

TROWBRIDGE AREA COMMUNITY LINK SCHEME

Registered Charity Number 1075506

CHAIR'S AND TRUSTEES' ANNUAL REPORT 2021/2022

Thanks to Covid, this is the first AGM since 2019. Much has happened and there have been many changes to the way in which we carry out our day-to-day business. The AGM is the one opportunity I get to thank every one of our volunteers face-to-face for the often-demanding work of providing the service for the benefit of those that rely on the only door-to-door transport available in the area.

By far the biggest influence of TACLS business for the last 2 years has been Covid-19. Many of us volunteers have been caught in its steely grip causing challenges for us all. So far, I am lucky enough to have been spared but Jane, my wife, has only recently tested negative after 10 awful days.

As with previous years, the year 2021-22 has been an immensely challenging time for everybody and TACLS has to constantly adapt to the ever-changing conditions imposed by the pandemic. This has meant that our volunteers, particularly our drivers, have needed to take personal precautions to ensure not just their own safety but that of the clients too.

Over the last 2 years, a few of our drivers wisely stepped back from driving, considering the risk being too much to bear when taking into account their age. The shortfall in drivers, for a while, was a cause of some concern with Margaret, the Chief Coordinator. However, an influx of new volunteers has taken away much of that pressure. The first lockdown had resulted in few drivers being available for a while, at which time we were fortunate that the Nicola Blackmore's daughter stepped in temporarily to do a vast number of shopping trips for those clients that were unable to go to the shops themselves. Since then, this last year has seen things beginning to return almost to as it had been before the pandemic.

Many clients now take advantage of telephone consultations with their GPs which has seen some reduction in local trips to their GPs. The flu and covid vaccination programmes then saw an increase in requests to a bewildering variety of venues.

Another aspect of our service, driven by the pandemic, has been the collection of food parcels for those in need of them as a result of requests from the Trowbridge Foodstore, the CAB or from Social Security. We don't request donations from these clients as they are clearly under enough hardship and we are delighted to consider this as our contribution to a local charity. Last year's audit shows that we have conducted 71 food parcel collections from the food store and deliveries to the recipients.

A long-standing committee member, Doug Ross, has recently resigned from the committee, having been active throughout the life-time of TACLS. He had been instrumental in the development of the scheme since its inception in 1999 and had worked tirelessly throughout that period. Since interviewing me in 2012 to become a driver, then training me as a coordinator in 2015 to mentoring me as Chairperson in 2017, I feel he contributed much in my own development in TACLS. An incredibly tough act to follow, I do my best to live up to the high bar that he set. On behalf of the Committee, I offer my heartfelt thanks to Doug.

Sadly, we lost two of long-standing members since the last AGM, before the pandemic. Our very good friends, George Goodwin and Tony Buckingham passed away after long illnesses. They both gave many years of sterling service to TACLS and are stalwarts that are both sadly missed. Our thoughts go to their families.

Our overall financial situation in the year 2021 to 2022 has been fairly satisfactory and stable. We have broken even thanks despite the annual core funding donation the town council having been stopped. Some of our clients are generous with their donations and despite these being anonymous at the time the donations are handed to the driver, on opening the envelopes the money given sometimes significantly exceeds the expenses relative to the miles the trip had taken. Other donations have also benefitted the scheme during the year, including £150 from the family of the late Gordon Schwarz, a long-standing client.

Our treasurer, John, will give a much more detailed presentation of our financial status for 2021 to 22.

Our Clients. Our aim is simply to help people in need, in particular the elderly and those with disabilities, in a personal and helpful way. Our clients remain our priority, after all it's the reason we are providing this service after all, and it is primarily their door-to-door transport needs at a cost that is affordable for them, and with a much-reduced time because their driver is ready to take them home straight away.

Additionally, the Link driver may be the only person they've seen for a while, so it's not all about the driving, it's also about the social contact. As you know, the Link scheme isn't just about providing a driver to take the client to an appointment, we also offer shopping trips, drop-offs to clubs, picking up food packs from the food bank and even a befriending service for people who suffer from loneliness.

