

# YORK Neighbours

## **IMPACT REPORT** **2021 - 2022**



## David Casswell, Chair of the Trustees



York Neighbours is a great idea. And like many great ideas it has a simplicity. Linking those with time and skills with those who have a need of help. Help with a small practical job in the house, a friendly phone conversation, or the opportunity to go out - can all make an enormous impact.

As you read this report you will understand more of that impact. We know that it is effective - because our Neighbours continue to express their thanks. Our volunteers enjoy it too - so it is a 'win win'.

Like other charities we have had to adapt to the pandemic and its aftermath. Our Neighbours were particularly affected - and many still struggle to restore former confidence. We are working through this - and find it very encouraging to have a closer alignment with other charities in the field. This way we can avoid duplication and sign-post effectively. Also we become a trusted partner in social care in the City. This is so important when so many services are stretched.

We are grateful to those organisations and individuals who support York Neighbours financially. Our core costs centre around providing a safe, organised and efficient way to link Neighbours to Volunteers. Simple ideas still need proper organisation. There needs to be care and sensitivity as new Neighbours are registered and of course, consideration, empathy and tact as their situations change. Also there needs to be proper scrutiny, accountability and training of volunteers - they are often going into people's homes. This is a continual ongoing process - and our staff have to be adaptive, creative and responsive. They serve us well.

Your interest in York Neighbours is precious to us. Even in these days of mass communication some good ideas can remain hidden. We hope York Neighbours can become widely known in the City - you can be a part of the process. That way we can have more impact.

If you have any questions - please contact us - all the details are below.

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Our **objective** is to **reduce** social isolation for people over the age of 65 within the City of York and to **support** them in retaining their independence in their own home. We work to make a **lasting difference** to people's lives rather than just alleviating the symptoms or solving current problems.

Our **aim** is to complement, not duplicate, other services - so we will refer on/signpost to other provision where possible.

We do this in various ways:



### Assist

Help with practical one-off tasks – e.g. changing a light bulb, small repair and maintenance jobs, disposal of broken or unwanted items, shopping during temporary illness, etc.



### Chat

A regular phone call to the most isolated who may not speak to anyone for days or even weeks.



### Socialise

Individual and group outings – e.g. trips to the coast, garden centre, theatre, exhibitions or other places of interest.

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## REGISTERING WITH YORK NEIGHBOURS

Registering with York Neighbours is a comprehensive and holistic process which can either be done over the telephone or we can visit the person in their home.

People register with York Neighbours in two main ways. They can either be referred to us from another organisation or they can self refer.

### Number of New Neighbours



### Total Number of Neighbours



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## ONE-OFF TASKS

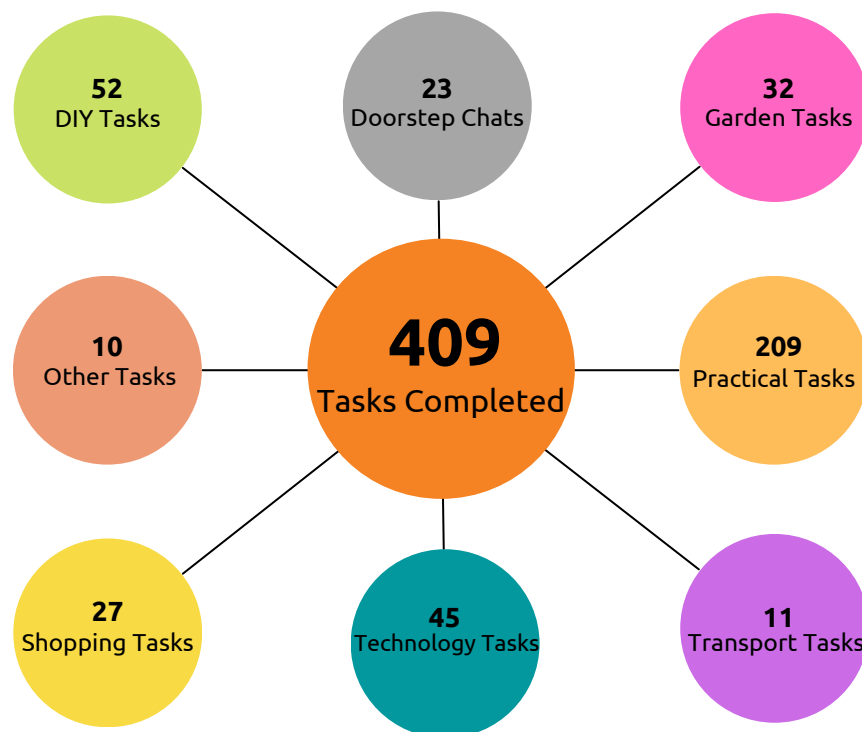
York Neighbours offers help in a number of different ways. We offer help with small, practical tasks around the home and garden, transport where additional assistance is required, help with shopping when it is needed and we offer regular phone calls to connect and chat with our Neighbours.

