



**November COVID-19 survey:  
How charities adapted to the pandemic**



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## Introduction

Question 8a: Earlier you told us about how COVID-19 and the restrictions were affecting your charity. OSCR is keen to provide the charity sector with an opportunity to share its experiences, frustrations and successes in response to the pandemic.

2,548 charities participated in the November survey, of these 1583 charities completed Q8. Many charities took the opportunity to share their experiences, frustrations and successes as they dealt with the challenges of COVID-19 and the restrictions.

The restrictions brought in by the governments to reduce the spread of COVID-19 affected everyone, and the experiences of charities reflect that. There were various aspects of the restrictions which had particular impact on charities' ability to operate, though they were not universally the same.

Despite the widely felt impact of restrictions most charities across Scotland adapted in some way to support their beneficiaries and meet the needs of their local communities caused by the pandemic.

Probably what people would be most aware of was the way charities adapted to meet the urgent needs for food within their local communities but there were many charities that adapted to the needs of their beneficiaries that were not necessarily visible, or only to a few. The scale of these operations might have varied to some extent by need, location and the ability of charities of different types and sizes but they were unwavering in their commitment to do what they could, and even those who said they were closed or unable to operate found ways of maintaining contact with their beneficiaries. As one charity put it

Working for a charity support body our observation from the 100s of charities we work with as well as our own response is that the charity sector responded very quickly and with agility in either delivering regular services in new ways or providing crisis response or both. Charities seemed to be able to say what can we do? and get on with it.

## 1. Impact of restrictions

The most consistent problem and frustration that charities had with restrictions was the lack of clarity in how they applied to their own charity and the frequency with which they changed.

Many charities said that the biggest problem was keeping up to date with unpredictable, complex and frequently changing advice. They found decision making was often overturned at the last moment, making changes to comply with social distancing restrictions took planning, time and money that were obsolete before they

were used, and it was very difficult to keep up with the guidelines in how to keep people safe while working.

There was also frustration and confusion among some charities about inconsistent restrictions and/or guidance for the same type of charities: one group of charities said they seemed to have varying rules for different geographical areas; and other felt that similar charities in the same area seemed to have different restrictions applied so that one might be operating but another was not.

### Uncertainty and frustration with continuously changing restrictions

- ☐ All face to face meetings were initially stopped. Then they were allowed to restart but then pulled again when tier system came into place. It's the constant changes that makes it very hard to plan ahead.
- ☐ It is sometimes difficult to try and fit a project/function into the moving guidelines. Fear of public blame etc if event held that people feel inappropriate.
- ☐ Lack of information specific to our type of charity. Frustration with changing advice and seemingly varying rules for different geographical areas. Using the science but not applying it evenly.
- ☐ Frustrated at the changing restrictions and the cost of complying.
- ☐ Frustrated by the continually changing requirements which do not seem to be the same for other organisations.
- ☐ Difficult to keep up to date with changes and being able to have effective meetings to discuss future planning.
- ☐ It's very hard to keep up with the guidelines in how to keep people safe while working.
- ☐ Decision making often overturned at the last minute as the rules change. Planning done then all has to be redone.
- ☐ Our biggest challenge has been the huge amount of time it has taken for a very small management team to try & navigate the very complex and constantly changing advice & guidance applicable to our sector.
- ☐ We are a pipe band and under Covid current regulations we cannot practice which is frustrating and the lack of up to date information for the playing of instruments is very poor.
- ☐ The restrictions are constantly changing and it is really hard to identify what procedures certain users of our facilities should follow. More clarity would be much better!
- ☐ Due to the complexity in keeping track of all the changing rules, we just stopped delivering services because that was easier and less stressful than trying to keep up with the ever-shifting landscape of rules.

## Lack of clarity

- Changing regulations and lack of clarity about how they apply.
- Biggest challenge has been the unpredictability and sometimes lack of clarity of Government restrictions
- There is lack of clear guidance from the SG (and its agents) which made it challenging to know how to act.
- Late delivery of detail, rapidly changing rules and regulations, lack of clarity over detail. Back-tracking and changing of requirements. All of these have made it irritating, frustrating and almost impossible to plan for the future or to be sure what to do.

Particular impacts of the restrictions that meant many charities could not operate included the closure of indoor venues which affected the income of the charities that own or run them and the users of those places which were mainly community based charities and groups that run activities, events, and fundraising. Travel restrictions also impacted charities that operate both indoors and outdoors. As one charity put it, we were restricted in our ability to operate due to the combined impact of National COVID restrictions, and the COVID risk assessment and operational procedures imposed by both the venue and charity. The trading of charity shops and venue cafes were similarly affected.

Many charities ceased their usual operation because the safety of their beneficiaries, who were either elderly and/or vulnerable, and restrictions to protect them was a priority that prevented their participation in activities or events such as lunch clubs. It also impacted some charities ability to offer support to their beneficiaries.

Similarly, social distancing impacted charities that run activities that involve close contact with beneficiaries so they could not operate, such as riding for the disabled; charities that run activities such as music or art classes; and schools were closed to visits from for example, a charity that has a mobile planetarium.

A number of charities also told us that they did not have enough volunteers to operate as usual even when restrictions allowed. This issue arose mainly for charities with elderly and/or vulnerable volunteers, many of whom were shielding. There were also charities that said their volunteers were afraid or reluctant to return as they did not feel safe, particularly where it meant coming into contact with the public.

## Difficulties with and inability to operate

- Since restarting we have had a good response but due to lack of volunteers and uncertainty about the future we are having to work at around 60% capacity and are unable to get that back up until the threat of future lockdowns is gone.
- The charity works in partnership with a commercial venue and is therefore restricted in its ability to operate due to the impact of National Covid restrictions and the Covid risk assessment / operational procedures imposed by both the venue and charity.
- As a venue within a small community we are totally dependent on group rental income. It is unlikely that some groups will now restart and unless there is a change in social distancing our income will continue at zero but we still have fixed costs such as Insurance, wages and general fire equipment servicing and licences to pay.
- Access to indoor practice facilities during the pandemic has not been possible. The inability to perform as a group due to ongoing restrictions would prevent us from restarting even if we did have access to facilities.
- Restrictions threaten the relationships that people have which are essential to their feelings of being supported. Preventing meetings has led to disengagement of a whole sector of people (often vulnerable people) who used to feel they could contribute to society despite their age or disabilities.
- The key thing that impacts us is the social distancing rule. We work with people with disability. Many who would benefit cannot access our services. We are eating into cash reserves previously earmarked for org development projects so impacting the long term success of our organisation.
- Our Charity supports the local community but in particular the elderly to enable them to participate in our events to help resolve issues with isolation. The current restrictions do however restrict our ability to offer support and events to enable the broader community to participate and to grow our charity to benefit a **wider range of the community.**
- Due to current restrictions, we are unable to meet in sufficient numbers to carry out tasks.
- Lack of access to the properties we use due to travel restrictions and general coronavirus precautions (not wishing to introduce the virus to the people who work the land adjacent to the properties) has caused a cessation of our activities.

