# **Whalley Range Community Forum**

### **Annual Report 2022**



Music and Cookery at JNR8 2022

Registered Charity Number: 1171658 | Website: https://whalleyrange.org Email: communityforumwhalleyrange@gmail.com | agefriendlywhalleyrange@gmail.com Telephone: 0161 881 3744 JNR8 Youth & Community Centre, 82 Cromwell Avenue, Whalley Range, Manchester M16 0BG

#### CHAIRMAN'S REPORT [2022-2023]

Resumption of normal activities at the centre was difficult because of the impact of Covid-19 virus.

All our meetings were held via ZOOM.

Manchester City Council, Manchester Local Care Organisation and Buzz - [one of our partner organisations] - provided funding for the purchase of essential materials to be distributed to our residents including those living in secured accommodation.

Celebrate festival was well attended and enjoyed by the residents. Christmas dinner party was held at Trafalgar Court.

The Whalley Range Map has been completed and is ready for circulation, either as a link to print or hard copies are available from JNR8.

The impact of the rising cost of living crisis had to be minimised by setting up a Warm Hub at the centre for our residents for them to socialise in a warm environment for few hours on Fridays. Refreshments were provided and residents were offered free essentials including clothes, hot water bottles etc.

Our Forum worker had to cope with the high demand for Food Vouchers which our residents need to have, in order to collect food from the Food bank.

I must express my sincere gratitude to our Forum worker and Admin support worker for handling all the crises very well.

We are grateful to Manchester City Council for supporting the Forum morally and financially.

I wish to express my gratitude to all our officers, Buzz, police, and various organisations.

Thanks,

BILL WILLIAMS

[CHAIR]





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

This Report is from the period of March 2022 – March 2023

#### Addressing the Cost of living crisis: Funding and support

It has been a difficult year: during the pandemic most funding streams were focused on Covid support – and we successfully applied for a number of grants from Forever Manchester, We Love Manchester, MCC and NHS grants - to assist people who struggled financially - and wellbeing packs to support the effect of the pandemic on mental health. As we progressed into 2022 some of the funding opportunities reopened for general activities – but then the cost of living crisis meant we had to re-evaluate our priorities.

In 2022 we held a meeting at JNR8 between the Forum, MCC Neighbourhood officers and Manchester Local Care Organisation Neighbourhood Health Worker to discuss the impact of the cost of living crisis and how we could support our residents. As we are already registered as a foodbank voucher issuing partner with Manchester South Foodbank, we wanted to provide residents with wider support, and discussed production of a cost of living leaflet to deliver door to door to 6500 households in Whalley Range. We used a local delivery company and the Whalley Range Climate Action Group produced a leaflet about saving on energy costs – which was was delivered alongside our leaflet to 6500 across Whalley Range.

MCC organised a Cost of Living Roadshow at JNR8 - with stalls, e.g, Citizens Advice, housing, benefits and welfare support – and Covid/Flu jabs from the local pharmacy. Local organisations hosted stalls too – including the Whalley Range Climate Action Group, South and Central Manchester Tenants Union, Walk Ride Whalley Range – and of course noticeboards and information from Whalley Range Community Forum. Refreshments were provided with Soup and a roll, and hot and cold drinks.

In November 2022, to address the impact of the cost of living crisis we launched our 'Warm Hub' in parnership with the church, opening the centre on Fridays from 10am -1pm. As well as saving on heating costs, the weekly Warm Hub is a chance to have a chat, keep warm over tea and toast and collect a bag of toiletries and essentials.



#### Funding

In 2022 the WRCF reapplied for our 3-year core funding from MCC Our Manchester Voluntary and Community Sector funding. Although we were unsuccessful in the OMVCS bid we were offered a grant for 2 years From the funders: "The OMVCS process has highlighted that supporting community infrastructure across the city, particularly in the context of the current cost of living crisis, is a strategic priority. In response, the Supporting Communities Fund (SCF) has been developed. The SCF is a direct award scheme and your organisation has been identified as being eligible."

Obviously this is such a relief: the application has been submitted and we await the next steps.

#### Age-friendly Whalley Range & Chorlton

During the past year, it's been a mixture of supporting each other, coping with the effects of the pandemic on our mental health, dealing with the loss of loved ones and the after-effects of Covid - followed by the Cost-of-Living crisis. A lot to deal with - so, throughout 2022 and into the first months of 2023, we focused on keeping ourselves and others protected and supported – and restarted all of our activities, to bring people together again. Our Chair Exercise, Tai Chi/Qigong, Afternoon Tea and music group continue to grow in popularity, most of our JNR8 visitors attend more than one class:

"I don't know what I would have done without my JNR8 friends".