*“Your volunteer was very knowledgeable and gave me lots of good tips. She did a brilliant job at clearing the gutters.”*

*“I was pleased that your volunteer was able to get the shopping I needed. We also had a nice chat when the volunteer came with the items. It was wonderful that York Neighbours could help.”*

*“I can't thank you enough for your help today. It is so good to know that the hallway will not be dark tonight.”*

*“You have made my day. I've been wanting to have a new bathroom cabinet for so long and I am delighted that you have made this happen.”*



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## REGULAR CALLS

Some people can go for days, or even weeks, without talking or chatting socially with someone. Regular phone calls from York Neighbours make a lasting difference, helping people to feel less isolated and lonely and more part of the local community. Our team of volunteers, many of them students, make fortnightly or monthly calls as requested. Neighbours tell us they really look forward to this contact. These calls are a lifeline for some of our Neighbours as they know we will follow up if we are unable to make contact with them. For those that find it hard to ask for help, the regular phone calls provide an opportunity for them to reach out.

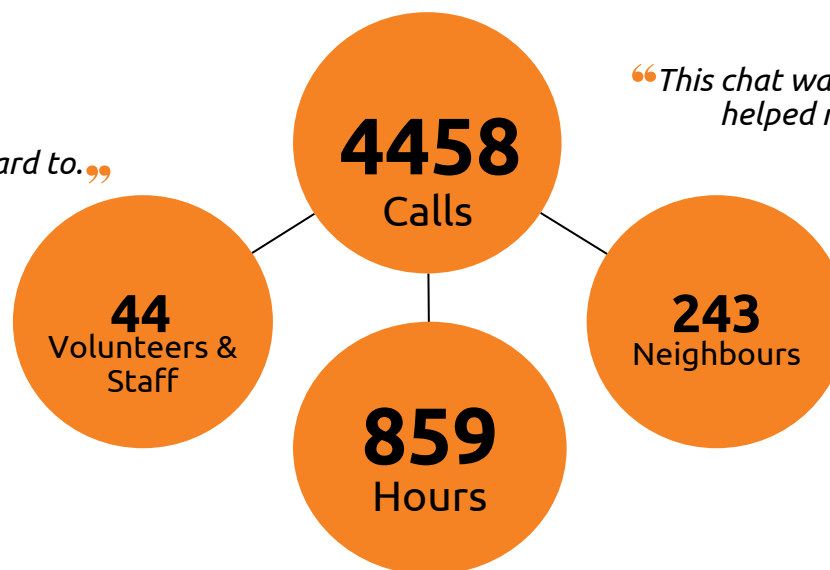
Our regular phone support can also be crucial support for those who are going through transitions in their life. This could be due to a change in health or discharge from hospital, or due to the responsibilities of their caring role. It is also a good support for those who may have lost a loved one and are coping with bereavement.

*“You are absolutely wonderful at York Neighbours. I don't know how I would manage without you at the moment.”*

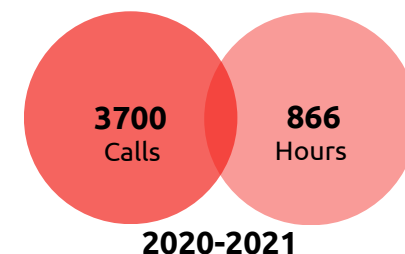
*“Your calls give me something to look forward to.”*



2021-2022



*“This chat was lovely and really helped my low mood.”*



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## OUTINGS

We organise individual and group outings for people with consideration for their various needs and difficulties. These needs often prevent them from taking part in other organised trips, maybe because they have poor mobility, are wheelchair users, have continence issues, dementia, mental health or confidence problems. Volunteers use their own cars in order to tailor arrangements to each person's need. The trips might include helping someone with limited mobility to shop for items other than general household goods, offering transport for appointments and at the same time providing support in what might be a stressful situation, or perhaps assisting someone to place flowers on a loved one's grave.

