Local Welcome
Annual report and accounts 2022-2023

LOCAL
WELCOME

Table of contents

The trustees present the annual report and financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2023. The financial statements comply with current statutory requirements and the requirements of the Charity's governing document.

a)
Letters from Chair and the team

Chair's letter

It is my pleasure to be sharing this report with you on behalf of Local Welcome. This report highlights how Local Welcome has continued to reflect, learn and adapt following the Covid-19 pandemic whilst remaining fiercely committed to its vision, mission and values, and how we have been able to carefully and successfully restart our meals at a time when human resilience and the power of our communities is needed more than ever.

We are grateful to our funders who have supported us this year and those who have committed to support us in future years. As a small, young charity it means so much to us when funders see the value in our work and back us as a team to achieve our goals. We would like to thank the National Lottery Heritage Fund, Save the Children UK, Postcode Places Trust, National Lottery Community Fund, The London Community Foundation, The Rayne Foundation, St Mark's church Kennington, and Herbert Smith Freehills.

I would like to thank all those that have supported us over the last year - our leaders, members, funders, partners and committed trustees and staff, without you none of the achievements we share in this report would have been possible.

Clare Young

A letter from the team

Well we certainly live in interesting times. The year has been one of delivering meals in a different, fractured and pressurised post-Covid world, whilst also learning more about where we can provide most value to people wanting to connect with others in their local community.

During the pandemic we had maintained our distinctive formula of community leadership and inclusive rituals by successfully supporting adults living with ADHD… but we were really itching to return to diverse meals around the table. When leader-trustee Claire Price and her team opened up the cooking kit again at Oasis Cardiff on 5 June 2022, it had been two years and four months since the pandemic forced us to pause our meals.

Re-starting meal groups gave us a good opportunity to make improvements to the way they worked. As explained in the Achievements and performance section, this time round our meals delivered better value for money (or, a higher return on investment) than ever before. This is particularly encouraging as we continue our journey towards a model and scale where Local Welcome is entirely membership-funded.

Spending a year running meals again has also given us plenty of new learning through collecting research data and iterative adjustments, making it clear that more can be done to improve the way meal groups operate. The current model has proved popular. However, one key issue is that it relies on staff to set up everything in advance, so that those Cardiff leaders could simply show up and give their time on the day.

In trying to make everything as simple as possible for leaders, we've created structures that are too rigid to allow local decision making, or creative adaptations. It's a complex challenge, but we're now learning to build greater flexibility into our systems, so that groups can feel and be more autonomous, without losing the magic, or crossing any boundaries designed to keep everyone safe.

David in Liverpool wants to invite people seeking sanctuary to our meals via WhatsApp without needing to communicate with us first about attendance lists. Marion in Derby wants to bring dessert to the meals without needing to go through us first to check about allergies. Abbas in Cardiff wants to start more groups locally, without depending on grants to cover the up-front costs. All this, and everyone wants to cook their own recipes, laden with their own personal stories, with food that they've sourced themselves.

Each of these barriers have local solutions which feature in the new version of the meal groups - where our support doesn't do anything leaders aren't better placed to do for themselves. It gives local leaders increased responsibility. We've been referring to it as autonomy, but some might call it power. Some might call it control. Call it what you will, it's the impact that counts.

As this report goes to press, we are launching a new version of our meal groups, and we're so excited to see what the impact will be.

We believe that equipping leaders to recruit new members, build a regular group income, and control the raw inputs of the meals they host (such as ingredients) is radical and innovative. We also think that these processes, and the inclusive cooking ritual they manifest, generates the 'civic literacy' our world needs more than ever. Where each person has a role to play in their local community, where newcomers are welcomed and cherished, and where all of us can feel like we belong.

Local Welcome is changing, but our values stay the same. As leaders become more equipped to take greater responsibility for the management of their local groups, we will also be assessing what management and governance structures those more-autonomous groups need from the charity, and our small core team. After all,

challenging ourselves to become an organisation that is membership-funded goes hand-in-hand with becoming an organisation that is membership-accountable. This is why we are reviewing the shape of our staff team, and why we are looking forward to more leaders joining our board of trustees in 2024.

After another year where Local Welcome has needed to ride the waves of pressure and opportunity - from the cost of living crisis to the joys of trialling meals in primary schools - we are grateful that our cycles of testing, learning and adapting have kept our small team moving forwards. In the difficult funding environment of the post-Covid era, the fact that we are still here another 12 months on is itself something we are proud of. As a new era of increased autonomy for local groups dawns, it feels that Local Welcome is in the safe hands of our incredibly loyal leaders. Here's to the next time we all cook, eat and connect, and all the time, energy, grants, donations, support and commitment that keeps us going.

Andrew, Azad, Ben, Celia, Hannah and Rhiannon

Our vision is diverse, resilient, and powerful communities, acting together for their common good.

Our values

Build open, honest and diverse relationships

Deliver joy through service

Think big and act long-term

Be creative and take risks

Grow and learn

Have compassion and fun

Build diverse supportive teams

Eat together

Tell the truth

Be humble

b)
Objectives and activities

Goal

OPERATE IMPACTFUL, INCLUSIVE RITUALS, THAT ARE MEMBERSHIP-FUNDED

Our vision and mission

Our vision is diverse, resilient, and powerful communities acting together for their common good

Our mission is to design digital infrastructure and shared rituals for community leaders

Our purpose and public benefit

Promote social inclusion

People feel more connected to their community and overcome barriers to inclusion e.g. due to being a newcomer to the area, or their language skills.

Tackle isolation and loneliness

People at risk of loneliness find a social outlet that helps them feel part of their community and increases their wellbeing.

Activate new leaders within communities

People who had never considered themselves community leaders start to lead, increasing their confidence and building local capacity.

