John Storer Charnwood

ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

Everyone Welcome!

Message from Sandy Leong, Chair of the Joint Board of Trustees of John Storer Charnwood (JSC) and John Storer House Foundation (JSHF)

John Storer Charnwood - Evolving & Staying Relevant

It is said that all organisations are going somewhere and even with no intervention will continue on a journey, but maybe not the right one. However, like steering a ship on a rough sea, (today's issues) to make sure organisations stay relevant there needs a firm hand on the tiller, pointing it in the right direction. The right direction for JSC is always the same, from its inception in 1966, but the hands on the tiller change (staff & volunteers), the ship (the building) changes and beneficiaries change but the differences we make, the values we promote, have never changed.

But to remain relevant in today's post Covid world, we have to change the way we meet these values. So again we have evolved, to stay relevant to the changing needs of the community and individuals in Charnwood. During this period we have redesigned and developed our services, some in partnership with other organisations, to meet newly identified issues that groups and individuals are experiencing. We have been constantly looking for innovative and creative ways to meet these needs in a timely and appropriate way.

The charity that Mr John Storer founded over 300 years ago and whose name we bear, gave bread to those in need and a warm coat to children. This can be a metaphor for what we do today, our transport service taking people who aren't able to use public transport to where they need to be, Your Store serving people who are struggling to feed their families, our wellbeing groups meeting to make people's lives better to mention just three of our many services.

We never change our values, but we understand the need to evolve to always be relevant in the world we live in today.

Sandy Leong

Message from Karen Frostick, Director of John Storer Charnwood

During the year 2021-22, we have continued to adjust to a post-Covid world. For John Storer that has meant much change, adapting to new customer and service needs.

We have seen many familiar faces, but more new ones, particularly in the community café. These customers are looking for a more modern and varied menu. These changes have been very positive, appealing to all.

We continue to welcome many community groups in both the café and for room hire and the new accessible Changing Places bathroom will be an asset to individuals requiring specialist facilities.

Well-being referral rates have increased significantly, particularly for people living with dementia and other sensory disabilities. This will require a shift to more therapeutic activity and facilities, both here at John Storer, but also at the Well-being allotments/gardens in both Loughborough and Shepshed.

Community Transport is much in demand. However, we are working hard to promote volunteer driving and recruitment.

One of the less welcome changes is the number of households and individuals facing food insecurity. Although it is difficult, John Storer has taken on the increase in demand and continues to work positively to improve this situation, providing hundreds of membership shops per week and other forms of support within the Your Store social supermarket.

I am proud to present this review and thank all the staff, volunteers, trustees and customers for their continued support during these ever-changing times.

Karen Frostick

John Storer House - a Place for Everyone

The theme of this year's review is "development". After a year of big changes, taking on new challenges and indeed being something completely different from normal throughout the course of the pandemic, John Storer Charnwood is now in a position to take stock and, to some extent, re-invent itself, and extend its hospitality to the new and diverse groups it has welcomed through its doors recently.

Don't be mistaken, we are still there for those who have been with us for years; the keep fit crowd, the cake and coffee lovers, the jigsaw puzzlers and the crafty natterers, but we are so much more.

Over the past year we have seen an influx of new (and much appreciated) visitors. They obviously like us as they keep returning! And so, we have begun to shape our services and facilities to accommodate them more readily.

Your Store is going from strength to strength. There are mixed feelings about this. While we would really like there to be no need for social supermarkets, we are proud and pleased that we have been able to help so many individuals and families going through difficult times. With living costs and energy costs continuing to rise, we see no end to the necessity of services like Your Store, with the probability that requests for assistance will only increase. When we began distributing food parcels during the pandemic, which we then went on to develop into Your Store, none of us envisaged what it would become.

St John Ambulance

The bridge

shaw trust

Business 2 Business

Letting rooms to new long-term hirers, Business 2 Business, The Shaw Trust, The Bridge East Midlands and St. John Ambulance means that more people are able to access the services they really need in a welcoming, central location.

It’s all going on (again!!)

We have been excited to see the return of some old favourites!

Groups include:

Keep Fit
Line dancing
Macular Society
Speakers’ Club
Slimming World
Ease
Older Veterans’ Coffee Morning

And more…….

Some things never change—our therapeutic allotments are still winning awards!

We are happy to welcome some new friends to the House. We are providing more services and activities for those with memory loss or dementia. And more families than ever before are visiting us. We have regular sales of babies’ clothes and toys and fundraising events. The weekends were made for relaxing and since we re-opened our café on Saturdays in July 2021, breakfasts have proved to be a bit hit!

Building Development

There is no getting away from the fact that John Storer House is an old building. Some parts are starting to show their age. Many of you will know that the drains have been the bane of our lives. But we are currently developing a plan of action to improve the situation.

Many improvements were undertaken during lockdown, with most of the hireable room spaces being re-decorated. New furniture was purchased to assist some of the regular hirers with extra storage space. The side car park was resurfaced with new speed bumps and kerbs added in December 2021 and February 2022. New paths and a shelter at the allotments have improved accessibility.

But you will not be surprised to learn that the list of renovations and repairs needed is a long one. It includes quick wins, must-dos, medium-term aspirations and nice-to-haves.

Here are just a few of the projects we are looking at: new floor in the café, replacement or work to the existing foldable doors to the Jubilee Room, new windows (!), second phase of the kitchen improvements, external paintwork and new signage! This is just a snippet!

We have made progress over the last year, with more to do, but, as it stands, we are now accessible to more people than ever before.

The Changing Places Accessible Bathroom

To further improve our accessible building, we are delighted to be officially opening our Changing Places Bathroom which will offer customers dignified facilities that are limited in the Charnwood community. We will feature on a national website where physically disabled customers can plan their journeys and activities knowing that a facility is available to them throughout the week, evenings and weekend.

How You Can Help

All of this work comes at a cost. And at a time when everyone is seeing the pound in their pockets worth less and prices increasing everywhere, it is difficult for us to ask for help. But whether it's buying a book or a jigsaw, drinking an extra cup of tea or just sticking a coin or two in the collection bucket after you've used the bathroom, it all contributes to our continuing to improve both the building facilities and our services.

Please support our fundraising events, music nights, bazaars and sales, if you can. Or you can join the Charnwood Community Lottery - win yourself a prize whilst supporting us at the same time!

We will also soon (fanfare) be launching our new and improved Membership/Friends scheme. See page 15 for details.

CHARNWOOD COMMUNITY Lottery

Service Reviews 2021-22

Well-being at JSH

JSC Well-being activities are specifically designed to support individuals with additional needs who may be feeling isolated, whose carers would benefit from respite or those who suffer from memory loss who find it difficult to engage in activities outside their homes without support. The activities are aimed at giving service users a fulfilling experience in a safe, warm and comfortable environment to enable them to socialise and make friends.

This year has been one of rebuilding. At the end of March 2021, we had only 12 service users accessing our Well-being sessions on a regular basis. Since then, the number has continued to grow and by the end of March 2022 we reached full capacity.

In December 2021 we were accepted back onto the Leicestershire County Council Community Life Choices Framework. This means that individuals can access our services regardless of whether they are self-funded, use their personal budgets or have managed budgets. In fact, we have more service users with managed budgets than we have had before, making us more inclusive than ever.

We offer Memorable Mondays, Craft & Sewing, Well-Being and Memorable Moments, Music and Movement, Drama, Craft and Therapeutic Gardening sessions and currently have 69 service users accessing a total of 113 Well-being sessions each week.

"Our community lunch club is as popular as ever with up to 75 attendees each week. We are providing them with a nutritious hot meal, subsidised transport and social interaction in a warm and friendly environment whilst generating additional income for the café. Many of the people who attend don't see anyone one else at all during the week and it's lovely to see people make new friends. There's such a buzz when you walk around the room! The members always look forward to coming in and some love it so much they come in three times a week."

Candi Barnes-Clarke, Senior Coordinator

Community Transport

JSC Community Transport enables adults in Charnwood to be as independent as possible, to access wellbeing services and support, to play a full and active part in their own and their family's lives and the life of their communities.

We have a fleet of two JSC 16-seater minibuses which are fully accessible and one accessible SUV and a car. We have two paid drivers and a team of dedicated volunteer drivers who provide much needed transport in our fleet vehicles and their own personal vehicles.

Leicestershire County Council provides us with a grant to deliver our transport service but, as you would imagine, demand for Community Transport plummeted during 2020/21. In fact, we only provided 927 Dial-A-Ride journeys throughout the whole of 2020/21. However, in 2021/22 we completed a total of 5,682 passenger journeys, 950 of which were to local and Leicester hospitals.

Our minibuses have been very busy too, ferrying people to and from our Community Lunch Clubs and providing transport for local community groups and organisations.

Just to say a massive thank you! I really appreciated your assistance with your voluntary transport to enable me to get to my hospital appointment. Thank you also to the driver, Harold, without whose assistance I would never have got to the department in the LRI. Thank you all so much.

J—Transport User

Room Hire at JSH

Room hire at JSH continues to be popular with both local hirers and those from further afield. The service has emerged strongly from the pandemic and has retained many of its existing hirers, as well as gaining more along the way.

JSH's central location has proved important for many hirers, with plus points being its close proximity to the leisure centre, Queen's Park and the offices of Charnwood Borough Council.

