

WBC Voluntary Sector Strategy Report

W3RT preliminary observations / responses to recommendations

Recommendation	W3RT Update Jan 2022 and RAG status	Action points
Post Covid Recovery and Renewal		
<p>1. Review the Watford Helps triage and referral processes, to clarify the complementary roles of all signposting/social prescribing bodies, i.e. Watford Helps, HertsHelp, the W3RT Wellbeing Hub, Watford’s Healthy Hub, HCNS, Watford Together, Neighbours Together, etc.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>Agreed, we regularly review and monitor triaging and referrals and W3RT staff are clear on processes.</p> <p>W3RT has a new referral link on our website for Health and Wellbeing activities and a new database to manage our H&W services, Elemental, which provides data on referral source from our online referral form: https://sites.elementalsoftware.co.uk/app/WeCEOjects/ES-QA.woa/cms/watford_trust_registerstart</p> <p>People can be referred to the project through our H&W referral link also through our tailored Staying Connected project webpages and Digital Inclusion specific form.</p>	<p>Complete</p>
<p>2. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service HertsHelp have accessible local information to support Watford residents effectively, and ease local services.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>W3RT will make sure that our website and future newsletters direct people to the portal to add their information (Request Login Hertfordshire MarketPlace) and that we offer help to any group facing difficulties.</p> <p>We have promoted the HertsHelp portal and have held discussions with HertsHelp to ensure they have good data on Watford groups. We will continue to monitor HCNS and other referrals.</p> <p>We are also launching our own list of local services through Nation Builder and encouraging groups to promote there as well. Thought needs to be given to ensuring we have a clear call to action for local groups around listing their services across multiple platforms.</p>	<p>Complete, with ongoing communications</p>

<p>3. Consider how to work towards a long-term town-wide strategic approach to respond specifically to issues of social isolation and mental health in the community.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>We are resuming meetings of the Watford and Three Rivers Health and Wellbeing Forum, holding regular discussions with the WBC Portfolio Holder for Wellbeing and the Head of Community Protection team. We're also holding monthly meetings with Watford Chamber and other key local groups to align thinking on mental health locally, and have offered to assist and promote the Mental Health steering group discussed at a recent One Watford meeting.</p> <p>W3RT Neighbours Together team have been instrumental in delivering the Watford Pensioners' Forum to improve awareness among older people and circulating our What's on Guide. We are also exploring digital version for our What's on Guide in future.</p> <p>W3RT is an active member of HertsHelp, the Hospital and Community Navigation Service, and Community Help Herts. We have secured funding for the Waiting Well project (supporting people awaiting treatment at Watford General Hospital) and will soon learn about future funding for Getting Together.</p> <p>A member of the W3RT Community Development team is involved with the Dementia Forum and local initiatives and exploring fundraising to support this initiative as well. W3RT staff have previously undertaken dementia awareness training and will conduct a review to see if new staff need further training.</p>	<p>Complete, with ongoing communications</p>
<p>4. Build on best practice in the VCS to tackle digital isolation as part of the Council's Road to Renewal plan.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>W3RT has members on each of the working and steering groups for the "Staying Connected" project, which is going well so far.</p> <p>As of Dec 2021:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 10 beneficiaries referred into the project, 4 completed, 6 outstanding • 7 fully registered volunteers, one more awaiting DBS check • 6 tablets ready to hand out, 3 ready to take over to be wiped <p>We continue to liaise with multiple local groups including Atria about device recycling points and have renewed our comms plan for this project and our CVS Lead has regular meetings with the Head of Customer Service at WBC to coordinate device drop offs through WBC. We are also liaising with other local groups with beneficiaries in need such as CAB, WBC Pensioner's Forum, W3RT Getting Together groups.</p> <p>People can be referred to the project through our H&W referral link (as above, section 1) and also through our tailored Staying Connected project webpages and Digital Inclusion specific form.</p>	<p>Complete – Staying Connected project ongoing</p>

