



St Werburghs Community Association

Business Plan 2021-25

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1. Executive Summary

At the time of drafting, the UK is emerging from the most extraordinary time in many living memories, due to Covid-19. The pandemic has exposed significant correlations between poor mental and physical health, economic disadvantage, disease prevalence, life expectancy and quality of life and compounded existing inequalities in society.

Like many other VCSE organisations in Bristol, St Werburghs Community Association (SWCA) had to quickly adapt to the challenging circumstances of the pandemic, re-purposing service provision to meet complex and escalating needs, particularly in relation to social isolation, food poverty, digital exclusion and financial insecurity. The Centre remained open during the lockdowns, enabling access to computers and free wifi; we increased outreach provision, supported those in economic jeopardy and provided connection to those at risk of social isolation.

Since 1971, St Werburghs Community Centre (SWCC) has provided a safe, supportive and affordable environment within which the community's diverse population can enjoy cultural, educational, leisure and social activities to nourish and develop their own aspirations, as well as providing a focal point for the cohesion and vitality of the community itself. Pre-Covid, we registered c.80,000 individual visits per annum, of which 40% were from black and other minority ethnic groups. We are 'of the community, for the community'. We are a trusted, valued, inclusive resource, with links to the Centre that span generations. We offer a lifeline of connection and a true sense of community, in an accessible, welcoming space enjoyed by Centre users, Members and Tenants of all ages, races and backgrounds.

In consultation with our members and Centre users and through our participation in organisations such as Voscur, Locality and others, we are committed to building solutions to issues informed by local needs, including those which threaten to be exacerbated by Covid-19. Our current projects were all set up as a result of community consultation, focus groups, responding to local demand and identified gaps in service provision and we will continue our consultations throughout the strategy period. Acknowledging the challenges of planning for the medium and long-term during such a complex time, we envisage that the following themes will inform our service priorities for 2021-25:

- **Supporting mental health & reducing social isolation**
- **Increasing digital & economic inclusion**
- **Encouraging sustainable living**
- **Strengthening community cohesion**

These will be met through SWCA's projects, events and activities; through signposting people to services delivered by Centre members (and beyond) and through exploring new partnerships and opportunities. During this strategy period, we will be open to a 'test and learn' approach, to new ways of working, exploring new ideas and collaborations.

We will invest in our own capacity; develop and diversify our income sources and further embed the outcomes of the 2017-21 business plan. Our digital marketing strategy will deliver a refreshed website, an online booking system and help support our revenue ambitions.

We look forward to the future, whilst drawing on 50 years' experience of working with and through our community to achieve positive change, empowering residents to learn, develop, connect celebrate and to thrive.

2. About us

2.1 St Werburghs Community Centre

“The Centre is like being in England, but with all the world at once”.

SWCC staff member, March 2021

St Werburghs Community Centre (SWCC) is a characterful, renovated Victorian building with a contemporary, eco-friendly annexe and renovated gardens, in east-central Bristol. We offer 700sqm² accessible space for individuals, community groups, voluntary organisations, commercial businesses and public sector agencies to use for meetings, classes, events and courses. We are open 8 am to 10 pm Monday to Thursday and booking depending, to midnight on Fridays & Saturdays, and 11 pm on Sundays.

The Centre has been operating on this site since 1971 and is the city’s oldest community centre. In 1999, St Werburghs Community Association (SWCA) took over the centre management. The building has been leased from Bristol City Council on a 35-year term at a 'peppercorn' rent since 2009. In 2013, SWCC won the ‘Community Venue of the Year’ at the first 'Voscurs', Bristol's Voluntary & Community Sector awards. In 2016, we were awarded Silver status in the Green Tourism’s Conference Venue category, in recognition of our commitment to environmental sustainability.

The Centre serves the people of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill wards, as well as communities of interest across the city. Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill have the highest percentage of black and minority ethnic residents in Bristol – 33.5%, 37.9% and 56.9% respectively¹. There are 11 LSOAs, which have been ranked in the UK’s 10% most deprived in terms of multiple deprivation (income, education, employment, health, housing, crime, skills and training) within 10 minutes’ walk from the Centre and a further eight are within the 20% most multiply deprived areas².

In 2019-20, we provided space for 384 groups, a 15% increase on the previous year. We accommodated over 80,000 individual visits including those from our 200+ member groups as well as other local residents, charitable organisations, public and private sector organisations. Some visitors use the Centre once, others come monthly, weekly or even daily. Amongst our members are local and national charities, arts and cultural groups; faith and support groups. The Centre hosts a very broad range of regular activities including - art, gardening, cooking, exercise, music, wellbeing therapies, languages, sewing, children's classes, ESOL, yoga and dance. The venue is regularly booked by communities of all faiths for weddings and other important life events.

In this way, SWCC inspires, enables and encourages local residents to learn, develop, celebrate and to thrive. We offer a lifeline of connection and a true sense of community, in an accessible, welcoming space enjoyed by people of all ages, races and backgrounds. Through our affordable and inclusive facilities, we help to build social capital at a time when this is vitally needed.

We host tenant organisations (currently Khaas, Kingsway International Christian Centre, Amicus Foster Care, Herbalists Without Borders, Zedify and Karen Christie Integrative Counselling) who utilise our affordable spaces to deliver services to local communities. The on-site café - Neck of the Woods - is rooted in the principles of permaculture and sustainability.

We run successful projects which promote social inclusion and better mental health and increase economic and digital inclusion. Our popular annual events’ programme reaches 2,500+ adults and

children and includes Picnic in the Park in Mina Road Park; Festive Friends, Remembrance Service, Christmas Market and Open Day, which all not only offer a fun, free way for the community to get together but also offer a way to showcase their interests, services, talents, recruit to groups and classes, take action on issues important to them and learn about each other. We serve and support our local residents' needs - listening, networking, capacity building and being what a true community centre should be - a welcoming hub for all.

2.2 St Werburghs Community Association

St Werburghs Community Association (SWCA) is governed by a [Management Committee](#), comprised of 10 volunteers who live locally, use the Centre and/or have a significant personal interest in the locality. They are elected annually from the Association's membership and local area. SWCA was incorporated as a Registered Charity (no. 1074495) and a Registered Company Limited by Guarantee (no. 3713212) in 1999, when it took over responsibility for the management of the community centre. SWCA became a full member of Locality in 2002, underlining our wider responsibility to community development and neighbourhood regeneration. We are a longstanding member of Voscur, the umbrella organisation for Bristol's voluntary organisations. In 2010, we achieved the national VISIBLE Communities quality standard in recognition our effective management.

SWCA's main aim is to promote the benefit and social welfare of the local people in a common effort to advance health, education and good relationships by eliminating discrimination and encouraging equality of opportunity between different groups. We achieve this through i) our projects and events ii) offering a trusted, multidisciplinary and inter-faith community meeting place and iii) providing accessible facilities and resources.



St Werburghs Community Centre

Horley Rd, St Werburgh's, Bristol

[Write a review](#)

4.7 ★★★★★ 27 reviews

Sort by: Most relevant

All classes 3 cafe 3

★★★★★ 4 years ago

Amazing café and a great community space with function/meeting rooms and lots of exciting classes and things to get involved with. Free computers with cheap printing services.

Like



Through the services and facilities that we offer at the Centre, SWCA is contributing to the priority targets agreed by Bristol City Council (BCC) and the Mayor of Bristol's One City Plan. As a Community Anchor Organisation (CAO), we seek to collaborate with other CAOs, the wider VCSE and with Bristol City Council, particularly in the aim to 'build back better' during the post-Covid-19 recovery phase. We will do this with particular emphasis on supporting mental health and wellbeing; addressing social isolation; enhancing digital inclusion; increasing pro-environmental behaviours and encouraging community cohesion, as explored further in Section 5.

We are committed to collaborative and asset-based working principles. Our culture is informed by the needs, views and participation of our members and wider communities of interest and operation.

2.3 Our Vision, Mission and Values

Our **vision** is that all residents living in Bristol, and particularly in wards of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill and their neighbouring districts, enjoy a high quality of life; are able to achieve their economic, social and educational goals, and are part of a strong, prosperous and caring local community.

In order to achieve our vision, SWCA has as our **mission**:

- To manage a community building which provides high quality facilities and a range of activities, accessible to all sections of the community.
- To continue to develop and improve the building so as to meet the changing needs and expectations of the community, both now and in the future.
- To provide a range of spaces for local community groups, in order to enhance local services for residents, particularly for people who are disadvantaged, vulnerable or who face difficulties accessing provision appropriate to their particular needs and circumstances.
- To develop activities at the Centre and in the local area that increase participation in civic life, including through providing opportunities for self-development, volunteering and involvement in local decision-making.

Our Values

Equal Opportunities - Equality and social justice for all is at the heart of our practice and standing beside those who struggle, is important to us. As both a service provider and employer, SWCA promotes equality of opportunity and believes in challenging discrimination of all kinds.

Community Cohesion – SWCA is committed to helping create a strong and prosperous community in which individuals from all cultures, backgrounds and beliefs are able to develop mutual understanding and respect. We stand firmly alongside our fellow citizens in the continuing fight against racism, social injustice and the denial of human rights.

Democracy and Accountability – SWCA is a membership organisation and its Management Committee is accountable to the community through open meetings and the annual election of its officers. It regularly communicates with and consults all sectors of the community to ensure that its planning and decision-making continues to reflect locally identified priorities.

Partnership Working - SWCA believes that collaboration with voluntary and community groups, public bodies and private sector organisations improves its ability to develop and deliver enhanced resources and services.

Independence and Financial Sustainability - SWCA recognises that it is in the best interest of the communities it serves for it to plan for a financially sustainable future based on sound management, cost effectiveness and increasing its own income generation.

Environmental Sustainability – SWCA recognises the need to meet the challenge of climate change through adopting good environmental practices and promoting all aspects of environmental sustainability throughout its operations.

3. External context

3.1 The city of Bristol

Population: With an estimated population of 464,300 (2019), Bristol is the UK's tenth largest city. Bristol's 85,900 children make up 18.5% of the total population. The growth in the number of primary school age children in Bristol in the last decade is one of the highest in the country. If recent trends continue, the total population of Bristol is projected to increase by 69,300 people to 532,700 by 2043.¹

Diversity: The population of Bristol has become increasingly diverse. There are now at least 45 religions, at least 187 countries of birth and at least 91 main languages spoken. The proportion of the population who are not 'White British' increased from 12% (2001) to 22% (2011).¹

Deprivation: 2019 data shows that Bristol has 41 areas in the most deprived 10% in England, including 3 in the most deprived 1%. 20% of children live in relative poverty – significantly higher than the national average of 17%.² Around 69,000 people in Bristol live in the bottom 10% most deprived parts of England, and that includes 17,800 children and 10,500 elderly people. A report by the Runnymede Trust found that Bristol was 55th in the country for the size of inequality in employment between White British people and ethnic minorities.³

Education: The growth in the number of primary school age children in Bristol in the last decade is one of the highest in the country. As at July 2019, 27% of Bristol pupils (16,900 children) are Disadvantaged. 7.7% of 16-17-year-olds (2018/19) were "not in education, employment or training" (NEET), worse than national average (5.5%). State of Bristol report, 2020¹

Environment: despite improvements in air quality, NO2 levels are still above EU limits in central areas. Approx. 300 deaths each year in Bristol can be attributed to air pollution, representing 8.5% of all deaths. 27% of Bristolians ride a bike at least weekly (19% in the most deprived areas). 72% of local residents are satisfied with parks and open spaces, but only 53% in the most deprived areas.

