



Together
We Thrive

FULL CIRCLE 2021/2022

Thriving Local Communities



- ▶ VOLUNTEERING ▶ ACCOUNTS SERVICE ▶ COMMUNITY TRANSPORT
- ▶ COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT ▶ PARTNERSHIPS ▶ TRAINING ▶ WELLBEING

Welcome from Tracy Rudling, CEO

To say that last year was challenging is truly an understatement. The global Covid-19 pandemic and the challenges with the cost of living and supply chains have affected and continue to affect our community's personal and economic wellbeing.

A new year always gives us time to pause and reflect. So before I share with you some of our exciting plans for 2022, I'd like to take a moment to extend my huge and heartfelt thanks to everyone who has supported Community360, from partner collaborations, our volunteers and of course our wonderful staff.

As I look back, there is an immense amount of pride at what we have accomplished.

From supporting our communities during the pandemic to being part of the world's largest vaccination programme, it was very much 'business as usual' for us here at Community360 and, not to be outdone by Covid, we continued to operate, albeit in some different ways to deliver our services. We also celebrated the opening of the One Colchester Community Hub in Long Wyre Street.

We had some firsts last year too. The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance held its first major virtual community conference with Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the Institute of Health Equity. Over 300 delegates attended this on the back of our report titled 'Communities Can...Build Back Fairer'. The conference aim was to raise awareness of how living through Covid for the past 18 months had highlighted a host of inequalities in health outcomes. More on this can be read about later in this report.

Without doubt the pandemic exacerbated pre-existing inequalities, so our work is more important than ever. We went on to publish 'We are not going back', a report on how we need build a fairer and equal society. I'm immensely proud of the powerful collaborative work we have been driving forward since the pandemic started, in that we can begin to understand the challenges that our communities face.

As for the future, we want to build on the great work we are doing, to be the 'go to' organisation for the community voluntary sector in north east Essex and Braintree areas and to continue to champion the work of our fantastic groups and charitable organisations. We are also delighted to be a partner in the new north east Essex health and wellbeing neighbourhoods project - Neighbourhood working brings communities, health, social care and voluntary organisations together to improve the health and wellbeing of a local community.

This is a new and exciting way of working and the 'joined up approach' is already making a positive difference for local people.

Thank you for being a part of our journey so far and sincere thanks once again for all of your support.

Tracy Rudling

CEO



Continuation of our Covid-19 Support Vaccination Marshall Volunteer Heroes

At the start of 2021 the mass Covid-19 vaccination programme was rolled out across the UK. Community360 supported the programme by recruiting an army of volunteers to become Vaccination Marshall Volunteers across Essex.

Community360 supported events as part of the Government COVID vaccination roll out in Colchester, Maldon and Braintree. Staff and volunteers were on hand to assist the CCG and GPs with booking in patients, temperature checks, car park and queue management along with after-care welfare for all patients. As the vaccine rollout continued staff and volunteers also helped with the NHS mobile vaccination programme, pop-up events for booster jabs and transport to vaccination appointments.

"Being part of Community360 is incredibly special. Volunteers certainly have a heart to help the community and support those who are vulnerable and in need of support. Without volunteers and those who coordinate everything from the top, Colchester would find itself losing out on something amazing. By giving hours of your time for the community, it brings value and hope

How else we helped: As the NHS and other colleagues struggled with the discharge of patients from hospital to their homes, volunteers were also recruited to help with all areas of support from domiciliary care and specialist rehabilitation, to just providing a listening ear and supporting care homes who needed extra help.

Home from Hospital Befrienders - Helping to keep people out of hospital by offering support such as medical and food collections along with helping to address social isolation. Home from Hospital befrienders also encouraged individuals to be self-sufficient and maintain their independence by linking them up with other support as appropriate.

Winter Resilience Ambassadors - Volunteers helped to support our winter work to ensure that Colchester residents remained safe, warm and well during the winter months. From supporting with preparation and distribution of winter packs, to getting out into the community to have conversations and offer signposting, advice and guidance to those who need it.



