

The Monday Night Club

Chair's Report 2023–2024

Theme: Anything But Ordinary

Introduction

This year our theme has been **Anything But Ordinary** – and what an extraordinary year it's been. Every week, our members continue to amaze us with their creativity, courage and energy.

We are proud to continue offering the kind of activities that are so often missing for adults with learning disabilities – especially in the evenings and at weekends. This year we've grown, expanded our projects, and celebrated huge achievements by our members. We've also faced challenges, particularly with funding, but we are determined to keep going and to keep developing.

Objectives and Activities (Our Purpose)

The Monday Night Club exists to improve the lives of people with learning disabilities and/or autism by:

- Offering regular social, sporting, creative and healthy living activities
- Promoting confidence, friendship, wellbeing and community involvement
- Creating opportunities for volunteering, skills development and leadership
- Challenging stereotypes and raising expectations in wider society

Our weekly programme of activities is co-produced with our members and designed to be welcoming, inclusive and fun.

Achievements and Performance (Highlights of the Year)

1. Monday Nights

Monday nights are getting busier than ever – we now have over **100 people attending every week**, enjoying discos, live entertainers, karaoke nights, dancing, African drumming, musical theatre workshops and celebrations.

2. MNC Saturday Kitchen

As part of our **National Lottery Community Fund** project with C&T, we filmed **eleven of**

our favourite healthy recipes to share online. This new resource will help more people with learning disabilities eat well and live healthier lives.

We also visited **Bransford Community Farm** for a wonderful day of planting, harvesting and cooking with vegetables and produce from the farm. This visit inspired the launch of a new project, planned for summer 2025.

3. Wednesday Sports Club and MNC Football

Our Wednesday Sports Club continues at Christopher Whitehead School, with a wide variety of inclusive games and sports, led by a professional multi-sports coach.

Thanks to a **Sported grant**, we purchased new badminton equipment. We also made **six summer trips to Boughton Park Lawn Tennis Club**, part-funded by them.

Our football teams had an amazing year!

- **MNC Blues** won the Three Counties League knockout tournament in May.
- In June, at Evesham United's Disability Tournament, our **MNC Red** team won every match and took home the trophy – beating eight other Midlands teams! Our goalkeeper, Matthew, didn't concede a single goal.

4. Special Projects

- Our painted bird was featured in the **Severn Birds of Croome** Christmas trail at NT Croome
- We launched a new **public artwork** on Worcester Plinth
- Our creative project **Anything But Ordinary** ran workshops and events across the year
- We launched the **Taste Touch Smell Trail** – now permanently installed at the Museum of Royal Worcester
- We developed **Let's Walk Worcestershire** – 24 walking and listening experiences across the county
- Our **4th Summer Art Exhibition** celebrated the talent of our members

5. Volunteer and Leadership Development

Through our **Lead Together** programme, we delivered training and mentoring, including:

- **A Volunteers Away Day**
- An **Emergency First Aid at Work course**
- Training on key policies and procedures, such as fire evacuation, health and safety, confidentiality and anti-bullying

Three of our members received **High Sheriff Awards** for Volunteering this year – a huge achievement.

6. Community Events and Celebrations

We ran **two successful day trips**, our **Annual Awards ceremony**, **theatre trips**, and our own **Talent Show** and **Sports Day**, all of which were well attended and full of joy.

We received two wonderful testimonials from significant supporters after their visits to us during the year. Firstly, from the Lord Lieutenant of Worcestershire, Beatrice Grant;
'The Club has such a happy feel to it and I can see why it is loved and enjoyed by so many. You allow the adults with learning disabilities and autism to be able to socialise in a safe place with much fun and music.'

And secondly from The High Sheriff of Worcestershire, Charles Moyle, after watching our Talent Show;
'The sheer life-enhancing power of what you are doing at the MNC just comes to life when I heard stories of A.... being basically mute only a short time ago – and T & M and their story....just extraordinary; there are so many! Well done Helen and Laura for all you've achieved. You have created such an immensely special organisation, a centre of friendship and belonging, it really is so incredibly touching.'

Financial Review

Summary of income and expenditure

Our total income for the year was £44,606. We received grants from The National Lottery Community Fund, Sported, Bransford Trust and the High Sheriff's Fund. We also received several generous donations from private donors. This year we generated £10,271 from our activities.

Expenses incurred include the costs of putting on our activities, staff and office costs, training, venue hire, sessional staff, marketing and insurance. Our total expenditure for the year was £57,380.

The net income at the end of the year was – £12,774. We have £23,612 in total funds at the end of the financial year.

Our reserves policy states: The amount held in the Reserves bank account should be equal to, or greater than, the amount required to continue core activities and cover running costs for six months with no further funding.

So, we will start this next year with a small financial risk, but we are confident that the grant applications already applied for, and interim payments due, will soon bring in more funds. The trustees review the financial position at every meeting and can take quick action to reduce costs.

Structure, Governance and Management

The Monday Night Club is a registered charity governed by a board of trustees. Day-to-day operations are led by the CEO, with support from volunteers, sessional workers and project leaders.

We are proud of how much we achieve with a small team: currently just two part-time staff members. We rely on grants, donations and the dedication of our volunteers and supporters to keep delivering and growing our work.

Challenges and Resilience

Like all small charities, we are facing increasing difficulty raising funds. With only two part-time staff running everything, the workload is intense.

However, thanks to funds carried over from previous years, we ended 2023–24 in a **comfortable financial position**.

Our CEO will now focus on **fundraising and grant applications** to secure our future activities. Despite the challenges, we are resilient – and committed to continuing our work for the community we serve.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

None of this would be possible without the dedication of our volunteers, trustees, and staff team. I'd like to thank:

- Our **brilliant members**, who inspire us every day
 - Our **sessional workers and project leaders**, who deliver engaging and inclusive activities
 - Our **funders and donors** – your support is vital and deeply appreciated
 - Our **partner organisations and venues** – thank you for working with us
 - Our **volunteers, carers and families**
 - And the **support companies** that bring the people they care for to our activities – thank you for investing in our work
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Plans for Future Periods (Looking Ahead)

Our theme for 2025 is **Assume That I Can**.

Low expectations create barriers for people with learning disabilities and/or autism. These barriers limit opportunities – in school, at work, in friendships and in life.

Assume That I Can is a challenge to those low expectations. It's about believing in potential, raising aspirations and opening doors.

Assume That I Can – and Maybe I Will!

Next year, we are planning a new Saturday project, **Farm to Fork**, working more closely with Bransford Community Farm. We are currently applying for funding to make this happen.

We also look forward to **Year 3 of our National Lottery Community Fund project**, with a focus on sport and digital engagement – including a new digital activity co-produced with our creative partners, **C&T**.

Signed:

Laura Gill
Chair of Trustees
The Monday Night Club

Date: