



## **New Heights - Warren Farm Community Project**

### **Annual General Meeting Report**

**Monday, 7 June 2021**

Opening Prayer - Fr Thé-Quang Nguyen

1. **Apologies**
2. **Minutes of the last AGM held on 8 June 2020**
3. **Chair's report and key events of last year – Sean Flynn**

This has without doubt been the strangest year in the charity's history. It has required ingenuity on behalf of the staff and trustees. In particular I would like to thank Kerry Boffin, the Project Manager, for her leadership and vision during this difficult period. The outcome is that we have been able to continue to offer a wide range of services.

#### **Our aims, objectives, vision and activities**

Our charity's purposes are set out in the objects contained in the charity's trust deed.

#### **Charity Aim:**

To meet the needs of the most disadvantaged members of the Kingstanding community and to help to bring about social cohesion.

#### **OBJECTIVES**

1. To relieve elderly people resident in the Kingstanding community who are in need in any manner as the trustees may from time to time determine.
2. To act as a resource for young people living in the Kingstanding community by providing advice and assistance and organising programmes of physical, educational and other activities as a means of:
  - A. Advancing in life and helping young people by developing their skills, capacities and capabilities to enable them to participate in society as independent, mature and responsible individuals;
  - B. Advancing education;
  - C. Relieving unemployment;
  - D. Providing recreational and leisure time activity in the interests of social welfare for people living in the area of benefit who have need by reason of their youth, age, infirmity or disability, poverty or social and economic circumstances with a view to improving the conditions of life of such persons.
3. To advance the education of and preserve and protect the health of parents, particularly vulnerable parents
4. To or for such other charitable purposes as the trustees may from time to time determine.

## **Our Vision:**

New Heights Charity is “A welcoming oasis for the whole community, supporting personal improvement, stronger family life, community cohesion and those in the most need.”

## **Strategic Plan**

We continue to use and monitor the effectiveness of a 3-year development plan. The current 3-year Business and Implementation Plan, January 2020 – December 2022, was agreed by the Board on 10th December 2019. The Board considers this plan at each meeting and reviews progress made in the achievement of agreed objectives. It has proved to be a very useful tool.

## **This approach helps us to:-**

Ensure our activities remained forecast on our stated charity objects

Review policy & procedure and update documents & training

Establish & review implementation of a Business Plan and Business Implementation Plan January 2020 to December 2022.

We have referred to guidance contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing and planning our activities. In particular, the trustees consider how planned activities will contribute to meeting the aims and objectives.

Internal control risks are minimised by the implementation of procedures for authorisation of all transactions and projects. Procedures are in place to ensure compliance with health and safety of staff, volunteers, clients and visitors to the Centre. These procedures are periodically reviewed to ensure that they continue to meet the needs of charity.

## **How our activities deliver public benefit**

Our main activities and those who we try to help are described below. All our charitable activities focus on working with people in the Kingstanding Ward who are living in challenging circumstances.

To meet the charity's objectives we deliver a range of services including:

- Domestic Abuse Counselling Service
- Advice & Advocacy Service on Welfare, Disability, Housing & Employment
- ‘Community Café’ – including opportunities for volunteers to gain accredited qualifications
- Luncheon Club, Friendship Group, Activity & Craft groups, Be-friending & Tai Chi;
- Monthly Community Meals & Festival Celebrations (Christmas Day & Easter Sunday)
- ‘Lest we Forget’ Dementia Choir
- ‘Crackers’ Playgroups
- ‘Imagine’ Group – self-help support for people living with mental health difficulties
- New Heights Youth Forum
- Youth Social Action projects
- Running Group
- Exercise Groups for young people, adults and families
- Community Consultation

- Community and Educational Trips

**To enhance community support within the charity’s objectives we facilitate delivery of activities by partners including:**

- Education Support (Home Tutored group & Saturday support with Maths, English & IT);
- Scouts – Beaver (6 – 8 years), Cubs 8 – 10) & Scout Groups (10 – 14)
- Karate Groups
- Alcohol support meetings (AA & Al-Anon)
- Healthy Eating group

**Impact of Covid-19 Pandemic on delivery of services:**

In response to Risk Assessment requirements and government directives in response to the Covid-19 pandemic all group and face-to-face activities were suspended from 19th March 2019. New protocols and additional equipment was put in place to facilitate on-going remote delivery of Domestic Abuse Counselling and Advice & Advocacy Services.

Indirect contact (telephone, social media, zoom, etc.) was immediately initiated with all vulnerable people on the charity database, volunteers and local partner agencies to check how they were coping with Covid-19 lock-down restrictions, what arrangements they needed help with and how their needs might best be met going forward. This informed planning and in-direct delivery of activities to meet changed needs. They were altered to take account of vulnerable people’s changing circumstances and difficulties.

**To meet the charity’s objectives, responding to Covid-19 pandemic social distancing requirements, we deliver a range of services including:**

- Domestic Abuse Counselling Service (telephone, social media, zoom, WhyPay, etc.)
- Advice & Advocacy Service on Welfare, Disability, Housing & Employment
- Weekly Community Newsletters:
  - ‘Silver Bulletin’- older / disabled people
  - ‘Keeping you in the loop!’ - general newsletter
  - ‘Schools Out-take Action’ – younger people / families
- Telephone Befriending
- Group activities on Zoom / WhyPay:
  - Coffee, Chill & Chat
  - Bi weekly relaxation video
  - Book Club
  - ‘No-prize Bingo’
  - Art & craft, painting & origami
  - Quiz Club
- Cards of Kindness
- ‘Weekly Live chat’ on social media
- Weekly Community Meal / Christmas Day Festival Meal deliveries
- Support to children & families:
  - School Holiday ‘Youth Social Action’ activity packs
  - Toy library
  - Weekly children’s activity packs (under 5’s & school age children)
  - Story Book Bags

- Children's Community Meals every Tuesday & Thursday
- Book Gifting Service
- Story time on-line

### **Who used and benefited from our services?**

One of our strategies is to engage with other providers and help them reach their target beneficiaries. This has led us into strong partnerships with Crackers Family Forum, Kingstanding Thursday Club, Imagine (Mental Health Self Help Group), Alcoholics Anonymous, AI-anon, Armstrong Karate, Scouts movement, as well as many others. We offer them good meeting facilities, networks, promotion of their services and inter-agency contacts. In response to Covid-19 pandemic risk assessment requirements we were required to suspend room letting arrangements, which in turn had an impact on the charity's unrestricted earned income.

Through our own network of volunteers, newsletters, website, notice-boards, social media, referrals system and word of mouth, we are able to give our partners access to the people they wish to serve. We have also developed our partnership working approach, and now represented on key strategic boards including Birmingham North Local Community Safety Partnership Board, Birmingham North Domestic Abuse Forum and 'Spirit of Kingstanding' group.

We remain committed to delivering a range of services and activities which meet local needs. The Community Café building provides office facilities for BREATHE Advice & Advocacy and Domestic Abuse Counselling Services - both firmly funded. Other activities delivered by charity volunteers, supported by a small staff team, are delivered from both the Community Café and St. John's Centre. All of these initiatives allow us to meet people who might need direction to another service and to provide stronger community cohesion. There are thousands of people in the Kingstanding Ward who have benefitted from the services through New Heights Charity.

### **Outreach**

The outreach work of the charity provides support to vulnerable adults living in our community. In partnership with the St Vincent De Paul Society and Christ the King Parish approximately 80 people are visited at home, most of these are house-bound due to disability or illness. This service is provided by volunteers.

We offer a signposting service to other organisations that provide help and support to local people.

### **Financial review**

By prudent management and successful bidding for funds, the Charity is in a sound financial position.

Kerry Boffin (Project Manager) leads the team and deals with the financial issues in partnership with Mike Daly, one of the trustees.

