



WALFORD COMMUNITY SUPPORT SCHEME

Annual Report 2018-2019

[Abstract](#)

A summary of activities and finances for the financial year 2018-2019 and a forward look into 2019-2020.

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Highlights from 2018-2019

We continue to offer the parish an extremely valuable service which aims to tackle exceptionally challenging and demographically relevant issues, such as loneliness and isolation.

Our service users benefit from a wide and varied range of services that are being provided by our volunteers, including befriending (in particular for one user who suffers from very advanced dementia), shopping trips and appointments that often also result in befriending and identifying other service needs, such as technology/communications/odd-job support that we can also provide. One of our great success stories comes in the style of an “old boys” club which sees three elderly members of the community meeting up on a regular basis and taking part in day trips and pub visits facilitated by one of our volunteers.

This year was our first full year of our popular programme of events, WoW or What’s on Walford. The events programme included a trip on the Cotswold Steam Railway, Easter floral demo and workshop, visits to Weston Cider and Tintern Abbey, Christmas lunch at the Weston Cross, games afternoons and a book swap morning. One of our Service Users hosted our Summer Soiree at his home in July, and our Christmas Soiree was once again hosted by our generous volunteers at Lower Wythall.

As part of our WoW events calendar, we recently ran our first event with the whole community in mind, in the form of a quiz night held at our local pub, The Mill Race. This was a fun, well-attended night comprising of six teams of service users and parishioners, and we look forward to organising another in the coming months.

As well as these additional activities, our regular monthly coffee mornings still take place at our local church, St Michaels and All Angels’, on the second Tuesday of every month.

We have strengthened our bond with Walford Primary School, and now visit every half term for lunch and chat with the Year 4 pupils. These are popular with children and service users alike. Our service users have been helping the children with their project of Ross “Now and Then”, a joint venture between the school and The Ross Gazette.

In October, the Community Support Scheme steering committee addressed the School Assembly, informing all the school children of how our Scheme works and what we do. We asked the children to spread the word to their parents and grandparents. At the same time, we asked the children to design a poster for our scheme, as part of a competition, which was very successfully received. The winning designs can be seen in and around the Parish.

We were very excited to be joined by a researcher from BBC Hereford and Worcester on our last visit to school in March, who recorded interviews and videos for Radio Hereford and Worcester and BBC Online.

Our numbers have increased this year, both for volunteers and services users but we are always looking for new initiatives in order to increase both groups and welcome direct approaches from individuals.

Service Provisions

Examples of our usual types of services offered include:

- Weekly shopping outing and befriending, extending to trips to the theatre and afternoon teas together
- Walford Old Boys trips to Museums and other places of interest, as well as regular outings for pub lunches.
- Weekly visiting to advanced dementia patient who rarely sees anyone other than her carers
- Befriending services
- Cinema trips
- WoW social events and outings
- Christmas and Summer soirees for volunteers and service users
- Monthly coffee mornings held in the local church
- Help with PCs, including email correspondence and online ordering
- Assistance with paperwork
- Support offered during adverse weather conditions
- Outings to Community based events such as Bishopswood lunches, Goodrich Afternoon Club and the Open Gardens event
- Assistance with remaining independent – accompanied shopping trips when an individual is unable to walk through a shop unaided, help re-arranging cupboard contents in to a more user-friendly order

Service Users and Volunteers

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Service Users	17	21	27
Volunteers	17	24	26

Service Hours by Activity

Month	Transport (appointment, shopping etc)	Social Visit	Social Activity	DIY / misc	Total no. hours
April	14	22	8		
May	16	25	6		
Jun	17	30	7		
Jul	10	12	6		
Aug	11	7	3	6	
Sept	12	20	4		
Oct	20	19	7		
Nov	19	12	6		
Dec	11	6	6		
Jan	15	21	5		
Feb	16	16	6		
Mar	13	13	9		
Totals	174	203	73	6	456

Testimonials

Below is a sample of comments and reviews of our scheme:

Service Users:

'The Community Support Scheme has given me an escape from loneliness with coffee mornings, the chance to mix with other members of the community and weekly pub lunches bringing much needed humour back into my life. I feel that I am regaining a little self-confidence.'

'It's given me a chance to enjoy more conversation and company than before. The coffee mornings and activities are really enjoyable.'

'It has had a positive effect on my life and I have made new friends.'

'Meeting all together is enough to keep me positive for a whole week. Although I've not yet had to rely especially on the practical side of the community scheme I hope that that will work as well as the Old Boys experience when I do come to need more help.'

Michelle Lawson, Volunteer

'The past year has been a joy for me, helping with the Monthly Chat scheme at Walford School. The Scheme has provided a wonderful opportunity for the parish members to enjoy a social afternoon of friendship and food. I've heard many of the lovely ladies' comment that the afternoon was the first time they've been out all week. It's an amazing Scheme, which I'd love to see gain momentum across the country. The laughter, and chat is brilliant for me as a volunteer, but the benefit for all the clients is immense and far reaching. It's a joy to help.'

Dr. Lennane, GP at Alton Street Surgery:

'I think your scheme is a perfect example of ground-up, proper community-based support. This is very much the direction we need to go in and it is very encouraging to see a successful example already happening in our locality. We're trying to facilitate similar schemes across the patch.'

'It is very likely that the return on investment is significant in terms of reducing hospital admissions, reducing workload across the NHS and social care, as well as forming more healthy and supportive communities.'

Ms. Louise George, Headteacher Walford Primary School:

'The governors, staff team and children work hard to forge strong relationships within our local community. This year, we are delighted that the school's collaboration with the Walford Community Support Scheme has brought about huge benefits to all involved. The school host a Monthly Chat Luncheon Club, bringing together children and elderly members of the parish. Whilst clearly improving our pupils' language and social skills, confidence and self-esteem, it also addresses one of the support scheme priorities of combating loneliness and isolation. It is wonderful to witness both joy and happiness on the faces of young and old as they spend quality time together, sharing life experiences, reading stories and making one another laugh. This is a fantastic partnership which we will continue to strengthen and develop.'

Financial Summary

Grants and Donations

We were extremely fortunate to receive a number of grants and donations which we applied to the financial year of 2018-2019. Our benefactors, whom we should gratefully like to thank are (in alphabetical order):

- Cobrey Farms
- EF Bulmer Benevolent Fund
- Eveson Charitable Trust
- Herefordshire Community Foundation
- Howle Hill Nursery
- Poseidon Group Ltd
- Walford Relief in Need Charity
- Walford Residents' Association
- Walford Timber

Income and Expenditure for 2018-2019

Income	Actuals	Budget
Walford PC	£4,601	£6,200
Local business donations	£1,463	£1,975
Other grants	£4,167	£5,625
Total Income	£10,231	£13,800
Expenditure		
Administration costs	£8,978	£9,900
Publicity	£720	£700
Coffee Mornings	£76	£200
WOW	£457	£3,000
Total Expenditure	£10,231	£13,800
Surplus / Deficit	£0	£0

Summary of Fundraising for 2019-20

Throughout 2018, efforts have been made by the community Support working to group to obtain funds to secure our operations in future years. This has, to date, been successful to the order of £5000 which will contribute to the 2019-20 budget. This money has been raised from charitable grant funding, local business, our local summer and Christmas soiree events and donations from individual parishioners. It is expected that the shortfall will be provided by Walford Parish council.

2019-2020 Budget

For the coming financial year, we have reduced the budget we set for 2018-19 based on yearend actuals. We are comfortable that we can continue to deliver our services to the parish within these levels and with no impact on quality.

Income	
Walford PC	5,800
Local business donations	300
Other grants	4,400
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Total Income	10,500
Expenditure	
Administration costs	8,825
Publicity	600
Coffee Mornings	75
WOW	1,000
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Total Expenditure	10,500
Surplus / Deficit	0

Looking Forward

The Co-ordinator has met with GPs from both Alton Street and Pendeen Surgeries, and also the Patients Participation Group at Pendeen, with all parties being extremely supportive of the service we offer. There is currently much support and interest from relevant organisations in neighbouring areas, as well as in and around our own, and we are looking forward to strengthening our Scheme's position by encouraging other areas to follow suit. Eventually, we hope it will become the norm for each Parish to have its own set up, and therefore it will be protocol to refer parishioners to their local Scheme as a matter of course, by those with responsibility to signpost, as well as healthcare professionals.

We continue to actively seek out additional funding via the usual channels of grants, local charities and business, and have introduced the facility for our Service Users to make donations, should they be able and willing to do so.

Plan for Increasing Uptake

We have intensified our reporting on our events to the Ross Gazette, and there is something in the Paper on an almost weekly basis. We are also publicising our WoW via their What's On page too, with events being publicised weekly too.

Our links with the Church are stronger too and we have content regarding our events, coffee mornings and our Scheme in general in the Church newsletter, as well as utilising their Parish mailing contacts for general email communications.

We have forged stronger links with both surgeries in Ross, by taking part in Patient Participation meetings and also, by addressing the GPs directly as a group.

We are also working on spreading the word of our work to neighbouring Parishes in the hope that we become stronger as an organisation if we have similar surrounding schemes.

Programme of WoW Events

WoW is now an established initiative that aims to provide a regular and frequent programme of events for our service users. We have been collaborating with the Ross Action Bus for our trips further afield which is proving a successful and cost-effective method of transporting our Service Users to places of interest out of the Parish. The social engagement on the bus journey alone is jovial, and the places we visit are selected for maximum enjoyment, for minimum cost and with inclusive accessibility for our Service Users. A number of our Service Users previously attended social activities at Weston Under Penyard, which have now ceased due to lack of volunteers. They now rely on our Scheme for their only source of social engagement. The upcoming activities include:

- April:** Easter flower demonstration followed by lunch
- May:** A trip to Abergavenny with lunch, shopping and Museum Exhibition
- June:** A trip to Gloucester and Sharpness Canal Boat trip
- July:** Summer Soiree
- August:** A trip to Westonbury Mill Water Gardens Leominster
- September:** A trip to Ledbury with lunch and a museum visit
- October:** Autumn Forest of Dean drive stopping for lunch en route
- November:** Pub Quiz / Bingo

Summary

The Community Support Scheme is in existence to support anyone who is vulnerable in the Parish of Walford. This includes those vulnerable on a temporary or long-term basis. From the busy mum who is unable to drive due to surgery with several youngsters to take care of, to the elderly neighbour whose family has moved away and is feeling lonely because they cannot get out as much.

With drastic cuts to many services that previously provided a lifeline – the district nurse, bus services to name a few - it is hoped the Scheme can help fill in the gaps left by the removal of these and similar services, in particular to rural areas. The rural status of the Parish as well as an ageing demographic, does mean that more of our community are left on their own, as their families move away to study and find work. We try to help where we can - shopping trips, appointments transport, assistance with PCs, paperwork and befriending.

The Scheme was founded in April 2016, so we're now approaching the end of our third year. The first 6 months were spent setting up the administration side and getting the correct structures in place as well as recruiting a base of volunteers. November 2016 saw us sign up our first service user and we have now actively helped 27 people in our Community and have 26 volunteers on our books. We regularly provide in excess of 40 volunteer hours-worth of support per month across the activities and issues I have previously mentioned.

One of the most prolific issues we have encountered through the Scheme is the devastating effect loneliness can have on a person. Loneliness is seen by many as one of the largest health concerns we face.

Health risks

- Loneliness, living alone and poor social connections are as bad for your health as smoking 15 cigarettes a day. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Loneliness is worse for you than obesity. (Holt-Lunstad, 2010)
- Lonely people are more likely to suffer from dementia, heart disease and depression. (Valtorta et al, 2016) (James et al, 2011) (Cacioppo et al, 2006)
- Loneliness is likely to increase your risk of death by 29% (Holt-Lunstad, 2015)

Loneliness and older people

- The number of over-50s experiencing loneliness is set to reach two million by 2025/6. This compares to around 1.4 million in 2016/7 – a 49% increase in 10 years (Age UK 2018, All The Lonely People)
- There are 1.2 million chronically lonely older people in the UK (Age UK 2016, No-one should have no one).
- Half a million older people go at least five or six days a week without seeing or speaking to anyone at all (Age UK 2016, No-one should have no one).
- Over half (51%) of all people aged 75 and over live alone (Office for National Statistics 2010. General Lifestyle Survey 2008).
- Two fifths all older people (about 3.9 million) say the television is their main company (Age, U.K., 2014. Evidence Review: Loneliness in Later Life. London: Age UK).
- There are over 2.2 million people aged 75 and over living alone in Great Britain, an increase of almost a quarter (24%) over the past 20 years (ONS).

Loneliness and people of all ages

- A study by The Co-op and the British Red Cross reveals over 9 million people in the UK across all adult ages – more than the population of London – are either always or often lonely.
- Research commissioned by Eden Project initiative The Big Lunch found that disconnected communities could be costing the UK economy £32 billion every year.

Loneliness and families

- A survey by Action for Children found that 43% of 17-25 year olds who used their service had experienced problems with loneliness, and that of this same group less than half said they felt loved.
- Action for Children has also reported 24% of parents surveyed said they were always or often lonely.

Loneliness and disabled people

- Research by Sense has shown that up to 50% of disabled people will be lonely on any given day.

With the above facts in mind, we felt it was important to work on providing more social opportunities for our Service Users. So this year with the help of generous and invaluable donations we've been able to grow the social side of our Scheme, focussing more on our programme of events – What's on Walford – or WoW as we like to call it. We try to put on an activity or an outing every month or so – they've included trips to the cinema, travelling on the Cotswold Steam Railway, Tintern Abbey, Weston's cider as well as flower arranging workshops and an afternoon of games. We have a close relationship with the Ross Action Bus and they have provided their mini bus and a driver, which operates on a donation basis for most of our trips. Our collaboration with the Ross Action Bus continues to flourish.

We've continued to promote the Scheme throughout the community, using door-knocking, GP practices, Walford Primary schools and community groups to access those in need, and our network of volunteers continues to undertake assistance where required with cheerfulness and enthusiasm.

The Scheme relies on the Parishioner to help publicise what we do and to let us know, in the strictest of confidence, of anyone they may be concerned about, or who they think would enjoy our social activities. We also rely on the Community for Volunteers. There is no pressure to carry out regular commitments, any time donated is very greatly appreciated. Please do contact the Coordinator, Sarah Hayes, if you'd like further information.