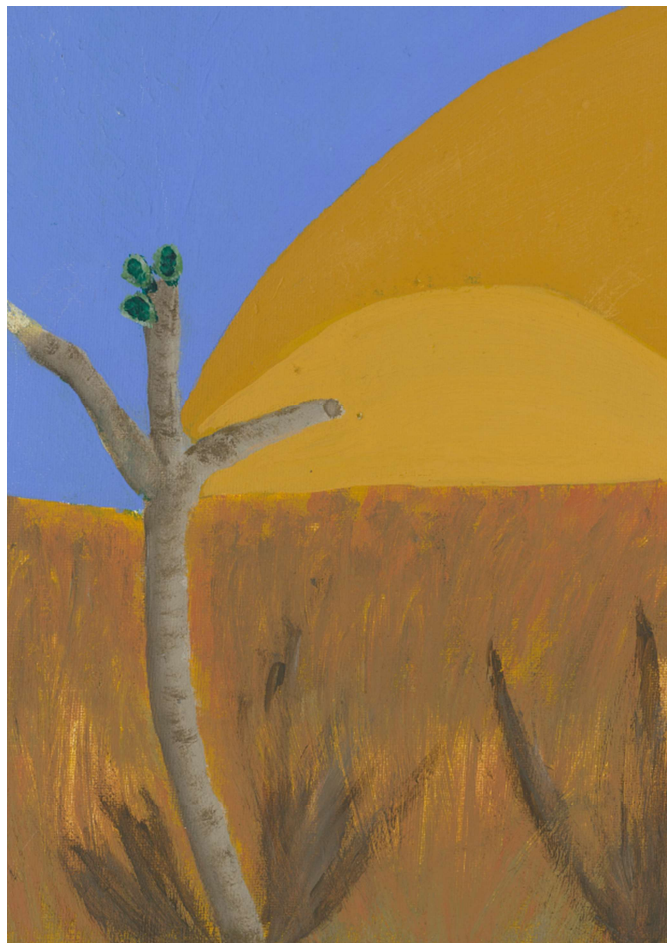


The Good Mental Health Cooperative Annual Report November 2021 – November 2022



Self Reliance by Claire Holloway





1.Introduction

In April 2013, the Good Mental Health Cooperative constituted formally as a Community Interest Company (No. 8505989) – a not-for-profit social enterprise. The Cooperative had previously been an un-constituted community group, gaining our first funding from the Big Lottery in August 2012.

Our founder Directors are:

Dr Martin Stevens – Chair
Carolyn Barber – Company Secretary
Dr Sandra Walker – Vice Chair
Janet East

Sadly Martin Stevens died in March this year, and Sandy Walker has taken over as Chair of the Management Committee.

Additional members of the Management Committee are:

Arthur Steward (Treasurer)
Clare Holloway
Sarah Haskett
Christine Lawrence
Charlotte Meldrum
Mary Vallely
Duncan McGibbon (withdrew from Committee in August)
Rachel Cox– our Administrative Assistant

Our thanks to Sandy and all members of the Management Committee

The GMHC office is now based at the Buckland United Reformed Church, 174 Kingston Road, Fratton, Portsmouth, PO2 7LP.

Martin Stevens 1965 – 2022

Extract from Obituary in the Guardian by John Woolham

My friend and colleague Martin Stevens, who has died aged 57 from Covid-related complications, was a senior research fellow at the health and social care workforce research unit at King's College London for the past 18 years.

During his career Martin chaired the UK Social Services Research Group and the Health Research Authority social care research ethics committee, in which roles he contributed much to developing ethics and governance in social care research. At his death he was chair of the Good Mental Health Co-operative management committee as well as being an adviser to the National Institute for Health Research's research design service.



Martin was loved as well as respected by colleagues. He had an exceptional ability to analyse complex problems from various perspectives, helping to provide valuable insights for health practitioners, managers and policymakers with clear and well-considered recommendations. I worked with him at King's College and his kindness, generosity, sense of fun and good humour made him a wonderful colleague.

Throughout most of his adult life Martin lived with chronic health problems after kidney failure, which led to years of dialysis and three kidney transplants: experiences that led him to develop a deep insight

into, and empathy for, the needs of other health and care service users. His death is a huge loss to those who knew him, as well as the wider social care research community to which he contributed so much.

