



Older People Active Lives

**ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20**

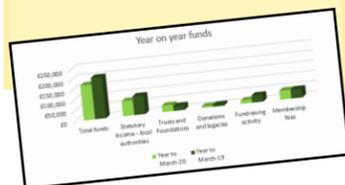
**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2020**



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MESSAGE FROM OUR CHAIR



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OUR FINANCES



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OPAL SERVICES



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OUR STRUCTURE, OUR TRUSTEES, OUR GOALS



08 MEMBERS



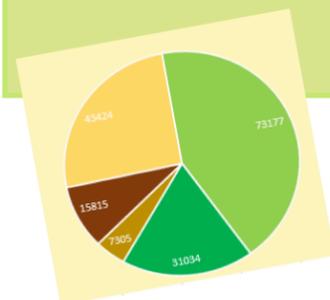
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BETTER, TOGETHER



09 VOLUNTEERS



10 MONEY MATTERS



A message from Jane Colville, Chair of Trustees



This year has been one of significant change for OPAL. We changed our name to one that was easier for all to remember. We introduced a new logo and image - which we are delighted with - and you will see the evidence of this through this report. Our website has changed in line with our new image and is now bright and interesting.

We were delighted when Philip Hearfield, trustee, offered to be our Honorary Secretary and he has already made his mark in the organisation. We also have a new Treasurer in the form of Brian Mackie who took over from Mary Thompson who had been our Treasurer from the start of OPAL. Happily for us Mary remains a trustee.

In terms of staff, we were sorry to say goodbye to Jackie, our Volunteer Coordinator, but delighted to welcome Janet Handley into the team to take her place and Sam Moggan joined us to take over as Tarporley Club Organiser.

Our services continued to develop and thrive and following the last Annual General Meeting at which we had a very interesting presentation by two speakers on the "Book of You", we agreed to pilot this approach within our services amongst some of our members and carers. Initial plans were made for the necessary volunteer and staff training and although these had to be deferred, they have now been followed through.

We have been helped this year by all the work undertaken by our staff and volunteers, who of course include our trustees. Much work is carried out in OPAL by trustees that in many other organisations would be done by paid staff and this ensures that such funding as is raised, donated or applied for gets ploughed into our services.

My thanks must go to our many partners including our Commissioners and our funders, supporters and Cheshire West Voluntary Action who continue to offer us so much in so many ways.

March 2020 saw us in unprecedented times when, along with everyone else, we had to enter lockdown but I am delighted to say that we were able - within a week - to set up a range of alternative services which allowed us to remain in contact with all members and volunteers in a proactive way. Nothing can take the place of face to face contact but we are pleased to have been able so quickly to put these in place.

Jane Colville

**Our principal objective is to provide a benefit for older people who are in need of social inclusion because they are housebound or socially isolated and are finding it difficult to take part in social activities in their community without the support of others.**

## OPAL Clubs

- ◆ 346 SESSIONS
- ◆ MEMBERS
- ◆ 1800 CLUB HOURS

In our mission to reduce social isolation in rural West Cheshire, we continue to run our series of Clubs for less mobile older people within our Community. Many of our members would be unable to attend social events without someone being with them or offering them transport which is one of the reasons why our Clubs are so successful and essential.

We run Clubs once a week in Frodsham, Helsby, Kelsall, Tarporley and Tattenhall and twice a week in Malpas, for groups of 10 – 20 people in community buildings, such as church halls, in their locality.

The emphasis is for the day to be ‘a good day out’ with lots of fun, laughter and conversation as well as a good hot mid-day meal.

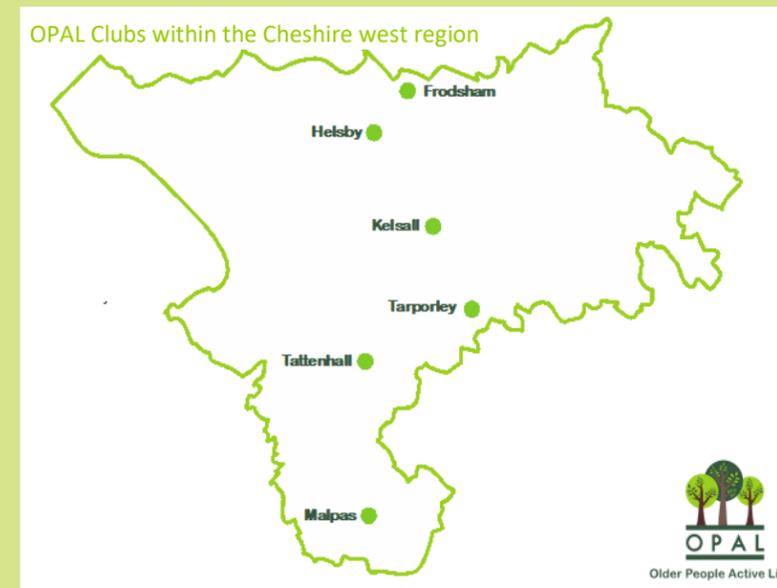
A whole series of activities were arranged during 2019, and perhaps the most unique one was the visit of the llama farmer, with his llama of course, to 3 of the Clubs.



The other activities arranged, though maybe less unique, but still enjoyable, included visits from musicians, singers, keep fit instructors, the police, primary school choirs, dancers, local clergy, flower arrangers, and so the list goes on.



OPAL Clubs within the Cheshire west region



The success of our Clubs could not be achieved without the valuable help and support of our volunteers, who run the days, help with the cooking and serving food, and bringing people to the Clubs in the morning and taking them home in the afternoons.

The teams of volunteers, helping on a rota basis, are supported and guided by our 3 part-time members of staff, our Club Organisers, who take care of all the administration, recruitment of members, organising of rotas and activity sessions - to mention but a few of their many tasks.

In 2019/20 the OPAL Clubs received £56,430 in membership fees and donations which contributed 59% towards the total cost of providing the OPAL Clubs service. The member fees remained at £12 per session, which is used to help support the main overheads of the service.



*“It’s something to look forward to.. A chance to relax, meet friends, chat and have fun.—my weekday treat”*

Together with the funding grant received from CWaC, membership fees, grants and donations received by OPAL totalled to a 96% contribution towards the running of the Clubs. This includes payments for rent, transport and all refreshments at the club, along with purchases of new equipment, providing entertainment and outings for members.

During 2019-2020 we ran a total of 346 Club sessions across six areas of rural west Cheshire.

## OPAL GoOnline

Our OPAL GoOnline service continues to be a very popular and successful service. Over the year we ran 118 sessions in 10 different rural communities. This included Tattenhall where we had not previously run OPAL GoOnline. We continued to run a weekly booked-for service in Ashton Hayes which proved successful. Overall we had over 400 attendances of which 146 had not previously used the service. We continued to encourage carers to attend and had a total of 6 carers join.

- ◆ 118 SESSIONS
- ◆ 146 NEW USERS
- ◆ 800 HOURS SUPPORT

We had 12 volunteers who provided almost 800 hours of support and ran two successful volunteer training days.

A survey early in the year aimed to ascertain

whether we were meeting our client’s expectations. The results indicated that our volunteers were indeed doing so and also highlighted four areas that most of people are interested in – family history, the storage and moving of photos, the use of apps and the use of mobile phones.

*“As I am a complete beginner I found the session was very enjoyable. The venue was comfortable and the group very welcoming. I received interesting and informative help from the volunteer  
- P Fowler*



## OPAL Branching Out

- ◆ 77 USERS
- ◆ 5 DROP IN LOCATIONS

The Brightlife funding, which we used to establish OPAL New Horizons and OPAL What's Cooking? groups, ended in May 2019. However, in April 2019, OPAL was successful in obtaining funding from Marshes Community Benefit Fund (MCBF) to run these services for a further year in the Helsby and Frodsham area.

Our main focus during this period has been to develop OPAL Branching Out - a replacement for New Horizons. This project started as a buddying service but over the course of the two years has evolved into a network of drop ins and small group socials.

The project further developed to include linking with OPAL GoOnline and OPAL Carer support services in that region to enable OPAL to offer more opportunities for members to make purposeful connections and meet with a wider group of people.

In August 2019, the OPAL Branching Out Activity café was launched, meeting at The King's Church in Frodsham and offering a variety of activities in one afternoon session. This attracted members from across many OPAL Services in addition to attracting new members. In January, a gentle Tai Chi session, which had originally only been offered to OPAL Carers Connect members, was made available in the hour before the café opened, and it attracted 12 regular attendees.