The Age-friendly Whalley Range & Chorlton Steering group continued to meet and plan each month – and in July we revised and updated our constitution – reflecting on the focus and priorities of the group, renaming the steering group the Age-friendly Whalley Range & Chorlton Network.

#### **Forum Meetings**

The Forum continued to meet bimonthly throughout 2022, via Zoom - with representatives of Whalley Range community groups, councillors, and trustees, to discuss local issues and hear reports and updates from groups, and at our AGM we reviewed and updated our Development Plan:

#### **Forum Events**

We started planning our first main event – a partnership with Chorlton Good Neighbours – in March 2022. The event was focused on older people and health: Spring into Action – and the first Celebrate festival day in Manley Park on June. We themed our Warm Hub sessions too – e.g. essential packs and information displays on International Mens Day, Carols at Christmas with the Church, Citizens Advice Energy Champion advice, Police surgery, Scam awareness and Lets Talk Clean Air workshop...more to come!

#### **Groups and Activities at JNR8**

A Forum priority is to support the health and wellbeing of our residents by offering a range of physical and mental health projects, events and activities. During 2022 our programme included more Boost Resilience sessions: 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. People self-referred to the course and 2 GP practice Focus Care Practitioners referred patients – who have benefited greatly: The courses were well attended by a diverse range of people - who are all invited to meet up monthly when the 5-week course is completed, to keep connected.



**Feedback from one of our participants:** "I was isolated and depressed, I was referred to JNR8 and very anxious but, I have found JNR8 to be warm, welcoming and supportive and it has helped me with my confidence and depression. I've gone from attending once a week to 3 times a week, I don't know where I would be without it. Thank you JNR8."

**New groups coming Soon:** Cookery, Leg Club, Computer classes, Arts & Craft for wellbeing – and the Celebrate festival!



#### 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 continues 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..

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, Real Health, and Eat Well, Get Well Projects).

The Forum has been instrumental in the development of the new ward map which, for this third edition has 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 work with the WR Climate Action Group hosting their monthly meetings, and contributing to their activities, particularly the Clean Air project, which has worked with groups across the ward to identify contributors to air pollution and actions that can be taken to reduce these and so improve health.

The Celebrate festival day, returned to Manley Park on June 11<sup>th</sup> with a theme of Celebrate Connections, and a day of workshops, information, music, bike repairs and general fun, preceded by workshops in schools and community venues and bringing many in our community together for the first time since the pandemic.



#### Celebrate 2022: Celebrate Life

Celebrate was a great success: it was apparent that people really wanted to come together and meet up face-toface again after the lockdowns and restrictions of the Covid Pandemic.

See the link to the Report below from Celebrate Coordinator Lotte Karlsen or you can request a hard copy by contacting the Forum office on 0161 881 3744

#### CELEBRATE FESTIVAL REPORT 2022 (1)

The Whalley Range Community Forum ran the popular age-friendly and health and wellbeing marquee again at Celebrate this year in June 2022

The combination of information boards, promoting local news and activities, leaflets and giveaways -e.g., canvas bags, resistance bands and exercise leaflets, light timers for security - were well visited and people took a lot of information away with them.

Information stalls and service providers included:

- Together Dementia Support and the Chorlton and Whalley Range Dementia Action Group
- Local pharmacy blood pressure and inhaler checks 3 people were advised to seek treatment for high blood pressure and results sent directly to their GP.
- Buzz wellbeing service hosted an information and advice stall with a draft preview of the new Whalley Range map for feedback. The 3<sup>rd</sup> edition has a focus on mental and physical wellbeing and the environment. There will also be an online brochure with more in-depth information about local groups and services.
- Eat Well, Get Well CIC/Public health collaboration charity shared sugar infographics and general information about eating a real whole food diet. They shared how this lifestyle has been shown to help with weight loss and in putting Diabetes (type 2) into remission.
- Chair exercise taster session for people with reduced mobility, and some Tai Chi combined with laughter Yoga!

We were happy to have our regular age-friendly photographer - Anthony Morris – as always capturing the atmosphere of the festival with his fantastic Celebrate photographs.

As a result of the information displayed in the marquee, the interactive sessions and engagement with people from the community we welcomed some new participants to our JNR8 sessions.

Contact <u>agefriendlywhalleyrange@gmail.com</u> to find out about our activities for older people and the Age-friendly Whalley Range and Chorlton network.

https://www.facebook.com/CelebrateFestivalWhalleyRange





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

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 include:

- Ashville Community Champions winter events,
- Whalley Range Women's Group trips and room hire for St Margaret's Centre,
- OPeNS projects,
- partnership between MCC, Walk Ride Whalley Range, Let's Talk Clean Air,
- Neighbour's groups alley greening
- Carlton Club gardening group

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

- Alexandra Park Heritage Group: "The OPeNS money has really helped us, as a heritage group, to stay focused during this difficult covid period. We have made useful contacts with park users both in the Afro Caribbean Care group and Together Dementia and with many park users who shared their stories of Carnival."
- JNR8 Food & Nutrition projects: The OPeNS funding for Food and Nutrition projects for the first year was allocated to Real Food Community Whalley Range who ran a diabetes support group. The year 2 (and 6-month extension) funding has enabled us to use our community kitchen to run cookery classes focused on the rising cost of living and looking at 5 ways to cook efficiently using low energy. The cooks used a slow cooker, a microwave, an air fryer, a pressure cooker and attended a session on preserving. Bread baking is next!
- Asian Elders Mens Group: The Men's Group were also isolated and unable to meet during the pandemic but we organised hot food during Ramadan to break the fast and welfare/wellbeing packs for the men to keep connected. They found their original meeting place was unavailable but with the OPeNS funding to pay for rent and refreshments the men have increased their meetings to twice a week at a local Mosque.
- JNR8 Over 50's Music Group: In April, the Over 50's JNR8 Music Group was launched. Some of the members were from a project called Brunswick Mill Music Group in Ancoats – which was an Ambition for Ageing/buzz project. Jane Goetzee who has been involved in many projects with us over the years and was working with the Royal Exchange Elders - had some funding to buy musical equipment. The mill was closed during the pandemic and then the building was put up for sale – so we offered to host the group at JNR8 - and it was agreed with buzz and the Elders that we transfer the instruments to our building. Since then, the group has attracted mostly older Whalley Range people – but also the original group and new members from various parts of Manchester. We were awarded a small buzz grant to start up the group – then repurposed some OPeNS funding to continue. The JNR8 Music group goes from strength to strength – and will hopefully perform at the Celebrate Festival in June!
- Teach Me I.T computer classes: Geoff kept the groups and other older people from the community connected at the start of the pandemic producing simple guides to Zoom, WhatsApp and Skype. The skills gained by the group were put into practice, enabling them to keep in touch with family and friends via email and live chat. Geoff also updated our computer leaflet for our wellbeing/wellness pack. Recovering from surgery, Geoff hopes to be back soon to produce a new copy of the I.T group newsletter 'Young at Heart'.



#### **Accounts and Finances**

#### WHALLEY RANGE COMMUNITY FORUM

#### STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2022

	Further Details	Unrestricted Funds £	Restricted Funds £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2022 £	Total Funds Year Ended 31st March 2021 £
Income from:					
Donations and legacies	(3)	2,903	-	2,903	-
Charitable Activities	(4)		73,027	73,027	79,860
Other		428	-	428	568
Total		3,331	73,027	76,358	80,428
Expenditure on: Charitable Activities Total	(5)	3,458 3,458	65,872 65,872	69,330 69,330	<u>57,503</u> 57,503
Net income/(expenditure)		(127)	7,155	7,028	22,925
Transfers between funds	(14)	-	-	•	-
Net movement in funds	2	(127)	7,155	7,028	22,925
Reconciliation of funds					
Total funds brought forward	(14)	20,445	36,825	57,270	34,345
Total funds carried forward	(14)	20,318	43,980	64,298	57,270

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.

Whalley Range Community Forum Accounts Extract Year End 31/3/2022 To view accounts in full visit WRCF on the Charity Commission website: <u>https://register-of-charities.charitycommission.gov.uk/charity-search/-/charity-details/5085926/accounts-and-annual-returns</u>

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#### **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 revieing 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

Following on from the restrictions and issues caused by the pandemic during the previous year, our priority has been on building back our communities.