Martin met Alison Heywood, an information governance specialist, in 2000, when they were working together at Hampshire county council, and they married in 2013. She survives him, as do his older sister, Linda, and younger brother, Seb.



In memory of Martin, his wife Alison wishes to make a donation to our organisation for an annual award for the next 10 years. This will be presented to a person nominated for their contribution to good mental health and wellbeing via the Good Mental Health Cooperative

2. Overview

This past year has seen the Good Mental Health Coop move our office base from Cathedral House in Old Portsmouth to the Buckland United Reformed Church. Plans were in hand for this at the last AGM, and we moved in March 2022 following a refurbishment of the office space by the BURC. Our thanks for the welcome we've had, and their support for our project activities. Since September we've been running three group activities using the church venue facilities, an established women's creativity and wellbeing group, a Monday morning drop-in social drop-in, and a programme of men's creative workshops. We've also hosted an International Women's Day event, a Carers Information event, and an Open Day for Men's Wellbeing.



It has also been the most challenging year financially that we have had, and particular thanks must go to Arthur Steward our Treasurer, to Rachel Cox for her financial diligence, and to the Committee for their support in navigating through this period.

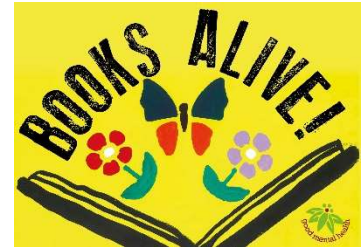
Prior to the Covid pandemic, the Good Mental Health Coop declared an overarching aim to establish a recognised arts and wellbeing hub in Portsmouth, one which would combine many of the initiatives developed over the past nine years. Our aim for the next 12 months is to make that vision a reality, and contribute to the support and community cohesion needed to help local residents through these extraordinarily difficult times.

December 2021

Following the last AGM, Sandy Walker, Sarah Haskett and Carolyn Barber created an online volunteer induction training programme funded by the National Lottery Community Fund. The course provides an introduction to the

ethos of the Good Mental Health Cooperative, essential policies, plus basic level training on safeguarding, communication skills and dealing with distress.

Rachel Cox organised a second online Books Alive! Week across our social media platforms to promote the volunteer videos again.



A Business Consultancy Project was completed with a team of students from the University of Portsmouth. Their brief was to help develop a sales strategy for licencing courses to local community organisations, and to increase the engagement of people registering for courses. They completed their project with a presentation and produced a full written report.

January – April 2022

We left our office at Cathedral House in early January and moved into a newly redecorated office at the Buckland United Reformed Church in early March. The office area also includes a smaller room which can be hired out for individual and small group therapy meetings.

Sadly our Chair, Dr.Martin Stevens, died from Covid related complications in March. Committee members attended his funeral in April, and a post was published on our website in memory of his contribution as a founding director of the Good Mental Health Cooperative. Obituaries have been published from Kings College London where he worked and in the Guardian. As Vice Chair, Sandy Walker took over Martin's role as Chair.

Two social work students, Zara-Jane and Jada, started on placement in February, from the University of Portsmouth and Solent University. They both helped to support the Nexus women's group through to June, and were also placed with local community groups and the Hive Helpdesk.

We held a very successful International Women's Day event in March at the Buckland URC, and a series of partnership wellbeing events with the Portsmouth Carer's Centre started in March in Paulsgrove, and then in April at the Buckland URC.



May to July 2022

By now we were becoming more established in our new office premises in the Buckland URC. The social work students did some community mapping to identify support services and groups in the immediate neighbourhood. Good contacts were made with Fratton Big Local, social prescribers based at the Kingston Crescent Health Centre, and activities at the North End Baptist Church.

The series of 5 monthly Pop-Up Wellbeing and Information events continued in partnership with the Portsmouth Carers Centre, with the last one held in July at the John Pounds Centre.

Plans were also underway to set up a men's creativity and wellbeing project funded by No Wrong Door as part of the Community Mental Health Framework transformation programme.