Currently, there are no investments other than buildings with reserves sufficient to meet the current working capital requirements of the charity.

While there is a small income from the Cafe, our main source of regular unrestricted income continues to be from service providers who use our premises. This unrestricted income covers our buildings maintenance and running costs; however, it has been significantly impacted by suspension of group activities and rental arrangements due to the Covid-19 pandemic. Funding for staff comes from grant

making bodies. The fact that in the main services and activities are delivered by volunteers and we have few paid members of staff makes this more sustainable. When group activities were suspended in March 2020 contact was made with all charitable foundations who had provided grants. In all cases we were able to successfully negotiate extended project timeframes for suspended group activity projects.

We continue to seek new partners, and the services they provide, as a tough economic climate naturally causes more needs amongst the community we serve, especially in Kingstanding, an area of major deprivation.

### **Plans for the future**

The Charity Board strategy is to keep staffing costs at levels that will not impose financial and structural risks to the charity. This is complemented by a vision that places working in partnership as another key component in making our charity both effective and sustainable. While working with volunteers also has its challenges, this forms the third element in a vision that marries financial strategy with a vision for the community that invites the community to play a key part in solving its own problems. We continue to seek partnerships and opportunities for activities and support which will add to our vision for our area and the community.

### **Mr S Flynn - Trustee/Chairperson**

#### **Overview from Project Manager Kerry Boffin**

I would like to start by warmly welcoming everyone to our Annual Meeting.

Like many organisations, New Heights has faced many challenges over the last twelve months as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. Our buildings, usually filled with fun, laughter, friendship, compassion and care became still and silent as we were forced to close for the safety and welling of the local community.

With thanks to the hard work, commitment and dedication of the staff team, trustees, volunteers, and funders, we have been able to provide a local emergency response during unprecedented times. Strong partnerships with other local agencies has ensured the needs of the local community have remained paramount at a time when the most vulnerable are the hardest to reach.

Despite the challenges presented by the pandemic, it has never been more important to continue to strive to meet our charity objectives and support the emerging needs of the local community. Over the last twelve months we have worked tirelessly to meet the demanding needs of the voluntary sector in response to a National emergency, alongside continuing to deliver services to meet the long term needs of the community and commitments to our stakeholders.

We continue to strive to make our services accessible to the local community throughout national restrictions, whilst also planning in parallel a return to the delivery of face to face services and activities. Over the next year we will undoubtedly face ongoing challenges and feel the long term effects of the Covid-19 pandemic, however we will continue to strive to support the community and those most in need.

### **Service delivery in the last year:**

- BREATHE Welfare, advice & advocacy service (funded by Big Lottery Community Fund until August 2022)
- Domestic Abuse Counselling Service (funded by Big Lottery Community Fund until March 2023)
- Weekly newsletters to provide factual information, sign posting and advice during the Covid crisis
- Telephone befriending service
- Weekly virtual support sessions
- Educational activity packs for children & adults
- Free weekly community meals

Over the next year we aim to complete a community consultation to gain a better understanding of local needs post pandemic and identify appropriate funding sources to provide the services required.

I would like to take this opportunity to once again thank all of our staff, Trustees, volunteers and beneficiaries for your continued support. It has been a challenging twelve months, but with your support we continue to strive forward!

### **Current Board**



Sean Flynn (Chair/Trustee) *is a retired Head Teacher with three grown up children, and has been involved with New Heights since it started back in 2007. Sean states “It has been a privilege to be one of the Trustees. It has been great to see how the charity has developed over the years. It is wonderful to see New Heights making a difference in the community”.*



John McGorman (Vice Chair/Trustee/Fundraising) retired in 2014 having worked as a senior manager for Birmingham City Council, for 34 years, initially in Adult Services. John also has, 20 year’s experience working in Children’s Social Care and for the last 5 years managing an IT systems re-design programme. He enjoys working with a great team of Trustees, staff and volunteers. John states, “my role is to target funding opportunities so that we can continue to deliver high quality services for local residents”. In 2018 John received the British Citizens Award at a ceremony at the Palace of Westminster.



