Trustees ANNUAL Report and Financial Statement for 2020/2021



The Life Project (Bath) Registered Charity: 1142459 Company number: 07573284

THE LIFE PROJECT (BATH)

ANNUAL REPORT AND FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

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Trustees' Report

The trustees present their report for the year to 31 March 2021. Due to the trustees' status as directors under the Companies Act 2006 this report constitutes a directors' report as required by section 415 of the Companies Act 2006.

1. OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES

The overall objective of the charity is to promote and protect the health and wellbeing of people with learning difficulties or other mental or physical disabilities in Bath.

The Life Project is committed to:

- Providing a home(s) for life, rooted in Christian principles and ethos, with opportunities for spiritual growth, leisure, learning, training, education and employment for people with disabilities, primarily learning disabilities, reflecting their individual needs; to fulfil their potential in community together, living lives that have purpose, security and dignity.
- Enabling each of these vulnerable people to live a vibrant and abundant life, expressing their God-given gifts/talents and positively impacting the community around them. Also offering the church and wider community an insight into the significance and power of inclusive and intentional Christian community.
- Providing an environment where these individuals can grow and mature in their relationship with God and respond to His 'call' on their lives.

The trustees have had due regard to the Charity Commission guidance on public benefit in deciding what activities we should undertake and confirm that all our activities are undertaken to further our charitable purposes for the public benefit.

We set down three key objectives for the year 2020-2021 and our performance against these are reported in detail in Section 2 of this report. In this Covid pandemic year significant adjustments had to be made to our mode of delivery and expectations needed to be managed. However, in summary the following activities were successfully achieved:

- Creative and purposeful activities in the Old Acorn Barn, meeting three times weekly in a socially distanced format where possible (mainly Autumn 2020);
- on-line social and creative sessions for Makers during lockdowns, and in situations where our users were too vulnerable to meet;
- one-to-one socially distanced walks where possible to maintain social contact;
- maintaining an allotment, allowing visitors occasional visits where possible according to lockdowns and social distancing measures;
- a weekly parent carer 'drop in' group with play area for pre-school children in a socially distanced format utilizing a bookable appointment system and café style arrangements (mainly Autumn 2020);

- peer support for parent-carer group members through WhatsApp, plus occasional online activity sessions, during lockdowns;
- online evening fellowship group meetings for adults in the Springs and K-Team groups, meeting twice monthly;
- new pastoral and prayer support initiated by the Life Project Chaplain.

Unfortunately, meetings of the Mini-Springs group and our scheduled programme of social activities for the year were suspended due to the Covid pandemic.

Most Life Project staff, volunteers and families are members of Christian churches and congregations around Bath and NE Somerset and are committed to the Christian ethos of the organisation. They strive to reflect these Christian values in the way they contribute their efforts to Life Project work and activities.

2. ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

Overview

Following a review of strategic goals, new approaches and timelines were ratified in March 2020. However, as the new reporting year opened in April 2020 it was apparent that pre-set goals, aspirations and activities would need to change in the short term due to the Covid-19 crisis. Projects and activities abruptly ceased to take place in face-to face format and a 'crisis team' of trustees and the Operations Director was convened on a weekly basis to address the critical operational and financial implications of the pandemic.

2.1. Achievement against objectives

Our stated strategic framework for the financial year from April 2020 to March 2021 concentrated on three key strands namely:-

- To become a sustainable organisation
- To expand our reach and impact
- To nurture and grow the Life Project 'community' of families, individuals and housemate groups

Progress made in achieving key goals within each of these strands is reported below. However, in many cases outcomes were necessarily delayed and expectations adjusted during the year.

Strategic Theme 1 - To become a sustainable organisation

a) To establish a balanced portfolio of fundraising activities in order to diversify our income streams (e.g. to include community fundraising, personal giving, grant funding).
Despite having to move community fundraising activities online and accept that some of our planned activities, such as the Bath Half Marathon, could not go ahead we demonstrated creativity and flexibility in adjusting our programme to maximise fundraising potential and still achieved approx. 66% of our target. Grant funding remained

challenging, although we benefitted from Covid emergency funding from some sources.

Committed regular giving by individuals remains relatively low, though we are constantly surprised by ad hoc donations from those who want to support our work.

b) To maximise the use of the Barn by increasing activity days to at least three days per week and thereby its contribution towards central costs

Whilst the launch of a third day at the Barn was delayed, it became a reality in September 2020 when our Outreach Worker launched activities on Tuesdays. This had to be run according to strict social distancing rules as were the pre-existing days. Whilst sign-up for this group was still low (several new contacts were not able to start at such a difficult time due to self-isolating)



other Makers and members of our community were able to spread their attendance over three days rather than two. The majority of our Makers maintained their payment of fees despite the change in delivery and content, for which we were very grateful.

c) To increase the contribution made via trading, e.g. products or commissioned services.

Developing diverse business related income was impossible to implement during the Covid year though remains a target for growth in the future. Whilst Makers were not able to attend the Barn, workshop and allotment, it was impossible to make products for sale. Also the closely guided activities (e.g. jam-making in the kitchen and wire and soldering work in the workshop) are difficult to accomplish safely. This will remain the case for some time though new activities related to outside wood working may shortly provide new opportunities for saleable products.

Commissioning opportunities to create reliable and sustainable income was not possible to pursue, though remain a priority in the coming year.

d) To expand the volunteer base to support and sustain existing and future services.

Volunteers, like staff and our users, were also impacted by the need to keep safe during the Covid year. Whilst face-to-face activities were suspended volunteers were not needed to physically support the work, though they enthusiastically took part in Zoom sessions and maintained their contact with the organisation. During the Autumn 2020 new volunteer drivers and escorts were appointed to drive the minibus to the Barn on Tuesdays and this may be developed in the future. During the year we identified a volunteer to assist in the office once restrictions have been lifted. Opportunities for volunteers to assist other aspects of our work, in particular to support events and fundraising activities, will be promoted when all restrictions are lifted.

