



Year End Report ... Calendar Year 2023

I'm delighted to report that the first full calendar year of the charity has been an outstanding success however you measure it. We have established a position on the townwide mental health landscape, but more importantly we have supported a significant number of people toward more positive and optimistic futures. There is such a lot to report, I do hope we won't bore you with the details!

As of today we have a waiting list of nine individuals, who we expect to manage down to zero from March, as a new initiative with Swindon New College comes on stream. This will coincide with us moving offices (in the same building) to enable more appropriate one to one spaces.

Also importantly, we have to thank our magnificent team of volunteers who've worked unstintingly throughout the past 12 months, to deliver the services that local people are beginning to expect from the charity.

1) SUCCESSES

It can be argued that from almost a standing start, to create a new, viable charity, delivering so many good outcomes in its first calendar year, is a success in itself. The charity has one paid employee and overall, costs around £60,000 a year to run. We don't get any statutory support at present, so this money had to be raised from investment by the Trustees, the generosity of donors (whose routine commitment still astonishes us), the number of events we run during the year which we will refer to these later, and we were fortunate in receiving a grant of £10,000 from the National Lottery commission, £5000 from Wiltshire Community Trust and two smaller restricted donations from the local parish councils.

At any one time we are helping upwards of 40 individuals via a combination of face-to-face counselling and therapy, including hypnotherapy, working within support groups, and as part of our holistic approach, being intimately involved with the causes of client's poor mental health including housing, debt, substance abuse, domestic violence and in some cases legal proceedings.

Because of the type of work we do it's hard to describe testimonials but we will make a couple of references with the individual's names concealed for reasons of confidentiality.

So briefly ...

Mrs A came to us 12 months ago in a difficult position. Her mental health was in a poor state, she was relying on alcohol in excess to get through the day, her marriage had all but broken down and her son had turned his back. She had been to other agencies but couldn't engage there, but did with us and worked very closely with The Kelly Foundation over a year, both face to face and remotely CBT. It seemed that other agencies failed to take on board the causes of her issues. Our life coach Mel, promised to dress up in a dinosaur suit in 12 months' time if, Mrs A with our help, was able to turn her life around. On Christmas Eve visitors to our offices in the Pinetrees Centre were not a little surprised to see a 12 foot pneumatic dinosaur plodding around the place.

Mr B came to us in October following an extremely traumatic life experience, something which caused him to lose his home, his job that he loved and ramifications that continued to haunt him. With our help and support he managed to find a way through this extremely debilitating episode and we will continue to support him into the New Year in whatever he wants to do next but I attach an extract of a note he sent just before Christmas.

Emma, John

Today I spent the day in court fighting for my life. I have been found not guilty (and was not of course) of the crime that I was accused of. I wanted you both to know that I wouldn't have gotten this far without the support of the Kelly Foundation and the wonderful staff at the cafe. I feel truly blessed to have been able to be a part of the wonderful charity you both represent.

When I say to Wojtek that the Foundation had saved my life, I say that in the knowledge of what I know of was capable of in my lowest points. The belief you had and the support you have offered has enabled me to carry on and face my future. I wanted to say thank you to you both for not hesitating in stepping up to write references for me, even though our time together had been short; it is something that I will never forget.

My intention is to continue to support the wonderful work you do as I continue my journey to recovery and beyond. But I couldn't finish the day without you knowing that you made the difference to me at a time I needed you most. Thank you, I know there's another (X) around the corner and I can't wait to find out how I can best support you in supporting them...

Thank you again,

Miss LC posted this on our Facebook page anonymously but I repeat it here, because, in a way it encapsulates what we set out to be.

