

# Wesley

## Community Furniture



Annual Report 2009

## ***Introduction***

During this year we successfully finished our 3 year Reaching Communities (Big Lottery) programme, which ended 3 months into 2010-11; 4 funded workers increased our ability to do what we do best, and over the first year and a half of the programme this was all about keeping our core service going and improving.

With the continued success of our new building in St Wilfrid's Hall, Hulme (from May 2008) and other operational improvements leading to the increasingly successful business of the charity, we were able to turn more of our attentions to other work within Wesley (such as the volunteer team, building improvements) and without (with external organisations).

These efforts are evidenced by the sheer number of volunteers/placements (41/6) and the list of agencies and groups we worked with in this period.



But the focus of all this work remains on delivering our core service as best we can. This service only survives if we can continue to provide household items to the people who need it, at a price that is affordable, whilst covering our growing costs. Much of our effort has focussed on working on these tiny margins, and on improving the quality of what we do.

We are happy to report that you can still buy and get a sofa delivered for £20 in Manchester, but we also hope that we can provide a lot more besides.

## ***Volunteers in action***

The extra staff provision plus our 2<sup>nd</sup> large shop enabled us to successfully increase and sustain a larger volunteer body.

It sometimes (with certain volunteers) takes a great deal of time & effort, although we are very fortunate to have sustained a core number of very capable and dedicated volunteers who can make this job a little easier - although these too require support.

Some volunteers (placed volunteers in particular) have needed a lot of close supervision and support. This has been mostly successful, although younger placements *can* be a great drain on staff time – which may become pertinent with the impending Work Programme.



The nature of the majority of our work – essentially, logistics/warehousing (to help people in need with their physical circumstances) – means that we are focused on operational issues; it is a very ‘masculine’ job. But we are happy to report that we have increased the number & proportion of female (& BME) workers – whilst endeavoring to make the work experience as friendly & inclusive as possible.

Many volunteers say (and reported in surveys) that they really enjoy the work and the experience of being part of the Wesley team, and it is this that we think accounts for whatever successes we have had.

And we still have a waiting list for prospective volunteers....



## ***Initiatives***

Another avenue we spent a lot of time and energy going down as a completely new initiative was that of the Gift Aid/Reuse Credits database for our stock items.



We had already been running a basic Reuse stock database in-house, but throughout 2009 we developed the web-based system with Avanti! Systems so that we could also claim back the sale-value Gift Aid of donated items.

With the support of our fantastic van crews and shop staff, this has worked very well.



The whole system now makes a serious contribution to our business, and plays a substantial role in the continued sustainability of our operation (adding £3-4.5k per quarter to Income), and to our ability to continue to deliver the service at a price that has barely changed in ten years.

We have also worked with GMWDA (the Waste Disposal authority), Manchester and Trafford councils and Faith4Change on local Reuse/Recycling initiatives. We also got involved in local events such as the Broadfield Road street party [see photo above: a young people's forum away from the main party – on our furniture]

We worked closely with the Green Jobs Partnership (the Aspire Foundation) and the Job Centre on developing our Future Jobs Fund programme; work that raised our reputation, and should lead to positive future work in these difficult times.

This outreach work continues, and is one of the main areas where we can progress the work of this charity.



## **The Future**

Moving further into 2010 and beyond, we are looking to capitalise on the successes and gains of the last two years:-

We are looking to open either a 3<sup>rd</sup> shop/building, or move to improved, large and better-located premises.

Both our existing buildings are a bit off the beaten track (not that easy for clients to find) and have uncertain futures; our main building, in particular, is in poor condition and is an unprepossessing place for our visitors and our staff.

We aim to further increase our other capacities: transport and staff.

More vans will help us increase the supply to our shops and customers, and help us deal with what we hope will be an increased volume of good quality donations/stock.

One of the main outcomes of our Reaching Communities programme was the increase in our volunteer team, and this is something we want to maintain and build upon. With increased physical capacities (buildings and vans) we will need more staff: a bigger body of volunteers and paid staff.

The overall ambition is to maintain a self-sustaining (out of sales and other income) core operation and keep up our gradual growth through self-funded and grant-aided development projects.

Two specific ambitions here are: 1) to further increase recycling and reduce our waste-to-landfill, which is something we have begun in February 2011 with our GWMDA Community Waste Fund pilot furniture workshop (and Technician), and 2) to collect donations from HWRCs, where a reuse container is sited amongst the recycling areas at a tip, thus increasing our volume of good items (the public can donate when we are not open) whilst not increasing our costs by a similar amount. The latter should get under way in May/June 2011.



## Treasurer's Report

1/4/09 to 31/3/10

Over this period we have been able to concentrate more on our main objectives, and as such we have again noticed incremental improvement on a number of levels. These have again included improved staff/volunteer liaison, increased sales of donated items, closer monitoring and reduction of costs & overheads, and increased volunteer numbers.

We have been pleased that the desired objectives of our Big Lottery Reaching Communities funding are being met, in terms of increasing the number of households our charity reaches, and the number of volunteers we can manage in order to achieve our objectives. We have also improved our systems in terms of stock and data management.

