Riverside
Community Health Project

# Annual Review

## 1st April 2023 – 31st March 2024

Charity Number 1028632 - Registered Company Number 02869470

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# Page 2 - Chairperson's Welcome

April 23 - March 24 has been a really busy year for Riverside Community Health Project. Throughout the year we continued to offer a great programme of activities for the local community and have been really encouraged by the way people engage. As trustees we express our thanks to the staff and volunteers of Riverside for their hard work and dedication.

Family groups and sessions have been well attended throughout term time. Holiday activities have included local festivals, family trips and a savings club to help families save up for special days out together. Our busy programme of training activities and employability support has continued with positive feedback from participants. The women's group has gone from strength to strength. Women from different backgrounds have formed supportive sisterly relationships with each other. We were able to increase our welfare advice and information until the end of the financial year. This support is positive in helping people access the benefits to which they are entitled. People in our community face an increasing range of challenges, particularly when it comes to accessing secure housing. A long-term approach is needed.

The project undertaken by our strategy sub-group came to fruition during this year. Our 2023-2028 strategy is the result of hard work, engagement with community members, staff and trustees, and research into the needs of the community. We hope this positive and

well thought through plan will help Riverside to develop and sustain meaningful activities during what continues to be a worrying time financially for our sector.

In April 2023 we started the financial year with a potentially large deficit. As a board we decided to give the management team time to raise additional funds and arranged for an external consultant to support this effort. We are thankful that this approach paid off and we have ended the year in a stronger financial position.

Carnegie Building remains a busy, vibrant hub for Riverside work and a host of partner organisations. This year, with the support of Carnegie Building Directors, we have explored options to improve the long-term sustainability and strength of the building. Through an energy assessment we better understand what is required to decarbonise. Relationship building with the range of key people at Newcastle City Council continues.

Having been on the Board of Trustees for nine years and vice-chair for several of those, I took on the responsibility of the Chair role this year, following the departure of Carly Walker-Dawson. As well as thanking Carly for her leadership during her tenure I would like to pay tribute to fellow trustees for support during the transition. I would also like to extend a warm welcome to two new Trustees, Chris Smith and Vicki Turnbull. We value the skills and experience you bring and are delighted to have you on board.