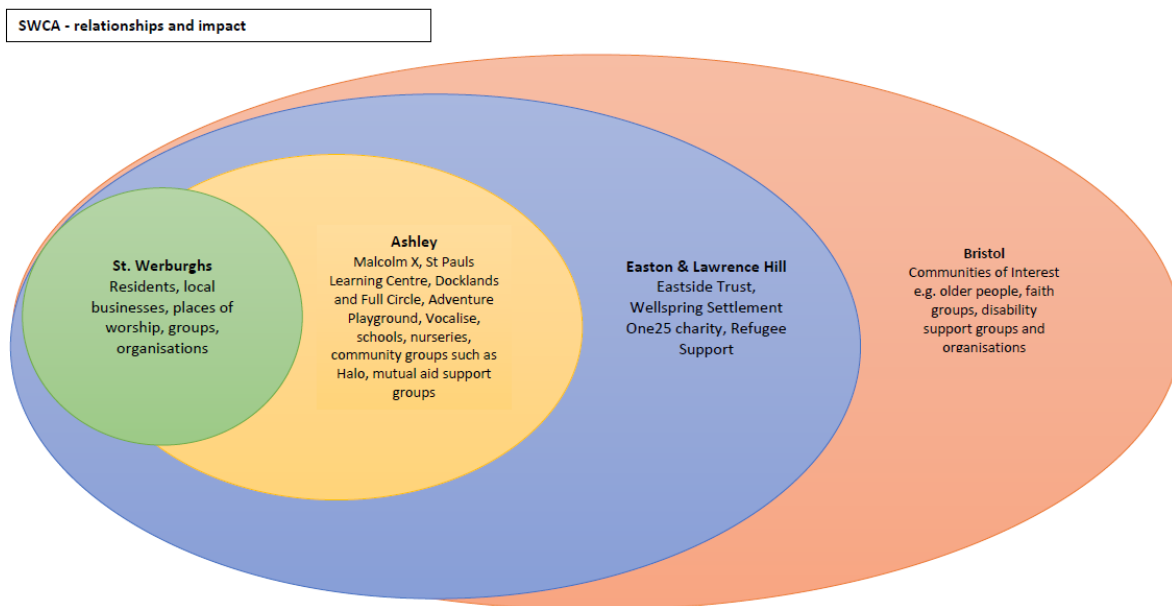
Health: Life expectancy for women is 82.6 years and for men 78.4 years (2016-2018), both are significantly worse than the national average. The inequalities gap in life expectancy between the most and least deprived areas in Bristol is 9.8 years for men and 7.7 years for women. 50,300 Bristol GP patients (11.8%) have a diagnosis of depression, above the England average (10.7%). Emergency hospital admissions for self-harm are significantly higher than the national average. Bristol's suicide rate at 12.7 deaths per 100,000 is significantly higher than the national average of 9.9 per 100,000.²

Housing: 98 people were sleeping rough on the street in a single night in Bristol (Nov 2019), which is likely to be an under representation – but still a rapid rise over the last 7 years (9 in Nov 2012). This excludes anyone who is part of the 'hidden homeless. In March 2020, the Council had a duty to house 618 homeless households. Average house prices have increased by £133,900 over the last ten years, (70% increase: 41% for England & Wales). The average house price is 9 x higher than average earnings.

Employment: Pre-Covid, the employment rate was 76.7% meaning 245,000 residents (of working age) were in employment. The "Claimant Count" in March 2020 was 8,520 residents, including 1,500 young (16-24 years) people (18% of claimants) and 1,815 older (aged 50+) people (21% of claimants).

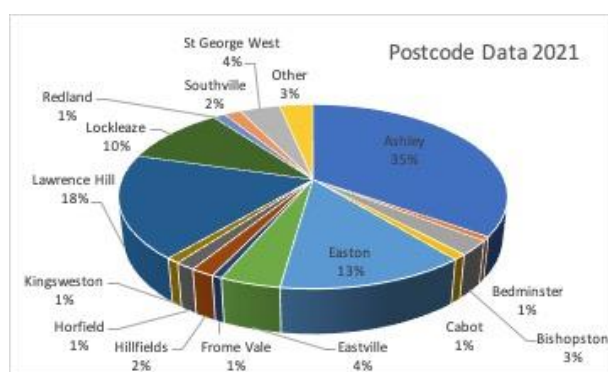
3.2 Communities of interest

SWCA operates within a broad network of associations and relationships, as mapped in outline below, from which we take our mandate and through which we will seek to deliver our services during this strategy period. This will be through a mix of consultation; informal partnerships; venue access and more formal collaborations.



There are 11 LSOAs, which have been ranked in the UK’s 10% most deprived in terms of multiple deprivation (income, education, employment, health, housing, crime, skills and training) within ten minutes’ walk from the Centre and a further eight are within the 20% most multiply deprived areas³.

We are proud to work with diverse communities which are home to a broad mix of ethnicities, particularly people who have a Black African, Black Caribbean, other Black, Mixed, Pakistani, Bangladeshi, other Asian and other Arab heritage. According to our 2021 postcode survey, the highest number of Centre users are from Ashley (35%), Lawrence Hill (18%) and Easton (13%).



Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill wards have the highest percentage of black and minority ethnic residents in Bristol, which has increased considerably in the last 10 years - from 26% to 35.5% in Ashley, 25% to 37.9% in Easton and from 32% to 56.9% in Lawrence Hill. These wards are also home to many people born outside the UK and for whom English is not their main language; the majority of whom are from Poland, Jamaica, Somalia and Pakistan.

	Bristol	Ashley	Easton	Lawrence Hill
Number of residents	464,300	19,100	14,200	19,600
% residents born outside UK	14.7%	23.8%	27.3%	39.2%

Ward Profiles for Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill also include the following relevant attributes:

- 39-44% of residents say they require assistance to develop their skills; almost a quarter (21%) of Easton and Lawrence Hill residents don't feel comfortable using digital services.
- 17% of Lawrence Hill residents struggle financially (compared to 9% average). 38% of children are entitled to free school meals; 44% are considered to be 'disadvantaged'; only 61% of Early years pupils achieving a good level of development compared to 70% average.
- Only 19-22% residents of all three wards feel they can influence local decision-making.
- Around one third of residents in Easton and Lawrence Hill are aged 65+ and receiving domestic social care support, with high levels of social isolation reported in Lawrence Hill in particular
- People living in these three wards are much more likely than average to be living in overcrowded households; more likely than average to have been affected by anti-social behaviours or been victims of crime in the last 12 months.
- In the NHS Bristol Mental Health Needs Assessment (2011), Lawrence Hill was identified as a high mental health risk ward⁵.

3.3 The socio-economic impacts of Covid-19

At the time of drafting, the UK is emerging from the most extraordinary time in many living memories, due to the impacts of Covid-19. The full socio-economic effects will only become apparent during the coming months, particularly after the ending of the Government furlough scheme which is supporting 4.7m employees and currently forecast to cease in September 2021. However, the pandemic has already exposed correlations between compromised mental and physical health, economic disadvantage, disease prevalence, life expectancy and quality of life. In England, the age-standardised mortality rate for deaths involving Covid-19 in the most deprived areas has been more than double the mortality rate in the least deprived areas⁶. The pandemic has also exposed enduring issues of structural racial inequality with disproportionate impacts being experienced by people of colour.⁷

Social isolation – according to the British Red Cross, before the crisis one in five people reported being often or always lonely and 41% of UK adults report feeling lonelier since lockdown⁸. The report noted that some communities have been at greater risk of loneliness than others – people from Black, Asian and minority ethnic communities, parents with young children, young people, those living with long term physical and mental health conditions, people on lower incomes and those with limited access to digital technology and the internet. Covid has also reduced the support available for refugees and asylum seekers. The highest number of people who reported feeling lonely live in urban areas (23%)⁸.

Mental health – the number of people coping well with the stress of the crisis in 2021 has fallen since 2020, according to the Mental Health Foundation⁹. In April 2020, during the first lockdown, 73% of adults said they were coping well compared to 64% in February 2021. Young adults (18-24-year-olds), full-time students, people who are unemployed, single parents and those with long-term disabling health problems and pre-existing problems with their mental health continue to be significantly more likely to be feeling distressed, compared with UK adults generally. Whilst reports of anxiety decreased, feelings of loneliness have increased; suicidal thoughts have increased from 8% to 13% of those polled.

Widening economic inequalities – the pandemic has had unequal economic impacts with almost half (47%) of those who were finding things “very difficult” financially before lockdown reporting things being “much worse” and 23% saying things are “worse”. This contrasts with respondents who were financially ‘comfortable’ before the pandemic. Of this group 20% are now worse off, whilst a quarter (27%) are better off now than they were in Spring 2020¹⁰.

There has been a 98% increase in the number of people on Universal Credit (UC) during the pandemic, increasing by 3million claimants from March 2020 to 6million in January 2021. In April 2020, 15% of claimants were 16 to 24 years old – this increased to 29.8% by July 2020¹¹. Whilst the proposed reduction in UC and other benefit rates in April 2021 was deferred, the Joseph Rowntree Foundation warned that 700,000 more people would have been pulled into poverty, including 300,000 children, and 500,000 more of those already in poverty will be pushed into deep poverty (more than 50% below the poverty line)¹². It is estimated that over 750,00 households are in rent arrears, over half of which have been caused by Covid-19. These threaten to cause significant rises in evictions.¹³

Impacts on employment – for those who were able to do so, working from home increased dramatically during the pandemic with high variability between well-paid, professional jobs and lower skilled, entry level or manual jobs. People aged 16 to 24 years were less likely to do some work from home than those in older age groups. 45% of people in the South-West reported as homeworking during the pandemic, although this was not all attributed to the pandemic restrictions¹⁴.

Research by the Resolution Foundation in October 2020 found that around one-in-five young people, and over one-in-five black, Asian and minority ethnic workers, who were furloughed during lockdown have since their lost jobs – and just one-in-three young people who have lost their jobs have been able to find new work¹⁵. Workers aged 24 and under account for almost three-fifths of the 726,000 fall in pay-rolled employment since the crisis began¹⁶.

Impact on education – the Education Endowment Foundation found attainment gaps in reading and maths equivalent to 9 months amongst KS1 pupils considered to be disadvantaged (2 months for all children). The UCL Institute for Education found one in five of those eligible for free school meals had no access to a computer at home during the pandemic. A survey by the Sutton Trust found that 15% of teachers in the most deprived schools said that more than a third of their students would not have adequate access to an electronic device for home learning, compared with 2% of teachers in the most affluent schools. 12% of teachers in deprived schools also thought that more than a third of their students would not have sufficient internet access¹⁷.

