Age-friendly Afternoon Tea Local older residents, chat, planning trips...and cake ☺
 12-1pm Foodbank vouchers distribution Suspended during Covid: contact Chris on 07751666150 for alternative access to foodbank
Thursday
 10-1pm Access to Basic Computing: Basic Computer classes: email, word processing, internet safety and lots more
 12-1:30 pm Conversation Spanish for beginners If interested, contact Kaz at kazkarm@yahoo.co.uk
 1:30 – 2:30 pm Tai Chi for mental and physical health – suitable for all ages and levels
Friday: Admin, Advice and Signposting – call 0161 881 3744
 6-8pm Time to Change Whalley Range Mental Wellbeing volunteer-led self-help group Call Carol on 0778855544 for more details
Whalley Range Community Forum Advice/signposting for local residents Call 0161 881 3744
Hate Crime 3rd Party Reporting – we can support you to report hate crime/incidents online.
 Call into JNR8 or phone Chris on 0161 881 3744
FREE CITY COUNCIL HATE CRIME REPORTING 08000 830007
 JNR8 Youth & Community Centre, 82 Cromwell Avenue, Whalley Range, M16 0BG
<https://whalleyrange.org> | Tel: 881 3744 | E: communityforumwhalleyrange@gmail.com
MORE CLASSES COMING SOON...Watch this space!!

Groups and Activities at JNR8

One of our Forum priorities is to support the health and wellbeing of our residents by offering a range of physical and mental health projects, events and activities.

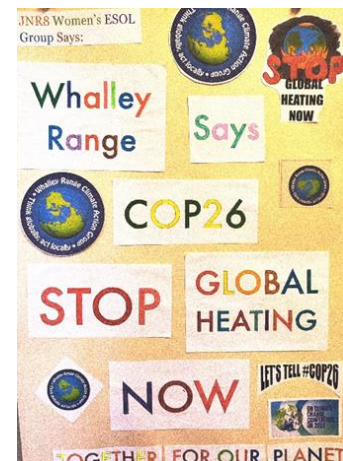
During 2021 our programme included the new Boost Resilience sessions: 4 x 5-week courses to improve mental health and self esteem for people who were finding it difficult to engage with their community again after long periods of isolation and shielding.

The courses were well attended by a diverse range of people - who now meet monthly.

Current Groups

- Cromwell Community Cuppa: an afternoon tea social group who meet on Wednesdays for a coffee and a chat and to plan trips out
- Young at Heart Computer Class: older learners who are beginners/improvers
- Creative conversations mental wellbeing craft group (back soon)
- Women's ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages)
- Women's Keep Fit aerobics
- Tai Chi for balance and mental/physical fitness
- Chair exercise for low mobility
- Spanish for beginners and improvers

Coming Soon: Asian Elders Men's Group, Jam Soup: play musical instruments/share lunch



Computer class attendees and COP26 environmental poster made by the ESOL group



Co-op giant Cheque given to the WRCF as a Co-op Local Community Fund cause (funds raised in store)

Funding

Our OMVCS core funding extension ran from April 2020-March 2021, with a short extension to June 2021. We are grateful to have now been offered a further year of funding up to March 2023 – subject to an Extension Proposal submission - and now need to look seriously at alternative sources of sustainable funding to continue our work.

We received our final total of funding from the Co-op Local Community Cause: the total amount was £3,718.12 - thanks to Co-op Members who supported us as their local cause. Some of the Co-op funding has already been used to support our fitness classes and to Time to Change towards their weekly cooking costs - and towards travel expenses to enable residents with low mobility to attend our community classes and activities. We are planning more resilience courses using the Co-op cause funding too.

Regular and new grants applied for and used to run projects over the past year:

OMVCS: WRCF running costs, salaries, and community engagement

Awards for All (carried over for Celebrate)

Buzz: Whalley Range Map, (The third edition of the map with a focus on health and wellbeing is due to be completed over the coming months).

Older People's Neighbourhood Support fund (OPeNS) - see below

MLCO Wellbeing Fund: Positivity resilience courses for mental wellbeing and Celebrate music wellbeing budget - for doorstep concerts for isolated/shielding residents.

