

ANNUAL REVIEW

2013-2014



SUPPORTING
PEOPLE,
ACHIEVING
CHANGE

SHROPSHIRE RCC

ABOUT US

Living in a rural area can be very hard for many Shropshire residents. Services like schools and GP surgeries can be difficult to access, public transport is often limited and living in a remote rural area can often leave people feeling lonely and isolated.

Since 1961 Shropshire RCC has been working with local people to develop and deliver practical solutions to rural problems, and build thriving communities. Every year we work with over 600 voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations. 39 employees and over 150 volunteers deliver our work through a variety of projects:

- We keep older, isolated members of the community in touch with others through community based activities, and by helping them get on-line. We support family carers with information, advice and the chance to meet others for a break from their caring role. Our volunteers support people with sensory impairment, including social groups for people with sight loss.
- We tackle fuel poverty by helping people to understand where energy

efficiency measures would help, and with funding to implement them. Our community buying scheme for heating oil enables people in “off-gas” areas to save money.

- We help people overcome transport barriers through “Wheels to Work” so people are not trapped in a cycle of “no transport, no work, no money, no transport”.
- We build capacity of other organisations to support vulnerable people in their community through training, advice and funding. As an accredited Volunteer Centre we promote social action as a route to employment, social engagement and personal well-being. We help communities to help themselves, with particular support to sustaining village halls.

We are a membership organisation with over 250 members including organisations. We actively seek to work in partnership with others and work closely with policy-makers to ensure that the people of Shropshire have a voice, and that the issues of rural living are understood.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE, ACHIEVING CHANGE

Chair's Annual Report 2013-14

Despite the increasingly difficult financial climate in which the Shropshire Rural Community Council now finds itself operating, I am pleased to report that our charity is continuing to thrive.

Everyone who lives in Shropshire may only be one step away from using one of our diverse services - suddenly becoming a Carer for a loved one; needing transport to work or just needing help to navigate the mass of bureaucracy and legislation which comes with wanting to do something in our local community.

The Report which follows gives more detail of the range of services which SRCC offers but I would like to highlight some of the particularly successful areas of our work in 2013 -14:

Support for Carers remains an essential area of our work, which we continually develop outside of the parameters of our contracted work on behalf of Shropshire Council. A successful funding application to the Triangle Trust means we are able to deliver very valuable training workshops for Carers over a two year period, and Shropshire County PCT have funded an eighteen month pilot project for supporting Carers who are coping with family members recently discharged from hospital.

This year we launched '**The Great Shropshire Bake Off**' a fundraising event which, like the TV show, proved to be very popular and successful. We were very grateful to celebrity chef, Marcus Bean, who hosted the two day event at his cookery school in Atcham.

Our Wise and Well Team organised the first county-wide **Boccia** tournament this year, generously refereed by the students of Shrewsbury College of Arts and Technology. I had the embarrassment of trying my hand at this very difficult sport and the pleasure of

presenting the prizes at the conclusion of a very hotly contested final.

We were delighted to win the contract to develop **GUSTO**, a friendship network for people who are isolated by their circumstances (bereavement, redundancy, retirement) but keen to meet new people and try new activities in a non-threatening and friendly environment. This fits well into our preventative services work.

As winter draws in, I am reminded of the success of our award-winning **Action Against Fuel Poverty** work and would prompt everyone to investigate and advertise the advantages of joining our **SRCC Oil Buying Scheme**.

And this year we launched our excellent new website: www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk which has details of all the projects contained in this report. Do take a look!

Finally, I should like to thank our CEO Julia Baron and her workforce, the army of volunteers, the Board of Trustees and, of course, our generous funders for their ongoing support to ensure that SRCC can continue to serve the people of Shropshire.

Dame Enid Bibby DBE

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

Shropshire's population is an aging one. Currently the average age is 45 years and 21% of residents are over the age of 65 years. The number of 65+ year olds is expected to rise from 61,000 to 82,000 by 2020.

43% of people live in rural areas where social isolation and loneliness are particular issues. The lack of affordable or accessible transport prevents them from staying connected to their communities, which may be made worse by failing eyesight or hearing, nervousness about going out following a fall, or anxiety about crime and anti-social behaviour.

