



York Neighbours
...for that little bit of help

Annual Report of York Neighbours

October 2015-September 2016



Registered Charity No. 1163768

Foreword from Sally Hutchinson, Chief Officer, Age UK York

Age UK York has been providing services throughout the city of York for over 45 years, but never in splendid isolation! We have always worked alongside and with our valued voluntary sector partners. Over the last two years we have been forging an extremely successful partnership with York Neighbours. We began our closer work together just as Belfrey Neighbours was becoming York Neighbours and we developed a Memorandum of Understanding to help and support how we brought our organisations together. We began by assisting with insurance, training and DBS checks. These functions have now passed to York Neighbours as they have succeeded with funding applications and therefore recruited valued staff to support the huge team of amazing volunteers.

We now have a very successful and lively partnership, working with the strengths and skills within our separate organisations – referring from one to the other to ensure that our older residents receive the most appropriate and quality service, when and where they really need it.

Age UK York is now embarking on a new funding regime with the CYC, and our ongoing relationship with York neighbours will continue to be vital to the mix and spread of preventative services for the older people of the city.

Letter from Wendy Smart, Chair

The pilot project, which led to York Neighbours, began five years ago and so it is exciting to be writing our first annual report as an independent charity and reviewing how far it has come. We have only arrived at this point through the hard work and support of so many people and I would like to thank all those involved in our formative years as Belfrey Neighbours (at St Michael le Belfrey, Priory Street URC and One Voice York). We are also very grateful for the support and encouragement we have received from Age UK York and for the close relationship established through our Memorandum of Understanding with them.

In April 2016 we appointed Rachael Armstrong as our full-time Co-ordinator. Rachael joined us at a time of rapid growth and faced a real challenge as our sole employee. We are extremely grateful for her commitment and all that she achieved in the six months she was with us. We are delighted that Rachael has stayed on as a volunteer and has been instrumental in helping to produce this first annual report.

It has been something of a rollercoaster ride but we thank God that each time we faced an obstacle there was a corresponding encouragement. In particular when it looked as if we would be unable to fund another co-ordinator post due to lack of funds and we received a personal donation of £10,000 (plus Gift Aid) from a couple wanting to see the work progress.

As a result we have started our next year with two excellent members of staff, Helen Aitchison (Co-ordinator) and Sarah Wallis (Assistant Co-ordinator) and we continue to receive gifts, grants, interest and support so we are looking forward to another great year!

Finally, the Trustees would like to thank the real stars of York Neighbours, our volunteers, whose commitment and energy are inspiring.

8 February 2017

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

Email: info@yorkneighbours.org.uk

Tel: 01904 891627

Board of Trustees

Wendy Smart (*Appointed Chair April 2016*)

Paul Luxton (Treasurer)

Rachel Thistlewood (*Appointed in March 2016*)

David Casswell Rev. (*Appointed in April 2016*)

Mel Griggs (*Appointed in January 2016*)

Dr. Walter Stockdale

Lis Ramage

Tessa Denbeigh

Debs Stephens

Chris Cullwick (*resigned in April 2016*)

Principal Bankers

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

Structure, Governance and Management

York Neighbours is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation.

The experience of Board members – including Age UK York, safeguarding and social work, general practice, management of voluntary organisations, IT, community care and welfare benefits, financial and business management – means we are well-equipped to deliver and develop our work. It also provides us with excellent access to other agencies in the same field.

The Board meets monthly to set objectives and policy and to oversee our work, with most Trustees also volunteering in the work with Neighbours thus 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** – e.g. 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** e.g. to a garden centre for lunch

Our History

York Neighbours began as a pilot project in 2012 in response to gaps in services for those over 65 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 but 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 unmet 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 pilot project was so successful in demonstrating the need for our services, we became a registered charity in September 2015. Today, as a new charity, we are growing rapidly, with more Neighbours and volunteers registering each week as we receive referrals from other charities and professional agencies.

Achievements in 2015/16

Between October 2015-September 2016, our volunteers helped us to undertake:

- **197 one-off tasks;**
- **1878 regular phone calls;**
- **62 Neighbours joining one of our group outings**

This totals 850 hours of support for some of the most isolated and vulnerable of York residents.

Each of the 114 Neighbours registered received a one-hour home visit looking at their needs and resulted in multiple referrals to other agencies and services.

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

We are aware of the financial challenges and demands on Adult Social Care and the Health sector and the wish for the individuals we work with to remain out of the formal assessment process for as long as possible. As such, we aim to support people's well-being through our community-based service and the support of our volunteers.

The Care Act (2016) statutory guidance underlines the notion that the best support for an individual is that which is appropriate to prevent further issues arising, maintains someone's independence and reduces the escalation of need. We are able to provide a proportionate response (and signpost as required) and we assist by offering a service that directly relates to the needs of the individual, intervenes early and ultimately prevents, reduces and delays the need for formal statutory input. Neighbours who access our service are helped to remain resilient, independent and connected within their communities.