2022–2023 Objectives

We have measured our activities in the year against five main objectives. This analysis is set our below, together with a summary of what we learned:

1. **Deliver regular meals in 10 cities across the UK**
2. **Conduct research with diverse users**
3. **Partner with schools**
4. **Develop new tools for leaders**
5. **Improve the cooking ritual**

Outputs
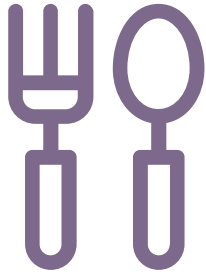
58
meals

10
cities

55
leaders running meals

925
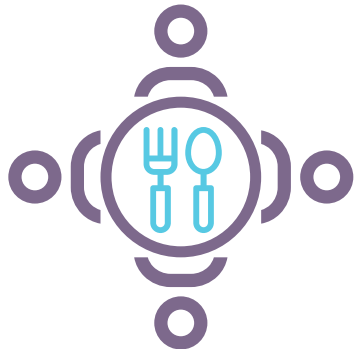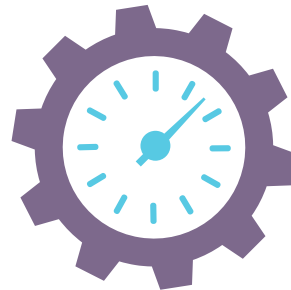**people attending meals**

1,870
hours of social contact

£8,314
membership income raised

1. Deliver regular meals in 10 cities across the UK

What we did:

In the reporting period 1 April 2022 - 31 March 2023, we delivered 53 meals across 10 cities spread throughout all 4 nations of the UK: Cardiff, Liverpool, Glasgow, Brent, Derby, Newcastle, Belfast, Leicester, Birmingham and Southwark (most places hosting monthly meals, with some fortnightly). We relaunched our meals, both as a response to the arrival of Ukrainian refugees to the UK, and the need for connection in a world emerging from the Covid-19 pandemic. As described in last year's report, by Spring 2022, "Face-to-face, in-person community activities were becoming, not only possible again, but needed more than ever to help address the trauma and isolation so many of us had experienced during the pandemic".

During our response to the Ukraine refugee crisis, we partnered with Save the Children UK (SCUK) to deliver the following priorities through our meal events:

1. Welcome refugee families to the UK and help grow the community welcoming movement by:

   a) Providing practical help to families, and
   b) Creating more connections and relationships between people from different backgrounds.

2. Expand support for all refugees by:

   a) Developing and devolving an effective community run mechanism of localised participatory politics that promotes rights and justice for refugees and other migrants by identifying and tackling structures and systems that may deny them their rights, and
   b) Demonstrating civic literacy in action.

By the end of the SCUK project in October 2022, we had recruited 1,515 new members from 16 different cities, and received 186 applications to become a leader, helping us to relaunch groups in most of these locations. The success of the project led to a second partnership with SCUK in Summer 2023, which we discuss later in Subsequent events and future plans. Furthermore, as Winter arrived, our hot nutritious meals in warm friendly spaces provided much-needed respite and support for those affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

What we learnt:

Firstly, we learnt that there was demonstrable appetite for restarting meals, evidenced by the fact that not only did new people sign up to lead and join their local groups, but in doing so they also paid the new ticket/subscription price of £7 (compared to £5 pre-Covid, which had been adjusted to reflect inflation). Secondly, we learnt that we could take approaches we had developed for our online support group for adults living with ADHD and re-apply them to the process of launching new Local Welcome groups. One good example of this are the online leader forums and training sessions that we ran, which were an improvement on our old systems of onboarding and consulting leaders used pre-Covid.

We also learnt some valuable lessons during our relaunch. Most notably, when refugees started to flee the war in Ukraine, and large numbers of people wanted to help, we were not able to keep up with the demand for new groups.

So many individuals committed time (and often money) to starting meals in their area that we couldn't provide the support they all needed. The biggest challenge, that we hope we've learnt from, was that we promised too much and didn't have the structures in place for leaders to do the work of setting up their own groups, and particularly finding their own local venues. We are taking forward the important learning from this experience by developing new toolkits to equip leaders through these stages, from signup to first meal - as we describe later in Subsequent events and future plans.

As we respond to this learning at the end of 2023, we're also keenly aware that the ideal time-frame between people engaging, signing up

and then taking action together, is tight - if we can't deliver quickly enough, people disengage. There's a delicate balance to strike between wanting to drive engagement and signups, and also needing to have all the structures in place to quickly connect these individuals through safe, positive, shared experiences. It's a knotty challenge, but one we're excited to solve together.

2. Conduct research with diverse users

What we did:

Throughout the year, we conducted user research with various methodologies and different types of users (both current and prospective), in order to learn more about how we could improve the service we were operating. The users we targeted included:
– Leaders
– Guests
– Local partners (such as Derbyshire Refugee Solidarity and DPIA, Cardiff)
– School leaders (see Objective 3 'Partner with schools', below)
– Organisations we draw inspiration from (this spans from surplus food initiatives like Your Local Pantry and Community Fridges, to inclusive cooking initiatives like Migrateful and Taste Education)

The types of research we conducted included:

– Interviews (both one-to-one and in a group setting) in a variety of contexts, including,
    – Collecting feedback on the meals, feedback on a particular tool we built, or feedback on changes we were considering
    – Collecting quantitative data about how organisations work or how people engage with them
    – Collecting qualitative data on people's personal motivations, such as by employing 'Jobs-to-be-done' interviews
– Surveys
– Desk research (secondary research)

What we learnt:

We drew a large array of insights from the various forms of research executed over the year; here is a snapshot of the most influential feedback themes that shaped our strategy:

– Current participants really wanted to preserve the cooking element of the ritual, however some aspects (such as the kit) could be simplified.
– Current participants wanted more opportunities for refugees to become leaders, and for refugees to share more of their cultural traditions at meals.
– There was appetite from school leaders for unique experiences such as Local Welcome meals to foster pupil enrichment and

community relations; meanwhile current participants wanted to engage more children in meals.
– Leaders wanted Local Welcome to develop more of a social media presence online, so that they could share their involvement with others.

Since this data was collected, we have been responding to these valuable insights, and are continuing to do so (see Subsequent events and future plans). More results from the research that pertain to impact are also described in the following section (Achievements and performance).