August to October 2022

Over the 6 weeks of school holidays the Tuesday's women's group sessions were replaced by an open Summer Activities programme.

In August we held a successful Open Day for Men's Wellbeing, attended by around 20 men, and our 'With Men in Mind' workshop programme began towards the end of September.

September also saw the start of a Monday morning ChitChat Club funded as a pilot by Fratton Big Local, and aimed at people feeling socially isolated.

Another very recent and sad loss has been the death of **John Jeffs**. John has been involved with the Good Mental Health Cooperative as an early Committee member and then as a regular volunteer with our Books Alive project. Living in Gosport, we last saw John at a couple of our Summer Activity sessions, and an event held in July at the John Pounds Centre.

Rest in Peace John

Thanks go to Mary Vallely who has supported activities as a sessional worker since June, and to all our volunteers on the management committee, and those who have contributed to our Nexus women and men's groups, the ChitChat Club, events and research and consultation initiatives in the city.

There are currently 50 individual members of the Good Mental Health Cooperative.

Funding Update

This year has been particularly challenging for funding, as the competition for grants has grown significantly. So far since the last AGM 17 funding bids have been submitted with only 3 that have been successful. There are 6 bids outstanding that we have yet to hear from, and one where we have progressed to the second stage.

Particular thanks to all our funders who have supported our activities and kept us going during the past year:



3. Projects

The Nexus Project

The Nexus Women's Creativity and Wellbeing Group started in May 2021 on Zoom, and moved to the Buckland United Reformed Church for a weekly group in September 2021. Since our office move in March, the weekly group has grown substantially with regular attendance of 15 – 20 women. Over the past year, 76 women have attended the group which is well known to social prescribers and other signposting organisations.



Image taken from a session in February 2022, celebrating Chinese New Year.

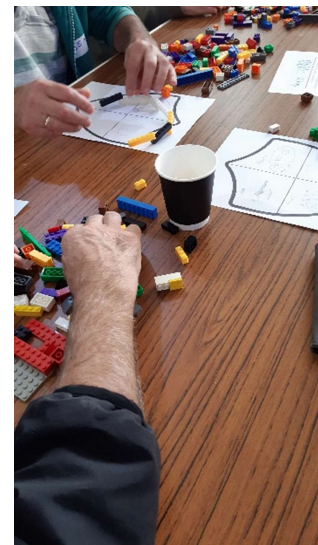
The women's group have co-produced an emotional wellbeing check-in which attendees complete at the start and the end of the session. This shows attendees themselves how their mood has usually lifted as a result of the session, and encourages emotional awareness. We collect the overall scores to analyse the overall impact of the group activities on the wellbeing of participants.

The charts produced demonstrate consistent overall increases in positive wellbeing and a reduction in negative feelings following participation in the group sessions.

The women's group has been funded through the National Lottery Awards for All programme, and the League of Friends of St. Marys Hospital have recently agreed to fund the continuation of the group during 2023.

Thanks to a grant from the No Wrong Door Fund, linked to the Community Mental Health Framework transformation programme, we have now set up the **Nexus 'With Men in Mind' Project**.

Following a period of consultation and mapping of existing support, we held an Open Day for Men's Wellbeing in August, and began a programme of creativity and wellbeing workshops for men for the autumn.



Currently this project will continue until the end of March 2023, thanks to additional support from the Solent NHS Trust.

Solent Connexions

Funded by Solent NHS Trust from March 2021 as part of their Community Partners Programme, this project was designed to support 'informal carers', people looking after or helping out an adult family member or friend because of illness, disability or emotional distress. Solent Connexions offered virtual support through an online hub, and covered the south Hampshire area.



Free online
creative and
wellbeing
courses



Signposting
and practical
resources



Online hub for
peer support
and chat



Befriending and 1-1
support sessions by
phone or zoom

The project was wound down in August 2022 as engagement with our online hub and online drop-in events was lower than we had hoped for. Our research suggests three main reasons for this:

- The development of the online hub missed the peak of virtual engagement during lockdowns
- Other projects and local initiatives for carer support started at a similar time
- Other organisations seeking to engage with carers online seemed to have similar difficulties unless they were already established prior to the pandemic.