A widening digital divide – pre-Covid-19, 11.9 million people were considered to be ‘digitally disadvantaged’ lacking essential skills for everyday life. 53% employees lacked the digital skills required for work.¹⁸ It is estimated that within the next 10 to 20 years, 90% of jobs will require some sort of digital skills¹⁹. The shift to greater online activity for work, domestic administration (shopping, banking), leisure and schooling during the pandemic has exacerbated the gap between those who have access to the hardware/broadband and skills to use digital services.

Of the 8million people in the UK who don't use the internet, 90% suffer from other kinds of economic or social disadvantages. They are also more likely to be in the lowest income bracket and/or be disabled with long-standing health conditions²⁰. This digital divide threatens to create a permanent schism between those who have the skills and knowledge to thrive in our society and those who do not, reinforcing existing inequalities.

3.4 The impact of Covid-19 on the VCSE sector in Bristol

As detailed in the Black South-West Network/Voscur/Locality reports, the Voluntary, Community & Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector quickly adapted to the Covid-19 crisis, re-purposing service provision to meet complex and escalating needs in the community, particularly in relation to poor mental health; digital exclusion and financial insecurity²¹.

For VCSE organisations, post-Covid priorities are applying for grant funding (71%), building partnerships (69%), reviewing services (63%), improving budgeting and planning capacity (50%), providing wellbeing support for staff (40%) and building digital infrastructure (34%). Internal flexibility (62%), resilient leadership (56%) and creativity/innovation (54%) were cited key attributes needed for organisations to navigate the challenges of the pandemic, along with collaborations/partnerships (40%), social networks (41%), digital infrastructure (38%) and financial reserves (26%).

The report noted the challenge to leadership in the context of the on-going uncertainties which hinder decision-making, with a knock-on effect on funding. The report also highlights how this uncertainty poses a threat to the mental health of VCSE staff, with sector leaders continuing to need to balance their own wellbeing, with that of their teams. The importance of regular communication with colleagues and Boards is a way to mitigate burdens on leaders, whilst also building a plurality of ideas for problem-solving.

The importance of enshrining equity as a guiding principle for VCSE organisations and the wider city, has been re-emphasised through the pandemic. This also resonates in terms of fairness in access to funding, particularly when smaller organisations are in competition with larger players. The vulnerability of community anchor organisations and community hubs, particularly those which manage or own buildings have been most affected by the reduced footfall and provision is highly dependent on a return to 'normal'. Supportive relationships with long-term funders have underpinned the financial sustainability of many organisations in this regard. The report cites the rise of "informal leadership particularly in leading volunteering, self-organised groups to emergency response and unlocking communities' potential to 'take care of themselves'". Similarly, The Kings Fund noted that more than 200 local community groups registered as part of the Covid-19 Mutual Aid UK network even before the lockdown began²² and Voscur has heralded the opportunity for organisations to harness this rise in community-based volunteering.²³

In conclusion, the research emphasises the resilience, agility and significant social value of Bristol's VCSE response to the Covid-19 crisis and argues it must be robustly mapped into the city's future delivery models and resourced adequately and appropriately.

3.5. The impact of Covid-19 on community centres

Covid-19 has underlined the importance and role of social and local community infrastructure and community organisations playing a vital role as "cogs of connection"²⁴, whilst showing great resilience and flexibility in securing funding to mitigate lost income. In many cases, community centres increased services, gained more connections, expanded engagement and saw an increase volunteering during the pandemic. They acted as a community hub, when many other essential services, were closed. Locality is calling for a community-powered economic recovery through the creation of collaborative public services that unlock community power and appropriate funding in support. Locality has highlighted the need for community centre to ensure future service provision addresses issues linked to mental health, educational disparities, digital exclusion and tech poverty and these have been incorporated into our strategy planning.

4. Internal context

4.1 The Building

“I am very pleased with the result and am still very impressed by the energy and drive SWCA have demonstrated. They succeeded in the face of adversity and have come out with a brilliant new facility and (hopefully) a more sustainable business. I can honestly say this was £1m well spent!”

John Bos, Bristol City Council Community Assets Manager

The Centre was originally built in 1902 as a school and comprises a central hall surrounded by a range of rooms with about 500m² of usable floorspace. SWCA manage the building at a peppercorn rent on a 35-year lease, awarded by BCC in 2009. In the same year, SWCA obtained a £1,050,000 grant from the Community Assets Programme through which the place was transformed from a dilapidated and shabby building into a welcoming, community venue. Derelict outbuildings were also replaced by an energy-efficient annex offering an additional 200m² of flexible space. Bristol City Council (BCC) installed a new roof and windows as their commitment to the Centre.

In 2015, the revenue potential from lettings was increased by converting two storerooms into offices and we also built an external store, using sustainable materials to lower the carbon footprint. In 2016, we created a café in the Centre lobby which is currently let to ‘Neck of the Woods’, a conscious café whose core values are inspired by permaculture and sustainability. In 2016-17 the Centre’s underused car park was transformed into an insect-themed community garden, play, education and leisure space for all to enjoy. In 2019-20 a further capital project was undertaken, funded by Power to Change’s Community Business Fund, matched by Enover Environmental Trust and Istock Community Trust. This included repairs to the timber turrets and bell tower, skylights, redecoration in the main building, improvements to accessibility and fire safety, lighting and heating, new chairs and AV equipment. The building is fully accessible with widened doorways, automatic doors, accessible toilets, wheelchair ramps, hearing devices, an adult-sized changing bed and disabled parking. Services are open-to-all and proof of address is not required, which meets the needs of the users who are of No Fixed Address.

The Centre has the following range of facilities available for its users:

- A 100m² main function hall, full of character with double height windows and wooden floors, used for conferences, private parties, dance or martial arts classes
- A fully accessible, professionally equipped kitchen, suitable for range of activities, such as cookery classes or professional catering
- A range of five modern rooms suitable for flexible community use, meetings and training, with internet access, flexible set-up options, with equipment and refreshments available
- A large lobby hosting the Reception, the café and informal networking and free, open-access computer suite available from 10 am to 8 pm with free Wi-Fi
- Gardens for group work, growing and outdoor play spaces (see below)
- Seven office spaces rented to local organisations on easy terms at affordable rates
- A storage room for users; community recycling facilities for toners and tetra packaging.

4.2 The Gardens

“I come here with my 2-and 6-year-olds and they love playing on the slide and tunnel and interacting with the displays and musical instruments. It is a very safe environment for my kids and they like chatting to the people who tend to the gardens.”

Visitor, 2020



In 2016-17, our grant-funded ‘Werbuzz Werbuzz’ project transformed the underused car park space at the back of the building into a community growing, seating, play and event space. Volunteer Gardening Days involved hundreds of local people who were supported by a professional landscaping company who oversaw the development creating a fantastic community area. The Garden is insect-themed – with a solitary bee beehive, herb spiral, large bug hotel and engaging educational displays. Accessible musical play installations are sited between the fruit trees on the south side of the garden. A slide and a play tunnel completed the play area around a hexagonal play pit which can also be used for small events, such as storytelling or group support work. Old, recycled wood growing containers in the perimeters were also replaced with brand new solid ones made of larch sleepers. The gardens have gained a couple of pergolas and new lockable recycling stations. The gardens were particularly valuable for the community during the Covid-19 pandemic when outdoor spaces were/are in high demand. In this strategy period, we will explore the potential to increase and diversify use of the space, as detailed in sections 5 and 8.

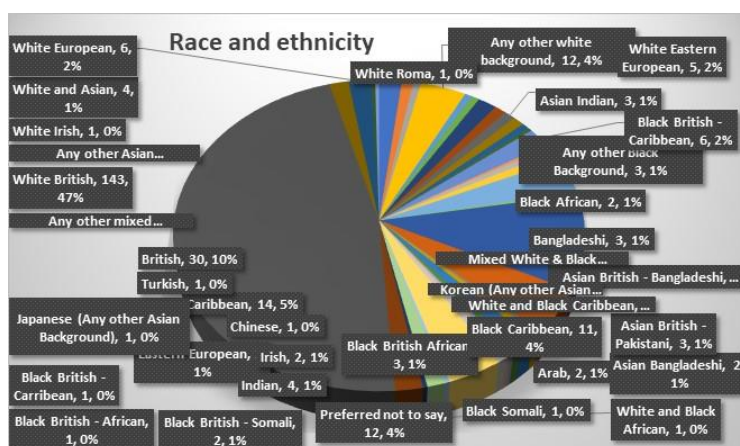
4.3 Centre users

Since opening our doors in 1971, SWCC has been a true community space and resource. Our vision is that “all residents living in Bristol, and particularly in the wards of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill and their neighbouring districts, enjoy a high quality of life; are able to achieve their economic, social and educational goals, and are part of a strong, prosperous and caring local community.”

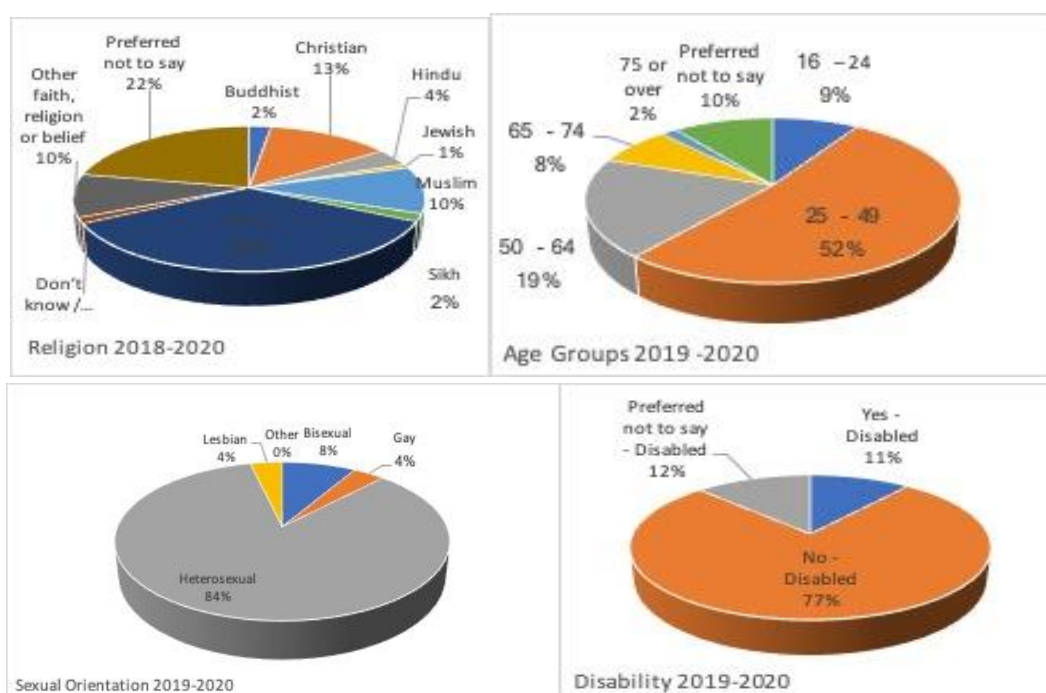
Through our welcoming approach and affordable venue, inclusive projects, collaborative partnerships and events we inspire, enable and encourage local residents to learn, develop and to thrive, in an accessible space enjoyed by people of all ages, races and backgrounds. The Centre provides a safe, supportive and affordable environment within which the community’s diverse population can enjoy a range of cultural, educational, leisure and social activities to nourish and develop their own aspirations, as well as providing a focal point for developing the cohesion and vitality of the community itself. Pre-Covid, we registered around 80,000 individual visits per annum, of which 40% were from black and other minority ethnic groups.

One of the Centre’s unique features is that it is a 'neutral' interfaith and intergenerational venue, which makes it popular for people from all ethnic backgrounds. This is demonstrated through the number and range of community groups, voluntary organisations and individuals that regularly use the Centre and has been proven in many local consultations and survey data, such as our Postcode

Survey which maps all the Centre Users, as noted above. Our 2019-20 monitoring evidenced that 29% of our project participants were from Black and other Ethnic Minority backgrounds. On some courses, such as Raking & Baking, an open-access cooking and gardening course which combines improving wellbeing through social contact and the development of skills and self-confidence, 47% of the participants were from non-White British backgrounds, as below.



This demographic diversity is also reflected in the broad range of people use from all faiths; ages, sexual orientations and people who are living with a disability (that they chose to disclose), who use the services, as below.



Our services and projects directly reach over 1,000 individuals per annum. We have over 150 people on our Raking & Baking list and 58 families accessing the weekly Foodbank, representing 258 individuals. Our Stay & Play, Easy PC and Tai Chi are well attended with over 60 users per annum each. The Open Access Public computers are used by over 100 new members each year. Many people benefit from multiple services on offer at the Centre as well as our own projects and events. The diversity of our Centre users is our main asset, offering a cultural richness and vibrancy which is evident at all our events and projects.

4.4 Members

We have 200+ Member Groups which use the facilities at the Centre on regular basis. These include all faith groups, various cultural and BAME groups, arts and music groups, support groups for people experiencing the greatest inequality, such as Alcoholics Anonymous, Mental Health, Disability, Older People, Women or Young People. Our Members also include local and national charities which support Bristol's residents and class providers who offer weekly activities ranging from life drawing and yoga to dance, martial arts and singing, those are open to people of all ages from toddlers to over 70s.

A Members' survey was conducted in April 2021 and helped us understand how they have been affected by Covid-19; how we could support their transition back to the Centre and also their reasons for membership: 62% cited the welcoming atmosphere, 59% the sense of community (an opportunity to make new connections, influence decisions, reach wider audiences), 71% appreciated the facilities, accessibility, location, green credentials and 56% were pleased with the affordable rates. SWCA supports its Members with capacity-building, marketing and fundraising. As detailed elsewhere in this strategy, we recognise the opportunity to work even more closely with a number of our member groups in the development of our services during this strategy period. 58% of Members who responded to the survey are interested in joint bid development. The collaborative nature of our organisation can bring additional value to the services we host and community engagement, being inclusive and reaching out to a wide and diverse range of networks easily.

In addition to tenants and members, the Centre is the base for a wide range of local community services and public sector agencies which provide services to local communities, including Police surgeries, employment advice, debt advice, councillor surgeries, neighbourhood associations, fundraising events, as well as enquiries for housing, benefits, mental health and care.

4.5 Tenants

We offer seven low-cost offices which are often used by community groups or small businesses as an affordable 'incubation' space, enabling an effective pathway to expansion and scaling their services.

Our current tenants include:

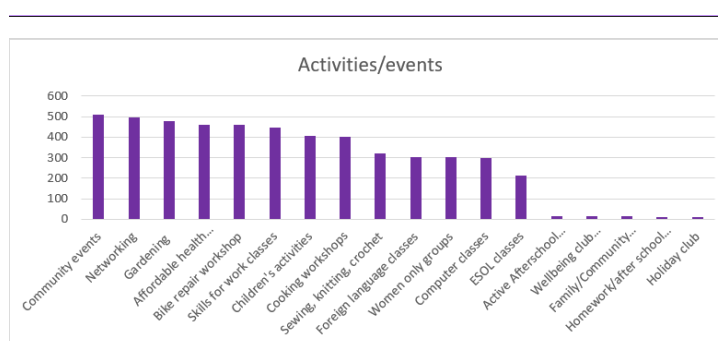
- Khaas - seeks to improve the lives of South Asian disabled children, their carers and their families. The organisation offers Saturday respite care, holiday play scheme, health-related sessions, short courses, young carer's projects and information workshops.
- Kingsway International Christian Centre - engages people in worship, Bible study and prayer. Young people may also hold their own services and perform songs and dramas.
- Amicus Foster Care - is an independent fostering agency supporting families to care for children and young people who are looked after by local authorities. The agency is small, friendly and responsive.
- Herbalists without Borders - supporting refugees without access to NHS.
- Karen Christie Integrative Counselling – offering affordable access to talking therapies.
- Zedify – an environmentally-conscious logistics company.

5. Service provision

“The role of community organisations in tackling the long-term social and economic consequences of the virus will be vital....these organisations are locally rooted, trusted and there for the long term. They have strong existing relationships with local people, especially with those whom public services traditionally find “hard to reach”. As multi-purpose organisations, they can respond flexibly, join up with other services, get people connected locally, and co-produce services with the individual.”

Locality, 2021

SWCA has a strong track record of delivering services that meet local needs, informed by qualitative and quantitative research. We conduct a User Forum and an Open Day to invite community participation in our service provision review, along with Centre User surveys and annual postcode tracking. Face-to-face interviews are also undertaken at local events, including our Picnic in the Park which attracts more than 1,500 people. We also undertake an annual Community Survey, to identify priorities for future development. In 2019, our survey highlighted the following responses:



This community feedback has informed our strategic focus areas for 2021-25, along with consultation with our Management Committee and staff members. Our key priorities for this period are to increase digital and economic inclusion; improve mental health and wellbeing; increase environmental awareness and strengthen the capacity of equalities-led and neighbourhood groups. We will do this through the direct delivery of projects, collaboration with our member groups and via the provision of affordable facilities.

5.1. Priorities and guiding principles

Staying flexible - SWCC remained open during the lockdowns enabling access to computers/Wifi; increased outreach provision supported those in economic jeopardy and provided connection to those at risk of social isolation. This included an outreach scheme providing a ‘Recipe in a Box’ and Wellbeing Walks; ‘Festive Friends’ at Christmas and telephone befriending; a foodbank and limited access to the Centre for use of the free to use computers and other equipment. We have also been accommodating essential healthcare training, faith groups, and a number of support groups to include Alcoholics Anonymous meetings, family support sessions, SARS an art group for women who have experienced sexual assaults or/and domestic violence, mental health women circle and NLP sessions. We are managing a phased return of Member groups and activities from June/July 2021 with a fuller provision of regular activities expected thereafter.

Building confidence post-Covid - through social media activity, emails to members and website updates, we are encouraging uptake to re-invigorate revenue. At the time of drafting, the Centre Coordinator reports that future bookings are steadily increasing, and the café expects to be

operational by June. We have offered free membership to all our member groups to incentivise a return to the centre as well as the completion of a survey to help us inform any changes to be made.

Increasing digital capability – despite the challenges of Covid, we have progressed a project to digitise our administrative systems to increase revenues, including a new online booking system ‘OnCentre’, which includes a bespoke Service User Monitoring. This will be ready for use from Summer 2021 and will also be hosted on our new website, which is being currently developed. It will enable users to access real time information about the room availability, prices, events and activities at the Centre. As well as enhancing and improving the facilities booking with an expected positive impact on revenue, OnCentre will also deliver more efficient data capture for service user monitoring, which in turn will reinforce grant monitoring and evaluation. We will be offering training sessions with our Duty Managers and any group leaders from June 2021.

Building on our strengths - we are ‘of the community, for the community’. We are a trusted, valued, inclusive resource, with connections to the Centre that span generations. We will maximise our role as an anchor organisation, focusing on our ability to engage a diversity of cultures, which acts as a catalyst for building social capital, at a time when this is vitally needed. We endorse Locality’s call for a “community-powered” recovery from Covid-19, in order that we can meet the singular challenges created by the pandemic and to “build back better”.

Ensuring a sustainable future - whilst the impacts of Covid-19 are still uncertain, we recognise the need to diversify our income streams. We will seek to build internal capacity, skills and competencies so that we can remain responsive and relevant in our service provision, retaining existing Centre users; attracting new members and users and securing funding in support of our charitable aims. Increasing our financial sustainability is a key objective for the period. Section 7 explores income scenario modelling for the remaining months of 2021 and 2022-23, which has been developed by our Finance Manager with the support of an external financial analyst. The Director, Centre Coordinator and Finance Manager will closely monitor room hire and venue bookings. As explored in section 8, securing additional external funding from Trusts & Foundations for existing and future delivery remains a priority and will build on successful track record with local and national funders such as the Bristol Impact Fund, the National Lottery, Quartet Community Foundation, John James Foundation, New Beginnings and John James Foundation. We remain extremely grateful to all our funders who continue to provide such valuable commitment to our work.

We will be exploring new models of income generation including an individual membership scheme, drawing on successful exemplars within the community centre sector. We will increase our marketing and promotional activity to reduce voids and increase regular bookings, as explored in section 10. We will also seek to increase revenue opportunities by engaging residents that we are not always reaching by piloting new events; increasing our marketing activity on social channels and will explore how working with the local business community could help to reach shared audiences. We will also develop a local media strategy as part of our Communications Plan, which will also capture this increase in both on and off-line activity.

Remaining responding to local needs – in consultation with our members and Centre users and through our participation in organisations such as Voscur, Locality and others, we are committed to building solutions to issues informed by local needs, including those which threaten to be exacerbated by Covid-19. Our current projects have all been set up as a result of community consultation, focus groups, responding to local demand and identified gaps in local service provision and we will continue our consultations throughout the strategy period. In 2021, this will include a members’ survey; a QR

survey (TBC) and face to face consultations at our Users Forum Open Day & Picnic in the Park (July – September 2021 - TBC). We are interested in wider research across Ashley jointly with other local organisations to inform the establishment of the ‘Ashley Alliance’ as explored in Section 5.5. We recognise the importance of collaborative approaches and will explore more formalised partnership with organisations which serve communities of interest, both inside and outside of the Centre.

Exploring new models of support – informed by our surveys and our diverse internal and external networks, we will review our service provision every January, to ensure that we are addressing gaps that exist locally. For example, we know that new parents were particularly isolated during the pandemic and unable to access traditional models of support. Similarly, we recognise that 18-24-year-olds have been disproportionately affected by the loss of jobs and lack of economic opportunities and may benefit from having targeted age-relevant support to explore skills and training e.g. apprenticeships; green infrastructure jobs. However, until we can secure funding for more staff, we are constrained by capacity and need to balance the ‘everyday reality’ with planning for the future. Notwithstanding the operational challenges during such a complex time, internal and external consultation has indicated the following themes will inform our service priorities for 2021-25:

- **Supporting mental health & reducing social isolation**
- **Increasing digital & economic inclusion**
- **Encouraging sustainable living**
- **Strengthening community cohesion**

These will be met through SWCA’s projects, events and activities; through signposting people to services delivered by Centre members (and beyond) and through exploring new partnerships and opportunities. During this strategy period, we will be open to a ‘test and learn’ approach and seek to build our understanding of new ways of working, such as social prescribing.