Funding from an MCC Neighbourhood Investment Fund (NIF) enabled us to distribute Mental Health and wellbeing welfare packs, to people who had been in touch and signposted for support during the first year of the pandemic – and who had received essentials packs from the Clean and Safe project. We included a copy of the WRCF 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>

The Forum supports community groups who are not yet established to apply for funding which is held in the Forum bank account, and we are grateful to our Treasurer for his support. Grants held for other local community groups and projects during the year are: Ashville Community Garden, the groups who applied for small Celebrate grants, OPeNS projects, and the wellbeing packs.



Celebrate Connections: Whalley Range Celebrate Festival 12-19th June 2021

Unfortunately, after running an event every year since 1998 it wasn't possible to get together in 2020 – due of course to the Covid-19 pandemic.

As one of the main aims of Celebrate is to bring the community together - and as we approached the June 2021 relaxing of Covid-19 restrictions - the Celebrate steering group decided that in the absence of a festival day of participatory workshops, we would run a week-long Covid-safe programme of activities, workshops and events – across the whole of Whalley Range - to encourage more people to get involved. We sent invitations to get involved to all our Whalley Range community groups, artists and partners. Celebrate Connections included walks, workshops, arts and crafts, planting and growing, doorstep music performances and concerts, online workshops, artistic bench signs, banner making and bike repairs.

As part of the festival to get more people involved in organising projects with their neighbours they were supported to apply for a small grant to run a Celebrate week project...

- Alexandra Park Heritage Group: guided tours of Alexandra Park
- Trafalgar Court housing scheme: hanging baskets with Friends of Tibetan Kitchen
- Burford Road residents: Celebrate Street Party
- Tibetan Kitchen: Macramé workshops
- Time to Change: cookbook featuring Friday meal recipes
- Whiz: Family bike workshops at JNR8

We distributed hundreds of creative and wellbeing packs and made new friends of all ages...Read the full Celebrate Report here <https://tinyurl.com/yc8zkew4>





OPeNS (Older People's Neighbourhood Support Fund) <https://tinyurl.com/y43ofuzq>
Whalley Range, Chorlton and Fallowfield Partnership project objectives

To enable older people:

- To be more socially connected to family, friends, colleagues, neighbours and their local community
- To increase their skills and abilities to help themselves and others
- To make more use of local organisations and amenities, and to engage with residents in their local community of all ages

Chorlton - Chorlton Good Neighbours

Fallowfield - The Place at Platt Lane: Knit & Natter, Forever Young, Social Café and Language Group

Whalley Range: Alexandra Park Heritage Group, Asian Elders Men's Group, Health Pride on the Range, Food & Nutrition group, and Young at Heart I.T classes.

The groups have managed to achieve their objectives while adapting their projects during the pandemic. OMVCS funders allowed the funding to be carried over – and in addition, the funding for the projects has been extended for 6 months.

Real Food Community Whalley Range: <https://tinyurl.com/y4yt4x7b> ran a diabetes support programme as part of the OPeNS food and nutrition funding last year - and have since been funded by the NHS to run further courses.

Also, during Ramadan, WRCF arranged the distribution of hot freshly cooked meals each Saturday to the Asian Elders Men's OPeNS Group - as they were unable to meet during the lockdown period. This group will begin to meet again weekly at JNR8 in 2022.

The Age-friendly Whalley Range & Chorlton Steering group have continued to meet throughout the pandemic via Zoom, sharing information, feeding back issues of concern from older residents - and organising events - including socially distanced walks around the benches route and the International Day of Older Persons events. Thanks to buzz for their attendance and support at age-friendly meetings and events.



Objectives and Activities

The purposes of the Charity are to support the people who work and live in Whalley Range and local businesses. The main activities are in areas of teaching English, keep fit classes for women, assisting unemployed, annual Celebrate Festival, cookery cases, computer literacy classes, aged residents support, local area improvement, lobbying council, assisting in grant applications, fund holding for grants where applicants are ineligible, local newsletter and miscellaneous projects.

