



York Neighbours

...for that little bit of help

Annual Report of York Neighbours

October 2016-September 2017



Registered Charity No. 1163768

Foreword by Rachael Maskell, MP

As the years pass by, we worry about the days when we will not be able to get out to meet people, or perhaps don't know where to begin to go to make friends in our local community.

York Neighbours does a fantastic job in organising an army of volunteers who like nothing more than to reduce loneliness and social isolation. For the more practically minded this can involve help with those tasks around the house and home that are getting harder to do. Even a regular chat on the phone can help us to feel that little bit more like we belong.

No one should feel isolated or lonely, and yet, as the Jo Cox Commission into loneliness has shown, this is now one of the most prevalent issues in any town or city. It is, thankfully, an issue that we can solve through lots of little acts of kindness. Visiting someone can never be a chore, as the reward of listening and engaging with someone else is always so enriching.

Currently 1 million people in later life are lonely and 49% of people over the age of 75 now live on their own, and this is increasing. Therefore it is absolutely vital to look structurally at how we ensure that no-one feels isolated or alone, and that older people get the very help they need at a time when they need it.

York Neighbours is providing an absolutely vital response to the needs of the older residents in the city, and I wholly commend the work of all the volunteers in building real friendships with those most in need. York Neighbours really does highlight what a caring and compassionate society is all about.

Thank you.

Letter from the Chair

As we review our second year as a charity one word looms large for me – GRATITUDE. We have supported more than 350 people in various ways and this has only been possible through the generosity of so many both as individuals and through various organisations.

Firstly, there are those we help, our neighbours. It is only as they share their need and reveal their vulnerability (both difficult & yet generous) that we are able to reach out and serve them.

Then there is our wonderful group of volunteers who give themselves, their time and their skills together with their willingness to get alongside the isolated and those in need in our communities.

They, of course, need to be trained, organised, supported and supervised by our staff. At the start of the year our full time coordinator, Rachael Armstrong moved on and was succeeded by Helen Aitchison, who, with Sarah Wallis as assistant coordinator, showing compassion and care, coped so well with the increasing demands on the service. They have been supported in the office by some very able volunteers.

Overseeing all this we have a great group of trustees bringing different skills and availability to bear on a demanding role. They give themselves unstintingly and without them, as with everyone mentioned above, we could not have achieved what we have. The trustees are particularly grateful to Wendy Smart who is on a well-deserved sabbatical. Her commitment to and part in the birthing of the vision for this work and her single minded involvement in the struggle and growth of the work is exemplary.

All this couldn't be possible without the generous support of so many, either in kind or by financial support and we are really grateful. We are mindful of the need for continuing and growing support in the face of increasing numbers of elderly neighbours and reducing resources available to our local authority.

Throughout this journey we have been aware of God's provision. Without Him this would not have started. We can only give what we have been given. We, as trustees, staff, volunteers, neighbours and supporters are so grateful for all that we are privileged to receive, to do and to give. THANK YOU.

Walter Stockdale

York Neighbours Report of the Board of Trustees

Reference and Administrative Information

Charity name: York Neighbours

Charity Registration Number: 1163768

Contact Details

Registered address: The Raylor Centre, James Street, York, YO10 3DW

Website: www.yorkneighbours.org.uk

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Tel: 01904 891627

Board of Trustees

Dr. Walter Stockdale (Chair)

Paul Luxton (Treasurer)

Rachel Thistlewood

David Casswell

Lis Ramage

Wendy Smart

Tessa Denbeigh

Caroline Wilson - appointed October 2017

Mel Griggs - resigned 22nd January 2017

Principal Bankers

CAF Bank Limited, 25 Kings Hill Avenue, Kings Hill, West Malling, Kent, ME19 4TD

Reserves Policy

The policy of York Neighbours is to hold an amount of reserves equal to the average expenditure over a six month period and for this amount and the financial risks of the charity to be reviewed every six months.

Structure, Governance and Management

York Neighbours is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

Each member of our Board of Trustees brings specific areas of expertise to the task of supporting York people aged over 65 within their own home, which gives us a detailed knowledge of the statutory framework of working with vulnerable people. It also provides us with excellent access to other agencies in the same field.

The experience of Board members – including Age UK York, safeguarding and social work, general practice, management of voluntary organisations, IT, community care, welfare benefits and law– means we are well-equipped to deliver and develop our work.

The Board meets monthly to set objectives and policy and to oversee our work, with most Trustees also acting as hands on volunteers, enhancing their understanding of the nature of our work.

Objectives and Aims

The purpose of York Neighbours is to reduce social isolation for people over the age of 65 within the City of York and to support them in retaining their independence in their own home.

Our aim is to complement, not duplicate, other services- so we will refer on/signpost to other provision where possible.

We offer support in three main areas:

1. **Help with practical one-off tasks** – eg changing a lightbulb, small repair and maintenance jobs, disposal of broken or unwanted items, shopping during temporary illness, etc
2. **A regular phone call** to the most isolated who may not speak to anyone for days or even weeks
3. **Individual and group outings** – eg trips to the coast, garden centre, theatre, exhibitions or other places of interest.

Our History

York Neighbours began as a pilot project in 2012 in response to gaps in services for the over 65's in York. We discovered that people were reluctant to ask for help with small tasks and feared a loss of their independence.

We began as Belfrey Neighbours, supported by St Michael le Belfrey Church. As our vision to work City-wide developed we changed our name to York Neighbours and moved under the umbrella of One Voice York. We are a church-led initiative but positively welcome people of any or no faith as volunteers and users of our service. To avoid duplicating, or competing with, existing provision in the voluntary sector, we met with the Chief Officer at Age UK York and she agreed with our assessment of the needs and offered to work with us by establishing a Memorandum of Understanding. Today these links are maintained through Trustees from One Voice York and Age UK York's Befriending Service.

The need for our services continues to be clear. We are growing rapidly, with more Neighbours and volunteers registering each week as we receive referrals from other charities and statutory services.

Achievements in 2016/17

Between October 2016-September 2017, our volunteers helped us to undertake:

273 one-off tasks;

2172 regular phone calls;

48 Neighbours joined one or more of our group outings

This totals 920 hours of support for some of the most isolated and vulnerable of York residents.

We have utilised our knowledge of other services available in York to signpost Neighbours to other services, including the Good Gym befriending and missions service, The Besom Project, The Carers' Centre and Age UK York.

Public Benefit

Statistics show that York's ageing population is above the national average and therefore the issues we seek to address are going to increase considerably over the next 10-15 years. Our vision is to encourage the community to become a city of good neighbours, with a volunteer in nearly every street. As an intermediary and facilitator, York Neighbours offers a safe and supportive setting for people to help, and engage with, vulnerable older people in their neighbourhood.

We have a good reputation in the community and particularly with Social Services, Age UK York and others, including the new social prescribing service. Feedback shows that we offer just what is needed to fill gaps in services, and our 'can do' attitude is appreciated.

We can also respond quickly to emergency situations such as when a carer is unexpectedly unavailable and has been unable to organise a stand-in, or an older person is advised to bring their bed downstairs but there is no-one to help. In severe weather, such as flooding or ice and snow, we can shop for people normally able to get out.

By working closely with older people and getting to know them, we can make it easier for them to ask for help sooner and for them to realise that a little assistance means more independence – a fall when attempting a task, or the frustration of not being able to cope with small maintenance jobs, can lead to mental and emotional problems as well as physical ill-health and huge costs to health and social care services.

We are told that it is often easier to ask a volunteer organisation for help rather than always bothering a neighbour, friend or relative which can affect the relationship. Contact with our volunteers helps Neighbours to feel more part of the community thanks to their ability to chat and engage with friends and neighbours without constantly having to ask for assistance.

A Trusted Service Provider

With the Care Act Statutory Guidance (March 2016), we are receiving increasing numbers of referrals from Social Services and other agencies. The Care Act 2014 (section 14) refers to preventative services – what is currently offered and what could be delivered in the future. This means that when Social Services come across older people who have no family, friends or neighbours to help them, and there is no funding or other ways of meeting the need, they can refer them to York Neighbours.

Several referrals have involved people being discharged from hospital. In one case, a woman had come home from an unexpected stay in hospital and had no food and no money in the house. Our volunteers were able to help our neighbour to the bank and then to the supermarket, making the return home a little easier.

We have utilised our knowledge of other services available in York to signpost Neighbours to other services, including the Good Gym befriending and missions service, The Besom Project, The Carers' Centre and Age UK York.

Our model appears to address many of the issues covered by the Care Act 2014 by offering a community response to some of the problems of an ageing population. Our service works, is low cost and avoids duplication with other agencies.

