



York Neighbours

...for that little bit of help





David Casswell, Chair of the Trustees

When something affects every area of our lives - you get sick of hearing about it. Sorry. Covid 19 has changed the world and we are just coming to terms with the losses, fears and hopes going forward.

In the Bible there is a woman called Esther. She is chosen as a King's new wife. When disaster threatens her people, her uncle says, "...who knows but that you have come to your royal position for such a time as this?" She is in a position to act.

Covid 19 changed everything - but actually the way York Neighbours had been set up, meant that it was ready with relevant help - even given the extreme circumstances. Our outings could not happen - but the phone calls and other help became even more important. It was ready, 'for such a time as this...'

As you will see in this report the work of York Neighbours has expanded with the growing needs. I hope you will be encouraged to see how the charity has responded.

We are so grateful to our new coordinator Roni Robbins and all the staff for the way they have adapted to the new working arrangements and coped with the increased demands on the service.

We are grateful to our volunteers - including the new ones who have joined us this year - who have wanted to give their time and energy in such a good cause.

We are grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund and other funding groups and individuals who have supported the work financially.

Together - as you will read - we have managed to respond positively to these crazy times.

York Neighbours grows by word of mouth. Please be part of that! We want more people to hear they can register and benefit as Neighbours. And at the same time find those wanting to Volunteer.

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Our **objective** 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. We work to make a **lasting difference** to people's lives rather than just alleviating the symptoms or solving current problems.

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



We do this in various ways:



Assist

Help with practical one-off tasks - e.g. changing a light bulb, small repair and maintenance jobs, disposal of broken or unwanted items, shopping during temporary illness, etc.



Chat

A regular phone call to the most isolated who may not speak to anyone for days or even weeks.



Socialise

Individual and group outings - e.g. trips to the coast, garden centre, theatre, exhibitions or other places of interest.

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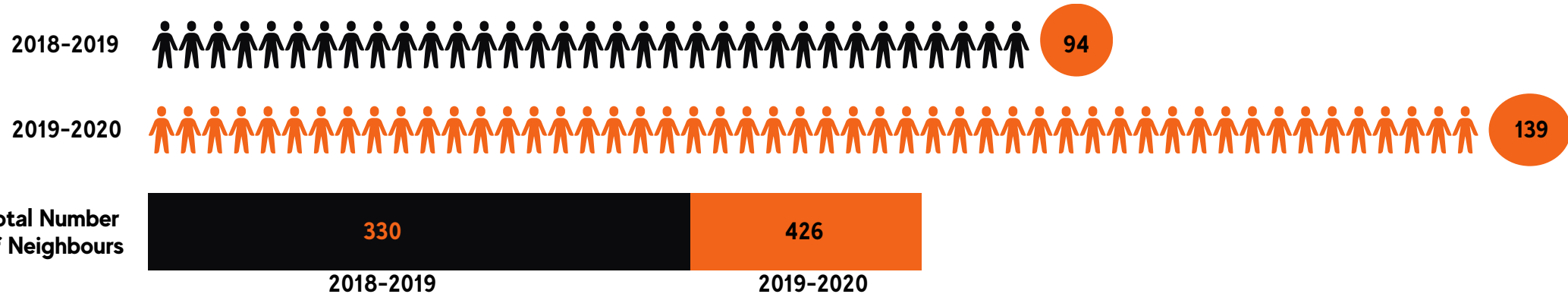


REGISTERING WITH YORK NEIGHBOURS

Registering with York Neighbours is a comprehensive and holistic process which can either be done over the telephone or we can visit the person in their home.

People register with York Neighbours in two main ways. They can either be referred to us from another organisation or they can self refer.