A month ago, I was in such a bad state. I was constantly depressed and demotivated and was imagining negative scenarios all the time. I then registered with the Kelly foundation and already I am making huge progress. I really feel like things are improving and I have come a long way since February. I have been making a good connection with the people there. They are so empathetic and kind and want to bring out the best in people and their abilities. With the lack of access to reliable and good mental health services, particularly in Swindon, Kelly foundation has been a godsend. As a relatively new charity they are also making phenomenal progress themselves and I see a bright future for them and everyone else who's going through this situation. I cannot thank you enough for all your support I would highly recommend this amazing organisation

Miss LC

There are many other 'good news' events we can point to : from representing a family of seven people including five children who were about to be evicted from their home yet following our intervention the decision was rescinded and we are now working with the family to try to obtain long-term secure housing locally... or another client whose 14 year old son ended his life and with no memorial possible until we worked closely with Haydon Wick Parish Council to provide a flowering cherry tree in the local skate park with a brass plaque as a permanent memorial to the young man.. or another client who is severely disabled, and managed to incur a parking fine having stopped in a rural car park for 10 minutes to take some sustenance late at night incurring the wrath of a night-time camera operated from someone in Yorkshire. The court and admin costs had risen to circa £500 when we attended court to advocate with our client in the Autumn, to see the judge wholly dismiss the case and criticise the basis of it ever being brought... and so it continued, very varied life problems where individuals become depressed, feel they have nowhere to turn to and we then do our very, very best to make a difference.

These are examples of our holistic approach but of course they take place alongside what we do every day, emotional support and counselling for individuals, on an open-ended basis and entirely free of charge.

2) MAJOR INITIATIVES

Our COO has always been keen on developing work programmes to help individuals regain self-esteem and confidence, in supportive environments and so when the opportunity arose to take over the catering at the Pinetrees Community Centre, we put in a determined bid, against others, to be awarded this opportunity. We were successful, signed a three-year lease and on October 1st renamed the cafe "Kell's Kitchen". After a hectic start it has calmed down to a 5 1/2 day a week operation from early a.m. to 3.00 PM and Saturdays from 10 to 12.00 noon. The café is run by Darren Smith and Siobhan Vaughan, together with 17 fantastic volunteers. A new 'Saturday' leader will join in early January. The food offer is good and competitively priced although we have had a few complaints from customers who prefer their food 'fried' in a traditional way. We will look to expand this work programme in 2024 to help more individuals. In very broad terms after rent and overhead costs, the café just about pays for itself but we are hoping next year to generate a small profit, which will be spent on securing more professional help for clients who are in despair. Just prior to Christmas our team provided an excellent meal for the well-established Pinehurst Memory Café which was well received. In conjunction with the Parish Council we held a well-attended Christmas Lunch on the 23rd for disadvantaged families and the appearance by Father Christmas, with some splendid quality Christmas gifts, made the children's day complete.

On the subject of children, with the kind support of Hillier's Funeral Services, we have been able to run a 'kids eat free' program during the holidays and we intend this to be a permanent feature going forward. Finally we are proposing a "snack club" for disadvantaged young locals in concert with the Parish Council.

3) SUPPORT GROUPS

It was always our objective to create a series of support groups where individuals who are suffering from specific mental health problems, could come together in a supportive, quasi-social environment and have the opportunity to talk about their experiences and, in time, develop the groups so specialist speakers could be introduced to add to the experience. The first of these, a 'Post-traumatic Stress Disorder Group', had to be postponed because the group leader fell ill very

close to the initial meeting. If we can identify resource, we intend to re-establish that group in 2024.

The second group, which was started in memory of Gemma Brown, whose life ended in the Autumn, addresses the problems of families coping with individuals experiencing severe eating disorder. There is no group like this in Swindon or the area, and the initial meeting in December was well received. With further promotion, we expect this group to grow and thrive, and become a lifeline to families who are sometimes witnessing loved ones, literally disappearing before their eyes!

