

Chris Westwood Charity for Children with Physical Disabilities.

Update Report - First Quarter 2020

Background:

In 2019 we completed 90 grants during the year totalling £100,428.09, which was a small increase on the 88 grants completed in 2018, and a small reduction on the £109,438.01 total grants in that year. This brought us to 690 grants completed and £836,548 granted since we started 16 years ago. The final quarter of 2019 was particularly busy, and we completed 31 grants totalling £35,840.40, which was the highest we have seen in that quarter.

We approached 2020 with some optimism about pushing on towards our next goal of £1 million raised and granted since we started, all with no administration cost, but with some trepidation at the fundraising difficulties the rate of activity we were now seeing might present.

Progress in 2020:

The year started quietly, which was perhaps not unexpected after the surge we had seen in Q4 2019. Subsequent events, in particular the Coronavirus Pandemic, have now completely changed both the outlook and the challenges we, and the whole Charity sector, face in 2020 and beyond.

We have completed 11 grants totalling £15,101.53, and we have also approved small increases for additional items to two grants we made towards the end of 2019, totalling £205.99, bringing the total for the year to date to £15,307.52.

We have at least another 10 pending applications following initial enquiries, but currently it would appear that only about 6 or 7 of those are likely to proceed at some point, currently estimated at approx £9,000 in total. The severe disruption caused by the Coronavirus emergency has significantly delayed medical appointments and further detailed consultant/doctor supporting letters, as well as making it very difficult for equipment assessments to be carried out safely, if at all. With this situation likely to continue for a while, and the vulnerable nature of the group of children/young people that we aim to help, we are expecting activity to continue to decrease for the time being.

Once the situation improves, we might expect a significant recovery in activity, which raises a second concern. We are only able to respond with help provided that we have the funding available. Fortunately, we do have some reserves at the moment, but with most fundraising events effectively suspended, and the large number of small groups that regularly collect for us likely to have suspended all of their meetings, events and collections, the funds usually raised will come to a standstill, and so the generation of our funding will begin to become a major concern.

We do have a number of loyal supporters, some of whom make one off donations, and some who make regular donations. Both of these sources are greatly appreciated and if anyone else would like to help we would value an approach.

It is highly likely that grant activity will be well down in the first three quarters of the year, so we can only speculate as to what the final figures for the year will be, but a major reduction in activity would seem to be the most logical outcome, with the potential for a sharp rebound once the situation eases. The Charity Sector is facing major disruption, which will sadly have serious effects on the support that can be given in many areas. At least we have the advantage of being able to work with zero administration cost, enabling us to better cope with variations in our income, and suspend operations with no cost implications for our funds, if we absolutely have to.

Funding Help in 2020:

With many of the varied sources of our income likely to be significantly reduced, our aim will be to try and concentrate on 5 areas:

1. Gift Aid - Our annual submission to HMRC, which will be made promptly on the 6th April, is practically ready, and subject to any late income receipts, we are expecting this claim to be for £4,803.64, which will be a very useful boost to funds.

2. Regular Donations - We currently have 15 regular monthly donors who kindly contribute £4,962.00 in a full year (£6,187.50 with Gift Aid where applicable), which is another very useful and reliable source of income. As already mentioned, we would be very appreciative of any additions to this group.

3. One-off Donations - Which vary greatly from year to year but are always welcome. In 2019 Personal Donations were £13,730.00 (which is slightly higher than usual), and Company Donations were £1,500.00 (which was lower than usual). We don't expect Company donations to be significant this year either, in the light of the difficulties that business is facing.

4. Charitable Foundations – We do receive help from some Charitable Foundations, and we have multi year agreements with several, although these are now approaching completion, and after a further year's break, we can then apply again for consideration. We received one guaranteed £5,000 grant in January, and we do have one guaranteed payment of £5,000 due by the end of Q2/early Q3. There are several groups that, while not guaranteed, do support us regularly, so we are hopeful that we will be able to raise some further useful funding, and we will be submitting a few applications soon to try to help our funding position.

5. Commission Payments – These arise from a percentage commission on purchases made online or in a store.

We are registered with Amazon Smile, so that we can be the named charity to receive the small payment from any purchase made online (usually 0.5%). You can nominate any charity, and while we would hope we might be considered, as long as this facility is used, it benefits the charity sector as a whole, at no additional cost to the purchaser.

We are also registered with Everyclick, and there is a link on our *Donation* webpage. Various percentages can be claimed for a named charity on purchases online from many different companies, and there are also Store cards. The Chairman uses a John Lewis Store card for Waitrose shopping, which he reloads with £100 regularly, and each payment puts the full £100 on the card and creates a payment of £1.50 to the Charity. To date, in two years of operation, this has generated £140 in commission payments at no additional cost. The Store Card is just swiped at the checkout instead of using a credit/debit card, which is quick and easy to do. This is a simple system to use, and it creates some useful income for the chosen charity at no cost other than an initial £2.50 for the relevant store card (these being available for a very wide range of stores). Any additional support this year would be very welcome, although again, whichever charity is selected helps the Charity sector as a whole.

We also have other sources of income, but many will be severely affected, so we are expecting total income for the year to be reduced. Against this, as already mentioned, we are seeing significant delays in grant applications being prepared, so as always, it will be the usual challenges of balancing income against demand.

Grants Made in Q1 2020:

Age Yrs	Grant £	Details
13.5	217.61	He has a diagnosis of Spastic quadriplegic cerebral palsy and is non-verbal. He has been provided with communication software for an iPad by the ACT Centre in Birmingham, but he uses a wheelchair and needs a tray to support the equipment when in use. Wheelchair Services will not support the extra cost, so we agreed to fully fund.
8	1435.50	She has a diagnosis of Micro Syndrome, which presents with a range of problems including hip displacement and discrepancies in limb length. Having outgrown her existing car seat she required a new seat capable of providing the special support required, as she has poor head and trunk control in addition to her special seating needs. Following a detailed assessment, a suitable seat was specified by our regular supplier with whom we have a discount structure. With the family having already raised some funding, we agreed to grant the balance required for the purchase to proceed.
2	1322.27	Born prematurely, she has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy. This exhibits as movement difficulties and the need for daily exercises and stretches to avoid muscle tightening in her legs. Her Paediatric Physiotherapist proposed a special exercise trike to help to both stretch and develop her leg muscles, and improve her general coordination. We agreed to fully fund the purchase, the cost being reduced by our discount structure with the supplier.
13	2033.20	She has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy spastic quadriplegia, and uses a powered wheelchair. She has been provided with various items of equipment including a standing frame, but is unable to use a walking frame due to her condition. She receives regular physiotherapy on her legs, makes extensive use of her standing frame, and her Paediatric Physiotherapist has proposed a Cavalier Walker to try to further develop her leg muscles. During a full assessment, with suitable support she was able to walk short distances, further helping to develop her muscles, prevent deterioration, and improve her mobility away from her wheelchair. We were asked if we could help and fund the full purchase cost, to which we agreed.
10	600.00	He was born with Arthrogyrosis (<i>short limbs and with fixed contractures</i>), and is fully dependent on adult help for all of his care. He uses a powered wheelchair for all of his mobility requirements and he would benefit from a high/low facility for his chair. NHS are currently replacing the chair but do not fund this extra facility, so we agreed to cover the additional cost.
4	1400.00	Born with Spinabifida and exhibits with hydrocephalus and a neurogenic bladder. Despite initial prognosis that he would never even crawl, with intensive physiotherapy he can walk short distances but with little sensation below his knees, manoeuvring is difficult. Proposal was to fund a special exercise trike to improve his mobility, build leg strength, and improve his co-ordination, and we agreed to fully fund.
	3000.00	To provide funding towards a mobility project for a child with cerebral palsy. Pledge made on the basis of provision once all the required funding is in place.
6	618.00	He has a diagnosis of Autism, learning disability and has mobility problems. A special exercise trike was proposed to help to develop his legs and improve his mobility. Total cost was £1,318.00, and with funding of £700.00 already in place we were asked if we could help with the balance of £618.00, which we approved.
7	637.00	He has a diagnosis of Cerebral palsy, and also has mobility problems. He required a fully supportive special car seat with a 5 point harness to hold him securely, and we agreed to fully fund.
13	2056.95	He has a range of serious eye conditions, and needed a suitable computer, together with magnification software and a screen reader, to help him to be able to work at home. Having missed a significant period of education recently, the equipment was needed urgently, and we were asked by Dudley Vision Impairment Service if we could help. Having reviewed the circumstances, we agreed to fully fund.
9	1781.00	He has a diagnosis of Cerebral Palsy with a range of additional medical conditions which include Epilepsy (<i>Lennox Gastaut</i>), development delay, hip dislocation and reconstruction, and difficulties in standing. Proposal to purchase a Baffin Trio Stander which will fully support him, and can cope with his need to lean forwards, as he is unable to stand upright. His Health Authority will part fund, the family has raised some funding, but COVID-19 has caused the cancellation of other fundraising events, and help urgently needed to bridge the funding gap. We agreed to fund the balance required.
		In addition to the above, further approvals to existing pledges were made subsequent to the initial approval in late 2019, once a final cost was determined, and orders placed.
11	5.99	He has been severely sight impaired since birth with a range of problems. He uses a Perkins Braille at school and his parents are keen for him to use a Braille at home. He had a lightweight unit which had become beyond repair, and we were asked if we could help with the purchase of a new unit, similar to the one he uses at school. This request arose late in 2019 and we agreed to fund the purchase at a cost of £620.00. With minor additional expenditure to cover the supply of suitable Braille paper, a small adjustment to the total cost was required when the final invoice was paid in the current financial year.
12	200.00	She has a diagnosis of cerebral palsy, microcephaly and development delay. We have previously helped on several occasions including part funding an exercise machine to help her leg muscles. She has now outgrown this and needs a larger unit which will suit her into adulthood. We again agreed to part fund the request to assist the family with their applications to other charities for the balance of funding needed with the pledge of a grant of £900.00. The family raised further funding from another organisation, but still required £1,100.00 to complete the purchase rather than the £900.00 we had initially agreed, so we agreed to fund the extra £200.00 to ensure that she received the equipment.
Total	£15,307.52	

In Conclusion:

If you would like to contact us regarding this report, please email us at chriswestwoodcharity@gmail.com.

We now look towards an uncertain and challenging year, and we can only thank our supporters for their help.

Chris Westwood.