Just over 80 people engaged with our online events and videos. During 2022 we delivered a series of in-person information events in partnership with the Portsmouth Carers Centre. 56 visitors completed monitoring forms showing that over half (58%) of visitors were informal carers and just over a third (36%) visited out of professional interest. One to one support via telephone or online was provided to 11 informal carers, and 16 people joined our online hub.

The most significant impact of our project was the collaborative work we undertook to raise awareness of support for informal carers in their local areas.

Summer Creative Activities

During the six weeks of the summer holidays, we hosted creative activity sessions every Tuesday morning, open to women and men and school aged children. People were encouraged to bring their own creative activity or ideas, or make use of our creative materials for a choice of art work, collage, drawing, jewelry making, macramé etc.

The ChitChat Club

A new initiative which started in September has been a weekly Monday morning social drop-in aimed at local people feeling socially isolated or wanting to find out about support available for other issues. Located in the Buckland United Reformed Church Community Café, the Chit Chat Club is being piloted until December, funded by Fratton Big Local.

So far the Chit Chat Club averages attendance of 4 – 8 every week with 18 visitors in total. Card games and Jenga are staple activities, and there is regular signposting to other activities and support services

A flyer for the ChitChat Club. It features a coffee cup icon and the text "WELCOME TO THE ChitChat Club". Below this, it says "Interested to know more about activities and support services in your local area?". The main text reads "EVERY MONDAY MORNING 10^{AM} - 12^{NOON} (from 5 September 2022)". It then says "Join us for a cuppa and a friendly chat". The location is "Community Café, Buckland United Reformed Church, 174 Kingston Road, Fratton PO2 7LP". It is hosted by the Good Mental Health Cooperative. At the bottom, it says "For more details go to www.goodmentalhealth.org.uk or phone 023 9310 6042". There are logos for Fratton Big Local, Good Mental Health, and the Community Fund.

This photo was taken at the last information and wellbeing event for informal carers at the John Pounds Centre in July 2022. Featuring our long standing volunteer and supporter John Jeffs, who sadly passed away at the end of October.

4. Committee activities

The GMHC management committee has met 5 times since the last AGM, in January, April, July, September and early November.

A major policy review has been carried out to ensure all our policies are updated to reflect our change of office base, and the post lockdown environment. There has been constant review of our project budgets to ensure maximum impact and financial stability given the uncertain funding situation.

A review of our online courses and workshops means that these are now available for sale via the Creative Learning online platform. The Mental Wealth Academy Online offers arts, crafts, music, personal development and mental health courses. A Calendar for 2023 has been created, and a range of other products has been set up via Red Bubble, using art images inspired from Mental Wealth Dialogue discussions.

You can see all our courses and products for sale on the following link, hosted by the Creative Learning Community:

<https://my.creative-learning.net/bundles/shop-GMHC>



Many thanks again to all our volunteer committee members who contribute time and energy to support our projects and the organisational work needed to keep the show on the road.

5.Future Plans

Our 10th anniversary as an organisation is next year – 2023!

Our aim is to continue developing the arts and wellbeing hub at the Buckland United Reformed Church, and focus on engaging and involving residents in the local neighbourhoods who are experiencing significant and disproportionate health inequalities in the wake of the pandemic and the cost of living crisis. All our activities now include an additional signposting element, so as to support socially isolated individuals in particular with information and access to relevant and appropriate services.

As well as continuing with the ChitChat Club, Nexus women's group and men's workshops, we want to deliver creativity and wellbeing courses and workshops via another round of the Mental Wealth Academy during 2023. Other popular projects such as Books Alive! and our Trialogue discussion events have been on hold, but not forgotten!

Other plans are afoot to create a series of short films which dramatise tales from our Heritage project, Stories of Asylum from WW1, and we're never short on ambitious ideas for new collaborative creative projects!

We want to celebrate our 10th anniversary in style with another Festival of the Mind, so watch out for more creative innovation to promote good mental health, not just from us, but from the wider Portsmouth community.

Much is dependent of course on the success of current funding bids. The most challenging organisational costs to fund are those behind the scenes which enable us to function as an organisation – office and IT costs, insurance, admin support, and ... writing funding bids!