Locally, there is also a severe lack of access to group discussion for those suffering the trauma of bereavement. A 'Survivors of Bereavement Group' was a priority, but we didn't have the resource at this time. Therefore we have teamed up with Vicky Bellinger who already operates a successful group entitled "You Are Not Alone". We expect us to get closer to this group in 2024, both in nominating individuals who need this help and in supporting Vicky in the splendid work she is doing. For us, the icing on the cake, was when Vicky agreed to become a Trustee of the Kelly Foundation and attended her first meeting in December. Presently "You are not Alone" meet in the Bakers Café in Emlyn Square but the plan is to open this up more widely, as we go forward.

We have been approached to consider a face-to-face, group opportunity for individuals who feel their mental health is being undermined as a result, specifically, of the menopause. This is something we are thinking how we might organise in 2024.

4) INCOME

As mentioned above, with administration, rentals, insurance, the purchase-in of professional therapy and counselling and one modest leadership salary, the charity, even in its infancy, costs in the order of £60,000 per annum to operate.

The biggest single income is derived from events. In 2023 we held a Swing music concert with the Swing Birds in Wichelstowe, a big band concert 'Music from the Movies' in Wroughton's Ellendune Hall and a restaurant takeover at the rather splendid Kutting Chai. In the summer, the highlight of the year was a sumptuous ball and auction of promises held at the DeVere Cotswold Water Park, (which on its own raised more than £7500) and an extremely successful Pink Floyd 'Dark side of the Moon' tribute held at Christ Church in the Autumn. Altogether these events contributed a little less than £20,000 of income. In the final section you will see some of the plans we have next year to continue this work, but remember all this is also managed by volunteers who give their time freely to support our work. Do come along and support us at these events if you possibly can. The shows are theatre standard but the ticket cost nowhere near!

We are blessed to have a number of regular monthly donors who feel our work is important and want to help those who are less fortunate and perhaps cannot afford private therapy and counselling (everything we do of course is free of charge for the client). They donate regularly on a monthly basis. Some plan and execute special additional fundraising events of their own to generate additional money. In particular we'd mention Haydon Wick Council who nominated us this year as their charity of choice, Companies Method Consultancy Limited, Sinewave Limited, Haydon Wick Thursday Group, and especially mention the family and friends of Gemma Brown whose story we can briefly recount.

The popular and well-liked Gemma had suffered from eating disorders for a number of years dating following traumatic events earlier in her life and in September 2023 her body was found near the A419. One of the last thing she had done, was to transfer most of her bank savings to our charity, although we had not had a not a real opportunity to actively begin working with her. As a result her workmates undertook a gruelling walk in the rain from Kemble in Gloucestershire to the centre of Oxford to raise money in her memory, a collection was taken at the funeral, and her family and employers also contributed, meaning that the charity overall benefited to the tune of almost £6000. We are determined to keep Gemma's memory alive as an inspiration to us all and the eating disorders group and the annual children's toy collection, in Gemma's name, are events firmly fixed in our calendar.

The Trustees continue to invest in the operation of the charity and between them this year will have contributed more than £25,000 to the charity's costs.

We were especially pleased to receive £10,000 from the National Lottery which is semi-restricted funding related to specific projects and mental health outreach within our local community and also £5000 from the Wiltshire Community Fund which contributes to our core running costs.

Zurich Community Partnership have been extremely supportive in helping us with a series of events through 2023, and we do look forward to working more closely with them as we go forward

5) COLLABORATIVE WORKING

Within a relatively short time we have established our charity as a viable and important entity within the Swindon mental health landscape.

We work with Avon and Wiltshire mental health partnership (AWP), either in close cooperation or in support roles and receive referrals from local GP practices. We sit on several local forums including: VCSE Group, the Swindon Wellbeing Steering Group and the Swindon Care Forum.

We work with CGL, drug and alcohol rehabilitation service and also with Wiltshire Police. We are keen to work more closely with Swindon Borough Council and there is some ongoing dialogue which we hope will prove fruitful in 2024. We feel the voluntary sector can do more in times of severe financial restrictions from Government.