As can be seen from our accounts York Neighbours annual running costs are low, similar to the annual cost of a place in a care home for one of our Neighbours. Utilising community volunteers gives us the ability to increase capacity with minimal cost increase.

Our initial assessment visit when registering a new Neighbour is holistic and invariably leads to information on, or referral to, further support and services which will help to reduce isolation. Staff and volunteers are trained and if they have any concerns about health, safety, unmet needs etc, our links with a wide range of related bodies mean that the Neighbour can be referred to the appropriate agency.

Strengths and Opportunities in our Community

York is relatively small and both statutory and voluntary agencies can easily work well together.

There is a real desire throughout York's churches to support local charities, and one of our Trustees represents One Voice York – the charitable umbrella for cross-denominational churches in the city. We are also supported by local shops and businesses and we plan to build on this.

Our team of volunteers includes social workers, nurses, and retired social and healthcare professionals, who enjoy being able to help in a practical way. Their wealth of experience means they are well aware of the great need facing older people today. Frustrated by seeing people in practical need, but often unable to help within the constraints of their work role they are delighted to be involved as volunteers.

Each year when term begins in September, we experience a flurry of enthusiastic students signing up to volunteer through the University of York's Students in Community scheme. We are thankful for the team involved in our three main areas of service, as well as office volunteering and fundraising. In Spring 2017, we nominated one of our dedicated students for a university award for her work with us, and it was a pleasure to see her win.

We also have volunteers who are newly retired who find a sense of purpose and the opportunity to give back to the community at the same time as retaining the freedom that retirement can offer. Neighbours and volunteers benefit from these opportunities for intergenerational involvement.



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Neighbours

It is great to see the vision of York Neighbours being realised on a daily basis. Our volunteers make a real difference to people who are feeling isolated, lonely, frustrated and often depressed. During the period between October 2016-September 2017, 87 Neighbours registered.

We work to make a lasting difference to people's lives rather than just alleviating the symptoms or solving current problems. We do this in various ways:

On receiving a referral, or a call from someone in need of help, we conduct an assessment visit at the home, which takes about an hour. Undertaken by a trained volunteer or our staff, the visit ensures that both Neighbours and volunteers are safe and that we can offer an appropriate response. In the case where we identify needs being better dealt with by other service providers, we will provide information about, or, with the Neighbour's consent, refer them to another more relevant agency.



This assessment visit is comprehensive and holistic. We recognise that people from other caring bodies, who have already been to see a Neighbour, are acting in specific roles and therefore may have missed the bigger picture, eg the person might be eligible for Attendance Allowance or benefit from a particular aid, or their mobility may be improved by a simple visit to a chiroprapist.

Many new Neighbours we meet do not know about the transport schemes available in York or they may be lonely and unaware of social and support networks nearby. During the assessment we talk through these things and give the relevant leaflets and information, or with their consent refer them on, if appropriate, and this can make a lasting difference to their lives.

This assessment visit at registration also forms an initial risk assessment so we gather as much relevant information as possible to ensure the health, safety, and comfort of the Neighbour and our volunteers.

Although some older people only ring us occasionally for help with a one-off task, they tell us that just knowing there is someone they can ring if they are 'stuck' reassures them. It can also encourage family members/carers who know they can ring us if they are going away or fall ill.

Activities

Our activities fall into 3 main areas:

Help with one-off tasks

Our volunteers help with a wide variety of one-off practical tasks. Examples include: changing a light bulb, taking down curtains and then re-hanging them once cleaned, defrosting a freezer, setting up a new phone or help with remote controls, resetting central heating thermostats, small household repairs, moving heavy items, getting something out of the loft and one-off gardening jobs.

A neighbour whose husband has recently gone into care needed help to dismantle a wardrobe. She approached York Neighbours and a volunteer attended within a week. Our neighbour said, *"He was very kind and sympathetic. He worked really hard, and I appreciate his help"*.

Another Neighbour commented on the security it gives her knowing she can call if she needs help and cannot find it elsewhere: *"Just before Christmas, I had an important appointment and, at short notice, requested help from York Neighbours. A volunteer was able to go with me, and kindly waited while I attended my appointment and then took me home. I used to feel anxious, but it is a great comfort to know this help is available especially as I am on my own. York Neighbours volunteers are kind, sociable and helpful – what more could one ask for?"*

Regular Phone Calls



Some people can go for days, or even weeks, without talking or chatting socially with someone. Regular phone calls from York Neighbours make a lasting difference, helping people to feel less isolated and lonely and more part of the local community. Our team of office volunteers, many of them students, make fortnightly or monthly calls as requested. Neighbours

tell us they really look forward to this contact. These calls are a lifeline for some of our neighbours as they know we will check up on them if we are unable to make contact with them. For those that find it hard to ask for help, the regular phone calls provide an opportunity for them to reach out.

A neighbour we call regularly had a fault on her phone line and being unable to get through to her, we managed to connect through her warden call, and she was able to sort out her phone line. She said: *"how reassuring to know that you would get someone to check that I am okay"*.

During the period of this report, volunteers helped us to make 2172 regular calls, totalling 543 hours of call time!

Outings

We organise individual and group outings for people with consideration for their various needs and difficulties. These needs often prevent them from taking part in other organised trips, maybe because they have poor mobility, are wheelchair users, have continence issues, dementia, mental health or confidence problems.

Volunteers use their own cars in order to tailor arrangements to each person's need. The trips might include helping someone with limited mobility to shop for items other than general household goods, offering transport for appointments and at the same time providing support in what might be a stressful situation, or perhaps assisting someone to place flowers on a loved one's grave.



We aim to help Neighbours feel at ease and supported. We also arrange group outings, meeting up at such venues as a garden centre or farm shop for lunch and chat.

"I really enjoyed the lunch and my food was very nice. I particularly have

to thank the volunteers as they were a great help with my mobility issues" was the feedback from one neighbour after one of our Christmas lunches in 2016

Throughout the year 2016/17, group outings have included:

- Christmas lunch at a local carvery
- two outings to The Balloon Tree

In total 48 Neighbours took part in these trips.

After a few outings Neighbours and volunteers start to get to know each other and it becomes a real social event. For many, it's a treat to have a drive out and see spring flowers or autumn colours they would otherwise miss, choose from a menu and eat in company rather than a ready microwave meal prepared by a carer who has no time to stay and chat. Not only do the outings offer something to look forward to, they also provide memories to think or talk about afterwards.

Feedback and evaluation is very important to us. Within a few days we contact all the Neighbours who came along, and their suggestions and comments guide us in our choice of venues and activities for the year ahead.

Volunteers

Without our volunteers York Neighbours would not be. They contribute their time, energy and skills to help make a real difference to some of the most vulnerable older people in York. Our volunteers come from all walks of life, some working, some retired, some students. All share a desire to contribute to their community.

In 2016/17 we recruited 45 volunteers – mostly through word of mouth or via our website, making our total number of volunteers 75. We held six training sessions during the year for the both new and experienced volunteers. Apart from giving people valuable insight in safeguarding, these sessions present a good opportunity for new volunteers to meet and hear from experienced volunteers.

Innovative and Flexible

The way to volunteering at York Neighbours starts with an application form followed by an informal interview, DBS check and training. Once this process is completed the volunteers are ready to begin working with us. At York Neighbours we do not ask for a minimum commitment. This is attractive to those who work full-time, or are away from home, those who are at university and therefore away from York for weeks or months at a time, or busy parent, and those retired people who don't want to be tied down.

In the office at the Raylor Centre we enjoy regular volunteer support – answering the phones, making regular calls to Neighbours, working with the database and providing us with information and help on which we can base decisions and develop.

The majority of volunteers help with the practical requests for help with tasks. We email exact details of what is required and when, and only volunteers who are able to help need to reply. This flexibility means that volunteers are not faced with tasks outside their skill or comfort level and, if short of time, they can choose tasks which can be easily completed on the way to or from work.

Our work also makes a difference to the lives of our volunteers.

Volunteers who are new to York, or have just retired, have found working with York Neighbours has been a great way of meeting new people and gaining a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

We are able to provide valuable work experience, skills and training for students or unemployed office volunteers which helps build a c.v. and can then provide a reference when they apply for work.

All volunteers complete induction and safeguarding training before making a visit. In the past 12 months, we have supplemented our training sessions with those offered by associated charities, such as offering dementia awareness, welfare benefits, moving and handling etc.

Funders and supporters

The following trusts, organisations and private businesses have supported us during 2016/17.

Allen Lane Foundation

Arlish & Chambers

The Church on Clifton Moor (LEP)

Clifton PCC

First Fruits

Foyle Foundation

Minster Lodge Freemasons

Garfield Weston Foundation

John Lewis

Langwith College Students (University of York)

Persula Foundation

Queens Hotel

St. Michael-le-Belfrey Church

Tang Hall Big Local

Woodthorpe & Dringhouses Ward (City of York Council)

York Minster

A big thank you goes out to them and to our many private supporters.

Treasurer's Report

This is the second year for York Neighbours as a charity and the foundations that were made last year have been built upon very well.

Over 80% of the income comes through grants. First Fruits have supported again this year. As requested their grant money has been used for the rent and rates on the office in the Raylor Centre on James Street. Nearly 85% of this cost has been covered by their grant. The office has enabled a professional service to be given. The second hand computer equipment from last year has carried on, but this year has been enhanced through a grant from the Minster Lodge (Freemasons) for two laptops which are being put to great use. Matt Nelson of Silverark has given of his time and expertise with advice and practical Information Technology support.

Restricted Funds are monies that have been given to be used for a specific purpose. York Neighbours has worked with Tang Hall Big Local to help them make Tang Hall a better place to live for older people. Their grant has enabled volunteer recruitment from the area and to increase work in the area amongst older people. This has also been the case with the grant from Woodthorpe & Dringhouses Ward of City of York Council where work has been focused on that part of the city. The money given by the Minster Lodge of the Freemasons was used to buy two laptops. First Fruits gave a monthly payment which was used to pay for most of the office rent.

The other grants shown on the previous page have been unrestricted. This means that the charity is free to spend them on whatever it thinks is the most appropriate. This grant money is then added to the donations received by individuals, who donate either directly or through Local Giving. There are more than 40 individuals who have donated directly during the year and 25 have donated via Local Giving.

Salary and office costs make up the largest part of the expenditure, which is then followed by stationery, postage and telephone / internet charges. This is as expected as the objectives can only be met by communicating with Neighbours and volunteers by telephone, e-mail and post.

The Reserves Policy is to hold an amount of reserves (unrestricted funds) equal to the average expenditure over a six-month period and for this amount and the financial risks of the charity to be reviewed every six months. These risks include the chance that a grant may not be renewed or that there is a short term deficit whilst waiting for a promised grant to be made available.

The Accounts have been drawn up using the Receipts and Payments method, as approved by The Charity Commission for a charity of this size. There are no funds in deficit at the year end. York Neighbours is most grateful to Alan Greenwood FMAAT who has kindly given his skills and time without charge to conduct the independent examination of this year's accounts.

Paul Luxton, Treasurer

York Neighbours CIO Charity Number 1163768

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year ended 30th September 2017

	Unrestricted Funds 2016-17	Restricted Funds 2016-17	Total 2016-17	2015-16
Receipts				
Donations, Legacies	£5,947	NIL	£5,947	£25,980
Grants	£25,332	£7,014	£32,346	£18,812
Debt Recovered	£426	NIL	£426	NIL
Total Receipts	£31,705	£7,014	£38,719	£44,792
Payments				
Salaries	£18,223	£1,872	£20,095	£9,815
Salary Administration	£364	NIL	£364	£201
Rent & Rates	£681	£3,600	£4,281	£3,768
Consultants Fees	NIL	NIL	NIL	£6,667
Other Expenses	£3,495	£913	£4,408	£3,409
Total Payments	£22,763	£6,385	£29,148	£23,860
Net Receipts	£8,942	£629	£9,571	£20,932
Cash Funds Brought Forward			£20,932	NIL
Cash Funds Carried Forward			£30,503	£20,932

Details of Restricted Funds	Used	Remaining	Total
Tang Hall Big Local	£1,513	£87	£1,600
Woodthorpe & Dringhouses Ward	£458	£542	£1,000
First Fruits	£3,600	NIL	£3,600
Minster Lodge	£814	NIL	£814
Total	£6,385	£629	£7,014

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 30th September 2017

	2016-17	2015-16
Unrestricted Funds	£29,874	£20,932
Restricted Funds	£629	NIL
Represented by Cash at Bank	<u>£30,503</u>	<u>£20,932</u>
Other Monetary Assets (Debtor)	<u>NIL</u>	<u>£426</u>
Fixed Assets	<u>£700</u>	<u></u>
Liabilities	<u>NIL</u>	<u>NIL</u>

Signed - Paul Luxton, Treasurer

19th February 2018