



# The Monday Night Club

Registered Charity no: 1160646

## Annual Report

1 November 2019 - 31 October 2020

### Chair's Report

#### Structure, Governance and Management

The Monday Night Club is constituted as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation and is governed by constitution. The CIO is a registered charity with The Charity Commission of England and Wales.

The Trustees on 31<sup>st</sup> October 2020 were:

Miss Laura Gill, Chair

Mr Richard Kenyon, Treasurer

Ms Hannah Phillips

Mr Max Dean

Ms Rachel Betteridge, appointed 14<sup>th</sup> July 2020

Mr Stephen Gipson, appointed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Mr Ashanti Brazier Olatunde, appointed 20<sup>th</sup> October 2020

Helen Gill resigned as a Trustee and Treasurer on 5<sup>th</sup> May 2020 to take up the position of Chief Executive Officer.

#### Charitable Objectives

To promote social inclusion for the public benefit by preventing people from becoming socially excluded, relieving the needs of those people who are socially excluded and assisting them to integrate into society through the provision of recreational and leisure activities and support to live a more independent life.

For the purpose of this clause 'socially excluded' means being excluded from society, or parts of society, as a result of being a member of a socially and economically deprived community but specifically for young people and adults with learning disabilities and autistic spectrum disorders in Worcestershire.

#### Our Vision

To live in a society where people with learning disabilities and / or autism are treated equally, given respect, recognised for their achievements and welcomed everywhere in the community.

## **Our Mission**

To provide social and recreational activities for people with learning disabilities and / or autism, aiming to improve their health and well-being, and support them to lead more independent lives.

## **Core Values**

Our core values are Respect, Dignity, Health, Happiness, Inclusion and Recognition.

These values are embedded in the four themes we build on to achieve our objectives and our Vision.

1. We respect all our members, staff and volunteers as individuals. We respect their choices, beliefs and values and uphold their Human Rights.
2. We strive to improve the health and happiness of our members, staff and volunteers in everything we do. Our activities are designed to improve physical and mental health and promote healthy lifestyles.
3. We listen to and inform our members. We listen to what they want and involve them in future planning. We communicate with them in ways they understand, adhering to the Accessible Information Standard, and provide any communication support they need.
4. We recognise and reward achievement. We promote the charity in the public domain and highlight the successes and achievements of our members and volunteers. We reward individual and group success.

## **Policies and Procedures**

Copies of all MNC Policies and Procedures can be downloaded from our website. The adoption and review of policies is an on-going duty of the Board.

Our bank account is with the Charities Aid Foundation Bank and its operation is governed by our Financial Policies and Procedures.

Risk assessments are carried out for all activities in accordance with our Employers Liability Insurance. We have separate insurances to cover disco equipment, the mobile disco and the football club.

## **2019-20**

### **The Year in Review**

The first four months of this financial year, November 2019 – February 2020, were busy and active with many social occasions and events. Our new venue, Worcester Arts Workshop, enabled us to add new activities to our programme of events. Attendance was steadily growing, and appreciation was consistently strong. We enjoyed live entertainment, discos, dance fitness, karaoke nights, a drumming workshop, movie nights, our Christmas Party and

Valentine's Day party. Our annual award ceremony, the Teddy Awards, took place with more nominees and awards given than ever before. We arranged a trip to the Pantomime at the Swan Theatre for all our members in January.

We joined community activities with Vamos Central drama group, Worcester Cathedral Christmas Tree Festival and the first Worcester Light Night Festival. We had pottery workshops at Worcester Arts Workshop and our tree for the Christmas Tree Festival was hung with ceramic decorations, made by us.

## **March 2020**

### **The Coronavirus Pandemic and its Impact on the Club**

As February turned to March, the realisation that we were at the beginning of what could be a serious pandemic was beginning to take hold. We knew that we could no longer continue to meet and keep everyone safe. We held our last disco on March 16<sup>th</sup> and lockdown started on March 23<sup>rd</sup>.

We were very aware that our members would be seriously affected by the lack of social contact and that we could not just abandon them. We had to change our plans and respond quickly to the changing circumstances without losing sight of our mission to prevent isolation and loneliness. Almost immediately our Chair took to social media and hosted live sessions every evening to keep our members and volunteers in touch and informed in an accessible way. The live sessions included news and information, art and craft projects, video tutorials, cooking demonstrations, well-being and fitness advice, competitions and quizzes, football challenge videos and friendly chat.

From mid-March to June, we hosted 107 hours of live social media, with 23,500 minutes of MNC TV viewed. We had over 12,000 social media post engagements, posting 60–75 posts each month to 450 followers.

We also connected two members to the internet (lending mobile Wi-Fi devices and iPads) sent prizes, activity ideas and useful gifts to members, made daily phone calls and video calls, gave counselling for anxiety and mental health support, and raised funds.

Our income from activities had ceased, but so had many of our outgoings, for example venue hire and paying sessional staff. We were in a stable financial position.

