

REGISTERED COMPANY NUMBER: 06283685 (England and Wales)

REGISTERED CHARITY NUMBER: 1122220

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES AND UNAUDITED FINANCIAL STATEMENTS  
FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020  
FOR  
YORK HOUSE CENTRE (STONY STRATFORD)**

**YORK HOUSE CENTRE (STONY STRATFORD)**  
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**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020**

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**YORK HOUSE CENTRE (STONY STRATFORD)**

**REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES**

**FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020**

The Trustees who are also Directors of the charity for the purpose of the Companies Act 2006, present their report with the financial statements of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2020. The Memorandum and Articles of Association, and Accounting and Reporting by Charities: Statement of Recommended Practice applicable to charities preparing their accounts in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard applicable in the UK and Republic of Ireland (FRS 102) (effective 1 January 2015).

**REFERENCE AND ADMINISTRATIVE DETAILS**

<b>Registered Company Number</b>	<b>Registered Charity Number</b>
<b>06283685 (England and Wales)</b>	<b>1122220</b>

**Registered office:** London Road, Stony Stratford, Milton Keynes, Buckinghamshire MK11 1JQ

**Trustees:** Ms A Box, Mr K C Daniels, Mr M J Moutrie, Mr S Ratcliffe, Mr D Tucker, Mr K Hall, Ms J Taylor, Mr D Gibbons, Mr A Hulme (co-opted)

**Company Secretary:** Ms F A Trinder

**Independent examiner:** Essendon Accounts and Tax Limited, 3 Warren Yard, Stratford Road, Wolverton Mill, Milton Keynes MK12 5NW

**COMMENCEMENT OF ACTIVITIES:** The Charitable Company was incorporated on 18th June 2007 and commenced its activities on 1st April 2008.

**STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT GOVERNING DOCUMENT:** The Charitable Company is controlled by its governing document, Memorandum and Articles of Association.

The Charitable Company was established under a Memorandum of Association which established the objects and powers of the Charitable Company and is governed under its Articles of Association. In the event of the Charitable Company being wound up members are required to contribute an amount not exceeding £10.

Recruitment and appointment of new Trustees New Trustees are appointed by existing Trustees as and when required. The Charity aims to recruit new Trustees from as diverse background as possible but ensures during the recruitment process that they are eligible to act as Trustees.

## YORK HOUSE CENTRE (STONY STRATFORD) REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

### STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT

**Induction and training of new Trustees:** The chair of the Trustees is responsible for the induction of any new Trustee, which involves awareness of a Trustee's responsibilities, the Memorandum and Articles of Association, administrative procedures, the history and philosophical approach of the Charitable Company. A new Trustee would receive copies of the previous year's annual report and financial statements and a copy of the Charity Commission leaflet 'The Essential Trustee: What you need to know.' New Trustees would also be encouraged to review other leaflets and publications issued by the Charity Commission.

**Organisational structure:** At the end of this financial year there were eight Trustees. The Trustees are responsible for ensuring that the centre meets its charitable aims and objectives as set out in the Memorandum and Articles of Association. The Centre, including the building and associated land, is wholly owned by the members and membership is open to any organisation or individual over the age of 18 who is on the electoral register for Stony Stratford or who has significant association with the area. Membership is free. Organisational memberships are held by Milton Keynes Council, Stony Stratford Town Council, Stony Stratford Business Association and Wolverton & District Archaeological & Historical Society.

The Centre employs four part-time staff who run the centre with the Trustees on a day to day basis. The office is staffed 9am – 2pm every weekday. The Board meets monthly and delegates portfolios to individual Trustees.

The Centre is also a member of Stony Stratford Futures Group, Stony Stratford Business Association, Milton Keynes Play Association, Milton Keynes Council of Voluntary Organisations and Milton Keynes Arts Gateway, Action for Youth and Community Impact Bucks.

**Risk Management:** The Trustees have a duty to identify and review the risks to which the charity is exposed and to ensure appropriate controls are in place to provide reasonable assurance against fraud and error.

### OBJECTIVES AND ACTIVITIES:

1. To provide facilities in the interests of social welfare for recreation and leisure-time occupation with the object of improving the conditions of life of the inhabitants of Stony Stratford and its environs (the area of benefit).
2. To advance the educations of young people in the area of benefit through their leisure times activities so as to develop their physical, mental and spiritual capacities that they grow to full maturity as individuals and members of society and that their conditions of life may be improved.
3. To advance education, particularly in the arts, for those living in the area of benefit.

York House Centre is the Youth, Community & Arts Centre for Stony Stratford and the surrounding area. The centre is a busy hub for community activities, and we estimate that our current annual footfall is about 50,000 people. We have over 40 regular User Groups including our two Youth Clubs, our affordable drama groups for young people (Act Out & Act Up), toddler groups, health and wellbeing groups, special needs/self-help groups, senior citizens, local musicians and artists plus a wide variety of clubs, classes and meetings. The building and grounds are available to hire for ad hoc parties and events and we offer reduced hire rates for young people. We run large scale community arts events/projects such as the Stony Stratford Lantern Project and York House Arts for All (we seek external funding to allow these events to be free or a minimal charge) and we also have a successful Community Gardens Project in our rear grounds.

## **YORK HOUSE CENTRE (STONY STRATFORD) REPORT OF THE TRUSTEES FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020**

### **Chair's Report for period 01 April 2019 to 31 March 2020**

The year has seen the culmination of many major projects which have resulted in significant developments at York House; some are physical improvements, others strengthen our ability to cope with increasing usage and demands on our revenue.

Once again, York House has continued to be heavily used by a wide variety of groups and individuals in the community and, in summary, it has been yet another highly successful year.

As always, I thank the team of volunteer Trustees (currently nine of us, as I welcome Andrew Hulme to the team), supported by our part-time staff of four. All have worked hard and positively to ensure a thriving community centre. Thanks too, to the army of volunteers for their cheerful help with bars and cafes, cake making, stewarding, setting up and clearing away, and general support for York House and its many activities. The Stony Stratford area community has also supported us well - attending events, subscribing to our ever-increasing membership, generously donating via our LocalGiving.Com page, and generally making good use of the centre.

We were delighted to welcome another group of volunteers from Santander as part of their "Community Days" scheme. Paul and his team got straight down to business re-decorating the walls and ceilings in Room 2.2 and Room 2.3 on the middle floor. They did an excellent job and enjoyed a good old natter whilst they worked!

York House Centre has benefitted greatly from this Santander scheme over the years, which also provides a donation of up to £250 per project for materials and equipment.

Our formal four-year relationship with Corporate Social Responsibility partners, Mercedes Benz Financial Services (MBFS), came to an end but we are still in touch and they have been most helpful with grants and assistance during the year. The period also saw us taking advantage of the many features their teams helped us develop: a new website, database, signage, security, IT, re-branding, and more. The investment of resources by MBFS has been both tremendous and transformational. We cannot thank them enough.

Thank you again to our long-term user groups and organisations, some of whom have been with us many years. York House is well-used by community members of all ages, from babies and toddlers to those at the other end of the span; self-help groups for those with both physical and mental challenges; social and action groups of a variety of hues; religious, spiritual and humanist organisations, dancers, artists, musicians, poets and storytellers, gardeners...

In January 2020 the Yo-Yos Baby & Toddler Group re-started as a Parent Volunteer-led group, in partnership with York House Centre, and has been a great success. More details can be found at Appendix 6.

The programme of community and fundraising events has also grown, and, once again, York House has worked in partnership with other local organisations such as Stony in Bloom, MK Alzheimer's Society, Stony Stratford Harvest Show, MK Community Cardio-Pulmonary Group, and Togfest.

Membership of York House continues to grow, showing an increasing ownership by local residents of the only publicly-owned community centre in Stony Stratford. I would encourage you to invite friends and neighbours to join us. Membership of York House is free, and available to residents, organisations and businesses in the MK11 postcode area, and Members can have a say in how York House is run and in its plans for the future by attending our AGM. <http://york-house.org.uk/about-us/membership/>

## **ACHIEVEMENTS:**

**TOILETS:** It may seem sad to excited about toilets but the new facilities are a major step forward in the development of York House. We now have women's and men's toilets on the ground and first floor, augmenting and replacing the ageing, inadequate, and unlovely "smallest rooms" of yore. The new toilets were officially opened, with no use of water of any kind, by the Mayor of Milton Keynes, Cllr Martin Petchey, on April 27<sup>th</sup> 2019.

You can see a more detailed report at Appendix 5.

**RE-BRANDING:** part of the MBFS business plan was to look at the public image of York House, and – with a massive thanks to Stony designer, Mason Edwards, who offered his talents and time for free – we undertook a major re-branding of York House in June 2019. Bright new signage, outdoors and indoors, livened up the York House image and provided colourful guidance for access to and around the building. The designs have been incorporated into our website, social media platforms, letterheads, and so on.

The new website is the result of the MBFS/York House partnership's work on defining functionality, with a splendid design by Stony-based Freestone Creatives.

A "Day of Caring" in June 2019 saw another joint MBFS/York House/Branch-Out CIC team re-vamping the tired front bed and installing the lovely new noticeboard. Special thanks here go to "Handyman Phil" and his son for their gruelling efforts on what proved to be frontier territory.

York House went into a form of partnership with local parents to create a parent led baby and toddler group offering crafts, toys, indoor and outdoor activities? This is the York House Yo-Yos, and it is as busy and lively as its predecessor.

The York House team successfully saved “for the nation” the “Phoenix Project” artwork (the hoarding previously fronting the burned-out building on the High Street)? We have obtained the necessary consents; to install along fence at the front, when circumstances permit.

You can read more about some of the above items (and see some photos) by looking at our website news page at <http://york-house.org.uk/category/news/>.

**GROUNDS:** the Community Gardens are in fine shape, thanks to all the hard work by gardeners and management, and the never-tiring Theresa Wedderburn and her “Branch-OutMK CIC”. York House Yo-Yos have taken custody of a small plot and will help to maintain the Educational Garden. As part of their Monday morning sessions, they will allow access to the plot to encourage our very youngest gardeners.

Theresa has produced a report, which can be seen at **Appendix 4**.

Thank you again to Stony Stratford Business Association for the splendid hanging baskets and to Stony Stratford Town Council for their generous financial support for the Arts for All, Act-Out/Act-Up, and Christmas Lanterns projects.

#### **ACT-OUT & ACT-UP:**

Another enjoyable and successful year, thanks to the hard work and creativity of Terrie Howey (“Red Phoenix”) and her team. We are very grateful for external funding from Stony Stratford Town Council, Ancell Trust, Wolverton Science & Art Institute Fund, Backstage Trust, Waitrose Community Matters, the York House Local Giving Fund and the group’s own fundraising efforts which allow us to offer these activities at an affordable rate.

Terrie’s report can be found at **Appendix 1**

#### **YOUTH CLUBS:**

We are very grateful for the external funding received from Stony Stratford Town Council which helps support our Junior and Senior Youth Clubs in partnership with York House Centre and Youth Network Milton Keynes (YNMK).

**JUNIOR YOUTH CLUB** – Ages 8 – 12 years, Mondays, 5.300pm – 7.00pm in term-time.

**SENIOR YOUTH CLUB** – Ages 12 – 16 years, Mondays, 7.15pm – 9.00pm in term-time.

YNMK has done a fine job in maintaining and developing the clubs. See **Appendix 2** for the report.

## EVENTS & PROJECTS:

York House Arts for All continues to be a great success, thanks to Angela Carel and Michelle Buckland, and all the volunteers who helped out. This is a superb family day with lots of imaginative work to produce spectacular montages (this year's theme was "Lost in Space"), and lots of delicious home-made cakes were enjoyed in the process. A full report can be found at Appendix 3.

"Jungle Bells" was the theme of the 2019 Christmas Lantern Project which saw another year of capacity attendance and astounding creations. The Lantern Volunteers continued their tradition of giant lanterns, with monstrously large twin parrots.

The Lantern Project is as huge a success as it is a task to complete. Once again, it's a big thank you to over 50 Volunteers, ably and tirelessly led by Fiona Trinder on the organisational and creative side, and Bob Adams, organiser and controller of the lanterns procession. This is one of the highlights of the Stony social calendar, made possible with financial assistance from Milton Keynes Community Foundation, Stony Stratford Town Council and Stony Stratford Business Association. Thanks too, to Laurence Conisbee of Wharf Distillery for donating that essential Christmas ingredient, mulled cider.

You can read more at Appendix 7.

Our entertainment and arts programme continues to be highly popular, with a great variety of offerings, as usual. To mention but a few: Turkish folk tales and food, the regular Song Loft evenings of folk music, improvised comedy, Derek's very successful "Stony Tracks" musical biography of local "celebs", outdoor cinema classics, mayhem from "Roadrunner" authentic blues from our favourite American, Kent Duchaine, classical guitar, and The Bullfrogs 25<sup>th</sup> anniversary bash. I should also mention the tremendously popular "EatStreet" which has been bringing delicious, gourmet world-food to Stony Stratford for four years and introducing York House to a large new crowd of people from all over the area.

Keep visiting the York House website at <http://www.york-house.org.uk> for news of more goodies.

There are always opportunities for volunteering at York House so if you have a few hours to spare or your company runs a "Community Day" scheme or similar, please bear us in mind.

## STAFFING:

Fiona Trinder has, as she has for seventeen years, been the kingpin of the centre. In addition to coping with an increasing demand for York House, she has been extra busy with all the projects stemming from the MBFS partnership and other developments at York House. Many of you will know that she left York House in June 2020 to pursue a career in teaching. She will be a great loss, and we wish her all the best. You can read her valedictory at Appendix 8.

Tina Batten continues to bring her cheerful and helpful manner to the office, making her popular with clients and applicants. As always, Malcolm Fryer-Kelsey does a fine job keeping York House looking good, clean and tidy. "Handyman Phil" likewise does an excellent job keeping on top of repairs and maintenance to ensure a safe and pleasant environment.

A big THANK YOU to them all!

## SOCIAL MEDIA:

The new website is being well used, and provides valuable news of all the events, activities, and news at York House. Our Facebook Group now boasts over 900 members; join it at <https://www.facebook.com/groups/356423684409136/> for the latest news and views. We also have a Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/York-House-Centre-1369744696453128/> - take a look.

YORK HOUSE FINANCES continue to be in a happy state, thanks to careful financial management and realistic planning and a business-like approach to all that goes on. My thanks go to our long-serving and efficient treasurer, Mick Moutrie, who – with able assistance from Fiona Trinder – has done a professional and business-like job. The Financial Review gives full details.

Our membership of the "LocalGiving.Com" scheme has proved a success with generous donations by our supporters being match-funded (and Gift-Aided) by the scheme. The Trustees have agreed that the money raised in this way should, wherever possible, be allocated to youth, community and arts projects. Please take a look at [www.localgiving.com/charity/yorkhousecentre](http://www.localgiving.com/charity/yorkhousecentre)

## FUTURE DEVELOPMENTS:

Unfortunately, the timing of the lockdown curtailed our efforts to recruit a new Centre Manager. We were just about to short-list the sixteen or so applicants for the job. As an aside, we will be re-starting the recruitment process in the near future, in readiness for a full return to business.

Planning work on development of “The Space” rehearsal room started, with some initial designs, applications for planning permission, and discussion with the authorities. Further work is, of course, on hold.

Similarly, progress was halted on the marketing strategy to encourage even greater use of York House.

Plans are afoot and some money has been obtained to make further improvements to the rear grounds, to enable more games and outdoor exercise activities.

The coming year will also be one of recuperation from several months of lockdown closure but, as Gloria nearly said “We will survive!”

We are always looking to move “onwards and upwards” with new schemes to benefit the Stony Stratford and district community. Any ideas you have will be most welcome, via email, letter, or personal call.

You may find this paragraph familiar, as I repeat my annual message: please remember that York House Centre is YOUR community centre, run by volunteer Trustees, and open, without prejudice, to anyone with a legitimate purpose. It is the only independent, publicly-owned facility in Stony Stratford. Come and join us – maybe as a Trustee! Our MEMBERSHIP scheme is open to all residents and associates of Stony Stratford aged 18 or over, and it is free! In return, members get a vote at the AGM, a say in how York House is run, and regular newsletters. York House benefits from this support when applying for grants or seeking permissions etc from Milton Keynes Council and other bodies.

Feel free to talk or write to us if you would like any more information or wish to get involved in some way, join our Facebook Group “York House Centre (Stony Stratford)” for the latest news. Better still, why not join the team? We are always on the look-out for those who can spare just a few hours a month to be Trustees, to help ensure that York House can still serve the community for many more years.

I look forward to another year as a Trustee of York House Centre, but am always happy to stand aside for anyone who is keen to be Chairman!

**ON BEHALF OF THE BOARD OF TRUSTEES:**

**Ken Daniels**

**Chair of Trustees - York House Centre (Stony Stratford)**

**28<sup>th</sup> August 2020**

## **Appendix 1:**

ACT OUT report

### 2019/2020 (pre-lockdown)

Autumn term (Sept - Dec)

The Autumn saw our largest groups sizes since we began with 21 in ACT OUT and 19 in ACT UP, which meant our Pantomime (Treasure Island) was our biggest yet, and most successful in terms of revenue raising just under £600. I am also pleased to report that our diversity levels are improving with participants from BAME backgrounds, and those with SEN. The group are highly supportive and welcoming to all and any.

Spring Term (Jan - April)

The Spring term began with high hopes, we began a site-specific and promenade theatre project which we were intending to use the whole of York House and grounds to produce our July Summer Gala. In part this project was to encourage alternative ways of producing performance with a view to tie in with a VE day project the Living Archive was trying to secure funding for and for us to perform a piece of theatre to tour around three sites in MK (MKC Library to council VIPs, York House, and the Bath House). Unfortunately, we only received notification that the funding was successful in the second week of March, we committed one week to it before lockdown began and all plans were cancelled.

### Lockdown

From the 26th March I began online classes, which I have run every week (even "holidays") to try to provide as much "normal" as possible for participants. Every week we have 12-18 participants attend, the numbers fluctuate due to internet connection and if school classes or other clubs/classes clash. Some children struggle with the online format, especially a few of the younger girls so we have seen a drop in numbers. All those members who don't wish to partake of the online classes have said they will return when we can do the physical classes again. I will freely admit doing drama online is complicated and I had to almost relearn how to do in this new format, but after some experimenting and a lot of hours poring through my books of games and exercises, and also with the kids enthusiasm we have got it to work. We have not been alone in finding difficulties in getting drama to work online, I have attend theatre online workshops (via zoom) and it has been a common struggle, but I am pleased to report that when I have informed such groups of the work we have been doing in class with improvisations, drama games and exercises even the bigger professional groups have been impressed with our work.

We have also submitted two pieces of work to the Theatre Centre's ImagiNATION project, and nationwide drive to encourage online performance which we recorded via zoom over one weekend at the beginning of June.

Due to restrictions on class sizes and year groups return to school we took the decision to remain closed for the summer term.

### Plans for Post-lockdown

As decisions on when schools will fully return and when it will be safe to end social distancing or allow public performances are still being debated we unfortunately can not make any certain plans for the future.

It is likely we will need to add additional classes to accommodate our numbers due to current class size restrictions (8-10 children) so our two class format may need to become four, of course we will have to negotiate this with room hire which may mean this system is unworkable and force us to remain on line.

Although we are trying to hold open the opportunity to delay the VE day project with Living Archive, our plans to reschedule for the September Heritage Days are looking unlikely. We may try to do something for Remembrance Day.

As public performances are still unable to resume, and limitations on audiences' sizes exist our ability to produce a pantomime this year is questionable. This will have an effect upon our finances moving forward. Even if an end of year production can take place, like the classes we may need more performances to cater for audience size limitations, meaning room hire will impact any funding raising we make.

Equity (Arts Union) is currently working with the government to create a package for arts projects and practitioners, and so there is the possibility we may be eligible.

## **Appendix 2:**

York House Junior and Senior Club report

September 2019 to March 2020

### **September – December 2019**

We were so happy to see so many returning faces in September and quite a few new members.

We were starting to see some repeating bad behaviours in the Junior club over the year so started in September with a few new club routines. Snack is now served at 6:30 every week and we ask all young people to help tidy the tables before and all sit together (even if they're not eating too). We also ask them to take their dirty plate/cup/bowl up to the kitchen counter when they're finished before they carry on playing. We've been pleasantly surprised with how quickly the young people have settled into the new routine and so delighted with some of the young people also adding in the occasional please or thank you.

There was a lot of new equipment to unpack at the start of this term and so many new activities for the young people to get stuck into straight away. We were able to replace a number of the board games almost immediately and some of the arts & craft supplies were really handy when starting some of the seasonal projects; we now have a book full of greetings and pictures ready to be cut out and stuck on cards and the Juniors really enjoy having so many stickers! The diablo and spinning plates are going down really well in the Senior club and they've loved digging through the new craft supplies to see what they can make now.

Hallowe'en fell during the break so both clubs celebrated on the first week back instead. The Juniors had a Hallowe'en party with food, spooky biscuit decorating, Hallowe'en inspired crafts like mask-making and ghosts made out of recycled milk bottles and battery-operated tea-lights. They also had party games like "stick the eyes on the spider" (a bit like pin the tail on the donkey but more Hallowe'eny!), pumpkin golf and who's got the spookiest face competition.

The Seniors opted for a slightly more relaxed evening with mood lighting (thanks to the coloured lights in the hall!), Halloween musical sing-along, talking about their favourite scary films, tv shows or stories, decorating spooky biscuits to go with their hot chocolates and making their own ghost lanterns to take home.

We had so much fun leading up to Christmas with festive activities like Christmas colouring, making glitter-glue snowflakes, loom band jewellery making and turning plastic milk bottles into Santas with crepe paper and cotton wool! Both clubs used Christmas paper to wrap shoeboxes the young people brought from home (some with a ribbon and bow too) to fill with all the Christmas crafts we made. It was great to do an activity across both clubs that used a lot of the same materials and helped us to create a greater sense of unity with both clubs.

It was fantastic to see so many of our members getting involved in other events in the community. Quite a few of them made lanterns at York House and took part in the lantern parade. We already knew that a huge number of past and present members are part of the Act Out/Act Up drama groups that Terrie runs at the building and we were delighted to be able to see them in the Christmas panto this year! We're incredibly proud of all of them.

Over-all it's been another fantastic year for both clubs; we feel like we've brought the clubs together a little bit more, seen a few Juniors move up to the Senior club and feel like we've started a few new routines that will really help the club next year.

All of us look forward to seeing the young people in January, hearing all about their Christmases and finding out what they would like to do in 2020.

### **January – March 2020**

Juniors: We were thrilled to return early in January to make sure we were able to reach the 36 weeks with the multiple bank holiday Mondays. The usual activities were popular including Archery, Table football, Twister, Connect4, toy cars/trucks, Spinning plates and other circus skills, colouring/drawing and activity sheets. We started the year with a snack of waffles to which the young people added their own toppings such as choco spread and marshmallows. So popular that we continued with this as the snack for a couple of weeks. Pokemon cards – playing and trading, was popular and there were some behaviour issues with "the whale", a stuffed toy! Tracey intervened set up a 'safe zone' where young people can retreat to if they want a break from being chased or indeed wish to speak to their peers from a position of safety!

From the end of January the club introduced the theme of 'Chinese New Year' with arts and crafts activities based around the theme. The group also did some cooking including making a stir fry and, most, trying it and enjoying it!

We also learned by now that Alice had decided to leave us and move on to pastures new. We were really sad to see her go, as were the young people who got together and made her a lovely card to say thanks for being at the club since the start. We brought in Timothy to replace Alice and he quickly became a hit with the young people. Playing football table tournaments and introducing end of session group games which was now to become the norm until the end of term. In February the focus was on Valentine's Day and many of the group made cards, bracelets and necklaces. Although we wanted to have some messy snacks the young people were again starting to become increasingly untidy and expecting staff to clear up after them. We therefore got all involved in clearing up after the snack and then the final 20 minutes of club, taking part in a group game such as human chess or whatever else Tim had up his sleeve.

Seniors: The numbers are still low but we have a core group attending regularly who really enjoy themselves. Some weeks they just want to catch up and talk about things happening in their lives, or things that have grabbed their attention such as the changes in the exam system, i.e. 1-9 instead of Grades A-C. Other evenings they get more involved in organising activities, tuck shop shopping lists and what they want to make for snacks. After the questionnaire results came out, we were able to speak to them about the results and some were very keen for leading on the idea of a Youth Café, run by young people for young people. We were hoping to pursue this in the next term which of course didn't happen.

They are quite keen on the Giant games such as Domino's. They also enjoyed looking through 'Where's Wally' books where you have to find Wally hidden within a picture. Also activity sheets where you need to find a list of hidden items. This term there has been an interest in cookery with young people producing brownies, preparing snacks and cooking a stir fry as part of the Chinese New Year theme.

### **Stony Stratford Questionnaire**

Youth Network enjoyed taking part in collecting questionnaires and read with interest the findings. We were particularly interested to hear that the YMCA had been able to send messages via Radcliffe email so that it reached all of the young people. We really need to do this once things get back to a more normal setting. We have tried to get into the school but without much luck.

However, before lockdown we did have a chance to talk to young seniors about the idea of them hosting a youth café in the first instance for young people, so they would, with our help, set it up and then hopefully others would come and get involved and become part of a steering group of young organisers.

### **Coronavirus**

Sadly, all came to an abrupt end at the end of term although we only missed the last 2 sessions but even the juniors dropped off after the 9<sup>th</sup> March. We are hoping and planning to return in September, subject to your agreement, where we may have to make some changes to delivery of the club, specifically to numbers I would imagine.

However, things seem to change on a daily basis so we will leave the decision making until August in the hope that things will be clearer by then and that some of us are able to return to work if only for a few hours. We also plan to communicate with parents during August to ensure their involvement going forward. We have been lucky to be successful with the Government furlough scheme, but this has meant only freelancers have been able to work during this period. Also, with very little income we are struggling to meet the bills which continue whether we are delivering or not. Hopefully we will all make it through this and continue in some shape or form to collectively support the young people during their leisure time into the future.

York House Youth Club Staff Team

### **Appendix 3:**

#### **ARTS FOR ALL SUCCESS – ‘LOST IN SPACE...’ AT YORK HOUSE CENTRE!**

Another fantastic York House Arts for All took place on Saturday 12 October with hundreds of families joining us at York House Centre for an art-tastic experience...

Local artists, Michelle Buckland and Angela Carel, transformed York House into Outer Space with a universe backdrop of moon, stars, planets, satellites and spaceships. There were a wide range of arty activities based around the theme – loads of weird and wonderful aliens to colour-in and paint; postcards from Space; bunting to decorate and hang up on the washing line around the hall; paper marbling; planet making, the very popular ‘paint a moon rock’; make a Space plate scene; icing rocket biscuits; face-painting, design your own shooting star t-shirt and loads more to make and do.... The creativity flowed from people of all ages – from tiny tots to those more advancing in years – and a fabulous time was had by all.

We are grateful to Stony Stratford Town Council, Milton Keynes Community Foundation and the York House Centre Local Giving Fund for their generous funding. Added to the money raised via the Volunteer Cafe, paid activities and bucket donations, this allows these events to be FREE for everyone (including materials) every year, giving the opportunity to all families to play and create together.

A massive thank you to all our Volunteers (the York House Arts Crew) who give so freely of their time to help everyone enjoy the day, and to everyone who baked cakes and ran the Volunteer Cafe to keep the masses fed and watered!

‘Like’ our page on Facebook at ‘York House Arts for All’ and for more information about all our events and activities.

### **Appendix 4:**

York House Community Gardens: with lockdown declared on 23rd March 2020 all activities at York House Community Gardens came to an abrupt halt, as all Community Centre Group users could no longer attend their sessions.

We all initially struggled to know what to do, the shock and fear of the unknown cast a dark shadow of uncertainty across the days ahead.

Against this background within just a few weeks Stony Stratford In Bloom asked if they could use the areas of the garden which other groups were not using. They felt that they should carry on gardening wherever they could by planting vegetables, which they could somehow give to the local community. This seemed a great idea and would certainly mean that all the space would be utilised over the spring months. They did a sterling job taking over every available inch of space, soon potatoes and beans, courgettes and salads were popping up all over the gardens. By late spring the polytunnel was bursting at the seams with tomato plants and all sorts of veg seedlings.

Kate from the YoYo baby & toddler group helped throughout the project planting sunflowers and digging over all the beds with her family. They put in a huge amount of hard graft.

The resulting harvests have been taken to Greenleys to add to the food bank supporting local families who struggled to access fresh food during the pandemic. Speaking to Judy Deveson it is clear that this is an initiative that SSIB would like to continue. We should give them every chance to do this as this is what truly makes a great community garden.

Branch-out MK CIC continued to maintain the main areas of lawn although to a much reduced level as all service users were locked down and the business focus had to shift to the cut flower plot. The heat wave in spring took all of our time and having no other help meant we were working every day, with our two teenage kids, to just keep the flowers alive. Ian Wedderburn mowed the lawn once a week, and Rooh Moore volunteered time whilst on furlough to tidy the community gardens.

A couple of weeks into lockdown Theresa was asked by a friend to make some flower posies which he then took to MK Hospital and gave to hospital staff by placing in buckets in the staff car park. This kickstarted the 'Rainbow Posies' project. People nominated keyworkers and Branch-out MK CIC delivered their home grown flower posies all over MK and the surrounding towns and villages. Over 10 weeks we delivered 250 flower posies. Much of the foliage and filler flowers were picked from the Branch-out MK Community Garden plot at York House and we used the workshop to prep the posies. It was odd working alone for months in a building that had always been so busy and vibrant.

All of this work is testament to the community spirit that makes Stony Stratford such a special place to live. The gardens have sustained the community, and whilst some of the groups that use the space have yet to return, the gardens provided a therapeutic place where two entirely new projects emerged during the pandemic, both of which have had a far reaching impact. Well done to everyone involved.

And from Judy Deveson of Stony Stratford in Bloom: SSIB volunteers have ensured a daily watering rota so that even in the heatwave everything survived - and that some of our older volunteers particularly liked to come on work parties there where it's peaceful and safe.

I think it's called the Wolverton King's Food Bank - and Andy and Debbie, who run it, have kindly picked up a big haul of veg from us from York House every Thursday for the last 10 weeks.'

## **Appendix 5:**

### **York House Centre is Flushed With Success!**

York House has gone from strength to strength over the past decade with several phases of major building work providing extra activity space, a new kitchen and storage rooms. The building is now a busy hub for all kinds of community activities but our toilets were letting us down...

The new toilet suites were officially opened in April 2019.

Funding was secured via grants from WREN (landfill tax) and The Bernard Sunley Charitable Foundation, plus generous donations from Mercedes Benz Financial Services and Daimler Insurance.

Clever design work by Svetlana at Milton Keynes- based SEP Design has allowed us to provide separate men's and women's facilities on both the ground floor and the middle floor, all within the envelope of the existing toilets. Women in particular will be delighted to hear that we are banishing the pink and more than doubling the number of ladies' cubicles available to provide 5!

Following a tendering process, our chosen contractors, local construction firm CJ Bricknall & Co Ltd of Kiln Farm constructed the toilets in record time, and to a high standard.

York House has gone from strength to strength over the past decade with several phases of major building work providing extra activity space, a new kitchen and storage rooms. The building is now a busy hub for all kinds of community activities but our toilets are letting us down...

**Appendix 6** (extracted from the York House Centre website "news" section:

### **PARENTS PARTNER WITH YORK HOUSE CENTRE TO OFFER BABY & TODDLER GROUP FOR STONY STRATFORD**

Local parents have come together with York House Centre in Stony Stratford to create a new playgroup, which will have its first session on Monday 13 January 2020.

The group will now be known as the York House Young Ones – Yo-Yos for short – and will offer craft, toys, indoor and outdoor activities and a safe and welcoming environment for babies, toddlers and their parents and carers.

The group will run from 9.30am – 11.30am every Monday during term-time in the Main Hall at York House.

The partnership developed after a long-running playgroup held at York House was scheduled to close and parents approached York House to try to keep the much-loved group going.

Yo-Yos will be run by parents, supported by York House Centre, who have helped to set up the new group and are hosting the sessions.

As well as a wide range of toys, a snack break for the children and refreshments for the grown-ups, there will be the opportunity to use York House's outdoor spaces in good weather plus regular music, story time and other themed sessions.

Yo-Yos will cost just £2.50 per family per session to help cover the costs of running the group.

The group's coordinator, Kate Shaw, said: "I've been to the playgroup at York House with all my children, and it has always been a lovely friendly environment. We're so pleased that we've been able to get this new group going, thanks to the support from York House. As parents we want to make Yo-Yos the group we want for our children and we're sure it will be great fun – and thanks to all the equipment and facilities at York House, great value too."

Centre Manager, Fiona Trinder, commented: "We are delighted that there will continue to be a baby & toddler group running at York House Centre. It's lovely to have a warm, stimulating environment to take your little ones along to and parents and carers will get a chance to socialise whilst the children play. Huge thanks to the parent volunteers who have stepped in to develop and run York House Yo-Yos, we look forward to working with you in the years ahead."

For more information see [York House Yo-Yos](#)

## **Appendix 7:**

### **STONY STRATFORD LANTERN PROJECT 2019 – “JUNGLE BELLS” – A REVIEW**

The Lantern-Makers turned out in full force on Saturday 30 November to take part in this year's Lantern Parade, the stunning culmination of the month-long Stony Stratford Lantern Project which was another massive success with a sell-out 280 lanterns made! Frame-making sessions were held at 4 local schools plus 2 full weekends of public workshops at York House Centre which saw the building packed to the rafters with people of all ages. Everyone's happy chatter made for a great community atmosphere and Bean in Stony provided a fabulous café to keep us all fed and watered with drinks, snacks and lunches.

This year's theme was "Jungle Bells!" which inspired local families to create an AMAZING array of colourful jungle-related lanterns – lions and tigers, elephants, giraffes, snakes, cheeky monkeys, parrots, toucans and finches, warthogs, sloths, bugs of all kinds, butterflies, a flock of 4 flamingos, rainforest trees, bananas and even a pineapple!

The Lantern Volunteers excelled themselves again this year by creating another giant lantern for the back of the parade. Our two parrots, 'Kiki' and 'Carmelo' wowed the crowds, sitting high on their treetop perches – the lantern took about 200 hours to make but we had loads of fun in the process.

The weather was perfect – cold and crisp – and the Lanterners were welcomed by live music from The Concrete Calves Woodwind Band who played a selection of Christmas and jungle-themed tunes for us. The procession was led by Stony Stratford's own Town Crier (Matt Ireland) and the Bernese Carting Dogs and we welcomed 'The Noizy Band' for the first time who provided us with fabulous Samba beats. The streets were packed with thousands of amazed onlookers as we made our way along the High Street to the Market Square. Everything went to plan, and we arrived in time to enjoy the festivities before the switching-on of the beautiful Christmas lights. A magical event for everyone involved, creating Christmassy memories to treasure!

Many thanks, as always, to the unstoppable team of over 50 Lantern Volunteers who give hours of their time and a massive amount of energy to make this spectacular community arts project possible, to Bob & Sue Adams and their team of Stewards for keeping us all safe during the parade, to the Trustees and Staff at York House Centre and to the CLASS Committee for organising the Switch-On Fun Day. Special thanks to our 'Official Project Photographer', Bob McDonald, for all his wonderful photographs which are included with this article and posted on our Facebook group and the York House Website.

Grateful thanks to our funders – Stony Stratford Town Council, Stony Stratford Business Association, Milton Keynes Community Foundation and the York House Local Giving Fund – for their continued financial support, helping us to keep the project affordable for all.

**2020 is going to be a strange one so keep an eye on the York House website for how the project might go ahead, albeit in a different format.**

Join our Facebook Group – **Stony Stratford Lantern Project**  
<https://www.facebook.com/groups/161331770478/>

## **Appendix 8:**

A message from Fiona Trinder

It was with mixed emotions that I finished working for York House Centre at the end of June after 17 years with the organisation, sadly whilst the building was closed due to Covid-19. It's been a wonderful place to work, a flexible job which fitted round bringing up my children and has grown with me as I was able to give more time. I am truly grateful to have worked with my lovely friends and colleagues – Tina Batten, Malcolm Fryer-Kelsey, and Handyman Phil as well as past colleagues Ron Fink, Emily Malleson, Kim McDonald, Jim Scott and Alan Ashworth. The Trustees (particularly Chairman Ken Daniels and former Chairman Bob Adams) have been excellent mentors for me over the years, and huge thanks to all the loyal York House Volunteers who give so freely of their time and energy supporting our projects and fundraising. We have all worked together to transform York House into the popular community hub it is today (or will be again soon, once this dreadful virus is put in its place). My proudest achievement? So many to choose from but it's got to be the Beechey Room, or maybe the new toilets.... Please keep supporting York House, we are so lucky to have this independent facility. I'm sad to leave but will be training to become a Primary Teacher so I will continue to work for the community and, of course, organise the Lantern Project and pull the odd pint for York House as a Volunteer. It's been a blast! Fiona