## 2. How charities adapted to meet the needs of their local communities

Some charities became involved in running foodbanks, provided shopping and prescription delivery services, delivered meals to support to people who were isolated, vulnerable or shielding; and we diversified into new types of community support programmes and projects, that have brought wider communities together, in relation to delivering food and ingredients pack for families to cook meals together, using recipes and our on online feeds for people who have access to internet. Charities organised, planned and delivered.

However the charities that adapted to these needs did not necessarily confine their activities to ensuring people had enough food, for example

☞ All our members are elderly and many of them were shielded during the lockdown. We have adapted the way we operate to ensure that our members have felt included and less socially isolated. Once it became impossible for our members to meet regularly at the lunch club and social activity sessions because of Covid restrictions we took the club to them instead! We have delivered meals to them all each week, we have delivered shopping for them, developed a newsletter, shared photos, challenges like quizzes, etc We have visited them each week for a (outside and socially distanced/masked) chat to check on their wellbeing . The Committee has worked hard to help members still feel that their club is there for them even though we cannot meet in person at the moment.

And covered large areas, for example

☞ Our main charity activity is the hire of the town hall for events but we also run three community clubs each week. At the start of lockdown we ran a very small meals on wheels service. We have now run shopping and prescriptions services, meals on wheels, befriending, gift parcels to those in isolation and food parcels in a 40 mile radius.

### Other ways charities adapted to support their local communities

Charities also told us they adapted in other ways, taking action to provide support and maintain communication with people who were isolated, vulnerable or shielding, some multitasking and others focusing an aspect that they could deliver, for example: tweaked their way of working to offer befriending to the lonely; dog walking; meeting for coffee; doing frequent phone calls to find out how people are coping; supporting people just home from hospital through meeting in a safe environment; provided packs of essentials to each household; issued 'shopping vouchers' to people in need; provided informal mental health/support to the community particularly those that were most vulnerable and isolated; held virtual events such as cookery projects and virtual Christmas activities; linked up with community groups and other charities to provide fresh produce from our gardens for community larders; adapted coffee shop to provide take away services; gift parcels to those in isolation; and focused on fuel poverty.

Connectivity and togetherness has been our key purpose. We started a Befrienders scheme phoning people at home and took our other services online. We've populated our Facebook page every day since March to inform, to entertain and to promote health and wellbeing. We took our youngsters' gaming club online. One of our volunteers started 3D production of face shields and we distribute them to third sector and charities for free. We also deliver digital support to other organisations with whom we recently made connections. Looking to January 2021, we are planning to reignite an online version of some of the clubs and classes we provided in real time. We keep in touch with our volunteers via Whereby. Our board meet on Zoom once every two weeks instead of once a month. These have been very challenging times for us all - collectively we can help and support each other - sharing challenges, but also laughing together.

*Extract from full response*

### Reactions and outcomes

A few charities also told us of the reaction in their local community including: we as a foodbank have been overwhelmed with the kindness and unconditional assistance that we have received during this time, we have received considerable donations which we will utilise over the future trying times; and it has been incredible to see the amount of community members getting involved with our group to assist us with the support we have been providing over the last few months.

A few charities told us of the outcomes to their adaptations including: it has been lovely to see how our staff, trustees and beneficiaries have pulled together to help each other during the pandemic; working to support other local charities has enabled us to reach our community when we could not on our own; we have had a closer working relationship with the local authority and other charities, and extended our service to different groups within the community; and we have increased communication with referral agents, other food banks and other charities.

There are over 25,000 charities across Scotland and therefore there were many charities who did not become directly involved in this type of support in their local communities, the reasons were varied including: their charitable purpose; lack of relevant resources; or vulnerability of their volunteers. However, there were other ways in which they adapted.

### 3. Going Online

The single greatest impact of the pandemic and restrictions on almost all charities was going online. They adapted to using online platforms for communication that facilitated the delivery of services, operation of the charity, maintaining contact with beneficiaries, generation of income and providing activities; this change was wide spread though with variable degrees of success.



The need to adapt was recognised by many charities across Scotland for two key reasons: as essential to the mental health and wellbeing of their beneficiaries, volunteers, staff, trustees and the public; and to ensure the future of their charities.

- Whilst COVID 19 has presented many challenges the use of technology has proven invaluable in maintaining communication with those who benefit from our charity and providing means of donating whilst social distancing continues.

Video conferencing was the most frequently mentioned in the responses with Zoom, Microsoft Teams and WhatsApp mentioned. Websites, Email, Facebook pages and other social media were also used for communication.

### How charities adapted to meet the needs of the beneficiaries

The diversity of Scottish charities meant that while there was an almost collective move to online activities the uses to which they put the available communication tools varied widely; and there were varying degrees of success in the execution of such a rapid and radical change in how they operated. Some charities told us what they did which gives an idea of the diversity of both charities going online and what they did; a few included outcomes of going online or their future plans for its use; and some charities told of the limitations of or barriers to going online that they experienced.











### Diversity of how charities adapted to going online

- We have used our digital platform to communicate with members and provide at home based activities.
- We should have had a volunteer giving training in dementia care to carers in China but travel restrictions meant that this had to be done by Zoom. Not quite as good as face to face but well received by the beneficiaries nevertheless
- We have had a Zoom meeting with members online, with an invited speaker, which was very successful and we are arranging to have a digital photographic competition among members.
- We used our website and Facebook page to give reminders on social distancing and other recommendations to help people using our community woodland trails to observe guidelines and take all necessary precautions to stay safe.
- Our charity learnt how to use Zoom meetings in order to continue to carry out music tuition remotely.
- Having to move to a digital way of working was a big learning curve. We have decided to continue online support to help reach outlying areas and peer group support.

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- As a local history society our programme of lectures was adapted to online Zoom talks, free to both members and others in the community. Despite the fact that most of our members are elderly many have really embraced the new world of Zoom and we have even attracted new members and donations from members of the community who really appreciate what we are offering.
- As our beneficiaries were parents, we decided to adopt new ways of supporting them as well as their children, through webinars, emails and telephone.
- We have increased the number of stories and images posted to our Facebook page and have boosted the number of views considerably. Comments posted on the site are extremely positive. While this does not give us any income directly it raises the profile of the museum and will lead to more visits in the future.
- We delivered talks on Zoom which enabled our more remote members to participate. We may continue with this even when we resume meetings in person, ie members will be able to participate by attending in person or remotely.
- Adapted to run rehearsals online.
- We work with girls under 14. I am amazed at how well they have adapted to online delivery of our services.
- We have conducted traditional music lessons on platforms such as Zoom. However, not all of our stakeholders are IT familiar so they have felt excluded.
- We held an online scientific meeting - this was a large success as we had even more participants than in a physical congress and especially from developing regions / countries. Thus we will try to have either additional online meetings or hybrid meetings to enable participation for people that cannot afford a physical attendance. Being forced to adapt by the pandemic still brought some beneficial developments.
- We offer remote access to our premises which allows Family Support workers to accompany clients to view furniture without any personal contact with charity volunteers. We also use WhatsApp to send photos of furniture to clients referred to us. This has led to a few new volunteers coming forward to help.
- One good thing is some of our online events have been attended by individuals overseas and we as a charity have been able to invite guest speakers outwith the UK. This would not have been possible before due to budget constraints on travel costs.
- The usefulness of social media in keeping our community of interest together.
- We managed to organise virtual choir practice, edited and published a virtual choir singing. No one actually had any prior experience of how to do this, so it shows what can be done if there is enough interest and dedication in doing something different and meeting a new challenge.

