

Annual Review 2021 – 2022

Registered
Charity No.
297955



Redbourn Community Group

Connecting and
supporting the village



We believe passionately
that everyone in Redbourn
matters and our volunteers
strive constantly to support
our community in as many
practical ways as possible.

See inside for what we did and the difference we made!

Everyone matters



Everyone in Redbourn matters to us; we could argue that we're a bit like "Goldilocks", we want everything to be "just right". Our volunteers strive to support our community in so many ways and increasingly work in partnership with those who share our vision. I'm immensely proud of all our volunteers and applaud the work of everyone who takes on different roles, providing such variety of services in the community. I would like to thank each and every one of them.

This year's Annual Review casts a spotlight on some of the fantastic local efforts in Redbourn. Easing restrictions on Covid has allowed us to resume the programme of Outings that were in abeyance during the lockdowns. However we know that the coming year will introduce its own challenges, with the increase in the cost of living driven by fuel bills and food prices. We have worked hard to increase our links with other agencies, so we are now in a better position to signpost those in need of support. We have built strong links with Citizens Advice, James Marshall Foundation, St Albans Old People's Trust, The Surgery, St Albans & District Foodbank amongst others. This year we have given out more grants to individuals and families than ever before but were also successful in receiving more grants (see page 6).

Whatever our activity, our biggest problem is finding volunteers. Whether it's car drivers for hospital visits, couriers and minibus drivers for outings, administrators to take calls in the office, it remains a major challenge. Please will more of you join us and help us find willing people to continue Redbourn's wonderful legacy of volunteering?

Everyone involved in the Community Group deserves special thanks, especially all the Trustees and Claire-Louise, who contribute so much behind the scenes to ensure the charity is run according to Charity Commission best practice. We couldn't do it without you.

There have been changes in the board of Trustees this year. In April we co-opted **Simone Deans** who moved to Redbourn in 1994, fell in love with it and hopes never to leave. Having originally qualified as a solicitor, she has worked in the not-for-profit sector for most of her working life. When raising a young family, Simone started volunteering in the charity sector, including Oxfam, Citizens Advice and more local projects, so she is a great asset with much experience and expertise.

The Rev Canon Will Gibbs stepped down from the board in August. Over the last 12 years, he has been a fantastic, hands on, involved, interested and a hugely helpful Trustee. We wish him and his family much happiness and success for the future.

Jan Fenton joined the board three years ago. She had a long career in HR mostly in the pharmaceuticals industry. She is involved in HR matters, strategy, risk management and is the lead on guidance for Friendly Calls. She is stepping down from the board but is continuing as a volunteer; we will miss her hugely, her enthusiasm for the village and the community of Redbourn has been of great value to us, we thank her very much for her contribution. Thank you to everyone who strives to get it "just right".

Sally Bartlett

Sally Bartlett
Chair



Board of Trustees...



Ben Miller

Dennis Poole
Treasurer



Jan Fenton



Simone Deans



Catharine Pusey



James Regan



Peta Gunson
Vice Chair & Safeguarding Lead

Mobility has been a MOVING experience for Bernie!

In our younger years many of us probably take getting out and about for granted. Yet popping out to the shops or walking round the Common can become more of a challenge as we get older or at times when we're not so well.

One person who has been working hard to keep Redbourners mobile for more than 12 years is **Bernie Penny** who has been the Community Group's Mobility Equipment Coordinator and who is 'retiring' from the role this year.

In this role Bernie has looked after all the electric scooters, wheelchairs, rollators and other mobility items loaned out to people who live in the village. That involves everything from organising annual servicing of scooters, to ad hoc repairs, meeting with clients to assess what they need and briefing them on how to use the equipment as well as all the administration that is necessary for this valuable service.

Bernie's involvement with the Community Group started when he retired from teaching in 2009 and after a spell driving the minibus, he volunteered to take on the mobility equipment role. *"I wanted to help people in our community and, as I enjoy DIY, the idea of maintaining the mobility 'fleet' appealed to me,"* said Bernie.

"When I walk my dog around the village, I often see our equipment being used to help people walk their own dogs, get to the shops and pub, watch cricket, attend U3A meetings and visit friends. Users are understandably so pleased to be able to keep their lives as normal as possible when getting about becomes more of an issue for them."

12 years ago, we had two or three mobility scooters and up to 6 wheelchairs but today there are 11 scooters, 22 wheelchairs and 22 rollators to cater for the increasing demand in the village. People are often surprised that we loan these out free of charge, it's a fantastic local service and I've been very pleased to have been able to help so many people in the village during this time," he says.