### **New Directions and Wider Horizons**

When lockdown finished in the summer, and holding a weekly disco again was impossible with social distancing, we had to think of other ways to support our members and relieve their loneliness and isolation. During July, August and September we walked together on Monday evenings, holding photography competitions and art projects, with conversation and fun. From October we walked on Saturday mornings. Altogether we have had 20 MNC walks and 196 walks have been taken by MNC members and volunteers.

In August we began small group drumming sessions with Drumlove. Nine 2-hour drumming sessions have now taken place with 100 participants. In October we spent an enjoyable evening tenpin bowling and had a meal out together for Halloween.

We started online groups and activities, including the MNC Art Club, and a #HappyConfidentMe group. These will be continued over the winter months. In September we were awarded a Covid response grant from The National Lottery Community Fund to fund six months of small group activities — a project called 'Circles of Support'.

During this time, we learned that Worcester Arts Workshop was going to close permanently.

### **Our Football Club**

The training of the team is supported by Worcestershire FA and Disability Sport Worcester. We belong to the Three Counties Ability Counts League, a disability football league, and our two teams played in tournaments in Hereford, Telford and Worcester in the winter of 2019-20. Once again, we achieved FA Charter Standard Adult Club status for this season.

When lockdown began in March all football activities had to stop.

We started training again on 25th June, following FA Covid-safety guidelines. We trained in small groups of five, each with a coach. Sessions took place outdoors in a park as the sports centres were still closed. Everyone had a health check and stayed at least 2m apart from each other. We were able to return to St Johns Sports Centre in September and train in larger groups.

One of our women players is taking part in the FA Lionesses course to be trained as a FA Level 1 coach and referee, but this has been paused. She hopes to continue the course online.

### **Community Connections**

We have actively sought collaboration with Worcester Arts Workshop, Worcester Snoezelen, Speakeasy NOW, Disability Sport Worcester, Worcestershire FA, Malvern Cube, Vamos Theatre, The Swan Theatre and Worcester Live, Wildgoose Rural Training, Worcester Festivals and Worcester Cathedral. Members took part in campaigns — 'The Wednesday Wave' waving to care home residents and an awareness-raising campaign about Hate Crime on social media.

### **Income and Expenditure**

Our funds are generated by grants, donations and entrance fees. Our total income for the year was £49,340.

We benefitted from a restricted grant from the #iwill Fund of £5,000 to develop younger volunteers. We also received a donation from the Co-op Communities Fund for the Football Club of £6,700 and a grant from the Baily Thomas Fund towards running costs of £2,000.

We received a further development grant from a private individual of £20,000 plus Gift Aid. This will help to fund the employment of a CEO (part-time) for three years and we employed a CEO from May 2020.

The greatest proportion of our funds was spent on our activities, sessional staff, entertainment, football training costs and venue hire. For the first time this year we now have staff costs. There were small costs for volunteers' expenses, accountancy and office expenses. Our total expenditure for the year was £20,791.

The net income at the end of the year was £28,549.

We have £57,051 in total funds at the end of the financial year.

## **Outcomes**

This year we have focussed on training, mentoring and developing younger volunteers in our project 'Step Up', funded by the #iwill Fund.

Our members include young care leavers, who may have mild learning disabilities and behavioural challenges. They are not supported by the social care adult services and are learning to live independently, on very low incomes, some with no support at all. We try to make them feel a valued part of our community and they are often chosen as volunteers.

The coronavirus pandemic has enabled us to spend more time with each volunteer individually. They will be a very valuable resource when the club gets back to normal activities. We have found that, once given responsibility, these young people are very dedicated and loyal volunteers. They have a sense of ownership of our club and our motto, Run By Us, For Us.

Strong bonds of friendship have formed amongst the members and are continued outside the club. This is particularly important to learning disabled and autistic people who find it difficult to make, and keep, friends and often feel socially excluded and isolated. Their parents, carers and families also benefit by mutual support and shared experiences during the pandemic.

However, it was difficult to keep in touch with some members and their families during the period of lockdown – we are not in regular touch with about one quarter of our members. They may find technology challenging, have no reliable internet connections or devices, or have limited verbal communication. We will be striving to reconnect with them as soon as it is possible to be physically together.

The football club continues to improve the health and well-being outcomes for our members, when we were able to play. However significant changes to their mental health have been observed when training was not possible.

## **Looking Forward**

The Monday Night Club will continue to arrange social and sporting opportunities and events for adults with learning disabilities and autism in Worcestershire. We will continue to uphold our values of Respect, Dignity, Health, Happiness, Inclusion and Recognition.

In 2021 we will celebrate our 10th birthday and we plan to expand the opportunities we offer to include Saturday Kitchen, a weekly healthy living café, a multi-sports club, an art and craft club and weekend away trips for small groups. We have found a new venue for discos and parties and a venue for music workshops. And we cannot wait to put on our annual 10<sup>th</sup> anniversary Talent Show, at the Swan Theatre, sadly postponed this year.

We want to continue to grow, to offer more activities, forge more links with the wider community and to be a positive and supportive influence on as many people with learning disabilities and / or autism as possible in the coming year.

Signed

-----

Laura Gill

Chair, The Monday Night Club Trustees  
January 2021