Increasingly, in a digital age, people are being excluded if they are unable or unwilling to get on-line. Poor broadband access in rural areas makes the problem worse. Young people find themselves disadvantaged by not being able to get a job without transport, and fuel poverty is a growing problem across all ages with people needing to make stark choices about whether to "heat or eat".

Our work seeks to help people stay well, healthy and living independently in their own homes, and help young people to stay in their community with transport on loan while they build up experience to get a better job, or save to buy their own transport.



"I remembered that my Extend tutor had said that mobility matters at all times and doing any exercise is better than nothing. Attending the classes worked! It was great having the music, and the company and Sonya (class tutor). I owe you all a big thank you."

letter from Dorothy S, from Wem, following an accident

"The very helpful lady who came to see me was very explicit in answering my questions and also gave me very helpful tips which I was very grateful for. I really think it's a wonderful service and hope that if I need help again, I will be able to ask for it. A very big thank you!!"

Elizabeth, hearing aid user, Newport



CASE STUDY



"Without the scheme my only option would have been taxis, and I wouldn't have had any wages left." Narayan, 25

Narayan moved to Church Stretton with his young family and managed to secure a job in catering at a hotel. He was cycling to and from work – a hilly round trip of 18 miles including journeys late at night, leaving him exhausted and struggling to complete a long shift on his feet. He wanted to save money as quickly as possible so he could buy his own vehicle.

Wheels 2 Work lent Narayan an electric bike and provided advice about purchasing a 125cc motorbike. Once he was in a position to buy, we subsidised the cost of his Compulsory Basic Training. Narayan successfully completed the scheme in two months – a fantastic success!



KEY STATS

- 254 people assisted to tackle fuel poverty through community events
- 14 new volunteers trained as affordable warmth champions.
- National Community Action Award received for our work in tackling fuel poverty.
- £2,885 of Winter Fuel payments donated
- 24 small grants distributed
- 200 people assisted with a moped, bicycle, travel plan or other transport opportunity.
- Moped fleet size increased from 43 to 51
- New, more accessible materials produced for W2W clients to explain the scheme
- W2W received Big Society Award from the Prime Minister at 10 Downing Street.
- 30 volunteers regularly visiting hearing impaired people at home
- Around 750 people attended the See Hear event
- Association Shropshire Exercise teachers launched with 26 paid members
- 9 community safety events, information days and diabetes awareness events attended by 300 people



Get Shropshire Online



Most of us take the technological convenience of the Internet for granted. From online shopping and banking, to keeping in touch with family and friends, it's easy - just a click away.

However, there are an estimated 40,000 people in Shropshire who have never used the Internet and when everything seems to be moving online, they are missing out on numerous benefits and services.

Shropshire RCC launched The Get Shropshire Online Project in 2011 to help people develop basic computer skills and confidence to use the world wide web.

Get Shropshire Online has over 35 volunteers based at community venues across the county offering free one-to-one support to teach beginners how to use email and search the Internet.

Volunteers use an online tool which provides free, easy-to-follow courses to help novices learn IT basics and develop an understanding of how the Internet can help them save money, access services, find a job, book a holiday etc.



Oil Buying Scheme



Our oil buying scheme continues to grow and has become the largest community oil buying scheme in Shropshire. By the end of March we had 658 members on the scheme including 45 locally based co-ordinators. Each month people are given the opportunity to purchase oil and by collating the orders, the purchasing power is significantly enhanced. People who benefit most from the scheme are those who buy small amounts of oil (500 litres) as they have the least negotiating power as individuals, and we have helped people make substantial savings. We have recently entered into an arrangement to also help LPG customers to switch suppliers for cheaper prices

A family carer provides unpaid care and support to a family member, partner, relative or friend, who couldn't manage without their help. Carers give vital assistance with everyday tasks such as dressing, bathing, and eating.

Any of us could become a carer at any time. A family member having a fall, or a stroke, developing Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, suddenly becomes dependent. A car accident leaves someone paralysed. Such events mean that, without warning the life of someone else changes forever when they become a carer.

