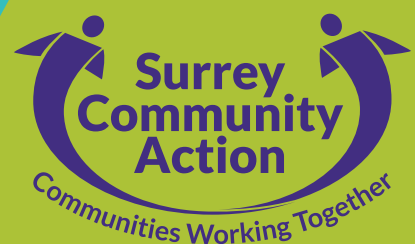


# Annual Review 2021/22



# Chairman's Statement



**I am looking for trustee candidates to build a diverse team with essential skills and a blend of experience and fresh thinking, who want to make a difference.**

**Continued coronavirus restrictions impacted a greater part of the year ended 31 March 2022, but Surrey Community Action had become adept at operating under these conditions. The result were successful outcomes for stakeholders and clients, many of which are reported elsewhere in this document.**

A further measure of Surrey Community Action's success is its financial sustainability. The year under review saw the repeat of a modest surplus on unrestricted activities, contributing to reserves which had been diminishing for some years.

Working from home with online meetings has now become the accepted way for staff to fulfil their duties and our trustees' meetings continued by Zoom. This has been made possible by keeping current with IT developments, which has led to fitting out meeting rooms with hybrid equipment, and which is now offered as a service to clients.

Careful arrangements were made to ensure Astolat was ready for the return of staff and tenants alike but a return to the pre-pandemic working patterns is awaited. Board meetings are dominated by the review of the charity's governance and activities, but focus has been applied to special Covid activities and potential issues emerging in Health Care, Gypsy, Roma & Traveller issues, the Surrey VCSE Alliance and Ukraine, amongst others. Of constant concern is Trustee recruitment, to ensure that the Board is able to maintain our position as an important participator in the VCFS. I am looking for candidates to build a diverse team with essential skills and a blend of experience and fresh thinking, who want to make a difference. The ensuing year is keenly anticipated with a challenging business plan and after an absence of three years, the resumption of our annual conference.

During the year we sadly said goodbye to Simon Matthews and Jo Josh as Trustees, both of whom had made a significant contribution to Surrey Community Action over a number of years. Our thanks and gratitude go with them. In August 2021 we welcomed Jan Rogers and John Skivington and since the year-end, Alison Keeley, each of whom brings valued skills and experience that will add to the strength of our Board.

Finally, I most sincerely thank the staff and trustees of Surrey Community Action for the hard work and loyalty they have shown during the year. It is their valued contribution that enables us to achieve the objectives we set ourselves.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keith McPherson', written in a cursive style.

Keith McPherson / Chair

# Chief Executive's Report

**2021-2022 was a year of contrasts for Surrey Community Action. The first half of the year was completely dominated by Covid-19. Internally, our prior disaster recovery work and move to cloud IT allowed us to close Astolat during lockdown and move staff almost seamlessly to work from home, a working model we have kept going since. Almost all of our staff were able to deliver their work, and many were able to flex their projects to help Surrey cope with COVID-19.**

Externally, we were very prominent in the county's Covid response. Amongst other things, we supported the welfare cell to make sure that vulnerable people were supported, volunteers could access priority shopping on behalf of their clients and we were able to get health and care volunteers vaccinated early. We also led the VCFS recovery work, carrying out research on the resilience of our sector and planning for recovery. Apart for a brief hiatus at the peak of the pandemic, we have continued to run Astolat as normal and have radically improved our conference room equipment to facilitate hybrid face-to-face and online meetings, reflecting the new normal for the way organisations meet and collaborate. An enduring legacy of the pandemic will be in the Surrey Charities Forum. Originally set up as a way for statutory and VCFS partners to co-ordinate our pandemic response, it has evolved into a vital communication channel between sectors. We continue to support and co-chair this important group.

The second half of the year, whilst still being heavily influenced by the ongoing legacy of Covid-19, did see us regain focus on our other core work. As well as our important services to the voluntary sector and Surrey's communities, we also supported a young person into work through the Kickstarter scheme, and helped the Lucy Rayner Foundation register as a charity and prepare to take on their first staff.

Towards the end of the year, we started to work with peers to develop the Surrey VCSE Alliance, an important part of national efforts to integrate and improve health and care services, recognising the voluntary sector as a vital part of the health and care landscape.




Jason Gaskell - Chief Executive



None of our achievements would have been possible without our dedicated team of staff and trustees. I thank them all for their hard work and perseverance in another challenging year.



**The Surrey Charities Forum has evolved into a vital communication channel between the third and public sectors.**



Surrey Community Action supports voluntary and not-for-profit groups with advice and services to help them to operate more effectively. We also run a range of projects to give local communities a helping hand.



## Sector Support

We support the sector through advocacy and representation to make sure their voice is heard, by co-ordinating forums and groups so we can share best practice and seek advice, carrying out research to identify needs and by providing a range of business and advice services to help them run more effectively.

### Advocacy and representation

**Surrey Community Action acts as advocates on behalf of the voluntary sector, ensuring that statutory bodies and other stakeholders understand the skills and experience the voluntary sector brings, and how it can shape and support service design and delivery.**

The second half of the year saw us take a leading role in the development of the Surrey VCSE Alliance, a new structure to help embed the voluntary sector as a strategic partner in the development of the Integrated Care Systems.

We continued to lead the Surrey Charity Chief Executives Group and this year introduced the Surrey Charities Forum to bring together organisations in the third and public sectors. We also continued to provide tailored advice and support to other voluntary and community organisations, such as helping the newly constituted Lucy Rayner Foundation to get their systems and processes in place ready to take on staff and move to the next level of their development.

We began a deep dive into the Charity Commission database to allow us to pull out data for peers and stakeholders to use and will continue to carry out research to help to support the sector.

Recognising that some organisations would no longer be office based as their needs had changed because of the pandemic, we introduced a virtual correspondence address service to help people to protect their privacy when running a charity or community organisation from home.

### Business Services

**Surrey Community Action offers a wide range of business services to charities, voluntary groups and to small local businesses including payroll support, meeting room hire, DBS checks and research.**

The number of visitors to Astolat (which hosts ten charities and not for profit organisations) is still lower than usual with 869 visitors to the building. Our DBS service was also restricted because of the pandemic but we processed 324 checks during the year. Our payroll service is now contracted to provide outsourced payroll support to 35 organisations. Recognising that some organisations have made the switch to remote working, we introduced a virtual correspondence address service to help charity leaders to protect their privacy when running a charity or community organisation from home.



## Community Buildings Support

**Our Community Buildings Adviser provides professional advice on the day to day running of community buildings, responsibilities of committee members, business planning, funding sources as well as technical and legal advice. We also run regular training events.**

There is a community centre, village or church halls in nearly every village or town in Surrey. Last year, the lockdowns took a toll on many of the community buildings we support with advice and training. Managers found that some of the businesses and organisations which used to book their venues continued to provide their classes and activities online post-lockdown, while others unfortunately had to close their businesses. As well as a drop in these regular bookings, social gatherings were also slow to resume to pre-pandemic levels. As a consequence, the committee members, volunteers and paid staff who manage these spaces reported that their income levels had dropped and there were concerns about their financial sustainability.

In response we offered training to help them to apply for grant funding and to market their buildings more effectively. We also connected our Tier 2 members to the Basecamp database, an online collaboration tool, which enables them to seek and share knowledge with community buildings teams nationwide. This year our Community Buildings Adviser also responded to 462 enquiries from village hall management committees.



I simply cannot tell you how grateful I am along with my fellow Trustees that we can reach out and ask for help and then get such extremely detailed replies that actually give a straight forward answer, backed with facts.

# Voluntary car and good neighbour schemes

Thousands of vulnerable and older people across Surrey rely on Voluntary Car Schemes and Good Neighbour Schemes to help them to get to GP and hospital appointments, to local shops and hairdressers or to visit their loved ones in nursing homes. Knowing that there is a friendly volunteer around in their hour of need helps people to remain physically and mentally well and independent in their own homes.

There are some 100 schemes across Surrey, 80 of which are supported by Surrey Community Action's Voluntary Car Scheme Adviser who helps to develop new schemes and provides on-going advice and support to existing schemes as well as DBS checks for volunteers. This specialist support

is a key element in maintaining the viability of these schemes, particularly because of the pandemic which caused some schemes to consider closing when volunteers did not return to their roles. With our guidance, we helped two schemes avoid closure by supporting their merger with neighbouring groups. We also played an integral role to the establishment and launch of two new schemes in Newdigate and East Horsley and are helping new groups to set up in Preston and Tadworth, Redhill, The Ashes, Laleham and Staines.

This year, our Voluntary Car Scheme Adviser dealt with 1,412 enquiries and distributed yellow high viz jackets, I.D. lanyards, car canes and 'Driver on Duty' discs to volunteer drivers. We continue to promote volunteering opportunities and assist schemes with their recruitment, help which this year saw 74 new drivers, committee members and duty officers join their local groups.



We support 80 schemes across Surrey

74 new drivers

1,412 Enquiries



# Strengthening Communities

We run a range of projects to give local communities a helping hand, by providing services directly to individuals in need and through our work as a Rural Community Council to increase the long-term sustainability of local community life.

## Enabling Rural Housing

**Surrey Community Action works with local communities to enable a meaningful increase in the delivery of affordable housing in rural villages and small towns and ensure a sustainable future for Surrey's rural communities.**

The pandemic lockdowns prompted people to re-evaluate their living space and seek homes with larger gardens and proximity to parks and beauty spots. A surge in interest in properties in Surrey since then has pushed housing costs in the county, and especially in more rural parts, to their highest yet.

Our Rural Housing Enabler assesses the level of need for affordable housing in rural villages and consults with communities and landowners to identify suitable land where homes can be built for local people in Mole Valley, Tandridge, Guildford and Waverley. These homes are usually developed as Rural Exception Schemes meaning that the homes remain in perpetuity for local people, often providing a mix of rented and shared owner homes so that communities remain mixed and sustainable. In 2021-22 our Rural Housing Enabler carried out housing and community needs surveys in Felbridge, Godalming, Compton, Ockley and Pirbright, working with parish councils and neighbourhood planning groups to assess local need. This year also saw the start of a development of 12 homes at social rent and five for affordable self build in Brockham and site preparation for an additional three homes to an existing site in Burstow.



Your Rural Housing Enabler has helped us enormously with some of background work for the emerging Ockley Neighbourhood Development Plan.

She wrote us a Character Appraisal which sets out in detail a description of the various areas of the village and conducted a survey of the parish in order to ascertain what the residents are looking for in the development of the parish over the next 15 years. Both these papers will form key documents in the final Plan.





One word to sum up how they feel?  
"Contentment."



## Case study

Mr and Mrs Gunter moved to a cottage in Dunsfold village tied to their work as gardeners almost 40 years ago. Over the years they have participated and contributed to village life with their involvement with local groups and organisations such as the Scouts, Cubs, Friends of The Common, The Horticultural Society, The Parish Council and Frensham Sailing Club.

As the village became increasingly unaffordable for local people, the Gunters have seen an increasing loss of amenities including two village stores, a pub, the local British Legion Club and primary school.

The Gunters too, needed an affordable home to rent as their cottage was tied to Mr Gunter's work as a gardener so as soon as he retired, they would be homeless.

The worry about losing the roof over their heads was part of the reason Mr Gunter delayed retiring until he was 81 and he lost a stone in weight. But the new development of affordable homes offered some hope and the Gunters applied, which Surrey Community Action helped to enable, a property to rent.

The wait to hear whether they had been successful was just as stressful but, Mr Gunter says that "when that letter came to tell us we had got the flat, it was lovely, it was such a sense of relief."

Their new home overlooks the old cottage and although it's difficult watching the property being modernised and the gardens they once tended becoming overgrown, they are happy with their new home. Mrs Gunter says that "it suits us down to the ground."

## Community Led Housing

**Our Community Led Housing project promotes and supports new ways of providing affordable housing in Surrey developed by people for local people. We explain how community led housing can work and help interested people form groups, develop their ideas, engage their communities and navigate every step of the development process.**

Last year we provided advice to Chobham CLT, Homes for Farnham, Puttenham PC and Ripley CLT, Horton ECO project and Haslemere CLT.

## Gypsy, Roma & Traveller Support

**Our Gypsy, Roma and Traveller outreach project provides practical advice, guidance, information and support to adults and families who are Gypsies, Roma and/or Travellers (GRT) in Surrey and in the Royal Borough of Kingston-upon-Thames.**

Working in multi-agency partnerships to help communities with housing and financial issues, our Community Development Workers have supported 249 families across Surrey and Kingston upon Thames with a multitude of issues including school exclusion, debt, health and well-being and employment. Families facing eviction, homelessness and poverty value the support and advice which enables them to stay in their homes and receive the benefits to which they are entitled. Personalised support plans, signposting and liaison with other agencies are all part of the service, and this year included working with health partners to boost Covid vaccination take-up and hosting school assemblies to help increase understanding of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller culture and heritage.

This year we launched our Skills Impact project, a pilot initiative funded by the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to help adults from the Gypsy, Roma and Traveller community aged 18 and over to improve their literacy and numeracy skills. Our personal tutoring is provided at a time and place to suit the learner and includes SPAG (Spelling, Punctuation and Grammar), the driving theory test, reading, form filling, digital literacy, budgeting and supporting parents to teach their children. Tutoring is not only giving students the skills for everyday life but also helping with loneliness, access to services, building confidence and self-esteem.



### Case study

Support from our Skills Impact project has helped Genty Lee to improve her literacy and numeracy skills. Our Skills Impact Tutor Vicky Nash visited Genty once a week to deliver a two hour session tailored to meet Genty's learning needs.

Genty says: "I have benefitted greatly from Vicky's time given to me, that I must add, I appreciate beyond words. I am now able to work out percentages; this is something that before now I have never been given the opportunity to be taught on a one-to-one. I have been researching the history of my ethnic origin for two decades. Collecting many notes along the way. During times in my life, I have kept what could be described as a diary, the research and my writings are now collectively being included in my autobiography.

Vicky's regular visits have kept me in a routine, encouraged to keep me focused and enthusiastic to complete my book and helped me to learn new grammar and punctuation skills."



Your Outreach Worker just gets it. She has a lovely approach to GRT families and it is a relief for me to be able to refer GRT families to someone to support non-education issues. I have absolute confidence that she will do her best for the families and help them get to the best possible position to improve their situation. GRT

# Warmth Matters and Money Matters

**Our Money Matters and Warmth Matters projects offer free, practical advice to help people on low incomes to save money, improve and manage their personal and family finances, reduce their fuel bills by saving energy and avoid the stress that comes with increasing debt.**

We understand that people find it hard to acknowledge that they are struggling to make ends meet, so we run pop-up advice sessions in places that are accessible to people and enable them to drop-in to chat in an informal way. Our service has prevented people from spiralling further into poverty and debt, helped people to budget better and save money on energy bills as well as raised awareness of other sources of support in the community.

Last year we gave advice and information to over 1,000 people - 80% of whom said that they would use this to take action to reduce their bills. We also distributed over £100,000 in fuel vouchers to low income households.



## Case study

Mrs Andrews approached us for help after building up debts with her energy supplier putting her account into arrears. She had an online account but struggled to manage things online. We helped Mrs Andrews to understand her energy bills and her online account and completed budgeting exercises to help her with her monthly payments.

We also helped Mrs Andrews to register for the Priority Service Register with her energy provider, electricity network provider and water company. We advised her to register for the 'Waterhelp' scheme, a cheaper water tariff which gives a discount on her water bill. We also checked eligibility for the Warm Home Discount and registered Mrs Andrews for this benefit too.



“Thank you so much for all you have done for us in the community, your support has been invaluable and a much needed help and kindness when everything else seems to be going awry. Just wanted to share my appreciation for your help, support and kindness.”

Warmth Matters Client





# Funding and Accounts



## Funding

**We continue to seek funds from a variety of sources in line with our funding strategy. As well as on-going funding from many of our long-term funders in 2021/22, we received new funding from Surrey County Council for a Gypsy, Roma & Traveller (GRT) Literacy project and the Royal Borough of Kingston for GRT Support work. We were also funded by Surrey County Council to write a report on Mutual Aid Groups.**

We were pleased to receive emergency funding to cover the costs of running our building Astolat and the organisation's core costs in the form of the Business Support Fund from Guildford Borough Council. We were also funded to be a distributor of the Household Support Fund.

We continue to build relationships with local and national funders, Council leaders and local businesses in order to promote everything we do to serve communities in need across Surrey. If you would like find out more about our work or how your funding could help us run new services or extend existing services, please get in touch.

## Funders and

ACRE

Community Foundation for Surrey

DEFRA

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC)

English Rural Housing Association

Guildford Borough Council

Mole Valley District Council

National Lottery Community Fund

NHS England

Reigate and Banstead Council

Scottish & Southern Electricity Networks (SSEN)

Surrey County Council

Tandridge District Council

The National Lottery Community Fund

The Royal Borough of Kingston Upon Thames

UK Power Networks

Waverley Borough Council



## Balance Sheet for the Year Ended 31 March 2022

	2021 £	2020 £
<b>FIXED ASSETS</b>		
Tangible assets	16,370	10,006
Investments	1	1
	16,371	10,007
<b>CURRENT ASSETS</b>		
Debtors: amounts falling due within one year	91,844	44,115
Cash at bank and in hand	471,589	388,730
Investments		
	563,433	432,845
<b>CREDITORS</b>		
Amounts falling due within one year	(259,110)	(146,765)
<b>NET CURRENT ASSETS</b>	304,232	286,080
<b>NET ASSETS</b>	320,694	296,087
<b>FUNDS</b>		
Unrestricted funds	229,422	210,975
Restricted Funds	91,272	85,112
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	320,694	296,087

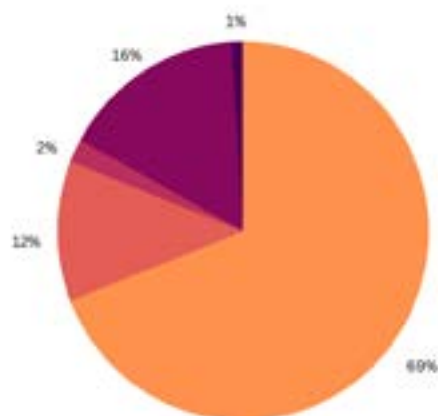
The total income for both Unrestricted and Restricted Funds for the year amounted to £539,654 with expenditure of £515,046. This resulted in net surplus of £24,608, of which £6,160 came from Restricted Funds. The remaining amount of £18,448 net surplus was from Unrestricted General Funds.

Surrey Community Action Funds now total £320,694, of which £229,422 represents Unrestricted Funds and £91,272 represents Restricted Funds (after transfers). Restricted Funds and income are only available for the specific projects and purposes as determined by the funders.

These summary financial statements have been extracted from the full Annual Accounts which were approved by the board of Trustees on 7th December 2022. These summary statements have not been separately audited. For the full accounts please visit [www.surreyca.org.uk](http://www.surreyca.org.uk)

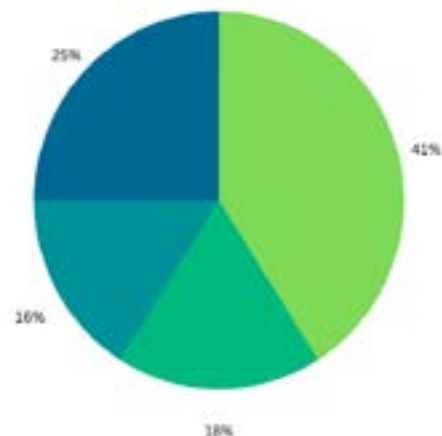
**Analysis of Expenditure** (£515,046 in total)

Staff Costs	69%
Office Costs	12%
Travel & Meetings	2%
Management	16%
Governance	1%



**Source of Income** (£539,654 in total)

Surrey County Council	41%
District & Borough Councils	18%
Other Income	16%
Service Income	25%



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