

Our Covid Year

**Fearon Community Association
Annual Report 2020-21**



From the Chair

Andy Rhodes
Chair of Trustees
June 2021

Like all organisations, Covid has dominated our year. As we negotiated through the early stages of the pandemic we saw our income drop by 80% overnight when we were all forced into lockdown on the 23 March.

As Fearon Community Association (FCA) exists to support people in our area, we made the decision to continue to do just that, rather than close entirely due to the impact on our finances. In hindsight it was a brave decision to have taken - to keep our service delivery going whilst trying to navigate the fast changing rules and legislation of this new Covid world. As a Board we then agreed to review the financial situation after four months to see if we could afford to continue to support our community moving forward.

Our decision was proven right.

Whilst our Centre Manager's time was diverted to supporting the wider Charnwood Community Action response, closer to home, our Activities and Bookings Manager worked tirelessly to adapt how we support our local residents and regular Hall users within a Covid-secure framework. Between March and June, more than 400 welfare calls were made which covered a diverse range of issues from helping a victim of online fraud to offering advice on how to make Yorkshire puddings rise! Large issues or small, I know what a difference this regular support has made to the lives of our local people in this unprecedented year. You can see from the stories on our website and 'Our Covid Year' timeline in this report more about what we have achieved.

Funding from a range of providers has enabled us to cover core running costs, increased cleaning and the wages of the Centre Manager and the Activities and Bookings Manager including making this role full-time to reflect the increased workload. These roles have been vital in ensuring we were able to keep delivering for the entirety of lockdown - all be it virtually when we were physically not able to open our doors - and be able to hit the ground running when Government restrictions were lifted. It has been great to welcome friends old and new back into the Hall.

Time has been taken to focus on our recovery with strong financial planning aimed at increasing room bookings to enable us to continue to deliver community benefit. Improvements to our wonderful building have also been made so that the user experience has been improved.

I am proud to announce security in the building for the next 25 years through the successful negotiation of the lease with the Leicester Diocesan Board of Finance and All Saints with Holy Trinity, and we are also delighted to welcome Charnwood Arts who are now officially making the Hall their home.

As we move into the next year with the security of the National Lottery funding behind us, we are also taking time to reflect on our strategic governance and reviewing our effectiveness as a board to take on the challenges arising from Covid recovery. We remain fully committed to keeping Fearon Hall at the heart of our community as we face the long-term impact of this difficult year on our users' well-being.

Financial Review

Michael Welbourne
Treasurer
June 2021

The year to March 2021 was certainly an unusual one. When the realities of Covid started to become clear there were some initial concerns about how things would go for FCA. At that early stage there were enough resources to keep things going and offer services to the community for at least four months so the decision was taken to do exactly that. Very soon after that help from the government and local councils was made available and, along with National Lottery, the grants income across the year has been the most significant area on which to report.

The National Lottery awarded £70,000 for Covid funding, furlough claims totalled £10,647, Leicestershire County Council awarded £11,955 from its Communities Fund, and Charnwood Borough Council awarded £40,809 across a number of business support grants.

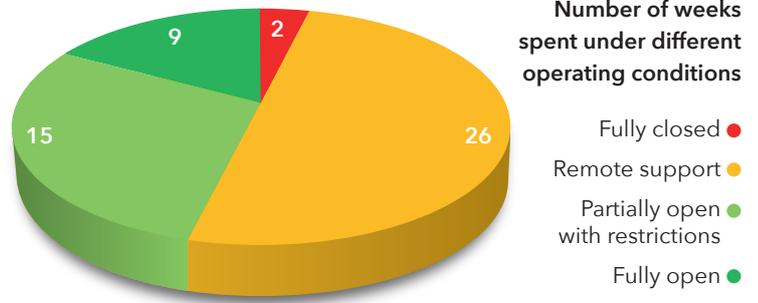
And along with the Strategic Partnership Grant of £30,489 Charnwood Borough Council also awarded a grant of £19,734 as match funding for the new kitchen. £25,050 of grants for the kitchen had been received in previous years and these were released into the accounts this year.

Due to lockdowns and other restrictions throughout the year income from other activities fell sharply. However, demand for the services offered has never been better and we expect to see income return to pre-Covid levels very quickly in the coming year.

Most overheads and running costs were reduced in the year compared to the previous year due to fewer activities. The only major increases were some legal costs regarding lease negotiations, an increase in depreciation charges due to the new kitchen, and an increase in wages due to making the part-time Activities Coordinator role into a full-time Activities and Bookings Manager role with Assistant Manager responsibilities.

Full financial statements are available on request.

Monitoring and Social Impact



In 2019-2020 we reflected on the unfolding Covid-19 pandemic and the uncertainty it presented. Who could have predicted what the subsequent 12 months would hold. We are proud and grateful to have been able to continue to provide support to our community during this period, in no small measure due to the confidence shown in us by our local authority and charitable funders.

We present here the data describing our work and impact over the last 12 months. We include progress in refocusing our monitoring activities to give the most responsive understanding of community needs, Hall usage and social impact.

Responsibility and scale

We have continued to operationalise our data collection, with leadership and oversight being provided by our Activities and Bookings Manager. The scale of data collection has been impacted by reduced opening, and the number of activities we have been able to offer has been restricted by social-distancing restrictions. However, the enormous effort and the innovation to safely meeting the needs of our most vulnerable users shines through.

Over the past twelve months, Fearon Hall has only been fully closed for two weeks (over the Christmas period). That means that for 46% of the year, the Hall has been open for permitted groups and activities, and for a further 50% of the year it has been possible to offer remote support to the community.

Whilst continuing to operate day-to-day, time has also been spent improving facilities, defining robust, Covid-safe operating procedures, and securing funding.

Scope and impact

Given the impact of Covid restrictions, no meaningful comparison of the number of bookings and attendees can be made between this and previous years. However, it is possible to illustrate that our own activities, and those of the groups that use the Hall continue to meet our community priorities in a balanced way. We continue to attract new users and develop new activity streams (8/19 new groups or activities this year).

| Group/activity | Priority | Group/activity | Priority |
|---------------------------------|----------|---------------------------------|----------|
| Scouts | ■ ● ▲ | Give Back Bakery | ▲ |
| 20:20 | ● | NCS activate | ▲ |
| Young people's sports programme | ● | Outdoor activities on the green | ■ ● |
| Christmas day event | ■ | Positive minds | ■ ● |
| Therapeutic group | ■ ● ▲ | Martial arts | ● |
| Counselling | ● | Rings boxing | ● |
| Hot desking | ▲ | Adult learning | ▲ |
| Public access computers | ▲ | New mums' support group | ■ |
| Café in the Hall | ■ ● | Drawing group | ■ ● ▲ |
| | | Harvest celebration | ■ |

■ New ■ Reduce loneliness & isolation ● Improve mental & physical health ▲ Build skills & qualifications

Continuous improvement

Last year, we used the Inspiring Impact framework to identify areas for improvement in our data collection and monitoring practices. We have made good progress on the majority of areas for improvement that we identified.

Progress made against 'Inspiring Impact' recommendations for 2020-2021

| |
|--|
| ■ Refresh community profile using neighbourhood statistics |
| ● Define quantitative data collection plan to evidence positive outcomes |
| ● Provide tools and support for those collecting data |
| ● Assess the full context of our services relative to other partners and initiatives |
| ▲ Identify the most appropriate data and evidence to support funding bids |
| ▲ Review and maintain standards for data gathering and storage |

■ To do ● In progress ▲ Done

Looking forward

With the anticipated re-opening of society we look forward to a return to full participation in community events and the buzz of people in the Hall. Our quantitative data collection plan for 2021-2022 is almost complete, and will meet the requirements of our funders in proving the impact of our work through the positive outcomes for groups and individuals.

We look forward to sharing this progress over the coming year.

Mar

- Funded scheduled work begins on kitchen refit.
- Government announces First Lockdown.
- 80% of our income lost overnight.
- First update on Covid response between FCA Board of Directors and FH Management Team.
- FH Management Team co-ordinate response to current situation and offer support as part of the wider Charnwood Community Action.

- Remote support for our most vulnerable users begins through telephone contact. With a focus on mental health and community resilience.
- £1,000 donation from Loughborough Beacon Rotary Club to ensure continued delivery of counselling service from Fearon Hall.
- Safeguarding and risk assessments finalised.
- Café and cleaning staff furloughed.
- Cash flow forecast reviewed and all non-essential spending paused.

