



# Shropshire RCC

50 YEARS  
SERVING  
SHROPSHIRE



Annual Review 2011-2012

# The early years ...



# Chairman's Annual Report 2011-2012

In my report last year I drew attention to the fact that the Community Council (RCC) was not immune from the effects of the 2008 global financial crisis. The negative impact on the level of funding and grants available continues to be felt across the whole voluntary sector, and there is no indication that things will change greatly over the next year or two.

Our response to this has been to minimise the effects of reduced funding on the level and scope of our services by becoming smarter about the way we deliver services and to enhance our scope through self-financing activities such as those mentioned below. This has enabled us to expand our already wide range of services. Our work ranges from supporting those who care for a family member or close friend, through information, advice and guidance to organisations, to giving grants to groups on behalf of funding organisations.

The difficult financial environment has not prevented the RCC from being able to register a number of notable achievements this year over and above our day-to-day work:

- ▶ We secured ongoing funding, until June 2014, for our Social Enterprise Business Coach to mentor and support new and embryonic social enterprises and, until March 2015, for our Wheels to Work project. Both these projects bring vital economic benefit to the county, and this funding will ensure continuity of delivery.
- ▶ We successfully launched our community bulk oil buying scheme which is now the largest and fastest growing scheme of its type in the county. Through this we have been able to help people reduce the cost of their heating oil by significant amounts, particularly those, such as the elderly and those on low income, who individually pay a premium price for buying small quantities.
- ▶ We have led the way in Shropshire for disabled people pooling their personalised budgets. Following the closure of the Shropshire Council Grange Day Centre we helped the "Musketeers and Maidens" group to become established and they now meet twice a week for social activity and friendship.

- ▶ We launched our first fundraising appeal – The Carers Appeal – as a first step on our aspiration to have a diverse income base and be more independent of statutory funding, and we are most grateful to those donors who have supported the appeal in its early stages.
- ▶ We supported a group of volunteers to establish The Pheasant at Neenton as a community-owned pub after the privately owned pub closed and the village was in danger of losing the facility.

During the year there have been two new appointments to strengthen the Board and provide a good balance of expertise. Charles Lillis brings a wealth of experience in corporate finance and Dame Enid Bibby has had a distinguished career in education; both add to the Board's expertise in business planning and related activities.

It is only possible to continue to develop and deliver the wide range of services described in this report to the high standard we do because of the hard work, dedication and professionalism of our staff and volunteers. Our Chief Executive, Julia Baron, and her senior team provide the leadership needed to bring it all together. In the short term, restrictions on funding continue to mean considerable uncertainty for our staff, and the Board and I very much appreciate their continuing commitment to our work. I also want to place on record my personal thanks to our many volunteers, and particularly to the Board for their continuing support both to me and to our staff.

This year we celebrated fifty years with our partners and supporters, and changed our operating name as agreed by our members at our last AGM. Shropshire RCC's services reach across the whole county, giving us a view which we can use to influence the way public and other services are planned and delivered. As we continue to demonstrate our cost-effectiveness and flexibility I am confident that our work is increasingly relevant and that we can build on our strengths to continue to serve the people of Shropshire for another fifty years.



Alan Healey

Shropshire's population is an aging one. The current average age of residents is 45 years and 21% of the population is over the age of 65. Predictions indicate that the number of 65+ year olds will rise from 61,000 to 82,000 by the year 2020.

43% of the population live in rural areas where social isolation and loneliness are particular issues. The lack of affordable or accessible transport prevents them from staying connected to their communities, which may be made worse by failing eyesight or hearing, or nervousness about going out following a fall, or anxiety about crime and anti-social behaviour.

Our Preventative Services Team brings together people from other organisations and agencies to tell older and vulnerable people what is available and how they can get it – from free smoke alarms to pension credits, and from insulation to recipes. By equipping people with advice and information, they are better able to deal with on-going health conditions, to eat properly and stay well, and to feel safe in their homes. But information isn't enough – creating a network of community based exercise classes has been a core part of our work since we began the delivery of preventative services in 2000. We have trained many Extend trainers and there is now a network of Extend classes across the County offering

opportunities in sheltered housing, community venues and day centres.

To meet the growing need for a range of levels of exercise for people with limited mobility, in 2011 we trained four teachers in Otago Falls Prevention, and eleven tutors in Zumba basic training and Zumba "Gold" (specifically designed for older people and beginners who have not been physically active for a while). And in the past eighteen months we have introduced Boccia (similar to "boule" for people with disabilities or limited mobility) into Shropshire and developed 30 local clubs. This is a sport which appeals to a new group of people of all abilities – which is particularly good at attracting men, and bringing together abled bodied and disabled people – who might otherwise be excluded from provision.

Other staff in the Team offer individual support to those experiencing sensory loss. The Sensory Resource and Development Service (SRDS) provides help, information and support including peer support to counteract social exclusion and provides access to a range of services.



## Case study: Musketeers and Maidens

Shropshire RCC stepped in to help a group of people with physical disabilities when the Shropshire Council Grange day centre in Shrewsbury closed in 2011. The Preventative Services Team worked with the group to help them combine their "personalised budgets", find a place they could continue to meet regularly, and commission facilitators to offer a range of activities. The Shropshire RCC Volunteering Team helped with some volunteers, and the group adopted the name Musketeers and Maidens to give them an identity.

The group meets twice a week and enjoy a range of activities including Boccia, Extend exercise, quizzes, art classes and trips out.

"I've tried to lose weight. I eat breakfast now."  
Participant on a "Healthy Heart" Day

## Key statistics

- 11 health-focused information events organised and attended by a total of 680 people
- Support given throughout the year to 8 Good Neighbour schemes, and a networking and training day was organised for representatives from all the schemes to meet up
- 1,224 Extend classes have been delivered
- 4 tutors trained in Otago
- 11 tutors trained in basic Zumba and then Zumba "Gold"
- 16 effective hearing programmes were attended by 303 people
- The Sight Loss Opportunity Group held 66 meetings and two new volunteers joined the team
- 32 volunteers made a total of 403 home visits to help people with their hearing aids
- The "See Hear" vehicle made 43 visits around the county and reached 258 people in remote areas

Sixty-six meetings of the SLOG groups have taken place, and two new SLOG volunteers have been recruited to support the groups. A new group was started in Ludlow shortly before Christmas.

SRDS supported the transport arrangements and once again helped to coordinate the very successful "See Hear" event. An estimated 600 people with sight or hearing loss visited the exhibition to find out about aids available to help them manage their sensory loss.

Young people also find themselves disadvantaged by not being able to get a job and find themselves caught in a cycle of "no transport, no job. No job, no money. No money, no transport." And fuel poverty has become a growing problem across all age groups with people needing to make stark choices about whether to "heat or eat".

Shropshire RCC is at the forefront of work to tackle fuel poverty in the county and is working with the charity National Energy Action to train "Affordable Warmth Champions" to help community groups support local residents with advice about energy efficiency, insulation and energy options.

In September we launched a new Community bulk oil purchasing group to help people to buy heating oil at the lowest possible price. This has a particular advantage for people in rural areas who are "off gas" and those who buy in smaller quantities and have the least negotiating power. Thanks to grant aid we were able to offer free membership to people who were most in need.

**Wheels to Work** was set up over 15 years ago as a pilot project in South Shropshire. After a year of uncertainty about funding, April 2011 brought news of a new Government funding programme – the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. Following a successful tendering process, Shropshire RCC have secure funding for this project until March 2015. We currently have 42 mopeds and a number of electric and traditional bikes which can be loaned for six months to people who have a job, or the offer of a job, but cannot get there due to transport problems. Mel's story is typical: "Holding down two jobs meant relying on taxis. Public transport didn't fit with my shift patterns and keeping both jobs would have meant spending most of my money just getting to work. The moped loan meant I could keep both jobs and save up to buy my own moped at the end of the loan period."



**Get Shropshire On-line** was a 12 month project to support digital inclusion. Access to the internet is increasingly necessary in modern life. Even health services, such as ordering repeat prescriptions, are increasingly being offered online to make them quicker and easier for people. However people in rural areas are disadvantaged by having limited access to the internet and at the start of the project, an estimated 50,000 people in the county had never used a computer.

During the year Get Shropshire On-line:

- Engaged 97 "digital champions" to work with people in their community who had not been on line before
- Worked with over 50 partner organisations
- Organised 3 major media campaigns
- Helped set up 11 new learning points
- Signed up 104 new learners
- Attended over 20 community events



"We would like to thank everyone for their help with assisting us with transport for our son. He is now equipped and able to be independent in getting to his placement. You have all been most helpful. He is delighted with the bike and enjoyed the compulsory basic training and found it very useful and enjoyable. I'm sure we are only one of many families so grateful for this scheme. Many, many thanks."  
*Ian, Leanne and Ash Pipe*

"I had just been diagnosed as diabetic and from attending your day, I learned that it was manageable and not as bad as I first thought."  
*Participant in a Diabetes Awareness Day*

**A family carer provides unpaid care and support to a family member, partner, relative or friend, who couldn't manage without this help, because of age, illness, disability, long term condition, addiction or mental health problem. There are an estimated 30,000 family carers in Shropshire and Shropshire RCC has been providing support for over 12 years.**

Any one of us could unexpectedly become a carer at any time. A family member could have a fall, or a stroke, develop Alzheimer's or Parkinson's, and suddenly become dependent on somebody else. A car accident can leave a young person paralysed, a difficult birth can render a new parent faced with a lifelong commitment to a brain-damaged child. These events mean that the life of someone else changes forever when, without warning, they become a carer.

Research shows that carers save the State an average of £15,260 per annum by caring for a family member at home. But the cost to an individual can be high. Being a family carer can be a physically, emotionally and

mentally challenging. Carers give vital assistance with everyday tasks such as dressing, bathing, eating, attending appointments, and shopping.

Carers put their own lives 'on hold' and may find themselves unable to carry on working or enjoying social activities because of their caring role. Family income is often greatly reduced and respite can be hard to come by, especially in a rural county like Shropshire. Holidays, an evening out or even something like Christmas shopping can become an insurmountable problem.

## Our services for carers:

- Free, impartial and independent advice and information about carers rights, financial support available, and respite options
- A telephone support line
- A newsletter 3 times a year.
- Training and workshops
- Resources through a dedicated section on our website and links to other organisations that can help
- Activities, events and support groups run by knowledgeable support workers who can help carers have a break

### Case study: Linda's story

Our son has mild learning disabilities and was in mainstream education until, at the age of 14, he went away to a special school where he was introduced to cannabis. Eleven years of smoking cannabis took a great toll on him, and us as a family. As parents we felt like failures, despite having three other well rounded children.

We haven't had a family holiday since 1999; family occasions, weddings, etc have always had one person missing, and the stress on our family has been intolerable. Then we were told about the Carers Support team at Shropshire RCC and life took on a better feel for us all.

My husband and I attended a carers group in Bridgnorth for carers of adults with substance misuse. It was wonderful to be with other people who had the same issues and truly understood how we felt.

Our Carers Support worker kept in regular touch to invite us to events and called in to see how we were coping. In 2011 we attended the Shropshire RCC training about Drug and Alcohol Dependency and as a direct result our son no longer takes cannabis.

"We are so grateful for the support which has changed our life."

"The outing meant we could have a good day out together without any worries or having to push a wheelchair."



"Brilliant day out with everything organised - only had to turn up on time."



## Key stats:

- There are 3,642 carers on our database who each receive a newsletter three times a year
- 366 carers assessments were undertaken and there were 720 reviews of previous assessments
- 7 carers support groups supported in market towns
- Activities for carers include a regular fly fishing group and day coach trips
- 121 carers attended "Learning Together" training



"A good day out, something to look forward to and really enjoyed the day. Please keep these days out going."

"A lovely break from caring – I was able to spend time with my sister."

"Nice to have time to myself and shop without feeling guilty."



"It gave my wife and me time to be ourselves."

During the year, the contract to deliver Carers Support Services on behalf of Shropshire Council was due for renewal and we were invited to tender for the work going forward. We were chosen as the preferred supplier but due to cuts in the local authority budget, the contract value was significantly less and our staffing hours were reduced as a result. We realised that in order to continue to provide services for carers in the long term we would need to raise funds from other sources, including the general public. We launched our first major fundraising appeal for carers and appointed a part-time fundraiser to assist with the planning and delivery of a programme of community fundraising.

Our appeal was launched in January by the High Sherriff of Shropshire, Mr Richard Burbidge, who called on people to "get behind this campaign and ensure this service is there for you and your family when caring affects your life."



**Shropshire RCC helps organisations and groups to build communities, particularly in rural areas, where access to facilities are scarce.**

Support begins with encouraging members of the community to give their time for free as volunteers. We hold drop-in sessions every fortnight to recruit new volunteers, using 13 different locations across Southern and Central Shropshire. 149 volunteering requests have been handled, and 75 went on to take up one of the volunteering opportunity they were matched with. During Volunteers Week, 3 roadshows to recruit new volunteers were organised across the county, and in September 120 volunteers were invited to a celebration event at Attingham Park attended by the High Sheriff and Shrewsbury Town Mayor

The Community Buildings Advisory Service provides advice, support, training and assistance to any buildings owned or managed by community groups. Buildings who are members of Shropshire RCC receive monthly e-bulletins keeping them up to date with changes to legislation or regulations they need to be aware of, as well as handling complex enquiries. During the year over 40 village halls and community facilities were provided with in-depth support including:

- Help to develop a large capital funding application to the Big Lottery
- Governance and constitutional issues
- Development of groups of trustees, including managing conflict within the community, and resolving issues between trustees

The Community Building Development Officer is supported by the work of a volunteer for 1 day per week,

who is essential for us to provide the level of service that we do.

Parish planning has remained a high profile, key area of activity for Shropshire RCC, with Shropshire parishes continuing to engage in the parish planning process. Parishes are supported by our staff who will attend meetings (parish councils or parish plan steering groups) as well as giving advice and help over the telephone or via email.

This year 35 new parishes became engaged with Parish Planning and a number of community consultation events were supported by CCS staff.

The introduction of the Localism Act of 2011 heralds an increase of our work with parish councils and we ran a very well attended joint conference with the County Association of Local Councils to introduce the new powers to parish councillors

*"Shropshire RCC has supported our committee greatly. Nothing is ever too much trouble. What would we do without you? Thank you!"*

*Knockin Assembly Rooms*

Things are changing in the voluntary and community sector, and changing fast. Community and voluntary sector groups, individuals and small businesses are all looking at social enterprise as a business option. Shropshire RCC has been supporting them with two days of free support from our Social Enterprise Business Outreach coach, and there has been a high volume of enquiries during the year.

To mark social enterprise week, fifteen social entrepreneurs we have supported came together for a day of activities and training. Filming from the day was edited into a promotional DVD showcasing the diversity of social enterprise in Shropshire.

*"The help we received from Shropshire RCC has been simply invaluable. It's hard to envisage how we could have developed the project to the point we have without their practical assistance and sound advice"*

*John Pickup, Chair of the Neenton Community Society*



## Case study: The Pheasant pub, Neenton

Shropshire RCC staff are currently supporting a voluntary group to establish a community-owned pub in Neenton, south of Bridgnorth. The privately owned pub closed several years ago due to flood damage and members of the community wanted to take on the building and turn it into a community-owned pub with meeting facilities. The community led plan, supported by Shropshire RCC, demonstrated widespread support.

Our social enterprise outreach project supported the group with market research, helped to develop their legal model and community share ownership, identified funding for refurbishment and developed their ideas for diversifying income.

John Pickup, Group Chair commented "Shropshire RCC helped a handful of people with minimal experience of community action to shape an ambitious but urgent idea about regenerating a dying village. They helped us turn the idea into a viable project with real momentum and widespread support. They've guided us in engaging and consulting the community, brought everyone together and focused us all on a common goal. They've helped us set our idea in the wider context of regeneration and pointed us towards sources of grants and other vital assistance."

At their launch event, the community group successfully recruited fifty local residents as initial shareholders.



# The Community Council of Shropshire

(A company limited by guarantee)

## Statement of Financial Activities (including an income and expenditure account) for the year ended 31 March 2012

	Endowment funds 2012 £	Restricted funds 2012 £	Unrestricted funds 2012 £	Total funds 2012 £	Total funds 2011 £
<b>Incoming resources</b>					
Incoming resources from generated funds:					
Voluntary income	1,614	506,592	88,595	596,801	888,588
Investment income	6,118	–	12,298	18,416	11,119
Incoming resources from charitable activities	53,797	531,036	116,292	701,125	765,743
<b>Total incoming resources</b>	<b>61,529</b>	<b>1,037,628</b>	<b>217,185</b>	<b>1,316,342</b>	<b>1,665,450</b>
<b>Resources expended</b>					
Costs of generating funds:					
Costs of generating voluntary income	1,900	1,376	18,249	21,525	23,620
Charitable activities	–	1,100,097	139,869	1,239,966	1,403,560
Governance costs	–	22,578	13,563	36,141	37,250
<b>Total resources expended</b>	<b>1,900</b>	<b>1,124,051</b>	<b>171,681</b>	<b>1,297,632</b>	<b>1,464,430</b>
<b>Net incoming resources / (resources expended) before revaluations</b>	<b>59,629</b>	<b>(86,423)</b>	<b>45,504</b>	<b>18,710</b>	<b>201,020</b>
Gains and losses on revaluations of investment assets	(3,658)	–	1,906	(1,752)	4,809
<b>Net movement in funds for the year</b>	<b>55,971</b>	<b>(86,423)</b>	<b>47,410</b>	<b>16,958</b>	<b>205,829</b>
<i>Total funds at 1 April 2011</i>	<i>201,951</i>	<i>310,597</i>	<i>947,034</i>	<i>1,459,582</i>	<i>1,253,753</i>
<b>Total funds at 31 March 2012</b>	<b>257,922</b>	<b>224,174</b>	<b>994,444</b>	<b>1,476,540</b>	<b>1,459,582</b>

# The Community Council of Shropshire

(A company limited by guarantee)

## Balance Sheet as at 31 March 2012

	2012		2011	
	£	£	£	£
<b>Fixed assets</b>				
Tangible assets		761,677		779,109
Investments		533,607		115,285
		<u>1,295,284</u>		<u>894,394</u>
<b>Current assets</b>				
Debtors	128,063		153,647	
Cash at bank and in hand	563,388		922,618	
	<u>691,451</u>		<u>1,076,265</u>	
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due within one year	<u>(180,739)</u>		<u>(176,113)</u>	
<b>Net current assets</b>		<u>510,712</u>		<u>900,152</u>
<b>Total assets less current liabilities</b>		<u>1,805,996</u>		<u>1,794,546</u>
<b>Creditors:</b> amounts falling due after more than one year		<u>(329,456)</u>		<u>(334,964)</u>
<b>Net assets</b>		<u>1,476,540</u>		<u>1,459,582</u>
<b>Charity funds</b>				
Endowment funds		257,922		201,951
Restricted funds		224,174		310,597
Unrestricted funds		994,444		947,034
		<u>1,476,540</u>		<u>1,459,582</u>

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the special provisions relating to companies subject to the small companies regime within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 20 September 2012 and signed on their behalf, by:

Mr. V. Craig

**Independent Auditors' Statement on the Summarised Accounts for the period ended 31 March 2012**

These summarised accounts are an extract from the statutory annual report and accounts for the year ended 31 March 2012. Whittingham Riddell LLP reported on the statutory accounts, as auditors, and gave an unqualified audit report.

The auditors have confirmed to the board of trustees that these summarised accounts are consistent with the statutory accounts for the period ended 31 March 2012.

The annual report and accounts were approved by the board of trustees and signed on their behalf on 20 September 2012.

These summarised accounts may not contain sufficient information to gain a complete understanding of the financial affairs of the charity.

Copies of the statutory annual report and accounts may be obtained from the Charity Commission website.

On behalf of the board of trustees.  
**Vince Craig**

We have examined the summarised financial statements of The Community Council of Shropshire.

**Respective responsibilities of trustees and auditors**

The trustees are responsible for preparing the summarised financial statements in accordance with applicable United Kingdom law.

Our responsibility is to report to you our opinion on the consistency of the summarised financial statements with the full financial statements and Trustees' Annual Report. We also read other information contained in the summarised annual report and consider the implications for our report if we become aware of any apparent misstatements or material inconsistencies with the summarised financial statements.

**Basis of opinion**

We conducted our work in accordance with Bulletin 2008/3 'The auditors' statement on the summary financial statement' issued by the Auditing Practices Board for use in the United Kingdom. Our report on the full financial statements describes the basis of our opinion on those financial statements and on the Trustees' Report.

**Opinion**

In our opinion the summarised financial statements are consistent with the full financial statements and the Trustees' Annual Report of The Community Council of Shropshire for the year ended 31 March 2012.

**Whittingham Riddell LLP**  
**Chartered Accountants & Statutory Auditors**  
**& Statutory Auditors**  
**03 October 2012**

**Belmont House**  
**Shrewsbury Business Park**  
**Shrewsbury**  
**Shropshire, SY2 6LG**

**Distribution of delegated grants**

Shropshire RCC is entrusted with funding to distribute as small grants by funders who want to know that their money is going to local projects which have the most value to the community.

The Shropshire Community Fund is administered on behalf of Shropshire County Primary Care NHS Trust. The funding is for projects with health related outcomes and during the year 12 grants totalling £6,600 were made. The Millichope Foundation allocates £5,000 per annum to support village halls, and we received £66,000 from the Roy Fletcher Trust to distribute as small grants for small groups. We also received a further £50,000 from the Government "Grassroots Grants" scheme, extending the scheme by six months from the expected end.

Shropshire RCC also holds endowed funds which have been invested to generate a small grants fund for community groups in future years.

**Case Study:**  
**SAFER Bishop's Castle first responders**

A new fast response vehicle was driven straight into action within an hour of being delivered to volunteers. Shropshire RCC had part funded the £14,000 4x4 vehicle with grants from the Shropshire Grassroots Fund and the Shropshire Community Fund. Before the volunteers had a chance to admire the new vehicle it was put into action to rush to the aid of an isolated caravan .

Volunteers from the SAFER Bishop's Castle first aid responders were delighted with the support from Shropshire RCC staff to buy the vehicle which enables the group to access the more remote areas around Bishop's Castle, Clun and Lydbury.

**"We are greatly indebted to Shropshire RCC for their assistance in gaining the funds and helping us to access other grants"**  
*Dawn Bush, SAFER Bishop's Castle Responders*

# thank you

**We would like to thank the following whose grants, donations and sponsorship have funded our work this year:**

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England)	Hunter Bevan Ltd
AON Limited	J Sainsburys PLC
Archant Publications (Shropshire Life)	Lord Leverhulme's Charitable Trust
Audiology Services, Shrewsbury & Telford Hospitals NHS Trust	Meadowbrae Technical Services
Big Lottery Fund	Office for Civil Society – Transition Funding
Bishops Castle Bowling Club	Rotary Club of Wem & District
Bomere & District Parish Council	Ruyton XI Towns Women's Institute
Border Holdings (UK) Ltd	Sabrina Brass Choir
Calor Gas Limited	Salop Leisure
Christchurch Bayston Hill over 55 group	Shrewsbury Abbey
Clee Hill Village Choir	Shrewsbury Municipal Charity
Community Development Foundation	Shropshire Council
Copthorne Companions WRVS Club	Shropshire County Primary Care NHS Trust
Darwin Matthews Solicitors	Skills For Care
Dearnford Lake	South West Charitable Giving
Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	Sports England (West Midlands Region)
Department for Health – Warm Homes Healthy People Fund	St James Place Wealth Management
Department of Transport – Local Sustainable Transport Fund	Staffordshire & Shropshire District Job Centre Plus
Department of Works & Pensions Flexible Support Fund	Svenska Handelsbanken AB, Shrewsbury
Dudeston & Dudleston Heath Relief of Need	Telford & Wrekin Council
Ellesmere Round Table	Telford & Wrekin Primary Care NHS Trust
European Regional Development Fund	The Millichope Foundation
European Rural Development Programme for England	The Plunkett Foundation
	The Roy Fletcher Charitable Trust
	UFI Ltd
	Westcroft Trust
	Whittingham Riddell

**We would like to thank those who have donated or raised funds for our Shropshire Grassroots Endowment Fund, our Carers Appeal and the Hearing Support Service Appeal this year. We would also like to thank everyone who donated their winter fuel payment to our "Warm Winter" grant fund for individuals in fuel poverty.**

Shropshire RCC\* is a leading local charity working Shropshire-wide with individuals and groups to improve quality of life and strengthen communities in the county. We were established in 1961 as part of a network of 38 RCCs across England.

We help those living and working in Shropshire to make things better for themselves and for their community. Working through our team of nearly 40 staff and over 150 local volunteers, we develop and deliver projects and services for a wide cross section of the county's residents. We also work closely with other organisations and policy makers to make sure the people of Shropshire have a fair voice, and the impact of our work goes far beyond those we help directly.

## Who uses and benefits from our services?

Our main areas of charitable activity are

- ✓ assistance for carers to help them continue caring;
- ✓ activities for older and vulnerable people to enable them to stay fit, well and independent;
- ✓ opportunities for unemployed people to access work and training through transport assistance;
- ✓ advice, training and funding for voluntary and community groups to be active in their communities

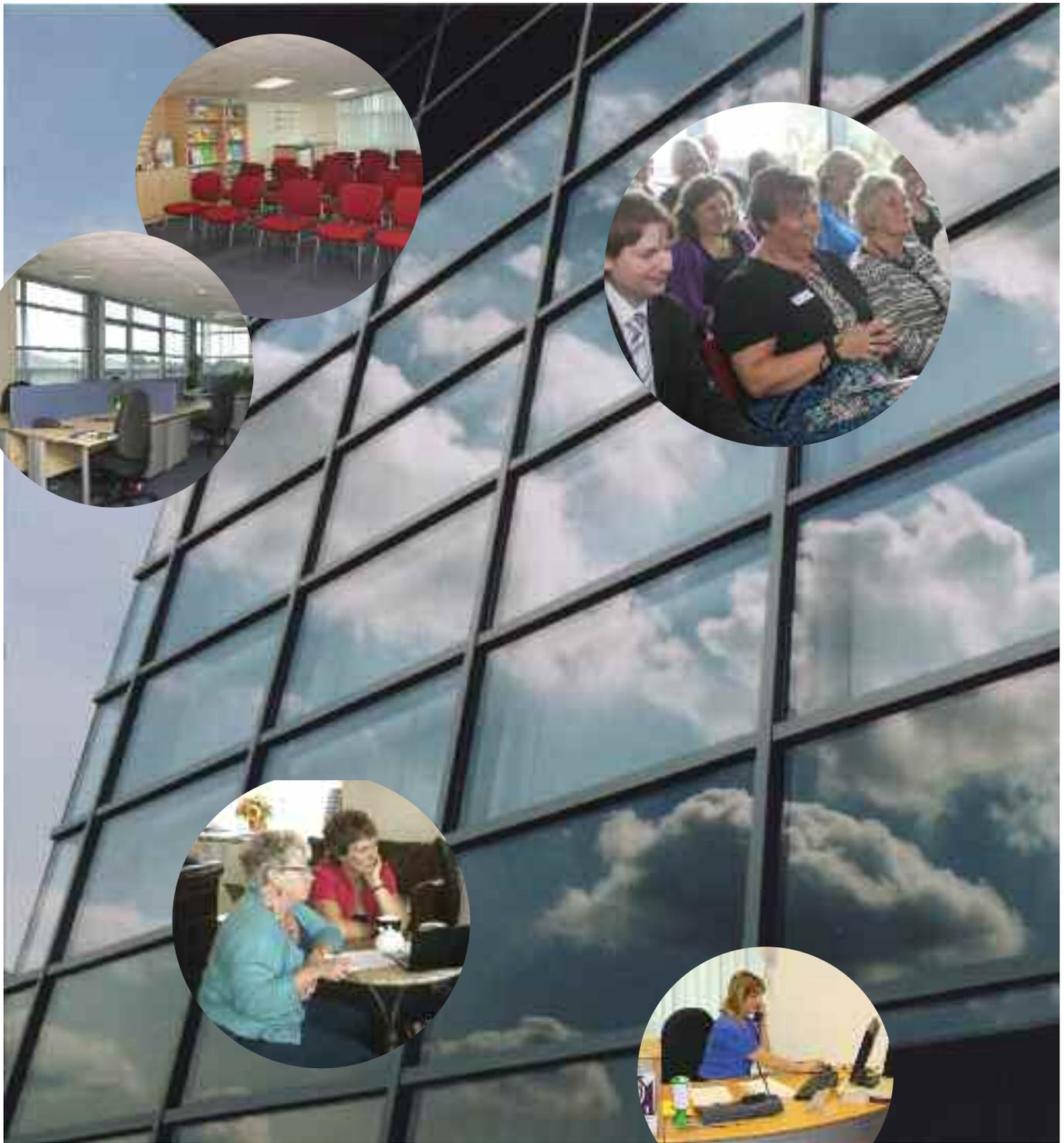
Equal access to our services is important for us, and in a large rural county we know that getting help from us can be challenging. Our staff and volunteers undertake home visits; interview clients in accessible public venues (such as libraries and Job centres); and organise events, training and meetings in venues all over the County. We pay volunteers travel expenses to enable them to travel on our behalf and we regularly monitor attendance at our events to make sure we reach a wide range of users. While we understand that personal contact is important we are exploring new technologies to reach more people and in different ways.

## Looking forward

In current times we look ahead to a future of change but exciting possibilities. In past times, Government and Local Authority money has funded the majority of our work but like most voluntary sector organisations we are needing to think differently, reach out to new audiences and markets, and structure our funding differently.

We are exploring new collaborative working arrangements and testing how we can sell our services in the market place while keeping our focus on community benefit and social value. Our premises provides us with a source of sustainable income both through using our training suite as a venue and by sharing surplus space with paying tenants. Through this we help other charities, who need high quality affordable serviced office space and meeting rooms.

We are fortunate that we are moving forward from a strong financial base with the ability to invest in new ideas and initiatives. We continue to look for new opportunities to develop projects which use the skills, contacts and expertise within our staff team, and will mean we can continue to deliver the services in Shropshire which we are passionate about and know to be vital.



## Shropshire RCC

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Website: [www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk](http://www.shropshire-rcc.org.uk)

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*celebrating 50 years*