

Cambridge SCA

Annual Report

1st April 2020 – 31st March 2021

&

Statement of Accounts

1st Jan 2020 - 31st Dec 2020

A year like no other.....



Registered Charity Number
263361

Student Community Action

SCA's Purpose and Values

Our Purpose

Cambridge SCA exists to encourage the involvement of students in voluntary community work, providing essential services to disadvantaged groups within the community and giving students a valuable learning experience.

Our Values

- The equal rights of all individuals
- Belief in the value of practical activities that help to counter disadvantage within the community
- Cultural diversity and the two-way exchange of ideas between individuals from different cultures and socio-economic backgrounds.

Our Organisational Objectives

- Provide equal opportunities for all students to become involved in the organisation's activities
- Provide a variety of volunteering opportunities to students by running a variety of projects
- Provide opportunities for students to become involved in the management of the organisation and its projects
- Allow client group opportunities to guide the organisation towards providing the services that they require
- Work in partnership with other organisations

Contents

Page 2	SCA's Purpose and Values
Page 3	Management Structure
Page 4	Steering Group Report
Page 5	Trustees' Report
Page 6	Managers' Report
Page 7	SCA Projects through the Pandemic report
Page 9	Junior Treasurer's Report
Page 10	Our Partners and Funders
Appendix 1	Annual Accounts 2020

Management Structure

The Student Community Action Executive Committee consists of Steering Group members, elected annually from students at the University of Cambridge and Anglia Ruskin University, and Senior Members who are appointed for 3 years. Election to the Steering Group takes place at our Annual General Meeting in March each year.

Executive Committee

Comprising of senior members co-opted for 3 years and student trustees elected annually.

Anthony Wheeler	Chair from May 2020 Exec member from Jan 2018
Paul Taylor	Senior Treasurer - SCA Exec from 2002 – 2021
Jo Haywood	Chair of Employment Sub Group Trustee from 2003 – 2020
Dwight Patten	Trustee from March 2018 – 2021 (Renewed until 2024)
Patricia Burkitt	Trustee from March 2018 – 2021 (Renewed until 2024)
Katie Knight	Trustee from March 2018 – April 2020
Josianne Chuisseu	Trustee from March 2018 – Dec 2020
Martha Evans	Trustee from January 2021 - 2024

Steering Group 2019/20

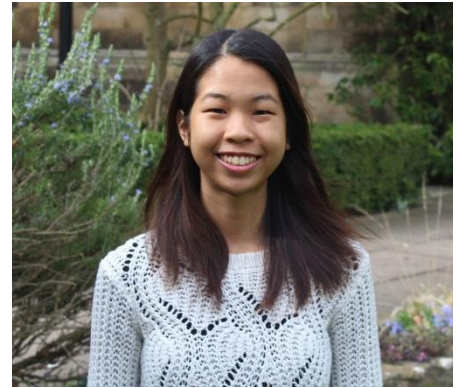
Vanessa Chuang	President
Hannah Quek	Vice President
Ren An Ooi	Junior Treasurer
Olivia Taylor	Publicity Officer
Colver Ne	Secretary
Isobel Wilkins	Projects Officer
Zil ing Ng	Recruitment Officer
Mathew Simon	ARU Rep

Office Staff

Caroline Ward	Manager (since 2009) 30 hours a week
Helen Vella Taylor	Volunteers and Projects Officer (From Sept 2019 – Sept 2020) 30 Hours a week

Steering Group Annual Report – 2020 2021

As this whirlwind of a year draws to a close, I'd like to take this opportunity to express my deepest thanks to the outgoing Steering Group. Despite the uncertainties and challenges wrought by the pandemic, your dedication and hard work have gone a long way in helping SCA weather the storm and emerge stronger!



I'm heartened by how the Steering Group has continually worked together to adapt to the circumstances. Over the summer, we organised SCA's first ever Zoom social, which helped volunteers form new connections and deepen existing ones. When Michaelmas rolled around, we participated in CamSU's two-day Virtual Freshers' Fair, where we recruited a strong contingent of eager volunteers. We also strengthened our ties with the Gates Cambridge community by hosting a Zoom breakout room at their 20th anniversary kick-off event.