We work with Mental Health for England (MHFA) and one of our associates, Melanie Williams, is now fully qualified as a mental health first aid trainer and will be operating courses on behalf of the charity and MHFA, both face-to-face in groups of up to 10 individuals, mostly from local companies but also online. We anticipate the charity may benefit in modest income from this source throughout 2024 and onwards, as the service we can offer becomes more widely known and appreciated.

6) FAILED BIDS FOR FUNDING

One of the main problems we have faced is trying to identify funding to underpin our core costs. There are a number of potential funding streams, if a project can be defined with given deliverables

in a given timescale, but that is not always straightforward when we are trying to offer practical and emotional support to individuals who are unwell, where medical interventions are proved not to be adequate to manage their conditions and if they have no access to talking therapies under the National Health Service and no funding to do this privately. It's hard to make this "a project"

Gordon Muvuti, (the local area board member for Swindon), of the Bath and South West Integrated Care Alliance (basically NHS providers), suggested that we bid under the provisions of inequality grants which they offer each autumn, or have done for the last two years.

We have made two bids, the second of which we considered to be strong and involved the setting up of an emergency 'out-of-hours' mental health support line with a guarantee to see somebody face-to-face the next day. Both were unsuccessful. We are disappointed, in so far as the NHS has a national objective of involving the third sector in the management of community mental health but don't seem to recognise that basic funding for such things as premises, insurance, admin and comms take a huge amount of effort on their own, allowing us to then realise the value that we can add in supporting individuals in the community. We will continue to try to engage with BSW ICA, especially in regards to men's mental health, where we feel there are significant gaps in the local offer.

We have also made a bid to the NHS nationally on a broadly similar basis, funding out of hours response with immediate follow-up, but so far have not had any response.

7) CHALLENGES LOOKING FORWARD

- A) We offer therapeutic and counselling services by encouraging private sector providers to give us one hour each week at a heavily discounted price. This is subject to both parties feeling there is a good and empathetic relationship. We need to identify more local skilled therapists who are prepared to help us in this way, both trained counsellors and hypnotherapists.
- B) We want to pursue specific initiatives in the field of men's mental health going forward and having lost Barry Brannigan in the last 12 months, (who had been instrumental in putting together various bids for funding), we are keen to identify somebody else who has expertise in this area, who may be able to offer this kind of service or at least advice.
- C) We need to make a success of the various events planned for 2024 including an ELO Concert in March, a restaurant takeover, possibly a half marathon and certainly a further concert in the Autumn. This may be a repeat of the Pink Floyd 'Dark Side of the Moon Experience' as there are a lot of people asking if it can be rerun.
- D) We want to consolidate and expand the support group network we are sponsoring presently and extend it further across the Borough. The Trust looks forward to working with Vicky Bellinger in that regard
- E) We are in discussion with Swindon Borough Council regarding further work programmes and in what way we may be able to support their adult mental health objectives. We believe that the third sector can and should play a significant role in support, especially in a climate where statutory authorities are being drained of resources.

F) We want to put together a regular newsletter, periodically informing our colleagues, supporters and donors of the ongoing work the charity undertakes. There is quite a good record on our Facebook page but not everybody is glued to social media. We feel there is an important role still for targeted electronic communication. Again we need to find a volunteer who may be prepared to support us with this newsletter, so we have a name, "Kell's Connections", we have bags of content, but we need somebody who understands 'Mail Chimp' to pull it together and get it on the rails!

G) We are also looking at the potential for a service-user led periodic Podcast.

8) CONCLUSION AND GOOD WISHES

On behalf of the Board of Trustees, my sincere thanks to each and everyone of you who have helped and supported us in any way in 2023, whether as a donor, a volunteer supporter, an employee or an attendee at any of our events. Without all of you that are so committed to helping us, it would be utterly impossible for us to continue. Thank you

Sincerely,



John Stooke

Chairman

On behalf of the Trustees of The Kelly Foundation

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