Strategic Theme 2 – To expand our reach and impact

a) To sustain and further develop the Outreach Worker role for the development of new initiatives and activities catering for the currently unmet needs of our learning disabled (LD) community.

As the practical development and piloting of new activities had to be abruptly put on hold during the reporting year there was no lack of ideas coming forward for the future. Our Development and Outreach Worker is still concentrating on gaining a full complement of Makers for Tuesdays at the Barn, though he has also prepared for implementing new creative pursuits either at the Barn or elsewhere. Whilst project funds may be required to pilot specific activities, we were pleased to gain funding to extend his contract by one year which will hopefully enable him to carry out these prospective developments. A particular focus of his plans include creating more opportunities attractive to men with LD, outdoor activities and also to meet the wellbeing agenda.

b) To develop our profile with the churches in Bath, demonstrating that the Life Project offers credible Christian outreach and is the organisation that can assist them to support those within their congregations with learning disabilities.

It was difficult to make positive steps forward by visiting and speaking at churches in Bath, but we maintained progress towards building links with specific churches and church leaders during the year. This has meant presenting or challenging church members during zoom or streamed services where church ministers are already 'on board' with our message about making church accessible to those with LD. Several churches have specifically included us in their regular prayer diaries. In early 2020 we commissioned a video specifically aimed at churches to raise awareness and support. This will remain a tool to use in the coming one-two years though we continue to rely on Life Project family members to advocate for us within their own Christian circles.

c) To increase our presence and profile across our local area through social media and networking.

Our updated website, monthly newsletters and social media posts have all been maintained with the objective of letting everyone know, and be encouraged by, news and pictures of our activities, users and the issues facing those who have learning disabilities and those who care for them. It was disappointing not to have additional opportunities of promoting our cause during the reporting year, in particular at the school and college fairs which normally provide a positive opportunity to meet potential users of our services. Staff continued to network with particular interest groups online and benefitted from sharing the challenges facing many in the charity sector through active networks such as the Bath Third Sector Group.

d) To actively develop our relationships with potential partners e.g. Liveability, B&NES/Virgin Care, Golden Lane and other smaller local organisations.

Capacity and opportunity to develop future partnerships was limited during 2020-21 as coping with developing safe ways of delivering and resourcing our services was clearly a priority. The desire to develop partnership working with small local organisations and suppliers in developing Barn related or other activities continued to be pursued during lockdown by our Development and Outreach Worker – the realisation of which is hoped to take shape during 2021-22.

Strategic Theme 3 - To nurture and grow the Life Project 'community' of families, individuals and housemate groups.

a) To promote the sense of belonging to a Life Project community amongst all those associated with our work and mission.

We continue to promote the Life Project as a family of all those connected or supported by us, plus their friends and families. Prospective plans for an open day, the socials programme, the AGM, cream tea and other occasions which we had hoped would promote the sense of family were necessarily either cancelled or carried out online. Whilst this

meant we were able to maintain contact with people we also recognise that this is second best to meeting as a community face-to-face. Life Project 'membership' has not progressed since its launch in 2019.

b) To continue working with the HAS Trust to establish our first Life Project home in Bath.

Progress has been made over the reporting year as the Life Project has worked on the project alongside the members of the HAS Trust, Golden Lane Housing (the proposed managing agent for the home when residents are in place) and Kathryn and Peter Spackman representing the



prospective house-mate group who may take up residence. Plans for the physical adaptations to the house in Bloomfield Park were drawn up during the year, discussed and agreed. HAS commissioned a builder to start work in May 2021 with a view to completing renovations by July. Legal aspects are yet to be finalised but the Life Project continues to act as support and facilitator to this project.

c) To develop proposals for purchasing our own house(s).

This remains a long-term objective – to pursue reasonable possibilities for owning a house. It has become evident that the first project in association with the HAS Trust needs to be realised before considering an additional housing project. There has been much to learn during the current project which will hopefully inform future initiatives.

d) To develop a Chaplaincy service for the households we support and to provide prayerful support for the whole organisation including staff, volunteers, groups and project teams.

As the pandemic started we were in the process of recruiting our first Life Project Chaplain. We appointed Marian Marlow who was already a volunteer at the Barn. She has previous chaplaincy experience and during this year has supported individuals with prayer including establishing a weekly zoom prayer meeting. She has also offered pastoral support at the Parent Carer group, contributed brief Christian encouragements to our monthly newsletters and, when asked, for other events. Whilst the Home is yet to be a reality for our first housemate group, she is aware of establishing chaplaincy support when it becomes a reality.

Summary

We are thankful for God's ongoing faithfulness and provision to the work of the Life Project. We rejoice in the creativity and adaptability of our staff who have enabled the maximum amount of input to support our users during difficult times. We have also been humbled by God's protection of our Makers, group members, staff and volunteers during this difficult year though we know that many have suffered personal losses.

3. LIFE PROJECT ACTIVITIES (detail provided by project coordinators)

3.1.The Old Acorn Barn

Pre-pandemic, activities at The Old Acorn Barn would operate on the established basis of two days a week during term time. We had capacity for seven Makers attending each day and from September 2019 they made a contribution of £45. For a further £7 a day the activity leaders provide transport from central Bath addresses.

Activities at The Barn continue to have three main aims:

- to provide opportunities for learning and training in skills necessary for producing quality items and increased independence in daily living;
- to create an environment which nurtures healthy relationships, whilst celebrating uniqueness and encouraging personal growth;
- to generate ways in which we can positively impact the wider community.

Most days start with time at the allotment, then later making plant supports, art and craft, cooking and time to enjoy the beautiful countryside around The Barn. After a freshly cooked lunch, drama and music sessions fill the afternoon sessions. Three paid staff lead the activities each day, aided by several volunteers and Personal Assistants who support our Makers during sessions.

March 2020 to March 2021 was a year like no other. As a team we worked hard to respond creatively and positively to each change in restrictions and guidelines to maintain contact with all our makers and continue to provide some kind of structure to the week and enjoyable and purposeful ways to engage. This included Zoom sessions, preparing activity packs to be completed at home, walks, allotment sessions, picnics and, for the autumn term, to a return to days at the barn, albeit half days for half the group at a time. We were very appreciative of hard work by Ruth, Sue and Dinah for their support and guidance in helping us return safely.

Despite the many challenges of the year, we have also shared some very special and positive developments that are worth marking:

• after much hard work by Tom we started a third day, Tuesdays, at the Barn in September 2020. We have had 2 new makers join us and 1 return after a few years at college. (3 other new makers were due to join but were then offered the opportunity to re-take their final years at college). It's great to have Tom on the barn Team. We now have a total of 12 makers.

- We had a very positive focus at the barn in the autumn with a theme of 'All Good Gifts' and worked to create a group creative installation of many things we feel grateful for. In the spring term we spent a very inspiring few months thinking about bees. They inspired our music, dancing, drama, craft and thoughts for the day.
- Two particular highlights were an open air art workshop at the allotment with artist Natalie Bedford and the day Danny the donkey came to the barn. It was so special to see our makers take this gentle animal for walks around the village.
- Most makers adapted incredibly well to Zoom meetings. In Jieun's drama sessions a very beautiful, immersive format evolved which included music and signing re-telling the Easter story in that manner had many of us in tears. Very special.

In closing, it would be wrong not to acknowledge the difficulties of the year. It has been a hard time for many parents and carers without the usual structure, supports and times of respite. We have missed volunteers who needed to shield for health reasons, and staff on furlough at certain times. The greatest sadness was the death of dear Claire Chambers, a maker who had had to leave barn activities just before the first lockdown and then passed away in March 2021. She enriched our times in so many ways and we still miss her.

~ Sarah Couchman

3.2. Barn Development and Outreach

In spite of the considerable challenges of this past year, I am pleased to report that some good progress has been made in terms of development and reaching out.

Barn developments: In particular, a new day at the Barn (Tuesday) was started as planned in September and we were able to continue this in spite of lockdowns, providing much needed meaningful contact and activities with a combination of Zoom and socially distanced walks and

outdoor activities at the Barn and Allotment when face-to-face indoor sessions weren't possible.

For one maker, who had no means of joining us online, we arranged for the loan of a computer and mobile wi-fi connector so they could join us on Zoom. While we did have four new people lined up to start, three of these opted to re-do their last year at college because of all they had missed with the lockdowns. However, two more people then asked to sign up (one a completely new contact) so the day was able to start as planned and



we currently have an established group of three on which we hope to build in the new year.

One of these makers signed up for Thursdays as well, and another would like to do another day when more space comes available.

Sadly, due to the ill health of one of our dear makers a space became available on Wed and Thurs shortly before the first Lockdown in March 2020. This was filled by a member of our Springs Group who was quite isolated during lockdown and who we had been meeting for walks. He has benefited hugely from now being part of these groups and is a real asset to the Barn.

The net effect of all these changes represents approximately a **30 per cent increase** in take-up for the Barn compared to the previous year.

To enable all the Barn sessions to go ahead, we were able to organize the use of a local community minibus large enough to transport small groups of makers to the Barn in a socially distanced Covid-safe way, following detailed risk assessments. We also recruited three excellent new volunteers to help with transport and with the Barn activities, for whom we are so grateful (as is the case with all our faithful volunteers).

Once again we had a presence at the local SEND Transitions Fair (which this year was virtual). It was a shame not to be able to meet young people and their parent/carers face to face, but we did have some positive enquiries who have expressed an interest in signing up to activities at the Barn for 2022. Other progress has been made in building links with the team of local social prescribers who have started to refer people to us in the hope we can help.

In terms of new projects, we have been exploring a partnership with the Urban Garden, a CIC based in Victoria Park, to run a City & Guilds horticulture training for a group of 6 people. We have also had discussions with Manvers Street Baptist Church café about starting a wellbeing or games café. Planning for both of these had to be put on hold due to Covid, but we hope they will be possible in the future. The purchase of a new 3 x 6m gazebo for the Barn affords us more flexibility and much needed shelter to enable our outdoor activities to continue whatever the weather. And further to building a fruitful relationship with a local tree surgeon, we used a grant to purchase some equipment to enable the makers to safely produce kindling which they will be able to sell to the local community in the Autumn and Winter months.

While it has been a challenging year, we are so grateful and thankful for the way Makers, volunteers and staff have been kept safe throughout this time and for all that has been achieved and learned. We look forward to building positively and creatively on this in the year ahead, to extend the benefits of the wonderful community of people that is the Life Project.

~ Tom Riley

3.3.Allotment Project

This project is based at the Monksdale Road Allotments where we have a large allotment plot, with six high raised beds, four ground level raised beds and a further level patch with a circular paved area. The Makers from the Barn usually start each day here. During harvest time, crops are shared and taken back to the Barn to cook for lunch.

We are fortunate to have such a lovely large plot and it has been a great blessing to the space to use during the pandemic. Over the summer term it was hard to keep on top of the weeds

without our regular sessions and it became a bit of a jungle but then Josh Brooks and his PAs came to the rescue and by the end of the year it had never looked so good!

We are also extremely grateful to Steve and Jenny Herring who continue to be so generous with their time and gardening expertise.