We aim to help Neighbours feel at ease and supported. We also arrange group outings, meeting up at such venues as a garden centre or travel further afield to walk around beautiful gardens and enjoy lunch and a chat.

Owing to the Covid-19 crisis, all our group trips were cancelled in 2021. In early 2022 we were readjusting to returning to a full operational office. In lieu of this, we offered more one-to-one social visits.

*“The visit from your volunteer, Heather was lovely and I really enjoyed her company - it has been the best part of my week. I enjoyed walking in the park and listening to the birds singing. It made me feel more confident having someone with me.”*

*“Thank you so much for yesterday, I really enjoyed it. It was the first time I have been out in a month.”*



*“It was really nice to have a visit and chat and the volunteer was easy to talk to.”*

*“I'm so happy with Martin's help. He is a very kind gentleman and we had also had a good chat.”*

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## SOCIAL VISITS

*“The chat with with your volunteer was lovely and we sat and talked about all sorts of things. It made such a different to me as I spend a lot of time on her own.”*

*“I had a very nice time when your volunteer visited her last weekend. It is the weekends when I am most lonely and would like some company.”*



*“I had such a lovely time with Jean. She was so easy to talk to and could easily come to be one of my friends.”*

*“The volunteer was absolutely first class. Her attitude was A1 and we just clicked. I was very impressed and am very much looking forward to her next visit.”*



*“It was a lovely visit and we had a really good chat. Your volunteer was a lovely lady and very intelligent. I managed okay with our walk, but sometimes I struggle with my balance and so it often feels better to have someone beside me.”*

*“Thank you for the wonderful magazines your volunteer dropped off to me. I especially loved "Women's Weekly" which was filled with short stories which I thoroughly enjoyed reading. In fact, I liked the magazine so much I am thinking of subscribing to it. These were the best magazines ever!!”*

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## MAKING A DIFFERENCE

Our model appears to address many of the issues covered by the Care Act 2014 by offering a community response to some of the problems of an ageing population. We have seen that our service works, is low cost and avoids duplication with other agencies. Feedback shows that we offer just what is needed to fill gaps in services, and our 'can do' attitude is much appreciated.

The advent of Covid-19 reaffirmed the need for services such as ours. We have seen a large increase in older adults who need a little support to continue to live as independently as possible.

*“Thank you for the call. You have made a tremendous difference to my life. Without York Neighbours I'm not sure where I'd be. My life has turned around so much since knowing you”.”*

*“I really enjoyed and appreciated our conversation. Thank you also for the documents that you kindly emailed me. They look very interesting and informative. I have now printed them off, and am looking forward to study them, and learn how to contact my friend by video online, and also how to make full use of the other helpful information you sent me. Your kindness and support has really made my day.”*

*“All your helpers are so kind and so helpful and it stops me worrying knowing you are there. I so enjoy the chats too. You do a wonderful job.”*

*“York Neighbours have been so helpful to me. I appreciate the volunteers who phone me. Keep on with the good work. Too many of us are living to old age and I find now that many firms are cashing in on the elderly. I live alone, my family are not nearby to offer help so you may imagine how appreciative one can be when shut in, often for days at a time, when York Neighbours ring. Thank you.”*

*“Thank you for the support that I have received from York Neighbours. This has made a huge difference since her husband passed away. You have helped me with a couple of practical tasks and called me regularly which are truly a godsend.”*

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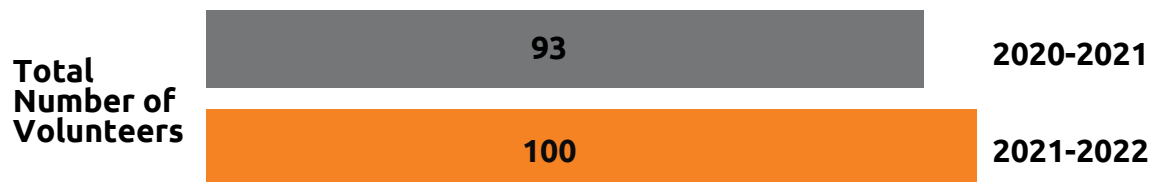


## VOLUNTEERING WITH YORK NEIGHBOURS

York Neighbours volunteers contribute their time, energy and skills to help make a real difference to some of the most vulnerable older people in York. Our volunteers come from all walks of life, some working, some retired, some students, all sharing a desire to contribute to their community.

Volunteers who are new to York, or have just retired, or parents working at home or caring for young children have found working with York Neighbours has been a great way of meeting new people (other volunteers and Neighbours) and gaining a sense of purpose and fulfilment.

### Number of New Volunteers



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## WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY - BARBARA

I was first introduced to York Neighbours over five years ago by a friend who was also a volunteer for the organisation. I knew immediately that this was a type of charity and service that was needed in our community to complement and to work, as far as we are able, alongside formal care and that I wanted to be part of it.

Often we come into contact with older people who live alone, who sometimes have no family or friends. By receiving regular phone calls from us either just for a chat or to ask if they are ok, can really break their day up and make a difference. Sometimes people ask us for advice or tell us their problems which they may not want to discuss with their family. It often helps just to have someone to listen to them.

I feel that the benefit of these calls is reciprocal. It gives me an opportunity to chat with interesting people and to hear more about their lives. I often find that we have many things in common, including a shared sense of humour, and so often these calls can be filled with laughter.

I get a real satisfaction from supporting these members of our community and have enjoyed meeting them when I help with any practical tasks. These tasks are often small but can make a big difference in someone's life. A little assistance often enables someone to retain their independence and self-confidence.

I feel very supported by the Charity and know that should I ever have any of concerns, that these will be listened to and acted on if necessary.

*“I cannot thank you enough for the support, friendly phone calls (which seem to come at a time I most need them) and the very friendly, kind people who come and help us when we are struggling.”*



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Pippa, one of our former student volunteers wrote: "I decided to become a volunteer with York Neighbours because I was looking for a way to help the local community. York Neighbours focus' on support in the community fitted perfectly with my goal in York."

My volunteering experience with York Neighbours lasted approximately a year and 3 months, during which time I was studying and working. The York Neighbours team was welcoming and flexible. My one-off tasks included aiding Neighbours while they went shopping, fixing video players, and accompanying our Neighbours on trips out. I particularly enjoyed the Christmas outing hosted at a local school. I also helped at promotion events.

York Neighbours helped convince me to work in the charity sector. I now work for Plan International UK, a humanitarian charity that focuses on helping children and young people, with a particular focus on girls. Although its focus is different to that of York Neighbours, both roles require safeguarding training, and a desire to help vulnerable people and make the world a better place".

*“Thank you for being there. It is very reassuring to know help is there if needed. Having a phone call when you are least expecting it when a very pleasant, cheerful person rings for a chat - I really enjoy that.”*





## WHAT OUR VOLUNTEERS SAY - CHRIS

I've enjoyed the satisfaction of doing various volunteering roles over a number of years, but when I joined York Neighbours about 4 years ago I was particularly attracted by the opportunity to do as much or as little as I wanted without being tied to a regular commitment.

I've enjoyed the experience of visiting people in their homes to do a variety of one-off tasks, and also accompanying members on trips out. During Covid, I made phone calls from home to members who receive regular welfare calls, many of whom I have had the opportunity to speak to numerous times.

It's a great pleasure to look back to a call that may have been made some weeks or months previously and then find out how someone is progressing and build up a rapport with them. There are some amazing older people out there in our community with fascinating stories to tell. Some of them show tremendous resilience to difficulties, and most express gratitude to York Neighbours for providing a listening ear. Sometimes it's satisfying to be able, via York Neighbours, to link people up to another local charity who may be able to offer practical help in a specific area, such as offering walking companions. It has amazed and delighted me to find out what a wonderful network of voluntary organisations exist in York to help people in a variety of ways.

*“It is so lovely to have someone to call and know that I will either get help or good advice on help.”*



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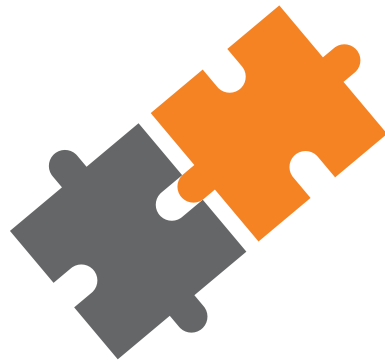
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We are grateful to the following organisations who have collaborated and supported us:

**We are stronger together than we are alone**



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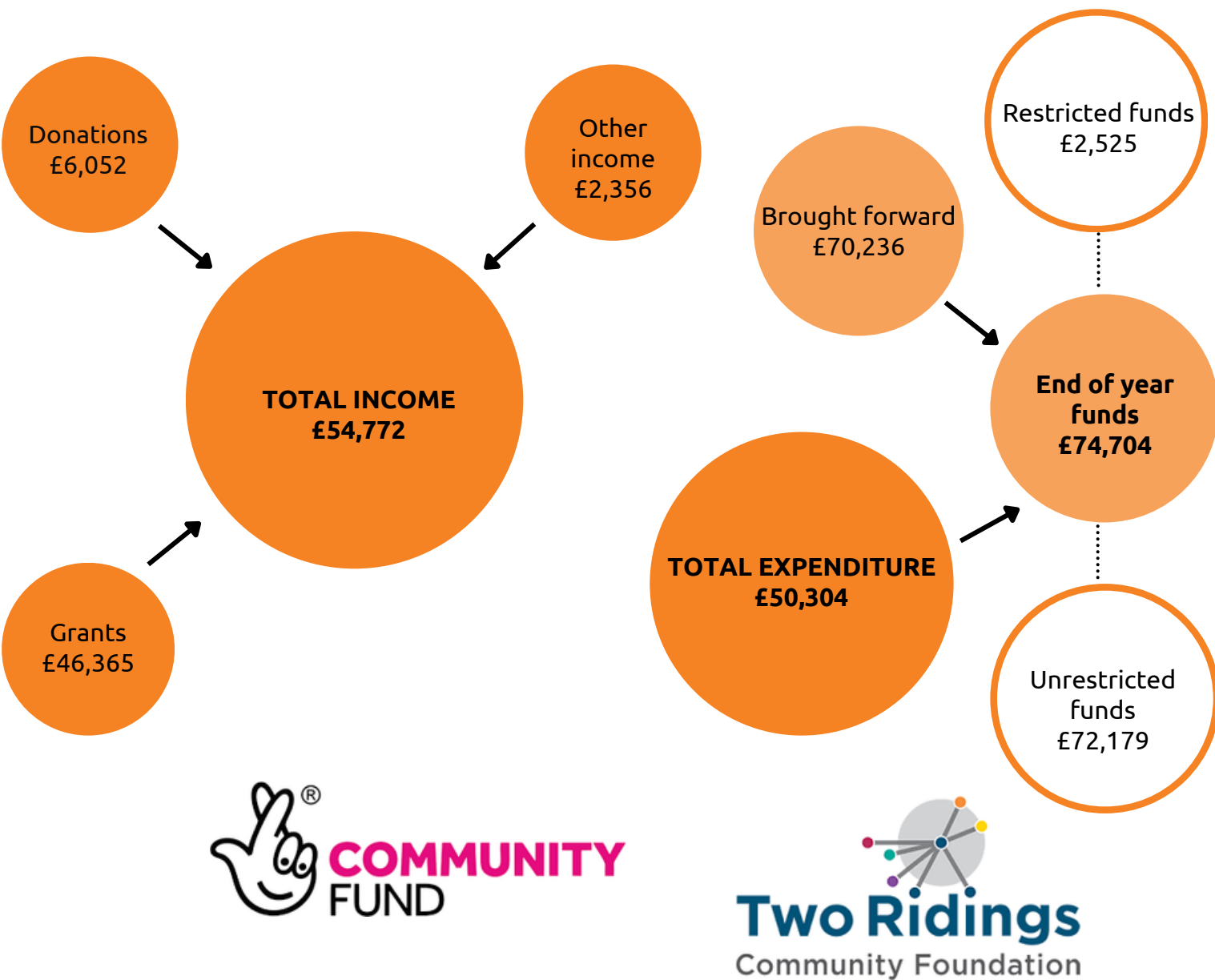
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A big thank you goes to the following grant providers, trusts and organisations in addition to our many individual supporters.

- Clifton Parochial Church Council
- Co-Operative Local Community Fund
- National Lottery Community Fund**
- Norman Collinson Charitable Trust
- Persimmon Homes
- Queens Hotel, York
- St Barnabas Parochial Church Council
- St Edward the Confessor Church
- Terracycle
- Two Ridings Community Fund



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