The virtual walkathon that we jointly organised with the Cambridge Homeless Outreach Programme (CHOP) surpassed our fundraising goal and raised £624 for three local charities: Wintercomfort, the Whitworth Trust, and SCA! The success of the CHOP-SCA collaboration inspired us to link up with the Education Society (CUEdSoc) and enter into a partnership with May Week Alternative (MWA). We ended the term on an uplifting note with our annual Christmas presents campaign, which saw the delivery of over 50 gifts to our clients.

Furthermore, in response to the national lockdown and the suspension of in-person volunteering, the Steering Group has contributed to SCA's rollout of two Covid-safe projects. In particular, Izzy and Olivia played a pivotal role in helping staff to set up Celebration Surprises, while other Steering Group members directly supported clients through Anxiety Slayers.

I'm grateful to have had a wonderful Steering Group on this journey with me. I'd like to thank Ziling, Vanessa W and Mathew for deftly managing and expanding our network of representatives across Cambridge -they've played such a key role in our recruitment efforts.. It goes without saying that Olivia has been an outstanding Publicity Officer. Thanks to her, our Facebook page is replete with informative posts and eye-catching graphics.

I'd also like to thank Colver, our Secretary, for his attention to detail across his numerous contributions. Izzy went above and beyond her role as Projects Officer — from Celebration Surprises to our virtual walkathon, she's left her mark on many aspects of SCA. As our Junior Treasurer, Ren An played an instrumental role in the Finance sub-committee, managing SCA's accounts, and securing donations from the Colleges. Last but not least, I'd like to thank Hannah for being an exceptional Vice-President. Not only has she wholeheartedly championed all the Steering Group's projects, she's also made countless contributions to SCA both as a volunteer and Student Trustee.

On behalf of the outgoing committee, I'd like to express my gratitude to Caroline, Anthony, and all the Trustees for their unwavering support. Your guidance has been vital to everything our committee achieved this year, and working alongside all of you has been an absolute pleasure and privilege. As the new Steering Group takes the helm of SCA, I look forward to seeing how they work together with Caroline and the Trustees to continue promoting student volunteerism and supporting the Cambridge community.

Vanessa Chuang
President 2020/21

Trustees' Report

In a year that has brought such difficulty and hardship, we are extremely proud that Cambridge Student Community Action continues to be an effective and well-respected organisation within the student and wider community.

Moving to predominantly online delivery of our projects, we have continued to support the Cambridge community and student volunteers we exist to serve, adapting to their changing needs in light of the COVID-19 pandemic.



We are always incredibly fortunate to draw on the skills and enthusiasm of our dedicated volunteers, student steering group and wonderful part-time employees; this year they have been such a credit to themselves and SCA, going above and beyond to support our beneficiaries. The trustees would particularly like to highlight the dedication of SCA's Manager, Caroline Ward, who has been invaluable in running the organisation and supporting our clients through these difficult times.

We would also like to take the time to thank Helen Vella-Taylor, who left the post of Volunteers and Projects Officer last autumn to start a teacher training programme, for her enthusiasm and commitment to SCA's values, clients and volunteers.

Given our consolidated portfolio of activities during the pandemic, we made a strategic decision not to immediately fill the post. The reduced staffing levels have helped contribute to more balanced end of year accounts and we will look to recruit for this position as we phase back in our projects once it is safe to do so.

At the heart of SCA's governance is our commitment to young people. We have been extremely lucky to work with Vanessa, Hannah and Ren An who have served as full trustees of the charity alongside their roles on the steering group. The impact they have on SCA should not be understated, particularly this year where they have been instrumental in helping the charity navigate the many challenges brought by the pandemic. The board would like to specifically highlight the contributions of Vanessa Chuang who has so wonderfully risen to the challenge of serving as student president and trustee this year.

There have also been changes to the board of trustees. We would like to thank Kate Knight and Josiane Chuisseu who stepped down as trustees this year for their contributions and are excited to welcome on board Martha Evans. Over the next year, we look forward to welcoming several new members to the board.

Last but not least, a huge thank you to our funders and other partners who enable us to do our work. This year in particular, we are extremely grateful for their flexibility and continued support.

While the year ahead is still filled with uncertainty, we stand ready to support the Cambridge community to the best of our ability.

Anthony Wheeler
Chair of Trustees

Manager's Report

Little did we know that the SCA AGM last March would be the last time we would all meet face to face for over a year and that we were about to navigate our charity through a global pandemic. Less than two weeks after the AGM the whole country went into the first lockdown. We immediately stopped all group projects and face to face volunteering and set about working with the Steering Group and Executive Committee to develop new ways we could support clients whilst keeping everyone safe.



Helen (Volunteers and Project's Officer) and I spoke to all of our one to one clients to establish their needs and to offer virtual support where appropriate. We contacted the relevant volunteers and asked them to continue supporting their one to one clients virtually through phone /video calls or letters and cards. The volunteers were all more than happy to do this and they set about finding new and fun ways to support and entertain their clients. It was clear very quickly that our clients responded really well to the virtual support and the student volunteers were able to offer reassurance and virtual company to many. As we received feedback from students on our clients changing needs, we were galvanised to offer new services such as food parcel and medication deliveries which were a tangible help to many.

I am so proud of the way the SCA were able to adapt to the changing guidelines and of the new projects we were able to set up which you can read more about in this report. The success of these adaptations and our ability to respond to new needs brought us some positive publicity within the university and in the wider community. It also allowed us to successfully explore and tap into the new funding streams which were set up in a response to the pandemic. This has enabled us to end the year in a much stronger financial position than we predicted when we first started to map out our Business Continuity Plan back in March 2020.

Along with the need to change *HOW* we worked, like many other businesses we had to change *WHERE* we worked. The University closed all non-essential buildings very quickly including our office at 17 Mill Lane. This caused a number of operational problems to begin with but I managed to get access to the office once a week from July and Helen and I were soon equipped to work from home for the rest of the time. How long we will be able to remain at 17 Mill Lane is currently unclear. We do know the building is due to be re-developed at some point in 2021 so discussions are ongoing with the University to see what our options are.

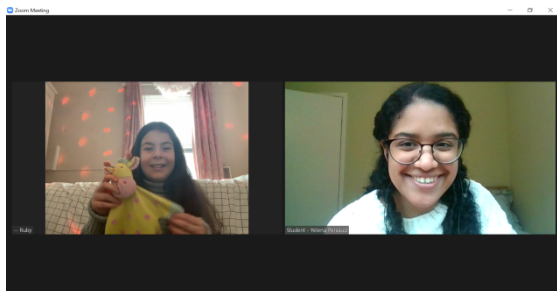
One of the biggest dilemmas we faced from an operational point of view was whether to replace Helen when she left to do her teacher training course in September. As it became clearer that Michaelmas Term was not going to see any major return to the work we were used to doing, the Employment Sub Committee took the decision in consultation with myself to combine my existing manager role with the V& P Officers role until the Projects could restart. This was only possible with the support of the Steering group who have been amazing, in particular Vanessa, Olivia, Izzy and Ren An who have all supported me practically when needed. I am also incredibly grateful for the support received from Anthony who has made an incredible impact in his first year as Chair of SCA. Our Bi-weekly meetings have been a real source of comfort and clarity when things around me have appeared to be overwhelming.

Considering all the challenges the pandemic brought, I feel we have risen to the challenges and are ready to come out the other side positive and resilient to face whatever 2021 and beyond has got for us.

Caroline Ward, SCA Manager, 2009 - 2021

Projects through the Pandemic

Student Community Action stopped all face to face volunteering activities from March 2020 but immediately set about finding safe and fun ways to continue to support our clients. Our Homework Help for individuals easily made the transition to supporting clients via video link and we developed a new project called Anxiety Slayers to support our Big Sib and Taskforce clients.



Through Anxiety Slayers we matched over 70 student volunteers to vulnerable adults, families and children, to provide fun video sessions, friendly phone calls or 'pen-pal' style postal contact.



Some of the fun things our volunteers have done include TikTok dance routines, virtual tours of college gardens, quizzes and virtual

arts and crafts sessions.



Initially Anxiety Slayers was aimed simply to alleviate some of the negative mental health implications of self-isolation and social distancing. However, as a result of these weekly chats and contacts, the volunteers soon started to feedback that access to food and prescriptions was becoming a concern. We also started receiving referrals from the Cambridgeshire County Council and other organisations who wondered if we had volunteers who could provide practical help in the form of delivering food to the most vulnerable.



We therefore rallied a team of student volunteers to provide food parcels and prescriptions, something that many students who were stuck in Cambridge were more than happy to do. At the height of the pandemic we were supporting 80 individuals virtually a week and have so far delivered over 100 food parcels and 41 prescriptions to vulnerable families, homeless charities and sheltered housing .



Although we have been unable to restart our group projects in schools, the refugee and care homes like we normally would in Michaelmas term, we are continuing to support clients through the Anxiety Slayers project and have set up a new project called Celebratory Surprises. This project receives referrals from partner agencies who are working with vulnerable people. They tell us about individuals who are celebrating a birthday or special achievement. Our group of enthusiastic student volunteers then wrote a little personalised song, poem or a rap and Zoom called them at

the time arranged. We hope this project has helped to reduce the clients' feelings of isolation during these difficult times and made them feel special.

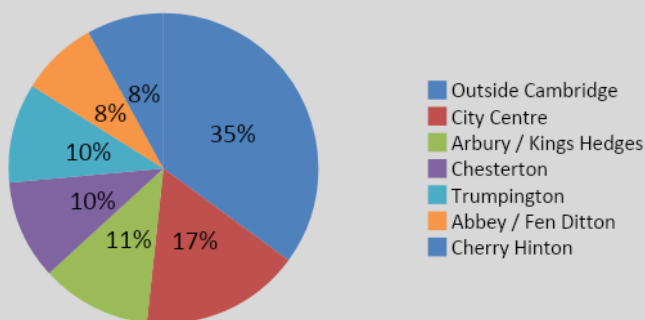
As we tentatively start coming out of lockdown, we continue to watch the Government Guidance carefully and aim to start the phased return to face to face volunteering as soon as possible.

Although not all of our group projects will return in the same format, we are hoping to draw on the lessons learnt during lockdown, assess our client's current needs and respond accordingly. The pandemic has disproportionately affected our clients as many were already on part time or zero hours contracts without savings that they could fall back on. Many live in environments which were already chaotic and volatile with mental and physical health issues common. Many of our young clients have missed out on huge chunks of their education and their desire to re-engage with their education is at an all-time low.

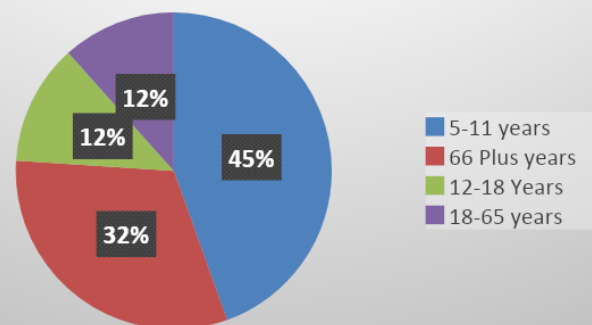
We are confident that SCA can play a significant role in helping overcome these issues and look forward to recruiting a new cohort of volunteers to step up to the challenges that are ahead.

Client statistics from Feb 2020 to March 2021

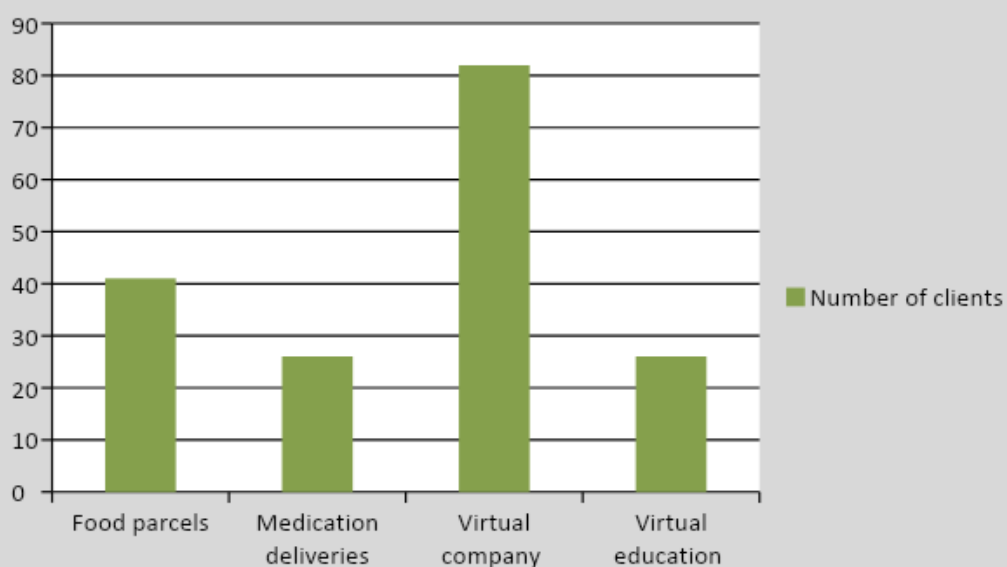
Location of client



Ages of Clients SCA has supported through the Covid 19 Pandemic



Type of support



Junior Treasurer's Report

2020-2021 was a year of so many changing variables and difficult situations that it is a credit to the finance sub-committee and SCA team that we end the year in a financially secure position.



The trust grants we received this year increased to £33,255. This increase was mainly due to an increase in the existing BBC Children in Need funding (£17,528) as well as their new Covid Booster Grant where we secured a further (£1,359). Other new sources of grants we were successful in applying to include the Community Reach Covid Enabler Fund (£500) and Cambridgeshire Covid Recovery Fund (£10,148). These new grants were very useful in supporting our new projects such as Anxiety Slayers and Celebration Surprises. It is notable that we did not seek funding from Society Syndicate this year due to us being able to access Covid related grants but access to this pot of funding will be critical in the years to come as the Covid grants are a short term solution.

The total amount earned from DBS checks this year was £15,805, which was a decrease of 43%. Understandably, this source of income has been negatively affected by the pandemic. More people chose to or were eligible to do the online version of the DBS checks which SCA does not provide and many charities we not recruiting at all so demand for DBS checks from existing clients declined.

As with previous years, we sent letters to colleges and chapels requesting donations. It is heartening that the amount we received increased slightly by 3% to £5,578 despite the financial implications of the pandemic. We are immensely thankful to the colleges and chapels for their continued support for the work we do.

The Steering Group didn't let the pandemic stop their fundraising efforts and they managed to raise £200 from the walkathon jointly organised by SCA and CHOP (Cambridge Homeless Outreach Programme). Credits to the steering group for great work put in for the walkathon, allowing us to achieve our target amount.

The surplus we have this year was also due to a decrease in expenditure by 20% to £45,994. This is attributed to the decrease in project costs as face to face volunteering has been suspended, as well as a decrease in DBS expenditure from reduced DBS checks. Staff costs have also reduced given that we did not recruit a new Volunteer and Projects Coordinator when Helen left in September as Caroline was able to combine her role as Manager with this role for the short term.

A breakdown in SCA's income is summarised as below:

- Trust grants: £33,255 (49% of income)
- DBS checks: £15,805 (23% of income)
- General donations (Friends of SCA, BSMEG donations, other donations): £11,018 (16% of income)
- Colleges and chapels donations: £5,578 (8% of income)
- Investment income: £1150 (2% of income)
- Fundraising income: £200 (0.3% of income)

The good financial position we have this year is a testament to the immense efforts of everyone involved in SCA, particularly Caroline who was instrumental in our trust grant applications.

Ooi Ren An
Junior Treasurer 2020/21

Our thanks go to the many organisations and individuals who support us financially and in many other ways, making it possible for us to help vulnerable people living in the Cambridge Community. We would especially like to thank the following for their generous help and support:

Our Funders

BBC Children in Need

Cambridge City Council

Cambridge Community Foundation

The University of Cambridge Colleges and Chapels

Birketts Staff Team Cambridge

The Covid Relief Fund

The Covid Recovery Fund

Cambridgeshire Covid Community Fund

Community Reach Covid Enabler Fund

Our Partners and Supporters

CUSU and the Estate Management Team

Tesco Fare Share Scheme

Cambridge Women's Aid

Cambridge Wine Merchants, especially Brett Turner

David Hardy Project

Cambridge University Centre

Gates Scholars

Thanks also go to the many individual friends of SCA

And of course –

Our AMAZING Volunteers!!!

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