Several referrals have involved people being discharged from hospital – maybe to a new home where there is no one to help unpack their boxes. In one case, a gentleman had been at home for a year following a stroke without being able to set up his music system – one of the few things he could still enjoy. A team of volunteers from York Neighbours was able to help him unpack, and access his music at last.

It is too soon to be able to measure the full impact of our help on relieving pressure on local authority services but we believe the increasing numbers of referrals demonstrates trust and confidence in our service.

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 increase in cost.

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 so that 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.

A team of social workers told us that they were impressed with our 'can do' attitude. They were so encouraged that many of them signed up as volunteers and one has become a Trustee. Frustrated by seeing people in practical need, but often unable to help within the constraints of their work role they were delighted to be involved as volunteers.

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.

York's students are many, enthusiastic and energetic, and we are thankful for the team involved in our three main areas of service, as well as office volunteering and fundraising. 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.



Photos from an Open Mic Night run by Langwith College at the University of York to raise funds for York Neighbours

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 2015-September 2016, 114 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 Neighbour and volunteers are safe and that we can offer an appropriate response.

This assessment visit is comprehensive and holistic. People from other caring bodies may have already been to see a Neighbour, but in specific roles and may miss the bigger picture – e.g. 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 chiropodist.

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.

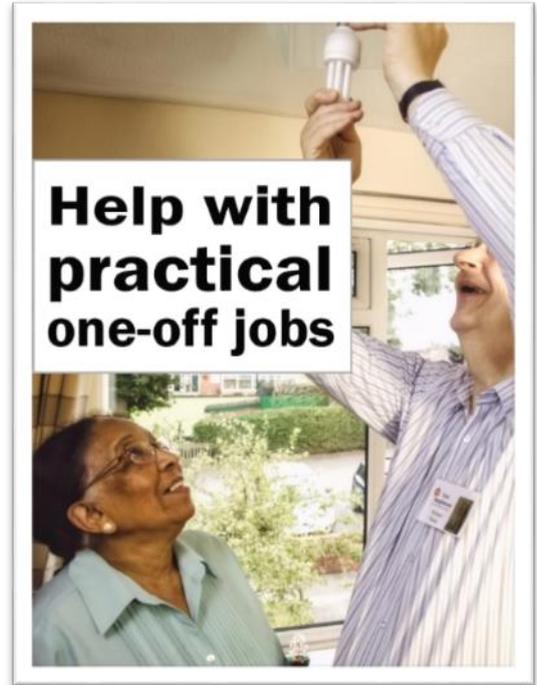
Although some older people only ring us occasionally for help with a one-off task, they tell us that just knowing there is someone they can ring if they are 'stuck' reassures them. It can also encourage family members/carers who know they can ring us if they are going away or fall ill.

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 and examples include: changing a light bulb, taking down curtains and then rehanging 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 and getting something out of the loft and one-off gardening jobs.

A lady in her mid-90's, living alone, with early stage memory loss has had many visits. She said of our volunteers, *"They have been a tremendous help. I know that whatever happens I can get in touch. It is a security to me. They have never let me down. They have been wonderful. I know they are always there whatever happens."*



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 make fortnightly or monthly calls as requested. Neighbours tell us they really look forward to this contact.

During the period of this report, volunteers helped us to make 1878 regular calls, totalling 470 hours of call time!

A gentleman with a long-term neurological condition, who lives alone, and receives a fortnightly call said, *"There is so much being talked about the problem of loneliness and your regular phone service makes such a difference to me. I might be feeling a bit lonely then I get a call from you and it shows me that there is somebody out there that does actually care.*

It's a wonderful service and is important to me - keep up the good work!"

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 a special present or replacement item, offering transport for appointments at the same 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. A 90-year-old Neighbour with poor hearing and chronic Irritable Bowel Syndrome

which affect his ability to know whether or not he can keep an appointment until the last minute, trusts our volunteers to take him to vital hospital appointments because he knows they will be patient and considerate should he need to stop to use the toilet.

He says: 'It makes such a difference. It stops me worrying and there is no other way I can go other than call an ambulance. It takes a lot of weight off my mind knowing I have someone who can help because I live on my own. You are my first port of call because I know I can relax because you can either help me or tell me who can. You have been a very good support to me. I am pleased I have you – you are like a very knowledgeable relation!'

A 96 year old Neighbour, who had Parkinson's, was referred for help with small jobs. On assessment and mentioning trips out, he said that he was an artist and longed to revisit a certain tea room in the Dales. He was amazed to discover that volunteers were happy to make the two-hour each way journey (over 100 miles altogether) and take him for afternoon tea. They all enjoyed a wonderful day out – the owner at the tea room remembered him! Sadly, this gentleman died shortly after the trip, but until he passed away he had photos to look at and memories to share of his day out.

We also arrange group outings, meeting up at such venues as a garden centre or farm shop for lunch and chat.

Throughout the year 2015/16, group outings have included:

- Christmas lunch at a local carvery
- Lunch and chat at garden centres
- A visit to the beautiful gardens and nursery at Breezy Knees with lunch in the café
- Afternoon tea at York's John Lewis's restaurant – at the invitation of John Lewis!