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.

The Charity furthers its charitable purposes for the public benefit through the activities detailed above.

A review of our achievements and performance: How our activities delivered public benefit

Covid risks and restrictions made this a difficult year in delivering all of our objectives and activities. Where circumstances allowed we continued to deliver in line with the above. Additionally, we repurposed deliverables to assist and benefit the community during the pandemic by providing on-line support where possible. To support the agedelderly, isolated and vulnerable we prepared and delivered support packages of essential goods and provided comfort and information in conversation and distanced companionship. Meetings face to face being against regulations and inadvisable meant the Charity organising and holding meetings on-line.

Financial Review

From new grants and repurposed grants, with grantor approval, we continued to support and deliver benefits for our community. Additionally, we became the lead organisation and fund holder for a significant new grant that not only supports community projects but also includes an element for staff administration time. This grant supports not only Whalley Range Community Forum projects but also a number of other local organisations with Whalley Range Community Forum being responsible for funds distribution and monitoring. Manchester City Council continued their substantial monetary support despite financial pressures thus showing their recognition of the value of the Charity. Given that the Charity was unable to hold the annual Celebrate Festival funds are being carried forward to support the next Celebrate Festival.

Reserves policy and going concern

The balance held in unrestricted reserves at 31st March 2021 was £20,445 (2020: £20,269) of which £20,273 (2020: £19,928) 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 six 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 are covered.

The Charity's main source of income is grants. Having regard to the level of reserves the trustees consider that it is appropriate to prepare the accounts on a going concern basis

**STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED
31ST MARCH 2021**

	Further Details	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2021 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2020 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	(3)	-	-	-	798
Charitable Activities	(4)	-	79,860	79,860	55,385
Other		568	-	568	476
Total		<u>568</u>	<u>79,860</u>	<u>80,428</u>	<u>56,659</u>
Expenditure on:					
Charitable Activities	(5)	392	57,111	57,503	62,248
Total		<u>392</u>	<u>57,111</u>	<u>57,503</u>	<u>62,248</u>
Net income/(expenditure)		176	22,749	22,925	(5,589)
Transfers between funds	(14)	-	-	-	-
Net movement in funds		<u>176</u>	<u>22,749</u>	<u>22,925</u>	<u>(5,589)</u>
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	(14)	20,269	14,076	34,345	39,934
Total funds carried forward	(14)	<u>20,445</u>	<u>36,825</u>	<u>57,270</u>	<u>34,345</u>

The statement of financial activities includes all gains and losses in the year. All incoming resources and resources expended derive from continuing activities.

The notes on pages 9 to 16 form part of these accounts.

“A great opportunity for women of all ages and sizes, to keep fit, mentally and physically, hope it continues for many, many more years ❤️”

“The class helps me get out of my house, not only do I have an energising workout which is good for my mental and physical being, I also meet friendly people from the community.”

“As a woman in her 70s I am finding that the exercise class is helping to maintain my mobility. Meeting the women who attend has enriched my life as they come from different backgrounds and are different ages.”

“Wednesdays classes are great! We all discuss different things before the class and learn new things. It's a social event and a chance to meet new people. Exercise keeps us fit and mobile as we get older. It's great for our mental wellbeing too. Miss the class when I don't make it 😊”

“In 2009 Chris asked me on a new venture at JNR8, which was a keep fit class for women only. I jumped at the offer with my eyes closed, we had 5 girls to begin with and they all lived down the road, that winter we had a blizzard and as I walked to the class I thought, no one is gonna be there! But hey I was wrong everyone was there, and we danced, we laughed, we exercise, and we talked about ourselves....and that has been how this class means for the community for all these years, I teach them how to be healthy and they teach me everything else.....it's all base in love, communication, respect and of course fun!” (BL, Fitness instructor)

Future work of the Forum

We will continue to support, work, and develop partnerships with the local groups and service providers we have built relationships with during the past 2 years. We aim to increase resilience for a stronger community, working with residents to address priorities around health and wellbeing, promote relevant consultations - and provide advice and access to trusted information about the pandemic and general issues.



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