In Shropshire, 7,379 people provide 50 hours or more of care to another person, every week. These Carers put their lives 'on hold', unable to carry on working or enjoying social activities because of their caring role. Family income is often greatly reduced and getting respite can be difficult, especially in rural areas. Holidays, an evening out or even Christmas shopping become insurmountable problems. Our service has been supporting family carers in Shropshire for over 15 years.

I really enjoy talking to other carers and the Support Worker at the "Coffee and chat" at the Buttermarket. It's a lovely break. The art class once a month is also great, getting involved in something completely different. Many thanks for the chance to do it.

Brenda, Carer, Market Drayton

I contacted the Support line and spoke to Angela who listened, was calm, reassuring, and realised the urgency of the situation. She was extremely pro-active, offered suggestions and supported me through a very difficult period.

Heather, Carer, Shrewsbury

CASE STUDY

Carrie lives with her elderly mother, Meg, who has some signs of memory loss. Meg was admitted to hospital after a fall and, following admission, her condition deteriorated due to an infection.

Carrie was very worried about Meg and wanted to know what was happening. She told ward staff about her mother's care needs but felt she was not being heard, and made a formal complaint. The impact on Carrie's mental health was noticeable. She became increasingly upset, angry and unable to cope.

Carrie needed to receive information and advice in language she could understand. I advocated for Carrie with the health and social care team, explaining Carrie was finding the situation traumatic and was concerned for her mother. I advised Carrie to write things down and I ensured she was kept informed. Carrie felt more confident to deal with the hospital, and I linked her into continuing support from the Carers Support Service for when Meg was discharged.

Mandy (Carer's Support Worker)



THIS IS A STOCK PHOTO

Carers Appeal



Our fundraising Team have had a busy year and we are very grateful for all the support received. The Great Shropshire Bake Off was a huge success with over 600 people and 80 baking entries and we raised almost £4,000 from the event. The Inner Wheel of Shrewsbury nominated the appeal to be their Charity of the Year and presented us with a cheque for £1,650. Halls Holdings donated £3,000, and we had support from Barclays Bank too. St Eata's Church Atcham auctioned donations from 40 parishioners of fresh produce, jams and preserves which raised £460 and at St Mary's Church, Shrewsbury, a trio of choirs added a further £1,000 from a sell-out concert. Coffee for Carers events swelled the appeal further. During the year, funds raised paid for respite trips and training for carers.

I-Care Card



Many carers face financial hardship as result of their caring role, either reducing their working hours or giving up work completely. There might also be additional costs such as heating or equipment costs to bear. In April 2013 we launched our I-Care Card

Scheme to help carers save money with the support of nearly 50 businesses across Shropshire offering a range of discounts, or special "2 for the price of 1" deals. Joining is simple, and free, and just requires a passport photo and a registration form. The card is valid for three years as long as the cardholder remains a carer.

Over 150 carers have already joined the scheme, making good use of their I-Care Card to go to the cinema or on a boat trip, having a break at Tickwood Care Farm, or just getting a discount on a hair treatment or meal out.



• **Our Carers Rights Day with a national speaker from the Carers Trust was well received with over 40 carers attending.**

• **A grant from the Triangle 1949 Trust paid for 10 training workshops in Moving & Handling; Managing stress and anxiety; Understanding Dementia; Emergency & Future planning.**

• **Funding from Shropshire County PCT enabled us to create a new Support Worker post based at the Royal Shrewsbury Hospital. In 12 months Mandy directed 139 referrals, including 89 carers not previously known to RCC Carers Service**

• **Carers Support Workers organised 2 canal trips, 2 carers lunches, 4 coach trips, 2 pamper mornings, 11 coffee and chat sessions/drop in sessions, 5 fly fishing groups, 11 support groups and a walking group, most of them funded by the Carers Appeal**

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

OUR
WORK
WITH
CARERS

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROUPS

Shropshire RCC provides support to help organisations and groups to build communities, particularly in rural areas, where access to facilities are scarce.

