



# Annual Report 2022-2023

# Chris Greenhill

## Chair



In some ways you can see our financial challenge during the year as both negative and positive – negative in that there is ever greater competition for fewer grants, and positive that we have a brilliant team headed by Sharon that has been successful in securing funding for the new and existing projects you will see reported on in this publication, a highlight being National Lottery’s award of a three year grant for Community Builder. Complementing the number of successful bids has been the nature of them. All have been won based on a full cost recovery model, ensuring projects are properly funded.

The bottom line that came from this effort is we secured more income than we budgeted for in the year and delivered a very welcome surplus at year end. However, to improve our sustainability, we have also been looking at ways of diversifying our income streams. Consultancy is one area where we believe we can still make a real difference and be funded by contracts rather than grant income. The year saw us start to establish our credentials in this area and we will continue to explore this approach along with other possibilities.

Whilst important, securing income is not why we are here – although our reputation for quality and effectiveness is the foundation for our bidding success.

As a Harlow-focussed charity our goal is to design and deliver community projects that fill gaps in local voluntary sector provision. Consequently, our projects are diverse and subject to change over time, reflecting the evolving needs of the Harlow community. This means we have to be innovative and resourceful and, increasingly, work with others to achieve the best outcomes. Our close working relationship with other Harlow VCSE organisations continues to good effect through projects such as the Harlow Community Hub, as does the work with partners outside of the town in our West Essex consortium, WECAN.

This report marks the end of a 20-year term during which time I have been either chair or vice chair. The work of the whole Rainbow team has been a constant source of pride and it’s been hugely rewarding to work with three superb CEOs in Jackie, Jemma, and Sharon. I feel privileged to have been associated with our wonderful charity and will continue to support it with my fellow trustees. Thank you to all the Rainbow ‘family’!

We are so incredibly lucky at Rainbow Services to have a fantastic team of staff and volunteers. Every day they go above and beyond to help individuals and families in Harlow, and I would like to send a huge heartfelt thank you to each and every one of them. Their passion, commitment and professionalism is what makes Rainbow Services the success that it is, and I am incredibly proud to work with all of them.

I also want to thank our wonderful funders, both statutory and non-statutory, without their support none of the work detailed in this report would have been possible. Thank you!



Throughout the year we have worked hard on making Rainbow Services as financially sustainable as possible, as we face unprecedented pressures on funding, with record levels of applications for each fund, and the number of funding opportunities declining. We have successfully set up full cost recovery funding portfolios for some of our projects and will continue to build on this with the remaining projects, with an ambition to move towards medium to long term funding.

To help with the sustainability of Rainbow Services, we are really proud to have increased our consultancy offer this year, using our unique knowledge of the local community and extensive networks, to help ensure that everyone's voice is heard during important consultations such as those for Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

We are so pleased to be part of a thriving voluntary sector in Harlow and are proud of the part we play in that as the local infrastructure support service, providing information, networking opportunities, development and 1:1 support for all not for profits.

Our projects have continued to develop and grow, despite the funding pressures. The Harlow Community Hub is now seen as an exemplar for community partnership and service delivery. Our Youth Project has been described by the Harlow Community Policing Team as "amazing", the Community Builder project gains new members and clubs each month offering a lifeline to Harlow seniors, and in terms of new projects, we are incredibly proud to have launched Our Health Matters and the new Rainbow Family Contact Centre.

We are all very proud of what has been achieved this year, and once again I would like to thank everyone who helped make that possible.

# Infrastructure

Rainbow Services supports voluntary and community organisations within Harlow through a range of infrastructure services and practical facilities, including:

- **The Rainbow Centre:** office space, hot desking, meeting room hire, PAT testing and Disclosure and Barring Services, plus reception and postal address services for hire,
- **Advice and Guidance:** one to one guidance on governance and funding issues, etc,
- **Representation:** representing the sector on over 30 regular forums,
- **Ebulletin:** a free weekly ebulletin containing local and national news, funding opportunities and access to workshops and training,
- **Voluntary Sector Forum:** a quarterly forum for our affiliates to meet together, have access to speakers who can share information relevant to the sector and the opportunity to network with colleagues from all sectors.

We have continued to help a number of new organisations to set up during this year and supported other organisations with guidance and advice around funding, which has been a real issue for some, as funding opportunities continue to decline.

Our Voluntary Sector Forums became “in person” events again and have been very successful this year. In June, we held the event at the Latton Bush Centre, when our speaker was from Harlow Health Centres Trust. In September, we went to Harlow Fire Station with Essex Community Foundation. In December, the event was held at Parndon Mill, and in March, we went to the Learning Centre in Harlow Town Park, with our speaker representing Harlow Council’s Town Park volunteer team. At each event, time is allocated to networking, which our affiliates report is very useful!

In August 2022, we held our first Voluntary Sector public facing event in the Watergardens in Harlow. All local organisations delivering services in the area were invited to come along and promote their services to the public and have the opportunity to talk to potential service users face to face. It was a fantastic day, and the weather was kind! We definitely want to make this an annual event!

**281** Ebulletin Subscribers

**100** Volunteers supported

**100** DBS checks carried out

**30** Networks attended to represent the sector

**21** VCSE groups provided with advice and guidance



*‘Rainbow Services have been an absolute godsend for Butterfly Effect WELLbeing. Every step of the way I have asked for help and support and they have always been there to assist and if they have not been able to help with a certain something, they will certainly point me in the right direction and introduce me to the relevant people. We definitely could not have got as far as we have without them. They have been our lifeline.’*

**Angie, Butterfly Effect WELLbeing**

# Community Builder

Wow what a Year. We achieved everything that we set out to achieve and so much more!

We are now running twenty-two weekly social groups, three of which are specifically Dementia Friendly, although open to all. They are more structured than other clubs for repetition and provoking memories, singing for the brain and seated exercise. One takes place in the award-winning Town Park, offering choices for connecting with Nature.

We have hosted four Safe & Social events with speakers in the morning providing essential information to keep our older people safe, well, and independent in their own homes for as long as possible. This was followed by a Fish & Chip lunch, and live entertainment in the afternoon.

We have held thirteen other events in this reporting period, from afternoon teas, boat trips on the river Stort, a trip to Southend and Clacton-on-Sea, Silver Sunday, Rochester Christmas Market, Christmas Parties, and a Valentines afternoon tea, The Great Get Together and a Jubilee Celebration to name a few.

We also ran a 12-week programme of strength-based exercises, and plan to run another programme later in the year. Demand far out ways supply and we are recruiting more volunteers so that we can start more weekly clubs.

As well as the clubs for our seniors, we have started a monthly social group for Neurodivergent Adults. This seems to be growing month on month with an average of 20 attendees each month.

**975** Beneficiaries

**60** Volunteers

**22** Weekly clubs

**17** Day trips & Events



# Our Health Matters

This project is part of National Programme to develop and support community-based action on healthcare inequalities. The programme recruits community connector volunteers whose role it is to assist in driving improvement in four of the five clinical areas for the *Core20PLUS* population.

Our work takes place in Harlow's Toddbrook and Staple Tye Wards and Alderton and Paternoster in Epping Forest. Our focus is those with Learning Disabilities, Mental Health Illness, Chronic Respiratory Disease, Early Cancer Diagnosis and Hypertension, and work with the Gypsy, Roma Travelling Community.

The project is about listening, involving and working with the community to co-design programme with a focus on our chosen *Core20Plus5* priorities; being the bridge between communities, link workers and health and care services to raise awareness, increase knowledge, understanding and signposting to health and care services.

*'It is so nice to finally be listened to.'*

We seek to influence change in behaviour and lifestyle, empower people to have a voice and take control of their health and wellbeing and make healthy life choices; being a voice, influencing and advocating to address barriers at service and system levels and influencing reduction in health inequalities.

To ensure that the design and delivery of the Connectors programme establishes and maintains strong co-design with people bringing lived experience of health inequalities though:

- Actions taken to mitigate differences to reduce health inequalities.
- System changes achieved through increased cultural awareness.
- Long term connections and trust built which continues to develop.
- Experiences and feelings validated.
- Information shared.
- Perceptions challenged.
- 'They said, we did' - Barriers and needs around accessing healthcare have been shared and feedback given to enable access to be improved.
- One size does not suit all.

**300** Worry worm packs distributed

**10** Connectors recruited

**2** Cancer events



# Community Hub

Rainbow Services (Harlow) leads the partnership with Citizens Advice Harlow, Mind in West Essex, Harlow Volunteer Centre and Michael Roberts Charitable Trust, working together to deliver the successful Harlow Community Hub project, which helps people in crisis. Each person we come into contact with receives a fast holistic approach to their request for help.

The Community Hub has been involved in some special projects this year, here's a snapshot...

**Recycling furniture.** Graham, the M11 junction 7a contractor had fully furnished rental properties in the area whilst they were completing the works. When they finished the works the furniture was due to go straight into a skip. Luckily, working together, we managed to divert this and instead it was given to local families in need.

1396

Households Supported

2016

Foodbank vouchers issued

429

Citizens Advice cases

93

Households assisted with fuel poverty



**Healthy cooking on a budget.** We delivered one pot meal cooking workshops, mainly aimed at families and residents of permitted developments. Harlow Foodbank provided fresh vegetables and other Hub partners offered support to the attendees, who took away a bag of store cupboard ingredients every week along with a recipe card so they could recreate the one pot meal at home. When all 4 sessions finished every attendee received a slow cooker. Sessions were funded by Active Essex.

**Using Winter Warmth funding.** We purchased essential items which were distributed via the Hub and partners Integration Support Services, PACT for Autism, Roots to Wellbeing, Action for Family Carers, Maybury Open Door and Harlow Foodbank. In addition, we purchased 728 hot meal vouchers, providing some to Passmores, Stewards, and Peartree Mead schools and Harlow Ethnic Minority Umbrella.



In December, we arranged a Christmas Party for some of the families we had met over the past year. Working with local business Synthomer, 50 brand new gifts were donated to the children by their staff team. Gifts were wrapped and placed under a tree, we also arranged a visit from Santa, entertainment and party food.

Finally, in partnership with Harlow Council and Voluntary Action Epping Forest, a weekly Ukrainian Get Together was set up at the Harlow Playhouse. The group were able to socialise, enjoy a free hot drink and receive support with the challenges they faced.

# Youth Project

Rainbow Services continued to deliver the very successful Youth Project in the carpentry workshop two days each week, and began to offer two Gateway Qualifications via Essex YouthBuild to our young people – health and safety in construction, and carpentry hand tools.

**133** Young people engaged

**100%** Pass rate for this year's qualifications

**94%** Reported they developed skills

**72%** Feel more confident

This provided the young people with a clear aim and focus and proved very successful with all the cohorts that have gone on to achieving their qualifications, some of them going onto gain their CSCS cards or college placements and even jobs in the construction industry.

The Youth Project takes referrals of at-risk young people from schools, Essex Youth Services, the Police and Fire Services and many other agencies, as well as working with young offenders referred by the Youth Offending Team. We have seen a 10% increase in referrals this year.

Matched to volunteer mentors, the young people are supported to develop their skills in communication, team working, initiative, and woodwork whilst also being encouraged to open up in a friendly, non-threatening environment. Young people have 12 weeks of support and are signposted to positive activities in the community to access once leaving the workshop.



Thanks to a donation from Strawberry Star, we were able to purchase hand tools for the Youth Project.

We took part in the Listening project with Essex Council for Voluntary Youth Services asking the young people about their biggest concerns for young people regarding youth violence in Harlow, results are being used to help funders target their grants in the areas that are most important to the young people themselves.



The top issues raised by the young people were around gangs, fear of being robbed, knife crime, violence against women and young people, antisocial behaviour, drug dealing, limited safe areas for young people to go, and the lack of lighting/security on the streets of Harlow.

***“Without Rainbow I don't think I would have had any hope. I would have carried on going down the path I was going down, and would have ended up in prison or worse, not alive.”***

***Service User***



# Family Contact Centre/WECAN

## Family Contact Centre

In November 2022 Rainbow Services took over the running of the Family Contact Centre from Freshwaters Christian Fellowship, who had been running the project successfully for over 20 years.

The Rainbow Family Contact Centre is open on a Saturday morning and provides a neutral meeting space where children of separated families may enjoy contact with a non-resident parent and/or other family member. The project is lucky to have an amazing team of volunteers, without their knowledge, experience and dedication we would not have been able to make the project so successful.

The reopening of the Family Contact Centre has allowed siblings, mothers, fathers and grandparents to reconnect and begin to build relationships. Many of these families haven't been able to see each other since before the Covid-19 pandemic.

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## WECAN

As well as our own work, Rainbow Services works in a consortium with our two neighbouring CVSs – Voluntary Action Epping Forest and CVS Uttlesford (UCAN). This consortium is called West Essex Community Action Network (WECAN) and delivers high level statutory ideas at a local level, across West Essex.

Our projects during the year include:

- **Digital Inclusion:** A two-year project funded by the NHS Charities Fund led by CVS Uttlesford. As the name suggests, the aim is to improve the life chances of those who would benefit from a greater ability to use technology or who might be in danger of becoming isolated or marginalised by not being able to use it to access services.
- **Mental Health Discharge:** Providing support and signposting to people who have been receiving residential mental health services and are ready to be discharged. This project, led by Voluntary Action Epping Forest supports the reintegration of discharged patients into their home and community through signposting to local interventions.
- **Bereavement Support:** A project run by Voluntary Action Epping Forest, providing practical and emotional support for those suffering the effects of bereavement. Services include regular 1:1 support, as well as group sessions both face to face and online. The service can be accessed by adults, young people, and children.
- **Find Your Active:** led by Rainbow Services, an Essex wide initiative funded by Active Essex to promote physical activity across West Essex. WECAN employs one member of staff who works in the community on a one-to-one basis supporting people into physical activity. This could be anything from a short walk to a marathon.



## Rainbow Services (Harlow)

### Statement of Financial Activities for the Year Ended 31 March 2023 (Including Income and Expenditure Account and Statement of Total Recognised Gains and Losses)

	Note	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2023 £	Total 2022 £
<b>Income and Endowments from:</b>					
Donations and legacies	3	79,467	403,599	483,066	412,466
Other trading activities	4	53,344	16,520	69,864	67,771
Investment income	5	912	-	912	361
Total income		<u>133,723</u>	<u>420,119</u>	<u>553,842</u>	<u>480,598</u>
<b>Expenditure on:</b>					
Charitable activities	6	<u>(120,665)</u>	<u>(384,096)</u>	<u>(504,761)</u>	<u>(490,879)</u>
Total expenditure		<u>(120,665)</u>	<u>(384,096)</u>	<u>(504,761)</u>	<u>(490,879)</u>
Gains/losses on investment assets		<u>(2,344)</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>(2,344)</u>	<u>12,403</u>
Net income		<u>10,714</u>	<u>36,023</u>	<u>46,737</u>	<u>2,122</u>
Net movement in funds		10,714	36,023	46,737	2,122
<b>Reconciliation of funds</b>					
Total funds brought forward		<u>258,634</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>258,634</u>	<u>256,512</u>
Total funds carried forward	17	<u><u>269,348</u></u>	<u><u>36,023</u></u>	<u><u>305,371</u></u>	<u><u>258,634</u></u>

Included within the Charity's restricted funds above is income which has been recognised under the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice where the expenditure will be incurred in a later period. The note related to restricted funds (Note 17) clearly identifies funds that are yet to be expended.

All of the charity's activities derive from continuing operations during the above two periods.

The funds breakdown for 2022 is shown in note 17.

# Accounts

## Trustee statement

These summarised financial statements contain information from both the Statement of Financial Activities and the Balance Sheet for the year ended 31st March 2023 but are not the full statutory report and accounts. The full financial statements were approved by the Trustees on the 14th November 2023 and subsequently submitted to the Charity Commission and to Companies House. The company is exempt from audit under Section 477 of the Companies Act 2006. The accounts were independently examined. The full annual accounts, including the Trustees Annual Report, can be obtained from the charity's head office.



Chris Greenhill

## Acknowledgements

Rainbow Services would like to publicly thank our funders, Investors, all of the generous individual Donors, our Rainbow Trustees, our amazing volunteers, all the users of our services, organisational supporters, Harlow VSF members and participants, Harlow District Council, Essex County Council, the staff at the Hertfordshire and West Essex ICB, and our fellow infrastructure providers across Essex.

### Rainbow Services major funders





Rainbow Reports