Number of New Neighbours



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ONE-OFF TASKS

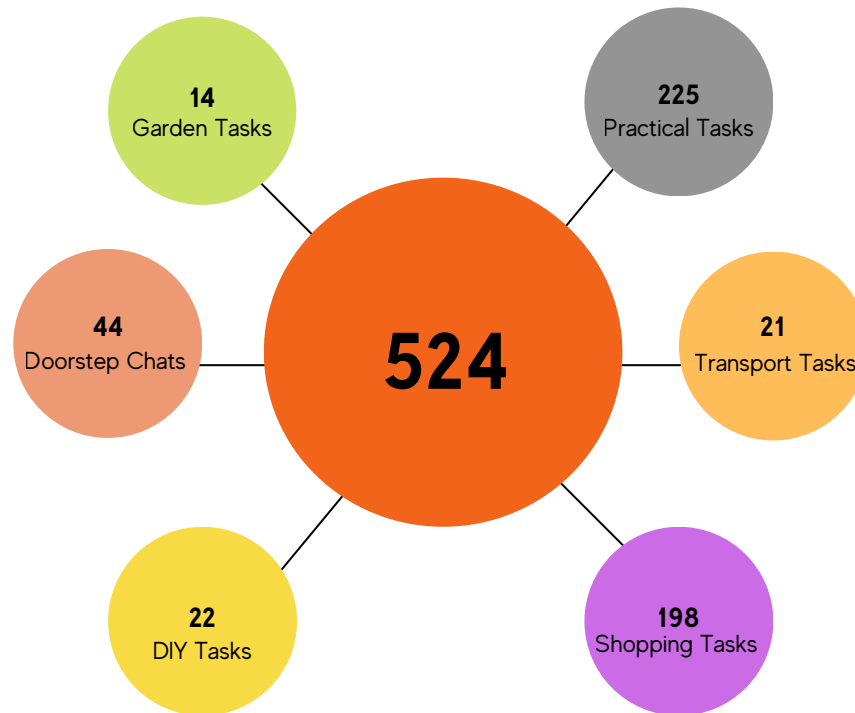
York Neighbours offers help in a number of different ways. We offer help with small, practical tasks around the home and garden, transport where additional assistance is required, help with shopping when it is needed and we offer regular phone calls to connect and chat with our Neighbours.

Covid-19 has had an enormous impact on our services. Some services had to be reduced owing to lockdown restrictions, some we could continue, some we adapted but we also found new ways to help. A lot of our Neighbours commented on how much they missed seeing another human being and so we introduced our "doorstep chats" when some restrictions were lifted which proved a success. We also undertook a number of prescription deliveries to our Neighbours who were shielding and couldn't get to the pharmacy thereby reducing their anxiety that this may have caused.

“ I am so grateful for the help given by York Neighbours volunteers. I would not have been able to manage to organise this myself. ”

“ I thank you from the depth of my heart for helping me and my husband with our shopping. It was also so nice to talk to your volunteer this afternoon as there is hardly anyone to talk to you. Thank you for all this good work which is very much appreciated. ”

“ Your volunteer has been very helpful. It would have been difficult to get a professional to help with a small task like this. ”



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REGULAR CALLS

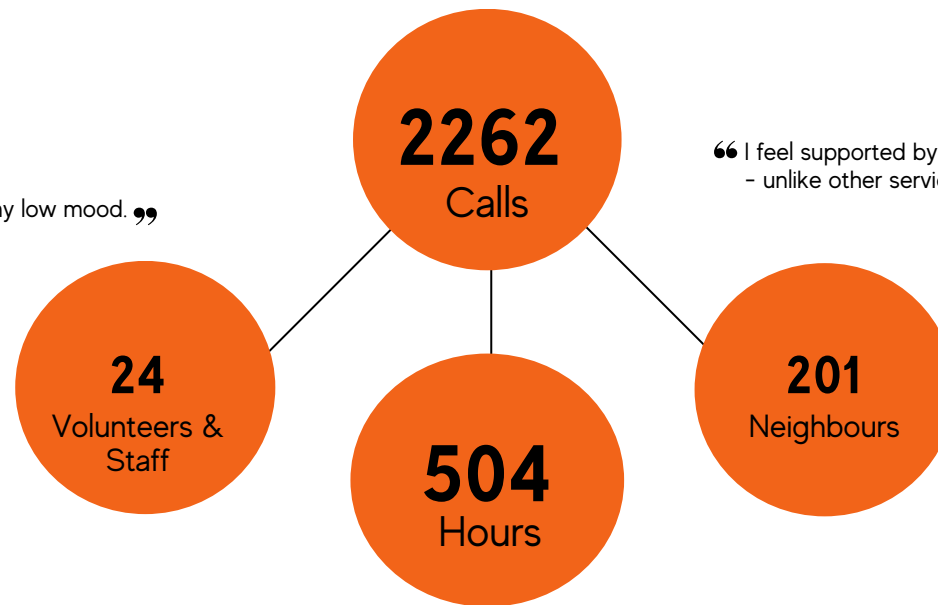
Some people can go for days, or even weeks, without talking or chatting socially with someone. Regular phone calls from York Neighbours make a lasting difference, helping people to feel less isolated and lonely and more part of the local community. Our team of volunteers, many of them students, make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

Our regular phone support can also be crucial support for those who are going through transitions in their life. This could be due to a change in health or discharge from hospital, or due to the responsibilities of their caring role. It is also a good support for those who may have lost a loved one and are coping with bereavement.

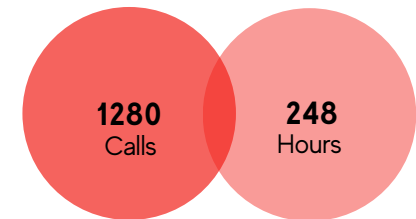
“ You are absolutely wonderful at York Neighbours. I don't know how I would manage without you at the moment. ”

“ This chat was lovely and really helped my low mood. ”

“ I feel very lonely living on my own and it is nice to know someone checks in on me. ”



“ I feel supported by York Neighbours - unlike other services. Thank you. ”



2018-2019

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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 travel further afield to walk around beautiful gardens and enjoy lunch and a chat.

Three outings took place before the advent of the Covid-19 crisis. After this, all our planned trips were cancelled but we hope we will be able to start organising them again soon.

“It was just lovely; it was just beautiful. I lost my husband earlier this year, and I was not looking forward to Christmas, but this was a beautiful event. I liked the carols and I felt loved.”

“Thank you so much for yesterday, I really enjoyed it. It was the first time I have been out in a month.”

“It was a lovely afternoon, thank you. It was a nice change as I haven't been out in a while due to a hip operation and my family live away. Good company and conversation.”



“It was exceptional and so generous. The pupils were attentive and credit to the school. I didn't want it to end! York Neighbours were brilliant. The present at the end was a lovely surprise. The best trip by York Neighbours and better than other charity organisational trips! A million thanks.”



“It was a lovely afternoon tea, thank you for all you do. York Neighbours is a wonderful organisation.”

“I had a lovely time and all your staff and volunteers are so lovely and attentive.”



“I really enjoyed the trip - it was very nice to meet other people there. I met two other ladies there and I plan to keep in touch with them through a Facebook group.”

“It was absolutely perfect. I would not change a thing. It was lovely to hear the students sing.”

“I really enjoyed it, and the food was good. I also enjoyed getting to meet and know Pat (another Neighbour).”

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MAKING A DIFFERENCE

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. We have seen that our service works, is low cost and avoids duplication with other agencies. Feedback shows that we offer just what is needed to fill gaps in services, and our 'can do' attitude is much appreciated.

The advent of Covid-19 reaffirmed the need for services such as ours. We have seen a large increase in older adults who need a little support to continue to live as independently as possible.

“You are absolutely wonderful at York Neighbours. I don't know how I would manage without you at the moment.”

“The help was absolutely perfect and having the items taken away has freed up more space.”

“This help was brilliant. It may look like a small thing to some but it was a big thing for me as I am not able to manage it myself.”

“I am so very grateful. Being disabled means that I rely on my TV a lot for entertainment so it's nice that I can sit and watch Corrie again.”

“My number of friends have diminished over the years and therefore so have the number of cards I receive. It was a truly wonderful surprise to receive yours. It has made my day.”

“Thank you so much for the birthday card I received today. It really means so much especially since I lost my partner a few months ago.”

“It made things a lot easier for me knowing that I don't need to go out for my shopping at this current time. It has saved me much anxiety and stress.”

“I don't know what I would have done without you. Please pass on my thanks to all at York Neighbours.”

“A chat in person really lifted my mood.”

“Fantastic job. I was very worried about tripping over the loose carpet.”

“These talks keep me going and connected with the outside world. I am gaining confidence to leave Abbeyfields once allowed.”

“These chats are keeping me going, keeping my brain working and my mind active. They are a lifeline. The residents here have been locked down in these 4 walls for 105 days and it's getting very lonely and depressing. I have no family or friends to chat to and chatting to the volunteers is helping me prepare myself for stepping back out into the real world. It's very scary but I feel less anxious. These chats have brightened my days. Thank you.”

“Your volunteer really went out of his way to fix my wheelchair.”

“Your help is much needed and appreciated.”

“It was a great help since I don't have a car and am still recovering from a stroke.”

“I think it's marvellous that people give up their time to help. You all deserve medals for what you do.”

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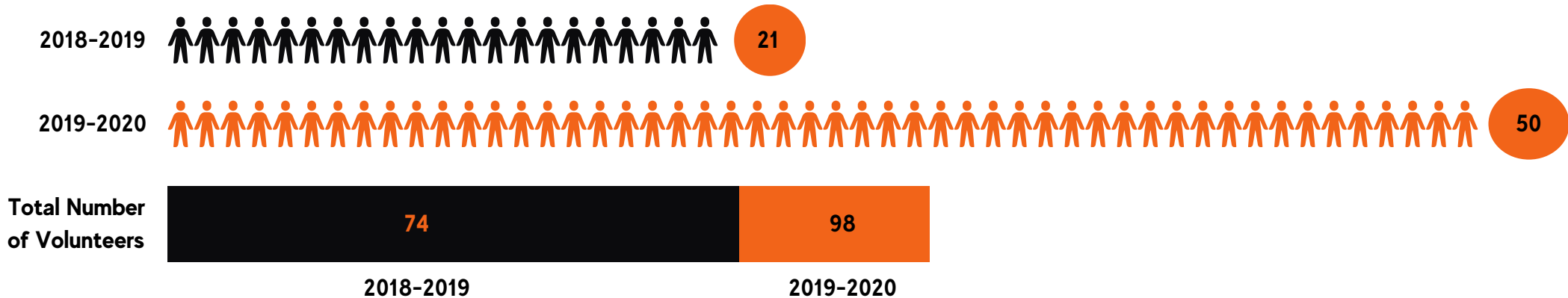
VOLUNTEERING WITH YORK NEIGHBOURS

York Neighbours volunteers 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 sharing a desire to contribute to their community.

Volunteers who are new to York, or have just retired, or parents working at home or caring for young children have found working with York Neighbours has been a great way of meeting new people (other volunteers and Neighbours) and gaining a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

Covid-19 brought about an increased interest in volunteering and we were lucky enough to to have a large number of volunteers enquire and, in turn, register to volunteer with us.

Number of New Volunteers



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WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY - LIBBIE

When COVID 19 and the lockdown hit, I was desperate to be able to do something to help the community. I recognised that working from home and being around elderly neighbours limited what I could realistically do, but through some hunting around, I came across York Neighbours and it seemed a perfect fit.

I'd been wanting to find something I could do in the community around my work anyway but many roles are quite tied in terms of only being during working hours or having to go somewhere to volunteer, which just doesn't work for me. Being a call volunteer for York Neighbours is the best of both worlds as I know I'm brightening someone else's day and they know that someone else out there cares for them. But equally I can fit it in around my work life and make the calls when I have a few minutes to spare.

Being a call volunteer means, in a literal sense, working my way through a list of people to call; but on a caring level it's so much more. To me it's an opportunity to remind people they aren't alone and someone else is out there keeping an eye on them. But equally when you get chatting to some of the neighbours you find out some fabulous stories about their lives and where they have come from, what they have been through and many of them have wicked senses of humour, so we can often have a good giggle. It's also someone I can chat to which for me gives me as much as I aim to give them as I can spend so long on my own, working from home, which in itself is fairly isolating. So it's equally nice for me to have the opportunity to speak to them and break up my day as well as theirs. I love the fact that there's so many different personalities, and all with a different story to tell, or different connections and it's about building that rapport. I hope eventually to start recognising names I've called before and get a bit more familiar with people and hopefully they might start to know me.

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WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY - PIPPA

Pippa, one of our former student volunteers wrote: "I decided to become a volunteer with York Neighbours because I was looking for a way to help the local community. York Neighbours focus' on support in the community fitted perfectly with my goal in York.

My volunteering experience with York Neighbours lasted approximately a year and 3 months, during which time I was studying and working. The York Neighbours team was welcoming and flexible. My one-off tasks included aiding Neighbours while they went shopping, fixing video players, and accompanying our Neighbours on trips out. I particularly enjoyed the Christmas outing hosted at a local school. I also helped at promotion events.

York Neighbours helped convince me to work in the charity sector. I now work for Plan International UK, a humanitarian charity that focuses on helping children and young people, with a particular focus on girls. Although its focus is different to that of York Neighbours, both roles require safeguarding training, and a desire to help vulnerable people and make the world a better place".