~ Sarah Couchman



3.4. Parent Carer 'Drop-in' Group

Just prior to the first national lockdown in March 2020 we held a parent carer retreat, had it been scheduled for a week later it would have been cancelled. The retreats are a much needed and appreciated part of our work, giving parents a time to breathe. Feedback received included:

"It was once again such a well planned and lovely day. We all walk a similar path and have good days and bad days. This was particularly bad for me and thank you all for being there and lifting me up again."

"Thanks so much for such a lovely day. Much needed. So lucky to have this group."

"Much appreciated!!! A real treat....much gratitude for been treated so beautifully."

It was good to know our parent-carers had some renewing time for themselves before our worlds turned upside down and they had even more stresses and strains and demands put on them.

Rachel and I were only able to support the parent carers through our WhatsApp group as we were furloughed and had home schooling to do with our own children, navigating them through a tricky and unpredictable time. The WhatsApp group proved to be good peer support and the group are very good at encouraging one another.

Upon return from furlough we still could not open the drop-in and telephone support was able to be offered one-to-one with each parent who required this. Starting with the ones for whom there was most concern but calling everyone and often providing a follow-up call after an average 40 minutes long conversation each.

It was amazing to be able to open the drop in up again in September and we did find a way to operate in Covid-secure manner with social distancing, face coverings, and other protocols in place. We continued to make it feel warm and welcoming.

Some things have worked really well and we may well maintain these after all restrictions have lifted, such as table service rather then the parent carers coming to the hatch. Even with children being off school for self-isolation and a mixture of other things, God covered us and we were able to stay open for the whole term. When the second school closure occurred in January, we could have legally remained open as support groups were allowed, however the practicalities of this whist parents, carers, staff and volunteers were all involved in home schooling, prevented our doing so. Once again the WhatsApp group was a support to everyone.

Opening again after Easter has worked well and we have a steady stream of new parent carers join the group. We are so delighted that we will be able to offer Pilates again in the coming weeks, and can prepare for a long awaited retreat as the restrictions lift further.

Rachel and I could not manage to offer the care and support to the parent carers without our hard working volunteers, Amazingly we have had 3 start within the last 12 months even with all the restrictions.

~ Fiona Day

3.5. Springs Group

Springs, our group for adults with learning disabilities meets twice monthly in the evening for fellowship, worship, sharing, Bible study and prayer. The group has now around 21 regular members and 15 committed volunteers. Members come from across Bath and from a variety of churches, or none. The group would usually meet at the Weston Hub, but has moved over to meet via Zoom for this period. This format does not work for everyone (and we miss those not present) but generally feel thrilled to have a group of 20-30 attending each meeting. We are also pleased to have been joined by the Keynsham K-Team for this season.

Since the autumn we have been looking at the Fruit of the Spirit and tried to be as interactive and accessible as possible; inviting members to wear or bring items relating to the theme, using breakout rooms has been valuable for sharing news and concerns and Makaton signing has been a great way to worship when singing is challenging! As ever, prayer means so much to our Springs members and they have really valued being able to pray through this difficult year.

Some members have been experiencing some very difficult personal challenges and where possible we have tried to support and partner with professional agencies involved.

Huge thanks to the committed and faithful volunteers who bring so much to the group.

~ Sarah Couchman

3.6. Mini-Springs Groups

Due to the age range and nature of the Mini-Springs group it has not been possible to facilitate this group during 2020-2021. The aim of the group has been to see families who have children with additional needs and their siblings be able to access and engage with age-appropriate Biblical input and fellowship time within a safe and fun environment. This aim remains important to us but before making decisions about reopening as restrictions lift we are choosing to review, with the Project Leaders, how we might best serve families and the local church.

3.7.Social Programme

The aim of the Life Project socials has been to build a time when everyone involved or associated with the Life Project can come together, where friendships and trust is built and people gain a deeper knowledge of one another, thus bridging the gap between the different projects.

Due to the Covid pandemic decisions were required to prioritise the work in which we engaged and which would be practical for the Life Project to deliver. Unfortunately, as we continued to evaluate, during the year, what work in terms of activity and frequency we acknowledged that transport, in particular, is a key factor in enabling everyone to participate. The programme of social activities was therefore sadly suspended but we are looking forward to their return as the covid restrictions continue to lift and opportunities to meet in person become increasingly practical.



4. SAFEGUARDING

The Life Project has continued to subscribe to *Thirtyone:eight* (previously known as the *Churches Child Protection Advisory Service*) and to use them as the umbrella organisation for the processing of Disclosure and Barring Service applications for volunteers and staff.

There were no serious safeguarding incidents during the reporting year, but we have consulted with *Thirtyone:eight* experts for occasional advice where we felt it necessary.

Our Safeguarding Policy was reviewed and updated in September 2020 with the specific additional of more specific guidance on working with service users online.

5. FUNDRAISING

5.1.Community Fundraising

Following the success of the new community fundraising strategy in 2018-19 ambitious targets are set each year. A variety of creative challenges and events continue to be organised and adjusting these to new and virtual formats during 2020-21 was challenging though considerable results were achieved.

Highlights of the fundraising calendar for 2020-21 included our annual Cream Tea being run virtually for the first time with active participants joining from Bath to South America! Whilst the Bath Christmas Market and other local fairs were cancelled we were able to quickly put in place sales of Christmas cards at a city centre church and a highly successful 'Bath to Bethlehem' campaign whereby people were sponsored to run, jog, cycle miles towards the nearly 3000-mile journey. Unfortunately, we were unable to sign up for the rescheduled Bath Half Marathon in 2021, which dented our annual target, but we look forward to participating in 2022.

We continued to pursue raising the number of regular givers to the Life Project and have created a video to promote this to church congregations in and around Bath. We continued to be recipients of one-off and regular financial support from a number of local churches, including All Saints Weston, Holy Trinity Combe Down and St Michaels Without.

5.2.Grant Funding

The identification and sourcing of dedicated funding to support the work of the Life Project has continued to be a time consuming and sometimes frustrating task, though assisted by some pro bono support by a professionally qualified charity fundraiser.