Number of vaccine volunteers
120

C360 Volunteer hours
20,000+

New volunteers recruited across the year
157

Finding your Feet Volunteers
11

Current number of volunteers
188

Befriending Volunteers Home from Hospital
17

Community Transport Call Back Volunteers
12

Total volunteers for the year
433

Social Prescribing

With an increasing number of referrals being received through our partnership working, links with multiple local agencies and individuals, the My Social Prescription™ (MSP) team had never been busier. Though Covid-19 restrictions changed throughout the year we continued to adapt and offer a full service to meet the needs of our community.

Our links with all the GP surgeries in Colchester continue to grow stronger and now include joint working with care homes, faith work, telephone clinics and on site working. We also support and contribute to Population Health Management through weight management, careers support, bereavement and children's mental health.

Number of
MSP Referrals
10,815

Our work with Colchester Hospital

- On site working increased to 7 days a week
- Closer working with the Discharge Hub and wards
- Reduction of the chances of readmissions
- Welfare calls in place within 24 hours of discharge
- Discharge Pilot Fund in place to financially aid patient support
- Introduction of Pathway Light wrap around care for patients, carers and loved ones, within 24 hours of referral



New Projects

The St Helena project enables equality and improves outcomes for members of our BAME and deprived communities' 'end of life' patients, allowing information and choices to be shared across this co-hort specific to their needs.

Urgent Care Response and Integrated Care teams are now visiting citizens in their homes or care homes settings. Joint conversations with health workers and our experienced social prescribing practitioners ensure citizens receive a 'one shop' service where all their initial concerns can be expressed and managed in one meeting with follow up telephone calls being arranged where needed.

Men's Mental Health group 'Manage' got underway specifically aimed at improving anxiety in men. It encourages men to reach out through attending our One Colchester Community Hub meetings where they can meet others and share positive experiences.

Through partnership working with EPUT, individuals on the waiting list to receive support or who have recently been discharged from community mental health services can attend telephone drop-in sessions to access social prescribing. 24-hour post discharge calls are also being conducted 7 days a week.

Bursary funding secured to support with low level mental health household support and food vouchers

Home from Hospital



Volunteers supporting patients on the journey from hospital to home

Patients have been settled back into life at home when they leave hospital thanks to a new service which was launched in north Essex in 2021.

The escorted home service enables patients with limited mobility to be settled back home safely by a member of Colchester Hospital's therapies team, who checks they have everything they need following their hospital stay, such as equipment.

Staff at East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust (ESNEFT), which runs Colchester and Ipswich hospitals, are providing the service in collaboration with us here at Community360, which provides the wrap-around patient transport.

The service has proved such a success that it has recently been awarded additional funding to extend it to operate seven days a week for the next 12 months.

Patients who have benefitted from the service say it has helped them to feel more confident before they return home as the team can explain how they can help and address any concerns they may have. Some patients have also been discharged sooner thanks to the escorted home service.

Number of
befrienders
8

Number of
citizens
supported
88

Number of
referrals
94

3,394
Home from Hospital
discharge trips
provided by
Community
Transport

Befrienders
calls
528



Over the years we have had some wonderful students supporting us who have greatly benefited from the experience. One of those is Cameron Wolmarans, currently a Biomedical Sciences Student at Essex University, who has been volunteering with Community360 for 8 months.

Our amazing befriender Cameron has come good again. He has recently heard that he has been accepted into medical school, which was his long-term ambition!

Having volunteered for our Home from Hospital Service and helped with Community Transport call backs for over a year, he has helped us in so many more ways. His time with patients and supporting clients, both complex and those with a medical element, has helped him achieve his goal.



Essex Family Support Service

The Essex Family Support Service has either supported or been able to fund some amazing activities over the last 12 months. Projects such as the Essex Wildlife Trust Family Nature Therapy which ran over 8 weeks; NOW's the Time for Change parent resilience workshops; Wilderness Foundation Family Sessions; Animal Therapy and seasonal competitions held at Halloween and Christmas.

