

AGM Managers Report 2020

Following a successful previous year in which we saw a small financial surplus it was more than disappointing to have to close the centre at the end of March due to Government guidelines for activities. This had an affect not only to participants attending but also financially given that almost 80% of our income is raised from activities in the centre. We recognise that not being open to the public has been a difficult and challenging time for the whole community.

The Board of Trustees met to discuss the situation and decided to continue with meals delivery. Emergency funding was sought from The Steve Morgan Foundation and Martin Lewis to compensate for not being able to continue with physical activities and the lunch club as revenue raised from these normally support our food delivery service. Funding from Steve Morgan was secured initially however after 2 weeks it became apparent that we needed to temporarily close due to safeguarding members, staff, volunteers and the future of the charity. The virus was spreading in an ambiguous way and as all our volunteer drivers were over the age of 70, it became increasingly difficult to maintain the service. We had tried to recruit volunteers from other sources however this also became a challenge due to the short notice of people being unable to assist, often due to either isolating themselves or caring for a family member.

As a result and to safeguard the charity for the future, The Board of Trustees made the decision to “Mothball” the organisation and to Furlough the Staff from the end of March. The staff ensured at this point that members receiving meals were contacted along with their family members to confirm that they would have alternative provision and to signpost additional help to Sefton for those that needed it. Sefton at this point had planned to put emergency provision for shielding members of the community.

In July it was decided to employ the Manager 2 days a week to seek funding and create a plan to re-open. Several Trust funds and emergency funds were applied to and a plan to re-start the meals delivery service from November was formulated and agreed and funding secured from the Liverpool City Region Community Fund and PH Holt Foundation.

The members were canvassed in August and the majority of those previously receiving meals were interested in resuming these. The funding received has meant that we can continue with this service until the end of March 2021. Meanwhile many applications for funding are being applied to for the continuation of services from April 2021.

Unfortunately, due to the health and financial risk assessments alongside a SWOT analysis, we have not been able to re-open the charity shop and café at this time. It is with sadness that we have been unable to resume even some of our services until now however I can assure you that this has been necessary and we hope this will build over the coming weeks and months and that future funding will be secured so that it can become once again a thriving resource for the community.

In summary, we will continue to reach out to the community in keeping with our objectives and continue to seek funds from Trusts, Council and donors. We would hope that in doing this monies would be secured for the next financial year and we will continue to follow Government guidelines on the feasibility of opening to more activities as soon as possible.

Rebecca Gomersall

November 2020