

CARESCO



meeting needs in our local community



ANNUAL REPORT

2020-2021

Registered Company Number 7513432

Registered Charity Number 1140728

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There you can find:

- *Details of the services we offer*
- *Current news*
- *How to volunteer*
- *Upcoming fundraising activities*
- *The Sawtry Eye magazine*
- *Ways you can support us*
- *Our history and background*
- *How to make a donation*
- *Past & present annual reports*
- *Contact details*



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*Our thanks to Webshepherd
for all his help in maintaining our website*

Welcome to our

ANNUAL REPORT

1st April 2020 to 31st March 2021



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INTRODUCTION

Objects: CARESCO's objects are: *"To advance any charitable purposes for the benefit of the community of Sawtry and satellite villages, in the county of Cambridgeshire, and in particular the relief of persons in need within the area of benefit.*

To identify welfare needs of individuals and groups in Sawtry and its satellite villages, devising means to meet those needs, with the help of volunteers, and to enlist the backing and co-operation of the statutory services, existing voluntary organisations and any other medium."

Taken from CARESCO's Articles of Association

Social Aims: To improve the lives of local people, in particular focusing on early intervention by providing a range of social activities and encouraging participation. CARESCO also aims to encourage social cohesion through supporting local people in a time of crisis and facilitating communication, while offering others an opportunity to concentrate their energy and effort into the community in a positive manner by volunteering.

Activities: By the start of April 2021, Britain was in a national lockdown in response to the Covid-19 pandemic. Under varying restrictions over the following 12 months, all the CARESCO activities had to quickly adapt to their new circumstances to be able to continue caring for local people. The immediate need to support those isolating or shielding from the virus quickly became apparent and local residents came together in the early days to offer help. This service was soon after brought under the CARESCO banner and co-ordinated by our General Manager.

As nationally, demand for our food bank services immediately increased significantly with the team adapting the way they worked to ensure everyone's safety while meeting this new level of requests and need for larger amounts of stock against a background of supermarkets shortages and purchase limits in the early days.

Our day care clubs had to be suspended, with staff providing direct one-to-one support through regular phone calls and small tasks such as shopping trips. The Sawtry-based club only reopening later in the year under significant restrictions and by following County Council guidelines.

Our social groups all stopped meeting in-person for most of the year with phone support, emails and where appropriate online meetings via video conferencing.

The car scheme drivers at first had to stop their service, then restarted but only providing transport for essential medical trips and requests to attend vaccination centres. Our Christmas Day Party team had to also adapt to circumstances, for the first time offering a meal delivery service for those guests unwilling to come into the building as once again infection rates went up.

Our workshop-based activity for men has been limited by both Covid restrictions and a major refurbishment of their space which combined to significantly reduced their ability to operate as normal. Members have been supplied with projects to do at home instead.

Unfortunately, activities which were also important income streams had to close too, including the charity shop and weekly drop-in café, though significant increases in grant funding helped to bridge the gap. However, the village magazine was published on schedule throughout the year, providing a vital source of local information as well as advice relating to the pandemic, government guideline and keeping safe and healthy.

All our activities are co-ordinated by a small team of paid part-time staff, supported by a large number of volunteers. We aim to ensure that the sole qualification for volunteer recruitment shall be the suitability to perform the required task. We welcome service users from within our geographical area regardless of background, gender, or faith. The only restriction being our ability to cope with their care needs. Most of our activities charge a modest fee for attendance to help with running costs while aiming to ensure no one is excluded by price.

Public Benefit: Throughout the year the CARESCO trustees have continued to have regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit when reviewing aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

CARESCO works to bring local residents together through a wide range of activities and interests. By encouraging people to engage and socialised, friendships are formed, people find a productive use of their time and our community grows stronger. Many individuals, by being involved as service users or volunteers, maintain their independence for longer than would otherwise be the case and thereby prevent or delay a need for more intensive levels of care.

In addition, CARESCO also runs trading activities: a weekly café, a charity shop and the village magazine, which while also providing a service are social enterprises with any profit reinvested back into the organisation.

For more than thirty-five years, CARESCO has been a social focal point in Sawtry, this year even more than before pulling people together in a common cause from a wide range of backgrounds. For many who have become involved with CARESCO, particularly during the pandemic, the experience has had a significant positive impact on their lives and mental health, providing support for those who need it and a occupation for those willing to volunteer.



CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

I began my report last year by saying that there's 'never a dull moment at CARESCO'. Little did any of us expect that just as we were beginning to enjoy the start of springtime we would suddenly find ourselves in lockdown due to the Coronavirus. This past year we have carried on in lockdown and for the majority of people, life has not changed a great deal since last year.



We have strived to find the best ways to keep our staff and volunteers safe whilst continuing the fantastic work that CARESCO does. Trying our hardest to carry on supporting those who rely on the many services which we provide.

CARESCO continues to develop, with no shortage of good ideas on how we can make things better for all. Processes may have changed since lockdown, but our service users are always at the top of our priorities. Where face-to-face meetings could not happen, telephone calls took their place. Online Zoom video calls became part of the new 'norm' and staff still worked hard behind the scenes, ensuring that these new processes worked.

I would like to take this opportunity to say a massive thank you to our superb team of volunteers who give up their time happily to help others. Of course, the thanks extend to our conscientious and professional staff. We should all be proud to be part of CARESCO.

Sawtry has grown massively in the last couple of years and we do not seem to be spreading the word as far as I would like. We must not become complacent and must keep driving forward. We need to let the whole village know that we mean business. Let us keep working together as a team and get more people involved. As the saying goes, many hands make light work and there is a lot of work to be done.

The future looks bright. The future is CARESCO.

Please continue to keep safe.

Tina Campbell

TREASURER'S REPORT



In a year of unprecedented difficulties, we have faced many new challenges, including doubts over our regular income sources, uncertainties regarding funding, and obstacles to fundraising opportunities. Nevertheless, with thanks to the dedicated efforts of the members of the finance team, we were able to source enough alternative funding to make up some of the shortfall in income caused by the closure of our Charity Shop and our inability to carry out traditional fundraising activities. This enabled us to carry on providing our core services during the year, and also to develop new services in response to the changing needs in the community brought about by the unfolding pandemic.

The instability of our normal income sources as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic has taught us that we need to be flexible and creative in the way that we source our funds in order to ensure the security and longevity of our charity. We now have infrastructure in place to sell donated items remotely and online. We are more prepared to hold virtual fundraising events instead of in-person if necessary. We are working with local businesses on our corporate fundraising goals and re-evaluating the importance of grant funding in our future financial planning.

A final thanks to all of our donors and supporters in the community, who help to keep CARESCO running throughout the year. Without your ongoing support we would not be able to provide such valuable services within our community.

Heather Bohonis



FINANCIAL STATEMENT

The examined financial statement for the year April 2020 to March 2021 is available as a separate document and can be found on the downloads page of our website, or contact us for a copy.

Our thanks to our Independent Examiner, Lisa Watson and also to our Accounts team, Manager Marina Joyce and her Deputy Donna Green, for all their hard work day-to-day to ensure that the financial records are kept up to date.



FINANCIAL RESERVES

Reserves are that part of a charity's unrestricted funds that are freely available to spend on any of the charity's purposes. This excludes restricted income funds and tangible fixed assets held for the charity's use and amounts designated for essential spending.

Having considered all the facts and information available in 2019 ahead of the pandemic, the Trustees concluded that the charity should hold a level of reserves sufficient to fund the organisation in a period of unforeseen difficulties for six months. They believed that this was a suitable length of time for them to consider the options and to find a solution to the difficulties.

In addition to the above, the current building from which CARESCO conducts its main activities has been assessed as having a limited lifespan. There is an expectation of a future need for either repairs to the existing building or the purchase or construction of a new building. Therefore a Building Fund Reserve is being accumulated toward this goal in preparation for this eventuality.

GENERAL MANAGER'S REPORT



This year, more so than most, has presented us with challenges and new situations that we have had to adapt to overnight. Throughout the ongoing changes of the pandemic, we have seen unmeasurable teamwork, new skills and ways of working as well as support from the local community which has been unmatched in recent years.

April 2020 saw the country in a lockdown and therefore we were required to close down the majority of our services. It was important to us to maintain a level of communication and support to our pre-existing CARESCO community, including all our members across all our services and our 200+ volunteers. The staff began working remotely and we immediately turned our focus to an in-house support system providing regular phone calls, doorstep welfare visits, and have been running errands for our service users on request and delivering hot meals to many too.

It was imperative that we kept our Foodbank provision operational and soon equipped the regular volunteering team with additional staff who could help cope with the expected increase in demand. The team have often had to find creative and diverse ways to source stock and fundraise for the additional items we needed to remain effective.

Incorporating regular online staff meetings helped keep the level of communication between us all high, not only allowing us to keep in touch but often troubleshooting problems between the team that would arise, offering quick work-arounds and solutions. These are the types of new procedures that will remain a valuable part of our working week when we finally move beyond the pandemic.

As the weeks progressed, our working relationships with organisations like Hunts Forum and Huntingdon District Council developed and it was soon apparent that CARESCO was in a position to become one of their '*Recognised Organisations*'. Adopting their accreditation allowed us to develop our support network, reaching even further and wider in the community whilst working directly with local residents. One of the many positives to come out of a challenging year has been the connections we have made with other likeminded organisations and charities. The common goal of 'helping people' allowed us all to come together and create a network whose actions were recognised on many levels.

In December CARESCO won a Community Spirit award which is part of the Chorus Homes Community Inspiration Awards. A proud achievement and welcomed recognition in adverse times, proving that with hard work and commitment, our community spirit is always a priority. We also featured in the media with multiple articles in the Hunts Post newspaper and interviews on BBC Radio Cambridgeshire, not only lifting our profile but allowing us to talk to a wider audience.

The CARESCO staff have spent a year redirecting their usual responsibilities and adapted accordingly to the changing guidelines to help the areas of CARESCO that needed it. Having to learn unfamiliar roles, set up new procedures and focus even more astutely on health and safety and wellbeing. Each staff member has gone above and beyond expectations, they have been a real support to each other and to me, excelling in their commitment to the charity and its services. We are very lucky to have such a strong team of staff.

As with any year, circumstances have meant that we sadly lost a few members of staff. Rosemary Jubb, our Charity Shop Supervisor left CARESCO in July and we welcomed Tina Drage into the same role the following month. In October, Margaret Oliver, our Deputy Manager at Alconbury Thursday Club also resigned. Then in January 2021, Gill Robinson, our Deputy of the Green End Day Club left us after a decade in that role. Suzanne Millman who is our Manager of Alconbury Thursday Club took on Gill's former position too.

In December we were approached by a group of volunteers in Alconbury who wanted to run a new day care club in the village. Most of this team had been involved for many years with our Thursday Club, but now wished to work autonomously from CARESCO. After much discussion, it was agreed

that CARESCO would close down the Thursday Club so that the new Alconbury-based team could do as they proposed. We now strive to work collectively with them so that the new organisation, called the Alconbury Cum Weston Thursday Club, can be established while ensuring all service users are catered for throughout the transitional period. It is our members after all who must remain at the forefront of our minds at this time of change.

As we reach the end of this financial year it has definitely been a year to reflect on many highs and lows. Fortunately, the highs have allowed us to grow and develop and the lows have allowed us to learn. As an organisation, we have never been busier, despite having fewer active services and activities. We have strengthened our impact in the community and focussed on those around us with our decisions. Developing a reputation of which I am extremely proud and everything that CARESCO has achieved over the last 12 months is credit to the hard work of our trustees, staff and volunteers.

Emma Flanz



CARESCO VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering with CARESCO throughout this year has been different to any other year. In March 2020 we had over 200 active volunteers across all our activities and services, but when the first lockdown began it was inevitable those numbers would be reduced. However, we used this time to re-evaluate the way we had been working, often coming up with creative ways to manage with fewer volunteers in certain areas whilst maintaining our high standards across the charity. We also redeployed people into other areas of our organisation that needed additional help.



At the end of April, we used our online platforms to recruit team members to our newly established COVID Response service, allowing us to utilise those in the community who had been furloughed from their employment who were keen to help out with everyday tasks like shopping trips and prescription deliveries.

Our close connections with Hunts Forum opened up online training opportunities for all our volunteers allowing us have access to their platform offering training on safeguarding, understanding wellbeing and mental health and knowledge on how to volunteer during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Our regular newsletter, which we use to update the volunteers about CARESCO news, proved to be a useful way of communicating with them when we were not allowed to meet face-to-face. As with many of our events, our annual celebration get together was cancelled leaving us with little opportunity to personally thank the volunteers and show our appreciation for all the hard work that they do. But despite this, in June 2020 the staff team managed to deliver a bouquet of flowers, biscuits and a thank you card to each volunteer, allowing us a brief door step chat and catch up.



This year we nominated eight of our volunteers for the Hunts Forum Annual Volunteer Awards: Heather Bohonis, Tony Stefanelli, Doreen Rickard, Dot Fowler, Jenny Measures, Jo Archer, David Whitaker and Sharon Farrington. Each nominee received a certificate and there was an online awards ceremony which coincided with Hunts Forum's AGM. It is always tricky to select only a handful of volunteers when each of our volunteers regularly show support and offer their time and their skill set, but we felt that these eight in particular were deserving of this extra recognition this year.

Our volunteers are the cogs that keep CARESCO turning. Each one fulfilling a special role that allows us to develop and grow. Without their support,

advice and commitment we simply could not achieve all that we do. They continue to provide a reliable, professional service and are advocates for the charity. It is often difficult to explain how much we rely and appreciate them and their work, but we are proud to have each one as part of our team and we are extremely lucky to have their support.

Emma Flanz



SAWTRY COVIDRESPONSE TEAM

Manager: Emma Flanz

Aims: *To provide support to those shielding or isolating at home during the COVID-19 pandemic*



In response to the COVID-19 outbreak, CARESCO was approached by Hunts Forum who had joined forces with Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) and we were asked if we would become one of their key registered organisations for the authority's new Community Hub and part of the 'We Are Huntingdonshire' partnership.

With the support of Hunts Forum and HDC, we began helping to support Sawtry and its neighbouring villages during the global crisis, supporting those in the shielded 'high risk' category and those who were self-isolating, undertaking tasks including:

- Shopping
- Collecting medication
- Posting parcels or letters
- Phone calls to vulnerable people offering a listening ear
- Getting a newspaper

Recruiting volunteers for this group was our first challenge, but by early May we had over 40 in our team, most of whom were new volunteers for CARESCO. We were able to utilise those in our community who had been furloughed from their other employment commitments at the time. Communication to the local residents was also important in setting this service up, new marketing materials were distributed around Sawtry via a leaflet drop and posters, we regularly updated the local organisations and businesses that remained open and were asking teams, such as those at the Wellside Surgery and Boots the Chemist in Sawtry, and staff at HDC to make referrals into us. Our Sawtry Eye magazine was a useful way of getting messages out to the community too as well as our online platforms.

Hunts Forum hosted monthly online 'Zooms' which included CARESCO, as well as their other Registered Organisations and representatives from HDC. These meetings were invaluable to allow us access to the latest data and briefings on what other areas of Huntingdonshire were doing. They also gave us a platform to collectively troubleshoot and come up with best practice solutions to some of the issues we were all facing. They also eventually opened up doors for us to access other meetings lead by the Council in other areas of the community that we have found extremely useful.

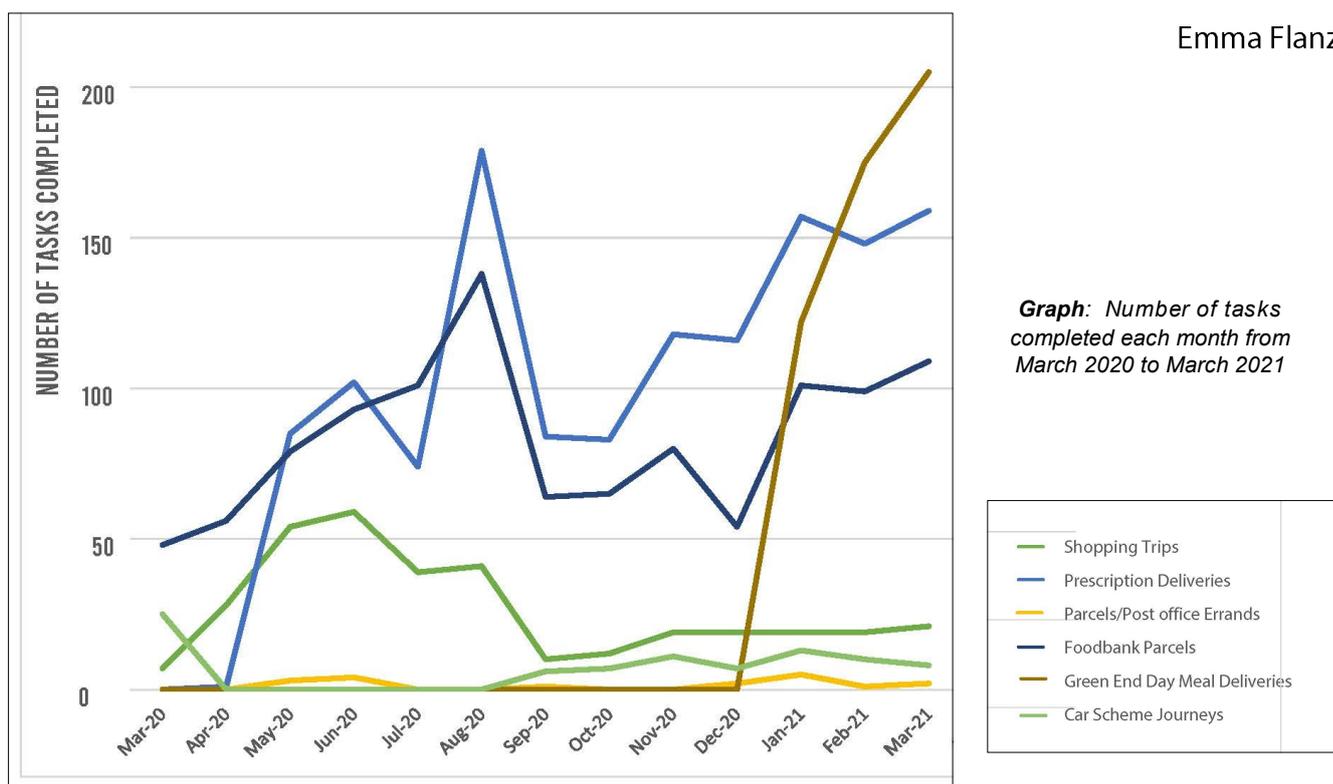
These troubling times have seen many of the local residents turn to us for not only physical support but emotional support too. We were able to easily direct people to the right help for the more unusual requests

and there have been numerous occasions when we have used our safeguarding procedures to signpost and further support people when we felt it necessary too.

Although at times setting up and co-ordinating the Covid Response for the Sawtry area has been extremely challenging, it has brought us many positives. We were fortunate to receive some funding to help us run this service and the networking allowed us to build relationships with many groups which we will continue to benefit from for many years.

As we look ahead to the next few months, CARESCO has raised the issue of the longevity of the Covid Response support set up during the pandemic. Hunts Forum will be stopping their Recognised Organisation accreditation in the Autumn of 2021, so discussions need to be had to decide what the future of this service will look like.

The graph shows the level of demand over the first thirteen months of the pandemic, which highlights how hard the various CARESCO teams have worked and the sheer volume of requests that we have faced:



Emma Flanz



ALCONBURY THURSDAY CLUB

- Manager:** Suzanne Millman
- Deputy:** Margaret Oliver (until October 2020)
- Venue:** Alconbury Sports & Social Club
- When:** 9.30am - 2.30pm
- Aims:** *To provide a day out for those who would like company, a hot meal and entertainment*



2020 saw Alconbury Thursday Club suffer the same challenges as the rest of the world. We had to close our doors to members in March to keep everyone safe and follow the government advice.

We then looked at ways we could help our members through this difficult time and it was decided

that weekly phone calls to everyone would be the best way to support them. We made contact each week and asked if we could help with anything, for example shopping or prescriptions. We also had a general chat with them to ensure they were well.



As government restrictions lifted in the summer of 2020, we had the pleasure of delivering an afternoon tea to each member in June, which gave us a chance at last to get some face-to-face contact which we had missed immensely. We continued with the phone calls and made efforts to have face-to-face visits where possible.

In October our deputy Margaret chose to step down from her role, my thanks to her for all she did at ATC.

Through the rest of the year the club has sadly remained closed but we continued supporting with calls and visits and at the beginning of 2021 we were able to offer a hot meal delivery service from the CARESCO Centre to the members, which was enjoyed by many.

We were informed in December by the local volunteers that they would like to set up an independent club for the Alconbury community and separate from CARESCO. Therefore, our trustees are working to enable a smooth transition to support this new committee in achieving their goal and we wish them all the best of luck in the future.

Suzanne Millman



GREENENDAY CLUB



- Managers:** Pat Ayres, Vicki Currington
- Deputy:** Gill Robinson (until February 2021)
Suzanne Millman (from February 2021)
- Cook:** Helen Trebes
- Venue:** CARESCO Centre
- When:** Monday to Thursday, 10.00am – 2.00pm
- Aims:** *To bring together members of our community for a regular day of friendship, food & fun*

Our first full financial year as a merged (Friendship/Vintage) club has proved quite challenging but for reasons outside our control. We had plenty of ideas to increase our membership, but unfortunately due to the COVID-19 pandemic we have not been able to implement any of them.

During each lockdown we have phoned all our members regularly and provided a shopping and medication delivery service for those who needed one. When national restrictions at times have been eased, we have been able to reopen with limited numbers each day and with all the government guidelines in place.



In June we delivered an afternoon tea to all our members and also took them all a plant and card to let them know we were thinking of them.

In January 2021 we began a meal delivery service twice a week offered to all our own club members, those who belonged to the Thursday Club in Alconbury and also to a small number of people living in our community that were in need of additional support in this way. Hot lunches were prepared in our kitchen at the CARESCO

Centre and delivered to the doorstep by our team. This has proved to be very successful and we will continue to deliver meals to those who are still unable to attend the club when we eventually move on from the pandemic.

Our deputy manager, Gill Robinson retired in February 2021. We thank her for all her support and help over the years, she will be missed. Suzanne Millman took over as the deputy on Wednesdays and Thursdays and we welcome her as part of our team. She will be a great asset to the club.

Our bus drivers and volunteers have continued to help us throughout the pandemic in any way they can. We thank Tony Black, Mark Campbell, Graham Bundy, Matt Spinks, Wendy Hunt, Linda McCleod, Rose Johnson, Dee Pike, Annette Faff and Julie Trolove.

Vicki Currington & Pat Ayres



SAWTRY EYE



Editors: Liz Coates & Marina Joyce

Designer: Donna Green

Bi-monthly: February, April, June, August, October & December

Distribution: Conington, the Giddings, Glatton, Holme, Sawtry, Upton and Winwick

Aims: *To edit, produce and distribute a community magazine funded by advertising*

The Sawtry Eye has been published throughout the year as normal, though content has necessarily changed to reflect the way our readership has been dealing with the pandemic. While news about meetings, events, fundraisers and activities have fallen by the wayside as we all lived under the lockdown restrictions, the Eye has been able to include official safety advice relating to COVID-19 and contact details for organisations, both local and national who were offering help and support to those who needed it.

For some readers, isolating or shielding at home alone and without access to the internet, the magazine has provided a vital link to the outside world. There is still a big need for reliable, informative printed media delivered through the letterbox even in this time of transition, despite the drive to go online. However, each issue is also available to download from the CARESCO website for those who prefer to access the magazine that way.



Following a request from residents in Holme, in October 2020 our circulation expanded to include the 240 properties in their village and we were able to welcome a new community of readers. This has taken the number of copies distributed to over 3300, a total which will continue to increase as the planned new estates are built on the edges of Sawtry.

We were delighted to receive original copies of the first three issues - Autumn 1988, Spring 1989 and Summer 1989 - which are now also available from our website. These give a fascinating snapshot of Sawtry at the time as well as illustrating how far desktop publishing has come since the editors were literally doing a 'copy and paste' job on the layout.

My thanks as always to my fellow editor, Marina and volunteer graphic designer Donna for their unflinching support and partnership throughout the year. All done remotely for the past 12 months. To our distribution team who despite the pandemic helped to get the copies delivered. Our thanks also to the team at Clanpress who have been so supportive through these difficult times.

Liz Coates

CHARITY SHOP



- Manager:** Sharon Dougherty
- Supervisors:** Rosemary Jubb (until July 20)
Susie Rodger (until July 20)
Tina Drage (from September 20)
- Venue:** 7 Greenways, Sawtry, PE28 5UR,
- When:** Monday - Friday: 9am - 12.30pm & 1.30pm - 4.30pm
Saturday: 9am - 12.30pm & 1pm - 4pm
Sunday: Closed
- Contact:** E - shop@caresco.org.uk; T - 01487 208026
- Aims:** *To provide a local low-cost recycling service for the community while raising funds to enable the wider activities of the charity.*

The last financial year at the shop has been very tough, but we have managed to meet the challenges set us by the pandemic head on and dealt with them as best we can. We have achieved an awful lot during a time which has brought a new normal to all of us.

April 2020 saw us face our first national lockdown when we had to sadly close our doors to our customers and volunteers. The shop benefitted from a much needed declutter whilst we were closed, this included both garages which proved to play a vital role and continue to do so. Thank you to Dave Dougherty for helping with this and putting in place our safe distance floor markings.

Throughout all the closures, a second in November and a third at Christmas, we have kept in constant contact with all of our volunteers by way of phone calls and doorstep visits, ensuring that everyone knows we are here should they need anything.