OPAL Branching Out continued to run the Thursday morning drop in and chat at Frodsham Library, and through the Age Friendly Cheshire "Social Butterfly" project also offered sessions at Helsby library and other pop up venues.

## OPAL What's Cooking?

- ◆ 65 SESSIONS
- ◆ 100 RECIPES
- ◆ 3 VENUES

OPAL What's Cooking? is a community club where people who have an interest in food and cooking can meet and enjoy the company of others who share their interest and passion.

The principal aim is to help older people to renew their interest and skills in cooking and eating good food, and to do so in good company and whilst having fun. Anyone with an interest in cooking is welcome.

What's Cooking? in Frodsham and Helsby continued in 2018/19 funded through the MCBF grant and OPAL was also able to continue the Farndon What's Cooking? group through a small grant received from the Members' Budget award scheme.

*Attending 'What's Cooking?' has given me a sense of belonging and wellbeing, through socialising with a group of similar aged people.*



## OPAL Carers Connect

The second year of the OPAL Carers Connect service continued to complement OPAL BreakTime well, with some carers being supported by both services at different times during the year.

We had 19 carers, of whom 7 were new to OPAL, supported through the sessions and a total of 193 respite hours provided.

- ◆ 193 RESPITE HOURS
- ◆ 19 CARERS SUPPORTED

The service involves small group get-togethers at which there may be an activity, a speaker or it may be that a trip out is arranged. Every effort is made to also include those being cared for so that the carer isn't excluded from this service.

In 2019 and early 2020 Carers events included visits to garden centres, country pub meetings and joining in sessions of OPAL Branching Out. With the commencement of lockdown due to COVID-19 we set up Zoom sessions for our carers with guest speakers joining the meetings including a hairdresser and life coach.

*"Breaktime has been such a great help with the wonderful support the service has provided"*

*SW- from Aldford*

## OPAL BreakTime

In 2019/20 we supported 26 carers through 900 support hours. The service continues to provide bespoke breaks and is designed with the carers and the

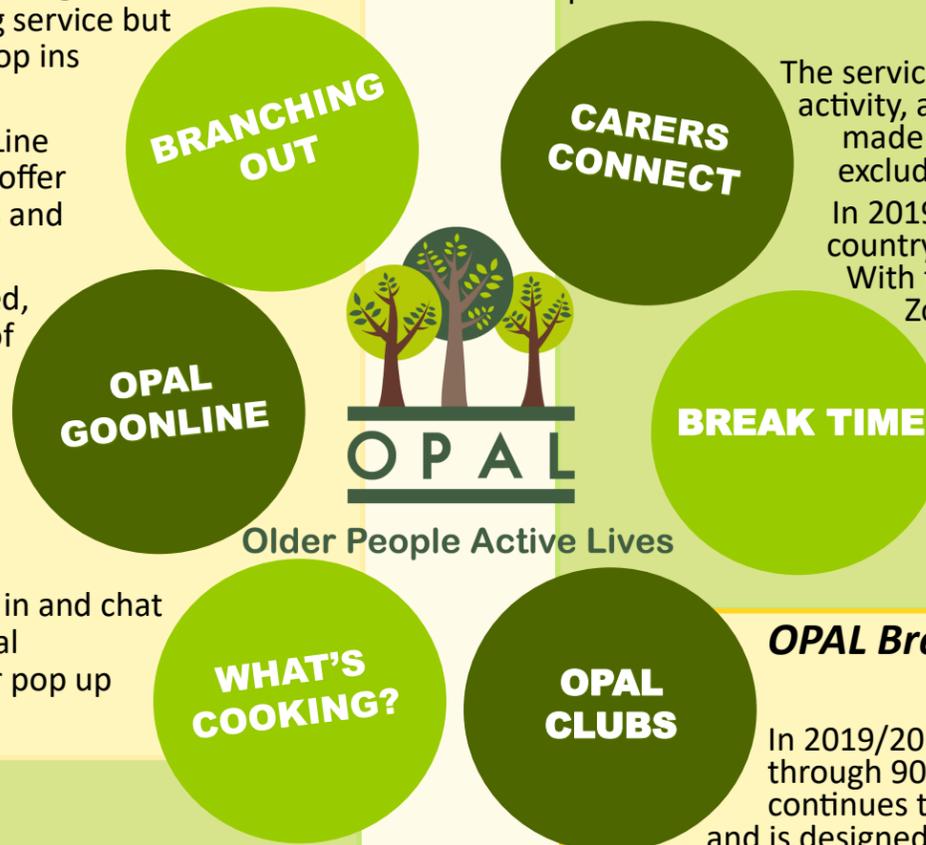
people they care for so it best meets their needs. As an individual's needs change these are taken account of and adjustments made.

- ◆ 26 CARERS SUPPORTED
- ◆ 900 SUPPORT HOURS

Volunteering for OPAL BreakTime can be very rewarding and relationships between the volunteer, carer and the person being cared for can become strong and long lasting.

Feedback from all parties is continually assessed and throughout the year results showed the services is consistently positive and OPAL BreakTime is greatly appreciated.

Providing the carer an opportunity to regularly have a few hours to themselves can be a real life saver for the carer.



### Our Members

From regular weekly attendees to our Clubs to individual OPAL GoOnline sessions and Carers Connect meet ups, the satisfaction and support provided to all of the OPAL Community is our priority. Our member surveys took place throughout the year with examples of feedback shown below.

*"It feels good to come to the Club, a day of smiling and seeing people. Waking up on an OPAL day is waking up on good day."*

*"Having the OPAL club has been of great support and reassurance to me; that mum is in good hands. I really don't know what I would do without the Club, it has made a real difference to my mums life and wellbeing and my peace of mind."*

*"I live on my own and the days are long. But on OPAL Club days we get a lovely meal and we see friends – the people become your friends there."*

*"It gives me a reason to get up in the morning"*

*"Within minutes of arriving we are all chattering and laughing away with each other!"*

IT SUPPORT

BEFRIENDER

CLUB HELPER

DRIVER



COOK

TRUSTEE

Older People Active Lives

### Taking Care

The safety of our members is paramount, and we continually assess and update our policies and procedures as well as introducing new ones where necessary and organising relevant training for both our staff and volunteers.

This year we introduced a number of new policies and procedures and updates to data protection privacy notices and consent forms and a Lone Working Policy. There were no recorded safeguarding incidents.



### Our Volunteers

Throughout 2019 and into the early part of 2020, our volunteers continued to give their time, skills and expertise across all of our different services. We have highlighted some of the roles our volunteers can undertake around our OPAL tree and these include providing transport for our members to and from our OPAL Clubs, cooking two-course hot lunches, running activity sessions, helping with IT issues and providing breaks for carers in their own homes.



Our trustees, who are also volunteers, have continued to passionately support OPAL throughout the year.

We undertook a new recruitment campaign which increased our volunteer numbers by 30 (plus a further 10 reserve volunteers to support during the COVID-19 period). Our Volunteer Coordinator established yearly reviews and satisfaction surveys to help improve how we support all our volunteers.

Through SkillShare and CWVA (Cheshire West Voluntary Action), OPAL used their volunteers to help rebrand the Charity and take professional photos which was completed in March 2020.

23 of our volunteers participated in our training sessions for Emergency Aid and Food Hygiene.

### March 2020

With the onset of the COVID19 pandemic our volunteers quickly adapted their skills to become phone befrienders to support our members at this unprecedented time. Our OPAL GoOnline volunteers have worked remotely, providing essential information and support for our members in isolation. We enlisted our volunteers to become telephone befrienders and these provided lifelines for many of our members providing weekly phone calls.



## OPAL Money Matters

The graph below illustrates precisely where OPAL's income came from in 2019-2020. As a small charity, we aim to receive income from a variety of sources, to spread the load and protect ourselves in case one funding stream disappears. In 2019-2020 OPAL succeeded in diversifying funds.

**Statutory Income** – from CWaC (Cheshire West and Chester Council) and covering OPAL Clubs, BreakTime and Carers Connect. By having multi-year contracts we are secure that income is stable and we have the opportunity to support members with confidence and develop the services.

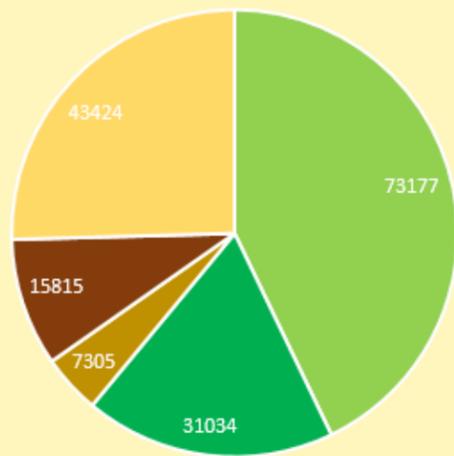
**Charitable Trusts and Foundations** – The Westminster Foundation is a trusted friend and frequent supporter of OPAL projects. The Marshes Community Benevolent Fund is a new OPAL supporter. They have been delighted with the way we have made an impact with OPAL What's Cooking and New Horizons across Helsby and Frodsham

**Members' fees** - OPAL Club members pay a daily fee that covers their transport to and from the Club, a full day of activities, entertainment and a home-cooked two course appetising lunch, and these fees are reflected on the pie chart.

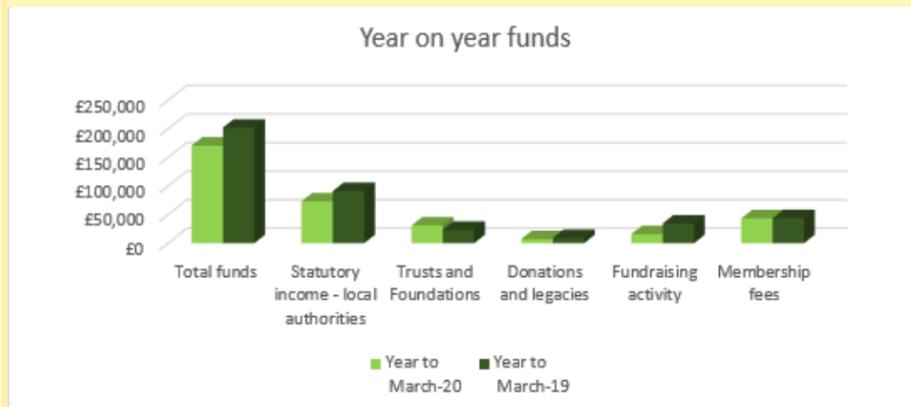
Other income sources have included gifts from individuals, gift aid and the income from holding fundraising events, such as a Fashion Show and a Grand Christmas Draw. These events are totally dependent upon our volunteers, trustees and staff, who all give their time freely for these occasions. This is another example of how everyone goes the extra mile for OPAL.

The total income for OPAL Services 2019-2020 totalled £170,756.

The total income for OPAL Services 2019-2020 totalled £170,756.



- Statutory Income from CWaC via commissioned services
- Charitable Trusts and Foundations
- Gifts from individuals including gift aid
- Fundraising activities such as events, raffles
- Members' fees



\* Statutory income funding drop of around £10,000 due to ending of New Horizons and What's Cooking funding and reduction in GoOnline funding, mitigated by new Branching Out funding grants.  
 \* £19,000 reduction in fundraising activities partially mitigated by £11,000 saving in

## Better, Together

2019 – 2020 was another year when OPAL's progress was supported enormously by the partnership relationships we have with other agencies, charities and delivery partners.

For example, once again we actively worked with Cheshire West Voluntary Action's Skillshare Project which enabled us to complete a rebranding exercise that has resulted in a modern, fresh, easy to identify brand, and a full suite of new publicity materials, as well as a smart OPAL badge.

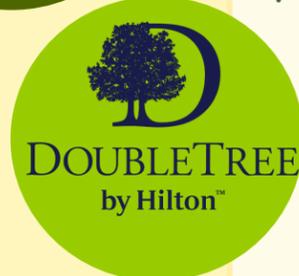


Special thanks to Ceri George of By George Marketing for leading this initiative. Her drive and brilliant attention to detail made all the difference. Also via Skillshare we obtained a set of photos to illustrate what we do and how we do it. Thank you for these to Warren McLennay and to Nigel Player for producing our amazing 'About OPAL' video.

Brightlife has wound down its five year commitment, but we continue to reap the benefits of their expertise, so thank you to Chris McClland, Chris McMahan, Cath Logan and Lynne Humphries. Via Brightlife we also had the opportunity to work with Sally Tuson of Saladbomb who helped us turn our text into beautiful published documents.



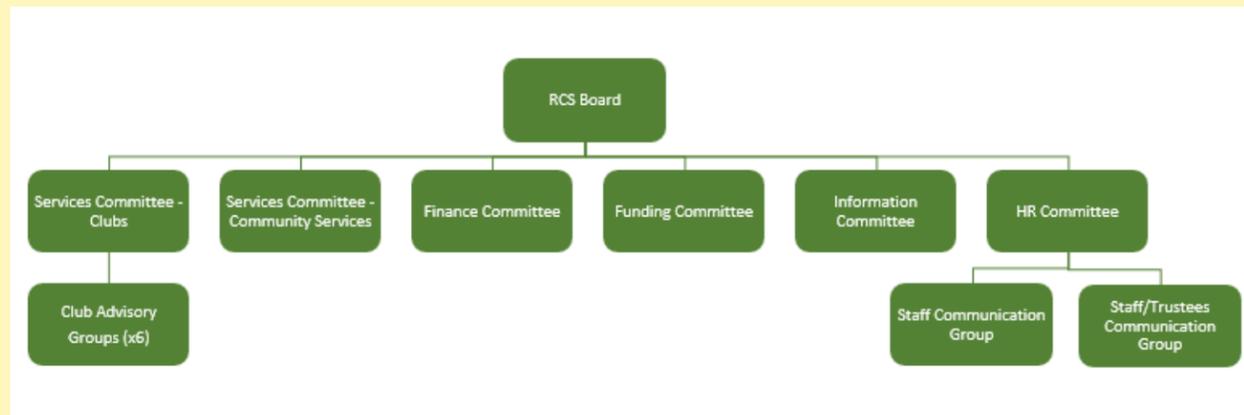
Older People Active Lives



CWVA continue to be great help and have enabled us to succeed with funding from unexpected sources; thank you for keeping us on your radar and for your skilful guidance. We continue to enjoy working in partnership with the Carers Trust providing support for Carers through our Carers Connect service. Our thanks also to the DoubleTree by Hilton Hotels for their generous discount on room hire for meetings.

In 2018, Cheshire West Health Care Trust stated that as a percentage of their total population, Cheshire Rural locality has the highest proportion of older people, with 22% of their patients aged 65 and over.

## Our Structure



## Our Trustees



## Our Goals

### KEY ACTIONS FROM ANNUAL REPORT 2018

- ✓ *We need to use one name consistently.*
- ✓ *We need to share our core values simply and clearly.*
- ✓ *The profile of the charity could be enhanced and promoted so more people understand our aims.*
- ✓ *We identified five priority areas which are to attract the right volunteers, access funding, provide more reliable services to those using our services, better respond to their needs and increase community engagement.*
- ✓ *We have written the story that underpins our organisation. A rebranding has been recommended including the use of one name so as to avoid any confusion and a new logo has been proposed.*

In our 2018 Annual Report we highlighted key areas of work (shown above) and we are delighted to have been able to achieve all of these actions. The development of our working document 'The Way We Do Things' has enabled us to produce cohesive and clear documentation and, along with our new logo, has begun to increase our awareness throughout our communities.



The Queen's Award  
for Voluntary Service

For 2020, we will focus on implementing this new identity throughout our services and this piece of work will continue over the next year and beyond. We were flattered to be nominated for The Queen's Award for Voluntary Service and have been shortlisted for this prestigious award - the announcement of which will take place on 2nd June 2020.

Our main aims for 2020 are set out below, however, COVID-19 will have had impact on all of our services and the charity as a whole so these aims may need to be adjusted or extended going forward and new goals may well be developed during the year.

- *Introduction of the new OPAL image and brand including;*
  - a) *a legal name change to OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire)*
  - b) *a new logo*
  - b) *revised core values, aims and objectives*
  - c) *production and sharing of our story*
- *Increase the numbers, diversity and skill mix of our volunteer force*
- *Increase the number, diversity and skill mix of our Trustees*
- *Obtain access to a wider range of funding streams and sources*
- *Implement a comprehensive policy review framework*

## Our Financial Statements

At March 31st there were ten trustees on the OPAL Board of Trustees who are also Directors of the Company for the purposes of Company Law.

