

# **ROUNDABOUT**

*Working to overcome disadvantage and waste*

Charity Registration Number: 1104867

Company Registration Number: 5065046

## **Annual Report April 2020-March 2021**

### **Directors/Trustees**

Mr Keith Barnes Chairman

Mrs Gabrielle Falkiner Vice Chairman

Ms Marlene Sale

Mr Brian Darwood

Mr Simon Yates

**Company Secretary:** Mrs Teresa Brimm

**Treasurer:** Vacant

**Manager:** Mr Peter Andrews

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## **Introduction- Chairman's Report**

Though I have been privileged to have been the Roundabout Chairman, it has been an incredibly challenging year due to the Covid-19 pandemic and lockdowns during this time. Holding committee meetings via Zoom was not ideal but it was our only option and I think we did reasonably well. During the pandemic many families have also lost loved ones and Roundabout has not come out unscathed with the loss of our own volunteers, Sean Dooley and Nigel Heath.

I am very pleased with my fellow Trustees decision to provide the 20% top up for the paid staff who were furloughed under the Coronavirus job retention scheme. This decision reduced the hardship that our staff may have endured while they were furloughed.

Peter has worked tirelessly to supply essential furniture for those in dire financial need during the lockdowns via our referral process maintaining one of our primary charitable objectives. He also kept in regular contact with our volunteers and staff to check on their physical and mental well-being during this difficult period. Teresa has worked hard, keeping on top of the workload as well as maintaining staff and volunteer's pastoral needs when returning to work following lockdown.

It has also been very satisfying to see how much Roundabout was missed during the lockdowns, we have had strong performances in respect of shop sales on our opening days which is very encouraging for us to build upon.

I would like to once again thank the Roundabout Management Team, Peter and Teresa, along with our two Warehouse Supervisors, Paul and Andy for their hard work and contributions. My gratitude also goes to our other part time staff members, Danny and Ceileigh and hopefully next year I will be making reference to contributions made by our new apprentice April.

It is unfortunate to lose some of the Trustees recruited in the past 12 months however we are pleased to have gained Simon and Brian as board members who through their experience in different fields have made contributions to the operation of the Charity. Last and not least, a big thank you to our wonderful volunteers who without their efforts the charity would not continue to be successful.

I look forward to Roundabout continuing to achieve all of their objectives, serving those in need of essential furniture in our community, looking after the welfare of our paid staff and volunteers and reducing the carbon footprint. I also look forward to when we can resume our social functions again in order to meet together and celebrate our achievements.

Keith Barnes

## **Manager's Report**

Welcome to my Annual Report, a summary of the most significant events that took place at Roundabout during the past financial year.

In last year's annual report, I made a brief reference to the Covid-19 global pandemic which on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March 2020 brought the UK to a virtual standstill. I like millions of other across the UK tuned into the Prime Minister's broadcast when he announced that all non-essential businesses and organisations were to close and the stay at home policy was introduced. Earlier in the month when it was obvious where the pandemic was heading I had made the decision to stand down all of the Roundabout volunteers until further notice. The rationale for this decision was that many of our volunteer work force have underlying health conditions or are 'senior citizens'. Until the 23<sup>rd</sup> March my plan was to continue our service provision by utilising the small number of part time paid staff only.

The national briefing on the 23<sup>rd</sup> March changed everything and by the end of Tuesday 24<sup>th</sup> March all of the paid staff had been stood down until further notice.

Even though we had closed down we still had significant financial overheads and my immediate concern was the loss of revenue generated through our retail outlet.

In March 2020 The Government introduced the Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme where the Government would pay 80% of the salaries of workers who had been furloughed as result of not being able to work.

I would like to thank the Roundabout board of trustees in agreeing to pay the remaining 20% of salaries to the Roundabout paid staff in order they still received 100% of their salaries during the close down.

In April the Government introduced the Small Business Grant Scheme which provided funding to organisations and retail that had been required to close down. This financial support based on rateable values has proved to be extremely generous.