From April 2020 and with the consequent threat to our financial stability due to Covid we energetically sought out Covid-related emergency and recovery funds, achieving success in obtaining two grants through the Quartet Community Foundation and one from the National Lottery Community Fund. These funds went a long way to help us resource our online delivery of activities, PPE and other equipment, and to fund additional hours of staff needed to facilitate new ways of working.

The Government's Job Retention Scheme offset much of our salary costs for those of our staff who were placed on either full or part-time furlough at certain times of the year. The final of three years' grant funding of the Parent Carer Group was received from the St John's Foundation.

Whilst projects and their development were restricted during the Covid pandemic we continued to seek funding for up to three years for core costs to underpin our future

sustainability and potential growth. In March 2021 we were successful in obtaining some funding in this regard from the Garfield Weston Foundation and were awaiting the results of several further applications.

We would therefore like to extend our gratitude to the following funding bodies that have supported us this year:

- St John's Foundation
- Co-op Community Fund
- Quartet Community Foundation
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- Garfield Weston Foundation.



6. FINANCIAL REVIEW

Over the year, the Charity received income of £121,220, with expenditure of £89,491, and finished with a surplus of £31,729. Income was up by 29% on the previous year, reflecting an increase in donations and some significant grants received, notwithstanding a drop in fee and fundraising income due to Covid-19 restrictions.

Overall expenditure was similar to the previous year, however the distribution of this had some marked differences largely due to the impact of Covid-19: less was spent on running activities and premises, whilst staff costs increased and additional costs were incurred for PPE and hygiene.

At 31 March 2021, the Charity had net assets of £82,295 of which £51,352 were restricted funds and £30,943 unrestricted.

The activities of the Charity were severely hit by the lockdowns and other restrictions during the Covid-19 pandemic and to address this trustees established a small Crisis Team at the start of the year enabling decisions to be made promptly in response to the developing situation, which later became a Recovery Team. As detailed elsewhere, many of the activities were adapted for on line delivery and where safe some limited face to face provision was maintained. The Charity benefited from a number of Covid-19 related grants to support the

adaptation of services and recovery (totalling nearly £24k) and most fees for the Barn continued to be paid. These, along with a major grant of £15k received at the end of the year, enabled the trustees to be confident that the Charity was financially secure to deliver its established programme of activities for 2021/22.

Looking further ahead, the Life Project will need to continue to secure funding for its core costs and to support the preparatory work for setting up new programmes. The final instalment of the Parent Carer grant was received in December, so new funding will need to be sought to maintain that work. The trustees are continuing their efforts to broaden the range of income sources to become less dependent on grants and have established a Strategic Finance Group to explore longer term funding opportunities.

Investment policy

The Life Project holds funds in an instant access Deposit Account and a 90 day notice Treasurer's Reserve Account so as to provide some interest. These savings have been placed with Triodos Bank, which has a strong ethical investment policy.

Reserves policy

The trustees have examined the charity's requirements for reserves in the light of the main risks to the organisation. As a result of this they aim to hold reserves equal to at least three months' unrestricted running costs. This is to ensure the continued running of the charity if unrestricted funding decreases, until new sources of funding can be found. At the year end unrestricted reserves were £30,943, amounting to over six months' unrestricted running costs.

7. FUTURE PLANS



The 12 months, April 2020 to March 2021, have been some of the most challenging due to the global covid19 pandemic, national and local lockdowns, and the changing rules and guidance regarding permitted activities versus organisational risk assessments. Looking back over the year it is a success in and of itself to have survived and to be considering a future for The Life Project.

The immediate future remains uncertain as the national restrictions begin to ease, with target dates in the coming months when the government will assess progress and consider which restrictions will lift and any related

protocols. Our primary concern is the welfare of our Makers, volunteers, and staff, although we look forward to returning to in-person gatherings at The Old Acorn Barn, Parent Carer Support and Springs/ K-Team this is not something that will be rushed. As the government's so-called road map unfolds it is envisaged that Old Acorn Barn and Parent Carer Support will return over the course of the summer term with Springs and K-Team regathering in the autumn.

The three strategic themes of the Life Project have remained our aspiration, however, as we emerge from the global pandemic the political, economic, social and technological (PEST) landscape has altered considerably. The year ahead will see our first Chief Executive take up their role in June 2021 and in collaboration with the trustees it is going to be important to review the strategies and objectives for the post-pandemic world.

Due to the unknowns presented by the covid-pandemic and the forthcoming change in leadership meeting the following themes and objectives remains our aspiration, whilst recognising the timeframe in which they can be met may be protracted. In addition our need for support through grant funding will be a priority in the coming year in order to meet the needs of community in the emerging post pandemic landscape.

Strategic Theme 1 - To become a sustainable organisation

- e) To establish a balanced portfolio of fundraising activities in order to diversify our income streams (e.g. to include community fundraising, personal giving, grant funding);
- f) To maximise the use of the Barn by increasing activity days to at least three days per week and thereby its contribution towards central costs;
- g) To increase the contribution made via trading, e.g. products or commissioned services;
- h) To expand the volunteer base to support and sustain existing and future services.

Strategic Theme 2 – To expand our reach and impact

- e) To sustain and further develop the Outreach Worker role for the development of new initiatives and activities catering for the currently unmet needs of our learning disabled (LD) community;
- f) To develop our profile with the churches in Bath, demonstrating that the Life Project offers credible Christian outreach and is the organisation that can assist them to support those within their congregations with learning disabilities;
- g) To increase our presence and profile across our local area through social media and networking;
- h) To actively develop our relationships with potential partners e.g. Liveability, B&NES/Virgin Care, Golden Lane and other smaller local organisations.

