



SEACHANGE

HEALTH & HAPPINESS FOR ALL

Annual Review 2022-2023

A charity
at the heart of
the Community



Welcome

From our Chair

I am delighted to present the first annual report for Seachange since its move from being embedded within Westbank for the last 5 years, to becoming an independent charity in 2021. The first year of any new charity is always a challenge, but despite the unprecedented issues of the post-Covid world and subsequent economic impact, the charity got off to an impressive start.

My thanks go to Marc and his team – they have worked tirelessly to ensure a smooth transition to independence, working hard to support the WEB community whilst also driving Seachange forward on a path to long-term sustainable growth.

I would also like to express my gratitude to The League of Friends of Budleigh Salterton Hospital. Their support of Seachange has been unwavering and unlimited.

Throughout this last year, we have continued to be supported by our advisory board who have provided some valuable insights and guidance that are helping us shape our service for which we are extremely grateful. As well as support and collaboration from our other partners including the NHS, RDUH Foundation Trust, Launchpad, Ness Care Group and the Budleigh Community Workshop Trust.

And we are of course indebted to our generous donors and fundraisers, and to our team of volunteers who donate their time so generously.

Board members and Management Team

Trustees:

Sarah Hicks (Chair)
Ian Christie
Dr Rick Mejzner
Prof Louise Allan Andy Hood
Stephen Thomas

Advisory Group:

Richard Bowes (Chair)
representatives from
NHS, Devon ICB,
EDDC, DCC, WEB
Health and Wellbeing
Board, Woodbury
Parish Council,
Westbank

Leadership Team:

Marc Jobson Head of
Seachange,
Sarah Forde
Volunteering and
Wellbeing Lead

With special thanks to
all our amazing team
without who keep the
wheels turning.



Welcome

From our Chair

I don't doubt that year 2 of our new charities' existence will continue to be challenging. But we are confident that our funders, partners and members of our community will continue to value and support Seachange going forward.

We support the communities of East Devon, particularly Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh and surrounding villages to live well and to feel healthier and happier. Our team do this by bringing people together. We know loneliness is a contributing factor to many physical and mental health issues.

This year has been our first year operating as a stand-alone charity in our own right. The change of entity has brought many challenges but also many successes and notable achievements. 2022 was a Covid year and we are still feeling the effects financially. Only towards the end of the year, our footfall through our building has returned to pre-Covid levels (+2000 PCM).

Seachange Devon provided over 60 different activities and classes to entice individuals to come together, feel each other's company and be happy. Activities have included: crafting; painting; dancing; singing; mindfulness; gardening; cooking games; table tennis; bereavement and carer support groups. Classes such as low impact and seated pilates; yoga; walking; better balance; postural stability; shibashi qigong; kettlercise help people with reduced mobility remain fit and strong.

Volunteers are key to our operations and growth. We have over 110 regular volunteers who contribute to the above classes and activities but also, befriend lonely and isolated people in person and by phone. They assist in returning medical equipment to RDUH teaching cooking and handing out ice creams during our film club. We run one of the busiest community transport services in Devon with 600 registered users. Over 35 volunteers give their time for free to enable those less fortunate to get to a medical appointment or one of our sessions. I know we will continue to go from strength to strength in our next financial year, and I am looking forward to sharing details of our success next year.

Sarah Hicks – Chair



From the Head of Seachange

Looking back at our first full year as a charity, I am incredibly proud of the effort our staff and volunteers have put in to ensure our continued development. We have been operating under a different legal entity for the previous five years. It was a big step to go out on our own but the correct one. It will ensure our sustainability for many years to come. Thanks, should rightly be given to Westbank (in particular, their CEO Sarah Hicks) and the Budleigh Hospital League of Friends for the support and guidance they have given us during our transition this year.

People are living longer but some spend many of their later years in poor health. In rural and coastal communities such as ours, age-related issues emerge ten years earlier on average. Seachange provides a suitable environment and services for people of all ages in the communities of Woodbury, Exmouth, Budleigh and surrounding villages. There are 42,000 people in this catchment area.

Our services enable people to reduce disability and long-term health conditions and help them exercise, eat well and stay fit in a socially welcoming space. This reduces loneliness, social isolation and saves us all money in the long run. Professor Chris Whitty said, "Having lots of exercise, having mental stimulation and a social network, eating a reasonably balanced diet...are things that are old fashioned, but they still work". That's Seachange in a nutshell.

Marc Jobson



Transport

Our community transport service is available to our community to enable them to access services at Seachange, Seachange activities elsewhere and medical appointments throughout East Devon. Clients also build relationships and social connections whilst travelling with other clients. The service is delivered by our volunteer drivers who give their time for free. We are fortunate enough to have a wheelchair-accessible car and a wheelchair-accessible minibus. Volunteer drivers also use their vehicles where appropriate. Clients donate as little or as much as they can afford and sometimes nothing at all depending on their circumstances.



**Community
transport trips**
3278 miles
travelled



**Number of
clients
registered 813**



Volunteer drivers
42 and 1254
health
appointments

Client story:

Due to long-term health conditions, a client and their carer became housebound which led to physical and mental deterioration. Using our wheelchair-accessible car we were able to bring them to Seachange to take advantage of our classes and personal training sessions in the gym. This helped our client to walk again and provide much-needed respite for her carer. They bought meals from our launchpad café. They attended regularly to access our warm space and to seek companionship.



Social Activities

Bringing lonely and isolated people together through social activities is at the heart of what we do. Small connections can have big effects on people's wellbeing, physical and mental health. It is not so much about the actual activity but more about how relationships are nurtured by facilitators and volunteers. Our blokes on buses project was an excellent example of how a hard-to-reach target group of middle-aged men can build bonds simply by travelling on a bus together. The group visited Yeovilton Fleet Air Arm, Haynes Car Museum and the National Aquarium in Plymouth. Upon their return, they told a wonderful story about eating fish and chips whilst watching the fish swim!

Other activities include singing, a ladies' brunch, an activity club, film events, allotment gardening, scrabble, cycling, table tennis and our every popular health walks.



Client story:

A attended our scrabble group with the support of a social prescriber. He has cognitive issues following a brain injury. He had a lack of social connections, as did the other members of the group. The group has gelled very well and now support one another. A helps a member with her shopping because she can no longer drive. They also had Christmas lunch together which made us all feel very warm and fuzzy.



Fitness

Fitness classes and gyms aren't just for gym bunnies, they are for all. We know many people are put off exercise by gyms full of ultra-fit bodies. Our well- equipped gym provides a welcome non-threatening space for people to exercise and get fit.

Recent additions include a new Concept 2 rowing machine, a Matrix stair climber and a cross machine. Over 130 members, up 60% in the year, utilise the facilities together with 400 casual users. It has a little light background music, no mirrors, flashing lights or photos of biceps on the walls. We have regular members in their 80's and 90's who work out every morning.



Client story:

JD from Exmouth, the lady in her 50s who walked with a stick had been recommended to attend Seachange by one of the local social prescribing teams to help her with her mental health and wellbeing. She was initially accompanied by the social prescriber and was able to access the welfare pot as on low income to try the use of the gym for one month. JD was supported by the fitness team to attend classes as well as complete her gym programme and it has turned her life around. She felt she was able to pay for her membership as it was of such benefit; she is a regular attendee of a variety of classes; she has introduced her mum to the benefits that Seachange can offer and most importantly she can now walk independently without her stick and this has been life-changing.



Fitness

Our low-impact and seated exercise classes offer the same warm welcome where those with reduced mobility can exercise safely and with confidence.

We have increased our opening hours and adapted the class timetable to include a range of sessions from youth gym, high-energy spinning classes and pilates to increasing the number of the more preventative/rehabilitative standing and seated classes i.e. Better Balance, as well as increasing classes and our profile across the WEB area, i.e. more classes held at Exmouth Library.

We offer a balance of internal and external fitness instructors to lead our classes and this provides the customer with choice and also the much-needed variation to form a rounded class schedule.

Supporting the NHS we have been instrumental in taking the lead in providing “Falls prevention” classes in the WEB area and have received funding to help support instructor external training and delivery for this intense 24-week programme, and providing a service to help relieve pressures on the NHS physio teams.



Support

Our Memory Café provides a relaxed and social space for those with memory loss. Always fun and lively giving a much-needed full day's break for their carers. Out of this group, the carers formed a dementia carers group. Sixteen carers now meet regularly exchange stories and provide one another with peer support in a relaxed and social environment.

Our bereavement group was formed when a gym member lost a husband and had a fortuitous conversation with someone else at Seachange in a similar situation. Now twenty people of all ages meet regularly to provide peer support and friendship.

Over the winter period, we provided a 'warm space' for people struggling with the cost-of-living crisis to have a hot drink and warm food. Working with partner organisations, we also gave away £5000 for items such as duvets, coats, sleeping bags and slow cookers. These were for people in the WEB area affected by winter hardship.



Client story:

SC was a carer for her husband who attended our Memory Café. SC was struggling with the 24hr care she needed to provide. A said, "Having a day of caring meant I could live again and even just sleep." A joined fellow care setting up our Dementia Carers Group. A's husband has now moved into a care home; however, A continues to attend the group because the relationships she has made are wonderful and fulfilling. "Without the support of the group, I would have broken down a long time ago forcing my husband into care long before he needed it."



Catalyst

At Seachange, we recognise the huge benefits of collaboration. To help our communities in further ways we have partnered with Jurassic Childcare, Launchpad and Ness Care Group.



**Jurassic
Childcare**

Jurassic Childcare provides mixed-aged childcare services all year round. They follow a Montessori-inspired approach and are key to our Inter-generational activities working closely with our memory café and activity club groups.



launchpad
more than just a cafe.....

Launchpad trains adults with learning disabilities in catering and hospitality. They run our café and kitchen with the students being integral to our 'whole community' approach.



THE NESS
CARE GROUP

Ness Care Group run 'active minds' providing specialist treatments for clinical dementia helping clients to maintain their independence.

In addition to the above, we host a range of NHS outpatient clinics, a GP Practice room, podiatry, audiology, MSK physiotherapy and a community nursing team. Clinicians and staff cross-refer to ensure the client is at the heart of Seachange.

These are amazing facilities. I feel I can offer my clients a better service in Seachange than anywhere else."

We also helped to support 110 Afghan families who helped the British Military in Afghanistan into temporary accommodation in Exmouth and assisted their resettlement across the UK. It was important to us they felt part of our community whilst they stayed here.

WEB infrastructure support

We provide infrastructure support for VCSE organisations across the WEB area including. Organisations such as: Open Door Exmouth; Budleigh Salterton Relief in Need, Budleigh Lions have all received our expert guidance and facilitating meetings. This meeting provide a safe space for organisations to network, discuss challenges and successes, share outcomes and learning in the absence east Devon CVS.

All VCSE organisations are struggling with recruitment of volunteers and as such we developed and facilitated a volunteer recruitment roadshow held in Exmouth in Spring 2023. Over 50 like organisations attended with most recruiting more volunteers to strengthen their offering to our community.



Voluntary Sector Representative

We provide the part-time VSR (Voluntary sector representative) to the WEB area on behalf of Devon County Council and the NHS. Within this role, we are directly able to work with strategic partners i.e. health and social care teams to signpost and support some of the more complex patients to third sector services.



Working in partnership with other VCSE and NHS organisations is key to our standing in the professional community of East Devon.

Client story:

A is a lady who moved from a council property in Exmouth to another council property in Budleigh to start a new life away from her abuser. Having experienced childhood traumas and domestic abuse for many years which resulted in a history of drug dependency and her suffering from Complex Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (CPTSD), she had received therapy and counselling for years which proved most beneficial. However, after all the trauma, she was now left feeling lonely and isolated. She also finds group situations too threatening and difficult.

She was concerned that her Goth appearance and music tastes would be a barrier to her finding companionship however we were able to find a local female volunteer, who just so happened to be a fully-fledged Goth in her earlier life, and they have hit it off!



Volunteering

We have only been able to expand our community offer across the WEB area and services due to the kindness and time given by our team of dedicated volunteers. The number of volunteers has increased by 15% over the year to 101 and this shows the increase in recruiting volunteer drivers, befrienders group facilitators and memory café carers to meet the increasing demand for our services.

We are using the Donorfy CRM system to capture and manage all the information provided on volunteers and we can see that we will be using this system much more effectively over the next year to communicate with our volunteer base.

We are using the Donorfy CRM system to capture and manage all the information provided on volunteers and we can see that we will be using this system much more effectively over the next year to communicate with our volunteer base.

Client Story:

The social prescribing team referred OG to a lady from Exmouth who was struggling with her mental health and associated health conditions. We empowered her to commit to an activity to give her a sense of purpose and a reason to get out of the house. She had a trial as a volunteer at our “Activity Club” aimed at supporting people experiencing loneliness and isolation. OG has adapted incredibly well to her volunteering role. She has taken on new challenges in terms of volunteering, and we couldn’t now run our sessions without her!



Funding

We rely on funding to support our many non-commissioned projects. This year we sincerely thank those individuals and organisations that have been kind enough to support us through donations:

The Exeter Chiefs Foundation; Norman Family Charitable Trust; Budleigh Fund; Fryer Trust; National Grid; EDDC; Jamieson-Bystock Trust; Postcode Local Trust; Versus Arthritis, Budleigh Lions and Parkinson's UK

Thank you

Head count
13 staff (7.5 FTE)

- 4 male
- 12 female
- x1 apprentice
- X1 bank

“When you are here at Seachange, people care about your wellbeing and they want to help you. That includes the reception staff, the café, and the managers. It does make a difference.”



“Seachange is a refuge in a sea, a calm safe place with a lovely aura. The help is better than the doctors and has a ripple effect through the connections that are made”.