5.2. Supporting mental health & reducing social isolation

Prior to the Covid-19 pandemic, Age UK estimated there were 1.2 million chronically lonely older people in the UK¹. Perhaps less well-documented is how this issue also affects younger people – in 2018, 40% of survey respondents aged 16-24 reported feeling lonely often or very often². Others who are badly affected by loneliness are “widowed older homeowners living alone with long-[term health conditions; unmarried, middle-agers with long-term health conditions and younger renters with little trust and sense of belonging to their area.”³ ‘Empty nesters’ and young, new mothers are also much more likely to feel lonely⁴.

SWCA encourages connections amongst people, many of whom might otherwise feel isolated. This underpins our whole ethos and delivers valuable social capital, given the huge mental and physical costs loneliness can cause. Research suggests that loneliness costs £6,000 per person in health costs and pressure on local services and for every £1 spent in preventing loneliness amongst older people there are £3 of savings.⁵

Through the diverse, accessible and inclusive range of projects and activities delivered and supported by the Centre, we can offer an ‘antidote to loneliness’. Every week, at the Centre there are holistic therapies, yoga classes, arts and crafts, singing groups, all of which can have a demonstrable impact on wellbeing and mental health, along with the sense of community which taking part can imbue.

Our successful ‘**Raking & Baking**’ project was initially set up in 2011 with the aim to engage local people in food growing and healthy cooking, and to provide an opportunity for intergenerational and

multicultural activities, supporting the Centre's vision to form a strong, cohesive, prosperous and caring local community. The need for the project was identified through community consultations on local needs and focus groups with various disadvantaged communities living in East Bristol: older people, long term unemployed, single parents, people recovering from addictions and people from backgrounds which are reflective of the communities we operate in. The consultation also resulted in a comprehensive plan for the outdoor area which included 'mini allotments or growing spaces' in the capital development plans, as explored in 4.2.

In total, between 2015-20, 290 new participants were engaged across a broad range of ages, ethnicities and life experiences. It is offered free, with a small, optional donation towards ingredients. A significant attribute is the development of esteem and confidence amongst the participants and sense of connection it enables: 92% of participants felt less isolated, 93% felt happier; 90% felt more confident and 100% reported making new friends. Participants have said:

"It is the highlight of my week, I feel so privileged to be a part of this group. I feel happier, healthier, more confident, more hopeful and more connected to my community."

"I've met some interesting people which was very helpful especially since I've been furloughed since March and haven't had the opportunity to socialise with other people."

"I feel less alone, happier to be part of a project", "It made me feel happier and I've met new friends."

In addition to the project metrics agreed with the funders; the additional benefit of reducing social isolation and community-building, was a very powerful outcome and one that we have addressed through our Covid-19 responses. During the pandemic, the Raking and Baking project evolved into an outreach service to support wellbeing, connection and skill share through cooking and gardening in a safe, socially distant way. This was enabled by extension funding from the Lottery to 2022. We offered four services on a weekly basis and started in November 2020 these included the delivery of recipe boxes, with the ingredients to make a small tasty, seasonal fresh meal, dessert or snack with at least one ingredient grown at the Centre; Gardening boxes, with instructions and kit to grow vegetables/herbs in a small space or windowsill; Wellbeing Walks, a half an hour socially distant in-person connection and Doorstop Dalliiances, a doorstep chat. We worked with 13 clients aged 60+ who identify as isolated or who are shielding. They were referred through Bristol City Council, local GP surgeries and support services across the city. Others self-referred and found out about our service via social media, activities at the centre, fliers or outreach door knocking. As well as encouraging healthy eating, the project created vital social connections during the isolating days of the pandemic.

"It was so nice to get out and about. I wouldn't have seen that beautiful sky if I hadn't come out today with you."

"I really look forward to my Thursday visits. It gives me something to look forward to."

As we plan for a return to in-person delivery of the courses from June, we are keen to encourage a peer-led walks group walks programme. We also have a host of useful recipe resources that we are keen to use going forwards.

During the previous business plan period, we set up new **Stay & Play** family support sessions - with 15 to 30 people coming along each week for an adult accompanied toddler group. This is a completely volunteer-led mutual support group, funded by small grants and donations. It supports parents in overcoming challenges, offers peer-support and connections which benefit their mental wellbeing.

Our **Tai Chi for Older People** is also a participants-led session, initially supported by grants it has been mainly funded by donations, with some support from John James Foundation and Awards for All. Around 90 participants attend each year and a core of 20+ regulars have been coming for a decade.

Through these projects, which are suitable, but not limited to, older people, often the most isolated we support around 300 participants a year. We aim to deliver intergenerational, multicultural, inclusive activities suitable for people with learning difficulties, and disabilities. Our monitoring shows that we are effective, having mixed ability groups of men and women, from different age categories and ethnic groups. Our inclusive projects and open access space combined with the long opening hours and staff who are always happy to help encourages our survey respondents to report high levels of happiness – in a recent evaluation for the Bristol Impact Fund, 471 people reported feeling ‘more confident and happier’ because of their engagement with the Centre and 243 reported an improvement in their overall wellbeing. 64% of our Raking and Baking participants said that they are doing more physical activities and exercise as a result of coming to the course. Between 2017-20, 512 people reported making new friendships through participating in Centre activities.

"I am pleased with my ability to socialise with all kinds of people and talk more to people you wouldn't normally talk to."

"I feel more in touch with younger generations."

"I moved to Bristol three years ago and I met everybody I know here."

"I feel less alone, happier to be part of a project and I've met new friends."

"It has provided a lovely social experience, got me out of the house every week and my fingers in the soil. I have recently been struggling with anxiety and depression and it has helped me with this."

Since June 2020 we have been running the **Food Share** project – these are boxes of food staples that assist families who have been hardest hit financially by Covid 19. Family members are able to add to their boxes in our 'free shop' where we place food, toiletries and cleaning products for self-selection. These and all items that are donated from the community and through funding from Brighter Places., 251 individuals and 58 families have benefited - 72% of participants used the service 3+ times. 61% of participants felt that they had become less isolated.; 69% of participants said the Food Share helped their mood/happiness; 76% of participants said they felt an overall improvement in their well-being (made more connections, learnt more, more active, felt healthier). It was described as *"a lifeline"* and *"Help so we can pay bills e.g. have heating on instead of deciding between the two"*.

Our Impact Assessment Toolkit which is based on NEF's 'Ways to Wellbeing' measure, enables us to identify the needs of local communities and to explore areas for development. In 2019, 30% of responses identify the ability to 'Connect' to others as the primary benefit of our services; followed by 'Learning' (23%), Being Healthy (16%), Being Aware (12%), Giving (11%) and Other (8%).

Our popular free **Events Programme** reaches 2,500+ adults and children and includes Picnic in the Park in Mina Road Park; Festive Friends, Remembrance Service, Christmas Market and Open Day, which all offer a fun way for the community to get together, as well as opportunities for networking, sharing knowledge and skills, recruitment and building connections between individuals, community groups and organisations. Our regular Volunteer Gardening Days also offer ongoing opportunities for gaining new skills, building confidence, making new friends and nurturing connections.

Objectives 2021-25

Extension and potential expansion of Raking & Baking – we are focusing on moving the Raking & Baking back into the Centre to start delivering face-to-face classes and courses from June 2021 onwards. The project is currently funded until 2022. Given the success of the Raking & Baking model in achieving its' objectives, we also see an opportunity to replicate the model into other areas such as the creative arts, for example a 'Making & Baking' or 'Making & Raking' course, with similar objectives around learning, connection and wellbeing, particularly as Arts & Crafts scored highly in the most recent Centre User survey. We also have a very useful resource of healthy recipes, which were developed through the outreach provision, which we will seek to use in the future.

Tackling food poverty through the Food Share – on-going provisions of the food bank will be informed by local need analysis and envisage it being in place until (at least) 2022.

Reducing isolation amongst parents and carers – we will continue to support the delivery of the Stay & Play project during this period.

Supporting better health amongst 50's – through the continued delivery of the Tai Chi for Older People will provide a valuable way for this group to stay connected as well as helping to improve mobility and physical health.

Delivery of our annual events programme – including Picnic in the Park in Mina Road Park; Festive Friends, Remembrance Service, Christmas Market and Open Day and volunteer Gardening Days. We recognise the powerful role these events play in developing community cohesion, increasing wellbeing and reducing isolation. In addition to our current provision, we recognise there is scope for more activities to engage a younger demographic of local residents, an objective which we will explore through our events programme. This aim will be supported by our refreshed branding, new-look website and marketing plan.

Development of more peer-led models – a key learning from the Wellbeing Walks which encouraged individuals to take a regular walk with one of the SWCA team to support their mental health and reduce isolation has been the opportunity for a peer or volunteer-led model, which would make the initiative less resource intensive and therefore support the sustainability of it in the future. We will explore this through the proposed development of 'The Hive' – as captured in section 5.5, offering a regular, informal but supported space for the community to identify and develop action on issues that are important to them; engage with local stakeholders and seek funding in support.

5.3 Increasing digital & economic inclusion

"The least digitally engaged are at a real disadvantage. They are more likely to be paying higher household bills irrespective of income, household or age; for utilities alone, they are spending an average of over £348 more per year."

Lloyds Bank UK Consumer Digital Index 2020

As explored in section 3, an estimated 11.7m people in the UK lack basic digital skills⁷, creating a digital divide which has been magnified and increased through Covid-19. During the pandemic, the ability to use digital technology has been vital in order to participate in education, to socialise with other people and so retain good mental health, to seek out information, conduct banking and shopping and to reach medical, housing and social services. 37% of people said they had used more technology than usual to support their health and well-being during the lockdown and 31% had learned new digital skills for work related purposes since the lockdown began.⁸

The digital divide in Bristol is a persistent social issue and was exacerbated by Covid. Internet access at home is 6% lower in deprived areas and 18% of people are uncomfortable using digital services.⁹ As a trusted and accessible organisation, SWCC builds digital inclusion helping to overcome the challenges to online use amongst the digitally disengaged.

Our digital inclusion project '**Easy PC**' has been running since 2013 and pre-Covid it was delivering to 80-100 participants annually, funded through Bristol City Council's 'Bristol Impact Fund' This one-to-one computer skills support service helps older people to get online and supports unemployed people who are looking for work. 40% of the participants were using Easy PC to undertake job searches and applications in 2019-20. The project consists of one-hour sessions and group classes in computer skills development. The one-to-one sessions have continued to be incredibly popular and typically booked up 6 weeks in advance. The weekly classes are open to all, regardless of experience and ability. Topics covered include an introduction to computers, e-mail, social media, Skype, online shopping and internet security. In a 2016 evaluation, 85% of participants said they had learnt new skills and 84% were encouraged to learn more. 38% had never used a computer before. A secondary benefit of these courses is the social connection they enable - 48% of participants made new friendships through taking part and 17% said they felt less isolated.