One final point is that ongoing, regular user research is foundational to the way we work at Local Welcome. This involves continuous repeating cycles of testing, learning and iterating how our meals work. However, since worthwhile user research also requires significant investment, sometimes the degree to which we do it varies. We are gradually learning how to sustain a healthy balance of regular user research on a weekly and monthly basis, that is sustainable within the capacity of our small staff team.

3. Partner with schools

What we did:

Our research told us that the Local Welcome cooking ritual could have a real positive impact for school communities, and so we adapted our tools and systems for use in the classroom context. As we approached primary schools across the UK (especially those with diverse catchment areas), they recognised that the potential of hosting Local Welcome meals for their community would go far beyond just a fun new initiative to help their school stand out. Meals would deliver higher parental engagement, better pupil outcomes, better fed families, more support for isolated families new to the country, and improved cultural capital.

This outreach to schools was inspired by two prior successes dating back to 2018. In the first instance, a Southwark leader and psychologist used the Local Welcome cooking ritual when leading workshops with young children in primary schools around Grenfell Tower. Secondly, a Local Welcome group in partnership with Archbishop Tenison's school and Stockwell Good Neighbours brought Year 8s together with elderly people for intergenerational exchange.

Our school partnership work in 2022-23 involved meetings with over a dozen head teachers and with the CEOs and school leaders from six Multi-Academy Trusts across the UK. In total, we secured partnerships with six primary schools in Wakefield, Tottenham, Newham, Leicester, Knowsley and Brent. The first school meal was held at St Andrew and St Francis CofE primary school in Brent on 19th March 2023.

What we learnt:

Partnering with schools was our first experience of contracting our service to other civic institutions to run meals for their own communities. In this context, we learnt a lot about the internal processes this requires, learning that helped to inform the changes we made later in the year.

From an operational perspective, we grew our capacity to collaborate on shared information with external parties simply and efficiently, whilst still maintaining high standards of data protection and good governance. A factor that made this a steeper learning curve is realising just how widely schools vary with regard to their administrative systems, structures and processes - everything from their preference of video call platform, to what time the school day ends, to whether they have their own bank account.

In terms of compliance we learnt how to develop a Service Level Agreement, supported by our legal advisors Herbert Smith Freehills. In terms of safeguarding, we learnt new ways to process enhanced DBS checks for leaders without slowing down their onboarding journey.

Overall, working with schools has grown our capacity to deliver our impactful meals in new contexts, and we're proud of the ways we've connected and supported children, families and school communities this year.

However, we also learnt that schools struggle to access community grant funding, and even with our support, they were still often turned down. This is partly a reflection of a challenging funding landscape, where grantmakers need to make difficult choices, and often choose to prioritise smaller organisations.

Unfortunately, after the initial success of our first school contract we expended a lot of time and energy developing a form of partnership that relied on repeating this success. With hindsight, this was the wrong approach, because the initial success turned out to be a false positive. We might have made more progress this year if we'd kept our focus on increasing the income and autonomy of our weekend groups, but the truth is, funders sometimes change their criteria, and depending on grants will always involve risks. It's also another reason why we're committed to increasing the income we receive from members and donors.

4. Develop new tools for leaders

What we did:

In last year's report, we wrote about "the need to build digital tools that connect leaders while equipping them to deliver shared tasks". In 2022-23 this work continued, as our part-time developer and product design team applied technological solutions to the challenge of helping local leaders organise and host meals without needing to depend on the day-to-day input of a remote staff team. This work was important since our team was 25% smaller compared to the pre-Covid team that ran meals 2019-20 (4.1 full-time equivalent, or FTE, compared to 5.6 FTE in 2019-20).

Examples of this work include transitioning leader resources from our website to a collaborative platform called Notion. This change meant that instead of leaders accessing static information about their meals passively, leaders could now engage and interact with staff about meal dates, recipes and training resources in a far more dynamic manner. Other examples include:

– a weekly rota tool for leaders,
– leader WhatsApp groups,
– an online sign-up tool for refugee guests that didn't depend on them having an email address,
– a tool that automated the collection of character references for safer recruitment,
– and the aforementioned online leader training sessions.

What we learnt:

We believe in continuous repeating cycles of testing, learning and iterating how our meals and systems work. This meant that all the learning we gained from building and trialling these tools was valuable - including (or even, especially) when the tool needed to be shelved because it didn't quite have the impact expected, or because strategic circumstances had shifted. For the weekly rota tool, for instance, this was precisely the case: what we discovered was that leaders began to coordinate their availability between themselves via their new WhatsApp groups, making rigid rotas obsolete. In this case, facilitating greater ownership and co-management via a WhatsApp group was a better solution than assigning leaders dates based on their historic preferences. Another lesson was that refugee guests often didn't have the tools or ability to access QR codes (at least, this was the feedback from local partners), which runs counter to the overall trend of their increased prevalence since the Covid-19 pandemic.

5. Improve the cooking ritual

What we did:

We identified areas of the cooking ritual that were ripe for improvement and then re-designed them. The criteria was that meals still needed to deliver the same or increased impact, whilst also being simpler and more affordable for leaders to run and for staff to launch in a new city.

One long-awaited-for milestone was the release of new recipes. For several years, we had not been able to devote the capacity required to design, test and release new recipes that satisfied all our requirements, which include health and safety, sustainability, cultural factors, nutrition, and cost. At last, leaders, members and guests could cook an alternative to our potato rosti, chickpea salad and tabbouleh combination! New menus featured a 'Curry night' complete with yellow rice and raita, and a highly popular flatbread recipe to complement a Lebanese-inspired green bean stew.

Several other improvements we made related to the cooking kit that groups use in their venues to host meals. We revised the list of items included to respond to feedback about what was or wasn't needed - sink strainers and gongs were out, rolling pins and spices were in. We also worked with Ikea (our main supplier) and simplified logistics so that kits could be delivered directly to a venue, rather than having to come via our office beforehand.

Finally, we produced a new edition of the meal guide (the folder which helps leaders run the event from start to finish), which included simplifying the design, and reducing the number of leader speeches, or special announcements, that are required. All of these changes were informed by our design principles of striking the right balance between liberating leaders to do what they do best on the day, whilst making sure the design of the ritual, and its intended outcomes, are preserved and enjoyed.

What we learnt:

Although we had big ambitions for improving our cooking ritual, even we were surprised ourselves by the simple success of some of them. Flatbreads are a prime example: Not only were they fun to make and helped us keep costs low during high food inflation (which was 19.1% in the 12 months to March 2023) - they also turned out to be highly popular with children. This in turn supported our efforts to make the ritual even more child-friendly, such as with our work in schools.

As with all things in life, sometimes the learning that happened was the silver lining to what was otherwise a bit of a mishap. In October 2022, we ran a meal at a new venue in Birmingham. There was an error with the courier so the cooking kit never showed up. Yet all was not lost - the venue had a functioning kitchen, and so we supported a leader to take a quick inventory and source all the equipment that was essential for running the Local Welcome meal anyway. This was a great lesson for us: that for some venues, it could be possible to run meals with little or no kit. We are acting on this learning in 2023-24 (see Subsequent events and future plans).
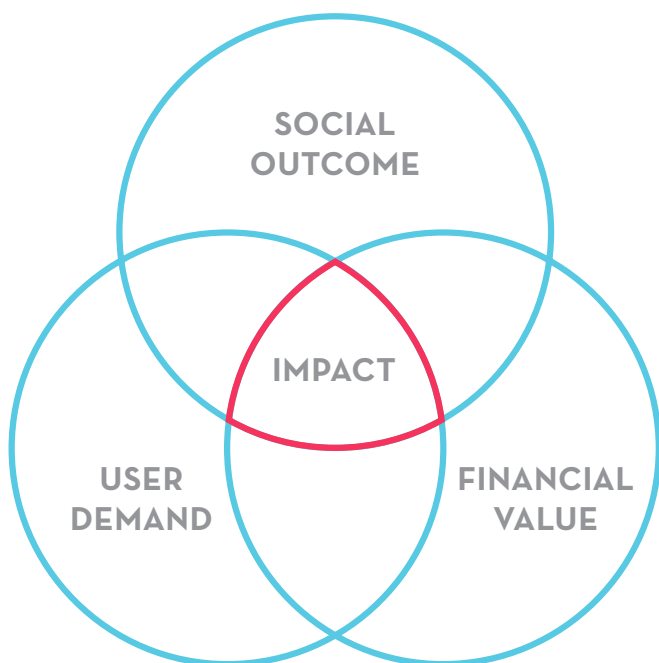
Cook Eat Connect

c)
Achievements and performance

Having an impact

Our ambition is to scale up to the point where we are a 100% membership funded organisation. We can only do this if there's demand and people are able to pay, and we can only achieve our purposes through social outcomes. The impact we have lies at the intersection of these three things.

User demand

By March 2022, we were still in the early stages of relaunching Local Welcome meals. The numbers speak for themselves when it comes to a demonstrable demand for our service: 1,197 signups in the first month, across 16 cities, including 160 people who wanted to be trained to organise and lead these meals.

In 2022-23, 55 leaders led meals across 10 cities. Each had to pass a disclosure check, do safeguarding training, and sign up for £7/month membership. Of these 55 leaders, 79% led another Sunday meal within 3 months. We also saw some leaders give more of their time in order to keep their group operating meals: in some cases, this involved visiting local partners mid-week to invite guests; and in one particular instance a leader's reason for signing up was because he knew another had to drop out. This clearly demonstrates the willingness that exists from leaders to sign up and carry out their important role.

As explained in Objectives and activities, during 2022-23 we also experienced demand from people in areas where we didn't have sufficient capacity to support them launching a new Local Welcome group.

A total of 739 members and 97 leaders - 26 of which started paying - signed up to join meals in cities where there is not yet a group. These figures illustrate the unmet need for meals in cities where we are yet to launch.

In November 2022, we undertook research with refugee guests who attended meals in Liverpool, Cardiff and Derby. The results illustrate that the meals are perceived to generate user value for people seeking sanctuary: 80% of those surveyed reported that they would definitely come to another meal, and 70% that they would definitely invite other friends to join them (sample size: 19).

79% of leaders led another meal within 3 months of their first one

85% of guests definitely agree that meals make them feel part of a community

739 members signed up in new cities with no established group

Social outcomes

In the same survey with refugee guests, 90% of respondents definitely enjoyed their meal experience, and 85% definitely agree that meals made them feel part of a community. The aspects of the meal that respondents enjoyed most were the opportunities to meet new people, practise English, and cook food together. We also know from this research, and from other interviews, that social outcomes for refugees increase if they are given more responsibility to lead meals themselves. For example: in mid-2022 an 18-year-old Eritrean woman was brought along to a Liverpool meal by her sisters, quiet and shy... but by the time of the pre-Christmas meal where twenty-five guests showed up, she was the leader of the flatbread table and supervised six men in preparing food.

When it comes to leaders, the belief that meals generate social value for all participants (including themselves) is one of the things that motivates people to become leaders in the first place. This is evident from interviews we conducted with leaders from Cardiff, Newcastle and Liverpool during the same research period. The desire to 'give back' to a 'worthwhile cause' was often cited. Alongside this, leaders described the gain in understanding of other cultures that leading meals gave them, as well as the opportunity to meet new people locally.

All of the evidence from the November 2022 surveys and interviews backs up previous independent research conducted by The Social Investment Consultancy in 2019 (available on our website).

"I have become more confident...I am really grateful for the meals and all the people that make them happen"
refugee leader, 18, Liverpool

"When I moved here, I didn't know anyone, other than my partner - LW helped me make friends, and find 'my people'. I've given time and energy, and I've got back friendship, community, and fun."
leader, Derby

Financial value

In 2022-23 we focused on learning how to maximise the financial value generated by meals, whilst minimising the investment costs required to achieve this. **The key outcome was a 20% reduction in the direct cost per hour of social contact generated**, as explained in further detail below. Developing a sound business model is important to us because we want the meal groups to be self-sustaining, so that in the long-term the charity is a 100% member-funded organisation.