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-  Our charity deals with face to face teaching of students and hands on training. We have adapted to on-line courses.
-  Our charity provides counselling and support services for individuals who suffer from alcohol and/or drugs addictions. It also provides services to those that are alone and isolated. We have had to move to delivering these services in a different way through telephone engagement and on line digital platforms like zoom and Microsoft teams.
-  We are better able to use digital technology, both within the charity and with our partners overseas. Our overseas partners have had to become more resilient and independent as we have been unable to visit them in person.
-  We have learned to adapt and change the delivery of our service by offering click and collect and at one point we offered contactless delivery too.
-  We have found it quite easy to meet and share remotely. Perhaps 10% of our membership has missed out but others have come in who would previously have been too distant to meet in person. Overall, participation has actually increased.
-  We are a church and quickly moved to providing online services and reflections which reached a much wider audience and helped connect with people on their own and those needing additional support.
-  On-line Sunday services and other community on-line events have meant that those physically unable [either through illness or distance] to attend church services have been able to participate fully and in a way we had not previously facilitated [but will do post-COVID].
-  We made use of more technology for our Worship and encouraged both online and direct banking giving.
-  Working in the field of complex trauma, we continued to provide services remotely, but increased need for IT equipment resulted in higher support costs, and with equipment off-site we have also incurred higher insurance costs, and the majority of funding does not cover these types of items. We have seen a dramatic increase in risk and had to adapt to provide additional support in order to help. We are struggling to recruit new staff during the pandemic, and demand for our services is increasing.
-  We have organised two digital classical chamber music concerts. In June 2020 we had an 'as live' event on youtube where recorded introductions linked a few recorded performances. In November 2020 we had a live performance using zoom and live-streaming on youtube simultaneously.

## Limitations of going online for some beneficiaries

The extent to which charities found the move to online activities successful was highly varied both between types of charity and between the same types of charity. One of the main issues for charities was the exclusion experienced by some of their beneficiaries. There were several reasons for this including: lack of access to IT equipment; lack of IT skills of charity and/or beneficiaries; poor network connection; inability to meet the cost of connection; and there are some activities that just do not translate easily or well to online platforms. The beneficiaries of a large number of these charities were elderly, but these issues also impacted charities working with young age groups, vulnerable people, some people living in rural areas and people on low incomes. A number of charities told us about the limitations they experienced.

- While moving to digital delivery has been effective, we are concerned that this often excludes beneficiaries who are unable to use this through age or disability.
- Although digital technology is great and has enabled us to continue to operate, it's not the same as face to face meeting and you lose something in meeting virtually.
- Much of our charity's work involves organising events and activities that have traditionally happened in-person. Obviously the COVID restrictions have forced us to try and move much of this work online. Clearly this works better for some activities types of activities (a seminar on local history, say) than for others (eg a guided walk). Also the move online means that certain sections of the target audience/beneficiaries might end up being excluded due to lack of IT skills/connectivity.
- We have conducted traditional music lessons on platforms such as Zoom. However, not all of our stakeholders are IT familiar so they have felt excluded.
- We are a singing group and consists of a majority of older adults who are less comfortable with using technology to communicate so having meetings on Zoom for example is problematic.
- We moved from a face-to-face environment to a digital one in one week. We are still delivering our services remotely (language classes for school-age children) because we still don't have access to classrooms. There are trade-offs, however, and we have lost quite a few pupils. Adaption has to be continuous, trying new online learning tools, being creative.
- As we run an art class for mainly elderly members we have had to close completely. We run a Facebook class free led by our paid tutor but only a few members can join in.
- Our charity provides a range of learning opportunities for older people, through monthly talks and smaller special interest group meetings. While it has been possible to move some of these to an online format, a number of people are, from personal circumstances, excluded.

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- ☞ We provide affordable and sometimes free, yoga, relaxation and meditation classes. We have had to move all our classes online since the end of March 2020. This has been useful for many of our beneficiaries and we have gained more new service users. However, there are many of our formerly regular clientele who have not been able to join the online sessions. Some, especially older people, are not able to use the technology. Some do not have the space at home. And some are actually in difficult domestic situations where the only way to safely practise is to go to a venue.
- ☞ Our charity is very dependent on fundraising events by the very people who have been most at risk and although we have done many things remotely the human contact and fellowship at our regular coffee mornings has been very much missed. Some have adapted extremely well to remote services etc but others not so.
- ☞ We are a charity supporting veterans and their families. As face-to-face contact has been stopped we have had to adapt completely to providing support via phone, email and video links, this has largely been successful but we lose the opportunity to ensure that the full needs of the individual beneficiaries are met.
- ☞ Certain clients are unable (or unwilling) to access the services we provide via phone or Zoom; counselling services to young people (which took place in schools) is currently suspended, although the adult service continues remotely.
- ☞ Our library has been closed, we cannot do our Study Club. We have been unable to offer our cooking workshops, although we hope to do this soon. Our digital support for families was not successful and there was low take up. People prefer face to face sessions.
- ☞ Needed to adapt to technology to do church services online. Big problem for older folk, and those without the necessary technology.
- ☞ If we could have some support both financially and technically, like, buying/using video editing software, our virtual choir might have done even better.
- ☞ We have not been able to run our meeting only been able to use zoom and it is very hard to do the work that the girls need to do to gain awards.
- ☞ A major focus of our work is to ensure engagement of older people in a wide range of activities - educational, social, physical. The pandemic has had a severe detrimental impact on relief from social isolation, Zoom etc can help but to a limited extent.
- ☞ Cannot reach all our beneficiaries, as a lot of girls do not like using technology.
- ☞ We can hold remote workshops but we can't resolve poor broadband because we can't go to people's houses (always assuming that we could find technical volunteers).
- ☞ It's not always the folk you'd expect who are wary of video conferencing eg not the elderly nor those with poor broadband.

## Barriers to online participation of beneficiaries

Some charities found that there was a greater impact on their beneficiaries and that there were barriers to going online. Again one of the main worries for these charities was the exclusion experienced by some of their beneficiaries due to: the lack of access or usability of online platforms for people with disabilities; lack of access to an effective network connection; inability to meet the cost of connection or equipment. A number of charities told us about the barriers their beneficiaries experienced.

- ❏ Unfortunately those without internet access have not been able to be part of our communal meetings; our pastoral care team has kept in touch by telephone, etc. Lack of internet access has involved a degree of deprivation.
- ❏ We have learned a huge amount about communication poverty and inclusion via the pandemic and mitigating issues.
- ❏ We could not move to keeping in touch and supporting by digital means - video meetings, due to the comparative poverty in the area; many older people do not have broadband connections due to being too far from 'the box'. We are in the 3% of the country that is ignored because we're a very remote, rural and fragile area whilst an area of much higher average incomes about 14 miles away got fibre to the premises. Our members feel forgotten in these times.
- ❏ Local and pan region 3rd sector meetings have been held on zoom between charities and local council officers. My charity deals with the elderly. Required mandatory form filling (PIP review for example) is hard to do for them online. They do not have access / are not comfortable using digital means. Bridging this digital access gap for the elderly needs to be addressed. Currently a lot of forms still go to the UK Gov so the Scottish Gov must recognise the need to bring this issue to the UK Gov.
- ❏ The move online means that certain of our beneficiaries might end up being excluded due to lack of IT skills/connectivity.
- ❏ More work needed on online platforms to include the hard of hearing. Teams and Google Meet have captions. Zoom not yet matched that.
- ❏ The main challenge we face with operating digitally is the intermittent, and in a lot of cases, poor WiFi throughout our rural area in the Highlands of Scotland. This poses a big disadvantage for those living in this area and I believe requires urgent investment by the Scottish and UK Governments.
- ❏ We have been doing Zoom meetings, but broadband is so slow it's been difficult to implement this as our signal disappears. Updated broadband is needed urgently in this area.
- ❏ Needing to use new technology has proved tricky for some older members and has effectively excluded our visually disabled member.