In total 62 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

Volunteers are vital to York Neighbours – 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 2015/16 we recruited 71 volunteers – mostly through word of mouth or via our website. We held six training sessions for the volunteers.

Innovative and Flexible

Our innovative and flexible way of using volunteers is that, beyond the recruitment, DBS check and training, we do not ask for a minimum commitment. This is attractive to those who work full-time, or away from home, those who are at university and therefore away from York for weeks or months at a time, busy parents and retired people who don't want to be tied down.

Since we set up the York Neighbours office in the Raylor Centre in December 2015, we have enjoyed regular volunteer support – manning 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 on 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 who gain valuable work experience and skills to help build a CV 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.

Treasurer's Report

York Neighbours is a new charity, so it began the first financial year with nothing in the bank. As it had grown through Belfrey Neighbours and being part of One Voice there was a sum of more than £8,500 that had been built up, so this money was transferred in.

City Of York Council and Joseph Rowntree gave us significant grant donations for which we are most grateful.

Over time we have built up a number of supporters who make a regular donation, either directly or via Local Giving. Regular giving is extremely important to us and we would like to say a big thank you to all concerned.

From January 2016 the First Fruits charity committed to paying a monthly grant which has covered most of our rental costs at the Raylor Centre. They have shown a real interest in our work and came to visit us to find out more and this has been a great encouragement.

We have also been recipients of grants from York Guild of Building, Clifton Parish Church, Arlish & Chambers, ASDA and Waitrose.

We have purchased recycled computer equipment for use in the office from Computers For Charities. Our staff salaries are managed through York CVS and our DBS Checks are done at a reasonable fee through Age UK York.

In addition to those mentioned above we would like to thank the following for their support during this first year:

- Sidney Butler (In Memorium)
- Chris and Joy Cullwick (donations in lieu of presents for their Ruby Anniversary)
- Heworth Retired Men's Forum
- Richard and Gill McIntosh
- The Persula Foundation
- Matt Nelson of Silverark
- Tom McGuffog and the Foundation at URC, Priory Street
- All volunteers who give their time freely, many of whom do not claim any expenses

The Accounts have been drawn up using the Receipts And Payments method, as approved by The Charity Commission for a charity of our size. As this is our first year we do not yet have a Reserves Policy, but a policy is planned to be decided upon during our current (second) year. There are no funds in deficit at the year end. We are most grateful to Alan Greenwood FMAAT who has very kindly given us his skills and time without charge to conduct the independent examination of our first year's accounts.

York Neighbours is in a robust position at the end of the first financial year and I believe is ready for steady growth.

Paul Luxton, Treasurer

York Neighbours CIO Charity Number 1163768

Receipts and Payments Account

For the year ended 30th September 2016

| | Total Funds |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Receipts | |
| Donations, Legacies and Grants | £44,792 |
| Total Receipts | <u>£44,792</u> |
| Payments | |
| Salaries | £9,815 |
| Salary Administration | £201 |
| Rent | £3,768 |
| Consultants Fees | £6,667 |
| Other Expenses | £3,409 |
| Total Payments | <u>£23,860</u> |
| Net Receipts | £20,932 |
| Cash Funds Brought Forward | NIL |
| Cash Funds Carried Forward | <u>£20,932</u> |

Statement of Assets and Liabilities at 30th September 2016

| | Total Funds |
|--------------------------------|--------------------|
| Cash at Bank | £20,932 |
| Other Monetary Assets (Debtor) | <u>£426</u> |
| Liabilities | <u>NIL</u> |

Signed - Paul Luxton, Treasurer

Date 8th February 2017

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF
YORK NEIGHBOURS
CHARITY NUMBER: 1163768

I report on the accounts of the Society for the year ended 30 September 2016.

RESPECTIVE RESPONSIBILITIES OF TRUSTEES AND EXAMINER

The Charity's Trustees are responsible for the preparation of the accounts. The Charity's Trustees consider that an audit is not required for this year under Section 144(2) of the Charities Act 2011 (the 2011 Act) and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility to:

- examine the accounts under Section 145 of the 2011 Act;
- to follow the procedures laid down in the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioner under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act; and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention.

BASIS OF INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT

My examination was carried out in accordance with the General Directions given by the Charity Commissioner. An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the Charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items or disclosures in the accounts, and the seeking of explanations from you as Trustees concerning any such matters. The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently no opinion is given as to whether the accounts present a "true and fair view" and the report is limited to those matters set out in the statement below.

INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S STATEMENT

In connection with my examination, no matter has come to my attention:

- 1** which gives me reasonable cause to believe that in any material respect the requirements:
 - a) to keep accounting records in accordance with Section 130 of the 2011 Act; and
 - b) to prepare accounts which accord with the accounting records and to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Acthave not been met: or
- 2** to which, in my opinion, attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

153 Tadcaster Road
York
YO24 1QL

ALAN GREENWOOD
F.M.A.A.T
The Association of Accounting
Technicians

8 February 2017