Unfortunately, in July our two Supervisors, Rosemary Jubb and Susie Rodger were unable to continue working at the shop. We wish Rosemary all the very best for the future and thank her for her time spent with us. Susie is still part of the office team with CARESCO and is also a relief volunteer at the shop. Tina Drage joined us from September as Supervisor and we also welcomed Jacqui Hedington and Angela Buckley as two additional relief Supervisors. All of the above has meant that a lot of training has been going on behind the scenes and I have created a shop manual which gives an A - Z of how to run the shop. This has proved to be very useful.



We like to look at everything with a 'glass half full' attitude and I am pleased to say that most of the changes we have had to implement due to COVID-19 have brought many positive results.

We have launched our own Facebook page which has generated much needed income during our three closures. We arranged collections from the shop's back door and also provided a free delivery service when collections were not appropriate. Our shop window has also played a very big part with the community, again with sales and also by giving the general public a little something to smile at when they have passed by on their daily exercise routine.

To boost our sales whilst we were closed, we 'Ziffited' every book that was in the shop. The majority of them were accepted due to the demand in reading material during lockdown. We sold hampers full of toiletries and other goodies collected over the year. These would normally have been sold at the annual Sawtry Frost Fayre but our shop window and social media page promoted these instead. We had a garage full of donations whilst we were closed which were sorted and where possible were sold via our Facebook page or shop window.

We have introduced a donation booking system which has proved to have all sorts of additional benefits in addition to us being able to manage the number of bags and boxes that we receive daily. The new system has, most importantly, created a safer area to work in for our volunteers. It has enabled us to better track gift aided donations, to enrol new 'Gift Aiders' and to correct any anomalies that have previously remained unsolved. This has resulted in an increase in the amount we have been able to claim back from HMRC which is a great achievement during a time when our sales have been reduced due to the situation we find ourselves in. Thank You to Debbie Coates who has taken over the role of looking after our Gift Aid records from Rosemary. The donation booking system means that the job is now a more physical one and has to be managed closely but the benefits far outweigh the negatives so it is a system that will stay in place at the shop even after the pandemic becomes a distant memory.

When the shop eventually reopened in June 2020 after the first lockdown, all required safety measures had been implemented and we were hugely grateful to Spirotech for donating and installing a Perspex screen for our till. Due to the need to reduce the total number of 'bodies' in the shop at any one time, as well as limiting customer numbers we also revisited our volunteer rota and reduced the shifts from three a day to two. This also meant reducing the total team of volunteers to around 30. Due to the new way we are managing donations, we will not need to increase this total in the future. We now have a regular team of volunteers and also a separate team of relief volunteers who cover holidays, sickness etc. As our volunteers are working an additional hour in each shift we close for one hour at lunchtime (half an hour on Saturdays). This enables us to change shifts more efficiently, to ensure all areas are clean, to take a breath and prepare for the afternoon.

Sales have been erratic throughout the last financial year which of course has been a concern, but our little shop is still here and, I feel it is an even bigger part of the community. We have been a comfort blanket for so many people and I am continually amazed and moved by the many stories that are told both by customers and volunteers of their own experiences during this last year.

Our volunteers have been wonderful throughout this worrying time and have adapted brilliantly to the changes that have had to be put in place. I am so proud of them all. We are very lucky to have their continued support; long may it continue.

Sharon Dougherty



SAWTRY MANCAVE

Supervisor: Hugh Spencer
Co-ordinator: Heather Thompson
Venue: Sawtry Community Centre
When: Monday, Tuesday & Thursday, 9- 12 noon

Aims: *To provide a safe space for men to build friendships while sharing expertise and passing on knowledge*



Well, despite Covid and the lockdown, it has been a very busy year for the Man Cave.

Following a successful grant application, our workshop and the Foodbank's foodstore are being completely refurbished. The workshop now has toilets, kitchen area, running water and all the floors have been sealed. The work is not completed as yet, the whole building is to have all the lights and the smoke alarm system replaced.

For those Cavers who needed something to do during lockdown, Hugh arranged for the members to have projects at home. Meanwhile, one member Pete was engaged in sorting out all the nuts, bolts and tools in the workshop. Whilst the contractors were in, many things had to be moved, it

was a huge task and he worked tirelessly and we are grateful for all his hard work. For most of the year we have also been able to continue providing a PAT testing service for local people.

A request was put out to the community for any unwanted computers, tablets and monitors as these were required for students at Sawtry Village Academy who needed them so they could work from home. The community rose to the task and a large supply of second-hand equipment was donated. The machines were cleared and PAT tested by our Cavers, then the equipment went to SVA for distribution amongst their students. We will continue to offer this service in future.



The flooding in Sawtry caused problems for lots of households during the Spring and Pete and Tom worked tirelessly to help local residents by managing to secure a supply of sand and sandbags. These were distributed around the village, in particular Hill View Residential Home. We still hold a supply and are working with Sawtry Parish Council to find a permanent store for the sand and bags in case they are needed again over the winter.

Several of the Cavers have volunteered with Sawtry Litter Pickers to help tidy the village. In particular they cleared the area of the Community Centre, SVA and the car park area behind the Old School Hall. They continue to monitor and pick up rubbish around this area. In addition the hedgerows have all been trimmed and the brambles removed from around the Community Centre.

We have been involved with several projects at the Junior School including supplying bird tables so the children can put food out for the birds and watch them feed through the window. The Cavers have also been involved in the All Saints Churchyard project, supplying a very large box with materials for children to fill the box for the insects. Again the community have loved it.

We are now looking at setting out clear work areas for each Caver. We have a lot of men interested in joining the Man Cave as and when we are able to reopen and several have disabilities. One of the priorities is to get an accessible station set up for them. This is a work in process and once the lighting and rewiring are complete, can move forward.

It will be lovely to see the members coming back to their cave once COVID restrictions are eased.

Heather Thompson



CHATTERBOX

- Manager:** Emma Flanz
Venue: CARESCO Centre
When: Second & Fourth Monday from 2 - 4pm
Aims: To provide peer support, advice and friendship for family carers and those for whom they care.



Chatterbox is a twice monthly drop-in where carers come on their own or with the person they care for. It is a place where carers can come to for advice, social interaction and to spend time with other likeminded individuals sharing their experiences. All are welcome. We also carry information and leaflets from other organisations and use these for signposting. The drop-ins regularly attract between 15 and 22 people.

The pandemic meant that we had to stop the face-to-face Chatterbox session, however we kept up contact with the group members. One of our trustees enjoyed making weekly phone calls to each member, allowing time to catch up and share news. We were also able to run small errands for the

members, often utilising our volunteers who were part of our Covid Response team.