During the Spring close down I continued to attend Roundabout to keep the organisation functioning. As the situation appeared to be so severe and unending I decided to take our vehicle fleet off the road to conserve our financial reserves.

At our first virtual board meeting in April Mrs Teressa Brimm was confirmed as the Roundabout Assistant Manager.

On the 6<sup>th</sup> July Roundabout was finally able to reopen although under strict covid-19 protocols. One of the restrictions that was most impactful was our inability to operate a second collection/delivery vehicle. Prior to the close down in March we had always operated a second vehicle crewed entirely by Roundabout volunteers. The driver would be a mature competent volunteer supported by two younger volunteer crew members to undertake the lifting of furniture. Strict rules around social distancing prevented us from deploying three volunteers in the cab of the delivery vehicle.

We have adapted our processes and by using our primary collection/delivery vehicle in a more efficient manner supported by our crew van which has the capacity to collect and deliver furniture items there has been little overall impact in our service delivery capabilities.

In July we received the sad news that one of our long standing volunteers Sean Dooey 50yrs had taken his own life. Sean had severe mental health issues and he had been unwell throughout the close down.

In August, Nigel Heath another long standing volunteer lost his battle against cancer. Even though we were unable to attend his funeral because of Covid restrictions we were able to form a 'guard of honour' outside the church entrance.

Upon our reopening in early July we experienced a strong demand and performance in our retail area breaking the daily record of sales of furniture.

Unfortunately, the demand for furniture referrals submitted by referral agents was very sluggish. At the time of reopening I wrote to all of the referral agents explaining we were back in business however it soon became apparent that many of the referral agents were working from home and that they were not meeting their clients in person and so they were unable to assess their needs in respect of the provision of essential furniture.

During the first national close down with the support of the existing board of Trustees I launched a recruitment campaign to recruit additional Trustees with a view to increasing numbers, diversity, knowledge and experience to the existing board. To facilitate this process, I created a Roundabout Trustee recruitment information pack and an application process.

By the time of the AGM in August we had recruited six additional Trustees making a total of nine trustees. Unfortunately, the recruitment of new trustees has not been a complete success and by the end of the financial year there have been several resignations for a variety of reasons. On a more positive note I was very pleased to welcome Simon Yates and Brian Darwood as new Roundabout Trustees. Simon has a wealth of knowledge and experience with regard to health and safety and property management and Brian was formerly the CEO of the Lighthouse furniture project in Brentwood, Essex.

Between the 5<sup>th</sup> November and 5<sup>th</sup> December Roundabout was required to close again following a second national close down. All of the volunteers and the paid staff were stood down once again.

Unlike during the Spring close down I decided I would try and continue with the provision of furniture through our referral process, providing furniture to individuals and families in financial need from our existing stock.

Following the delivery of essential furniture to a young man in Chipping Camden through a referral request I compiled a press release ensuring referral agents and other persons who could qualify as referral agents were aware of our services.

During this month long close down we were able to complete 11 deliveries of essential furniture.

Due to Covid protocols around social distancing the annual Christmas meal was cancelled for the very first time.

Roundabout reopened on the 2<sup>nd</sup> January 2021 only for a third national close down to be announced on the 5<sup>th</sup> January and again all of the volunteers and the part time paid staff were stood down once again.

I again made the decision to continue with the furniture referrals, I am immensely proud that we were able to continue providing essential furniture to individuals and families in financial need as the majority of similar organisations and charities in our sector simply closed their doors as if 'deprivation just disappears with lockdown.'

During this close down as a result of ensuring our referral process continued we received requests for urgent essential furniture from organisations in areas where we do not normally operate.

One delivery in particular involved delivering new mattresses to five properties in Worcester on behalf of the Worcester Municipal Charities in order that the properties could be let to homeless clients. On another occasion we delivered a double bed base and new double mattress to a single parent in Warwick who is a survivor of domestic violence and who had been allocated a new property away from her abuser.

It was fortunate that we had sufficient stock to meet demand however by the end of February it became apparent that we were exhausting our supply of essential furniture items and so I compiled a press release appealing for specific furniture donations.