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- ☐ We have developed virtual services but poor digital/broadband access in remote areas often prevents beneficiaries from accessing them.
- ☐ Whilst moving the support we give to our beneficiaries on-line has allowed us to continue to our work, we are conscious that we are not able to reach those who are digitally excluded or are suffering digital poverty.
- ☐ We are a community choir and the ban on meeting up effectively means we can't operate. There aren't any effective digital solutions.

## How charities adapted to meet their own needs

Almost all charities appear to have gone online to some extent, but with varying degrees of success, and as above some experienced limitations and barriers including: lack of access to IT equipment; lack of IT skills of trustees and/or volunteers and/or their beneficiaries; and poor network connection. Whilst Zoom was the most frequently mentioned, some charities used other platforms, and the uses to which they put these platforms was varied. Many charities told us they used online platforms for trustee/committee/Board meetings and that some found there were additional benefits to this; used various platforms to maintain contact with their beneficiaries; the restrictions also catalysed going online and working from home for some charities; some adapted to generating income online; and some charities said they would continue to use these tools in the future, though there are issues that need to be addressed.

### Trustee Meetings

- ☐ We have become much more efficient and effective through the use of frequent remote on-line meetings via Zoom. We will continue using this in future rather than revert to pre-Covid physical meetings.
- ☐ We accelerated our move to operating digitally. We have learned it is possible to hold our Trustee meetings remotely although we lose some of the personal contact, particularly when inducting new Trustees.
- ☐ Made the use of technology accessible to all volunteers and trustees to enable fluid communication and planning. Used digital communication or technology to fundraise and manage activities remotely.
- ☐ Trustees meeting online a much more efficient way of working.
- ☐ Without the technology to communicate online our charity would not have been able to function.

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- On line meetings have positives and are likely to become part of our new normal. In person will be much appreciated when again possible, but online will be retained for routine matters with advantage of reducing travel time, travel costs, can accommodate participants' time constraints more easily, with added benefit of reducing our carbon footprint. Online meetings are tiring and we are getting better at advance preparation to use the online time decision making time more effectively.
- Ability to use remote platforms to replace face to face meetings has had a positive effect on expenses of meetings.
- The crisis provided impetus for change which was being discussed but had not got buy in from management and staff especially in the provision of services from face to face to digital.
- Adapted quickly to increased use of digital technologies which would have been very difficult before this became essential.
- Our organisation has learnt the importance of communication through digital means. This was something that some of our Board Members were hesitant about using but are now committed to.
- We have found the use of ZOOM for meetings and contact with beneficiaries has been useful.
- We run Trustee meetings online and we are finding alternative ways to run fundraising events.
- Encouragement of direct debits and internet banking.
- Providing means of donating whilst social distancing continues.
- Adapted to working on line and use things like smile amazon and easyfunding.
- Cash is no longer king - contactless payment facility is essential. Gift shop spending is well down both in total and spend per head.
- All donations now by electronic transfer.
- People can be persuaded (sometimes against their better judgement) to donate electronically and regularly.
- We have learned how to use digital resources, which we would hope to integrate into our future, this is not something that we would have considered in the past. The younger members of our organisation have been getting more involved as they realise that they have useful skills to offer, this is of benefit to the organisation as a refresh was required.



## Maintaining contact with beneficiaries

- ☞ We have had to be resourceful and adapt methods of working to maintain contact with our clients and people in need using technology.
- ☞ On-line regular contact between our members/volunteers has maintained (and sometimes increased) our internal communication and supported our own members/volunteers. Regular contact with our regular beneficiaries and contact with new/possible new ones has helped us to continue to support and develop our support in other ways, and increased our links with our community/ies.
- ☞ Whilst COVID 19 has presented many challenges the use of technology has proven invaluable in maintaining communication with those who benefit from our charity.
- ☞ Greater experience in using YouTube and Live Streaming to reach users.
- ☞ We are now using more online services in order to stay in touch with both volunteers and service users.
- ☞ The uncertainty and the frequent changes in the regulations and restrictions are making it difficult to plan ahead. The fact that our main governing body is based in England has led to even more lack of clarity. We have been unable to have any face to face activity since March 16th 2020. However, we have maintained contact with our staff and cadets using virtual meetings, to continue to give training.

## Generating income

- ☞ We are finding alternative ways to run fundraising events.
- ☞ Encouragement of direct debits and internet banking.
- ☞ Providing means of donating whilst social distancing continues.
- ☞ Adapted to working on line and use things like smile amazon and easyfunding.
- ☞ Cash is no longer king - contactless payment facility is essential. Gift shop spending is well down both in total and spend per head.
- ☞ All donations now by electronic transfer.
- ☞ People can be persuaded (sometimes against their better judgement) to donate electronically and regularly.

## Connected to other groups, charities and organisations

- Local and pan region 3rd sector meetings have been held on zoom between charities and local council officers.
- Covid has enabled our charity to connect in ways that wasn't possible previously. We are a cross border charity between Scotland and England and our Glasgow and Bristol teams have managed to meet online in ways that would not have been as straightforward if we tried to do this face-to-face. We are now more connected with each other and have run a number of events online successfully.
- We have learned that we can all work from home and save on office costs. We are able to involve more of our partners in meetings to share learning and develop the workforce that supports carers and young carers.
- Joined a WhatsApp group to share interpretation of rules with other charities e. g. Community Hall.
- For us we adapted fast to online delivery of our work and in the first six months worked more than ever in order to help influence policy, and respond to information and support needs.
- We've learned to use digital ways of communication with other bodies. In terms of awareness raising of the plight and needs of our members and campaigning for recognition, our access to appropriate government and other bodies has increased and progress has been made.

## Working from home

- We invested in communications and technology just months before the pandemic struck. Had we not we couldn't have worked from home or provided digital support to our users. So we have learned the value of keeping up to date with technology.
- The positive effects that can be gained from a blend of office and home working.
- We had to respond quickly to facilitating home working for our staff; improved digital/remote working has led us to reflect on a more blended work pattern in the longer term, post Covid. We managed to maintain most of our services remotely without too much of an impact on our customers. We have worked closely with other HAs to bring local funding to the area to address Covid impact.
- The benefits of virtual meetings & training - and the improvement it has on work/life balance.
- We have greatly increased the level of our work on line--with a considerable degree of success.