In June, each Chatterbox member received an afternoon tea to their doorstep, produced and distributed by our staff at the Green End Day Club. A nice way to remind all those that we could not meet with personally that we were still thinking of them and wanting to make them smile. The doorstep chat at the point of delivery was a welcomed interaction too.

Online sessions proved to be a lifeline in the Autumn when we decided to trial a social get together via the video conferencing service Zoom. Using these catch-ups to check in on each other, these soon became the norm. We even recruited two new members too. Unfortunately, due to

government restrictions, we had to cancel all other celebrations such as our yearly BBQ and later the annual trip to watch a Christmas pantomime.

In mid-October, between lockdowns and following all the restriction guidelines, the Chatterbox group was able to meet in-person socially before another national lockdown meant we finished the year back on Zoom.

Looking ahead to the next few months, we remain positive that we will be able to meet again in-person and get our Chatterbox group back to the CARESCO Centre.

Emma Flanz



COFFEE SHOP

Co-ordinator: Carolyn Watts
Venue: CARESCO Centre
When: Friday, 9 — 11.30am

Aims: *To provide a venue for people to meet up with old friends and to get to know new ones over a cuppa and cake.*



Along with other CARESCO activities our Coffee Shop had to be suspended when the first lockdown started at the end of March 2020 and due to government restrictions and concerns for safety, did not resume again until early September and then under tight guidelines on capacity, distancing and other COVID-related measures.

Following the national procedures and guidelines for hospitality, the reduced team of willing volunteers soon learned to deal with new ways of working, including using a different room layout with reduced seating, providing table service, limiting cash handling, dealing with Track & Trace and ensuring customers wore face coverings when not seated.

Thankfully we were able to welcome our new volunteer co-ordinator for the Coffee Shop as Carolyn stepped into her role after many months of waiting and Friday mornings quickly became an established routine again in the CARESCO Centre with bacon butties and cake on the menu. Sadly



however we were not able to be open for long and services were once again suspended for a second lockdown from November and this has continued through to the end of March 2021 and beyond.

As always, we are grateful to our wonderful team of volunteers and our cake bakers and we hope to be able to welcome them back as soon as it is safe to do so.

Liz Coates

SAWTRY CAR SCHEME

Co-ordinator: Peter Fox

When: Daytime weekdays, depending on availability

Contact: T - 07810 476979

Aims: *To provide an affordable alternative for anyone who has difficulty using public transport.*



When CARESCO purchased the minibus in 2019, one result was to reduce the total number of trips done by the Car Scheme drivers by approximately 36 per month. For the Car Scheme, the downside to purchasing the minibus was that one driver committed himself to two days a week driving the vehicle to collect members attending the Green End Day Club.

The drivers were previously committed to transporting members to the Green End Day Club by car on two days a week, along with several shopping trips, averaging eighty trips per month. This took a heavy toll on the available driver resources. Another ten journeys per month were taken up with shopping trips. The remaining journeys were for medical reasons, such as for hospital, dental, doctor, optician or chiropodist appointments. When the first lockdown hit, the Scheme was suspended, however since the easing of lockdown in September 2020, bookings for medical appointments have been accepted, averaging ten a month.

Sadly, several drivers have resigned for health or personal reasons during the pandemic. The Scheme can currently draw on five voluntary drivers if required. Regrettably five of the Scheme's regular users have died over the year.



If anything good has developed out of this terrible pandemic, relatives have come out of the woodwork and started taking care of their older family members and are now providing personal or online shopping and hospital transport.

One major change for the Car Scheme during the year is the management of community transport within Cambridgeshire, which has been transferred to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Combined Authority (C&PCA) from

Cambridgeshire County Council (CCC). This includes public, private and volunteer sectors providing transport within the county of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough City, with taxis remaining under the control of the District Councils.

Gavin Moulton, who was the lead officer responsible for voluntary car schemes, has transferred from CCC to C&PCA. As far as CARESCO and the Sawtry Car Scheme are concerned, we are now working in partnership with C&PCA.

The Car Scheme volunteer co-ordinator provides weekly statistics to CARESCO office and the General Manager plus a monthly overview of that month's statistics with a copy to the C&PCA community transport team.

At the time of writing, the Car Scheme can respond to the current volume of requests with the existing number of drivers. If however the volume increases, additional drivers would be welcome. The problem with recruitment and retention of volunteer drivers to the Scheme are completely different to any of the other CARESCO's activity involving volunteers. If a person offers their time to the other CARESCO activities, they can be told of the number of hours required per day or per week. Then the perspective volunteer knows what is wanted of them. With the Car Scheme, volunteer drivers are only wanted when trips are required. While I have been the incumbent coordinator five people have made inquiries about volunteering and three have subsequently joined only to leave a few months later as they have had no driving to do.

Peter Fox

SOUNDS GOOD

Co-ordinator: Linda Dupée

Venue: CARESCO Centre

When: Second & Fourth Fridays, 1.30 - 3pm

Aims: *To provide a friendship group for those who enjoy all things musical & the spoken word*



We started off this year with Sounds Good unable to meet in person due to the first national lockdown. Although we could not see each other all together, regular contact was maintained via email and telephone calls. This support and conversation proved to be a welcome distraction from what was happening around us and the creativity amongst the group continued to flourish.



In May one of our Sounds Good members David wrote a poem called 'We're Still Here', which was so thought provoking and comical we felt it needed a wider audience. So we tasked the staff and trustees to record a verse each, which edited together created a video that we were able to use on our online platforms. With hundreds of views, we were able to collectively create a little cheer and make people smile.

Then in June, the Sounds Good members benefited from a delicious home-made afternoon tea, made by the staff at the Green End Day Club. Delivery day also allowed for a quick doorstep chat with each member, a chance for us to meet briefly before it was time for cake.

Throughout the year, Evie co-ordinated ways to make sure the members were able to keep singing in their own homes. Thank you also to David for utilising the technology available to us. Poems and songs continued to be written to pass the time too with some published in the Sawtry Eye magazine to give them a wider audience.

Unfortunately Sounds Good was one of the CARESCO activities which remained closed for the entire year, but despite that every effort was made to make sure that everyone felt safe and supported. Linda, our volunteer co-ordinator for this group was paramount in maintaining the contact necessary between group members. However, in December Linda made the tough decision to step down from the role. As a founder of the group, Linda has helped to shape this activity into a thriving group over the years and we look forward to seeing it continue to grow and develop in years to come. For now, we hope for a time when we can come together again to sing, discuss music and catch up on the last 12 months.