Using a strength-based approach, the aim of the service is to support to families to work towards improving outcomes around developing positive relationships, reducing participation in risky behaviours through promoting safety and wellbeing, supporting families to connect with peers and their local community, as well as establishing healthy inter-family relationships. Throughout 2021/22 the service has supported 1117 referrals from across the county to achieve positive outcomes.

Volunteer family mentors
44

Number of families supported
600

Number of individuals supported
1,219



Total Membership
76

New DAA Members
4

People Supported by PBSA Activities:
828

The Colchester Dementia Action Alliance

The Changing Face of Dementia

The Colchester Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) currently has over 70 members and is firmly embedded into the local community, working with the strategic partnership One Colchester. Its aim is to conduct community engagement to raise awareness of Dementia, to improve the quality of life for people affected by Dementia and to provide a platform for people living with Dementia and their carers to have a 'voice.'

We are now one of 9 pilot areas in PBSA and we will be moving into a new programme until the end of March 2025 where the focus will be on 4 key areas: Reflection, Awareness, Togetherness and Prevention.

Community Accounts and Transport

Community Accounts has been busy throughout 2021 supporting groups with their finances. We continued as much as we could virtually with our groups but are delighted we are able to visit our clients again.

We have also supported our groups with the Covid response on furlough claims, completing these free of charge for them.



New Minibus for Local Charity thanks to Essex County Council Covid Response Fund

Community360 took delivery of a new community minibus in the summer of 2021, which helped to continue to operate a safe and responsive Community Transport service. This was thanks to extra funding from the Essex County Council Covid Response Fund.

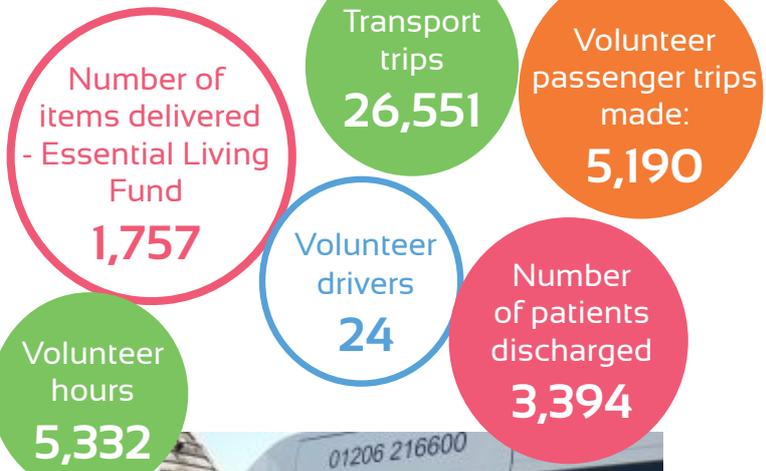
Essex County Council received funding from the Department of Health and Social Care to support the increased demand on voluntary and community sector services during the pandemic. £44,000 was awarded to Community360 to fund a new minibus as well as to help develop its valuable transport service to the community.

The transport service has helped people to stay connected and provided first line, self-organised community support to those in need. We also provided transport to Clinically Extremely Vulnerable people to vaccination appointments in Colchester and Maldon. Moving forward we want to continue and improve our transport offering and crucial funding will really help us to do that.

As well as offering help with shopping trips and medical appointments, the Community Transport service recommenced their social excursions to their members, encouraging people to re-engage socially after the pandemic.



In 2021, we continued to provide the furniture for the Essential Living Fund as well as completing the admin function.



Partnerships



Major Community Conference - Reducing Health Inequalities in North East Essex

The North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance held its first major virtual community conference with Professor Sir Michael Marmot, Director of the Institute of Health Equity (UCL Department of Epidemiology & Public Health).

Titled **Communities Can...Build Back Fairer**, the conference aim was to raise awareness of how living through Covid for the past 18 months has highlighted a host of inequalities in health outcomes.

The conference was the first phase of a commitment from local leadership that there must be systematic change to 'Build Back Fairer.' This comes on the back of our 'Communities Responding to Crisis' report which was co-designed by Community360 and the University of Essex.

The Marmot Leadership Forum was launched in 2021 to 'keep the conversation going.' A collaborative call to action, which will fight for a less unequal society.

Marmot Leadership Forum to be Launched

We are still facing challenging levels of inequalities across North-East Essex because of Covid-19. That's why it is crucial that we continue working together to tackle these issues. This will ensure that we offer the community access to the resources and support needed to assist the borough's recovery from the impact of the pandemic.

Therefore we will launch the Marmot Leadership Forum as we feel it is important that we keep the conversation going.

Our hope is that local leaders will come together to strengthen leadership culture and create a collaborative call to action, a unified and consolidated voluntary and community sector leadership forum in Colchester which will fight for a less unequal society and challenge the cultural norms.



North East Essex Communities Responding to Crisis Report

In August 2020, C360 commissioned the University of Essex to collect the testimonies of community organisers. Interviewees generously gave their time between October 2020 and February 2021 when contributors, their families as well as their staff, volunteers and service users were under great pressure.

You can read the full report on our website:
<https://www.community360.org.uk/insight/>

We're not going back report - Report highlights why we 'must not go back'

Titled, 'We're Not Going Back' the report was put together by Community360 on behalf of the sector. We have listened and recorded testimonies from the public, charitable organisations and local communities as well as conducting surveys to monitor the state of the sector by capturing information about the operation, challenges and opportunities faced by leaders and local citizens.

From this information we now have an opportunity to push for an equitable, productive, and more prosperous future that improves everyone's quality of life.

Our ambitions are to build on these strengths highlighted in this report and to provide a framework for positive action in the future.

You can read the full report on our website: <https://www.community360.org.uk/insight/>



Winter Resilience

Colchester's Strategic Partnership Winter Resilience Campaign Stay safe, warm, well and connected

Thanks to partnership working, funding and community spirit, this project continues to provide advice and support through the One Colchester initiative, delivering roadshows in the community and distributing winter packs to those affected by the cold weather, including families on low incomes and people living with long-term health conditions or at risk of social isolation.

A Winter Resilience Steering Group, chaired by Community360, who co-deliver the project, brings together representatives from the public and voluntary sector to facilitate more action over the winter months.

We were delighted to be working once again with key partners who provide much needed help and support when things get tough during the winter months. This also includes funding local projects and conducting outreach across the borough.

The Winter Packs, a crucial part of the campaign, include a guide to local support services ranging from Colchester Borough Council's Emergency Heater Scheme to social groups, and contain practical items, such as clothing, basic refreshments, a torch, blanket and flask and were distributed to those identified as being in need by partnership members.

One Colchester Community Hub Opens its Doors

In 2021 we welcomed the addition of our new Community Hub in Long Wyre Street – a huge asset to the town as well as an important focal point for our communities. The Covid-19 lockdown forced the Hub to pause its usual activities and we had to adapt to support our communities in new ways. It is fantastic our wonderful staff can once again greet the people of Colchester at this welcoming space and access point for a wide range of activities, programmes, services, social and wellbeing activities.

We host many different social groups throughout the week, including a Monday morning friendship group, a board games group, men's and women's groups, a variety of textiles activities and more. We offer drop-in advice and signposting and practical support such as winter packs and slippers for those at risk of falls. We have a variety of spaces available for groups and organisations to hire.

2,968
people have
been directly
supported

7,538
interventions



Visitors
September:
117

Visitors
October:
689



Visitors
November:
892

Visitors
December:
392

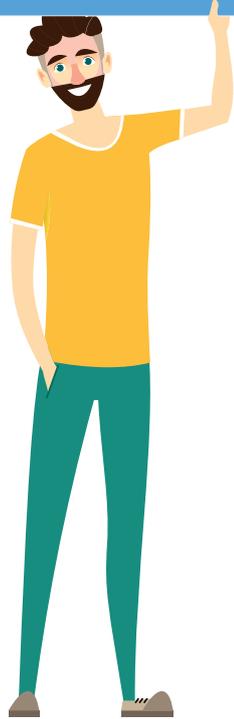
Regular Hub
social groups:
14

Support to the Voluntary Sector

£700,000
raised for
Groups in
Colchester
and
Braintree



15,434
hours spent supporting community
residents and voluntary groups:



Number of Voluntary and Community
Groups Supported:
457



Braintree

Community Collaboration to Support Braintree District Residents

Braintree District Council together with other community support services joined forces to make sure important information on help available during the pandemic was accessible to all residents.

A community support leaflet was developed which initially was given out by volunteers at the district's vaccination centres.

Community360 together with First Stop, The Samaritans, Carers First, Compass, The Essex Wellbeing Service and Witham Community Hub provided vital support with signposting to other services such as information on food banks, citizens advice, transport and the Essential Living Fund.



Groups supported with Volunteers: 15

Vaccination Support

The vaccination work for Braintree ran from September – December 2021. We held three outreach events to promote vaccination uptake at Braintree Village, Braintree Christmas Lights Switch on and the Halstead Hub which gave us some good opportunities to engage with the public and hand out information on the vaccination clinics. We supported at Christchurch Clinics with the push for the booster jab pre-Christmas and we also organised a Vaccination Van for Braintree College in November 2021, helping to ensure that 48 students received their vaccines.



Groups supported with Timebank Exchanges: 11



Groups supported in Braintree: 234



Community360 Braintree – Holiday Activities 2021/22

Community360 has always concentrated on the Just About Managing (JAM) families to support those who are potentially in danger of slipping into food poverty. We have worked with Active Essex to facilitate spaces on their activity camps during school holidays



June Half Term

This holiday Community360 started to provide hot meals at lunch time. It increased its scope by collaborating with the 2nd Witham Boys & Girls Brigade to provide further enhancement activities such as basic cooking lessons, Professor Chaos who carried out unusual experiments to amuse the children, the use of a small outdoor arena to play football, cricket & tennis, making designs with laser printing and basic guitar lessons. Community360 still supported Active Essex with children at the other centres.

Summer Holidays

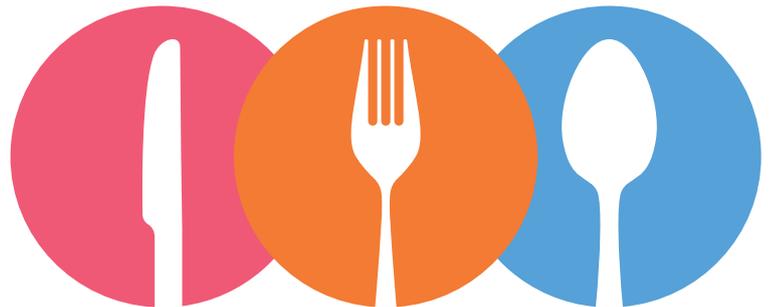
We supported Active Essex but, this time, at four centres and for 5 weeks.



All centres provided hot lunches for the children. Community360 provided **62** bags of shopping from Tesco's plus £30 Tesco vouchers. Each food bag contained 30 items. These were distributed to all who attended the activities plus others who couldn't attend. Tesco's contributed to this expense which was £700.

October Half Term

Community360 supported 4 centres plus the Witham Boys Brigade. The attendances were very encouraging with **43** children joining the activities. With the help of Braintree Food Bank, we gave away **19** food bags to deserving families.



Witham Boys Brigade managed to arrange for Professor Chaos again, Reptiles Etc. and DNA Kids to give the children more enhancement activities.

December Holidays

Community360 supported 5 centres with Active Essex but this time the support of Braintree Museum was enlisted. They held 3 days of activities and the feedback was tremendous. Parents and children were delighted. Braintree Museum not only provided hot lunches, but they also gave out hot breakfasts. In all **38** children were supported.

On Board Group

The On-Board group runs every Monday, 10am – Midday in Braintree Town Hall for ages 65+. The group goes from strength to strength with members increasing steadily and a real sense of community between them. Many of the members now meet up outside of the group for lunch and they have also arranged to stay longer than midday and bring their own provisions as they're having so much fun! It's a great opportunity for social prescribing as many have existing health issues and live alone and our new Social Prescriber will be taking on the group from March 2022.

Weight Management

Witham weight management has been a roaring success so far. We support a maximum of 25 attendees per session to meet their weight loss goals. In January 2022 we moved the group to a new venue which has a fantastic, friendly atmosphere and has really encouraged attendees to stay and chat to each other, resulting in a small group joining a local Water Aerobics class.

We have also worked with Provide and Fusion Leisure Centres to hand out One Month Free Membership vouchers. These have had a good uptake with some fantastic feedback on how the membership has been beneficial for people's weight and wellbeing in general. The session has turned into a real lifeline for some members who now rely on it not only for weight loss but also for social interaction and a feeling of belonging and achieving something.

We have signposted many members to our Finding Your Feet Walks and other local groups which may be beneficial to them.

Each Wednesday morning is a real joy for us at Braintree C360.



Jo Bryant – Find your Active Ambassador

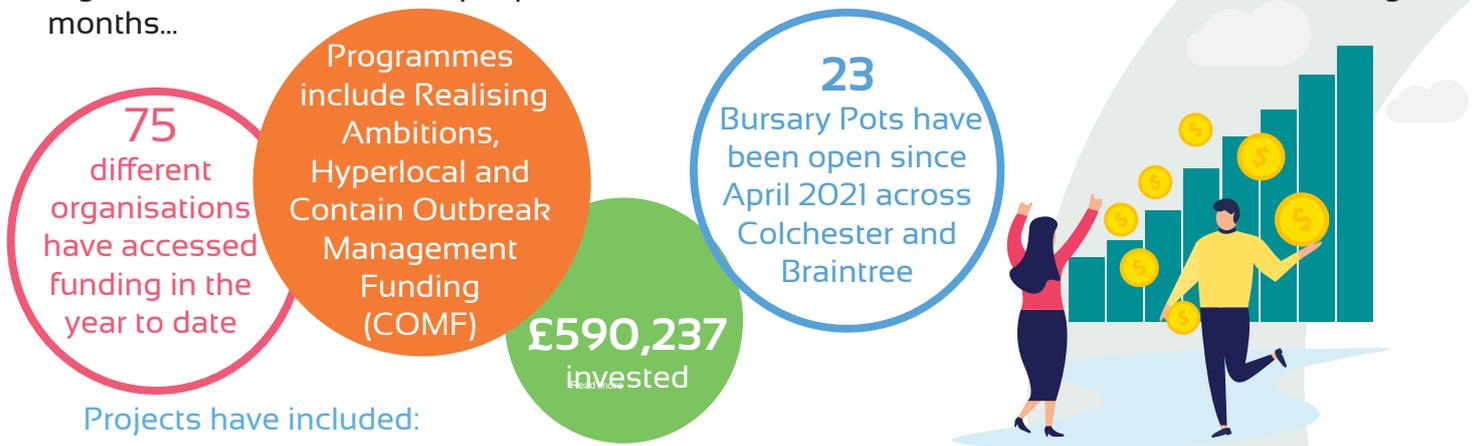
Jo Bryant was appointed as a Find Your Active Ambassador. Ambassadors are all supporters of the Find Your Active campaign. It is hoped that all their stories will inspire everyone to get involved in physical activity and see why they are so passionate about positive movement. As well as this, Jo is helping to promote physical activity opportunities available in local communities and leads our 'Finding your Feet' walks in Braintree. Jo was also shortlisted for an Active Essex Award, in their 'Find Your Active Ambassador of the Year' category.