Growing our member income so that it covers all the costs of the charity would mean that we are wholly accountable to our members - the people on the ground showing up at weekends to cook and eat with others in their communities. We are grateful to our funders who are investing in our journey towards this goal - but we don't want to rely on the money of external organisations in the long-term. Local Welcome isn't about burnt-out volunteering (giving time but not money), neither is it about forgotten direct debits (money but no action). Local Welcome is about membership, and membership is where money and action meet. This is why we want to be powered, and funded, by our members.

The year marked a relaunch of our meals since the Covid-19 pandemic. On the one hand, when compared to the pre-Covid year of 2019-20, we ran fewer meals in 2022-23 and they weren't quite as well attended. On the other hand, we made significant steps forward in reducing the up-front investment required to launch a group. For example:

– We developed ways of finding and onboarding venues remotely, and holding launch meals without sending a member of staff. This drastically reduced the travel costs of starting a group.

– We found ways of running successful and safe meals with a smaller team of leaders. This reduced the amount of advertising required to launch a group.

This progress in making the group model more sustainable means that, in terms of the total cost incurred in order to achieve one hour of social contact, the year actually represents a marked improvement on 2019-20. As the table shows, the direct cost per hour of social contact generated decreased by over 20%, from £9.10 to £7.16.

	2019-20	2022-23
Meals	99	58
Social contact hours	4,112	1,870
Advertising costs for meals	£14,140	£4,013
Travel costs for meals	£6,706	£194
Total Direct cost of meals*	£37,439	£13,382
Direct cost per hour of social contact generated	**£9.10**	**£7.16**

* Total Direct cost also includes food, venue hire, equipment and other costs not listed here

For added context, it is also worth noting that this reduction in up-front investment required for relaunch isn't simply because we were building on previous established relationships. As noted in the 2021-22 annual report, fewer than 20% of the leaders this year had led a meal pre-Covid - so for most people, this felt like a brand new initiative.

When measuring financial value in terms of membership fees raised, it is also notable that leaders and members paid £7 per month / per meal in the period (compared to £5 in 2019-20). In total, membership income showed signs of returning to pre-Covid levels (£8,314 in 2022-23 compared to £8,577 in 2019-20). This fact is another validation that we continue to generate financial value, as well as user demand and social outcomes.

d)
Financial review

Our financial results for the year are set out in the Statement of Financial Activities. Although our total income increased by 10% on the prior year, we made a small net deficit of £4,271 (2022 net income £52,696). We finished the year with unrestricted net funds of £22,253 (2022 £13,009) and restricted net funds of £67,567 (2022 £81,081). The increased unrestricted figure means that we had a stronger reserves position as we entered 2023-24.

Funders and supporters

We are grateful to our funders who have supported us this year and those who have committed to support us in future years. As a small charity it means so much to us when funders see the value in our work and back us as a team to achieve our goals. We would like to thank:

Reserves policy

At any time, we aim to maintain a total of one full month of normal expenditure in reserves. For any elements of our work over the following 12 months fully covered by existing restricted funds, we do not need to also hold unrestricted funds.

One full month's normal expenditure is an approximation for the following more detailed calculation:

– One month of permanent salaries and related employment costs
– One month of contractor costs
– Minimum notice period for rent
– Minimum notice period for recurring supplier contracts
– Zero months of one-off costs

The one month of overall costs is therefore considered a good estimate as no staff currently have a notice period longer than 30 days. Also the only recurring supplier contracts with more than 30 days' notice are relatively small values. If either of those changed, we might need to increase the number of month's reserves accordingly.

At March 2023 this would have equated to unrestricted reserves of £15,251 (2022 £16,533) compared to our actual unrestricted reserves of £22,253 (2022 £13,009).

note: The grants of those above are listed in the accounts, with exception of St Marks Kennington, to whom we are grateful for subsidising the rent of our office space.

e)
Structure, governance and management

Structure

Local Welcome is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) and it operates under the provisions set out in our constitution.

Team

We have a small, multidisciplinary staff team with a mix of backgrounds, skills, and levels of learnt and lived experience, led by our founder and CEO, Ben Pollard. [Find out more about our team](). We had an average of 4.1 full time equivalent (FTE) team members throughout the year (2022 3.3 FTE).

The team resource during the year broken down by role is represented in the table below.

We have built the kind of multidisciplinary team found in the technology sector because our organisation is rooted in principles like 'human-centred design', enabling a project to evolve throughout the delivery period based on cycles of testing, learning and adapting. The aim is to design, build, and grow a service without having to increase the size of the team, achieving greater economies of scale over time. This is why in many ways we don't reflect the usual structure of a typical charity.

We've chosen to invest in people with a mix of skills and experience including from the charity, education, design and technology sectors.

During the year, we learnt to recruit short-term freelance support for one-off projects on an 'as-needs' basis. We are grateful to all those listed who left the team during 2022-23, or who have moved on since then: Lucy Baker, Helen Brown, Isobel Cairns, Emily Cornuaud, Cat Gamaleldin, Mary Matthews, Katie McDermott, Alec Molloy, and Vic Rocca.

Team resource during the year broken down by role:

Role	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Jan	Feb	Mar
Ben Pollard - CEO (1 FTE, 0.8 from December)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Celia Mellow - Operations lead (1 FTE, 0.8 from February)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Andrew Chaplin - Delivery manager (0.8 FTE, 0.7 from February)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Alec Molloy - Developer (0.2 FTE, 0.1 from January)	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Mary Matthews - Funding (0.4 FTE)	■	■	■	■	■							
Helen Brown - Admin & HR (0.2 FTE)	■	■	■	■	■							
Vic Rocca - Member Support Officer (MSO) (0.5 FTE)		■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■	■
Cat Gamaleldin - MSO (0.1 FTE)		■	■	■	■							
Lucy Baker - MSO (0.1 FTE)		■	■	■	■							
Rhiannon Prideaux - Funding (0.4 FTE)							■	■	■	■	■	■
Katie McDermott - Comms (0.3 FTE)							■	■	■	■		
Emily Cornuaud - Service Design (0.6 FTE)							■	■	■	■		
Isobel Cairns - MSO (0.3 FTE)							■	■	■	■		

Governance

Our trustees met 6 times during the year (about every 8 weeks). They regularly review finances, policy, strategy, progress against Objectives and Key Results, as well as safeguarding policy and practice. Our current trustees are Clare Young (Chair), Nick Gretton (Treasurer), Kylie Havelock (Secretary) and Claire Price (Leader-trustee), and you can find out more about our trustees here.

In October 2022 James Darling and Niketa Sanderson-Gillard left the board, and we recruited Claire Price and Sana Rao (the latter recently stepped down in October 2023). We are very appreciative of the service of those trustees who have left the board. Claire is also the first local leader to join the board (she runs meals in Cardiff), and as we recruit more trustees to the board, we are keen to include other leaders from across our different meal groups.

Management

The day-to-day management of Local Welcome is undertaken by a management team of paid staff.

f)
Subsequent events and future plans

During 2022-23, we had gathered a lot of evidence and learning from our user research - and improvements we had experimented with - following our post-pandemic relaunch of meals (as described in Objectives and activities). Looking forwards, our response to these insights falls into two main areas of work:

1. Develop the current meal groups model in direct response to feedback and demand

2. Launch a new meal groups model for 2024, based on greater local autonomy

Below is further detail on these two types of response we are making to the learning from 2022-23.

1. Develop the current meal groups model in direct response to feedback and demand

Research participants raised specific needs and emerging areas of potential in the 2022-23 model which we knew were worth pursuing - such as increasing access for children, celebrating diverse cultural traditions, and improving our social media presence. Consequently, we have devoted operational capacity towards responding to these needs directly, to grow our impacts throughout 2023-24:

– We have started two projects funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund in the Midlands and in Newham, to record oral history stories from participants at groups, and to develop the ways we showcase the diverse cultural traditions that are present around the table at our meals

– We have continued our partnerships work, including with Save the Children UK (SCUK) to provide meals during the school holidays, and with two new primary schools in London

– We have launched groups in Tottenham and Newham, and relaunched a group in Birmingham to start reaching the unmet user demand for groups in areas identified in 2022-23 (see Achievements and Performance)

– We have invested in a stronger online presence, such as by hiring a Digital Marketing lead, securing a pro-bono partnership with creative agency Nice & Serious, and by co-hosting an event with Instagram celebrity chef Big Has (in collaboration with SCUK)

2. Launch a new meal groups model for 2024, based on greater local autonomy

What also emerged from our testing and research was that, besides specific developments to the current model, a reorientation of how leaders were supported by Local Welcome staff to launch and run their own local groups was needed. A model where leaders have responsibility for some of the tasks that historically staff have done on their behalf is not only more scalable, but has more impact. Therefore, in collaboration with existing leaders, we have designed a new meal groups model for launch in early 2024, reimagining how everything is managed; from money, to food, to venues.

Although this redesign process has taken several months, the collaboration with current leaders has also developed our capacity for ongoing user research, and grown the resilience of the organisation (such as through recruiting more leader trustees to the board). At the time of writing we are preparing to launch a new advertising campaign in several cities where there is unmet need for Local Welcome groups. It's early days, but we think people will be excited by the following prospects that the new 2024 model offers:

– Providing leaders with prepaid Soldo cards so they can purchase ingredients for the meals locally and in ways that they choose

– A starter kit of cooking equipment that is a fraction of the size, cost or complexity of the current one (removing the cost and logistical barriers to a group launching)

– Online toolkits to equip leaders to build local partnerships, secure their own venue, and do campaigning and organising

– Translated content, such as advertising the groups in Farsi and Arabic, to ensure that we recruit more leaders with a refugee background

– A pay-what-you-can inclusive tiered pricing structure

Our hope is that by launching this new offer to prospective Local Welcomers around the UK, 2024 will see more isolated individuals coming together in their local communities to build resilience, using the simple recipe of cook, eat, connect.

Key advisors

We are grateful for the support and guidance of our advisors:

Legal
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP
Richard Norridge
Exchange House
Primrose Street
London, EC2A 2EG

Independent examiner
Nicola Anderson FCA FCIE
189 Baldwins Lane
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth
Herts, WD3 3LL

g)
Annual accounts

Trustees' responsibilities in the preparation of financial statements

For the year ended 31 March 2023

The trustees are responsible for preparing the trustees' report and the financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards (UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice).

Charity law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements which give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of the charity and of its income and expenditure for the period. In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to

– Select suitable accounting policies, observing the methods and principles set out in the Charities SORP, and apply them consistently

– Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent

– State whether applicable accounting standards have been followed subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements; and

– Prepare financial statements on a going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to assume that the company will continue on that basis.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charitable company and to enable it to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. They are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charitable company and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

The above report was approved by the trustees on Wednesday 20 December 2023 and signed on their behalf by

Clare Young
Chair

Independent examiner's report to the trustees

For the year ended 31 March 2023

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Local Welcome CIO (charity no.1180770) for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 31 to 44.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the charity, you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

Since the charity's gross income exceeds £250,000 your examiner must be a member of a body listed in section 145 of the 2011 Act. I confirm that I am qualified to undertake the examination because I am a member of the Institute of Chartered Accountants in England and Wales, which is one of the listed bodies.

I report in respect of my examination of the charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

Your attention is drawn to the fact that the charity has prepared financial statements in accordance with Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) in preference to the Accounting and Reporting by Charities Statement of Recommended Practice issued 1 April 2005 which is referred to in the extant regulations but has now been withdrawn.

I understand that this has been done in order for the financial statements to provide a true and fair view in accordance with Generally Accepted Accounting Practice effective for reporting periods beginning on or after 1 January 2019.

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or

2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Nicola Anderson FCA FCIE
Chartered Accountant and Independent Examiner
189 Baldwins Lane
Croxley Green
Rickmansworth
Herts. WD3 3LL

Dated: Wednesday 20 December 2023

Statement of financial activities
For the year ended 31 March 2023

	Note	Restricted Funds	Unrestricted Funds	2023 Total Funds	2022 Total Funds
		£	£	£	£
Income from:					
Grants and donations	2	267,965	774	268,739	248,880
Charitable activities	3	-	8,314	8,314	558
Bank interest		-	155	155	54
Total income		**267,965**	**9,244**	**277,208**	**249,491**
Expenditure on:					
Raising funds		29,598	-	29,598	17,189
Direct charitable activities		251,881	-	251,881	179,607
Total expenditure	4	**281,479**	**-**	**281,479**	**196,796**
Net (deficit) income for the year	5	**(13,514)**	**9,244**	**(4,271)**	**52,696**
Reconciliation of funds					
Funds brought forward		81,081	13,009	94,090	41,395
Funds carried forward	12	**67,567**	**22,253**	**89,820**	**94,090**

The notes on pages 33 to 44 form part of these accounts.

Balance sheet
As at 31 March 2023

	note	2023 £	2023 £	2022 £	2022 £
Current assets					
Debtors and prepayments	8	6,906		1,360	
Cash at bank and in hand	9	90,833		101,220	
		97,739		**102,580**	
Creditors: Amounts due within one year	10	(7,919)		(8,489)	
Net current assets			**89,820**		**94,090**
Net assets			**89,820**		**94,090**
Funds of the charity:					
Restricted funds			67,567		81,081
Unrestricted funds			22,253		13,009
Total funds	11		**89,820**		**94,090**

The notes on pages 33 to 44 form part of these accounts

The financial statements on pages 31 to 44 were approved by the trustees and authorised for issue on Wednesday 20 December 2023 and are signed on its behalf by:

Clare Young
Chair

Nick Gretton
Treasurer

Notes to the accounts
For the year ended 31 March 2023

1. Accounting policies

Basis of accounting

The accounts have been prepared under the historical cost convention with items recognised at cost or transaction value unless otherwise stated in the relevant note(s) to these accounts.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the updated Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) effective 1 January 2019 (SORP FRS102)

The accounts have departed from the Charities (Accounts and Reports) Regulations 2008 only to the extent required to provide a true and fair view. This departure has involved applying 'Statement of Recommended Practice: Accounting and Reporting by Charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS102) effective 1 January 2019' rather than the version of the Statement of Recommended Practice referred to in the regulation but which has since been withdrawn.

The charity constitutes a public benefit entity as defined by FRS102.

Going concern

The trustees have reviewed the income and expenditure requirements for the charity and are satisfied that the cash position and expected income are adequate to meet ongoing expenses for at least 12 months from the approval of these financial statements and therefore the trustees believe that it is appropriate to prepare the financial statements on a going concern basis.

Statement of cashflows

The trustees have taken advantage of the exemption in accordance with SORP FRS 102 for smaller charities and have not included a statement of cashflows in the accounts.

Significant accounting policies applied in the preparation of these accounts are as follows:

Income

Income is recognised when entitlement passes to the charity, receipt is probable and the amount can be measured.

Donations and unrestricted grants are recognised on the earlier of receipt or due date in accordance with any agreement with the donor or grant funder. Donations and grants are only deferred if they relate exclusively to a future accounting period as determined by the donor.

Performance related grants and contracts are recognised when the service has been delivered.

Expenditure

Expenditure is recognised when a liability is incurred. Irrecoverable VAT is charged against the expenditure heading for which it was incurred.

Event costs include all costs relating to running the events including food, equipment, promotion, venue costs and travel.

Computers and other equipment with costing over £500 and with an estimated useful life in excess of one year are capitalised and depreciated at rates estimated to write off cost, less realisable value, as follows:

— Computers: 3 years
— Other equipment: 5 years

Funds

Restricted funds comprise income received that is restricted by the donor to activities that are narrower than, but within, the charity's general objects. Expenditure which meets these restrictions is charged against restricted income with any amounts unspent at the yearend carried forward to be applied within the restrictions in future accounting periods.

Unrestricted funds comprise income received that can be applied by the trustees at their discretion to the general objects of the charity.

Financial Instruments

The charity has elected to apply the provisions of Section 11 "Basic Financial Instruments" and Section 12 "Other Financial instruments Issues" of FRS 102, in full, to all of its financial instruments. Financial instruments are classified and accounted for according to the substance of the contractual arrangement as financial assets, financial liabilities or equity instruments. An equity instrument is any contract that evidences a residual interest in the assets of the entity after deducting all of its liabilities.

Basic financial assets, which include other debtors and accrued income are initially measured at transaction price including transaction costs and are subsequently carried at amortised cost.

Basic financial liabilities, which include accruals, are initially measured at transaction price and subsequently measured at amortised cost.

2(a). Grants and donations – current year

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2023 Total
	£	£	£
Government grants			
National Lottery Heritage Fund	58,654	-	58,654
National Lottery Community Fund	39,392	-	39,392
	98,046	**-**	**98,046**
Grants			
The Save the Children Fund	50,000	-	50,000
The Rayne Foundation	30,000	-	30,000
Postcode Places Trust	24,000	-	24,000
The London Community Foundation	10,000	-	10,000
	114,000	**-**	**114,000**
Donations			
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP	55,919	-	55,919
Individuals	-	774	774
	55,919	**774**	**56,693**
Total	**267,965**	**774**	**268,739**

2(b). Grants and donations – prior year

	Restricted	Unrestricted	2022 Total
	£	£	£
Grants			
National Lottery Community Fund	243,800	-	243,800
Coronavirus Job Retention Scheme (Furlough)	2,543	-	2,543
	246,343	**-**	**246,343**
Donations			
Herbert Smith Freehills LLP	1,150	-	1,150
Individuals	175	1,212	1,387
	1,325	**1,212**	**2,537**
Total	**247,668**	**1,212**	**248,880**

