



THE ARCHWAY FOUNDATION: 2023 -2025 BUSINESS PLAN

LONELINESS AND THE NEED FOR THE ARCHWAY FOUNDATION

The Archway Foundation (Archway) was founded in Oxford in 1982 to help relieve some of the distress caused by loneliness. Over 9 million people in the UK – almost a fifth of the population – say they are always or often lonely, and its effects include deterioration in mental and physical health as well as emotional distress. For more than 40 years Archway has been a key source of support to many people in and around the Oxford area through supportive social groups in Oxford and Abingdon, Individual support face-to-face (formerly befriending). Post pandemic services have developed to offer a pathway of support that includes Telephone Support, Individual Support face-to-face, Small Supportive Social Groups and invitations to Social and Fund/Raising events.

ARCHWAY'S AIMS

Archway has three strategic aims:

- To provide a range of services for adults experiencing loneliness and social isolation in order to alleviate distress and reduce the sense of loneliness, and to assist in solving, or preventing the development of mental health problems associated with loneliness
- To ensure that the organisation maintains a strong team of trained volunteers to support both current and future needs
- To extend such a service to other areas by collaborating with other bodies with similar charitable objects and by establishing new branches of the Foundation sharing the purposes and regulations

"You get to a point where you feel as if you're slipping down a slope, you know, and you can't climb back up and if it wasn't for Archway holding their arms out and catching me I don't know where I'd be." Quote from an Archway Friend (service user)

GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE AND ORGANISATION

- Archway is governed by a Board of Trustees with ten members, some with lived experience of loneliness and mental / physical health concerns. Their skills include financial management and accountancy, project management, governance in education and NHS, HR expertise, digital analytics, organisational leadership and management.
- It has a staff of nine (5.2 fte), led by a Chief Executive Officer who has worked in the field of loneliness since Archway's inception. To ensure financial stability it employs the services of a professional fundraiser.
- 70 volunteers, from all walks of life, help to deliver its services. All are required to undergo thorough recruitment checking (references, enhanced DBS etc) and training.

ARCHWAY'S IMPACT

Responses to annual surveys in the years running up to the Covid epidemic have shown that the work of Archway makes a significant difference to the physical and mental well-being of its service users. The survey asked questions about peoples' confidence and feelings about a number of social situations. Between 62% and 83% of those surveyed said that the Archway community had helped them, and about half reported that their general levels of loneliness were less than before. However, about half still found it hard to make new friendships outside the Archway community.

During the COVID pandemic social contact restrictions meant Archway's services moved from face-to-face contact to telephone support service and postal communication as the majority of Archway Friends (service users) were not digitally connected. The effectiveness of this support was also confirmed shown by a survey. Prior to receiving telephone support in the pandemic 43% reported feeling lonely always or often and 51% often felt isolated. Having received telephone support over a period between 12 and 24 months 83% reported feeling less lonely, 98% more connected, 85% more confident and 64% more able to trust others.

PUBLIC RECOGNITION

Archway has won a number of awards including the Queen's Award For Voluntary Service (2007), Charity of the Year for the company Infinium in 2012, Blenheim Palace's Charity of the Year (2019) with volunteers recognised by VWHDC's 'Unsung Hero of the Year' (2019) and regularly in awards schemes by Oxford City Council and Oxford Community and Voluntary Action (OCVA). It is was selected by the Abingdon Mayor in 2022 as one of the two charities supported during his tenure.

The expertise of its CEO is recognised through invitations to assist local initiatives in loneliness, through invitations to speak and in 2021 being awarded the MBE for services to mental health.

Archway has significant partnerships with other organisations. It worked with Age UK Oxon, Adult Safeguarding Board and other local charities to deliver an event 'a 'Let's Talk Loneliness' in June 2019, (276 delegates with national speakers, 20 workshops, 45 Organisations promoting their services). The CEO's participation in Charity Leaders Forum/ Suicide Multiagency Group, Communities of Practice enables an awareness of and contribution to the wider identification of needs and responses within the community. It has an ongoing collaboration with Age UK and the Oxford Hub, set up in the pandemic

POST PANDEMIC SERVICES

A post-pandemic review of operations, informed by user focus groups, has resulted in re-evaluation and development of Archway's pathway of support.