Support to voluntary sector – How we supported the sector

Serving as a Single Point of Commissioning (SPOC)

Community organisations play an important role in helping local residents and in helping to deliver the outcomes of public services. However, it can be difficult for organisations and groups to access commissioning processes for many reasons. C360 has been working for many years to open up opportunities to a wider range of voluntary organisations by serving as a single point of access. In 2021, we have now supported more organisations, with more funding, across a wider footprint than ever before. It is a privilege to work with so many organisations to reach local people and we will continue to award further funds in the coming months...



Projects have included:

- Funding holiday activities for families who are just about managing
- Helping people move in back at home following a hospital stay
- Organising health events for minority communities
- Supporting volunteers with expenses and training
- Working with care home residents to take part in physical activity sessions

Fundraisers Network Group



In November our Fundraiser Network group was attended by Jess Leonard from the National Lottery Community Fund. The session was designed to provide VCSE groups in Colchester with a simplified guide to capturing knowledge, skills and learning from their projects' work in the community.

Attendees ranged from large charities to small grassroots organisations. The session included how learning can help you identify what's working well, demonstrating to funders and decision-makers how your work makes a difference.

Feedback included:

"The highlight for me was that I learnt that as we design the programme and delivery of it, of course people centered, we can design how we measure outcomes in ways that work for the people we support and for us as an organisation."

C360 will be providing further sessions on relevant topics in 2022.

My Weight Matters

Community360 works in partnership with the

Provide Essex Wellbeing Service to deliver the My Weight Matters (MWM) programme, which supports people to live healthy lifestyles and manage their weight. Weekly weigh-ins take place at the One Colchester Hub.

Many of those attending have achieved significant weight loss and made other lifestyle changes to benefit their health. Christopher joined the programme in 2018. He has had a few health problems over the years, these have made it very difficult for him to manage his weight which he says has yo-yoed most of his adult life. Christopher has lost well over 10kgs since January. This has been partly due to him eating a bit more healthily and joining the walks that our Walks Coordinator, organises.

"My Weight Matters has helped me change the way I think about food, I feel more contented and I realise I've got to take care of myself better in the future".

Communication

Support, Communication and Engagement

As the pandemic continued into 2021 we continued to keep an eye on official advice which was being updated and to make sure this was communicated to our charitable organisations, volunteers, peers, staff and stakeholders.

We continued our reliance on digital communication, compounded by staff and volunteers working remotely from each other, the challenges of this were eased from the previous year as 'Teams' meetings became the norm.

As an organisation we are proud in the way we communicate with our workforce, the voluntary sector and wider stakeholders.

We worked tirelessly with partners and organisations to effectively disseminate vital information to keep everyone up to date with grants, funding help and support that was available to them.

Our Weekly C360 News was used as a platform to provide up to date information and support networks. We also used social media and worked closely with the local media, local councils and partner organisations to share news and information.

We shared some wonderful stories regarding our volunteers, staff and partners, via the press, radio and TV.

As an organisation communication is key and we will continue to work hard to make sure we always provide up to date and informative information. Our new and improved website will go live early spring/summer and we are proud that our website users doubled from the previous year.

Website users:

114,269

Doubled our users this year!

New website users:

95%

Web page views:

155,452

Community360 Sponsors Halstead Town FC Under 16's Kit

Community360 became the proud sponsor of Halstead FC under 16's Blues football kit this season.

We're always looking for ways to help our local community and sport plays an important role in helping young people build confidence as well as keeping fit which is also a very important part of growing up. Halstead Town FC has been at the heart of the community for 142 years and is proud to be part of grass roots football.



Contact us

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Follow us on



Number of calls fielded by our Admin Team

8,594

Number of newsletters produced:

72

Press Releases:

42