Although Bernie is moving on from his role, he'll still be volunteering for the Community Group driving the minibus and taking people to hospital and doctors' appointments.



Welcome to Mike who takes over the MOVING role!

As a qualified car mechanic who has worked with companies such as Ford and Audi/VW and owned his own garage, **Mike Pryor** is ably qualified to take over the role of Mobility Equipment Coordinator from Bernie.

"I've always been around motors and mechanical equipment, so I was very pleased at the chance to help the Community Group keep local people moving," said Mike.

In only a year since he moved to Redbourn, Mike has thrown himself into village life, getting involved in Redbourn in Bloom, taking on an allotment and now taking over the role of Mobility Equipment Coordinator. He has already met several users of the equipment and is busy collecting, delivering and repairing items.

"I'm hoping to build on the great work Bernie has done and give the Community Group and its clients a really efficient, helpful and friendly service," says Mike.

Thanks to **Pam Calvert** for interviewing Bernie and Mike and writing this article.



Tribute to Peter 'Podge' Fox MBE 1939 – 2022

For me it is such a privilege to speak about my old friend Peter, or Podge as he preferred to be called; what a lovely man. And what a lovely family he had reason to be so proud of. And they are so proud of him and his achievements. No wonder he was popularly known as 'Mister Redbourn'.

But I am here to tell you, or remind you, of one of his greatest achievements. And that is none other than his forty-year association with Redbourn Care Group, an organisation that I believe to be, the greatest and best-known charity in the village. Evidence of which we can see most days of every week with the vision of the shiny white minibus (our 8th), affectionately known as the 'Care Bus' or the 'Happy Bus', picking up clients from all over the village, for that all important journey in the company of others.

I moved to live in Redbourn in 1998 and soon became involved as a volunteer with the Care Group. In my early years working with the Care Group as Street Contact, car driver and then minibus driver, I didn't really get to know Podge.

Then, around 2004, I got a message from him inviting me to one of the Group's weekly committee meetings where I was introduced to all the trustees. I quickly became involved with the various workings of the committee and was tasked by Podge to carry out a few projects to help modernise the charity to be fit for the new millennium. I thoroughly enjoyed working alongside Podge and I learned just how passionate and committed he was to the success of the charity.

By this time, Podge had been its chairman for 16 years and would go on to serve as Chairman for 20 years. In recognition of his sterling work, he was rightly honoured by the Queen with his MBE in 1999.

He had been instrumental in founding the Group in 1980, together with his sister-in-law, Daphne and others, basically to provide lifts to Redbourn residents who needed neighbourly help to attend medical appointments at doctors' surgeries and the many hospitals in the region.

Soon a small group of volunteers was formed, and this quickly grew to accommodate the increasing numbers of clients in need of the services offered. A little later on, Podge secured the first minibus donated to the Group to give housebound residents, and others living alone, the opportunity to enjoy outings in the company of others; by this means, many friendships were formed, and continue to be formed.

Working in close cooperation with Podge, I learned so much about the organisation. I also came to appreciate why the valuable work of the Care Group had been recognised by the Queen's Award for Voluntary Service, acknowledging the selfless work of all its volunteers as 'Unsung Heroes'.

Then in 2006, Podge persuaded me to become his Vice Chairman and to learn by his example until, in 2008 it was agreed that we would trade places to allow him time to pursue other local interests. Podge continued to serve as Vice Chair, to support me until his retirement from the Board of Trustees in 2014. At this time, another Redbourn worthy, none other than our old friend the late Cllr Tony Swendell, was our serving President, and so it was that the honorary title of Life President was bestowed upon Podge.

The charity that Podge moulded and nurtured, is now known as Redbourn Community Group to reflect the various ways in which all residents are now assisted to enhance their lives and connect with the local community.

That is the legacy for which Podge will always be remembered with love and affection.

Barry Welch, RCG President



What we did ...