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- ☐ We have adapted to use of technology, and using online cloud storage and office facilities, and this has made remote working much easier. This we have learnt as we go, which has been interesting and frustrating at times!! We have learned that those we support are flexible and have more resilience than we perhaps credited them with.
- ☐ We're holding weekly Zoom team meetings and regular training sessions for our staff. We've been able to adapt to new ways of working and new ways of delivering services which have worked really well and anticipate more of the same even once we're back to the office.
- ☐ Having to quickly adapt to working from home, taking every meeting and our AGM online - we quickly adapted to this new way of working but being unable to carry face to face consultation remains a challenge for us and the development of our projects. As a community, we have grown stronger. As a Trust, we are becoming better recognised and have developed meaningful relationships with community members that without COVID would've taken us a lot longer.
- ☐ Remote working has been successful in many ways and is something we will incorporate into future plans. Remote meetings were not as successful because they lack personal contact but have been useful when meetings were required.

## Green Benefits

- ☐ We have learned how we can reduce our carbon footprint and committee meeting expenses by having Zoom committee meetings. We have been forced to consider having Zoom meetings for the membership, which we would not otherwise have chosen to do
- ☐ Zoom meetings work well and save travel costs. We might continue to use it in some circumstances after the pandemic.
- ☐ We have switched to Zoom for management committee meetings which had had the benefit of cutting travel time for already busy people.
- ☐ Charity Meetings were held by zoom so effective and time/travel saving. Meetings however had to become monthly due to general issues, increase use of charity, etc.

## Barriers and limitation experienced by charities

- ❏ Lack of proper broadband provision stops our Board from having a visual connection, we have to meet by conference call (audio) which is better than nothing but not nearly so good as being able to see each other and means that a lot of materials have to be duplicated and delivered - costly in time and money.
- ❏ We don't have the IT skills to have a Just giving site or a Facebook page to raise funds online. We have been able to meet using zoom and have found this invaluable.
- ❏ The expectation that everyone has access to the necessary tools to complete everything online eg grant applications/reporting, everything has to be submitted electronically when volunteers do not have for example scanners or printers at home.
- ❏ Older volunteers do not always have access to up to date IT or broadband speeds needed for Zoom meetings.
- ❏ None of our trustees had any experience of providing online services or conducting online meetings. All our services were provided face to face and now we are trying to learn how to film, edit and deliver online workshops, set up online coffees chats to reduce isolation etc and we are struggling to learn the skills and to pay for the new equipment. We need to find people willing to give up the time to do these as everything takes longer digitally. The morale within our trustees is also rock bottom and is putting the charity at risk.
- ❏ At the start of the pandemic of our 5 staff, 2 were furloughed and 3 were working from home with 1 shielding and 1 shielding plus. This made it very difficult to engage with our normal range of service users and beneficiaries. We facilitated a weekly online call for local organisations which proved popular with people working from home. People involved with emergency provision were full on and many were shattered come the end of the summer. Working remotely has made it harder to continue to work with local partners who have been delivering emergency provision. A benefit of working from home has been significant reduction in commuting and travel time and ability to access a wide range of information and expertise via organisations such as ACOSVO, Senscot etc. and accessing people all across Scotland and beyond who we normally wouldn't have access to. Hopefully this is something that will continue in the future.
- ❏ Closure of our meeting place has reduced the communication we can have with our community. They can only contact us online, FB, Twitter, our website. Our Trustee's agreed to remain in office by email for the coming year, some being contacted in person because they didn't have computers. Others were competent with email but couldn't use zoom. Those of us with PC' were able to arrange some community activities keeping our online services up to date with info about Covid-19, Neighbourhood watch activities, community clean ups with social distancing, attending zoom meetings.

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- ▢ Trustees met on Zoom but it would have been nice to have sector specific training for this. This has improved communication but not the social side of working in a charity which is sad.
- ▢ Some charities were concerned that older volunteers find it hard to use all of the IT when they are used to speaking to others.
- ▢ Older members struggle to adapt to technology. Technology cost (Zoom) offset by savings made on room hire etc Loss of public outreach opportunities (small financially but significant in meeting our stated goals)
- ▢ Our members (and indeed our Trustees) are typically elderly and vulnerable to Covid; they are also less technologically competent or equipped to access our services online (eg online presentations and talks; use of social media; online resources). Our events and those of our member societies provide a valuable social interaction - particularly for the elderly - which will be missed and affect mental wellbeing. We have held our AGM on zoom to maintain governance.
- ▢ In August we began virtual meetings. Participants were not all keen and therefore numbers were reduced.
- ▢ Zoom works but is largely ineffective in the delivery of outputs. Without these the charity cannot deliver outcomes. The social contact is essential to our charity's outcomes. We manage to keep in touch and to continue to improve (in relative terms) but cannot deliver for our beneficiaries.
- ▢ There must always be non-online options for doing things - everything from operating a business/charity to private individuals going about their life. The increased reliance and requirements to do things online, or using automated services, is alienating and mentally destroying many people: people for whom these methods, for many individual reasons, are not an option. Many of our members/supporters fall into this category, and are being isolated and left out as a result. There must always be options for doing things in person or at least over the phone, with another human being. Many of our supporters are not able to use online or mobile banking, so cheque and cash payment options must be supported. Most of our donations, or payments for merchandise, are by cheque, but it is becoming increasingly difficult to pay them in.

### The future of charities online

As already indicated, some charities said they intend to continue to use online platforms and tools for meetings, delivery of services and wider communication with other organisations. Several charities also shared their thoughts on the future of charities online.

- ▢ We hope to attract more trustees who will not have to attend meetings in person but can be present on line.
- ▢ A digital strategy has to be included in any planning for the future.
- ▢ Our immediate challenge is to better gear up for digital working between our trustees.
- ▢ We have learned that we are more efficient when working flexibly and remotely. We are taking this on board in reviewing our HR policies. We have also learned that we have been agile and imaginative in adapting our delivery models. We are building on this going forward.
- ▢ Our charity supplies computers and training to schools mainly southern Africa. We have a small group of trustee/volunteers. I think it unlikely that the services we provide will disappear immediately but the whole IT sector is evolving at such a breakneck speed that our traditional desktop/laptop provision strategy is due for a massive rethink.
- ▢ We have become more digital in our internal and external communications. Therefore, a strong ultra-fast broadband network is essential for the UK.
- ▢ We are starting to offer members' days as Zoom meetings. This excludes those who don't feel at ease with technology, so we need to find a way to reach them too.

#### 4. Maintaining Contact

Although 32% of charities that responded to the November survey told us they were not able to operate or were closed it appears that almost all of them were in fact trying in various ways to maintain contact with their beneficiaries, staff and volunteers even though they could not provide their usual services or activities. Some charities told us about the importance of maintaining communication with their members and/or volunteers.

As seen above many charities went online but some found there were limitations and barriers to the use of online platforms and tools. Where this was the case they found other ways to maintain contact including phone calls, text messages, paired walking, emails, letters, cards, newsletters, amateur radio, local radio and TV. There were even occasional benefits, as one charity told us that keeping in touch with each other had made them a stronger group; and another that they would continue to use phone calls to service users after restrictions ceased.

- ❏ We have had to totally change our modus operandi. Our vulnerable elderly clientele were shielding in their own isolated homes unable to attend our centre which offers them companionship friendship social activities and entertainment in addition to a hot nutritious midday meal. We have now become basically a large meals on wheels provider but encouraging members to remain in touch with each other staff and volunteers by whatever means possible. This will continue as long as restrictions last and until our members feel confident to meet in a normal fashion again.

## Phone

- ❏ Transferring to regular phone calls to our service users was a positive step and may well continue to be implemented in some form.
- ❏ We have had to change the way we operate to reach out to our members, instead of our regular meetings we have to make phone calls. Through the calls we established any support that was required which was delivered by our trustees and volunteers. The changes were difficult for our members as they longed for our meetings and to get a pass from the confines of their homes.
- ❏ We try to keep in regular contact with our volunteers via text message, phone calls etc.
- ❏ The only way we have been able to support our clients has been by telephone contact. Due to restrictions we are unable to meet at all.
- ❏ We are a lunch club catering for those 65+. Following lockdown, we found our members missed the social contact. As a result, our Co-ordinator took to phoning members on a regular basis. She found, especially for those who were single, that this contact was of benefit especially if they had other problems.
- ❏ We have learned that keeping communication by telephone with our listeners helps them to deal with the fact that they are not receiving our usual service. Contact by email/telephone with volunteers and exchanging ideas has helped us all cope with frustration.
- ❏ We have changed how we communicate with our service users to phone calls and texts rather than face to face.

## Newsletters

- ☐ We have increased our dialogue with members through Newsletters and the increased contact appears to have been much appreciated.
- ☐ Newsletters to which all can contribute. Zoom for meeting up.
- ☐ We have managed to continue producing our e-newsletter by having committee members (volunteers) work from home. We have also gone ahead and have published our calendar for 2021, again by remote working. The sales from this should help us to raise some money, we hope.

## Letters

- ☐ We changed our service delivery from face to face to a free post out service. This actually expanded our geographical reach from local to national, but with little or no extra funding.
- ☐ Unable to function and achieve our aims and purposes fully providing support to older people. Learnt to adapt support in keeping with guidelines. Connecting with local school to begin a pen pal scheme. Connecting with children to draw pictures to post to people. Connecting with other charities sharing and supporting each other.

## Sharing Information

- ☐ The main thing we have worked hard on during the pandemic is information gathering and exchange amongst volunteers and beneficiaries. Opening up dialogue and networking with other agencies.

## Radio and media

- ☐ We operate a community radio station and found people valued it more greatly during lockdown and have continued to be appreciative of it.
- ☐ A key objective has always been community engagement and involvement, which has essentially stopped since March. We have, to compensate, heightened our media communications, both on TV and in print.

## Walking and coffee shops

- ☐ We have learnt that we need to be adaptable and imaginative. One example our fortnightly paired walks keep folk connected.
- ☐ The inability to visit families or restrictions on the number of families we can visit each day has created some difficulties as the support staff had cries for help from many who needed face to face contact. They took them to coffee shops as this was allowed but was not the same as their own home where they could more easily share confidences.



## Various combinations

- ☐ We are a very small charity, with weekly meetings to chat over afternoon tea, play board games, and be entertained by speakers, musicians or singers. To maintain contact and to try to keep members' morale up, we initiated at least a weekly phone call to each member from a trustee or volunteer; and started a newsletter mailed or emailed to members approx every 10-14 days; and on VE Day and again recently we delivered an afternoon tea to each member (hygienically of course!); and we'll deliver a wee present towards Christmas too. All this has been well received by all concerned
- ☐ We have had to move from face-to-face, group gatherings to individual telephone support and one-to-one meetings in cafes, within the terms of the local restrictions.
- ☐ As my charities members have an average age of 86 we fall into the vulnerable group, so we've not been able to do anything really! However.....we have managed to speak to everyone, phone, distanced visit when permitted, we have written letters. We've had food parcels delivered from our development trust, and our wellbeing officer has "kept an eye".
- ☐ During the pandemic we have made weekly phone calls to our member and issued a monthly newsletter to keep them informed. We have marked member and volunteers birthdays by sending a card and gift voucher to members and a card and flowers to our volunteers.
- ☐ We spent a lot of time ensuring as many of our members could connect online as possible and set up weekly chat meetings, offered individual meeting, weekly quizzes and Trustee meetings/chats. Not forgetting those who could not connect online we have increased our mail contact by sending out regular newsletters, exercise and singing dvds, birthday cards etc. We are in the process of compiling a book about our Covid experience to share with Members.
- ☐ We have used telephone contact with all our members every three weeks & continued to produce a monthly newsletter every month, which has been posted out to members & volunteers.
- ☐ Unable to provide face to face support. However, we are proving some support on the phone and Zoom!
- ☐ We have been unable to hold regular meetings and now communicate by email or telephone.
- ☐ We as a community have had to adapt to communicating via our community website but some elderly or other people in the village do not have access. This has made us send out more newsletters and do more socially distanced community events to keep up the morale of the village. We have done this, not by using our vital funding, but our own money within the volunteers because we feel so strongly about the elderly being shut out. We have tried our best but with shielding and not being able to visit anyone it has really impacted them and other villagers' mental health.

## Unforeseen benefit

- ❏ Mental health issues, isolation issues, financial poverty, family. We have been getting closer as a group and the group keeping in touch with each other has made us a stronger group.

## 5. Other ways Charities adapted

The way that charities adapted was not all about going online or communication. There were others that told us about ways they had adapted spaces for restriction compliant use; the way they worked; met diverse needs; and developed charity facilities.

### Cleaning

- ❏ We are restricted to only two staff working the club out of four our manager works in other settings and therefore due to the restrictions is unable to attend. We have had to recruit more staff to cover and manager working from home. We have introduced a system to clean our toys which we feel is very effective (a hand held steamer), toys are steam cleaned at the end of each session.
- ❏ We are able to run limited services to help the mental health of our local young people. We have increased cleaning procedures that I hope continue when Covid-19 has long gone!!
- ❏ Most of the men in the men's club are over 60 or got under line medical conditions so a lot had to self-isolate till the end of August/September from the middle of March which was a long time for some but after having meetings with the local council and doing risk assessments and Covid-19 checks ie 1m rule, wearing of face masks, knowing the high risk areas and cleaning them more the club could open to one day a week for club members to meet and have a tea/coffee and a chat as over the months with keeping in touch through phoning each member their mental health was suffering so open one day a week has been a god send to all members.

## Adapted spaces and ways of working

- With effective communication and cooperation, we developed ways of continuing our land management work while also following Government Guidelines, we now only work outdoors at a safe distance. We are a food growing group. Demand for produce has improved (seedlings, vegetables, salads and fruit).
- As an archaeological charity which does fieldwork this has been limited, although we have a few families who have continued to be able to work and some pairs have adapted to work socially distanced.
- We have had to adapt new ways to work in confined spaces and new ways of completing tasks.
- The services we provide to beneficiaries (patient hospital transport in particular) were not deemed to be 'essential' by the NHS or HSCPs prior to Covid-19, so were not funded by them. However, they suddenly became essential during lockdown. We were also required to change the way we delivered them due to the new social distancing restrictions. Additional volunteers had to be recruited and fuel costs increased per patient. During the time of restrictions we have received funding from both the NHS and HSCPs, but have received no reassurances that our 'essential' services will be funded post Covid-19.
- We are a local museum that has had to temporarily close its premises. Having returned from furlough our manager is developing and posting relevant video material on our website and on social media, while some of our volunteers are utilising quiet time to increase archive work.
- Events still run, but reduced, controlled, attendance and increased need for preparations. Extended opening hours to give members greater access to the Gardens which helps with mental health issues. Able to continue to undergo refurbishment by careful planning and execution of tasks.
- We have linked up with community groups and other charities to provide fresh produce from our gardens for community larders.