Strategic Theme 3 - To nurture and grow the Life Project 'community' of families, individuals and housemate groups

- e) To promote the sense of belonging to a Life Project community amongst all those associated with our work and mission;
- f) To continue working with HAS to establish our first Life Project home in Bath;
- g) To develop proposals for purchasing our own house(s);
- h) To develop a Chaplaincy service for the households we support and to provide prayerful support for the whole organisation including staff, volunteers, groups and project teams.



8. STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

8.1.Governing Document

The organisation is a charitable company limited by guarantee. The company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the charitable company and is governed under its Articles of Association. The company was incorporated on 22 March 2011. The company was registered as a charity on 17 June 2011.

The Life Project (Bath) was initiated by over a dozen Christian families, mainly from the Bath area but also including Keynsham, most of whom had children, teenagers or adults with a range of learning disabilities. The families involved represented a variety of different denominations, but all shared a vision and passion for enabling their children to play a full role in the life of the church and in the community. The Life Project (Bath) aims for the highest standards of care and professionalism but is not seeking to create a home(s) or meaningful occupation(s) that isolate or removes those with learning disabilities from the wider world.

8.2. Governance Roles

The directors of the company are also charity trustees for the purposes of charity law.

Role descriptions for the Chair of Board and for individual trustees were updated in 2017 and a Code of Conduct for Trustees and other guidance and induction documentation has been collated for use by new trustees.

8.3. Recruitment and Appointment of the Trustees

The trustees regularly review the skills and experience base of its board and new trustees are sought to reflect the needs of the organisation. A three-year term of office, with potential to renew, has been established. Based on a skills audit of trustees and identified skills gaps, potential trustees are approached. In order to be confirmed as a trustee DBS clearance is sought, a 'fit and proper persons' check carried out and candidates must sign up to all elements

of the Confirmation of Appointment declaration. Two new trustees were formally appointed to the board at the 2020 AGM year and one trustee resigned.

8.4. Trustee Induction and Training

Induction is seen as a key element in retaining and supporting trustees. New trustees are given clear advice and support in relation to their obligations. A Trustee Induction Checklist is in use and all relevant documentation is made available, including details of resourcing, the current financial position as set out in the latest set of accounts and information about future plans and the strategic development of the charity. Other governance specific training available for trustees in the charity sector is notified to trustees.

8.5. Day to Day Management

The charity was run during 2020 to the end April of 2021 by its Operations Director, Sue Snell. In preparation for her retirement Rich Blake-Lobb was recruited and will become the Chief Executive of the charity from June 2021. During 2020-21 seven other part-time staff were employed.

The office base is based at 13 Church Street, Weston, Bath, BA1 4BU.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

The Life Project maintains a risk register that captures the main events that might have a significant adverse impact on the Life Project's service delivery, service users or financial/reputational integrity. The register describes the event, the impact of the event being realised and the probability of it happening and whether the risk can be treated or tolerated. Each Life Project activity has its own Risk Assessment and these are regularly reviewed between the Project Coordinators and the Operations Director (Chief Executive) with relevant elements being included in the management level risk register.



At the start of the first Covid related lockdown an EGM was held by Trustees on the 26 March 2020 to assess the risks to the charity of the Covid pandemic and its effect on its activities and financial implications. A business continuity plan was drawn up and weekly Crisis Team meetings between the Operations Director and a core group of trustees ensued. This group took any urgent decisions required, constantly risk assessing the safety of staff and users as well as consequent actions such as furloughing staff and other remedial financial measures. From June 2020 these meetings were renamed Recovery Team meetings as circumstances improved over the summer.

At each stage of national or local lockdown, Coronavirus risk assessments have been carried out and adherence to Government guidance applied to all activities. Given the higher than average vulnerability to Covid of our client base we have been particularly cautious when resuming face-to-face activities, whilst aiming to maintain social contact through online sessions and delivering usable activity packs to mitigate isolation in these vulnerable groups.

The risks associated with normal business continued to be reported and assessed routinely at Trustee meetings throughout the year. The trustees have satisfied themselves that systems or procedures are established in order to manage those risks effectively.

10. REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS

Name and Charity Number: The Life Project (Bath) Registered Charity Number: 1142459 Company Number: 07573284

Trustees:

Clive Brooks Colin McSherry (resigned Oct 2020) Duncan Nash Tony Russell

Independent Examiner: Colin Goater 102 Freeview Road Bath BA2 1DZ

Bankers: The Co-operative Bank Plc PO Box 250 Skelmersdale WN8 6WT Triodos Bank UK Ltd Deanery Road Bristol BS1 5AS

Registered Office:

41 Charlton Road

Ben Stokes (appointed Oct 2020)

Alison Tucker (appointed Oct 2020, appointed

Keynsham

Ruth Taylor

Chair Feb 2021) David Twine

BS31 2JG

11. TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES IN RELATION TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS

The charity trustees (who are also the directors of The Life Project (Bath) for the purposes of company law) are responsible for preparing a trustees' annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (United Kingdom Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Company law requires the charity trustees to prepare financial statements for each year which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing the financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently;
- Observe the methods and principles in the Charities SORP;
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- State whether applicable UK accounting standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- Prepare financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the charity will continue in business.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and the group and hence taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The trustees are responsible for the maintenance and integrity of the corporate and financial information included on the charitable company's website. Legislation in the United Kingdom governing the preparation and dissemination of financial statements may differ from legislation in other jurisdictions.

Statement as to disclosure to the Independent Examiner

In so far as the trustees are aware at the time of approving our trustees' annual report:

- there is no relevant audit information, being information needed by the Independent Examiner in connection with preparing their report, of which the charitable company's Independent Examiner is unaware; and
- the trustees, having made enquiries of fellow directors and the charity's Independent Examiner that they ought to have individually taken, have each taken all steps that they are obliged to take as a director in order to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the Independent Examiner is aware of that information.

Approved by the Trustee Board on: 15th September 2021

and signed on its behalf by:

Aslota

Alison Tucker (Chair)

12. INDEPENDENT EXAMINER'S REPORT TO THE TRUSTEES OF THE LIFE PROJECT (BATH)

I report to the charity trustees on my examination of the accounts of the Company for the year ended 31 March 2021.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity's trustees of the Company (and also its directors for the purposes of company law) you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Companies Act 2006 ('the 2006 Act').

Having satisfied myself that the accounts of the Company are not required to be audited under Part 16 of the 2006 Act and are eligible for independent examination, I report in respect of my examination of your charity's accounts as carried out under section 145 of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act'). In carrying out my examination I have followed the Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Company as required by section 386 of the 2006 Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records; or
- the accounts do not comply with the accounting requirements of section 396 of the 2006 Act other than any requirement that the accounts give a 'true and fair view which is not a matter considered as part of an independent examination; or
- the accounts have not been prepared in accordance with the methods and principles of the Statement of Recommended Practice for accounting and reporting by charities [applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102)].

Name: Colin Marty and Colin Goater

Date: 22 July 2021

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Address: **102 Freeview Road,** Bath BA2 1DZ

13. STATEMENT OF FINANCIAL ACTIVITIES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE		Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds	Total Funds
		Funds	Funds	2021	2020
INCOME	Note	£	£	£	£
Donations		18,787	0	18,787	8,929
Gift aid on donations		1,427	0	1,427	1,778
Grants receivable		2,450	61,431	63,881	35,694
Contributions towards activities		24,011	18	24,029	28,606
Fundraising income		13,003	0	13,003	18,694
Interest on bank		94	0	94	210
TOTAL INCOME	-	59,772	61,449	121,220	93,910
EXPENDITURE					
Fundraising costs	-	1,277	0	1,277	1,654
Charitable Activities					
Activity costs		304	499	803	5,170
Allotment costs		0	212	212	110
Transport costs		156	0	156	553
IT costs		98	0	98	116
Staff travel and expenses		194	492	686	2,620
Equipment and tools		496	3,211	3,706	1,022
Volunteer gifts		244	81	325	272
Staff Costs	4	40,698	29,506	70,203	62,637
Telephone, stationery and postage		614	0	614	599
Administration costs		457	291	748	354
Premises rent and running costs		5,411	1,875	7,286	11,857
Professional fees		1,536	1,131	2,667	1,957
Insurance		459	0	459	592
Accountancy costs		250	0	250	200
		50,917	37,297	88,213	88,056
TOTAL EXPENDITURE		52,194	37,297	89,491	89,710
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	3	7,577	24,152	31,729	4,200
Reconciliation of funds:					
Fund balances brought forward at 1 April		23,365	27,200	50,565	46,366
Fund balances carried forward at 31 March		30,943	51,352	82,295	50,565

All of the charity's operations are classed as continuing.

The notes on pages 25 to 30 form part of these accounts. See Note 2 for fund accounting comparative figures.

14. BALANCE SHEET AS AT 31 MARCH 2021

	Notes	2021	2020
		£	£
Current Assets			
Debtors – Gift Aid		1,427	1,778
Prepayments		1,077	841
Accrued income		273	2,869
Cash at bank		83,096	47,709
		85,873	53,197
Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year			
Accruals and deferred income	5	3,578	2,632
Net Current Assets		82,295	50,565
Funds of the Charity			
Restricted	6	51,352	27,200
Unrestricted	7	30,943	23,365
Total Charity Funds	-	82,295	50,565

The Trustees are satisfied that the company is entitled to exemption from the provisions of the Companies Act 2006 (the Act) relating to the audit of the financial statements for the year by virtue of section 477, and that no member or members have requested an audit pursuant to section 476 of the Act.

The Trustees acknowledge their responsibilities for:

- (i) ensuring that the company keeps adequate accounting records which comply with section 386 of the Act, and
- (ii) preparing financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the company as at the end of the financial year and of its profit or loss for the financial year in accordance with the requirements of section 393, and which otherwise comply with the requirements of the Act relating to financial statements, so far as applicable to the company.

These financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions for small companies under Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006. These accounts have been delivered in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime.

Approved by the Trustees on 15th September 2021 and signed on their behalf by

Name: Alison Tucker

Date: <u>15th September 2021</u>

COMPANY NO. 07573284 The notes on pages 25 to 30 form part of these accounts.

15. NOTES TO THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021

Note 1: Accounting Policies

Basis of preparation

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015) - (Charities SORP (FRS 102)), the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) and the Companies Act 2006. Life Project (Bath) meets the definition of a public benefit entity under FRS 102. Assets and liabilities are initially recognised at historical cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant accounting policy note(s).

Preparation of the accounts on a going concern basis

The trustees have considered the immediate future of the charity for the next 12 to 18 months and consider that there are no material uncertainties about the charity's ability to continue as a going concern.

Income recognition

All income is recognised once the charity has entitlement to the income, it is probable that the income will be received and the amount of the income receivable can be measured reliably.

Income is deferred only when the charity has to fulfil conditions before becoming entitled to it or where the donor has specified that the income is to be expended in a future period.

Grants and donations are credited to the Statement of Financial Activities in the year in which they are receivable and are allocated to the appropriate fund.

Investment income is included when receivable.

Expenditure recognition and irrecoverable VAT

Liabilities are recognised as expenditure as soon as there is a legal or constructive obligation committing the charity to that expenditure, it is probable that settlement will be required, and the amount of the obligation can be measured reliably.

All expenditure is accounted for on an accrual basis.

Charitable expenditure comprises those costs incurred by the charity in the delivery of its activities and services for its beneficiaries. As the charity has only one activity, all costs are allocated against the charitable activity. They include attributable VAT which cannot be recovered.