Part of our ongoing Covid Recovery Plan has included using some of the hireable space as long-term lets to socially conscious businesses and charities. JSC has been able to form strong partnerships with these hirers and it has also helped secure valuable guaranteed income.

We have also continued to support local community groups related to well-being, education, religion, healthcare and arts & crafts. We are also aiming to build and offer more entertainment-styled events that will help generate another revenue stream.

We currently have eight rooms available for general booking, and four other rooms hired out on long-term agreements. We have begun a programme of upgrading our hireable rooms and will continue to do so over the coming year.

We will always keep rooms open for community use as this is one of the fundamental objectives of John Storer Charnwood.

EASE Group have settled in well in the Forest Room. We enjoy meeting there and have always had courteous efficient service from the staff, particularly Jacob and the staff in the Cafe. The room is always clean and set up for us. All in all we are happy and content there.

Margaret, EASE Group Coordinator

Volunteering

The year from 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022 was unique in volunteering at John Storer Charnwood.

During April 2021, we began a series of consultations with groups of registered volunteers to test their appetite for returning. This involved letters and e-mails with reply slips, telephone calls, socially distanced face to face individual meetings and 4 separate meetings of groups of volunteers by service once they were allowed.

It became clear that the pandemic had caused much individual soul-searching and taking stock, with many volunteers deciding on different paths altogether for their futures whilst others recommitted to volunteering here or elsewhere.

JSH opened to the public in July 2021, with reduced opening hours for the Café, Welcome and Help Desk and JSH activities, a situation which continued to the end of this reporting period. Funded Well-being activities expanded, but the need for strict social distancing reduced the number of volunteers we could involve.

By March 2022 a total of 68 previously registered volunteers had returned to volunteering at John Storer House and 44 new volunteers had been recruited. Some of these were into new roles, mainly working in Your Store in a different kind of role requiring additional sensitivity to sign-posting needs and a non-judgemental approach. Additional training for volunteers was identified and delivered to inform and enable a better understanding of both the community shop concept and customer needs.

Hours recorded for JSH volunteers = 16084. Hours recorded for SVC volunteers = 1532
Based on 17,616 recorded volunteering hours during the year 2021-22, and a minimum wage of £8.36 per hour, volunteers from John Storer Charnwood contributed £147,269.76 to the organisation.

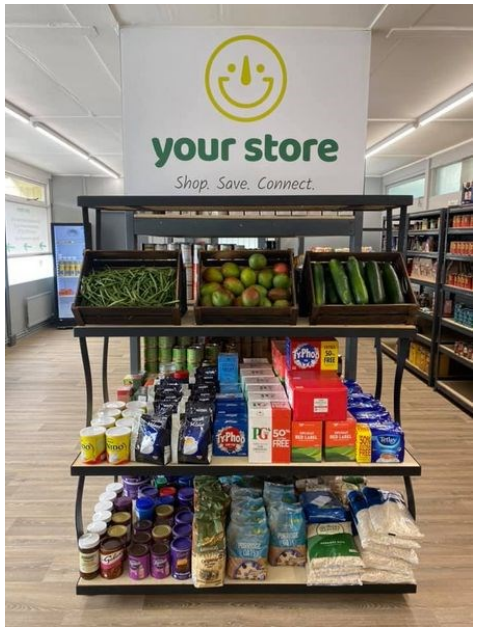
Volunteering helps me to feel useful.

All the service users and leaders have been very accepting of my wheelchair.

We all seem to have a good time and have a laugh together.

Emma, volunteer in Well-being

Your Store



No-one could have envisaged just how the social supermarket, Your Store, based at John Storer House, would take-off. But it's not just about food. Citizens Advice has been holding a session once a week to advise on everything from debts to benefits. We have a stack of leaflets on heating, benefits, education and much more. We have been trying to help with nutrition and recipe cards.

John Storer Charnwood's commitment to Your Store has been total and unwavering. The volunteers that have been recruited have worked diligently under sometimes very trying and distressing circumstances. There is no doubt it has been difficult and emotional at times, but we have tried to maintain our customers' dignity and we always endeavour to be helpful and approachable. Very often, if we don't know the answer, we know someone who does, and this is vital in helping to maintain this service.

In September 2021 we held an event for partner organisations. They could have a look round the store, asks questions about how the membership scheme would work and find out how they could be involved. There was plenty of enthusiasm and people left the event with the feeling it was definitely worthwhile being a part of this project.

We are a family of 10. You help so much. Lovely staff. We need you! **H (regular shopper)**

It's a lifesaver, this place. **N.B. (regular shopper)**

Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Support

John Storer Charnwood is a Strategic Partner of Charnwood Borough Council. Part of its commitment to this is to provide support to the wider Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) in Charnwood and this support takes many forms.