Mrs Eula Hersey resigned as a trustee in August 2019. Three new trustees were elected during the year – Mr Philip Hearfield, Mrs Rhiannon Wilson and Mr Brian Mackie.

The procedure for the appointment of trustees is set out in the Articles of Association.

There must be at least five trustees but no maximum is set.

### Responsibilities of Trustees

The trustees are responsible for preparing the Annual Report and the Financial Statements in accordance with applicable law and regulations.

Company law requires the trustees to prepare financial statements for each financial year. Under that law the trustees have elected to prepare the financial statements in accordance with UK Generally Accepted Accounting Practice (UK Accounting Standards and applicable law). The financial statements are required by law to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs at the charity and of the surplus/deficit of the charity for that period.

In preparing these financial statements, the trustees are required to:

select suitable accounting policies and then apply them consistently

make judgments and estimates that are reasonable and prudent

prepare the financial statements on the on-going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the charity will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records which disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the charity and which enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the companies Act 2006.

The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

So far as the trustees are aware:

there is no relevant information of which the charity's independent examiner is unaware the trustees have taken all steps that they ought to have taken to make themselves aware of any relevant information and to establish that the independent examiner is aware of that information.

### Declaration

The trustees declare that there were no Serious Incidents, as defined by the Charity Commission, or any other matters which should have been brought to the attention of the Charity Commission.

### Small Company Provisions

This report has been prepared in accordance with the provisions of Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies.

### Independent Examiner.

Rebecca Ellams has been re-appointed as independent examiner.

**This Trustees Annual Report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 9th September 2020.**

This summarised financial information contains extracts from the OPAL Services Statement of Financial Activities, a full copy of which is available by emailing [morag.hutson@opalservices.org.uk](mailto:morag.hutson@opalservices.org.uk)

## OPAL SERVICES (RURAL WEST CHESHIRE)

### BALANCE SHEET

AS AT 31 MARCH 2020

	Notes	2020 £	£	2019 £	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>					
Tangible assets	10		2,405		2,556
<b>Current assets</b>					
Debtors	11	12,923		15,716	
Cash at bank and in hand		217,789		216,540	
			230,712		232,256
<b>Creditors: amounts falling due within one year</b>	12	(28,415)		(33,629)	
Net current assets			202,297		198,627
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>			204,702		201,183
<b>Income funds</b>					
Restricted funds	13		46,369		39,090
<u>Unrestricted funds</u>					
Designated funds	14	44,067		49,040	
General unrestricted funds		114,266		113,053	
			158,333		162,093
			204,702		201,183

## Company Information

**OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire)** is a company limited by guarantee.

Charity name	OPAL Services (Rural West Cheshire)
Registered company no.	7521625 (England and Wales)
Registered office	18 Utkinton Road, Tarporley, Cheshire CW6 0HS
Date of Incorporation	8th February 2011
Date activities commenced	22nd May 2011
Accounting reference date	31st March
Registered charity no.	1143753

### Board of Trustee Directors 2019/20

P Cllr Mrs Gill Clough	From February 2011
P Cllr Mrs Jane Colville	From February 2011, Chair
Mr Philip Hearfield	From June 2019, Secretary from October 2019
Mrs Eula Hersey	From November 2017 until August 2019
Mrs Ilene Hoyle	From January 2015
Mr Brian Mackie, CA	From March 2020, Treasurer from March 2020
Dr Victoria Ridgway	From March 2018, Secretary until Oct 2019
Mrs Gill Swash	From July 2017
Mrs Mary Thompson	From February 2011, Treasurer until March 2020
P Cllr Mr John Webb	From October 2011
Mrs Rhiannon Wilson	From September 2019

**Company Secretary** Vicky Ridgway/Philip Hearfield

**Independent Examiner** Rebecca Ellams FCCA, Hall Livesey Brown  
HLB House, 68 High Street, Tarporley,  
Cheshire CW6 0AT

**Bankers** The Co-operative Bank plc, PO Box 101, 1 Balloon  
Street, Manchester M60 4EP

**Think about me, not my age**