The press release had the desired effect and we were able to collect essential furniture items in a Covid secure manner and continue to provide furniture through our referral process.

From the start of the third national close down and until the 1<sup>st</sup> April we completed 56 deliveries of essential furniture. My thanks go to charity supervisors Andy Brimm, Paul Byatt for their assistance along with Teresa for admin support.

It was during this period of the third close down I received consent from the Roundabout board to recruit a business administrative apprentice. On the 29<sup>th</sup> March April Barnes was appointed Roundabout's third ever apprentice on a 12-month contract during which time April is expected to complete an NVQ level 3 in business administration.

As the close down continued the Government published it's Covid road map with regard to reopening society and the economy in particular. At the beginning of April, we set about preparing Roundabout to reopen and to welcome back the wonderful Roundabout volunteers.

As the Roundabout Manager I regularly review and assess the risks faced by the charity in all areas of our work and I plan for the management of those risk and advise the Board of trustees accordingly in order to safeguard the charities funds and assets.

I am pleased to report to the board that during the period under review there have been no 'serious incidents' to report.

### Performance

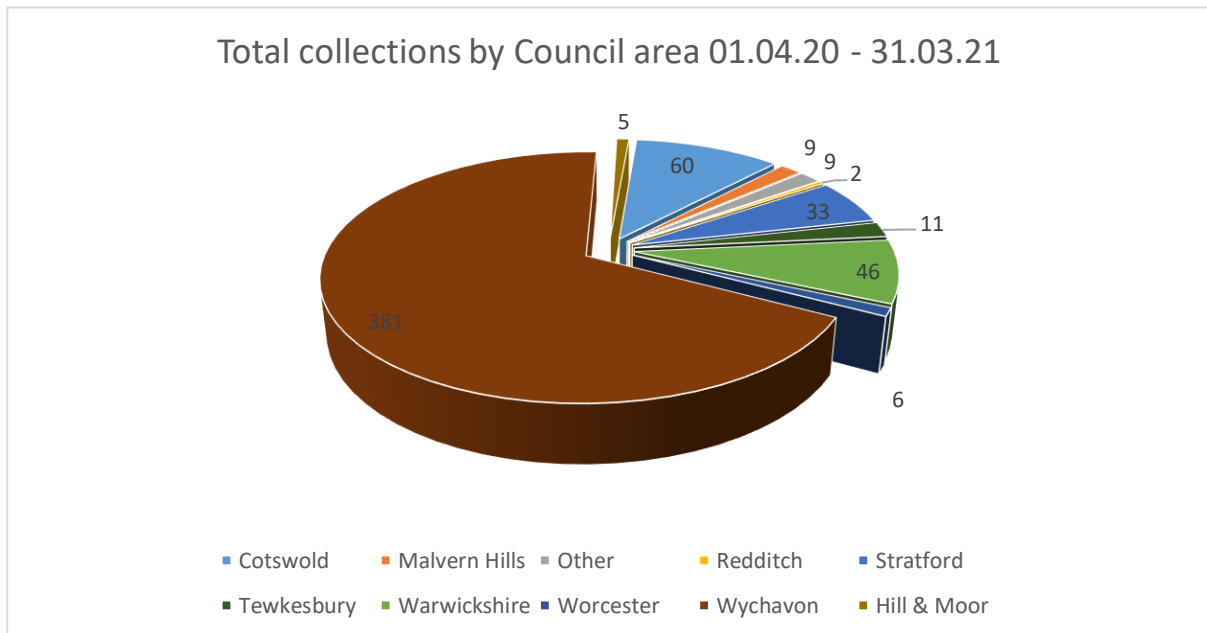
It is important to note that Roundabout continues to be self-funding, we receive no grant support what so ever.

The year under review has been unlike any year before in Roundabout's illustrious history and so it is very difficult to make meaningful performance comparisons with previous years.

### Collections

During the period under review Roundabout has collected donated furniture in the form of 562 furniture collections made up of 3724 furniture items. This figure compares with 1311 furniture collections and 7606 furniture items collected for the same period 2019-2020.