- During the year we saw a 42% increase in volunteer car drivers enabling us to support more clients with transport needs (up from 26 to 37)
- Our volunteers took clients to medical appointments 463 times
- St Albans Hospital is our busiest location for medical appointments, followed by Luton and Dunstable, and then Watford General
- 17 wheelchairs are on short term loan and each month on average 5 are returned and loaned back out to new clients



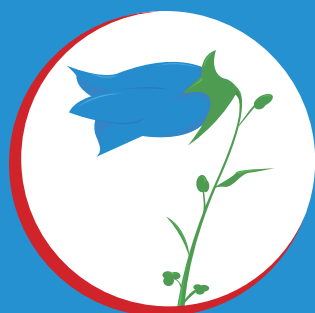
- We delivered on average 6 welcome packs each month to new Redbourn residents throughout the year
- 92% of the streets in Redbourn are covered by RCG Street Contact
- 541 passenger journeys were made in the minibus
- We average three outings a month for our clients and the most popular locations are Poplars Garden Centre, Stockwell Park and Whipsnade
- We took 48 passengers to Southend for the day thanks to a grant from Redbourn Co-op
- Our minibus went shopping 50 times for housebound clients throughout the year
- Our volunteers went out in their own cars 103 times to shop for housebound clients
- Our volunteers make on average 35 Friendly Calls a month to clients to provide friendship
- Our newly formed Litter Picking Team have been out and about on several occasions keeping Redbourn Tidy

"Thank you, thank you to all the wonderful volunteers who made our visit to Southend so great! Sunshine, great company, caring guidance, help when needed, plus fish and chips and ice-cream! How lucky we are to have you all to give us such a memorable day. Thank you from the bottom of my heart!"

Shirley

"To all the volunteers who have taken the time to organise the recent trip to Southend. It was a great day out, and so good to see so many happy smiling faces. I believe that everyone would agree the trip was a great success, and of course the weather was also great. Thank you all once again, and our thanks also go to the Co-op for their part in our enjoyment."

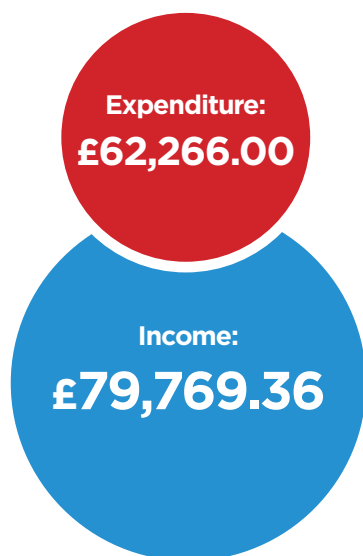
Sue and Harry



Our newly formed Harebell Club is working alongside and in support of Redbourn Community Group, organising social activities for current volunteers, former volunteers and beneficiaries. Its aim is to keep people connected to RCG through relevant, enjoyable and social events. The St George's Day Singalong Tea Party on 23 April was a great success and enjoyed by over 70 participants.

Finance Report

FOR THE YEAR ENDING 31 AUGUST 2022



Overview

During and since the pandemic RCG has initiated a wider range of activities than was the case in the past. This has inevitably added substantially to our costs, as you will see from the results opposite. However, we have been very successful in obtaining funding of over £25,000 from public bodies which has underwritten this additional expenditure. Also, a grant of over £8,000 was made to us by the Co-op in 2020 which, because of Covid, we have only recently begun spending on social activities and outings. The Co-op approved our delaying these until the pandemic eased this year. So the grant is in the bank, but not in this year's income. The essential point is that despite the difficult challenges and extra burdens of the last two years we have emerged with our finances not only intact, but actually improved.

Income

Our revenues have been buoyed not only by grant funding from several public bodies, but also by the wonderful generosity of the Redbourn community. The return of the Classics show last year also delivered a welcome boost of almost £8,000. The biggest single factor on the income side was, however, a residual bequest of over £18,000 from the estate of Harry Hobbs following an initial payment of over £46,000 in the previous year's accounts. At 31st August we had cash on hand totalling £236,017.40. A large part of those funds has been earmarked by the trustees either for long-term operational purposes (eg replacing the minibus), or to fulfil outstanding commitments to the donors who gave us grants. Our reserves are being carefully managed to ensure RCG has a solid financial base to maintain our activities for the foreseeable future.

Expenditure

As highlighted above, our core spending has been added to by the several new roles RCG has taken on, much of it triggered by the commitments attached to the grants we have received. Underlying operational costs, although rising in these inflationary times, are under control. Miscellaneous costs look high but a wide variety of small and varied expenditure is included here for convenience. Likewise, the grants we have made for need, and expenses for taxis, are covered by the terms of our grants from donors.

Redbourn Care Trust

The Trust has not yet been able to dissolve itself as intended because the transfer of the garage lease to RCG by Herts County Council is still awaited. However, the Trust has now donated back to us £104,551.70. RCG's original donation to RCT was £120,000 in 2016.