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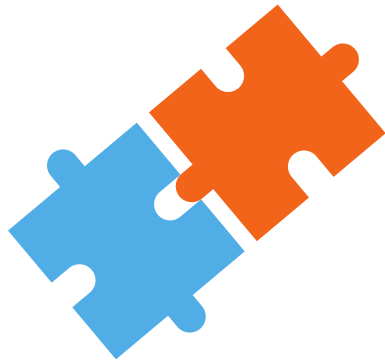
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We are grateful to the following organisations who have collaborated and supported us:

We are stronger together than we are alone



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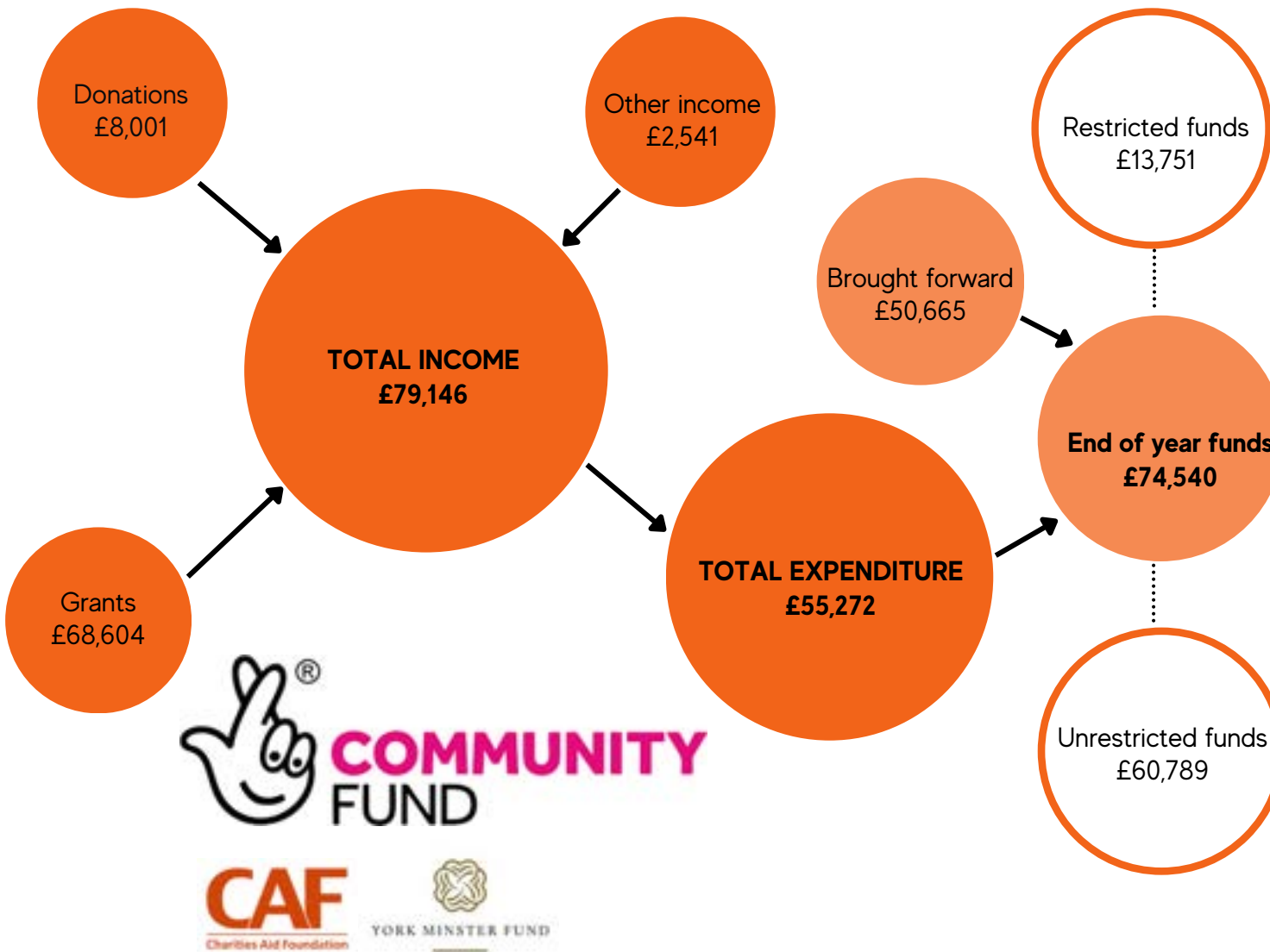
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A big thank you goes to the following grant providers, trusts and organisations in addition to our many individual supporters.

- Arlish & Chambers
- Asda Foundation
- CAF Bank Coronavirus Emergency Fund
- Christ Church 70s Group
- Co-Operative Local Community Fund
- Eastholme Drive Post Office
- Fulcrum Foundation
- Greggs
- Heineken Community Fund
- Masonic Charitable Foundation
- National Lottery Community Fund**
- Norman Collinson Charitable Trust
- Persimmon Charitable Fund
- Queens Hotel, York
- St Barnabas Parochial Church Council
- St Edward the Confessor Church
- Tesco Carrier Bags
- York Minster Fund



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