Emma Flanz



CHRISTMAS DAY PARTY

Co-ordinators: Tina Campbell, Mark Campbell

Venue: CARESCO Centre

When: Annually on 25th December

Aims: *To provide an opportunity for people who would otherwise be on their own to get together on Christmas Day to enjoy a traditional lunch and celebration.*



Christmas 2020, what can I say? In my mind there was no way we were going to let people down due to lockdown. Christmas was still 'go'.

A lot of preparation goes into this day, from purchasing and storing the food, to choosing the presents, getting our lovely volunteers in and prepped. Christmas Eve is usually spent peeling veg, laying tables and putting up decorations - but in 2020 it was a bit different. With another lockdown looming, guests were offered the choice of attending in-person at the CARESCO Centre or having their Christmas lunch delivered hot to their front door. Yes, prep still had to be done, but there was the additional ordering of the take-away containers and storage bags, along with sorting out the drivers and delivery routes.

Christmas 2020 was a challenge but it was still as successful as previous years - even without a visit from Santa this time.



Volunteer chef, Sally had the oven gloves on again. Sally was a Home Economics Teacher, so she was and is very organised. We still had a choice of starters, main and desserts that were offered to our guests. In the end there were ten of us who were picked up by the CARESCO minibus and ate in and 21 meals were delivered to guests in their own homes in Sawtry or surrounding villages.

The ten of us at the Centre played games and even managed to tune in and catch the Queen's Speech at 3pm. We did the 'take home' bags slightly differently too. The final course went home with the guests, along with any food which could be eaten the next day. This saved on any waste as not everyone can squeeze in all the food on offer in the time given. The presents, cake and some crosswords/word searches were also in the bags.

This day is so much fun for everyone involved. I think this was my sixth year of Christmas Day volunteering and I am as enthusiastic about it now as I was when I first volunteered. It was my first taster of volunteering and that showed me how great CARESCO can be and is.

A massive thank you to all involved and fingers crossed we will be celebrating together again Christmas 2021.

Tina Campbell



SAWTRYFOODBANK

Supervisor Pat Furzland (from November 2020)
Venue: Sawtry Community Centre
When: Fridays, 3.30 - 5.30pm
Contact: E - foodbank@caresco.org.uk
T - 07743 593863
(During session times only, otherwise via the office)



Aims: *To provide emergency food for local people in crisis by working in partnership with the congregations of the Sawtry & Glatton Churches*

April 2020 began in full lockdown and the COVID-19 restrictions completely changed the way Sawtry Foodbank was run. All vouchers were sent by email and the majority of food parcels were delivered by a team of drivers. The team worked in smaller groups through the week and some volunteers had to self-isolate.

This became our busiest year ever. We gave out a total of 1039 food parcels over the twelve months April 20 - March 21, which helped 3783 local people in food crisis. This was an average of 20 food parcels a week, a huge increase on the previous year where it was around 3 to 4 per week.

At the start of the pandemic, when our supplies were low and there were purchasing restrictions in the supermarkets, the CARESCO Fundraising Manager Jacqui was busy helping us to maintain our stock levels and she has continued to do so all year. All her hard work was very much appreciated.

There were already plans in place for alterations to our foodstore in the Community Centre but in July, at short notice, we moved temporarily over to the Old School Hall to make way for the workmen. It took less than a day and we had help from the Man Cavers and other volunteers, including one of the Councillors from the Parish Council. Thankfully Sawtry Parish Council allowed us to stay in the hall throughout the refurbishment to the end of 2020. Thank you to them for their help with this temporary accommodation.



The Summer Scheme supporting children normally receiving free school meals began in July when the number of parcels going out reached a peak of 30 a week. The team worked hard to ensure all deliveries were made on time.

In November, I was appointed as a part-time supervisor of the Foodbank. CARESCO General Manager, Emma has been very supportive throughout the year and the office and accounts team have helped me to navigate through my first months in a new role.

We returned to our format of alternating Team A one week then Team B next. Tony Stefanelli was Team A leader, Alison Sutton was Team B leader and Pauline Fox became our warehouse manager. We began a new system, working with at least one week of stock in hand. I joined the Hunts Food Network, which brings all the District's emergency food groups together. I have sent them regular updates on our statistics including number of food parcels, number of people helped and postcode distribution. These figures are helping Huntingdonshire District Council (HDC) to help prevent food poverty in our District.

We also began to work with Andrew Hall, who is a Social Prescribing Link Worker and clients can contact him through the Wellside Surgery. He joined our list of referral agencies in November and this has been the start of a very successful partnership. We continue to refer clients to him for help and he issues food parcel vouchers when necessary.

In December, we had a donation table at the Santa Fun Run in Sawtry. This was manned by our volunteers and all the runners generously donated food items. We also received new shelving from a grant organised by trustee Heather Bohonis. This was put up in the foodstore when the alteration work had been completed. It all looked very smart.

Three of our volunteers were nominated for a Hunts Forum Volunteer award for all their hard work and commitment to Foodbank. Heather Bohonis, Tony Stefanelli and Jo Archer were all proud recipients of this award.

Our Christmas Food Parcel Scheme was a success. This was operated from the foodstore, while the weekly parcels were sent from the Old School Hall. We delivered 66 Christmas food parcels in addition to the weekly parcels, and there was funding from the local community for a fresh fruit and vegetable parcel and meat parcel too. Both were supplied by Sawtry businesses. These helped 241 local people at a time when budgets were stretched.

From January we began operating from the foodstore again and by February we had averaged 25 parcels a week since the start of 2021. We began to include information leaflets in our food parcels and started to use supermarkets regularly to purchase essential items that were low in stock.

In March we received a DEFRA grant via HDC, which we will use to buy new tables, a ramp for the door and a security light. We also signed up to the Winter Grant Scheme which is run by HDC.

I nominated six of our clients in March and they all received £50 in supermarket vouchers to help with their food bills.

Throughout the year John Green (J R Green Newsagents) has given us a weekly supply of fresh bread, all free of charge and carrier bags too when we needed them for packing parcels. I worked with Sawtry Co-op, who continue to collect donations for us and I provided them with regular updates to the list of items we need. We are fortunate to have a constant supply of local donations. In addition, we continue to build working relationships with outside organisations such as the charities Fareshare and Food For Nought. They supply us with regular stock and this has improved the range of items that we can give out.

We have lots of support from the local community who have continued to donate food items during a difficult year, our thanks to all who have donated through this difficult time.

Thank you to all volunteers, trustees and staff for your help and support during this very unique year. 2021 was a year when our volunteers showed us just how amazing they are working together to keep Foodbank open every week of the year.