Support begins by encouraging members of the community to volunteer their time. We hold drop-in sessions to recruit new volunteers, using different locations across Southern and Central Shropshire.

We continue to receive a high volume of enquiries for social enterprise support during the year, including existing organisations keen to develop further, and new entrepreneurs seeking to establish a business that trades for social purpose.

Funding for small scale project work is extremely valuable but increasingly hard for groups to find. We distribute funds on behalf of other bodies for whom the cost of administering small targeted grants would be prohibitive. Unsuccessful applicants are signposted to our funding advice service and assisted to find funding from other sources. Our community buildings advisory service provides advice, support, training and assistance to all community run facilities.

CASE STUDY



Students from Ludlow College came to the aid of the Craven Arms community gardening project Grow, Cook and Share by rolling up their sleeves and getting the ground ready for planting. Grow, Cook and Share encourages communities to grow their own food, cook it themselves and share their knowledge and excess produce by providing free gardening and cookery training to local residents.

Shropshire RCC Volunteering Outreach Officer Clive Leworthy helped them organise the volunteering project which included clearing the ground of weeds and debris, preparing beds, building raised beds and litter picking. Most hadn't done this type of work before but soon got into the swing and picked up a number of new skills as a result.

"Some students have low aspirations for their future and positive experiences like this can make a real difference."

Stuart Edwards (Ludlow College tutor).





KEY STATS

- 1100 volunteering enquiries handled
- In year, 25 drop in sessions for volunteers took place using 13 different locations
- During volunteers week, 3 roadshows took place across the county
- Shropshire RCC chosen as one of five pilot sites for national programme of volunteering in care homes.
- 44 enterprises supported
- 46 community buildings given in-depth support
- 28 community led plan groups have received support April-March.
- 14 community led plan groups have purchased consultancy services from Shropshire RCC

Thank you very much for your encouragement and support through this [Plan process]. It came at a critical point in the development and was very important and influential. I wish you and the RCC continued good progress.

MJ Hurley – Chair, Neen Savage
Community Led Plan Steering Group

Great course tutor who was able to impart information in such a way as to make it interesting and informative and keen to include all participants in discussions.

Pauline, course participant on Roles and Responsibilities of Charity Trustees



Advisory Service

Our Community Buildings Advisory Service provides advice, support, and assistance to any buildings owned or managed by community groups. Despite reduced capacity, this year 46 organisations were helped with in-depth enquiries (compared with 42 last year).

Village halls/community facilities can access support including:

- Monthly e-bulletins keeping them up to date with changes to legislation, funding opportunities and governance issues
- Handling complex issues such as constitutional changes, and resolving issues between trustees
- Taking on an asset within their community for the first time.

Healthwatch

Following a successful tender, Shropshire RCC set up Healthwatch Shropshire (HWS) as a wholly owned subsidiary charity with its own Board and staff. HWS is based at the Creative Quarter and Shropshire RCC continues to provide back office functions.

HWS has been set up to be the county's independent consumer champion for health and social care. HWS gathers information and opinions from patients, carers, service users and the wider public about health and social care services across Shropshire, then makes sure those views are used to improve services.