Susan Byrne (Trustee/Secretary) *has lived in Kingstanding for almost all of her life. She has worked in the fields of banking, finance, debt collection and financial distress. Susan is married, supports non-league football team Sutton Coldfield Town and enjoys reading. She was confirmed into the Catholic Church in December 1989 and became involved with the setting up of New Heights in 2006 through involvement with Christ the King*

*Church. She wanted to help local people empower themselves to have a better life. Susan has overseen some of the financial issues and processes of the charity and is currently involved in ensuring the charity's compliance with current legislation and polices.*



*Michael Daly (Trustee/Treasurer) an accountant by profession has worked in a variety of sectors but mainly in manufacturing and construction. Mike is now an independent business advisor offering support and advice to a wide range of businesses. As Treasurer of New Heights his responsibilities are to monitor the financial affairs of the charity, ensure that proper records are kept and keep the Board of Trustees informed on the financial health of the organisation. He lives in Sutton Coldfield and has been married for 39 years. His hobbies are football, travel and music.*



*Rev. Jack Foxall (Trustee/IT) was born in Kingstanding and brought up in Kingstanding and still lives close by. He attended Cranbourne Road Primary and King Edward, Aston Schools. He worked with GPO Telephones from 1967 to 2008. In 1993 he became a School Governor at Christ the King school and remained for 10 years. He joined the SVP in 2005 and then felt the calling to do more for the church and the community. In 2008 he began 4 years formation training and was ordained a Deacon in July 2012. He remains actively involved in supporting our Kingstanding community.*



*James Head (Trustee/Website) Actor, Singer & Author, James has worked extensively in the entertainment business for over thirty years. His role in New Heights is to help with the website and audio visual media. He also designed the website for Christ the King Church. He enjoys walking and watching movies - but not at the same time!*



*John Lowe (Trustee/Health and Safety) is a retired Local Government Officer. He has attended Christ the King Church for more than 10 years. John's interests include sport in general particularly soccer, cricket, golf, steam locomotives and model railways. John's main role is the Health and Safety of New Heights premises.*



Clare Gutteridge (Trustee) is married to husband Richard and have two amazing children, Kate and Jack. We have been fortunate to have had and continue to have a wonderful family life and it has been a joy to see them grow and become independent young adults. I have for the past 15 years worked in further education. During this time, I have worked with many people who have become hard to reach and marginalised within society, many of whom have been disenchanted with the education system have experienced barriers to learning and, in some instances, have no self-esteem and lack confidence to achieve in an educational establishment. I have vast experience of delivering and supporting young people and adults to achieve their aims and objectives with their chosen qualifications to set them on the right career pathway. I am, also a member of a Fostering Panel for Ikon fostering in Walsall, I am honoured that I am able to support those on both sides to become foster carers. I am also currently working with a council delivering stand-alone training to their registered foster carers, this gives me hands on experience of the expectations of foster carers. I am looking forward to bringing all of these skills in my role as a new trustee for New Heights and the people who use the services.



Nancy Makombe (Trustee) has a wealth of experience working with people from all walks of life, supporting people to live as independently as possible. She works in Finance and has also worked in the domiciliary care for over 10 years. Nancy has been living in Kingstanding for over 10 years and attending Christ the King Church. She is a mother of 2 a boy and girl and a huge F1 fan, also enjoying MotoGP and tennis.



Sandra Mageean has a wealth of experience supporting the local community. She is the chairperson for the Thursday Luncheon Club, where they have on average of 45 members per week participating in exercise, bingo, quizzes, birthday parties, and day outings. Sandra is also the leading volunteer for the monthly Community meals. Sandra particularly enjoys running the monthly gatherings, knowing she and her team of volunteers are providing an important service to the most vulnerable through a hot meal and company.

4. **Treasurer's report and accounts for the year ending 31 December 2020 (vote online) – Mike Daly**
5. **Any other Business**