Until January this year the Trust processed all the repayments for shopping purchases by volunteers. Since then RCG has taken this over. Consequently, in line with Charity Commission rules, our final independently-examined accounts will include both these payments to volunteers and the card reader payments by clients. The statement opposite excludes these elements of our bank transactions. In summary, RCG is in a strong position for delivering services to the community in the coming year.

Dennis Poole
Treasurer

Income and Expenditure Statement

	2021-22	2020-21
INCOME		
Standing order donations	1,011.00	704.00
Donations	25,753.39	27,825.24
Boxes	349.84	173.77
Bequests / in memoriam	21,224.73	75,879.53
Herts CC mileage	292.50	0.00
Gift Aid tax refunds	4,328.02	3,762.63
Bank Interest	112.48	3.34
Redbourn PC Grant	5,000.00	5,000.00
Minibus operations	0.00	0.00
Other grants	21,697.40	4,615.00
	79,769.36	117,963.51
EXPENDITURE		
Bus servicing and repairs	519.70	236.54
Fuel costs	1,120.07	643.61
Minibus insurance	689.79	656.19
Garage costs	104.63	195.86
Extra bus hire	0.00	0.00
Other bus costs	506.49	399.70
Phone	490.42	506.63
General office expenses	1,168.78	4,354.70
Subscriptions and Fees	1,156.40	1,247.80
Public Liability Insurance	924.68	844.28
Office support	16,944.11	17,565.84
Miscellaneous costs	9,009.67	553.55
Scooter servicing	1,061.50	1,437.02
Other scooter costs	0.00	700.00
Training expenses	1,501.00	671.00
Marketing expenses	1,548.50	814.76
IT expenses	1,444.48	1,020.99
Driver mileage expenses	803.44	12.50
Grants	14,487.02	570.00
Village Hall	1,246.20	1,246.20
Shopping	135.53	0.00
Taxis	4,146.00	0.00
SADC Grant expenditure	0.00	2,085.00
Coop Grants expenditure	3,192.09	0.00
Bank charges	65.50	0.00
	62,266.00	35,762.17
NET FINANCIAL BALANCE	17,503.36	82,201.34
DONATED BY RCT	104,551.70	
REVISED NET FINANCIAL BALANCE	122,055.06	

SAFEGUARDING REPORT

*Presented by **Peta Gunson** – Vice Chair and Safeguarding Lead*

This financial year Redbourn Community Group has not referred any safeguarding concerns to Hertfordshire Adult Social Services. We have had potential concerns raised with us throughout the year, and we continue to monitor some of these and seek support when required.

We were fortunate to receive a training grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation for Safeguarding training. Twenty one volunteers were able to complete these online sessions in February 2022 and we thank everyone for their active participation. Our Adult Safeguarding Policy was updated in August 2022 which includes information about the types of abuse and guidelines for reporting. Click [here](#) for the updated policy. Please continue to be vigilant about safeguarding issues and if you have any concerns please contact Peta at Peta@redbourncrg.org.

The Safeguarding Policy and its application have been discussed and shared with all new volunteers during their induction, whether that was in person or virtually. All Office staff and those who support our remote working and call lines have been kept up to date with policy changes and other information as required. We will continue to update our volunteers with training on a regular basis.

Donations and Supporters



We are extremely grateful to every individual who has made a donation this financial year, your support is very much appreciated. We have been delighted to receive significant amounts from funeral collections, in particular we want to thank Norah Tart's family who have funded a series of trips to Bletchley Park.

Thanks also to those who contributed to collections at **The Cricketers** and **Hollybush Pubs**, **NISA** and **Crown Pharmacy**, to **Maxwell Taylor** who generously funded the Jazz Band at the Platinum Jubilee and a very special thanks to **Redbourn Autos** for their Minibus Support Package. Appreciation to **The Methodist Church** for hosting our partners **St Albans & District Foodbank** every Monday afternoon.

Massive thanks to the hardworking team who organise the **Redbourn Classics Motor Show and Village Fete** and to the many volunteers across the village who were involved in helping the event activities to run smoothly on the day. We were also delighted to receive the donation from the event which is the largest annual supporter of RCG. Thank you.

We do want to thank those who gave us grants to assist with provision of services and extra support: **Redbourn Parish Council**, **St Albans District Council**, **Hertfordshire Community Foundation**, **Redbourn Co-op**, **Community Development Action Hertfordshire** and **Harlow Health Centres Trust**.



Thanks to Redbourn based **Whiteing Design Partnership** for keeping prices to a minimum. The costs of both the design and printing of this 2022 Annual Review have been met by a donation given to cover this particular expenditure.



Redbourn Community Group

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Charity Number: 297955