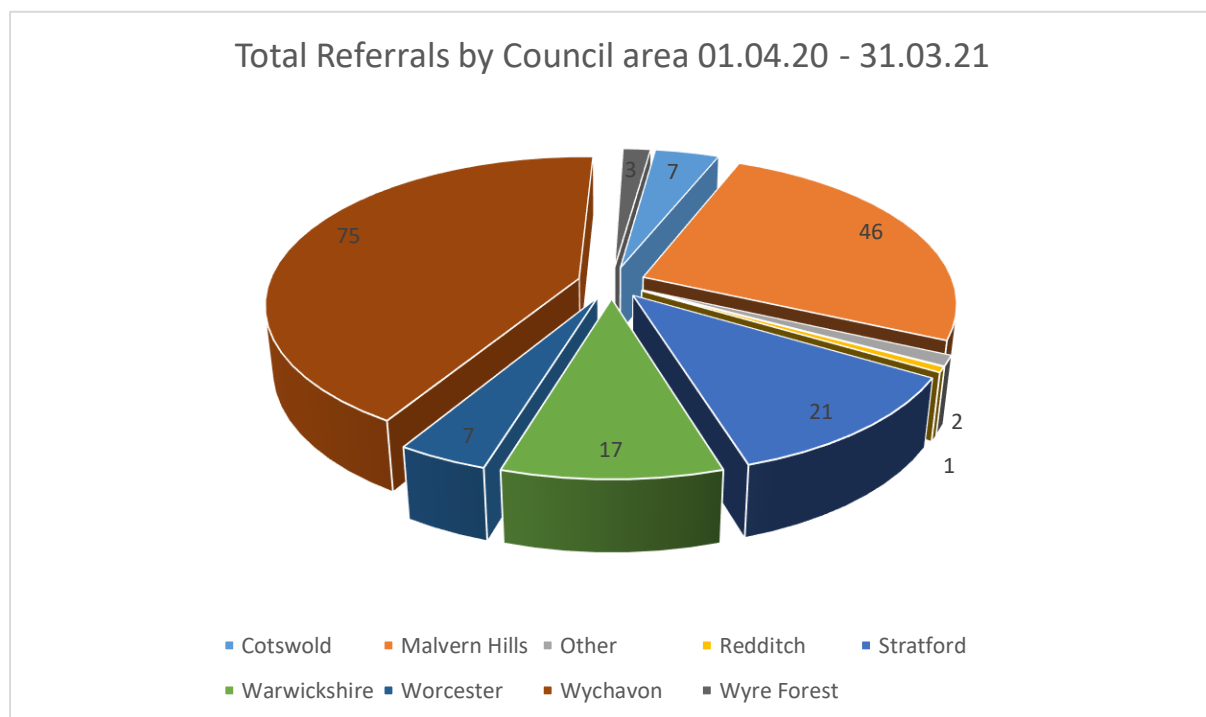
During the period under review we have diverted 71 tonnes of furniture items which may have been destined for landfill. The 2019-2020 figure was 143.8 tonnes.



## Referrals

During the period under review Roundabout has completed 179 separate referral deliveries of furniture and other essential household items such as bedding packs and kitchen starter packs to individuals and families in financial need across Worcestershire, North Gloucestershire and West Warwickshire. A reduction of 52% in comparison with the 2019-2020 figure of 375 referral deliveries.

Roundabout's unique selling proposition which sets it above other charities and organisations in our sector is the continued desire to provide only new mattresses to our referral clients. The period under review has seen an increase in the cost of purchasing the mattresses from our supplier however I am optimistic that we can continue to supply the mattresses basically free to referral clients with no increase on the current admin charge of £7 for a single mattress and £9 for a double.



## Volunteers

Roundabout is primarily a volunteer based organisation governed by volunteer Trustees. Over the years there has been a small increase in the number of paid part time members of staff, the most recent addition being our new apprentice April Barnes. There are certain roles within Roundabout which are best undertaken by permanent paid staff for continuity reasons however any move to recruit yet more paid staff I feel would be detrimental to the whole ethos of Roundabout and our supporters.