As we all know now, the VCS was at the forefront when it came to getting Charnwood, and indeed the country, through the worst of the Covid-19 pandemic. All over the borough people stepped up to help their neighbours with shopping, collecting prescriptions, checking on the most vulnerable in our society and even walking dogs. But it wasn't just these neighbourly acts of kindness that were the difference. The Charnwood VCS really got together at this time to ensure that no vulnerable person was left without food, help or just a telephone call once a week. At John Storer Charnwood, we not only hosted the foodbank and the Charnwood Community Action Hub, we distributed food parcels, did telephone befriending, shopped and collected prescriptions, but we were also there for all those small organisations that were struggling to obtain PPE, funding or other forms of advice and guidance.

Since the spring of 2021, the VCS support that John Storer Charnwood offers has been getting back more to its old self. With the emphasis on training and advice, from April 2021 to March 2022 we hosted three First Aid courses, one Fire Training course, two on Health and Safety, two on Safeguarding Vulnerable People and a two-day course on Managing Volunteers. We were involved in the setting up and development of a Coaching & Mentoring scheme for leaders of VCS organisations, in conjunction with Charnwood Borough Council and Loughborough Rotary Club. This continues to develop, recruiting both new coaches and new participants.

The Community Centres network goes from strength to strength and now has a whole raft of group projects to work on through the year. We continue to work together for the good of Charnwood—ensuring there are activities, groups, entertainment or just a place to have a coffee for all members of the community.

Going forward, the recruitment and retention of new volunteers has been identified by Charnwood VCS as a whole as a major problem. Organisations had to cope with the loss of existing volunteers for various reasons during the pandemic and, as we know, the VCS cannot function properly without its volunteers—certainly John Storer Charnwood cannot. Other issues that are coming to the fore, especially for those in customer-facing roles, are how to communicate with those who come through your door in distress or suffering from anxiety, and also how to gain a better understanding of dementia and memory loss, also with a view to being able to communicate better with our clients and visitors. Over the next twelve months we hope to be able to offer training and talks on all of these issues—so keep up to date with what is on offer via our website www.johnstorercharnwood.org.uk.

Shepshed Volunteer Centre

SVC office reopened In April 2021 with the transport scheme for hospital appointments. Several drivers left us during the pandemic and most of the others were cautious about returning to driving. We covered 4350.9 miles on 520 journeys. Demand has continued to increase. However, we have lost more drivers and by March 2022 we were down to seven.

The gardening scheme restarted in May and continued until the end of October as we had started late. A team of eight gardeners tend eight gardens across Shepshed. In 2022 we will be asking everyone to reapply to the gardening scheme; the waiting list is long, and we want to ensure that we reaching those most in need in Shepshed.

The volunteers returned to the Well-being garden behind the volunteer centre and managed to get a good vegetable patch started with the produce being sold to raise funds for SVC. The activity shed has been completely refurbished over the last 18 months, thanks to a grant from the Co-op. We are in the process of starting groups, a military veterans' coffee morning, a board games group and a craft and chat group have all been suggested by the community.

The jigsaw library restarted in September once a month, this increased to fortnightly, then weekly in February 2022. This takes place at Shepshed library.

SVC reopened in April 2021 with staff from JSC covering, as well as Keith. The volunteers returned in May 2021 and the office was open for two hours a day until August when Jayne Curnock started as Volunteer Coordinator. The office then returned to three hours opening Monday to Friday.

We have eight volunteers who befriend eight residents in Shepshed. This continued throughout 21/22 with the majority in contact weekly by telephone. Face to face befriending resumed when restrictions were lifted if both the befriender and befriendee were happy to meet face to face.

The much-loved Scaresheep festival took place over the weekend of Halloween in 2021.

Going Forward—Other Developments and your chance to help shape our future

Membership/Friends of Scheme

There will be a new membership scheme launching in 2023 for both individuals and organisations. Details are still being finalised, but there will be levels of membership, dependent on how and what services you wish to access from us, how you would like to support us and what level of involvement you would like in how JSC is run. All will be ready to be unveiled in the New Year so keep an eye out in the House, on our website and social media platforms for details.

JSC as an entertainment venue

We would like to run more evening and weekend entertainment events, mainly as fundraisers for JSC. Let us know if there is something in particular you would like to see at JSC. Is it music, films, discos or other entertainment? Look out for more news and advertisements in 2023 as we up our entertainment game!

These are just a couple of our ideas. But we'd also like to know what you'd like to see both at John Storer House and Shepshed Volunteer Centre in the future.

- **Is there a class or activity you've always wanted to take part in?**
- **An event you've always wanted to join in with?**
- **A service you wish we provided?**

We can't guarantee we'll be able to do it all, but we want to hear from you.

Email us at enquiries@jscharnwood.org.uk or leave a message on our Facebook page and we'll see what we can do!

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