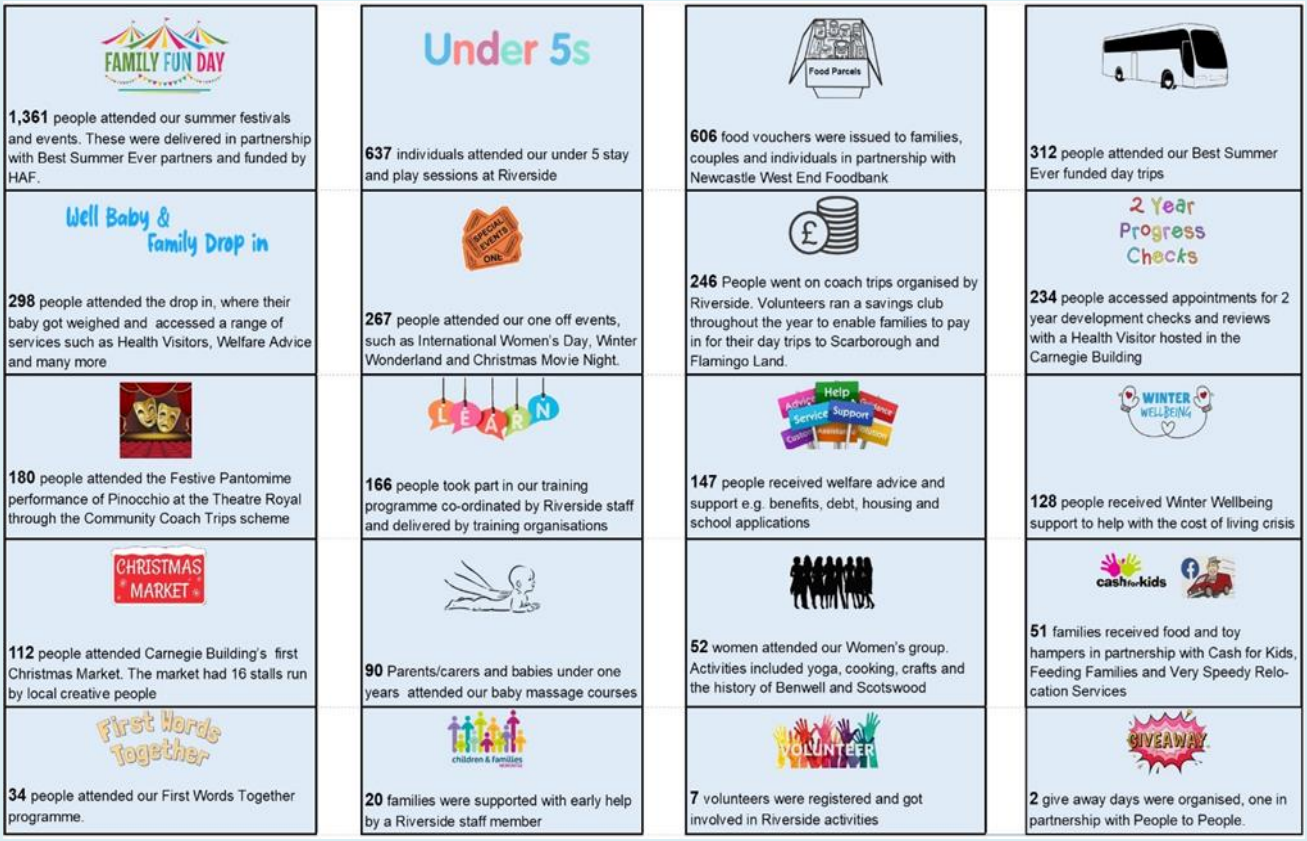
With best wishes

Susan Wroe

Chair of the Board of Trustees

# Page 4 - Summary of Activities

This infograph gives a summary of all our activities over year and peoples' engagement with them. A summary of each programme area will follow. These are Children and Family Support, Training and Employability, Welfare Advice Information and Support, Activities with Women and Community Action Projects.



# Page 5 - Children and Family Support

Riverside facilitates six different groups for parent / carers and children from birth until the child starts nursery. Here is some feedback on these groups from the reporting year.

- Baby Massage for Parents / Carers and Babies Up to 12 Months

**“I have really enjoyed coming to this baby massage class. It has helped my grandson loads with his constipation symptoms, and it’s such a relief knowing I can help him now”**

- My Baby and Me for Parents and Babies up to 12 Months

**“My daughter loves coming to this group. It has given me some socialisation back after becoming a parent for the first time, and it is great that I can get her weighed here too”**

- First Words Together for Families with Children up to 2 Years

**“I have really enjoyed this group. I was very worried that speaking to my child in my first language was going to delay them in learning English. This group has put my mind at ease and given me a lot of tips on how to communicate with them, and I know I’m doing the right thing by speaking to my child in my home language”**

**“This is the first baby group I have been to with my child. We love the fact that it is the same songs each week as it gives me a chance to learn them and sing them at home”**

- Breakfast Stay and Play for Families with Children from 6 months to 4 years.

**“We really enjoy coming to breakfast club each week. There is always a lovely selection of food and it gives me ideas on what I can cook for him at home”**

- Toddle Time for Families with Children aged 1 and 2 years.

**“This group has been excellent for my child. I was so concerned that my child didn’t like to share or get involved with other children and it made me anxious to bring them around other children. He has really enjoyed this group and I can see him starting to play alongside other children now without becoming distressed”**

”

School Holiday Programme

Our Children and Family Team organised lots of school holiday activities. These included day trips with packed lunches to North East beaches, community farms and play parks. As with previous years we led the Family Festivals in Hodgkin Park. We appreciate families’ positive feedback and are working on the suggestions given. For example, we are looking at how to manage the large numbers attending the festivals so that queuing is kept to a minimum.

Further Children and Family Support

Firstly, we are part of a network of practitioners that provide Early Help for families. Secondly, Children and Family Team members work with partners on a weekly Well Baby and Family Drop-in at Carnegie Building. This drop-in was set up in partnership with Health Visitors following feedback from new parents that it would be easier if they could access different services under one roof.  Lots of partners involved from Parent Support, Family Health, Breastfeeding Support, Mental Health, Welfare Rights, Housing Support, School Admissions and so on. Thirdly, we support regular group sessions at Carnegie for families receiving Baby Boxes, again in partnership with NHS colleagues.

# Page 8 - Training and Employability

- Training

Riverside organised a comprehensive training programme that was delivered by a range of training organisations. Throughout the year we engaged with the community to find out what courses they want. We liaised with various training organisations to deliver these courses and hosted the training in our centre, Carnegie Building.  We also recruited and helped register people on to the courses.

There is huge interest in courses that enhance peoples' job prospects in assisting teaching and learning, health and social interpreting, and working in the night-time economy. We responded to this interest in the courses we put together over the year.

We did not only focus on employability, but also on wellbeing, by giving people space to come together to do something they enjoy.  We organised a new training course in partnership with Digital Voice – Recipe 4 Success. This course focused on digital skills and life skills, namely cooking. It was so popular that we have more sessions planned in the next financial year.

- Employability Support

With funding secured towards the end of the year, we were delighted to be able to return to providing one-to-one support with people towards their goals. The Moving Forward Project now provides tailored support so people can look ahead to a future that might involve education, training or (self) employment.

# Page 10 - Welfare Advice, Information and Support

- Advice

We provided welfare advice to 147 people during the year. Monitoring information shows the positive impact when it comes to accessing benefits. When benefit applications have been unsuccessful first-time round, we supported re-applications. Successful reapplications demonstrate the preventable delays people experience. We helped people to register with a GP, apply for school places, council tax reductions etc. Evaluation of the service shows that people were satisfied with the support they received.

- Information

Throughout the year we became increasingly concerned about the difficulties people face getting secure housing. We know housing problems can push people into crisis. For this reason, we pulled information together about the current housing situation in Newcastle. We shared Newcastle Homes data, including information on banding, waiting times and importantly, where to go for more help. Feedback from residents and other professionals was that this information was useful.

- Support

During the year we issued 606 foodbank vouchers as part of the referral system into Newcastle Foodbank. The infograph on page four also shows we have we have directly provided items to people from households we supported throughout the year. Items included food packages and toiletries / household detergents etc. mainly to help in the winter months when household costs are at their highest. As mentioned in last year's report, we don't see direct donations to families as part of our long-term work. We donate because we acknowledge that people are dealing with the financial hardship caused by the ongoing effects of austerity, poverty and the so-called cost-of-living crisis.

# Page 11 - Activities with Women

We strive to support women to come together to identify the issues they are facing and support each other.  This year we facilitated a weekly women's group, hosted free yoga sessions for women and organised an International Women's Day event.

- Women's Group

Women tried different activities and shared their considerable skills with each other. They learned about different cultures and the history of Benwell and Scotswood. Guest speakers provided information on cancer awareness, energy saving, personal safety and wellbeing.

**"I have enjoyed the company of other women. Learning about their cultures and family has been so interesting. It has also helped with my confidence and social isolation"**

**“I enjoy the togetherness I felt, like we are just one family”**

- Women’s Yoga

  Yoga for women was organised in partnership with Dovile from The Yoga Wellness.

