

**RUTLAND FIRST CIC  
ANNUAL REPORT  
1 APRIL 2022 TO 31 MARCH 2023**



## CHAIR'S INTRODUCTION



The Resilient Rutland project, aimed at improving mental health and wellbeing amongst young people going to school in Rutland, has again been the principal activity during the year. Using funds generously given by the National Lottery we have been providing services and resources to the state and private, primary and secondary schools in the county. The project was originally scheduled to end in January 2022, but because of interruptions caused by Covid-19, the Lottery agreed to an extension until January 2023 with a small amount of residual funding being spent until July 2023. Up to July 2022 the work was overseen by the Project Manager, Morag Tyler, and the Schools Liaison Officer, Lyn Harte, With the majority of the work and spending finished by then, they both retired at the end of the month. Since July the programme has been managed by volunteer Board members.

Once again, I should like to thank Morag and Lyn for the exceptional effort that they put into adapting the programme to meet the ever-changing need, and to congratulate them on successfully continuing to work with the schools despite the difficulties caused by Covid-19. The high regard in which they were held by staff and pupils at Rutland schools was reflected in the fulsome praise given by speakers at the Project Celebration in June 2022.

Last year, the Board agreed to provide oversight and support to a group setting up and bidding for funds for an Uppingham Youth Project. This got underway in April 2022, and with financial support from Don Paddy's, the Co-Op, Uppingham Town Council, Rutland Lions and the National Lottery, is now going full steam ahead. We have been lucky to find excellent part-time Youth Leaders who have managed and supervised activities.

The Board has also been in discussions with a Youth Project in Whissendine and a Veterans Wellbeing Drop-In Centre in Oakham. These arrangements are expected to be formalised during 2023/24.

**Miles Williamson-Noble**

**Chair Rutland First**

## **RESILIENT RUTLAND**

The Resilient Rutland End of Project Review will be published on the Rutland First website ([www.rutlandfirst.co.uk](http://www.rutlandfirst.co.uk)). It provides details of the project streams undertaken, how the money was spent, the successes achieved and the problems that had to be overcome. The after-effects of Covid remained an influencing factor, although it was possible to reinstate most support activities. Highlights of the year were in-school counselling for secondary pupils, the provision of creative arts and sporting activities for primary schools, the development of well-being ambassadors, young people led initiatives in secondary schools, multi-school young people's conferences, and a programme of webinars and discussion groups for parents and carers.

The National Lottery kindly agreed to our request to amend the programme to reflect changes in what the schools wanted, and to extend the project end-date by a year, albeit with no additional funding, to January 2023. By the end of the 2022 summer term most of the planning and contracting was finished, and it was agreed that the two staff members would finish their contracts of employment then. Ongoing activity was handled by volunteer Board Members.

Considerable planning effort was devoted to looking into options for resilience so that support did not end suddenly once the funding was finished. Rutland County Council was able to identify some public health funding to continue secondary school and bereavement counselling until the end of July 2023 and the Lottery agreed to allow us to continue until then funding creative art and sporting activities out of the small underspend still available.

In June 2022, we held a celebratory event in Oakham Castle to mark the end of the major investment phase of the project. Secondary and primary school pupils and staff were invited, as were key players from the local authorities. The Lord-Lieutenant and the High Sheriff of Rutland both attended. The schools were invited to make short presentations on their experiences, and all spoke enthusiastically about how much they had gained and their plans to keep key initiatives such as pupil mentors and young people's conferences going.

We believe that most of the project's initial aims, as set out by the young people themselves, have been achieved. School staff have a wider understanding of mental health and wellbeing problems, training in mental health first aid and for emotional literacy support assistants has been provided, schools have witnessed the psychological benefits of extra-curricular activities, pupil mentors and student conferences are up and running, and most importantly children are far more willing to admit to and seek help with emotional problems at an early stage.

## **UPPINGHAM YOUTH SPACE**

In 2021, a group of Uppingham residents started work on putting together a case for a Youth Hub in the town and for obtaining financial support to get it off the ground. Rutland First offered its support to the team in bid writing, and in its role as a Community Interest Company in oversight and financial management once the project was up and running.

We started in April 2022 with a weekly session for 11 to 16 year olds in Uppingham Church Hall. Originally, we relied on volunteers to manage everything, but rapidly realised that it would be much better to have a part-time member of staff who could organise sessions, arrange rosters for volunteer supporters and take the lead in any safeguarding issues. Rutland County Council kindly offered the loan of staff members to help with getting the project up and running, and Uppingham church allowed its Children's, Families and Youth Mission Enabler to get involved. With increasing numbers attending and with only limited storage facilities available, the church hall became too small, and Uppingham Town Council offered us the use of its hall on Wednesday afternoons. We are continuing to take advantage of this, but with activities relocated to Tod's Piece on fine afternoons in the summer holidays.

Youth Space, as it is now called, is open from 3.15 to 5.00 every Wednesday, during both term-time and school holidays. Admission is free and there are typically about 20 youngsters there each week, with roughly equal numbers of boys and girls. Snacks are provided, and there is a wide-ranging selection of games, sports and activities for the youngsters to engage in. Externally sourced activities such as dance, yoga, glass engraving and first-aid are provided on an occasional basis.

Bids to local industry (Don Paddy's and the Co-Op), Rutland Lions and Uppingham Town Council for financial support were all successful and enabled the project to get off the ground. A bid to the National Lottery's Awards for All fund for £10,000 over a year was also successful. This has been sufficient to guarantee staff salaries, room hire, weekly snacks and consumables until the end of 2023. Looking further to the future, we will be submitting bids to the Co-Op and the National Lottery Community Fund which we hope will guarantee ongoing operation for a further 5 years.

## **GOVERNANCE**

### **Articles of Association and Standing Orders**

The Rutland First CIC Articles of Association had originally used the template for CICs with a large membership. This was appropriate in days when we acted as Healthwatch Rutland. However, with the change in role to Rutland First we no longer had members who were not also Board Members, and the Articles were amended to use the template for CICs Limited by Guarantee with a small membership. The changes were approved by Companies House and the Board.

There had previously been some overlap between the Articles and Standing Orders, and the necessity of reflecting the new Articles prompted a revision of Standing Orders. Duplication with the Articles was removed and the rules relating to rotational retirement of Board

Members and the Chair were updated. Both the Articles and Standing Orders are available on the website ([www.rutlandfirst.co.uk](http://www.rutlandfirst.co.uk))

## **Board Membership**

There were no changes in Board Membership during the year. All Board Members are now registered with Companies House as Directors.

## **FINANCE**

The Company started the financial year with cash at bank £88,084, with £81,200 earmarked for the Resilient Rutland Project. During the year, the Company received a final payment from the Big Lottery Fund (BLF) of £48,541 making a grand total of £484,700 since the project inception. This can be taken as an indication that the Company has fulfilled its ongoing reporting obligations to BLF through the course of the project.

The Company finished the financial year with cash of £39,106, of which £26,605 was earmarked for the Resilient Rutland project. The balance reflects the funding and expenditure on the Youth Project explained elsewhere in this report. Expenditure on the Resilient Rutland Project was slightly slower than expected, leaving some expenditure to take place in 2023/24.

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

We would like to acknowledge the help we have received from our accountants Bulley Davey in overseeing our financial dealings, and from Hegarty LLP Solicitors in preparing contracts.

We would also like to acknowledge our many sponsors without whom none of the above would have been possible. They include the National Lottery, Uppingham Town Council, Rutland Lions, The Co-Op and Don Paddy's.

## **ANNEXES**

- A.** Annual Accounts 1 Apr 2022 to 31 Mar 2023