A revised format for **social groups**, meeting in Oxford and Abingdon, offers a monthly opportunity for **supportive social contact**. The pre-pandemic groups, mainly large groups with volunteers enabling conversations, had become too large for those struggling with anxiety, and have been reshaped using well-ventilated, easily accessible spaces to address the concerns around returning to face-to-face contact. They focus on building social confidence, establishing meaningful social connection with others and where possible, moving people through to engage in groups and activities in the community.

The **Individual Support Service** continues for those not ready to meet face to face, with 60% meeting in-person and 40% continuing with Telephone Support. In addition to companionship, individuals are signposted and supported to access additional forms of help where relevant, such as financial benefit claims and appeals, (the level of worry about the cost of living and heating bills is unprecedented), and Social Care assessments, with the involvement of mental health teams where appropriate. **High levels of mental distress**, with expressions of self-harm and suicide, are encountered daily by staff and some experienced volunteers providing Individual Support for those with complex needs

Archway continues to work and collaborate with other organisations in service provision and referrals. Our experience in working with adults with highly complex needs means we are often instrumental in bringing together staff from the several agencies and organisations involved in supporting an individual. This is time consuming but vital work in keeping people safe.

MAJOR ACHIEVEMENTS 2021-2023.

Services to adults:

- Adaptation and restructuring of services during and in response to the pandemic, including introduction of a Friend's newsletter (The Bright Side).
- Launch and evaluation of new social group and individual support structures.
- Improved referral procedure.
Better definition of the individual pathway of support.

Volunteer and staff support and recruitment

- All new and existing volunteers trained for their new role within the new Pathway of Support
- Revision of volunteer and staff role descriptions.

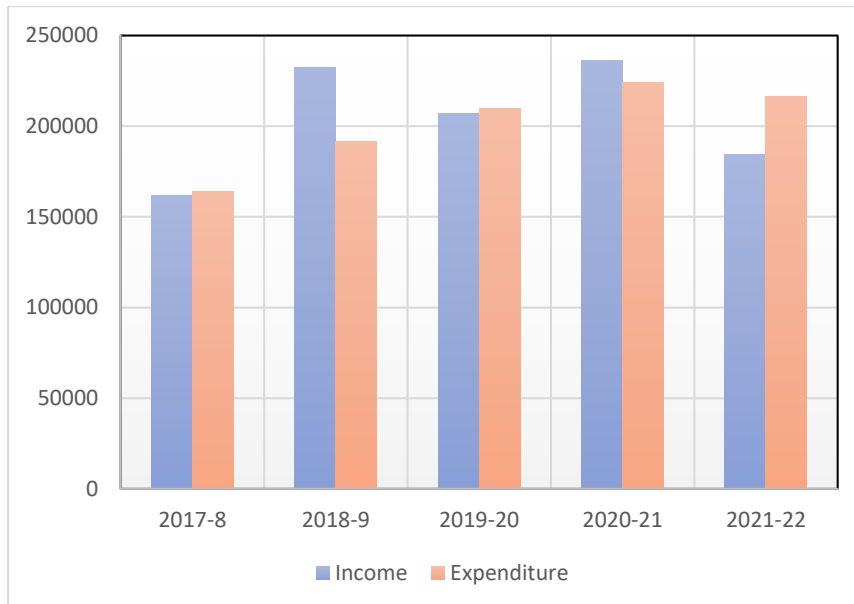
All volunteer online platforms updated with new volunteering opportunities

Infrastructure

- Design and launch of new website.
- Database reviewed and updated to reflect the new services and to enable recording of work in appropriate categories.