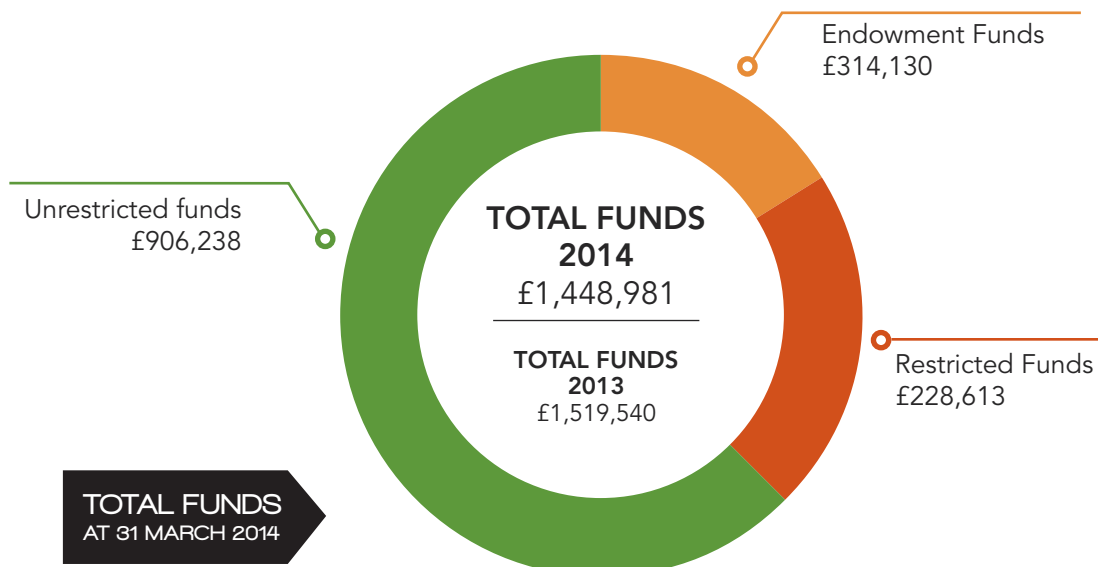
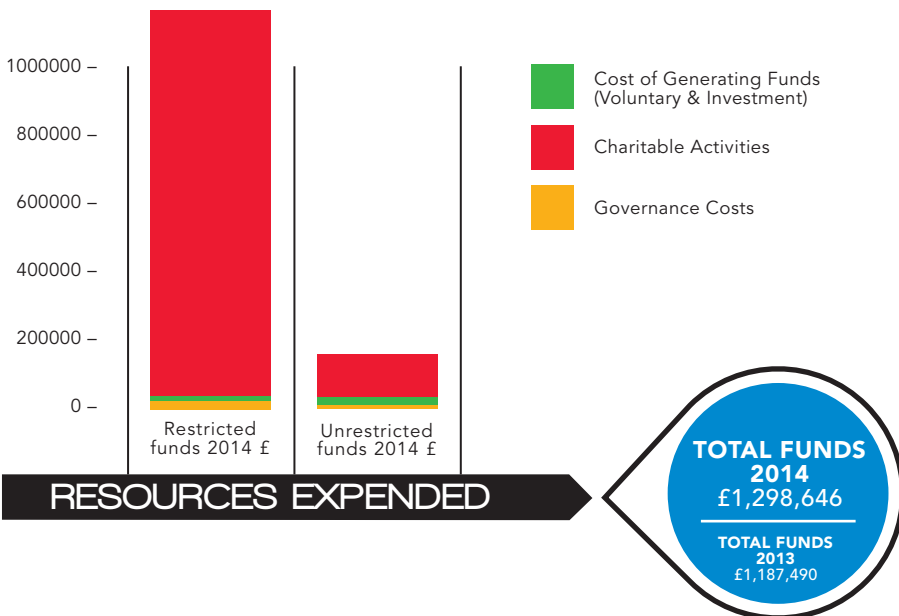
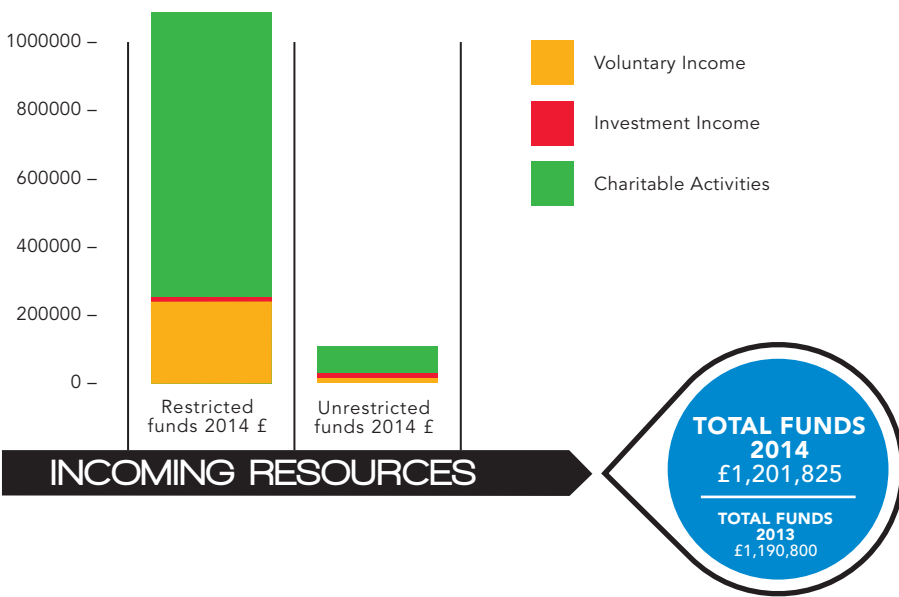
HWS had an exciting first year where it became well established in the local and regional health and social care structures, and developed a strong team of trained volunteers supporting the work. Looking forward, two major pieces of work will be around mental health provision and NHS FutureFit.

For more information, see the website:
www.healthwatchshropshire.co.uk

healthwatch
Shropshire



Statement of Financial Activities (including an income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2014)





Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 March 2014 (The Community Council of Shropshire and Healthwatch Shropshire)

	2014		2013	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets		752,640		765,672
Investments		624,005		585,735
		1,376,645		1,351,407
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	69,842		135,215	
Cash at bank and in hand	454,522		554,836	
	524,364		690,051	
CREDITORS:				
amounts falling due within one year	(143,057)		(203,141)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		381,307		486,910
TOTAL ASSETS				
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,757,952		1,838,317
CREDITORS:				
amounts falling due after more than one year		(308,971)		(319,297)
NET ASSETS		1,448,981		1,519,020
CHARITY FUNDS				
Endowment funds		314,130		288,468
Restricted funds:				
Restricted funds	202,654		230,910	
Restricted funds – Healthwatch Shropshire	25,959		–	
Total restricted funds		228,613		230,910
Unrestricted funds		906,238		999,642
TOTAL FUNDS		1,448,981		1,519,020

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 2nd October 2014 and signed on their behalf, by
Dame Enid Bibby

The Community Council of Shropshire is a company limited by guarantee. Registration number 4652487.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING CHANGE

We would like to thank the following whose grants, donations, fundraising, sponsorship and "gifts-in-kind" have financed our work this year:

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England)

AICO Ltd

Audiology Services, Shrewsbury & Telford
Hospitals NHS Trust

Balfours LLP

Barclays Bank

Big Lottery Fund

Brewin Dolphin

Brompton Cookery School

Calor Gas Limited

Carl Jones Design

Department of Energy & Climate Change

Department for Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs

Department for Transport – Local Sustainable
Transport Fund

European Regional Development Fund

The Foundation for Social Improvement

Halls Holdings

Healthwatch Shropshire

High Sheriff of Shropshire (Legal Service
collection)

Hodnet Parish Council

Inner Wheel Club Shrewsbury

Jigsaw Sound Choral Group

Mr and Mrs C Lillis

Millichope Foundation

Morris Care

National Association for Community and
Voluntary Action

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

National Energy Action

NIACE Digital Funding

OM Architects

Roy Fletcher Charitable Trust

Salop Leisure

Sevenside Housing

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Shropshire Council

Shropshire Masonic Charitable Association

Sight Loss Shropshire

St. Eata's Church, Atcham

Strutt & Parker

Telford & Wrekin Council

Telford College of Arts & Technology

Tents & Marquees Ltd

Tinder Foundation

Triangle Trust

Un Ltd (Foundation for Social Enterprises)

Waitrose Community Matters

Westcroft Trust

WM Griffiths Farms

We would like to say a special thank you to those individuals who have donated or raised funds for our Shropshire Grassroots Endowment Fund, Shropshire RCC Carers Appeal and Shropshire Hearing Support Service Appeal.

We would also like to thank those individuals who donated their winter fuel payments to our "Winter Warmth" grant fund for individuals in fuel poverty.

We are grateful for the continuing support of our members, community groups, parish and town councils, village hall committees and other individuals and groups interested in our work.



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