"I am able to update and send CV, documents and respond to and send emails. Amazing service."

"I use Excel for work. I am completely new to this program. It has made me feel more confident."

"I look after my husband with Alzheimer's, so I enjoy the friendship as well as learning. When I can no longer get out, I will hopefully be able to shop online, do banking and lots more."

Lack of access to digital hardware is another facet of digital exclusion to which we provide a solution. We have been offering use of **free access computers** for the last 15 years, with access available 10am to 9pm (in normal operating circumstances). Unlike in library settings, we don't require an address to use the computers, which serves the increasing number of Centre users without a fixed address (15%).

We also offer vital, informal support from reception Support Team who provide significant levels of help with CVs, cover letters, emails, scanning, printing and basic skills including booking appointments, help with search engines and proofreading. Where appropriate we refer to Easy-PC or other Job Clubs in the area, depending on availability of sessions and timescales. The Open Access Job Search Support service has served 378 people between July 2019 to March 2020 despite the lockdown. This is an extremely valued and in-demand part of the reception Support Services and it proves to be very demanding on our team. Between July 2019 – March 2020 we recorded 101 new computer members, 3,017 visits to this service, 739 of these for Job Search and 64 indicated that they've completed a Job Application. The second method we have evaluated this service is through observational monitoring and the above figure of 378 comes from the total count of those collated by our staff.

The SWCC team also provide vital **signposting** to our local services including from our Reception - face to face, over the phone and by e-mail. The signposting services are also delivered by all Project Coordinators, management team, volunteers. Being well informed and up to date is part of what all staff do to keep on the top of enquiries and when selecting staff, we ensure that they can meet the demands of the communities. We continued to provide online and over the phone support during Lockdown as well as printed and published online directories and delivered hard copies to those digitally excluded in our networks. We usually support more than 700 people every year in this way. During 2019-20, our reception staff spent 500% more time on Job Support services than anticipated.

We enable economic inclusion through our **affordable venue hire and tenancy rates**, offering an accessible venue for the self-employed to develop their own services. Many of these people were also affected by lack of access to furlough payments during 2020-21 and we have worked collaboratively to support our members for example, through securing funds from Sport England/Voscur in April 2021 which will allow us to create video content promoting physical activities; support five providers with running classes and bringing people back safely for exercise and to purchase and distribute activity packs. This has funding has also then created more employment for a Project Coordinator at SWCA.

We also participate in the Government-backed **KickStart** scheme, which enables unemployed 16-24-year-olds to gain work-based skills over 25 hours a month for 6 months, during which they are paid Minimum Wage. We offer opportunities in administration and facilities supervision.

Objectives 2021-25

Piloting new approaches to reach more people – subject to funding, we intend continue our EasyPC project, running one day a week. Building on insights from the 2019 Centre user survey, we will consult further with Members and Centre users to test interest in new classes for example, a female-led digital skills course, potentially in partnership with Peony Project. We will also scope interest in new provision aimed at young people to both assist with formal learning and to support employability/economic inclusion. Ideas for this include a coding club e.g. [Generation Code](#), summer schools and workshops, such as the Government-funded digital skills ‘bootcamps’. In developing these ideas, we will consider how we can engage with our Members e.g. 1625 Independent People, and also with St. Barnabas School, who were recognised as a Covid-response Champion School due to their digital provision.

We will seek to broaden our 1 to 1 and group classes, informed by the [Essential Digital Skills](#) framework and further consultation to assess where there are gaps in provision to meet the expressed demand for other workplace skills training, as captured in our most recent Centre user survey. We are also keen to work with more refugee groups, recognising Bristol’s status of a City of Sanctuary and will look at their engagement into EasyPC through members who work with refugees and asylum-seekers e.g. Herbalists without Borders.

Learning from good practice - we will learn from local organisations including the Knowle West Media Centre and the Bristol Digital Futures Institute partnership. Through our Locality membership, we will contact London-based organisations Skills Enterprise and Manor House Development Trust to explore their successful schemes which offered digital training sessions to increase employability, hardware loans and provision of internet dongles. SWCA staff will also continue to contribute to Voscur’s Digital Inclusion Working Group, which in turn is feeding into the One City Digital Inclusion strategy.

Establish SWCC as an Online Centre – we will liaise with our contacts at TALO, who are an [‘Online Centre’](#) to understand how they use this network of 5,000 grassroots organisations which tackle social and digital exclusion to benefit their clients, with a view to SWCC joining in 2021. This will help to ensure we are linked into relevant research, funding opportunities and other resources, such as access to free online courses ([Learn My Way](#)) which align with the essential digital skills framework.

Host a digital drop-off point – in 2021 we will join and promote the [‘Community Calling’](#) campaign through which residents can donate unwanted phones to enable those without mobiles to benefit from internet access. The phones are data-wiped and redistributed to someone in need. Each recipient receives 12-months’ free data provided by O2 and access to free digital skills training. This aligns with our objectives to encourage sustainable living too, by reducing e-waste going to landfill.

Explore hot-desking/co-working space – the pandemic has underlined the value of having access to office equipment and services, which are close to where people live. We will explore the revenue opportunities of offering affordable spaces for people who may be doing more working from home (and lack the space to do so effectively) and continue to offer our affordable rates for the self-employed to undertake their business practices.

Building our capacity - SWCA's staff including Digital Marketing & Communications Officer and Development Manager will respond to and scale provision in line with recommendations of the One City Digital Board. By extending our provision in this way, we can also open up new funding, including new Trust & Foundations and corporate support.

Remaining inclusive – many Centre users remain reliant on offline communications channels, and it is vital that they are not excluded by the increasing shift to digital, as explored in Section 10. The members survey underlined the importance of remaining accessible to those who are not digitally connected, with one group leader commenting:

“Online contact is very difficult. The increase of (this) is very negative for some of us....your team was the only organisation to pick up the phone and call me. I will always thank you for that. Please keep up that kind of approach.”

5.4 Encouraging sustainable living

“It is...essential that all Bristol's organisations, communities and citizens are engaged during the transition to a low carbon economy, in order that the transition will be an equitable one.”

Bristol One City Plan 2020

A higher than city-average percentage of residents in the communities that we serve are concerned about climate change.⁹ The Trustees are keen to develop SWCC's role of in creating a more sustainable city, particularly in relation to smart meter roll-out and 'energy literacy'; improvements to public transport and air quality and offering ways to engage in more sustainable consumption practices. This is a newer area for us and we envisage developing our knowledge and focus, benefitting from the expertise and connections of staff, Trustees and Centre members and partnership and, linking with existing energy advice hubs such as St Pauls Advice Centre, UWE, the Centre for Sustainable Energy (CSE) and local schools.

Objectives 2021-25

Provide support for local stakeholders e.g. Green Parents group in achieving their objectives by capacity building; Mina Road Park Playground and Mina Road Park groups and the Narrowways Nature Reserve group. The Green Parents group aims to develop a plan not just for the schools but also for transport and infrastructure locally, so it links very directly with our own objectives. They started operating a couple of months before lockdown so we will strive to support them to achieve their goals.

Test 2 -3 new 'greener' events in 2022-23 – we are keen to develop more events which can promote sustainable living, working with partners both locally e.g. St Werburghs City Farm and city-wide. Also, as explored in section 8, we will trial an Artists & Makers market (potentially linking with the [St. Werburghs Arts Trail](#) in Sept/Oct 22); a vintage fair, plant and food markets in 2022. These also offer revenue-generating opportunities for the Centre, local vendors and the café; and will enable us to reach new audiences whilst supporting the ethos of buying small/local. We will also trial a [repair café](#)

and a bike surgery, exploring links with [Bristol Bike Partnership](#) and encourage attendance by green groups at our existing events.

Explore a partnerships-based campaign focused on energy or clean air – subject to the appointment of a Development Manager, we will develop our partnerships activity, which could include supporting the Smart Meter roll-out and increasing energy literacy. This has the potential to be [grant funded](#) and inspired by other [energy community projects](#), potentially working with stakeholders including CSE and UWE. Similarly, we could work with local schools and others to building on existing air quality monitoring data; developing the Centre as a hub for better understanding of air quality.

Promoting engagement – through offering space to explore and discuss issues of concern to residents, we can invite greater engagement in issues about sustainability for example, through our existing members of [Bristol Green Capital Partnership](#), we can utilise the [Black and Green Ambassadors scheme](#). This could include online or in-person events; guest blogs and social media features.

Increase our own use of green infrastructure – in this strategy period we will explore offering electric charging points and partnering with Co-Wheels to provide/promote pool vehicles. We will also track and increase our recycling and consider the cost-benefits of switching to a green-energy provider.

5.5 Strengthening community cohesion

Our culture is founded on a collaborative approach - for example, our Office Manager and Senior Administrator will work with Member Groups helping them develop their services, e.g. reaching more participants for their newly set up classes, publicising their events through social media, or linking them with other member groups who might be interested in their services, the reception staff will help people access job opportunities or information on food banks, washroom facilities and other support available. Our Director works with residents' groups on accessing funding and developing neighbourhood improvements by ensuring they can reach the right information at the right time and by getting local people involved in the local planning. This work also informs the development and delivery of services provided at the Centre. During the lockdown for example we were asked for support with food and set up a new food bank service for local families. We strongly endorse the principles of to a 'place-based' response to Covid-19 recovery and the vital role of community anchor organisations within this, as outlined by Public Health England.¹¹

The inclusivity and accessibility of our venue means groups also use SWCC as a venue for their consultation or support sessions. This includes Bristol City Council (e.g. Homeless & Van Communities Policy drop-in session), Voscur Support Groups, Elder Care. This extends to faith and ethnicity groups within the city too - Ahmadiyya hold daily prayers at the Centre, which extend into the wider Muslim community during annual celebrations such as Iftar and Eid bazaars. Other examples include:

- Supporting Mina Road Park Playground group in the application to CIL and S106 for £200k for the redevelopment of the playground
- Engaging with local business for catering for Festive Friends meal deliveries to 110 people
- Delivering Picnic in the Park; Festive Friends, Remembrance Service, Christmas Market and annual Open Days, which all offer a fun, free way for the community to get together
- Focusing all service provision, events and project on building relationships in the community, introducing people to each other, and making meaningful connections between individuals in the community.

Objectives 2021-25

Developing ‘The Hive’ - in addition to informal, regular drop-in sessions, we envisage The Hive as being a way to connect our communities to each other. It would provide a way to generate more engagement in wider issues and act as a precursor to a more formalised neighbourhood forum. ‘The Hive’ will be a peer-led, lightly facilitated fortnightly session to convene residents, service users, Trustees and local groups at a forum where people are welcome to bring ideas for development with our support. Currently only 19-22% residents of Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill feel they can influence decision-making¹⁰. The Hive can act as a catalyst and ‘incubation place’ for developing community-led projects and initiatives, which will leverage our key assets: a welcoming space which can be used for events, meetings and informal drop-in sessions; numerous local links/networks and expertise in building social capital. The Hive Coordinator will be trained in ‘asset-based community development’ and will have capacity to follow up in between meetings, offer fundraising coaching & ensure inclusivity of all work. SWCA would offer capacity building to support The Hive in applying for funding and consider reinvigorating the opportunity for groups to benefit from direct donations from the community, based on the [Brighton Soup model](#), which has also been trialled in Bristol.

Catalysing a Neighbourhood Association – SWCA would like to encourage the re-establishment of a local forum at which issues could be tabled and discussed; invited speakers could engage with the community (as above) and connections could be fostered. For example, this might include the Mina Road Park Playground, Kernow Building, air quality issues, reducing traffic etc. The recent upsurge in community volunteering might encourage participation – the BS2 Mutual Aid group would be a good place to promote involvement. Residents from the new Brooks development and representatives from local businesses might also be recruited. We will also seek more information from our Locality contact about the opportunity to influence transport committee/panels.

Community consultation – exploring current (and post-pandemic) needs in the communities will remain a priority. In addition to our Centre user and Member surveys, we will develop a QR survey to generate a broader response. Face to Face consultations will also be planned around Users Forum Open Day & Picnic in the Park which we hope will take place between July – September 2021.

Enabling community resilience through our events programme – as noted above, our events programme creates valuable social capital by bringing together diverse groups and communities in celebration. They generate over 120 stalls spaces, over 250 volunteer opportunities and 75 creative and arts performance leadership opportunities each year. These events are a key in community cohesion and often also enable people to take action on issues which are important to them.

Establishing an ‘Ashley Alliance’ – in recognition of the good practice established elsewhere in the city, we will explore interest in setting up a coalition of organisations which are spanning shared social goals within the locality. This could incorporate a shared survey of community needs in order to reduce duplication and ensure joined-up approaches. It will also be a strong foundation for any social prescribing opportunities. This is partly dependent on the appointment of the Development Manager post, but initial groundwork will be made by the Director in 2021-2022.

Offering access to decision makers – we will continue to offer opportunities to engage with our Centre users and local residents, providing a space for Councillors, Mayoral candidates (as relevant) and our MP to host regular surgeries and to create a dialogue with the people they represent.

6. Our People

6.1 Staff

“It’s such a welcoming, inclusive place - I’m so proud to work here.”

SWCC staff member, March 2021

SWCA currently operates with a lean staff team and employs a Centre Director (32 hours), Finance and HR Manager (22.5 hours), Centre Coordinator (30 hours), Digital Marketing and Communications Officer (15 hours), a Cleaner (21 hours) and Duty Managers on zero hours contracts, who cover evening and weekend shifts. Three Project Coordinators, work one day a week each and a casual Events Manager is appointed when and as needed. Two posts have been made redundant: Reception Centre Worker (30 hours) and Finance Worker (10 hours); and a new Maintenance Officer post has not been filled yet due to the pandemic and decrease in business, operations and income. SWCA has applied to offer three Kick Start Opportunities for three Centre Assistants, offering training opportunities to young people who are unemployed and registered with Job Centre.

The invaluable contributions of the team during the pandemic were recognised by the Management Committee at the AGM in December, particularly in relation to the challenging operating environment. During this time, the operational staff were furloughed (Duty Managers & Cleaner); significant and rapid changes to services were delivered by others and the acquisition of vital funding was also prioritised.

Moving into a post-Covid phase, a sustainable operational model supported by internal capacity building will be in focus. In this strategy period we will aim to address the significant breadth of the Centre Director’s responsibilities which encompass operational management; fundraising development & delivery; partnership identification & brokering and facilities management.

This would be supported by the introduction of a Development Manager post which has now been made possible through 12-months of funding from The Quartet Community Foundation. The Development Manager will work closely with the Director to shape the design and delivery of identified priorities; develop partnerships and submit funding bids in support of projects. They will also complete a feasibility of a new Membership System; conduct a fundraising audit to support a sustainable income strategy; identify potential partners for new or expanded services, along with an exit strategy for continuation after the funding period ends.

The role of the Digital Marketing & Communications Officer will be broadened (subject to funding) to encompass objectives designed to promote greater digital inclusion, working closely with the Project Tutor (Digital). Through the KickStart programme there will be additional support available for the design and delivery of the annual Marketing & Communications Plan, as defined in Section 10.

A proposed idea is the creation of a Support Coordinator internship, potentially delivered through and with a relevant postgraduate provider. This post would support the Programme Team as needed and help to create a joined-up experience for course participants as they finish a course at the Centre; develop more peer support models and signpost to other local organisations; similar to a Link Worker in the social prescribing model, helping to build internal capacity for this mode of working.

6.2 Volunteers

Volunteers are key to our operations. During 2019-20, we had engaged over 150 local people in supported volunteering opportunities. Our numbers have not suffered greatly due to Covid-19 and lack of our annual events in 2020 and indeed we were supported throughout the pandemic by new volunteers who helped coordinate the Food Bank and Festive Friends deliveries to isolated older people across Bristol.

New role profiles for specific volunteering roles are being drafted by Project Managers who have the capacity to coordinate and manage them. More roles are to be developed in 2022 to meet organisational requirements and attract committed candidates who may be encouraged to apply in view of career goals; or through an upsurge in community commitment generated through the pandemic.

6.3 Management Committee & Trustees

SWCA's Management Committee currently comprises ten individuals whose depth and breadth of experience brings valuable leadership and skills to the Association in addition to strong community knowledge, links and networks. The skills and expertise include business and organisational development, grants and funding, community engagement, energy management, knowledge of the local community, equalities, child protection, health & safety, human resources, public health and disability. The Trustees mostly live locally to BS2 and BS5 post codes and are members of groups which use the Centre from Red Notes Choir to Mothership Writers and Green Parents.

Our Trustee Board and Senior Management are a true representation of the communities we serve, including 45% from BAME background, 80% from local area and 90% nominated from Members' groups, 20% people with disability, aging from young adults in their 20s to seniors in 80s and 90s, and 50% split between women and men.

The Board contributes 70 hours a year to the Centre's operations. The Management Committee meets eight times a year to review the performance of the organisation via through reports from Staff, make decisions and plan developments. Finance, HR and Maintenance work is informed by the more detailed work of its sub-committees which meet as and when required. These include HR & Finance Subcommittee and Buildings Maintenance Subcommittee. Other Sub-committees will be set up for relevant project areas, e.g. Café Review Subcommittee, Green Action or Events Subcommittee.

6.4 Ways of working

The unique culture of the Centre is underpinned by the contribution and commitment of our hard-working staff, Trustee and volunteer teams. During the phased return to in-person delivery from June 2021, the importance of staff wellbeing will remain a priority for the Board and this is captured an operational risk to be monitored, supported by the Director and HR Manager.

We are committed to investing in Staff Development and Wellbeing. The Chair and Director are participating in Stepping Up Programme and new training packages have been procured from Voscur, amongst other providers for this strategy period. Finance & HR Manager is undertaking CIPD qualification. Team training currently covers Mental Health Awareness, H&S & Lone Working, GDPR and Signposting. Additional modules offered include Challenging Behaviour, Managing Incidents and Wellbeing at Work, Ladder Safety, Emergency First Aid, Fire Warden, Resilience in the workplace, Essential Skills for Line Managers, Introduction to Twitter, Applying for Core Funding, ACAS Transition from Lockdown and Being a Good Employer. This allows every one of our staff to be confident in communicating and offering a variety of services to support centre users queries. Our service provision is often delivered 'there and then' as the Reception and all Project Staff respond to the incoming enquiries and support individuals and groups at the Centre. The staff are all committed to Equality and Diversity. Additional training has been booked to ensure all procedures and actions adhere to current best practice.

The introduction of regular Team Meetings would create an opportunity to identify shared challenges and solutions, building on the strengths of the team. Informed by the action plan in section 12, the staff team will have written annual objectives to support to the deliverables (where relevant/appropriate) to reinforce our shared vision and to capture any learning and development requirements. These will be regularly reviewed by line managers at regular one-to-one meetings and formally reviewed annually.

Given the significant professional experience available from the Trustees, there is also an opportunity to harness this beyond Committee meetings through the appointment of 'theme leads' to support identified service priorities in this strategy period. This could draw on the Skills Audit undertaken in 2020 which identified where the Trustees have particular fields of expertise. For example, setting up a Fundraising & Communications sub-committee would support SWCC staff to meet the challenge presented by an increasingly competitive fundraising environment.

7. Financial Overview

Analysis of figures for 2020/21:

Since our last completed accounts our financial focus has shifted exponentially.

Due to the Covid pandemic we have adapted to the situation by delivering of services in response to the pandemic, whilst managing a severe drop in our traditional earned income from room hire.

During 2020/21 we secured grant funding both for direct delivery and to offset core costs.

Overall grant income was four times the amount received in 2019/20, with 42% of this grant income coming from Power to Change Community Business Fund, for our Capital & Digital project.

Our core funding from Bristol City Council represented 6% of total grant income, 10% of grants other than Community Business Fund.

Of the overall grant income 20% was unrestricted and enabled us to cover a significant portion of the shortfall incurred due to loss of hire fees during Covid.

Our earned income was a third of 2019/20 levels, and as a percentage of overall income reduced considerably due to the level of grant income in the year.

During this difficult year we shifted from earning 60% of income directly through our business activities to earning 11% of overall income. This was, as outlined, offset by unrestricted grants and we were in a position to adapt our business model to secure significant funding in order to deliver services and mitigate losses in the year.

Notes to accompany projected cash flows:

Following two unusual years finance wise, setting projections going forward has proved challenging.

Both years included unusual levels of grant income relating to our Capital & Digital project, and the second, most recent year obviously brought unprecedented changes to our financial forecast.

Starting with the current year – 2021/22 – the cash flow has been populated with the actuals for April and May.

Going forward the following assumptions have been made:

CBF final drawdown and Quartet Funding the Future figures are known, and estimated to come in in June.

Other grant income has been estimated at levels comparable with prior years.

BIF funding to September is confirmed, subsequent figures are as applied for in the BIF2 round of funding.

Room hire shows a steady increase as we rebuild post Covid – with reductions during August and December as these have traditionally been quieter months. We are predicting an overall income at 70% of pre-pandemic levels.

Rental levels show an increase over the year as tenants return, with the café on an incremental rent arrangement as they return to full capacity.

Business Rates Grant offsets loss of income during our recovery period.

Our last remaining staff member in furlough is due to return to work in June and we do not anticipate further furlough claims at this point in time.

We hope to recruit 3 Kickstart placements for which we will pay the minimum wage, regardless of their age – this cash flow assumes we claim the maximum grant available but this will depend on the age of any successful applicants.

Expenditure on salaries has been allocated across the year allowing for the complex split between restricted and unrestricted funds where appropriate.

New posts such as the development manager are allocated and new posts to be funded by BIF2 are included.

Funding has been secured for the Food Bank until December 2021, this assumes we will secure funding to continue to the end of March 2022.

All other costs are based on current levels and looking at the last two years' figures, as 2020/21 was not a usual year so those costs would be unrealistic if viewed in isolation. Maintenance and repair costs are lower than prior years as we have just completed major refurbishment works, and to allow for a recovery of income before committing to regular outgoings in this area.