For clients going to hospital appointments, they're stressed enough with the appointment without having to worry about transport there and back again. It is worth saying the clients are probably stressed enough with forthcoming trips to hospitals, GP and dental appointments, so we take away their worry about

getting there.

Therefore, our volunteer drivers are pivotal in delivering our services to the clients and, at this difficult time of the pandemic, and as such, the Committee's responsibility is to provide all the support that the drivers require, including trying to overcome the random challenges that changes to hospital parking gives us.

As an aid to this support, last year we recruited an experienced person to provide Safeguarding guidance and Health and Safety advice to our drivers. Jane Boyce has extensive experience in both of these aspects and has been instrumental in providing some advice to Community First which has benefitted all of the Link schemes within the county of Wiltshire.

Whilst we encourage our clients to make their donations cover the cost of their trips, we do understand how some suffer from financial hardship and it is still important we continue to provide that service no matter their financial situation. We mustn't lose sight of the fact that we are a charity and the money placed in the envelope is a donation, not a charge. Contrary to the Good Practice Guide, which states that Link may operate a tariff system for long distance drives out of the county, we rarely actually do so, merely pointing out the amount it costs us to pay our drivers for the journey and, as such, their contribution towards us meeting those costs will be of great benefit to us.

Our Coordinators. The process is that a client phones the coordinator on the Link mobile number and requests the help of a volunteer driver with a car. The call is answered by the coordinator, who at that point is the hub of the Link Scheme. Is that all there is about it? We wish!

At times, I've answered the phone to people asking "I want a Link Taxi this afternoon" or "tomorrow morning". I then have to give them the news update! Generally, we request at least 48 hours' notice for local trip requests, even more for RUH and Bristol if we're lucky. It's not unusual for the coordinator to receive short notice requests, even at the very last minute. Food bank requests are virtually all made on the morning they are needed – the food bank closes at 12.30pm. Thank goodness for our drivers.

The pandemic has affected the scheme in such a way as to change many of the ways in which we operate. All drivers are now risk-assessed with the over-70s having a personalized risk assessment. All drivers agree to the **Protocol**, a document produced by our H&S representative and agreed by the committee, that supports the risk assessment and is primarily for reference by the coordinators when allocating drivers' tasks and for the drivers carrying out these tasks.

This last year has thankfully welcomed a new coordinator, Brett Davies, joining Margaret's team. He has taken to Coording like a duck to water and has quickly

settled in and has become a valuable member of the team.

Although we have enough coordinators to cover each day of the week, things can turn a bit pear-shaped when holidays and illnesses require individual coordinators to work two or even three days a week. In short, we are constantly looking for new coordinators and despite encouraging noises from interested people, we are not very successful.

I would like to give my thanks to all the coordinators for the often-long days sitting at the laptop and trying to keep cheerful when the phone rings.

Our Drivers. These stalwart volunteers deliver our transport services straight to our clients and it is thanks purely to their dedication and flexibility that our scheme can deliver this service as efficiently and effectively as we do. Our clients regularly state their appreciation and gratitude the quality service that our drivers provide.

I know that a couple of our drivers have also provided befriending and support services in addition to the trips that they carry out, which are often not recorded as separate tasks or even added to the overall number of hours recorded by our volunteers.

All the coordinators and members of the Committee will join me, I'm sure, in thanking our Drivers for their sterling efforts in covering the tasks that we pass on to them. Despite the pressure, they make our work as coordinators a pleasure.

Introduce you to the members of the Management Committee:

Our Management Committee is a cohesive team that, before the pandemic, met for a meeting every second month. They conduct a vast number of hours in the management of the scheme, including advising me of the problems and successes. Presently the committee is comprised of: -

The Chairperson, I took over the position 5 years ago and have been privileged to chair the committee meetings – and I still strive to get it right! I started off as a driver in 2012, had to stop due to health constraints so became a coordinator in 2015. I have been fortunate to experience most of the aspects of the Link scheme.

I would like to personally thank the Committee and Coordinators for being patient with me in these 5 years.