When Roundabout reopened in July after the first national close down there was a strong uptake in attendance by our volunteers who were enthusiastically looking forward to getting back to work. As a result of the requirement for social distancing

several of the volunteers with severe disabilities were requested to defer their return to reduce the numbers of volunteers on site at any one time.

During the period of the three national close downs I maintained regular telephone contact with all of the volunteers and staff to check on their welfare and to maintain their interest in Roundabout. Recruitment of new volunteers because of the requirement for social distancing was not a priority during the period under review however I am still keen to feature new volunteers who have joined during the year and have contributed to the success of the charity.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all of the Roundabout volunteers including the Roundabout board of Trustees for all of their contributions in making Roundabout a continued success.

### **Pat Bellew**

After retirement I tried to find some paid part time work without success. I met Peter the Roundabout Manager last year while he was collecting some donated furniture and after he explained what Roundabout did as a charity I thought I would consider volunteering. I joined Roundabout in August last year, I work in the workshop I enjoy the camaraderie working with the other workshop volunteers Pat, Doug and Adam. Every day is different and the work varied I would recommend Roundabout as a charity it is an extremely good cause.



Pat (right) with Adam Smith



## **Health and Safety**

Roundabout is committed to maintaining the highest standards of health and safety for our employees, volunteers and the public and to ensuring environmental sustainability. We discuss health and safety and wellbeing at every Board meeting, which provides an update on progress against our health and safety strategy.

Covid-19 has been the main area of focus over the last 12 months and Roundabout has been committed to protecting our workforce and the public. We have carried out and regularly reviewed our Covid-19 risk assessments and ensured that all controls are in place. Roundabout has not had anyone with Covid-19 symptoms or a positive test result and this is thanks to the staff, volunteers, customers and visitors complying with our Covid-19 guidance.

The Health and Safety policy is undergoing an annual review and will as part of this review incorporate wellbeing for the first time as well as health and safety. It will undergo the required consultation and be signed off at the AGM. All health and safety policies and procedures will be reviewed and refreshed or developed as required as part of our new Human Resources action plan and will be completed in accordance with defined document control requirements. The policy and procedure review, refresh and development will be in order of priority and risk.

The Health and Safety committee chaired by the Assistant Manager/Company Secretary, Teresa Brimm has undergone a review with new health and safety representatives being appointed, the first meeting of the new committee took place in August 2020. Health and safety induction and training will be incorporated into the Human Resources action plan. We consider health and safety risks as part of our ongoing business risk management process.

Teresa is also a mental health first aider and Roundabout has achieved the Worcestershire Works Well Level 2 accreditation to encourage and support staff to maintain a healthy lifestyle. Volunteers and staff can access corporate discounts on membership at leisure centres in Wychavon, receive a referral to the Living Well service in Worcestershire and access food and other items donated by Aldi through the Neighbourly scheme. Roundabout is also accredited with Disability Confident and Working for Carers supporting our volunteers and staff who have disabilities and/or caring commitments.

Roundabout is committed to minimising waste, waste recycling, energy and water consumption. As well as a positive environmental impact, this provides financial savings. Through simple initiatives such as recycling any paper, cardboard, plastic and glass we generate on-site Roundabout complies with its statutory and ethical environmental obligations.

## **Conclusion and Comment**

At the end of March 2020 we were all venturing into the unknown as we were being informed of the unprecedented and catastrophic implications of the world wide Covid-19 pandemic. By the end of the period under review there was much more clarity with regard to the pandemic and even though we are still living with Covid-19 restrictions Roundabout has managed to return to some degree of normality. During the next 12 months our focus will be on recovery and consolidation aligned with continuous improvement.

We will continue to work to achieving our vision, mission, values and charitable objectives as with the imminent climate change crisis and an increase in deprivation in our communities Roundabout is more relevant than ever before.

Peter Andrews

Roundabout Manager