

# WAM YOUTH

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ANNUAL REPORT  
2020



# CHAIRPERSON'S STATEMENT

What a year, who would have thought in September 2019 we would have seen so much change and have to grapple with new ways of doing things. It's been great to see the staff adapting their ways of communication with the young people.

During the year WAM has continued to provide support for the young people it has contact with, and it has been great to see and hear of youngsters changing and responding positively to challenges in their lives. We are grateful to Ben Coles for joining and strengthening the team of Trustees this year.

As trustees we are grateful to Gemma Madle and Ali Kirkwood who so quickly got to grips with the new legislation and policies that needed to be put in place, so that WAM could continue the work during Covid with the youngster safely. With many small charities struggling we are continually grateful to God for His continued blessing of WAM and all it does. So as we press on through the pandemic we just want to say a very big thank you to all who have raised funds and donated to WAM.

Colin Impey, Chair of Trustees.



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# DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

When we started the new academic year in September 2019 we certainly had no idea of what we were walking into! We've all had our worldviews shaken this year, the things we have taken for granted and come to expect as our right have been stripped away and in these times we're forced to re-evaluate what is truly important. For me personally its been time to remind myself of the vision that led to WAM's establishment in 2013. A vision of a community where all young people are valued, their voice is heard, where they have opportunity to experience wholeness and where we can support and encourage them to seek justice on behalf of themselves and of others.

There's an alternative worldview that Jesus talked quite a lot about known as the Kingdom of God. It's a worldview that reveals our life in community as it was always intended to be. One where there is social and economic justice, health and wholeness for all, where those our world cares about least are given value and honour, where we live in harmony with the wonderful creation that we are privileged to steward.

Where WAM is present we hope that we can influence young people's experience of the world so its a little more like this worldview. You can be the judge of whether we have achieved that or not by reading some of the stories of the young people and families we've journeyed with this year. Stories of bringing light and of changed perspectives.

My heartfelt thanks goes to our staff, volunteers and supporters for catching WAM's vision and enabling the impacts which we always hope are possible. We look forward to whatever the next year will bring with thanks that we are still journeying and with hope for the future.

*Gemma Madle*

**GEMMA MADLE**

Director of WAM Youth



# WAM OUTDOORS



**DAVE WILLCOX**  
**OUTDOOR EDUCATION MANAGER**

The WAM Outdoors Team this year have provided 7 young people with 1:1 placements and within that lots of opportunity to work towards AQA Unit Awards in fire lighting, filtering water, building shelters and outdoor cooking to name a few! Between them they achieved a whopping total of 37 units in the year!

in the Spring, whilst we could continue the 1:1 sessions during lockdown unfortunately the restrictions meant the group sessions that Winchcombe Abbey Primary School, Cleeve School and Betaris had booked were unable to go ahead so we're hoping things will look better in Spring 2021 and we'll be able to see those groups then!

Behind the scenes the team, with the help of some of our young people have been busy adding activities to the woodland including a nature trail, rope maze and a spider's web team challenge. All really fun, engaging and educational activities we can use in our group sessions. We have finished the main felling for the four rides through the woodland and continue to fell trees that pose a safety risk following high winds (which we've seen a lot of this year!) and other inclement weather conditions. The compost toilet is now complete and has been a new experience for some visitors! As we follow our woodland management plan we are beginning to see the vision we had for this beautiful space become a reality. It's a continued privilege to be able to involve young people in many aspects of our woodland management and a real benefit to them and their learning.

The summer has seen the start of bushcraft-enthusiasts coming to use the woodland (socially distanced and all within current guidelines of course!) for their own social use. This small number of people have helped us learn how to utilise the woodland and also help keep it safe when we are not there. So far the feedback has been extremely positive, with every person who came to try the woodland out subsequently rebooking for another use!

It's been a challenging year for obvious reasons but we are looking forward to 2021, to growing our capacity and continuing to develop our woodland area.



Spring in the woodland



Steamed Thai Pork Rolls made in our pizza oven



Building the rope maze



Ava the dog testing out our rope maze obstacles

# WAM MENTORING



**ALI KIRKWOOD**  
**MENTORING PROJECT MANAGER**

During this year, our team of 15 mentors have worked with 25 different young people, from 13 different schools, including 6 who receive online tuition from the hospital education service. Referrals come from schools, social workers and family support workers, we've seen an increase in referrals for young people in primary schools. A significant proportion of enquiries are for young people who struggle with school attendance, and we are being asked to work with a growing number of children with autism (either suspected or diagnosed).

Lockdown was a significant challenge and one that we rose to! Changes we had been discussing for a while, had to be made within a few weeks in order to meet the needs of the young people we worked with. Within a few weeks, all of our mentees and their families had been contacted and most of our mentees wanted to carry on mentoring. Over lockdown we began mentoring via video calls, phone calls and letter writing, and we developed guidelines to be able to do this safely. We played new online games with our mentees, and tried out virtual games of chess, hangman, battleships and even monopoly! The WAM team also delivered care packs to our mentees to help counter the effects of isolation. Once restrictions eased, we began to meet 1:1 again, but with new guidelines to try and protect everyone. Pre covid, most of our mentoring took place in schools, or in community venues. Over the summer, most of our mentoring happened outside, and we were glad of dry weather to facilitate that. We did a lot of local walks (sometimes involving dogs!), played on rope swings, dammed streams, had picnics in parks, created scavenger hunts and more. Spring 2020 was an experience we could never have predicted but one that will shape our mentoring service going forward as we integrate online delivery into what was previously a solely face to face service.



Mentoring is  
journeying  
alongside a young  
person, not  
leading or  
directing but  
simply walking with

2021 will undoubtedly bring its own challenges but we are well positioned going into the new year to provide support to the increased numbers of children and young people who are being referred to us. We're looking forward to training more mentors and hopefully (funding permitting) adding to the staff team to enable us to grow this service to meet the demand.

# WAM COMMUNITY



**CARLA THRAVES**  
COMMUNITY YOUTH WORKER

After we said goodbye to Sophia in June 2019, Gemma our Director, with the support of Tim and volunteers Mary, Jill & Jon, has run two weekly groups in Winchcombe:

- an open access youth group for ages 10-16
- a girls group for ages 10-12.

Twenty four young people accessed these groups regularly before April. During lockdown we moved both groups online. Just before lockdown the girls group had started an Empower programme with Young Gloucestershire and UK Youth and we were very grateful to both organisations in supporting our move to run this programme online. As part of the social action part of their programme the girls:

- ran a story competition fundraiser for Bristol Children's Hospital's Grand Appeal
- created Care Packages for local NHS frontline workers
- made and wrote cards that were distributed via Winchcombe Day Care Centre to isolated elderly people during lockdown.

Other things we've been up to this year include:

- sending out wellbeing packs for over 70 children and young people in lockdown
- launching a lockdown Helpline with Winchcombe Youth Partnership for local young people, funding from the National Lottery Community Fund will allow us to develop this into a more long term WAM Chat listening service
- delivering relationships and sex lessons to Winchcombe School students in person and online!

The really good news in June was that we were successful in applying for grant funding from Gloucestershire County Council to secure funds to employ a new Community Youth Worker for the year ahead to enable us to re-develop our Community Youth Service and Carla joined us in September 2020 and since then has got stuck in with the youth groups, runs a drop in service at Winchcombe School and has created two community trails for All Hallow's Eve and Christmas enabling some socially distanced family activities during the pandemic. Now she's settled she's going to be throwing herself into a community consultation on local youth provision and exploring how we can develop provision for children with special needs so watch this space!



**The Care Packs  
Girls Group  
made for NHS  
Staff**



**Handmade Cards  
for isolated local  
residents**



**A recipient of  
one of our  
wellbeing packs**

# HOLIDAY CLUBS



**LEANNE GREENWOOD**  
**OUTDOOR EDUCATION OFFICER**

Leanne & Gemma co-ordinated a very successful programme of Holiday Club Days during the 2020 School Summer Holidays with 60 children attending multiple sessions over 8 days. These were woodland based days and we made full use of the activities and natural environment, something that was a real blessing to those that attended, especially given the Spring lockdown. They were ably assisted by various WAM staff (Grace, Laura, Sam, Harriet, Dave and Jon) and a brilliant bunch of volunteers! A local Art Teacher, Ed Turfrey, kindly volunteered his time to run some woodland based-art sessions and an amazing bunch of young people from Winchcombe (Daisy, Flo, Lauren, Maeve, Olly, Sam, Will & Izzy) volunteered as Young Leaders and their help was invaluable to our staff.

For many of the children attending the activity days it was the first time they had connected with peers in this way, having not attended school since March. They enjoyed nature trails, t-shirt decorating, fire lighting, water filtering, catapult firing, circus skills with Thomas Trilby, damper bread making, charcoal making, printing, shelter building and lots of hide and seek!

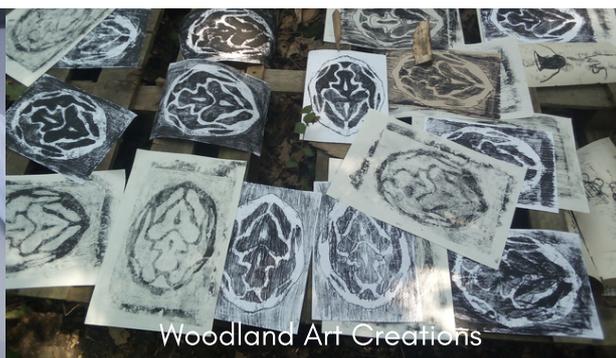
We were thankful to the emergency Coronavirus Response funds from Tewkesbury Borough Council and Gloucestershire Community Foundation that enabled us to buy the extra resources we needed for infection control in the pandemic, resource the extra staffing required due to the bubble requirement and to provide funded places for children whose families were affected economically by Covid. Since the summer Leanne has been planning more holiday club days and launched our new Home Education Woodland Group Sessions!



Holiday Club fun  
on the slack line



**Elm Group's T-Shirt Decorating**



Woodland Art Creations



Hazel Group's  
epic shelter

# OUR VOLUNTEERS

WAM wouldn't function without the small army of over 20 volunteers who support our work in multiple ways. Some are trustees, some are mentors, some volunteer at youth groups or as respondents to our listening service and some do all four! A special mention goes to June Yeates who gives WAM two mornings a week to help run our office and keep all our admin in check! Not content with this she's also appointed herself chief community fundraiser and is on a mission to find creative ways to raise money during a time when we can't run the usual events. By the end of 2020 she had already raised well over £900 by making and selling facemasks, a fundraiser that is set to continue for the foreseeable future!



**JUNE YEATES**  
**ADMINISTRATIVE VOLUNTEER**



**SOME OF OUR OTHER VOLUNTEERS (THE ONES THAT SENT THEIR PHOTOS IN!)**

## AND WHAT THEY SAID ABOUT THEIR EXPERIENCE OF VOLUNTEERING

"lost for words to say .. such a pleasure to help in the work WAM takes on"

"My lovely mentee was not attending school and barely leaving the house at all. We met in her bedroom where due to her intense anxiety she was under the duvet and I did most of the talking. Within two visits she showed her face and conversation became two way. Each week we set a goal for her to attain e.g watch a movie with the family, to slowly bring back her confidence. Our big goal in advance was to go out for coffee at a cafe in Christmas week. I was delighted when she asked me to support her in Christmas shopping for her family too. We did art, went out for coffee, had sessions where we just talked until the day she felt confident to say she didn't need a mentor any more. Job done! We have since met in a cafe and she is successfully attending an Art College course producing some amazing work."