Both supporting me and, more importantly, supporting all of you, are:

Our Vice-Chair, Nicola Blackmore continues to demonstrate her valuable knowledge and experience. She was successful in recently persuading Wiltshire Council to secure the updated blue badges. She doggedly pursues the new

hospital parking requirements despite receiving conflicting messages from the parking wombles at the hospitals. She efficiently manages the responsibilities of Recruitment Volunteer Support Officer including the DBS aspects. Furthermore, because the Chairperson has appalling *internet* limitations at home, she has been representing the Scheme at the Community First Link Chairs' Zoom meetings. She has an extremely busy appointment in the Committee.

Our Secretary, Maureen Brent, often works tirelessly redirecting emails from me, taking the minutes at our AGM and bi-monthly committee meetings, when covid allows us to hold them, and writing out the excellent minutes of our meetings. She also fits in coordinating once a week and loads poor Chris, her husband, with driving tasks.

Our Chief Coordinator, Margaret Goodall, continues in the post as our Chief Coordinator while driving as a volunteer too. Her many years with the scheme make her the most ideal person to hold the post, with her innovative ideas that keep the business of coordinating ticking over. This year has seen her training Brett, not that much training was needed because he took to it like a duck to water. She is also in the enviable position of being able to load her husband, Peter, with driving tasks.

Our Treasurer, John Freeman, has carried out the job most efficiently and effectively for quite a few years, and despite being there in the background, he ensures that all expense payments are made promptly, client donations are banked regularly and proper records are maintained, his demanding post is pivotal in ensuring finances are managed and claims are paid promptly. From all outward appearances, he makes the job look easy especially when producing the mind-boggling annual spreadsheets. Furthermore, without his help, I would not be able to complete the annual Audit.

Our Deputy Treasurer, Mike Mortimer, ably supports John particularly on the cash counting and banking, and on payment of expenses. He also fits in occasional driving tasks, particularly with those at the foodbank.

Safeguarding and Health & Safety Representative, Jane Boyce. She was co-opted in 2020 as a committee member primarily as a direct result of the covid pandemic but she has developed the post since then. Before her retirement, her qualifications and appointment as the Health and Safety Services Manager at the RUH gave her immense knowledge and experience that she now puts to our benefit. She provides the valuable safeguarding advice and written policy and plans to provide training documentation in safeguarding. This was demonstrated with the recent implementation of the Risk Assessment process and distribution of personal protective equipment, in line with the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health Regulations. She has also recently become one of our team of drivers.

Our Events Officer, Sandra Fry arranges the big events that occur during the year, covid permitting, including the New Year lunch, our monthly coffee mornings and the occasional lunches. Unfortunately, the pandemic had put a stop to some of these activities but they are now being reinstated. She combines this post with that of coordinator, stepping in when one or more other coordinators, including yours truly, are away on holiday.

Our Other Committee Members:

Lynn Hitchcock is very busy as a driver and willingly helps with TACLS events as well as providing ideas and support at our meetings.

Brett Davies is a recent addition to our team of coordinators and he quickly settled into the task. As a new committee member, he is already proving to be pro-active.

Our System and Support Officer, Ena Watts, although not a member of our committee, she looks after our database and hardware matters relating to the laptop. Without her skill and expertise, we would struggle with our system. On behalf of the Committee, I would like to give her our appreciation and thanks.

Our Press and Publicity Officer, Sue Holt, although she's not actually a committee member because of her many other commitments, she continues to promote TACLS through letters and articles in the Wiltshire Times and has been instrumental over recent years in having leaflets and posters produced. So effective have they been that our coordinators often hear from new clients and to prospective volunteers that discovered us thanks to these leaflets and newspaper articles. Her efforts have greatly assisted Nicola in recruiting more volunteers. Her work to have the website developed for TACLS have given us wider publicity.

Aside from the Link volunteers, I would like to mention the external organisation that give us so much advice and support:

The Link Project Team –It is based with Community First in Devizes. Its website is www.wiltshirelink.org.uk.

Samantha Lloyd, at Community First, has been in regular contact with TACLS over a number of different aspects.

THANK YOU:

I would like to thank all members of TACLS who make my post as Chairman enjoyable and fulfilling.

Trowbridge Area Community Link Scheme

Receipts & Payments Report for the Year Ended 31st March 2022

	Year ended 31/03/2022	Year ended 31/03/2021
RECEIPTS		
Grants Received		
Town Council	1000	
Other Grants	0	0
Total Grants	1000	0
Donations		
Donations - Clients	28252	11099
Donations - Volunteer Drivers	0	0
Donations - Other	0	0
Total Donations	28252	11099
Other Income		
Fundraising	45	0
New Year Meal	652	0
Bank Interest (deposit a/c)	2	19
Total Other Income	699	19
Bequests	0	0
TOTAL RECEIPTS	29951	11118
PAYMENTS		
Volunteer Driver Expenses	25261	10223
Meetings & Events	161	0
Insurances	510	493
Telephone Expenses	263	264
Admin. - Postage, Printing and Stationery	407	200
COVID-19 expenses	18	259
Miscellaneous expenditure	30	47
Advertising and Publicity	37	37
Examiner's Fees and Accountancy	32	28
Bank Charges (current a/c)	183	69
New Year Meal	860	0
Equipment	130	20
TOTAL PAYMENTS	27892	11640
SURPLUS/(DEFICIT) for the year	2059	(522)

Trowbridge Area Community Link Scheme

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2022

	As at 31/03/2022		As at 31/03/2021	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Computer: Cost	2261		2261	
Computer: Cumulative depreciation	2260		2260	
		1		1
Equipment: Cost	545		545	
Equipment: Cumulative depreciation	544		544	
		1		1
NET FIXED ASSETS		2		2
CURRENT ASSETS				
Cash at Bank: COIF Deposit Account	16568		16566	
Cash at Bank: CAF Current Account	12144		10087	
Petty Cash	0		0	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		28712		26653
TOTAL ASSETS		28714		26655
Surplus/(Deficit) for Current Year		2059		(522)
BALANCE CARRIED FORWARD		28714		26655



Section A

Independent Examiner's Report

Report to the trustees/ members of

TROWBRIDGE AREA COMMUNITY LINK SCHEME

On accounts for the year ended

MARCH 2022

Charity no (if any)

1075506

Set out on pages

Remember to include the page numbers of additional sheets

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of the above charity ("the Trust") for the year ended

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

I report in respect of my examination of the Trust's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination, I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention (~~other than that disclosed below~~ *) in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the Act or
- the accounts do not accord with the accounting records

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

* Please delete the words in the brackets if they do not apply.

Signed:

M R Houghton

Date:

16/06/2022

Name:

MARTIN RICHARD HOUGHTON

Relevant professional qualification(s) or body (if any):

CHARTERED MANAGEMENT INSTITUTE

Address:

11 THE MAORLANDS

DEVIZES.


WILTSHIRE. SN10 5HF

Section B

Disclosure

Only complete if the examiner needs to highlight matters of concern (see CC32, Independent examination of charity accounts: directions and guidance for examiners).

Give here brief details of any items that the examiner wishes to disclose.

<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Region to the trustees</p> <p>Part of</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>On account for the year ended</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Set out on pages</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts for the year ended</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>As the chief officer of the Trust, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>I report to you on my examination of the Trust's accounts for the year ended 31st March 2018 and I am required to report to you on any matters that have arisen in connection with the accounts.</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>I have completed my examination. I confirm that in my opinion the accounts are true and fair and that the trustees have prepared the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 38(1) of the Act.</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>The accounts do not accord with the accounting records.</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>I have no concerns and have come to the conclusion that the accounts are true and fair and that the trustees have prepared the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 (the Act).</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Please check the words in the boxes if they do not apply.</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Signed: </p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Name: Martin Kumar</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Relay professional qualification(s) or body (if any): Chartered Management Institute</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>Address: 11 The Quadrant</p>
<p>10/10/2018</p> <p>March 2018</p>	<p>11 The Quadrant</p>