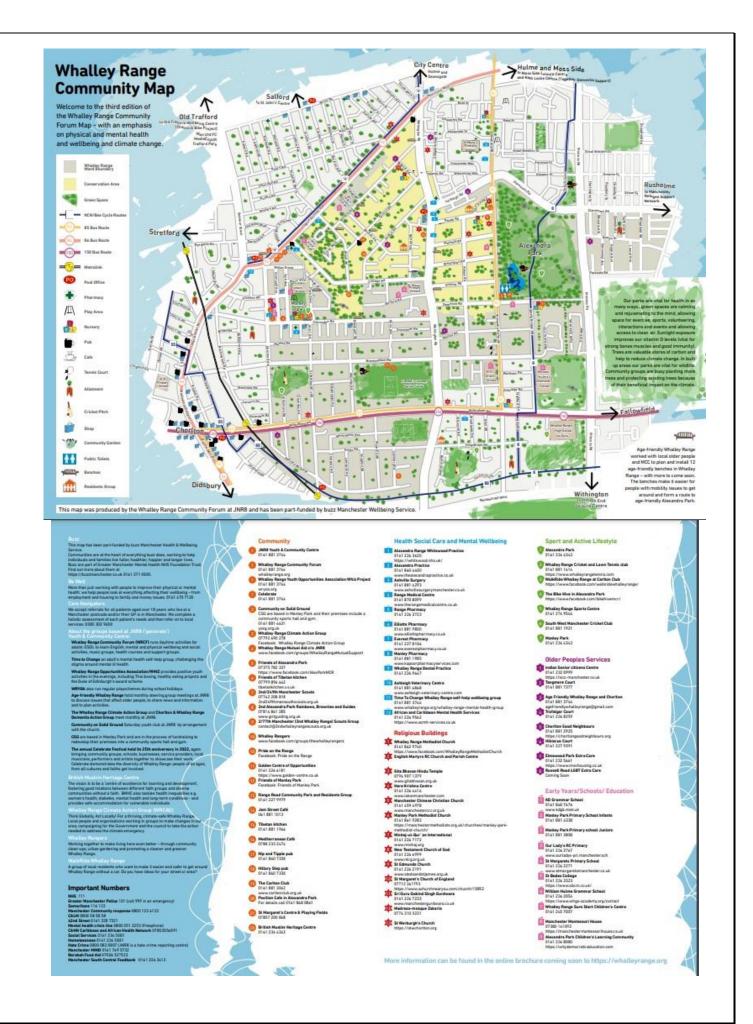
We focused on providing information, increasing attendance at community activities safely, supporting other community groups and strengthening our partnerships. We addressed some of the mental health effects of the pandemic in terms of isolation by organising confidence building and resilience courses and face to face work and events. There was an increase in requests from residents who wanted support to address their neglected health concerns and housing/benefits issues including reorganising cancelled hospital and GP appointments and benefit claims. Grants to build resilience and rebuild our communities allowed us to provide wellbeing packs and resources and to organise small events building up to our annual community festival, to encourage people living in our community to re-engage with others, and to feel confident enough to leave their homes and meet up socially.

#### **Financial Review**

Following the end of restrictions related to Covid we used funds carried forward to present the annual Celebrate Festival in Whalley Range after last year's cancellation. This represents a welcome return to some form of normality. Funds generally were reverted to original use following the agreed repurposing during Covid restrictions and face to face activities restarted. Despite the difficult situation created for charity funding WRCF successfully bid for sufficient new grants to continue activities. Particular appreciation goes to Manchester City Council who provided a large part of our funding in the period despite all the pressures on their finances.

#### **Reserves policy and going concern**

The balance held in unrestricted reserves at 31<sup>st</sup> March 2022 was £20,318 (2021: £20,445) all of which (2021: £20,273) 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.



# WHALLEY RANGE COMMUNITY FORUM

#### **Future work of the Forum**

We will continue to review our Development Plan, to work with residents and groups in the community to build resilience and encourage participation. We will strengthen our partnerships to support residents through difficult times, working with the foodbank and advice services to ensure residents can access relevant support. We will continue and expand our classes at JNR8 to improve mental and physical wellbeing with resilience and confidence building courses and fun exercise classes to improve health and mobility. We will also promote the work of the Forum and encourage more people to get involved and attend meetings.



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We were very sad to hear that our fantastic Age-friendly and Celebrate photographer – Anthony Morris - passed away in December. Anthony captured the essence and spirit of many of our events for over 10 years - and worked with the Buzz Chatty Cafe and Chorlton & Whalley Range Dementia Action Group, taking photos for the 10 Big Ideas dementia booklet. Anthony is sadly missed, both as a friendly face at JNR8, popping in for a brew – and as a great volunteer photographer at so many of our events.

Compiled by Christine Ricard March 2023