Fund accounting

Funds held by the charity are:

- Unrestricted general funds these are funds which can be used in accordance with the charitable objects at the discretion of the Trustees.
- Restricted funds these are funds that can only be used for particular restricted purposes within the objects of the charity. Restrictions arise when specified by the donor or when funds are raised for particular restricted purposes.

Further explanation of the nature and purpose of each fund is included in the notes to the accounts.

Note 2: Prior Year Comparatives

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE	Unrestricted	Restricted	Total Funds
	Funds	Funds	2020
INCOME	£	£	£
Donations	8,929	0	8,929
Gift aid on donations	1,778	0	1,778
Grants receivable	694	35,000	35,694
Contributions towards activities	27,378	1,228	28,606
Fundraising income	18,694	0	18,694
Interest on bank	210	0	210
TOTAL INCOME	57,682	36,228	93,910
EXPENDITURE			
Fundraising costs	1,654	0	1,654
Charitable Activities			
Activity costs	1,034	4,136	5,170
Allotment costs	0	110	110
Transport costs	553	0	553
IT costs	116	0	116
Staff travel and expenses	2,078	542	2,620
Equipment and tools	966	56	1,022
Volunteer gifts	214	58	272
Staff Costs	40,895	21,742	62,637
Telephone, stationery and postage	599	0	599
Administration costs	354	0	354
Premises rent and running costs	9,385	2,472	11,857
Professional fees	488	1,468	1,957
Insurance	592	0	592
Accountancy costs	200	0	200
	57,472	30,584	88,056
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	59,126	30,584	89,710
Net (expenditure)/income for the year	(1,444)	5,644	4,200

Note 3: Net Income/(Expenditure) for the year

This is stated after charging:	2021	2020
	£	£
Independent examiner's remuneration	250	200

Note 4: Staff Costs and Related Party Transactions

	Unrestricted	Restricted	2021	2020
	£	£	Total	Total
Gross wages and salaries	38,182	28,950	67,132	60,468
Pension contributions	2,515	556	3,071	2,168
	40,698	29,506	70,203	62,637

Note

None of the Trustees receive fees or reimbursed expenses in respect of their trusteeship. The value of waived expenses were not considered significant. There are no other related party transactions that require disclosure in the accounts.

The aggregate value of donations received from Trustees and related parties was £1,275. (2020 - £780).

The Trustees considers its key management personnel is the Operations Director who received total employment benefits of £24,642. No employee received emoluments of more than £60,000.

The average number of persons employed as full-time or full-time equivalents by the charity during the year is detailed below.	2021 Number	2020 Number
Management	1.0	1.0
Carers / other	1.7	1.6
	2.7	2.6

The average headcount during the year was 8 (2020 - 7.5).

Note 5: Creditors: Amounts falling due within one year

	2021	2020
	£	£
Accruals	3,578	2,632
Deferred income	0	0
	3,578	2,632

Note 6: Restricted Funds

	Springs	Barn outreach & development	Website	Barn activities & allotment	Parent carer	Core Costs
b/f 1 April 2020	1,362	4,672	1,452	1,020	18,693	0
Income	200	0	0	0	22,353	15,000
Expenditure	58	1,781	1,452	800	13,084	0
c/f 31 Mar 2021	1,505	2,891	0	219	27,962	15,000

	Job Retention Scheme	Quartet Covid-19 Grant	NLCF Covid-19 Grant	DCMS C Covid-19 Grant	Quartet Covid Recovery Fund	Totals
b/f 1 April 2020	0	0	0	0	0	27,200
Income	5,721	4,431	4,814	165	8,765	61,449
Expenditure	5,721	4,431	4,814	165	4,991	37,297
c/f 31 Mar 2021	0	0	0	0	3,774	51,352

Purpose of Funds:

Springs and Mini-Springs - Springs caters for adults with learning disabilities which meets twice a month in the evening, supported by volunteers. Mini-Springs, which meets monthly, is open to families with children who have any type of additional needs. Face to face activities have ceased during Covid, with Springs meeting on line.

Barn Outreach & Development – Grant received for employment of an outreach worker to develop an additional day at the Barn.

Website – Grant received for redevelopment of the Life Project website.

Barn Activities and Allotment – A grant was received to allow additional activities to be provided for users of the Barn, such as Pilates and Wheels for All sessions, and to improve and develop the allotment.

Parent / Carers – Further funding to continue the Parent / Carer group.

Core Costs – Grants received specifically to cover core costs; one large grant was received towards the end of the year.

COVID-19 Related Grants

Job Retention Scheme - Grant for staff placed on furlough

Quartet Covid-19 – Grant covering salaries and other costs associated with developing on line service delivery during first three months of Barn closure

NLCF Covid-19 – Grant towards additional costs associated with resuming activities at Barn from September, as restrictions allowed, including extra staff time and hygiene, PPE etc

DCMS Covid-19 - Grant towards equipment for new Barn activities post Covid

Quartet Covid Recovery Fund – Grant to fund a further year for Barn Outreach and Development worker to develop activities post Covid

Note 7: Unrestricted Funds

	Balance	Income	Expenditure	Balance
	at 1 April			at 31 March
	£	£	£	£
	2020			2021
General Fund	23,366	59,772	52,194	30,943
Total	23,366	59,772	52,194	30,943

Note 8: Analysis of Net Assets between Funds

	General Funds	Restricted Funds	Total Funds
	£	£	£
Current assets	2,777	0	2,777
Cash at bank	30,171	52,925	83,096
Current liabilities	(2,005)	(1,573)	(3 <i>,</i> 578)
TOTAL	30,943	51,352	82,295

Note 9: Bank Balances 31 March 2021

	£
Petty Cash	30
Current Account	25,721
Deposit Account	22,078
Treasurer's Account	35,268
TOTAL	83,096