## Acquired or developed charity facilities

- Despite COVID we got an opportunity to purchase our village hall with the help of the Scottish land fund. We used JustGiving to support this. We were successful COVID made the whole thing much more complicated but we did succeed.
- Our trustee group is stronger and more committed due to the challenges we have faced. We have received generous grant support to continue development of the shed facilities, despite having no customers at present, and so when we do open up we will have an improved experience to offer our members.

## Met diverse needs

- We have had to stop all educational courses, a major source of income, much to the frustration of students, but we have been pleased with the response to our free helpline opened up to the public and on all issues (horse welfare, care and safety around horses) and found remote working very useful, although our members are somewhat frustrated with our strict advice on professional conduct to keep to Govt guidelines and 'rules' and on maintaining biosecurity. We trust that most understand this is for the greater good of all and that the crisis will pass.
- We got funding initially to provide craft packs for children - all these materials are expensive and home schooling and general entertainment required a lot of materials which were not obtainable on low incomes. Then we realised that people who depended on charity shops for kids books, toys and clothes could only shop in the local supermarket. Many people locally could no longer get to other supermarkets (because of travel difficulties and not being able to take kids into shops) and had to shop in the local one. We got funding to buy gift cards for the local supermarket and distributed them in conjunction with schools, social work, carers centre etc.
- We have managed to adapt the shed skills to the procurement and assembly of face visors to support local businesses, care home and vulnerable members of the community

## 6. Why some charities were unable to adapt

### Closure of places

Buildings run by charities such as village halls, community centres, churches and church halls, theatres, Town Halls, venues, shops, museums and historic buildings provide the places where a vast range of activities happen. Many of the charities that operate a building told us they were closed, and the reasons given for this were mixed.

The buildings operated by charities were closed for reasons that included: the decision to close some of these places was made elsewhere, by a local authority where they owned the building operated by a charity, by an umbrella body, or a landlord; lack of clear guidance from governments, councils and local authorities; the cessation of indoor meetings, events and performances under the restrictions; buildings unsuitable for compliance with restrictions, for example narrow entrances or hallways; no bookings because restrictions either prevented groups gathering or could not gather in sufficient numbers when socially distanced for income to cover their costs; insufficient income or reserves to cover cost of opening; lack of access to potential spreading of the coronavirus, particularly in regard to vulnerable people; unwillingness of volunteers to work in an environment that exposed them to the risk of catching the virus from others.

- Our building is normally used by user groups for substance abuse, homelessness, mental health and wellbeing, community events and health, we have had to completely shut down all of these groups leaving our community stranded and isolated.
- 100% closure can be managed but not knowing for how long can be a major concern. Major effect on other organisations, mainly children, who utilise our premises for various activities
- Our theatre has been closed since March 2020 and we have no way of forecasting when it will re-open. Any grants we have applied for require us to have an employee which we don't have as we are all volunteers.
- It is fantastic that there is funds out there for staffing but when you are closed there are ongoing costs for your facility and with no money coming in and you have more than one premises it's very difficult to pay the outgoing costs.
- There was considerable disagreement within our committee on to what extent we could resume normal activities and the decision was eventually taken to close down all activities i.e. opening the museum to the public, afternoon teas at the week-ends and hiring the hall to exercise and other groups. Some independent advice tailored to our specific circumstances would have been useful.
- We partially rely on income generated by tourists, particularly in the spring and summer. Until we can safely open our premises to members and the public, the situation will not improve. Most of our volunteers are in the 65-95 years old range and most are reluctant to return until they feel secure.
- Our resource centre is not presently open.
- Our delivery sites are unable to open due to the current restriction.
- We are a small charity running a village hall in a remote area with an elderly population. We run a community entertainment and our maximum audience is 25 in number, mainly elderly, many living in isolation. With a small hall and the new distancing required we can't get enough people inside and seated to enable us to cover our costs. We are also reluctant to contribute to increasing the risk for our beneficiaries as many of our attendees are vulnerable residents who are most at risk. We also provide the only indoor sport available in the area, and it is played by all ages. This too has stopped entirely. We have not opened to allow play as we have no staff to do the additional cleaning and to ensure folk keep themselves safe whilst playing. We've not found any funding for village halls to help them whilst they have no income. As far as we can tell we don't qualify for a small business grant and we hope that we won't in fact need a grant but don't want to fundraise to open until we are actually prepared to open. Protection for our elderly is top priority. Information on how to set up as safe an environment as possible would be very much appreciated. We struggle with the dilemma of not wanting to open before it really is safe to do so to keep our beneficiaries safe, and not knowing when we will be able to re-open safely. As time goes on folk feel lonelier, particularly with the winter weather and long dark evenings. Could the risk from loneliness begin to outweigh the risk of catching covid? We simply don't know.

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- It has been a frustrating experience. Feedback from some of our service users about how much they were missing the use of the facility prompted the charity trustees to have a socially-distanced meeting to consider when/whether it might be possible to reopen. A number of documents were produced describing changes which might be adopted to allow safe reopening. However discussion of potential risk to users, as well as changing restrictions introduced by Scottish Government, led to us reluctantly concluding that nothing could be offered in the foreseeable future.

These buildings were used by other charities, community groups, sports groups, school groups, child care, care of the elderly, social care, events, arts and performance groups, the public and have an essential role in the life of the communities in which they are located. Their closure had a knock on effect on the ability of other charities to operate

- Our charity operates within the Arts sector using a variety of venues ranging from community centres and professional theatres for holding events. Following the cancellation of our main event in 2020 we are currently struggling to plan for 2021 due to uncertainty over when Arts venues will become available again and when they do, whether they will be viable for raising money. Also our members operate across a number of local council areas, which makes it even more difficult as differing lockdown rules are affecting members in different ways.
- We are a small charity and currently unable to operate due to restrictions imposed on the use of our venue.
- We are a community church that hires rooms from an ALEO. We have not been able to meet in person now for 8 months. There is a growing sense of frustration amongst both beneficiaries and volunteers alike.
- Our Charity are not meeting at present, stopped the weekly meetings on the 23rd March. Although there has been some relaxation regarding meetings we cannot get access to the property we use and their policy will be reviewed in early January 2021.
- As a charity we are in limbo waiting for our premises to become available again.
- Our Day Centre closed, so no source of income, but continuing to support older service users with befriending phone calls or 1-2-1 home visits to provide some company and mental health support.
- Lack of access to the properties we use due to travel restrictions and general coronavirus precautions (not wishing to introduce the virus to the people who work adjacent to the properties) has caused a cessation of our activities.

- ❏ We have not had many decisions or choices to make. Premises have been closed and restrictions mean that we found we cannot function safely.
- ❏ The major impact we have experienced is the closure of our retreat during periods of lock down
- ❏ Our groups are not able to meet because of the village halls being closed. We know this is for safety but our membership is quite elderly, in some halls we could have had meetings and spread out to keep the distance between members.
- ❏ Most of our clients are local schools and they now have severe restrictions on who can visit the school.
- ❏ We chose to close our charity shop in March and it has remained closed with no decision made to reopen.
- ❏ The closure of non-essential shops cut off our only source of income.
- ❏ We are unable to use our residential centre.

That said, these charities were not as inactive as they appeared to be, some told us of renovations, refurbishment and building projects they were undertaking whilst they were unable to operate. They were also amongst the charities that were endeavouring to maintain contact with their beneficiaries and volunteers by going online, and by various other means when this was not possible.

### Other reasons why some charities were unable to adapt

There were some charities who were unable to adapt and the reasons for this appear to include the loss of places to operate, loss of income, their location, type of activity, the vulnerability of their beneficiaries and/or volunteers and/or staff; or sometimes combinations of these.

Although these charities told us that they were closed or inactive it is likely that they too went online but also found there were limitations and barriers to the use of online platforms or that they found other ways to try and maintain contact with volunteers and beneficiaries, though they did not tell us this.

## Meeting or gathering

- ☞ We are unable to organise meetings and outings for our members.
- ☞ As a school based charity we have been unable to operate at all as we have no way of parents physically meeting.
- ☞ Restrictions on youth meeting together has temporarily suspended our activity.
- ☞ We have effectively been dormant, since all of our normal activities were prevented by Covid restrictions.
- ☞ Restrictions on meeting up with experts who could advise us on work we need to do, which would then allow us to seek estimates for the work required, leading to us then seeking appropriate funding and commencing work. Due to this we are almost in limbo.
- ☞ As an art club we have been unable to meet thus removing the social aspect which affects many of our older members especially those who live on their own.
- ☞ The rules placed upon the area where we live are such that we can no longer meet as a group so all classes have ceased.
- ☞ Virtually all Charitable Trust work ceased, except on independent consultant studies about development opportunities. Community engagement has been a real challenge, but progress has been enabled by remote meetings.
- ☞ A virus which threatens the well-being of our volunteers and the elderly people we supply our service to can, and has, brought our organisation to a standstill.

## Travel

- ☞ As an environmental/wildlife-related charity, restrictions on volunteers' travel and fieldwork have halted long-term wildlife monitoring and conservation projects.
- ☞ In order to tour out our site visiting work it is necessary to be able to stay in hotels, and of course to eat out as we are away from home. As none of this is to be allowed for the next month it has proven impossible to meet our basic needs for both our rehearsal period and for the early touring period. This is coupled with national uncertainty about both workplace and travel insurances. Supported by our committee of trustees I am instigating discussion with each of our funders to look at postponing all site visits until next year.



## Type of activity

- Our small branch has completely shut down as it is a high physical contact type of dancing.
- Our activities are seasonal water based and we have just had to cancel this year.
- Our charity is newly established and focused on the ethnic minority community. Due to current restriction, we are not able to visit door to door and cannot provide support to the community members as we wanted.
- We have had many effects on our work such as not being able to get out in the field and network with people interested in working with us. We had to cancel all services provided

## Restrictions on performance and events

- Covid restrictions have prevented us from holding our usual events and will continue to do so until these are lifted particularly in relation to group gatherings.
- Unable to host live events for members.
- As an event organiser in Scotland, it is extremely frustrating not to know when events can safely restart.
- We are a small community drama group so have been unable to perform this year.
- We have suspended our activity until the pandemic is over as we are a performance related charity.
- We are also no longer able to put on exhibitions.
- We are a charity set up to provide access to theatre and the arts through amateur dramatics, pantomimes etc. This is still not permitted and has no end in sight currently meaning we are unable to offer any services at the moment, and we don't know when this will change. Even if this does change going forward if numbers allowed to attend are limited this would potentially make any events not viable from an economic standpoint.
- We are prevented from convening large gatherings as audiences indoors.
- We exist to run an annual event. We cancelled the event and the associated activities and we have shut down until we can run the event again.

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- Our charity depends on coffee mornings, charity dinners and lots of social events this has come to a complete halt with no income coming in.
- Unable to display historic vehicles at public displays.
- Our charitable operations have more or less halted since the outbreak of Covid. Fundraising activities have virtually ceased other than a personal sponsored event by one of our trustees which was organised via Just giving. Requests for funding have also ceased as the type of events and activities that we are generally asked to support have also been stopped due to covid restrictions.

### Vulnerable staff

- Our support staff are all high risk along with our clients

### Vulnerable volunteers

- Nearly all our volunteers are retired persons and are Covid-19 vulnerable.
- With all volunteers (7) over 70 and no fundraising activities taking place, we have temporarily ceased operations.
- Most of our volunteers are in the 65-95 years old range and most are reluctant to return until they feel secure.
- We have found that we have not adapted very well to the impact of the pandemic as our trustees are too old to adapt quickly.

### Vulnerable beneficiaries

- We have closed completely as we only deal with the elderly and it is too much of a risk.
- We run a club for the elderly. We hire a bus to collect them and return them to their homes afterwards. Well while this deadly virus is active there is no way we are going to encourage 80 year olds to leave the safety of their homes to come out to meetings and no way are we going to be held responsible for taking them out.

### Loss of income

- Fundraising has been difficult and trying to provide the help we usually give has been impossible.

## Loss of contact

- ☞ The majority of our targeted population are in the shielding group; all NHS and Social Service community care has ceased and we have not been contacted to provide that missing service.

## Loss of access

- ☞ We have not carried out any of our functions because we have not had access to the hospital.
- ☞ We were unable to attend in supermarkets and local events that we would normally do, due to the restrictions, to issue safety leaflets and security products.
- ☞ We were left in total chaos not knowing what would happen as we were closed so quickly. We had no idea when we would get back. We then lost our meeting place and have also lost our weekly collection which funds our unit so we cannot afford to move to another location. We are therefore now having to close our unit which has run for over 50 years.

## Combined issues

- ☞ The impact of Covid-19 on a very small charity has been to emphasise how vulnerable it is, and pose an additional query about its longer-term viability. Some, but maybe not all, of the trustees were already aware of this. A high proportion of the trustees and members have additional support needs, and often also other chronic health issues. Some of the trustees and volunteers are above retirement age, and also have personal or family health issues. This has made group meetings impossible since late March, and also caused our main project to close down completely, as it necessitates quite close contact. Our disabled members also have financial issues, and tend not to have technical skills, so meetings on Zoom etc have not been possible. All the above issues make it unlikely that any resumption of our normal activities will be possible for some time. In practice, the future of the charity is in some doubt. Despite this, the more hale and hearty of the trustees have maintained contact with people by phone, and met occasionally (never more than 2 at a time, still allowable under Scottish rules), to plan, get the Annual Accounts under way, etc. A further issue, not of the charity's making, is that the church where the project takes place has said we cannot return there in the foreseeable future because they cannot ensure social distancing arrangements. Overall, we have learned that the longer-term future of the charity will need to be addressed, but that we can hang on in the current weird limbo if necessary.

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