3. Income from charitable activities

	2023	2022
	£	£
Participation fees	8,314	558
	8,314	**558**

4(a). Allocation of expenditure – current year

	Raising funds	Charitable activities	Support	Governance	2023 Total
	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries and other staff costs (note 7)	22,480	111,997	44,420	5,702	184,600
Events	-	13,382	318	-	13,700
Office	83	16,305	9,161	812	26,361
Professional fees	-	50,327	5,592	-	55,919
Independent examination	-	-	-	900	900
Total direct costs	**22,563**	**192,011**	**59,491**	**7,414**	**281,479**
Apportionment of support and governance	7,035	59,869	(59,491)	(7,414)	-
Total costs	**29,598**	**251,881**	**-**	**-**	**281,479**

4(b). Allocation of expenditure – prior year

	Raising funds	Charitable activities		Support	Governance	2022 Total
		Local Welcome meals	ADHD Together			
	£	£	£	£	£	£
Salaries and other staff costs (note 7)	11,762	23,467	73,914	40,720	7,494	157,358
Events	60	3,329	3,527	235	240	7,391
Office	202	3,140	9,016	8,829	664	21,852
Professional fees	-	-	9,245	150	-	9,395
Independent examination	-	-	-	-	800	800
Total direct costs	**12,024**	**29,937**	**95,703**	**49,934**	**9,198**	**196,796**
Apportionment of support and governance	5,165	12,859	41,108	(49,934)	(9,198)	-
Total costs	**17,189**	**42,796**	**136,811**	**-**	**-**	**196,796**

5. Net income

This is stated after charging

	2023	2022
	£	£
Independent examiner's fee	900	800

6. Trustee expenses, remuneration and related party transactions

No trustee received any remuneration or reimbursement for expenses in the year (2022: none)

There were no other related party transactions (2022: none)

7. Staff costs and key management remuneration

	2023	2022	2023	2022
	Headcount		£	£
Staff costs comprise:				
Employees - Gross salary			119,840	123,482
- Social security costs			8,955	9,255
- Employer pension contributions			2,696	2,727
Total employee costs	3	3	**131,491**	**135,464**
Other staff:				
Self-employed contractors	5	2	49,750	18,982
Volunteers' expenses			-	339
Staff related costs:				
Training and recruitment			1,041	1,676
Travel and subsistence			2,319	897
	8	**5**	**184,600**	**157,358**

The average number of employees and contractors in the year (based on headcount) spent on each activity was:

	2023	2022		
Raising funds	1.3	0.4		
Direct activities	5.4	3.7		
Support and governance	1.3	0.9		
	8.0	**5.0**		
Full-time equivalent (based on standard hours worked)	**4.1**	**3.3**		
Number of employees paid over £60,000 (gross salary)	1	1		

Due to the small team, all staff are considered 'key management personnel' and their aggregate renumeration is disclosed above.

8. Debtors

	2023	2022
	£	£
Grants secured but not yet paid	6,906	1,360

9. Cash at bank

	2023	2022
	£	£
Current and deposit accounts	90,833	101,220

Cash is held in instant access accounts with Metrobank.

10. Creditors: amounts due within one year

	2023	2022
	£	£
Tax and social security costs	2,850	2,930
Other creditors	4,169	4,260
Accruals	900	1,300
	7,919	**8,489**

11(a). Movement on funds – current year

	At 1 April 2022	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2023
		£	£	£
Restricted Funds				
Dulverton Trust	23,333	-	23,333	-
National Lottery Community Fund	57,748	39,392	91,277	5,913
Professional fees	-	55,919	55,919	-
National Lottery Heritage Fund	-	58,654	-	58,654
The Save the Children Fund	-	50,000	50,000	-
The Rayne Foundation	-	30,000	30,000	-
Postcode Places Trust	-	24,000	23,000	1,000
The London Community Foundation	-	10,000	8,000	2,000
Total restricted funds	**81,081**	**267,965**	**281,479**	**67,567**
Unrestricted funds	**13,009**	**9,244**	**-**	**22,253**
Total funds	**94,090**	**277,208**	**281,479**	**89,820**

The National Lottery Heritage Fund grants are for projects starting 1 April 2023. The grants from National Lottery Community Fund, Postcode Places Trust and The London Community Foundation are all for projects continuing into 2023/24. These grants all fund Local Welcome meals but with geographical restrictions.

11(b). Movement on funds – prior year

	At 1 April 2021	Income	Expenditure	At 31 March 2022
		£	£	£
Restricted Funds				
Dulverton Trust	30,000	-	6,667	23,333
National Lottery Community Fund	-	243,800	186,052	57,748
Coronavirus Job Support Scheme	-	2,543	2,543	-
Professional fees	-	1,325	1,325	-
Total restricted funds	**30,000**	**247,668**	**196,586**	**81,081**
Unrestricted funds	**11,395**	**1,823**	**209**	**13,009**
Total funds	**41,395**	**249,491**	**196,796**	**94,090**

12(a). Analysis of net assets by fund – current year

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total Funds 2023
	£	£	£
Debtors	6,906	-	6,906
Cash at bank	68,580	22,253	90,833
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(7,919)	-	(7,919)
	67,567	**22,253**	**89,820**

12(b). Analysis of net assets by fund – prior year

	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total Funds 2022
	£	£	£
Debtors	1,360	-	1,360
Cash at bank	88,211	13,009	101,220
Creditors: amounts due within one year	(8,489)	-	(8,489)
	81,081	**13,009**	**94,090**

13. Government and local authority grants

At 31 March 2023 the charity held £64,567 (2022: £57,748) in unspent government grants as explained in note 11(a).

14. Statement of financial activities – prior year

	Note	Restricted funds	Unrestricted funds	Total funds 2022
		£	£	£
Income from:				
Grants and donations	2	247,668	1,212	248,880
Charitable activities	3	-	558	558
Bank interest		-	54	54
Total income		**247,668**	**1,823**	**249,491**
Expenditure on:				
Raising funds		17,189	-	17,189
Direct charitable activities		179,398	209	179,607
Total expenditure	4	**196,586**	**209**	**196,796**
Net income (deficit) for the year	5	**51,081**	**1,614**	**52,696**
Reconciliation of funds				
Funds brought forward		30,000	11,395	41,395
Funds carried forward	12	**81,081**	**13,009**	**94,090**