We have also benefited from engaging with the Government's Future Jobs Fund which created 6 months jobs for 4 unemployed people; this also provided us with some able people who contributed greatly to our work.

It has been a very encouraging year for 'The Wesley', the momentum of which we hope to maintain. We are aware that during this period our Lottery grant is nearing its end, but we are pleased to see that turnover from charitable trading activity has increased on the previous year, a trend we are keen to sustain and improve.

We hope to sustain the improvements to our operations which have been brought about in recent years. We are aware that we benefit from keenly achieved overhead costs, and our focus is now on future growth, and the retention of positive momentum, for which we have commenced investigating the viability of the opening of a third shop/premises.

### Statement of Financial Activities Period ended 31<sup>st</sup> March 2010

	1/4/09- 31/3/10	1/4/08- 31/3/09
<b>Incoming Resources</b>		
Grants receivable	92,286	79,949
Trading activities	149,156	127,164
Interest receivable	35	38
<b>Total Incoming Resources</b>	<b>241,477</b>	<b>207,151</b>
<b>Resources Expended</b>		
Costs in furtherance of		
Charitable objects	(193,190)	(197,852)
Management & administration	(1,795)	(2,199)
<b>Total Resources Expended</b>	<b>(194,985)</b>	<b>(200,051)</b>
<b>Net Outgoing Resources for the Period</b>	<b>46,492</b>	<b>(7,100)</b>
Balances brought forward	6,994	(106)
Balances carried forward	<b>53,486</b>	6,944
<b>Balance Sheet 31 March 2010</b>		
<b>Fixed Assets</b>		
Tangible assets	15,460	18,858
<b>Current Assets</b>		
Debtors	8,710	6,883
Cash at bank & in hand	47,431	13,137
Creditors due within 1 year	(18,115)	(31,884)
<b>Net Current Assets</b>	<b>38,026</b>	<b>(11,864)</b>
<b>Total Assets</b>		
<b>Less Current Liabilities</b>	<b>53,486</b>	<b>6,994</b>
<b>Funds</b>		
Restricted	14,252	12,607
Unrestricted	39,234	(5,613)
<b>TOTAL FUNDS</b>	<b>53,486</b>	<b>6,994</b>

## **Thank you**

*To the numerous individuals & organisations that have helped us, some of whom are below:*

**Community Recycling Network** – Ian Scott, North West office, [ian@crn.org.uk](mailto:ian@crn.org.uk)

[www.crn.org.uk](http://www.crn.org.uk)

**Firmstart (Mcr) Ltd** – St Wilfrid’s Enterprise Centre, M15 5BJ (managed workspace)

[www.firmstart.co.uk](http://www.firmstart.co.uk)

St Wilfrid’s nuns (& Diocese) and St Wilfrid’s school for their forbearance

**Furniture Reuse Network** – all the officers & members [www.frn.org.uk](http://www.frn.org.uk)

**Cheshire Furniture Re-use Forum** [www.cfrf.org.uk](http://www.cfrf.org.uk)

**GMWDA**

**GM3Rs** – all partners

**Good Energy** for good electricity

**Knutsford Directory**

**Manchester City Council**

**MMU**

**Phone Coop**

**Places for People Housing Association**

**Traidcraft** – for all the Fairtrade tea & coffee we get through

**Tree-of-Life** in Wythenshawe (Janet, Colin & Co)

**University of Manchester Estates office**

To all at the Big Lottery Fund for all their help which successfully saw us to the conclusion of our Reaching Communities programme in June 2010

And to all our neighbours & supporters in Hulme, Moss Side & Fallowfield

**And, especially, to our staff team – volunteers and paid.**



## Wesley Community Furniture

WCF is a charity with an accessible and open management committee meeting every six weeks.

**Trustees:** Dr Sheridan McLaughlin, John Nancollis, Rob Ramwell.

**Charity Registration No: 1116806**

Company Limited by Guarantee, registered at Companies House, Manchester.

**Company No. 5939287**

**Registered Office:** 56-58 Lloyd Street South, Fallowfield, Manchester M14 7HT

**Telephone:** 0161 226 9051 (Transport Office/General)

**Fax/phone:** 0161 232 0631 (Project Development)

[info@thewesley.org.uk](mailto:info@thewesley.org.uk)

[www.thewesley.org.uk](http://www.thewesley.org.uk)

**Accountants:** Beaver & Struthers, 215-219 Chester Road M15 4JE

**Bankers:** The Cooperative Bank plc, 1 Balloon Street M60 4EP

**Hulme Shop:** St Wilfrid's Hall, St Wilfrid's Street, Hulme M15 5BJ

**Telephone:** 0161 226 4266



### Mission Statement

*"To work in partnership with others to provide furniture and other household items at the lowest possible prices to those in need in Manchester, to further relieve poverty by providing jobs, volunteering and training opportunities, and to recycle and reuse as much of the material we receive as possible."*