Pat Furzeland



THE CARESCO CENTRE

With the suspension of most activities and meetings moving online as the pandemic hit us, the Centre has been a very quiet place through much of the past year. For the first lockdown, the admin and accounts teams mostly worked from home. Since that initial period though, the office has been manned, if behind a locked front door, as a point of contact for the organisation.

The challenge in the early weeks was to source adequate protective equipment to keep staff and volunteers safe as they carried out their vital tasks and our Administrator Susie worked hard to find supplies at a reasonable price. Thankfully Susie has been able to maintain stocks in line with demand throughout the year.

Following risk assessments, new cleaning regimes were introduced in response to the COVID-related guidelines to mitigate the risks as much as possible and keep all building users as safe as possible. Any teams using the building had to undertake their own cleaning as well as our wonderful cleaner Sandra doing her usual weekly routine.

The challenges of maintaining an aging modular building are increasing and making more demands on staff time. During the year the original water heater had to be replaced along with the kitchen heater unit. The original and now obsolete fluorescent light fitting are also progressively failing and being replaced in turn with more modern energy efficient units. During one period of lockdown, the Green End team set to and redecorated the club room for us.

With consideration for the anticipated lifespan of the building, the trustees are developing a business plan for acquiring a replacement permanent building and are researching possible alternatives and sources of funding.

Storage, always in short supply, became even more of an issue when our overflow space in the Community Centre had to be sacrificed to allow the installation of a toilet and kitchen space for the Man Cave's workshop. This meant a big clear-out and some items coming back into the Centre for safe keeping. One result of which has been to emphasise the need to ensure sufficient storage space is planned in from the beginning for our new building.

Our thanks to everyone who has helped with maintenance tasks during the year. In particular to Brian and Matt for all their support, both practical and technical. Thank you also to Keith, Ann and Alan who have kept us looking tidy outside and have looked after our garden and planters and to our cleaner, Sandra for her hard work throughout the year.

Liz Coates

FUNDRAISING



Well what a year we have all had and how marvellous that our community has pulled together to help each other. It never ceases to amaze me what can be done when people get together. Let us keep up the good work we have all done and together we can achieve great things.

It has been a difficult year with regards to the normal fundraising that CARESCO is well known for. We have been unable to arrange the usual big events and had to cancel those that were booked due to the pandemic. That said we have still managed to organise some good fundraisers and fingers crossed as restrictions are being lifted, we can get back to some of our bigger events.

We have a fantastic team of volunteers who can turn their hand to anything and are always willing to help when needed. We would like to thank them, without them this job would be a lot harder.

We still continue to promote our “Funding our Future” campaign that was started in 2020 and we go from strength to strength and are thankful for the people who have donated regularly so far.

These are the highlights of our past year’s fundraising efforts:

Date	Event	Total
April 20 - March 21	Funding our Future	£2053.77
April 20	Sawtry Walk to Run donation	£ 158.00
August 20	BGL Donation	£3000.00
September 20	Scarecrow Trail	£ 79.00
October 20	Pumpkin Trail	£ 173.00
November 20	Raffle	£ 210.00
November 20	Sawtry Infant School mask sale	£ 100.00
November 20	BGL Christmas parcels	£1600.00
November 20	Avon products donation	£ 50.00
December 20	Body Shop sales donation	£ 35.00
December 20	Christmas Quiz sheet	£ 54.00
December 20	Santa Calls	£ 15.00
December 20	Tree Hearts	£ 88.50
December 20	Raffle	£ 202.00
December 20	Polygon donation for Christmas	£ 250.00
January 21	Raffle	£ 50.00
February 21	Children’s Poetry Competition	£ 19.00

We are very hopeful that we will be able to organise more events in the coming year as like many other charities we are dependent on donations and future fundraising.

Our continual thanks and praise must go to everyone who has made donations to us over the year especially under the current circumstances. We would like to thank the many individuals, companies, organisations, businesses and groups that continually support us. Our gratitude to you for always thinking of us, it is very much appreciated. Also thank you to everyone who joins in,

attends and supports our events because without you they would not be as successful as they are.



Registered with
**FUNDRAISING
REGULATOR**

Onwards and upwards to another year in the life of CARESCO and to becoming as great as we can be – A huge THANK YOU from all of us.

Jacqui Hedington

THE STORY SO FAR

Our Sawtry-based charity was set up in 1982 (registered number 288202) with the grand name of 'Sawtry & District Care and Resource Organisation', but colloquially known as CARESCO from the start. The initial aim of the founders was to rescue two pre-existing activities, a lunch club and a day centre, both threatened with closure.

Based in the ancient modular building known as the *Homecraft Centre* adjacent to the Agricultural (Ag) Centre behind the Old School Hall, CARESCO continued to grow in size and strength through the enthusiasm and hard work of all involved and soon took over the Manpower Services Printshop which shared the building.

Over the years a variety of additional activities have joined the originals under the CARESCO umbrella, most run by paid part-time staff and supported by teams of volunteers, working together with local authorities and other voluntary organisations to create a stronger, more caring community. Always with the aim of meeting identified needs within the local community. Funding over the years has come through grants both from local councils and trusts, attendance fees personal and organisational donations and fundraising.

In 2001 CARESCO moved into a purpose-built modular building, the *CARESCO Centre*, funded by the National Lottery and bringing the Sawtry-based activities together into one building. In 2011 CARESCO became an incorporated charity, *CARESCO Ltd* (registered charity number 1140728; company number 7513432).

CARESCO opened a charity shop in Sawtry in April 2013 where the extra income has both helped to underpin the existing activities and also to fund the ongoing development of new services to further meet needs within the local community.

For more information, please visit www.caresco.org.uk



MANAGEMENT TRUSTEES

2020 – 2021

Life President: John Garner

Officers:	Chairman	Tina Campbell
	Vice-Chairman	Heather Thompson
	Treasurer	Heather Bohonis

Trustees: Heather Bohonis ; Tina Campbell; Elizabeth Coates;
Roy Dunn; Peter Fox; Jackie Kelly (resigned 09/09/20);
Bob Seeds (resigned 12/11/2020); Tony Stefanelli; Heather Thompson



Note: Trustees are recruited from the local community and are elected at the annual general meeting by the CARESCO Members present. All trustees give their time voluntarily and receive no remuneration or other benefits. Trustees have referred to the guidelines contained in the Charity Commission's general guidance on public benefit when reviewing aims and objectives and in planning future activities.

Non-voting: CARESCO Activity Managers are welcome to attend full trustee meetings and contribute to the discussion, however staff are asked to leave during sensitive agenda items.