- International Women’s Day

  On Friday 8th March 50 women from the local community came to celebrate International Women’s Day on the themes of Investing in Women and Inspiring Inclusion. Activities puzzles, cooking demonstrations and self-care.  We reflected on the history of International Women’s Day, the importance of women voting and discussed women's ongoing struggles against inequality.  Several guests attended to share vital health information around wellbeing and breast cancer awareness.

# Page 13 – Community Action Projects

In the last year Riverside has continued to work alongside people in the community that want to help themselves and others.  Here are two examples.

The Community Coach Trips Savings club is growing**.** In Summer 2023 two 72-seater coaches were filled with families on a July day trip to Scarborough in July and another two coaches went to Flamingo Land in August.  The club also pantomime trips and180 people went to see Pinocchio at the Theatre Royal. Even more people have signed up for a seasonal pantomime next year and the savings club is also planning to organise half-term trips as well as summer days out**.**  This community led action makes memorable days out cheaper (through group more affordable by enabling people to pay little by little.

We hosted Give Away Days in Carnegie Building in partnership with a local activist group, People 2 People. Lots of pre-loved clothing, baby items, toys and household goods were brought in by and handed out to people from the community.  There is huge interest in this kind of self-help support and we have received enquiries about when future events will run. If you would like to be involved, please get in touch with us.

# Page 14 – Managing Carnegie Building

Several voluntary and community sector organisations and teams are based in Carnegie Building alongside Riverside:

- JET - jobs, education, and training for people from diverse BAME communities
- Involve North East – health focused involvement and participation organisation
- Search Newcastle – support for older people
- Side-step - a young peoples' project by the children's charity, Action for Children
- Success 4 All - homework clubs for children, supported by volunteers

Carnegie Building is a space where many practitioners from community organisations and teams that support children and families come to support people. These partners range from Men's Pie Club to NHS colleagues supporting expectant families with a Baby Box. Carnegie Building is also available for hire by the local community for children's parties and family events.  All of us people doing so many activities are what make Carnegie Building such an important community asset.

Riverside has a subsidiary company, Carnegie Building Newcastle, which manages the building through Riverside staff. This subsidiary ensures that any surplus generated is ploughed back into Riverside's charitable work. Our focus has firmly been on improving the sustainability of Carnegie Building and we have liaised with the building owner, Newcastle City Council, on safety matters. Through this liaison we had an energy assessment undertaken, which informed us of the likely cost to install more energy efficient measures. This information will be useful when the opportunity presents itself to apply for such funding.

# Page 15 – Financial Summary and Thanks

| | 2024 £ | 2023 £ |
|---|---|---|
| **Income from:** | | |
| Donations | **15,727** | 2,328 |
| Grants and contracts | **432,729** | 513,635 |
| Other income | **5,104** | 237 |
| ***Total income*** | **453,560** | **516,200** |
| **Expenditure on:** | | |
| Raising funds | **2,865** | - |
| Operation of the charity | **433,001** | 474,496 |
| Depreciation of assets | **50,298** | 50,928 |
| ***Total expenditure*** | **486,164** | **525,424** |
| ***Net income/(expenditure)*** | **(32,604)** | (9,224) |
| Total funds brought forward | **1,064,948** | 1,074,172 |
| ***Total funds carried forward*** | **1,032,344** | **1,064,948** |

These key figures relate to our income and expenditure in 2023/24. For more detail, our independently examined accounts for 23/24 are available on our website and the Charity Commission website.

- Thank You to Our Funders

Riverside Community Health Project

# Further Information and Contact

You can find lots of useful information including our programme of activities,

on our website: www.riversidechp.org.uk

We also post lots of information on our Facebook and Instagram which are both @riversidechp

If you would like to visit, call or email, you can reach us at:

Riverside Community Health Project
Carnegie Building
Atkinson Road
Newcastle upon Tyne
NE4 8XS

Tel: 0191 226 0754
Email: admin@riversidechp.org.uk