2022/23 onwards:

Other grants income has again been estimated at a level comparable with prior years – with a target uplift of 5% per year for 2023/24 and 2024/25.

BIF2 is again as applied for - figures are different for the first year as we are carrying forward funding from the previous fund, the BIF year runs October to December hence the change part way through our financial year.

Room hire shows small increases year on year for 2022/23 and 2023/24, with again August and December assumed to be quieter. Figures show income at a similar level to that predicted prior to starting the Capital project, but with uplift results achieved a year later than originally planned.

Rental levels are shown at full current capacity for 2022/23 onwards.

Membership fees under our current offering have been suspended during 2021/22 but are reinstated in 2022/23, with the average monthly income from the last available figures included here.

Salaries assume that from the end of the Kickstart scheme in December 2021 at least one placement will convert to a permanent position.

A 5% uplift has been added to the majority of costs year on year from 2022/23 onwards.

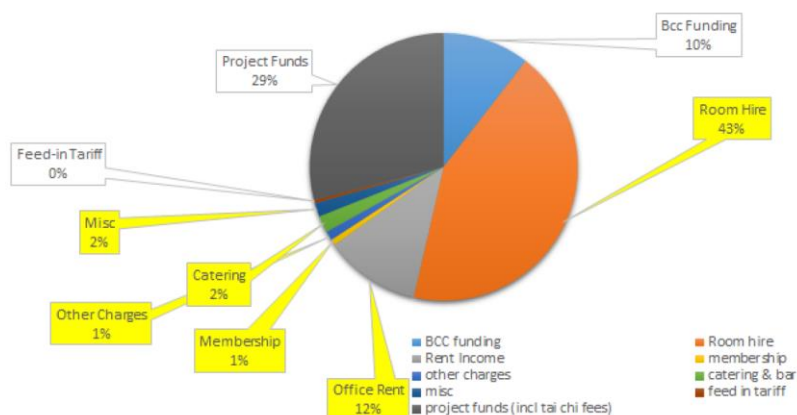
Repairs and Maintenance are such a variable that these have been estimated – at the lower end of the spectrum, but with the proviso that increases in income will allow for this to increase as necessary. Also we have designated funds identified that can be used to cover both ongoing refurbishments and major repair works should the need arise.

For 2024/25 figures have been left as per 2023/24, but with the opening balances adjusted. This illustrates the ongoing position if no further changes occurred during that year. As this is a projection several years down the line and following a potentially changeable situation in the current year, it would seem prudent to assume this for the time being.

The Current Cashflows and Cashflows Projections for the Business Plan are included in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2.

8. Income Generation & Fundraising

In 2019-20, our income was £313,920, of which 43% was from room hire receipts; 12% from office rent; 2% from catering and 1% from membership (as below). This represented a decrease on income in 2018-19, primarily in room hire and rental receipts, which were down by 5.5%. Although some of this is due to the impact of Covid-19, this income had levelled off after the previous years' increase.



During 2020-21 and throughout the pandemic we have shown resilience in moving from a business model reliant on trading income into an increased level of service provision and grant funding; all of which took place alongside a major Capital & Digital project, now 90% completed. The diversity of our income streams has proven the right balance as we were able to sustain ourselves while increasing essential services for our communities.

During the first half of 2021, social distancing restrictions continued to impact on income, and we expect the situation to remain fluid for (at least) the next 6-9 months, as explored in section 7. Forecasting and planning is naturally hampered by this ambiguity, and we will revisit the issue at forthcoming Management Committees, with the Finance Manager, Director and Treasurer recommending any remedial actions including the requirement to apply for any available emergency funding or to identify cost savings or use of financial reserves.

SWCA will continue to work hard on increasing income from room hire and market the underused spaces and time slots, when restrictions allow. Reinvigorating our existing customer base will be a priority. We will also focus on building new partnerships with other community groups, social enterprises and businesses. Our digital marketing strategy and introduction of OnCentre will underpin venue hire and simplifying bookings. We recognise the importance of our accessible rates to the communities that we serve and will work hard to retain these throughout the strategy period, however some changes to the room hire and services Rates and Memberships' structure, and discounts, might need to be introduced.

We are fortunate to have invested in our key assets, particularly our kitchen and garden facilities, which can be used imaginatively to deliver more projects, courses and events. Whilst demand for indoor activities is currently suppressed, our (pre-Covid) survey indicated appetite for more events. We will explore this, particularly the opportunity to engage local residents who don't currently use the Centre and to generate revenue e.g. street food pop-up vans, supper clubs and markets; children's parties; vintage fairs; repair cafes; Artists & Makers events (linking with local Arts Trail); plant & produce markets; wellbeing events; acoustic music and spoken word gigs. We note the success of the [Coexist Community café](#) and will explore how we can learn from this model. We know that childcare costs are a barrier to economic inclusion for many working adults. A feasibility study has already ruled out formal nursery provision, but we will consider the viability of summer clubs (linking with local schools), with the intention of seeking funding to underwrite costs to increase affordability. We will also evaluate any new opportunities afforded by post-Covid working patterns which [may accelerate demand](#) for single desk hire and co-working spaces.

8.2 Fundraising

Thanks to funding from the Quartet Community Foundation, we will recruit a Development Manager to work with the Centre Director, to increase fundraising from grants, trusts and foundations; undertake a fundraising audit; evaluate and pilot new revenue sources as described (but not limited to) proposals in this plan and to scope and implement a membership scheme.

Building on our strong track record to date with institutional fundraising, tailored proposals based on a full-cost recovery principle will be submitted, liaising with the Finance Manager in the development of budgets and monitoring & evaluation reporting. A project and grants tracker will be shared between the Director, the Development Manager and Finance Manager, to further support efficient ways of working. Once a pipeline of prospects has been identified, we will seek to introduce more stewardship opportunities, e.g. centre or event visits. We will develop an annual Impact Report, case studies of beneficiaries and more user-led outputs e.g. smartphone photography and testimonies to bring our work to life for funders and supporters. This content will also align with the Communications Plan and collaboration between the Centre teams will continue to be key.

We recognise that both formal and informal partnership working is an increasingly common expectation by funders (Locality, 2021) along with assets-based project development and bid design. Our regular centre user surveys and forums and ‘community pulse’ research will reinforce our co-creation approach to funding opportunities, ensuring that we are being led by local needs and interests. As a result of the scoping work undertaken by the Development Manager, we will seek to encourage and support joint funding bids with member groups and in this way help to capacity build skills, whilst aligning with our identified priorities and outcomes. We also aim to broker partnerships as part of an ‘Ashley Alliance’ with organisations which extend our reach, share our values and increase our impacts. In this strategy period, we would like to explore opportunities linked to social prescribing – particularly those related to mental health & wellbeing.

Looking towards 2023 and beyond, we will explore ways to increase unrestricted income from corporate partnerships, although this has so far proven to be a challenging area, particularly in accommodating CSR-linked volunteering requests. We are fortunate to benefit from the sponsorships of our Picnic in the Park event – and it may be that we can extend this through a wider events programme (as above), which could also generate further revenue from attendees.

As a further potential source of unrestricted income, individual giving (as distinct to a membership scheme) would require investment and subject expertise and we will review this opportunity from 2023. Related actions such as an increased familiarity with digital tools (e.g. Google Analytics, Google Ads; Facebook analysis); data capture (within GDPR compliance); a supporter system/CRM integrated with our website; online payment tools; case studies, e-newsletters and impact reports will all be developed by the Digital Marketing & Communications Officer in 2021-22 (see section 10). To support our funding bids within an increasingly competitive environment we will explore the merits of a [software package](#) and [training](#) that would help to measure our social impact and value.

Objectives 2021-23

- Conduct a fundraising audit and establish a three-year strategy with targets against each fundraising/income generation channel.
- Build a prospect pipeline of relevant funding opportunities with grants, trusts & foundations informed by resources such as Grants Online; DSC and Charity Excellence Framework.
- Submit an agreed number of funding bids, delivering income for identified service provision to meet our operational priorities over a defined budget period, enabled by the new grants tracker.

- Working with the wider SWCA team, further evaluate needs in three key target wards (Ashley, Easton and Lawrence Hill) against current and future local service provision using data from SWCA's membership and service users, engagement with local people and wider data assessments and reports e.g. BCC reports. Explore and evaluate the potential for collaboration and alliances as outlined in the Business Plan.
- Complete a feasibility study of a new membership system – working with support from Locality to identify common good practice, adhering to Charity Commission rules and any legislation relating to memberships and voting rights; and ensuring the desired outcomes are achieved in terms of community engagement and capacity building.
- Scope new revenue opportunities (and the potential for seed funding) through events, catering and hot-desking/co-working and others.
- Registering with the Fundraising Regulator before the end of 2021 to reinforce donor trust and ensure a compliant supporter experience.

9. Marketing & Communications

Since the return from furlough of our Digital Marketing & Communications Officer in early 2021, we have increased her capacity to 22 hours a week, supported by Power to Change funding. This is helping to expedite the Digital Marketing, Communications and Inclusion Strategy, which was shared with the Trustees in March 2021 and included the following priorities:

- Progress the majority of the recommendations from the Beesting Digital analysis as current capacity allows, including launching the refreshed website and branding – due Summer 2021
- Embedding 'OnCentre' to facilitate online bookings, including any staff training as needed
- Development of digital marketing tools, including Google Ad grants and Facebook advertising,
- Establishing baseline measures to set KPIs for 2022 and beyond
- Incorporating EAST principles (Easy, Attractive, Social, Timely), to reach a diverse range of audiences, captured below:

Local residents	Service groups	Private parties
Training facilitators	Local charities	National Charities
Faith groups	Private companies	After school clubs
Funders	Tenants	Service users
Fitness groups	Customers ad hoc rm hire	Local schools
NHS	Local government	Climate action groups



This communications activity will include:

- Increasing graphics-led content using Canva;
- Good news stories from Centre staff (and tenants, members and project participants);
- Continuing to create offline content including posters, flyers and brochures to reach those without access to or familiarity with digital channels.

Any new activities, plans and projects which emerge through delivery of this Business Plan will need to be cross-referenced with Marketing & Communications planning to ensure alignment with wider goals. This would certainly be required to support the launch of a new membership scheme, working with the input of other SWCA staff and informed by best practice guidance from Locality.

A Marketing & Communications Plan for 2022 could include the following deliverables:

- Proactive engagement with local & community media to promote events, projects & classes
- Quarterly e-newsletters for dissemination through Mailchimp to build basis for membership
- More user generated content e.g. smartphone photography, zines, vlogs and blogs – helping to ensure the voices of the Centre users are amplified throughout all communications
- Spotlights on community campaigns; opinion pieces from residents and local representatives
- Working with the Development Manager (subject to recruitment) on funder recognition and stewardship opportunities, including production of an Impact Report
- A B2B plan to increase venue hire, highlighting affordability and green credentials
- Launch of membership scheme including features and benefits (TBC)
- Target to increase social channel audiences by 5-10%.

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