

Annual Report for the year ended March 31st 2023

The trustees of Wandsworth Community Association are pleased to submit their report and accounts for the period 1st April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

Achievements and Performance

This year dealt us a massive blow with the sudden death of an esteemed and main member of our team Alison Smith BEM, Alison was the backbone of Wandsworth and without her dedication and support Wandsworth would not be what it is today, she has left a massive hole which is going to be extremely difficult to fill. The committee have pulled together in this difficult time to ensure programmes continued and we keep Alisons legacy alive. Thankfully, before her passing Alisons hard work and dedication was acknowledged by being put forward and receiving a BEM. In September we commenced with a new winter programme of activities for all ages. As well as our usual weekly programme of social, recreational educational, physical and wrap around day care facility for local school children offering breakfast club and after school care. The income generated from facility hire helps us become more self-sufficient and less dependent on grants which are hard to source and difficult to successfully secure without a lot of voluntary hours wading through masses of paperwork. Our Duke of Edinburgh's Award programme has commenced again with twice weekly "in Centre" practical training sessions in map work, river navigation, route planning, cooking and campcraft allied by our volunteers. These training sessions continue throughout the winter months to prepare the young people for their practice and full expeditions canoeing on rivers Blackwater and Bann, Erne Shannon Canal and Lough Erne. In October we also commenced our "on water" canoe training at Castlewellan where we take the young people for full day training sessions to learn how to paddle and handle a canoe. During November we held a Child Protection course attended by adults from local Day Nurseries, Churches and our own members. The lantern workshops were also held in November working in conjunction with the Strand Arts Centre and we supported a neighbouring community group in preparation for their parade led by our drummers in December. Our own lantern parade was held in December along the Belmont Road to CS Lewis Square at the Arches with over 500 participants. Also in December we ran our usual parties and seniors Christmas Dinner. From January through to September we had a busy spell as we worked our way through all the various DotE practices and full expeditions. At this stage I must acknowledge the many hours given by my co-workers Connor Irvine and Christine Johnston to help me get all young people through. In all, this year, our volunteers have spent 80 hours on "in Centre" training nights through winter months training at Castlewellan and Lagansports. In June our Mums & Tots group held their end of year party. Throughout July we held community centre tidy ups to prepare the centre for our summer work and new term. The Wandsworth Intergenerational Project (WIP) for over 50's and young people is continued this year, with various outings and workshops. This project gives young people the opportunity to interact with local PSNI Neighbourhood Officers and gain accreditation towards their DoE award. The work at Wandsworth Community Association continues to be totally led by volunteers - people who get a real kick out of helping others achieve more of themselves and enjoy the resulting satisfaction, excitement and happiness it brings to our community. From DofE leaders to admin support, garden maintenance to minibus drivers, toddlers group catering to carnival drumming there are so many opportunities here at Wandsworth so if you want to be part of a team that gets a buzz out of enabling people of all ages to reach their potential do come on board as without our volunteers Wandsworth would not exist or be to do the work we achieve.