

Start Up Stirling Newsletter

June 2020

A note from the Convenor!

I must start by expressing my thanks to Nick Reed, who decided to step back from his activities with Start Up Stirling and left us at the beginning of June. Besides acting as a warehouse volunteer and driver over some years he has acted with immense energy and care over eighteen months as a Trustee and Treasurer. That Start Up Stirling at present does not have immediate financial worries is very largely thanks to Nick's work in managing our finances, in setting our budgets and in working to increase our income. Gillian Morton is also stepping down from the Board, but continuing her work for us as editor of our Newsletters. We thank them for all their work, and wish them both well in the future.

During the current Pandemic emergency, Start Up Stirling's support of those in need is more than ever essential. As the economic effects of Lockdown continue, we anticipate that need will continue to grow. In adapting our operations to work under social distancing rules and in protecting the vulnerable we have been much helped by new 'emergency' volunteers who have stepped in to replace the more elderly of our established volunteers who are in effect "furloughed". Other supporters are also noted in the newsletter and I must again thank all concerned for their efforts and generosity. Of our operations, food bank home deliveries continue and Starter packs are still going out, but in lower numbers than before, as few are being rehoused at present. We remain in telephone contact with the Support Service groups and some of those who are most vulnerable and need continuing support.

We usually will have held our AGM by now. However, the Board recently decided on their web conference meeting that we should delay holding a General Meeting of members until it becomes possible to gather together again, safely. Web conferences are very useful for a dozen or so people to work together but are less satisfactory with larger numbers. We will soon be circulating the Annual Report and Accounts and submitting them to the Scottish Charities Regulator (OSCR). The delay to our AGM will be against the directions of our constitution, but we believe the delay to be appropriate in the present circumstances.

Anthony

Finance Report

This is my first report as your new treasurer and it's also the end of the first quarter of a financial year which promises to be like no other we've seen at Start-up Stirling. As has been reported elsewhere, we have had to make significant changes to our operating model in light of Covid-19 and this has led to some increases in costs, mainly in the form of personnel, food purchases and transport.

However, we continue to be very well supported through the generosity of many individuals and organisations and have also been successful in our application for a number of grants including the Martin Lewis Fund, Wellbeing fund and Stirling Council's Community Response Food Fund. Our total income from grants and donations during April and May 2020 amounted to over £130,000 and I am therefore pleased to report that the charity's reserves have increased since the year end. However, we need to be aware that Covid-19 could be with us for some time and we are likely to see additional pressure on our services and running costs in future. We are therefore preparing for the long haul and will continue to be proactive about fundraising and grant applications in the coming weeks.

Elise Ferguson



Teenage Volunteer LOUIS racks up an amazing 160 hours volunteering with Start Up Stirling!

Start Up Stirling has for some years welcomed students to carry out their volunteering hours for the various Duke of Edinburgh awards. All students work hard but now and again a "special" student joins us and then remains after their required hours are completed.

Louis Bishop is one of these students. Louis, one of the senior boys in 25th Stirling (Dunblane) Boys' Brigade, began volunteering with us in October 2018 age 16 as part of his Silver Duke of Edinburgh award and Boys' Brigade Queens' Badge. However, having now completed both, has decided to remain with us and is now working towards achieving his Gold Duke of Edinburgh award. From a recent calculation of his hours with us we were amazed to learn this totals to no less than **160 hours** of volunteering!

Louis told us, "I really like volunteering for Start-Up because I know it makes a difference to people's lives. The best thing about volunteering is all the other volunteers and the banter we have as we work. I have Autism and find some things tricky, but volunteering has really helped my confidence and helped me to enjoy being part of a team." We congratulate Louis on all his achievements. Thank you for all you do for Start Up Stirling and for continuing to volunteer during lockdown and the pandemic. It is a pleasure to have you on the team!

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COVID-19 Operational Update

It's been 14 weeks now since the start of lockdown and we moved all foodbanks to home delivery. We have settled in to a 'new' normal working way of life. We continue to request that all food donations be made at the supermarket donation stations, so we can keep visitors to the warehouse to a minimum. In recent weeks, we have started to see an increase in food donations once again. We are extremely grateful to all those who are continuing to support us in varying ways, ranging from food donations, monetary donations and all the other many efforts which have included initiatives such as quizzes, making and selling cookies in the local community or climbing stairs at home!

Our thanks and gratitude must also extend to all the local supermarkets, who despite their own difficulties, have been promoting our work and to Stirling Council who have continued to support us by assisting us with central purchasing of essential items. Many items have been in limited supply within the supermarkets and this support has been invaluable. We must not forget the significant assistance we have received and continue to receive from Dial A Journey, who continue to provide vehicles and drivers weekly. It has been truly heart-warming to see everyone, existing and newly recruited 'emergency' volunteers, staff and trustees pulling together and working hard to ensure we can continue to provide food to all those who need it, in the safest way possible. We hope you are all keeping safe and well and thank you for your continuing support.

The pandemic by numbers!

We know many of you will be wondering what the picture looks like for those currently receiving crisis food support as there are varying accounts in the press, depending on where in the UK you live. Whilst we are reporting increases in the numbers of individuals supported across April & May, we are pleased to report as we write in June, a more stabilised situation. Many people are moving on quickly having accessed additional supports, although we are aware this is a fast-moving situation, with rapid week by week changes. We are well positioned to meet an increasing demand.

During **April & May** we have supported, through our full home delivery service, an average of 145 households and distributed 213 crates of food weekly.

In April 2020 we supported 556 individuals, up 57% from April 2019 at 354. In May 2020 we supported 489 individuals, up 93% from May 2019 at 254

Our volunteer hours for the combined two months were a colossal 2009! Our staff hours for the combined two months were 1507 hours.

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