# IMPACT STORIES

Family 1:

"Due to the suicide of my husband and the debts that he left that I wasn't not aware of, general life and keeping going has been very challenging. The world that we have been plunged into is unknown to any of us. For the all of us but especially the boys, the shock initially was horrific, and then managing the day to day emotions, as well as then finding a new norm, in a single parent household has been a challenge for all of them individually. This year has been especially hard with the lockdown from Covid. Home schooling, being the only wage earner with no support from family at all, and no contact with friends for many months has been difficult and left us in an isolated situation.

The age split of my children has meant that this has been further compounded. Turning to be a teenager has been difficult for J, as well as having no male role models. H and E are angry so this results in outbursts that are difficult to manage for them and for me.

The support from WAM has been invaluable. The mentoring has a different role for each of them. Enabling H and J to engage with a male influence in their lives that they wouldn't get otherwise. Being able to attend holiday club in the summer holidays enabling me to be able to work so that we can at least feed ourselves. We are massively indebted to the patience and understanding of Ali, Gemma and the team of mentors. It's difficult to put into words the difference that this structured and consistent support brings, but ***it is a light in the week for us, a point at which we look to see how things have changed.***"

## WAM MENTORING & HOLIDAY CLUBS

Family 2

"As a single parent and full time carer to my disabled son, C aged 8, our home life has had a massive impact. My eldest son J aged 10, had been prevented accessing typical play places and been isolated at home due to C's challenging behaviour. J is classed as a young carer and helps support C's holistic needs. WAM provided a 1-2-1 mentor for J who is a positive male role model and a consistent weekly support. J openly talks to him and his confidence has increased since seeing Ben. J is given quality time without interruptions from his siblings. J would previously try to spend all his time online and was less interactive with us. The more time he spent online his mood declined and would be annoyed if I asked him to come off it. He communicates more with me now and is happier actually interacting with others in person playing and learning more.

WAM also provides the holiday clubs and youth groups which J benefits from seeing local friends in a safe environment. The varied activities are great experiences such as the Woodlands and learning outside skills I couldn't do with J and siblings. These groups are accessible and staff are understanding at times our personal difficulties with C affect J such as requiring transport or J tired from being disturbed at night. WAM staff/volunteers are approachable, non judgmental and accepting of difference, always wanting to help and improve their service. I feel ***they are a light to all families and adhere to their name 'We all matter'. J feels safe and listened to in all activities at WAM which has a positive ripple effect to family life.*** Massive thank you to an incredible organisation."

### WAM Outdoors 1:1 Student:

"When T started WAM he was in a pretty bad place he was very angry with life and had no confidence in himself he didn't believe he was capable of doing anything and had no drive to attempt new things. He really didn't want to attend WAM when he first started it took a lot to get him to go. As time went on with the help of everyone at WAM you could see **he started to believe in himself** a lot more he realised he was capable of doing more than he ever thought, he confidence has gone from strength to strength. I feel like T has made massive steps towards making something of his life and WAM has been a big part of that I'm very proud of the person he's become. He really has a positive mindset at the moment and it's clearly showing. He gets excited about his days at WAM and is always excited to tell me what he's been doing." (Parent 1)



"I'm incredibly thankful for the dedication and support you've all given T. I've seen him come from a very troubled, insecure and lost boy to a young man who is so much happier and **sees a purpose for his life**. Without you all supporting him and believing in him I don't think he'd be where he is now." (Parent 2)

"I wish I could come out 5 days per week, **it feels good learning how to do things**. It relaxes me & helps with my aggression." (T)

"**WAM really does support complex young pupils to see life through a different lens**" (T's teacher)

## WAM OUTDOORS & COMMUNITY GROUPS

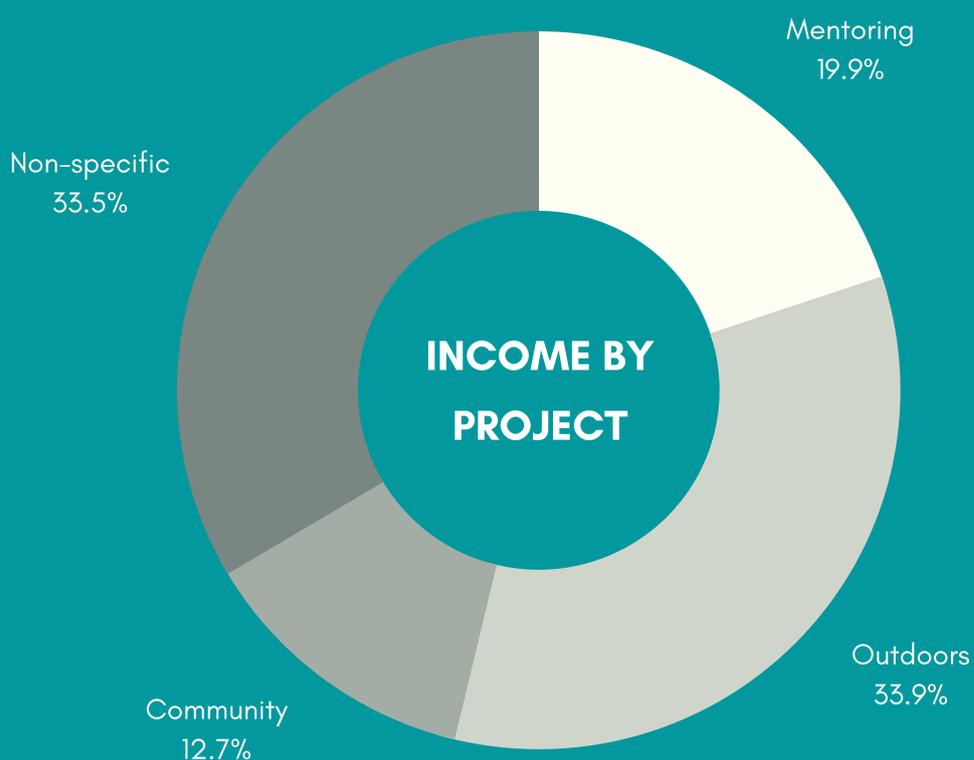
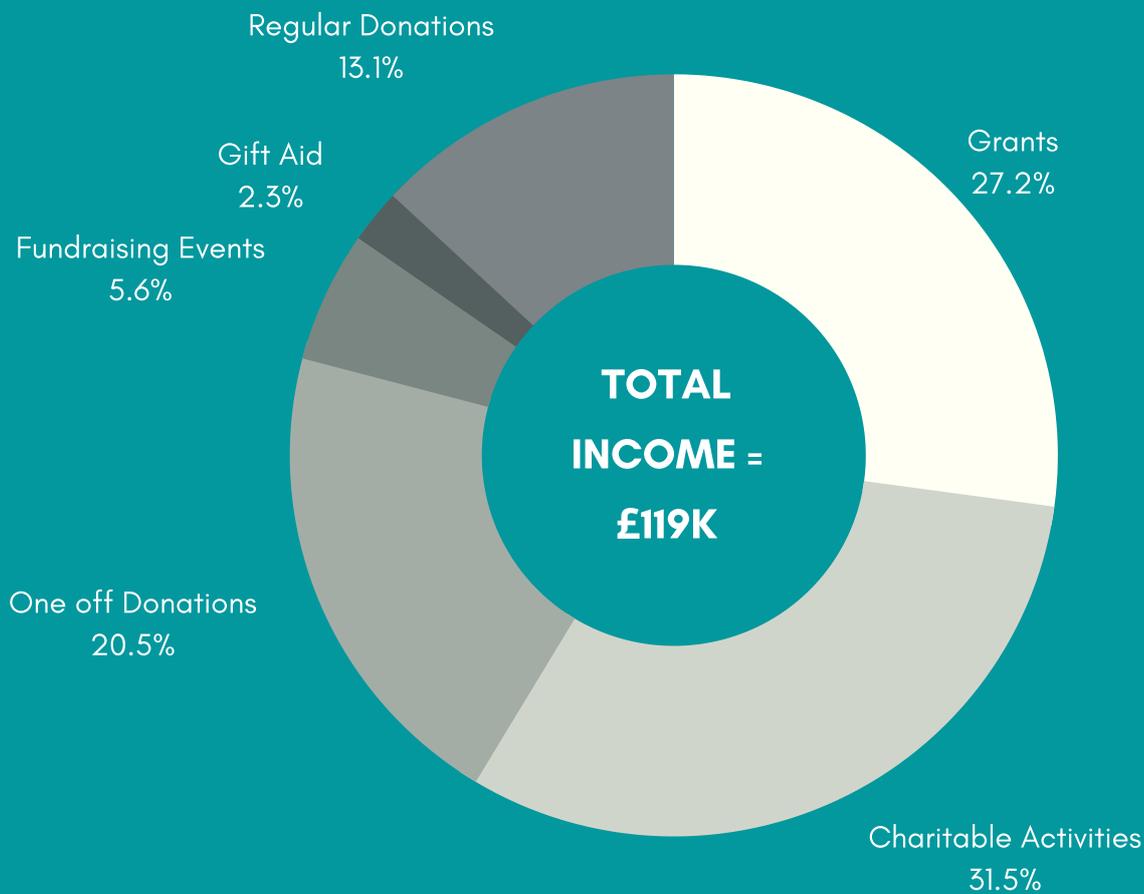


### Jill Bryant, a WAM Volunteer:

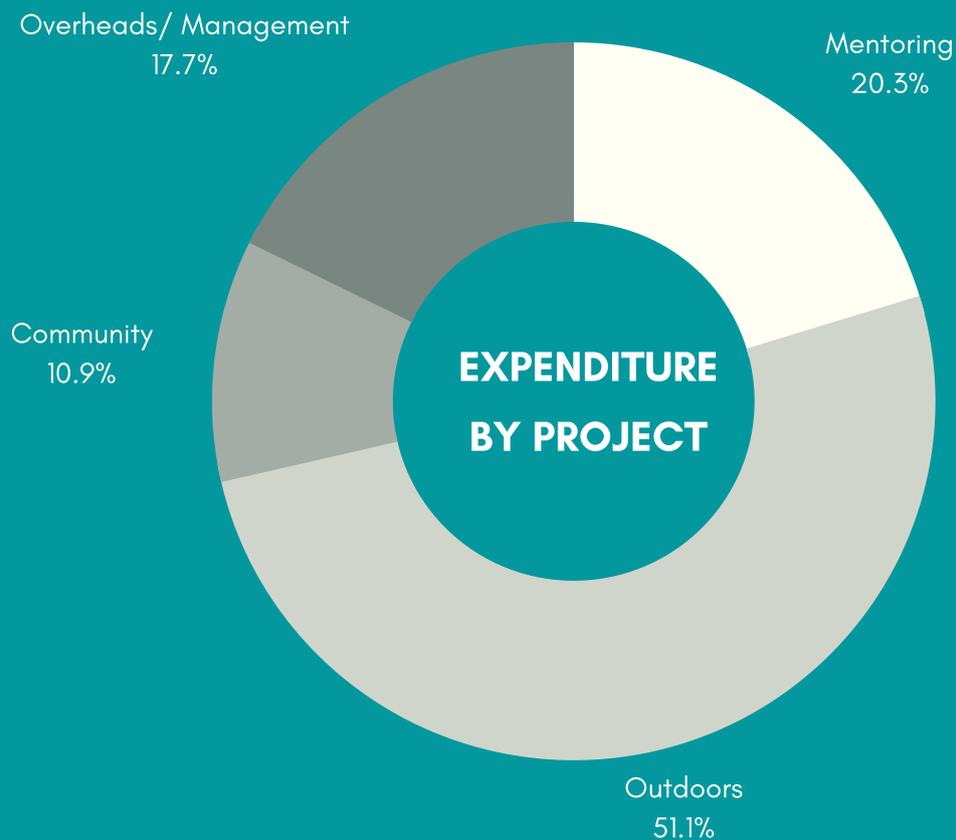
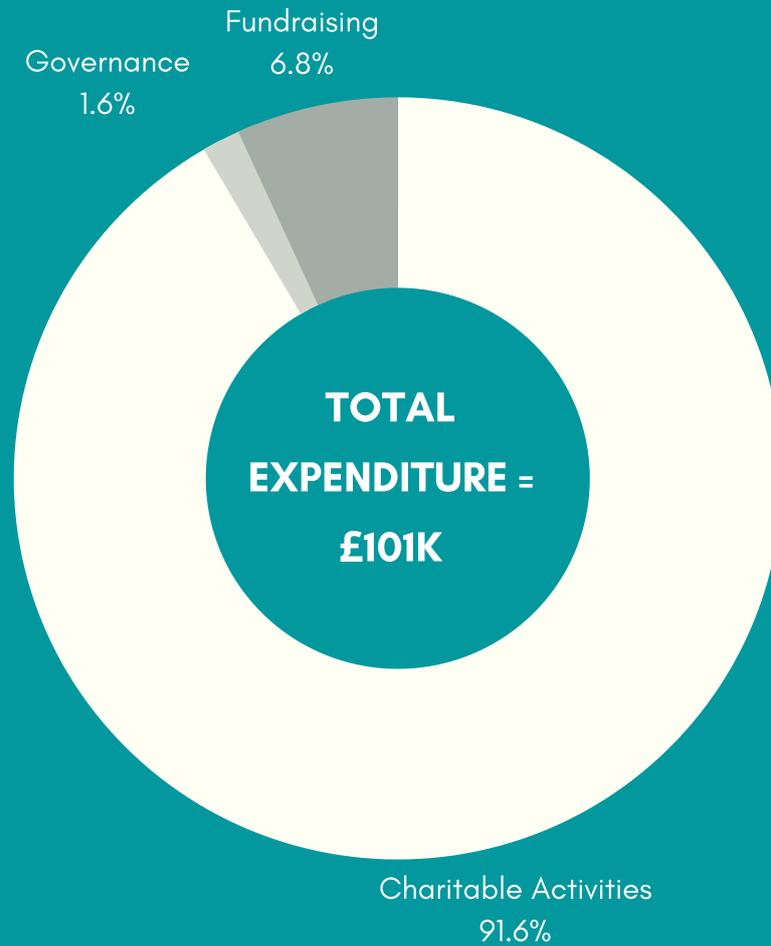
"You're doing such an amazing job with the youths you help and I think they are responding really well to it. The few that I was able to engage with were happy to talk about their aspirations etc and they gave me the impression that they certainly wanted to improve their future prospects, they just needed someone to believe in them. As you know, when I first started, I was really apprehensive about what to expect and a little scared!! But as I got to know them and build their trust, I was overwhelmed by the way they welcomed me, their politeness and their eagerness to engage. I began to look forward to Tuesday evenings and catch up with them so **it really taught me that underneath all the layers they wear and the roles they act out, they are just individuals trying to find their way in the world**. Going forward, I'm continuing on with my counselling course and will be qualified in 2 years. This is the age group that I want to work with so it was a huge step forward for me to work with the youth group. So, **I want to thank you so much for that opportunity because without it, I wouldn't have had the courage to pursue my path.**"

# ANNUAL INCOME

A full set of accounts is filed with the Charity Commission each year. This is an overview for Sep 19-Aug 20.



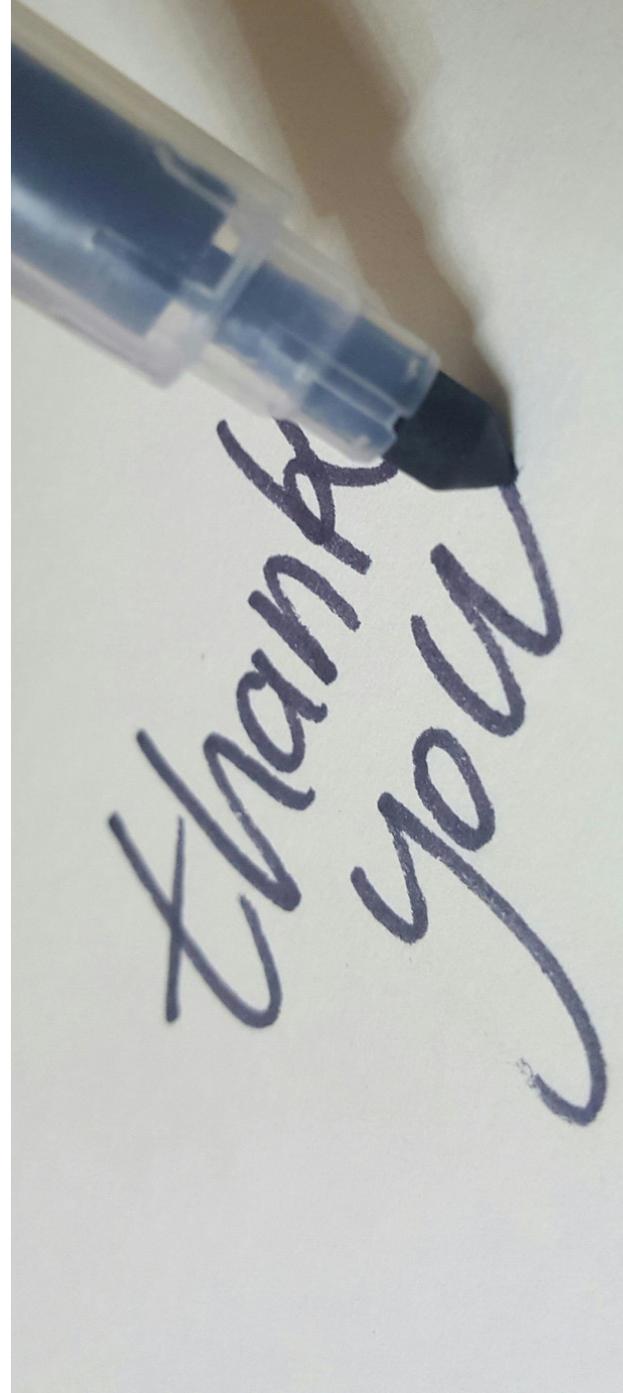
# ANNUAL EXPENDITURE



# SUPPORTERS & LINKS

Thanks to the following organisations who have supported us this year both financially and practically!

Barnwood Trust, Severn Trent Water, Tewkesbury Borough Council, National Lottery Community Fund, Groundwork Trust, Winchcombe Youth Hub, Gloucestershire Community Foundation, GCC's Growing Our Communities Fund, Encounter Church, St Peter's Church, Winchcombe Churches Together, Winchcombe Methodist Church, Christmas Raffle at GCHO, Gloucestershire Police and Crime Commissioner's Fund, Winchcombe Town Council, GCC's Thriving Communities Fund, Winchcombe Rotary Club, Box Tree Gifts, Emporium Cheltenham, Young Gloucestershire, UK Youth, Winchcombe Co-op, Tewkesbury Rotary Club, Langtree Trust, Winchcombe Together, Winchcombe School's WISPA and the many individuals whose donations have made our work possible.



ENCOUNTER CHURCH



HM Government

In partnership with

THE NATIONAL LOTTERY  
COMMUNITY FUND