FINANCIAL RESOURCES

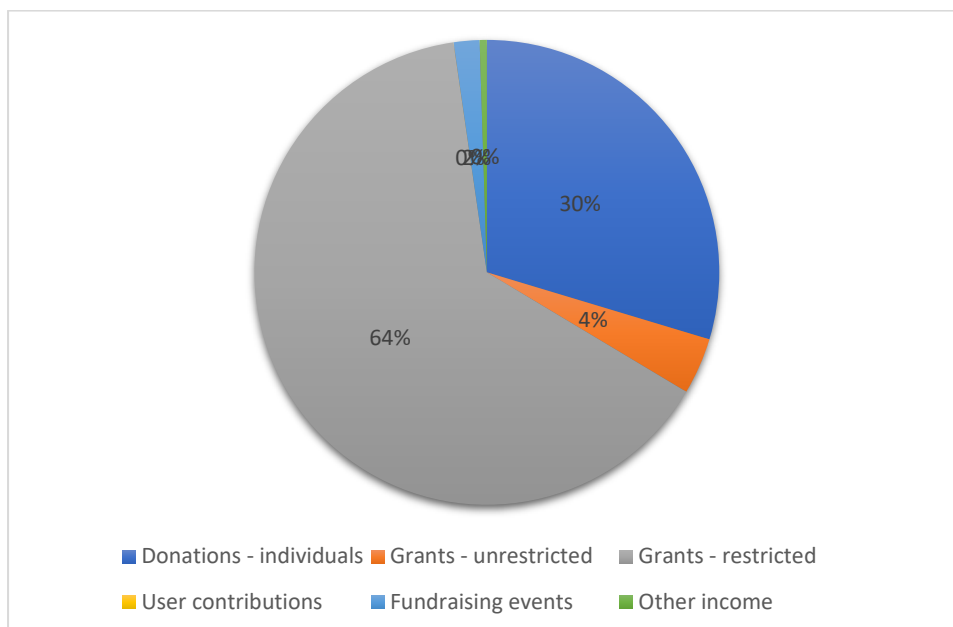
1. Income and Expenditure over the last five years



Income and expenditure have been reasonably stable over the last three to four years. The COVID epidemic led to lower expenditure on social groups (which were inactive over quite a long period), leading to an increase in reserves. This allowed expenditure to remain at a similar level to last year as we relaunched new groups. Income in the year 2020-21 was boosted especially by Archway being selected as charity of the year by Blenheim Palace. The end of a three-year grant from the Oxford Community Foundation can also be seen in the lower level of income last year.

For several years Archway has used an external fundraiser to help us acquire grant income, with marked success. However, although we have had considerable success in winning short-term grants (normally up to 12 months), we have found, along with other charities, the opportunities increasingly competitive especially in acquiring grants for longer periods of funding. A grant from the Big Lottery Foundation has been used over the last 12 months to extend our fundraising work into new sectors, currently focussing especially on the corporate sector. Our 40th anniversary celebrations last summer and other initiatives have led to a number of openings, as well as raising significant income immediately (showing mainly in the accounts for 2022-23).

Main sources of income: 2021-22



Comment on funding sources.

1. National Lottery continued as our main funder as we entered into the third year of a five-year grant supporting social groups and training for our individual support service. Local funders include Oxford Community Foundation's Step Change Fund, Christ's Hospital, Oxford City Council, St Michael and All Saints City Charities & St Aldates Parochial Charity. We benefited from a number of small COVID recovery grants in the latter part of the year and some small grants from other charitable trusts.
2. Donations from organisations. A number of churches give regular and significant donations.
3. Regular donations from individuals. We have a number of donors through regular standing orders or one-off contributions.
4. Event income and income from individuals through, for example, sponsored events, was very low owing to COVID. For the same reasons user contributions were very low. These together are normally worth about £10000

KEY TARGETS 2023-25

(A) Review and re shape service delivery:

1. Continue to develop the Pathway of Support. Priorities here are to ensure each element of the pathway is able to respond to the respective needs of Friends and that the paths of movement between them are understood where this is appropriate:

- Individual Support (Telephone)
- Individual Support (Face-to-Face)
- Supportive Social Group
- Social (including fund raising) events

2. Identify under represented groups and set up an action plan to reach them.

(B) Resourcing

1. Obtain funding to support the initiatives above
2. Obtain funding to support existing work and any additional posts to help us build capacity.
3. Manage existing grants, submitting reports as required.
4. Continue to develop a wider fundraising strategy, including corporate, in liaison with the Archway Fundraiser
5. Ensure that resources are managed effectively and ethically, with environmental sustainability at the core of decision making.

(C) Organisation

1. Provide the capacity in terms of staff, volunteers and other resources to maintain and build the support in response to demand.
2. Review staff roles and responsibilities to align with the developing Pathway of Support.
3. Continue to explore new avenues for volunteer recruitment and develop a strategy to target recruitment of volunteer drivers and Individual support volunteers.
4. Monitor the well-being of staff and volunteers undertaking emotionally demanding work and provide appropriate support and training for all aspects of the service, including Safeguarding.
5. Manage the recruitment and transition of a new CEO to ensure minimum disruption, staff/volunteer retention and in a way which maintains the ethos/culture of the organisation

Communications

1. Develop new promotional material
2. Develop structures to ensure our modes of communication are able to reach those who need and use our services as well as those who work for, volunteer with or support it.