Apr

- Five year National Lottery Community Fund application started November 2019, formally submitted.
- Kitchen refit works put on hold due to supply issues.
- Application made to Leicestershire County Council Communities Fund to cover core running costs and secure the short term financial viability of FCA.
- First session of Fearon Front Room Café online community coffee morning.

- National Lottery Community Fund announce suspension of all future funding for the next 6 months.
- Notification of part funding from Leicestershire County Council for salaries.
- Continuation of work with Charnwood Community Action.

May

- FCA initiate contact with community organisations within the East of Loughborough to begin discussions on peer support and ongoing community needs in our area.
- Return to workplace allowed under social distancing rules. Centre Manager and Activities & Bookings Manager return to Fearon Hall for one day a week.
- Trialing a new way of working using Facebook Portals that might benefit our most socially isolated.

- Small business grant received from Charnwood Borough Council. *Thanks to Love Loughborough Bid for indicating availability of this funding stream.*
- Loughborough Against Corona use Fearon Hall to make and distribute PPE packs.
- 180 wellbeing phonecalls made and ongoing remote community support.
- Community need suggests small Covid secure meeting space would be beneficial.
- Works commence to transform store room into counselling and small meeting space.

Jun

- Tentative discussions for August activities with the East of Loughborough community organisations. Providing a test run for the new kitchen, support for people within the area using outdoor social and physical activity.
- Action plans continually developed for the reopening of Fearon Hall. In partnership with the Consortium of Community Centres.
- Fearon Front Room Café ended due to issues with user IT access.

- Review of cashflow indicates a potential £25k deficit in coming months.
- Q2 figures reveal reserves for just 4 further months of operations. Pension and redundancy liabilities reviewed.
- Talks commence with Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Sport to discuss inequality gaps in physical activity made worse over Covid. Potential funding to support August activity programme.
- A further 232 wellbeing phonecalls made.
- Government announces relaxation of restrictions and 2m social distancing rules.
- Work starts on risk, fire and legionella assessments ahead of lockdown easing in July.
- Plans actioned to enable the opening of rooms for hire in September.

Jul

- Fearon Hall 25 year lease discussions commence with the Church.
- Application begins to National Lottery for Coronavirus Community Support Fund.
- Benchmark four month review takes place. Decision taken to continue staying open and delivering due to confidence with increased funding opportunities.
- Funding application for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Sport England submitted for the East of Loughborough Group.

- Demand for help from most vulnerable service users increasing.
- Successful application for liquidity funding from the Coronavirus Community Support Fund. Securing the future of FCA for the next 6 months.
- Successful application for Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Sport England funding.
- New Fearon Hall website design underway.

Aug

- Development of activities for Thursdays and Fridays during August aimed at people struggling with isolation and fear of going out.
- Booking enquiries resume.
- Kitchen refit completed.
- Lockdown restrictions eased further.
- Computer suite fit out to help people access online services.
- Beacon and Jubilee Rotarians help to decorate Fearon Hall.

- Activities on the Green. Targeting people struggling with isolation. 8 days of activities over 4 weeks. Tea & chat, arts & crafts, exercise & fitness, family picnic, rummage sales all well attended.
- Maintaining relationships with existing groups and building new ones.
- Partnership working with Charnwood Arts, Health Watch Leicestershire.
- New Fearon Hall website goes live.



Sep

Oct

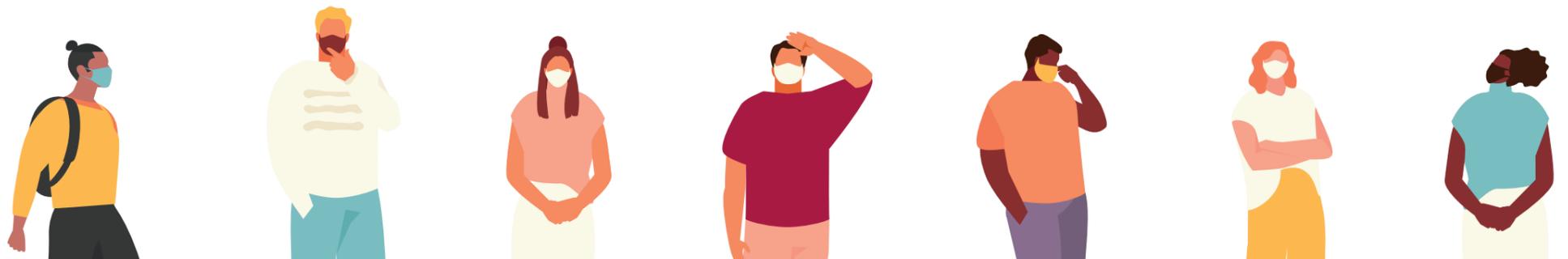
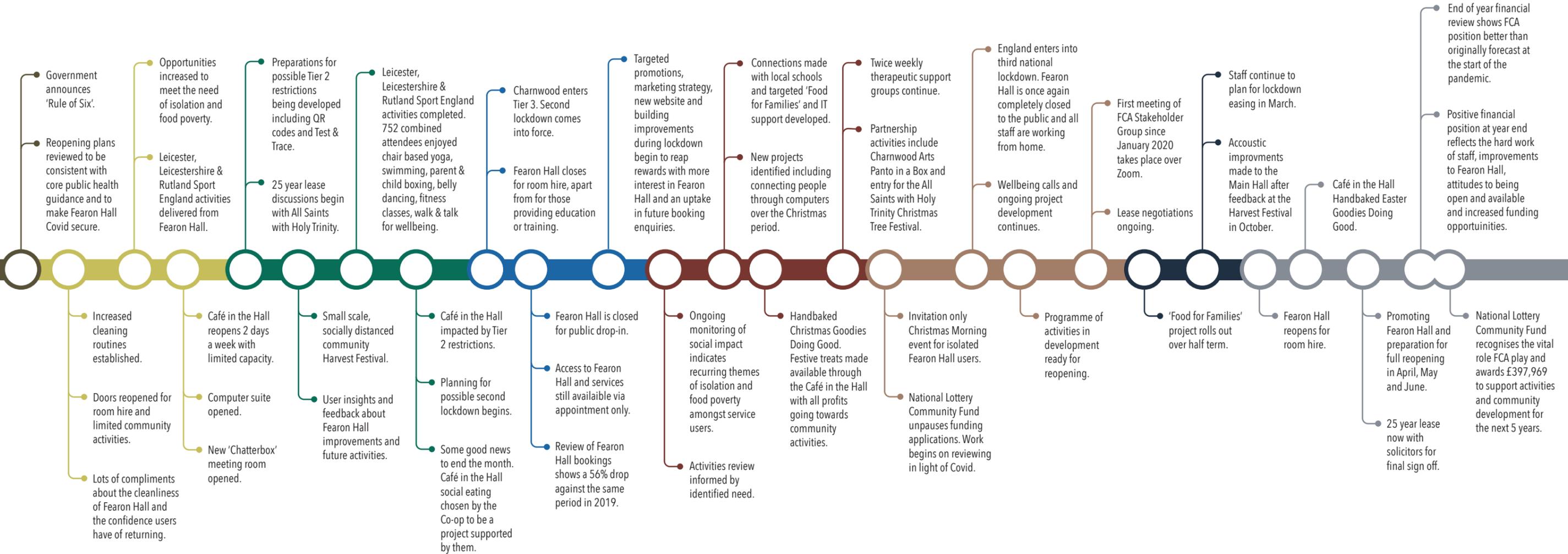
Nov

Dec

Jan

Feb

Mar



Fearon Hall

Rectory Road
Loughborough
LE11 1PL
T: 01509 230629
E: office@fearonhall.org.uk
www.fearonhall.org.uk

Legal Status

Charitable Company
Limited by Guarantee

Governing Document

Memorandum and Articles
of Association

Charity Number

1130457

Company Number

6852232

Directors

Andy Rhodes
Richard Thorpe
Michael Welbourne
Michael Charlesworth
Carolina Escobar Tello
Rosanna Cant
Georgia Thompson

Centre Manager

Meg Bezzano-Griffiths

Activities & Bookings Manager

Dawn Page

Café in the Hall

Carrie Driver
Peter Scott (Volunteer)
Zoe Powdrill (Volunteer)

Office

Andrew Creswell (Volunteer)

Cleaner

Lorraine Dickinson
Fatbardha Coci

Social Impact Reporting

Nichole Browne, DVSA

IT Support & Development

Lightning Bolt

We greatly acknowledge funding support from:

