

ANNUAL REPORT 2023

Making Life Better



Welcome from our Chair and CEO

Key Highlights for Community Action Dacorum



Welcome to the annual report of the trustees for 2022/2023. It was a year where our resilience and imagination enabled us to emerge successfully from the covid pandemic and operate a more normal year of support to the community.

We continue to make progress in our aim to have a positive difference on the lives of people in Dacorum and increasing recognition for the work of our staff and volunteers. During the year we have recruited several excellent new trustees who have enabled us to fill some of the skill and experience gaps on the board and to commence succession planning for the future.

This has allowed us to deliver services in the key arenas of Communities | Employability | Wellbeing to develop our services and increasingly offer more support to Dacorum residents. Our events volunteering team is a new group, emerging from our vaccine volunteers. They can support community events and one-off pop-up experiences supporting the charity and the community. Our HITS team have been working with the DWP to provide courses for bilingual individuals to support them to set up in business as translators. As a result, we have directly employed several new interpreters and other individuals are using their newly developed skills elsewhere. Our wellbeing team have increased our offering with a wheelchair accessible vehicle, which offers the potential for a holistic transfer from home to ShopMobility and back again.

Our trading subsidiary achieved another successful and profitable year enabling us to use a high proportion of the profits to support our efforts to successfully meet our charitable objectives. Thanks to our prudent financial management, we have been able to set aside further provisions against the potential risk of unexpected cost increases in future years as well as making further investments in our capital assets. So far this has allowed us to cope with the cost-of-living crisis and to support our staff through a difficult financial time. We were able to increase salaries for staff to mitigate the impact of inflation and increased interest rates.

It has been an exciting year of growth for Community Action Dacorum which has had an increased impact on the community in which we live. We are both proud to present this review of that year for you in this report.

Enjoy!

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Simon".

Simon Aulton
Chief Executive

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Colin".

Colin Gage
Chairman



**The Queen's Award
for Voluntary Service**

Meeting our Charitable Purpose

As set out in our governing document, Community Action Dacorum exists “to link the public, corporate, and voluntary sectors for the benefit of the community”

Specifically:

- To promote any charitable purposes for the benefit of the public, principally but not exclusively in the local government area of Dacorum and its environs, and build the capacity of third sector organisations, providing them with the necessary support, information, and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.
- To promote, organise, and facilitate co-operation and partnership working between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purposes within the area of benefit.

We deliver our charitable purpose by focusing on three key areas for the benefit of the residents of Dacorum: Communities | Employability | Wellbeing.

Each one of our services aims to improve the areas of people’s lives that most influence the wider health of our community. Often working with the borough’s most vulnerable residents, we support the labour market, promote life-long education, help people with their income and expenditure through the cost-of-living crisis, and build a sense of community within Dacorum.

Our Communities team meets our charitable purpose by promoting, organising, and facilitating co-operation and partnership between third sector, statutory and other relevant bodies. Together with our Employability and Wellbeing teams, and the support of our interpreting service, it improves quality of life for people across the borough.

Our Impact

Our work during the year has strengthened Dacorum’s social and community networks, making the borough a better place to live and work. We’ve empowered residents by supporting them to improve their job prospects and working environments. We’ve addressed digital poverty and provided access to healthcare services. Our wellbeing services have given dignified independence to vulnerable residents, something that’s crucial to ensuring wellness in the long-term. We’ve used education to tackle isolation and loneliness and built life-long learning skills for many via our training and development work. We’ve provided practical lessons in numeracy and forged partnerships to further improve skills across the borough.

In this report we present some examples of the many interventions we have undertaken during the year. We would love to showcase everything but sadly space will not allow...



Community

Social and community networks are crucial to wellbeing and a key factor in determining good health. People and businesses are drawn to Dacorum because of the borough's strong sense of community, and the voluntary sector is a major contributor to this.

At the forefront is Community Action Dacorum – coordinating the voluntary sector's approach to meeting social needs and ensuring the sector has a voice with decision makers. We have brought investment into the borough, funded cost-of-living information events for residents, and supported member charities to set up warm spaces. The charity has pulled together partnerships within the sector and continues to safeguard Dacorum by ensuring groups operate safely.

Payroll Services

At Community Action Dacorum, the expertise of our in-house payroll department is available to charities, groups, and organisations throughout the borough and county.

Our dedicated and seasoned team delivers a full and professional monthly payroll service at exceptionally competitive rates, saving our members time and money. Services include the preparation of monthly salary payments, paying employees directly via BACS, generating pay slips, handling P45s, P14s, and P60s, pensions, maternity pay, and dealing with

Inland Revenue on an organisation's behalf.

Local charities make savings every year by using our services, and numerous parish councils reap the benefits of having their accounts reviewed by our experienced team before submission. This year we saved a local charity £14,000 by optimising their Employment Allowance claims. Identifying the opportunity for savings positively impacted the charity's ability to spend more of its resources on the important work they do supporting people in the community.



Supporting Tring Music Partnership

A key element of our work with community groups is helping them achieve their goals. Via our Support4Dacorum service, we work with groups to recruit volunteers, ensure best practice in governance, and raise funds through grants. This year we've worked closely with 50 organisations to bring in funding, one of which was Tring Together.

The charity Tring Together runs events to help people 'enjoy life in Tring'. With our help and advice, the charity secured funding from Dacorum Borough Council to launch the Tring Music Partnership programme. Through free and subsidised workshops, the programme has made music accessible to everyone in Tring. It's given hundreds of residents



from all backgrounds the opportunity to experience the health and wellbeing benefits of making music and performing, and also provides music for the town's community events.

Tring Together is well supported by volunteers and goodwill, but securing funding was vital in ensuring the varied programme was managed smoothly and that it secured professional, highly experienced musicians and tutors. Our team supported the charity through the application process; they were told that they made the process seem "straightforward". By ensuring the aims were clearly explained our Communities team had a positive impact on Tring Together, who in turn made a difference to Tring residents.

Supporting Communities in Crisis

This year we organised a sewing course for Afghan women who had been homed in hotels in Dacorum. This opportunity to learn a practical skill they could use in the future also provided a safe, comfortable place to socialise and be themselves. The sessions improved their mental health and wellbeing by boosting self-confidence and self-esteem and fostering engagement and teamwork. Additionally, sewing for their daughters and granddaughters gave them great pleasure.

At the end of the course, we were able to gift sewing machines to those who attended, who have since put them to use setting up a business. The impact of this work was improving the quality of lives for people in a time of crisis, giving them hope and empowerment and reducing their needs for future support.

Dacorum Volunteer Centre *"Thanks to Dacorum Volunteer Centre I'm volunteering for Stepping Out for Carers and Dacorum Community Trust – Community Action*

Our Community Projects

- Support4Dacorum
- Dacorum Volunteer Centre
- Community Help Hertfordshire
- Resettling Afghan Refugees
- Supporting Ukrainian Guests and their Families
- Ukrainian Peace Garden
- ESOL for Hong Kong BNOs
- Cost of Living Advice Programme
- Minibuses for Groups
- Climate Change Youth Exchange
- Smile to EU



Dacorum did my DBS check for this, and I enjoy it. Supporting the vaccine centre was the first volunteering I did, so this is a new world for me, and it has really been an eye opener in so many ways. Community Action Dacorum do a great job pulling it all together." Abigail McElheron – volunteer

Employability

At Community Action Dacorum we recognise that our working life impacts our health, and we empower people in Dacorum, including our most vulnerable residents, to improve their life chances by offering opportunities for practical skills-based development. We support young people in building their CVs through our schools' careers work and help schools meet their Gatsby targets, we work with those whose abilities outshine their disabilities by connecting them with the support they need to get into work, and we provide purposeful retirement to those leaving the workforce with opportunities for volunteering and skills development.

Dragons Apprentice 10 Years On

This year the Dacorum Dragon's Apprentice Challenge marked a decade of supporting local school students and charities. The challenge has seen 645 Dacorum teens learn skills directly from business leaders and raise an incredible £109,921 for local causes.

Every year, Dacorum schools enter Year 12 students to the challenge, where they use business ideas to turn £100 into £1,000 for a Dacorum-based charity. They're supported by the chosen charity and their 'Dragon' – a local business leader who shares their experiences of business planning, marketing, and entrepreneurship.

As the challenge has run for 10 years, the High Sheriff of Hertfordshire, Liz Green, visited John

F Kennedy School in Hemel Hempstead to thank this year's apprentices, whose latest efforts took the school's 10-year total raised by the challenge to more than £30,000. The headteacher, Paul Neves, is a great supporter of the programme because of the confidence it gives his students and the impact it makes on their lives. The challenge helps young people care more for their community and from an early age makes links between entrepreneurial business practices and social values.

Earlier in the year, the Lord Lieutenant of Hertfordshire, Robert Voss CBE, presented the Dragons' Apprentice Challenge awards and also emphasised the practical value of the programme.



2735 students supported with CV Writting

Since 2014 Connect Dacorum has been running CV and interview skills at local secondary schools. It's a very successful programme with around 2735 pupils and over 1,355 hours volunteered by the business community.

The pupils feedback from the events have been very positive - *"I have found about interviews and a variety of skills needed"*. Another said *"I will apply the communication skills that I have developed."*

Our Employability Services

- CV Writing Days
- Dragon's Apprentice
- Volunteering for Employment
- Purposeful Retirement
- ESOL Courses
- Introduction to Interpreting Courses
- Connect Dacorum
- Digital Inclusion
- 1:1 work with SEND children
- Keeping Traditions Alive
- Joint Venture



Radio Dacorum Builds Confidence

Zak Smith joined our community radio station, Radio Dacorum, for a six-month work experience placement in 2021 and now hosts a regular music show. Zak has learning difficulties, including autism, among other neural divergent challenges, which made achieving his dream of being a DJ challenging. His confidence grew at the studio and he now hosts his own weekly rock show. Every week he prepares two hours of music from notes he makes of all his favorite tracks. He makes his own posters to promote the show on social media and has built up quite a following. In between playing his songs he often tells listeners about what he did at the weekend, the gig he went to and who he hopes to see live next, all interspersed with fun facts and daft jokes, just as all the other presenters on the radio do.

Zak has learnt so much that he has just started training another young volunteer, who also has extra learning requirements. The confidence this has given Zak is remarkable, mainly due to the vast increase in his ability to communicate, and his increased confidence in what he says and how he says it.

Radio Dacorum has worked with Druglink, DENS, the NHS, Herts County Council, Dacorum Borough Council, and local schools and colleges, giving people of all ages a unique opportunity to have fun, meet people, interact, learn, play music, interview guests, communicate, grow and thrive, all while doing something they genuinely enjoy. The impact of this targeted work is to build the confidence of the young people we support and thanks to that increased confidence, to support them into meaningful employment. The Radio Station simulates work experience that is invaluable when moving on. You can read more about Radio Dacorum and its impact on wellbeing on page 10 of this report.

Wellbeing

Having access to healthcare services that promote dignity and independence has a significant impact on wellbeing. That's why our wellbeing services focus on increasing the independence of people with mobility issues. By providing community transport between medical appointments, mobility scooters that allow families to access shops together, and accessible day trips and shopping trips that reduce isolation and loneliness, we give our residents facing mobility issues dignified access to wider services in our community.

Wheelchair Accessible Vehicles

Our Community Transport scheme has been providing affordable, inclusive transport for Dacorum's residents for more than 30 years. More recently, we've also been able to provide accessible transport for residents who use wheelchairs.

Susan Draper, who uses the service, explains what it means to her:

"I have peripheral vascular disease, which for me means I have severe arthritis in both ankles and find it very difficult to weight bear and I can only walk a couple of steps with a walking aid. Without the use of a wheelchair, I would be prone to falling so I need to have transport where I can stay in my wheelchair."

"For two years I've been having treatment at the local hospital and using the NHS non-emergency transport service to get to the appointments. For a while they were twice a week and getting to them took a lot of effort and left me feeling very anxious about the transport."

This year Susan found out about the Community Transport service and got in touch – and we've been getting her to and from appointments ever since. Susan says the impact the service has on her life is 'huge'. Because we pick Susan up 30 minutes before she needs to arrive for her appointment, she doesn't have to get up extremely early and can have



a good night's sleep. She doesn't have to spend long, uncomfortable periods waiting for return transport either, as our volunteers stay for the duration of her appointment then drive her straight home. Susan says she no longer feels anxious about the transport as the drivers are 'always on time and very helpful'. She hasn't missed any appointments since using the service.

She said:

"A huge benefit of using Community Transport is the sheer convenience and ease of booking, all the drivers are very kind and always ask if there is anything extra that they can do to help me."

10 Years of Door2Store

This year marks the 10th anniversary of our community shopping service, Door2Store, which provides transport to the supermarket for elderly residents and people with disabilities. We launched the scheme to allow people to remain independent in their own homes and provide opportunities for social interaction. Without the service, many of the residents who use it wouldn't be able to go shopping at all.

One passenger, Jean, said:

"I can hardly walk and need to use a wheelchair when going around the store. Coming on the minibus once a fortnight is the only time I get to go out. I really missed the service when it didn't run during lockdown."

"Everyone is so nice and helpful on the minibus." Another shopper, Sheila, uses the service because she has no other way of getting to the supermarket. She said: "It gives me independence and we get plenty of time to shop, I finally got the chance to walk around the clothing section when I started using the service. It feels more like an outing, and everyone is lovely."

Door2Store and its volunteers have made an incredible impact on the lives of people living in Dacorum over the past decade. To celebrate the 10-year success of the service, volunteer minibus driver Andy Miles, and volunteer passenger assistants Fiona MacDonald and Janet Bond, shared their experiences. All three said the impact of volunteering on their mental health had been positive and shared the joy of supporting their community.

Janet said:

"I really enjoy helping out every fortnight. I like to keep active and have always helped people out. The social aspect of Door2Store is very important to me and the shoppers, they are good company. I help Joyce who is 99 years old every time she comes and it's a way of her getting here and chatting with the other ladies. We take the shopping in to her home and put it away into her fridge for her. I also pop in to see Joyce on other days for a social chat and to check if she needs any support. There is a great camaraderie between the three of us, as a volunteer role it's very easy, they are nice group of ladies and very appreciative."

Our Wellbeing Services

- ShopMobility
- Door2Store
- Community Transport
- Community Buses
- Community Help Hertfordshire
- Staying Connected



Supportive Wellbeing Projects

Being part of a community has proven benefits for your health and wellbeing. Our social and community networks provide support and strength and make us who we are. Promoting and extending the joy that comes from volunteering and being involved with the community is one of the ways Community Action Dacorum supports residents to have purposeful lives. Our wellbeing services ensure that people across Dacorum have the highest quality of life possible.



Radio Dacorum

Community radio station Radio Dacorum gives vulnerable groups and individuals in our community a safe space in which to have a voice. Broadcasting 24 hours a day and playing a mix of music from well-known artists and local musicians, the station features chat and views from Dacorum residents about local issues. What makes Radio Dacorum special is it does these things to make a positive difference to people's lives. From building the confidence and wellbeing of our volunteers, to impacting the lives of our listeners, the content of the station is designed to ensure a better quality of life for those who interact with it.

When volunteers aren't in the studio, they take the confidence and communication skills they gain there with them. Young volunteers often go on to full-time employment where it had previously not been thought possible, due to barriers like autism or other diverse learning issues. One volunteer benefited from her time in the studio by practising talking into the microphone, explaining to listeners the reason for her speech impediment was because of neurological damage, and over time her speech impediment decreased. Another volunteer, diagnosed with stage four breast cancer, presented a weekly show called '40 Things Before I'm 40', where she played her



favourite music and talked on air about what she'd ticked off her bucket list, one of which was hosting a radio show. The station provides a cathartic safe space for presenters to express themselves and a place they can process things that are happening to them with their listeners.

This year saw the launch of a 'Music for Memory' show, inspired by a presenter who was unable to visit his father's nursing home as often as he'd like. Nursing and care homes play the show live in their day rooms and send in specific song requests to stimulate memories for people with dementia.

Dr Rachel Daly, a nurse specialising in dementia care, explained:

"Many people living with dementia have strong memories of when they were younger. Music can be a powerful tool for unlocking and stimulating these memories."

At the start of the most recent invasion of Ukraine, Radio Dacorum made immediate contact with Ukrainians we had previously worked with through European Projects, a Community Action Dacorum initiative that shares best practice and learning within a network of likeminded European organisations. We've spoken live on the radio to, and interviewed via Zoom, people caught in the conflict and engaged with incoming Ukrainian refugees, who are now looking to start bi-lingual broadcasts on Radio Dacorum to give helpful information and hope to those fleeing the war.

More than 17,000 people in 170 different countries tuned in to Radio Dacorum between April 2022 and April 2023, making its impact truly global. Many of our non-UK listeners use the station to keep in touch with home, find out with what's happening in the borough, and keep their Dacorum roots alive. For local listeners, Radio Dacorum provides shows they really relate to and that make them feel less alone. For our presenters, hosting a show is a cathartic way to relax, express themselves, and mindfully process their thoughts and feelings with thousands of 'friends' across the borough. The station supports employability, giving young people with learning difficulties the skills to gain employment or build techniques that allow them to pass on their skills. We also shout about Dacorum, promoting local events and organisations to encourage more residents to get involved with the wider community.

Our Supportive Wellbeing Projects

- Day Trippers
- Radio Dacorum
- Volunteer Centre
- Repair Sheds
- DICA
- Active 2

Training and Development

Keeping your mind and body active makes for a more fulfilling and healthy life, which means our training and development courses deliver across all three of our focus areas: Communities | Employability | Wellbeing. They also support our work with the trading company Herts Interpretation and Translation Service (HITS).

Employability Training for Interpreters

Following the withdrawal of western governments from the conflict in Afghanistan and the Russian invasion of Ukraine, this year has seen an increased demand for interpretation of the Afghani and Ukrainian languages. To meet the increased need for interpreters, our training and development team partnered with the Department of Work and Pensions and the East of England Local Government Association to train bilingual job seekers to become interpreters.

Interpretation is more than speaking fluently in two languages. The moral and ethical responsibilities of an interpreter are essential to ensure the quality-of-service delivery. Our Introduction to Interpreting course takes bilingual hopefuls through these industry standard approaches and equips people new to the sector to work in difficult situations such as hospitals and public sector bodies. Our

award-winning training includes an introduction to community interpreting, an introduction to interpretation, and a diploma in public service interpreting (DPSI) qualification.

This year, we worked in partnership with the Job Centre Plus team to offer potential interpreters the course as well as inviting non-jobseekers to join us. Having completed the course, those who are successful can join our register and can start their own business as a professional interpreter or join our payroll as an in-house interpreter. The impact of this course has been wide ranging – it built confidence for jobseekers, provided more interpreters in much needed or rare languages, ensured people could fully access medical and legal services, and provided employment, often for those who are refugees or guests in the UK.

Lifelong Learning

Our Training and Development team has run courses in Hertfordshire for more than 20 years, reaching more than 10,000 people. The classes impact lives across the borough and beyond, reducing loneliness, stimulating minds, and upskilling adults. Some highlights this year include teaching maths through crafts and arts therapy courses at The Waterside Centre, a day centre for adults with learning difficulties and special needs. And meeting a wonderful 90-year-old volunteer at the Heather Club, a day centre for those with Dementia, who joined in the classes. We also ran 'Staying In Touch' digital skills classes for elderly residents living in supported housing. Feedback from our classes is very positive. Many learners say it has a positive impact on their wellbeing and that they look forward to our weekly sessions, without which they would feel isolated and depressed.





Multiply

Our Multiply courses are designed to make everyone a champion for numeracy and have given learners practical skills that make a big impact on their day-to-day lives. Evidence shows improving skills in literacy and numeracy boosts self-confidence and personal empowerment. It helps with job opportunities and budgeting finances, and enhances critical thinking, which helps us tell the difference between reliable and misleading information. Better literacy and numeracy skills also lead to a greater sense of control and improved wellbeing, which in turn boosts communication and empathy, both vital for building strong social connections. We deliver our accessible Multiply classes to individuals and organisations in Dacorum, passing on the delivery methods to the charities we work with to leave a legacy of learning and equipping even more people to lead healthier and more fulfilling lives.

Our Training and Development Services

- DPSI
- Introduction to interpreting
- Community Interpreting
- ESOL
- Lifelong Learning
- Multiply
- Safeguarding for Charities
- Governance for Charities
- Recruiting Volunteers
- IT courses
- Staying Connected

"It was a really interesting course and enjoyed learning about metric and imperial measurements as well as the similarities with our countries. I thoroughly enjoyed practical session and it was interesting to see how maths/numbers were used during the cooking session which we usually don't think about."

Our Core Values and Beliefs

Our vision for Community Action Dacorum is to be the local leader in the provision of high-quality and good-value community services, directly and indirectly, to the people of Dacorum, addressing identified social needs in the areas of Communities | Employability | Wellbeing.

We believe Community Organisations play a vital role in an inclusive society. We aim to achieve this by:

- Listening to and respecting the ideas and aspirations of others
- Giving everyone the right to equality of opportunity and the chance to make a contribution
- Committing to quality in all that we do and emphasising throughout our activities that quality matters
- Bringing people and organisations together to achieve more
- Encouraging the widespread participation of volunteers in the organisation and leadership of all our Activities and Business Units
- Working always in an ethical and responsible manner
- Responding to the need for change in a timely and responsible way
- Seeking to develop new initiatives that address developing social needs
- Being an employer of choice, supporting our staff team

Our Mission

Our mission is to make a positive difference to the lives of people in our area of operation. We support our community by working through member and partner organisations. Through the services we deliver directly, we improve life chances for those seeking employment or retirement. We also improve the quality of life for individuals by delivering wellbeing programmes.



How we will achieve this

Our strategy is made up of seven key objectives:

1. Communities
2. Employability
3. Wellbeing
4. Trading
5. Finance, Funding and Governance
6. Resources
7. Reputation, Impact and Influence



Focusing on the three major areas of our charitable delivery:

Communities remain at the centre of our strategy, over the coming years we will get to know our community even better, building our relationships to understand the residents of Dacorum and be an independent voice for those hardest to hear. Our work will be impactful and facilitate community groups to grow and be stronger, through an increasing range of offers and the development of our community services; these include Radio Dacorum and Connect Dacorum, as well as Support4Dacorum and the Volunteer Centre. We will aim to forge strong partnerships across the sector to work collaboratively towards a common goal.

Employability and aspiration are perennial issues in Dacorum, with average incomes lower than the rest of Hertfordshire. We will work with voluntary, statutory, and business partners to offer holistic support to both those who need support in achieving their ambitions and those seeking employment. By delivering training and offering opportunities to learn through intergenerational experiences we will support people seeking their first job, those who wish to upskill or reskill, and those leaving the workforce to begin a purposeful retirement. Through our ESOL courses and language services, we will break down barriers to employment and build our local workforce.

Wellbeing support is at the heart of our volunteering offer, we will continue to work in strong partnerships to leverage the benefits of the voluntary sector to strengthen the wellbeing of Dacorum's community. Building on our existing range of services, we will encourage independence and develop confidence for vulnerable residents. Through this work we will continue to contribute to the health and wellbeing of Dacorum and beyond.

The first three strategic objectives set out in the Trustees Strategic Plan 2022-2025 set out our direction to meet our charitable objectives of Communities | Employability | Wellbeing. These strategies were developed following a review of our successes from the previous strategic plan, and the gaps we saw in providing a holistic service to vulnerable people in the borough. We have set out our plans to work for the public benefit in Dacorum and surrounding areas over the next three years. The trustee board has been restructured in line with the seven themes and closely monitors progress in each area.

Our Year in Numbers

The financial year which ended in March 2023 began with two main financial issues facing us. The first, which was a consequence of Brexit, was the termination of projects that had for several years been financed by the European organisation known as Erasmus+. This had not only been a significant part of our activity but involved several members of staff whose jobs would therefore end. Happily we were able to redeploy those people and limit the number of compulsory redundancies.

The second issue was the uncertainty which still existed regarding COVID. This had affected several of our activities and in April 2022 it was not known if there would be another wave and perhaps another lockdown later in the year. Happily, the worst did not happen and life, along with Community Action Dacorum finances, returned almost to normal.

The financial result of these happy outturns was that the charity operated financially better than we had feared and the contribution made by our Trading subsidiary was much larger than expected. The Trustees decided to use some £260,000 of our funds to carry out some overdue renewals of facilities and

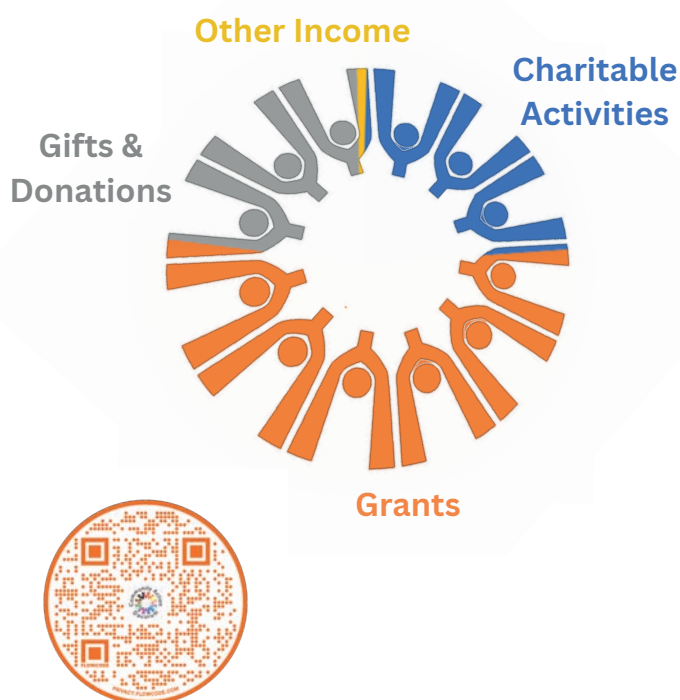


updating of our operations, which will enable us to provide a better service to our beneficiaries.

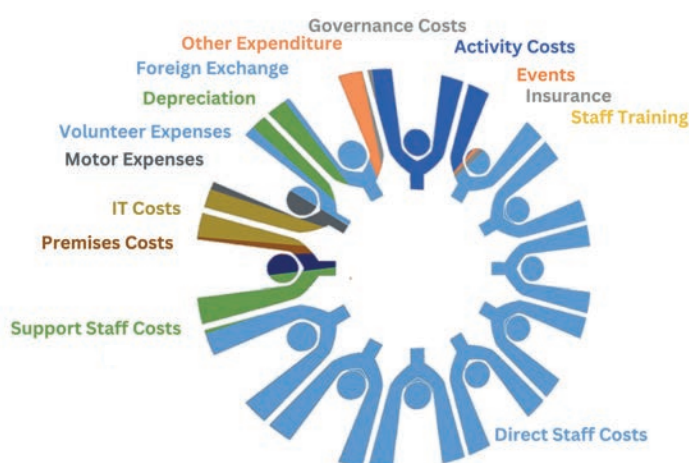
Looking forward, the big unknown now is inflation and the effect it may have on our costs. The trustees have made an allowance for this in their budget, but future costs still remain uncertain. Nevertheless, Community Action Dacorum has strong finances and there is no reason to think that we cannot cope with what may be thrown at us and we look forward with confidence.

Chris Dove
Honorary Treasurer

Where Money Comes From



How We Spend Our Money



TIMELINE OF 2022 - 2023



2022 saw:

10 teams, made up of 88 students, raised £10,445

In the 10 years it has run we have impacted on 645 students who have raised £109,920



Saw 2,280 hires in 2022, amounting to 7,980 hours shopping.

We enrolled 123 new members during the year.



170 Countries listen, 22% of listeners aged 25-35, 50:50 male: female



16,842 listeners in 2022, who tuned in 67,276 times 4,398 follow us on Facebook of whom 55% are female

310 items were gifted by businesses from 13 companies in Hertfordshire.



568 individuals were supported by the 72 Digital Champions on the project who delivered 609 support sessions

Training and Development team have been running courses for the people of Dacorum and across Hertfordshire for over 20 years, with in excess of 10,000 learners.



WWW.COMMUNITYACTIONDACORUM.ORG.UK

Financial Review

The parent charity had incoming resources of £1,479,733 and expenditure of £1,117,139 for the year giving rise to a surplus of £362,594. At the year end the charity had total reserves of £1,810,298 comprising of £3,958 of restricted funds, £790,789 of designated funds and £1,015,551 of unrestricted general funds.

Reserves Policy

The Charity Commission requires all charities to hold reserves, to this end the Board has examined the charity's requirements for reserves in light of the main risks to the organisation. It has established a policy whereby the unrestricted funds not committed or invested in tangible fixed assets held by the charity should be a minimum of 26 weeks of resources expended. At this level, which was reviewed during the year, the Trustees feel they would be able to continue the current activities of the charity in the event of a significant drop in funding. Should this happen, it would be necessary to consider how such funding would be replaced or activities changed. As of the 31st of March 2023, the charity had total access to free reserves in its accounts (based on

current assets less current liabilities) of £1,015,551, which amounted to 44 weeks of extended reserves. Trustees have designated £790,789 of our reserves to specific future projects and emergency reserves. Trustees are aware that with increasing inflationary costs due to the war in Ukraine, resources may be needed to support the delivery of our charitable purpose and are keen to make appropriate provision to protect the charity. Therefore, they have allocated a specific reserve to help mitigate future risks that they have assessed as being very likely, as well as designating substantial funds for development activities and rebranding over the next three to five years.



Funds Held on Behalf of Others

As a part of our role as a CVS, Community Action Dacorum operates a payroll service for our members. As part of this service Community Action Dacorum holds funds on behalf of our member organisations, which are used to pay salaries on a monthly basis. As of the 31st March 2023, the charity held £129,898 (2022: £119,822) on behalf of our payroll service users. In addition, we hold around €75,000 for European partner organisations who co-deliver Erasmus+ projects with us. These are held as a specific account in the Community Action Dacorum balance sheet and reported in Note 13.

Statement of Responsibilities of The Trustees

The Trustees are pleased to present their report and annual accounts of Dacorum Council for Voluntary Services (Community Action Dacorum) for the year ended 31 March 2023. These comply with current statutory requirements, the memorandum and articles of association and the requirements of the Statement of Recommended Practice – Accounting and Reporting by Charities (SORP) 2015.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial period that give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charitable company and of the incoming resources and application of resources, including the income and expenditure, of the charitable company for that period. In preparing those financial statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently;
- Comply with applicable accounting standards, including FRS102, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements;
- State whether a Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) applies and has been followed, subject to any material departures which are explained in the financial statements
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent;
- Prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charitable company will continue in business.



The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Companies Act 2006.

They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

In so far as the trustees are aware:

there is no relevant audit information of which the charitable company's auditor is unaware; and

the trustees have taken all the steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant audit information and to establish that the auditor is aware of that information.

The Trustees' Annual Report is approved by the trustees of the Charity. The Strategic Report, which forms part of the Annual Report, is approved by the trustees in their capacity as directors in company law of the Charity.

Signed on behalf of the Trustees on 31st October 2023

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Colin Gage', written over a light blue circular stamp.

Colin Gage
Chairman

DCVS Trading Limited and Hertfordshire Interpretation and Translation Service (HITS)

In addition to our charitable activities, we operate a commercially run, wholly owned subsidiary company – DCVS (Trading) Ltd – from which all profits are paid over to the charity to subsidise our charitable objectives. The core service we deliver through this subsidiary is our interpretation and translation service Hertfordshire Interpretation and Translation Service (HITS), which provides DPSI-qualified interpreters to public sector, voluntary sector, and business-based clients across England and Wales. Most of our clients are hospitals and councils in the East of England, Southern England and London.

This work grew from our support for communities in Dacorum, where we recognised that access to healthcare and local government was reliant on understanding. By building a team of community interpreters we were able to improve residents' understanding of the decisions that affect their lives and support them in making informed decisions. HITS continues this work, supporting people in Dacorum, Hertfordshire, and further afield, to better understand their interactions with local government and healthcare professionals.

As time has gone on, HITS has helped train community interpreters to higher and higher standards, now offering a range of courses from basic introductions and community interpreting to courses that provide interpreters with a minimum safe-to-practice level, and on to diplomas in public service interpreting courses that are equivalent to a degree-level qualification. Having completed these courses individuals improve their employability and can begin careers as professionals.

For our customers, HITS provides **Quality, Performance, Reliability and Security**, providing reassurance that their interpretation and translation needs are accurate and unbiased. Through our network of interpreters, we provide more than 300 different languages and dialects to our clients on a contract or ad hoc basis. All profits are used to support the charity and so money spent with HITS not only provides a quality service for patients and



families, but also funds preventative programmes aimed at reducing the need for medical intervention.

Our dedicated booking team ensure we provide a bespoke service to our customers, matching the most appropriate interpreter to the client and recommending the most cost-effective way to interact, be that face-to-face or via video link. The team have expertise in ensuring the individuals needs are prioritised and offer support and advice when booking. They also monitor and support bookings placed through our online portal to ensure that costs are kept to a minimum whilst maintaining the highest quality.

Our award-winning Diploma in Public Service Interpreting (DPSI) and Safe to Practice

interpretation courses offer a way into interpreting for those who wish to start a new career. Through this training route, HITS can select the best students to join our team and ensure the highest quality interpreters are available to our clients and ensure we provide a service they can trust. This year our training was recognised by the Department for Work and Pensions as a way into employment and so more students have come through our training team than in previous years, supporting the delivery of our charitable aims around employability.

HITS are ISO9001 and ISO27001 certified, ensuring the security of our client's data. Our interpreters are all fully vetted and offered continuous personal development opportunities to ensure their knowledge of interpreting, safeguarding, and data security remain current. With a fulfilment rate of over 97 per cent successful appointments, HITS continues to offer our customers a high quality, reliable service at an affordable price.

The impact of HITS is to support communities in crisis with languages and communication. We support individuals who struggle to understand and local organisations, including many of our community

member organisations, to be more inclusive. Our training supports hundreds of people to be more employable and to set up their own businesses in interpreting and translation. We are also able to offer them work to help get them started on their new career path. Finally, by helping people when they need it, we improve the wellbeing of non-native speaking individuals in Dacorum and beyond, giving them a better quality of life and helping them integrate in the borough.

To access interpretation services, call 01442 867212 or email

**interpreting@communityactiondacorum.org.uk
24 hours a day, seven days a week.**

"It has been good to be able to use the same interpreter, giving that consistency to a client, allowing the client to build a relationship with interpreter and myself, therefore getting a better response from the client. I like the speed that the interpreter works at, it suits me!"

J.B. Herts County Council



Legal and Administrative Information

NAME OF CHARITABLE COMPANY: Dacorum Council for Voluntary Service (Community Action Dacorum)

COMPANY LIMITED BY GUARANTEE NUMBER: 01745852 **CHARITY COMMISSION NUMBER:** 288080

TRUSTEES (NON-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS)

Colin Gage (Chair)

Tina Howard (Vice Chair)

Doug Root (Vice Chair)

Chris Dove (Hon. Treasurer)

William Allen

(Appointed 01 December 2022)

Peter Ashman

(Appointed 01 December 2022)

John Birnie

Margaret Griffiths

Pushpa Kalu

Ian Laidlaw-Dickson

(Resigned 01 December 2022)

Richard Roberts

Sally Symington

(Appointed 01 December 2022)

Roger Taylor

Helen Young



Trustees are inducted on appointment and have opportunities for ongoing training on a regular basis both individually and as a group.

SENIOR STAFF MEMBERS TO WHOM DAY-TO-DAY MANAGEMENT OF THE CHARITABLE COMPANY IS DELEGATED BY THE TRUSTEES:

Simon Aulton Chief Executive Officer

Helen Mutio Deputy Chief Executive

PRINCIPAL ADVISERS:

BANKERS:

Metro Bank

56-58 Marlow Centre

Hemel Hempstead

Hertfordshire

HP1 1DX

ACCOUNTANTS:

LB Group

Swift House

18 Hoffmanns Way

Chelmsford

CM1 1GU

AUDITORS:

Moore Kingston Smith LLP

4 Victoria Square

St Albans

Hertfordshire

AL1 3TF

About Us Structure, Governance and Management

Dacorum Council for Voluntary Service (DCVS) operating as Community Action Dacorum (CAD) is a registered non-profit company limited by guarantee and governed by a memorandum of association and articles of association. Community Action Dacorum is also a registered charity with the Charity Commission of England and Wales.

Dacorum Council for Voluntary Service is controlled solely by its members (as defined in article 31 of the memorandum and articles) who elect its Trustees and whose members make up the board of directors. The charity is governed by its Memorandum and Articles of Association, initially dated 11th August 1983, and is subject to the requirements and the protection of both charity and company law.

The company has an executive board, known as the Board of Trustees, of at least four individuals. The Board of Trustees meets 8 times per year to make decisions and receive the report of the Chief Executive Officer who is line managed by the Chair of the Board. The CEO is responsible for operations and manages the

Community Action Dacorum management team who in turn manage staff, interns and volunteers. The Trustees set the salaries of key management personnel and oversee the allocation of pay increases for all personnel.

The charity owns a wholly owned subsidiary trading company, "DCVS Trading Ltd.", which includes Hertfordshire Interpretation and Translation Service (HITS). This trading company was formed prior to the financial year ending 31st March 2019.

DCVS Trading Ltd, is a company limited by shares. It is controlled by a board of directors brought together from the local community, including three directors who also serve as Trustees of the charity. The board meets 6 times per year to make decisions and receive the report of the Chief Executive Officer. The CEO is responsible for the operations and line manages the DCVS Trading Ltd. management team, who in turn line manage staff and contractors. All profits from the trading company are transferred under the terms of a deed of covenant by Gift Aid donation to Community Action Dacorum.

History and Governing Document

Dacorum Council for Voluntary Service is a charitable company, limited by guarantee, incorporated on 8 December 1976 with its activities taken over by the company on 1 October 1983, and registered with the Charity Commission on 1 October 1983. In addition to the legal name the charity has as a working name Community Action Dacorum, which is primarily used in promoting the work and activities of the organisation.

Community Action Dacorum makes a positive difference to the lives of people within Dacorum in the areas of Communities | Employment | Wellbeing. As a council for voluntary service, we make a difference to the lives of people in Dacorum, bringing people together to achieve more in their communities and improve quality of life.

Recruitment and Appointment of Trustees

Trustees are appointed for an initial term of three years and can stand for re-election at the Annual General Meeting. The Trustees elect from their membership the positions of Chair, two Vice Chairs and Honorary Treasurer. All trustees are volunteers.

The Board of Directors meets six times a year and has a membership of all Directors. The Finance and General Purposes Committee also meets six times a year and comprises eight members of the Board of Directors. Reporting to the board are five committees

which oversee the service delivery and marketing of the charity.

Community Action Dacorum has an Equal Opportunity Policy which is applicable both internally to all staff, volunteers, the board and externally. We also have a Safeguarding Policy, a Modern Slavery Policy, a User Engagement Policy, a Data Management Policy, and a Volunteering Policy. We have an employee handbook and a Finance Management Policy.

We are grateful to our many sponsors and supporters, some of whom are listed here:

- The Captain Tom Foundation
- Dacorum Borough Council
- Department for Work and Pensions
- East of England Local Government Association
- European Social Fund
- European Union – Erasmus+ Fund
- Hertfordshire Community Foundation
- Hertfordshire County Council
- Hertfordshire Interpreting and Translation Services
- Hertfordshire County Councillors Locality Budget
- Herts Valleys CCG
- NHS Charities Together
- Step2Skills

Full details about the charity's legal and regulatory status can be found at the Charity Commission's website.

Registered Office:

Community Action Dacorum

48 High Street

Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 3AF

Office telephone: **01442 253935**

www.communityactiondacorum.org.uk

Email: reception@communityactiondacorum.org.uk

Web: <http://www.communityactiondacorum.org>