<p>5. Work with W3RT to create and share accessibly a collection of case studies with innovations and best practices, developed in response to Covid-19, from the Voluntary and Community Sector.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>W3RT staff are proactively focusing more on developing and sharing case studies in the lead up to the end of the financial year. Work is underway to refresh our internal case study policy and process with GDPR best practice and sensitivity to the personal nature of case studies at the heart of this.</p> <p>Case studies and quotes will be a key feature in our end of year reporting and future communications. W3RT CVS will use our knowledge in this area to support other local charities to prepare and publish case studies.</p> <p>We aim to produce a year-end report on our work through Covid including case studies of our own work and the work of our members.</p>	<p>Internal review complete</p> <p>Action:</p> <p>Include case study guidance for CVS members through communications and workshops</p>
<p>Engaging Volunteers</p>		
<p>6. Review the Team Herts volunteer brokerage system, to clarify the complementary roles of all volunteering services which Watford residents might access, including TeamHertsVolunteering, do-it.org and W3RT.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>W3RT CVS continues to work closely with Team Herts volunteering and direct organisations and individuals towards them where activities fall outside of Watford and Three Rivers area or are Hertfordshire wide. Likewise, TH refer back to W3RT CVS enquiries for local opportunities.</p> <p>Head of Community Development has engaged with Team Herts to outline our new volunteer platform, Golden Volunteer and they have made us aware of their new recruitment platform 'GoVolHerts'. We have proactively sought consensus on how we can each share clear messages on the purpose of these two different systems and outlined the enhanced functionality of Golden Volunteer for management of volunteers.</p>	<p>Complete, with collaboration ongoing</p>
<p>7. Ensure that partners at Hertfordshire County Council-commissioned service TeamHerts Volunteering have accessible local information to efficiently help Watford residents, and ease local services.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>As above, W3RT CVS is in regular, positive communication with Team Herts volunteering and will continue this throughout 2022.</p> <p>A member of THV spoke at our W3RT CVS Annual Conference in November 2021, including figures on volunteering in Watford during the pandemic. Slides available on request.</p>	<p>Complete, with collaboration ongoing</p>

<p>8. Ensure that there is a formal process for volunteer referrals to organisations to ensure both skills and motivations are considered, and that engagement information is captured.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete.</p> <p>This will be managed by our new Golden Volunteer online volunteer recruitment and management system that W3RT and local charities can benefit from using.</p> <p>Following successful workshops in December 2021 and January 2022 on the new system, we will also be engaging with local charities at our Volunteering Network meeting at the end of January to gather feedback on those using the system.</p> <p>We currently have 250 volunteers registered (including W3RT volunteers) with 84 new volunteers joining. We will be proactively promoting Golden Volunteer to the wider public during January and February to ensure take up from a wide range of local people with different time and skills to offer.</p>	<p>Complete, with collaboration ongoing</p>
<p>9. Coordinate approaches for the recognition of volunteers by the Council and other partners in the community.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>The CEO and Head of Community Development recognise the need to align approach to volunteer recognition across Watford. Historically, W3RT has made recommendations and look forward to discussions with key stakeholders and partners.</p> <p>We look forward to the resumed Audentior Awards and associated work around Watford’s Centenary. Golden Volunteer will help highlight good work. We will welcome further discussions on the long-term alignment of local initiatives. We are in discussions with Atria and West Herts College for a volunteer drive during Volunteers’ Week 2022 (1-7th June) and during the year our Golden Volunteer platform will be available to local employers to promote employee volunteering.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>Arrange meeting in February/March 2022 with Cllr Dychton and Julietta Federico and CVS to discuss wider strategy</p>
<p>10. Build on the response to the Covid-19 crisis as a basis to change attitudes to support the most vulnerable in society, by building opportunities for professional development and long-term volunteering such as trusteeship.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>W3RT CVS is working closely with West Herts College to promote local volunteering opportunities to students to develop their transferable skills. In addition, we are promoting 6-month industry placements for students among local charitable groups.</p> <p>We are developing a co-ordinated approach to promote trusteeship roles via local organisations especially for younger candidates and those from BAME communities. We have monthly calls with Watford Chamber and can raise professional volunteering and trusteeship with them during the year.</p> <p>Our Digital Inclusion ‘Staying Connected’ and our Neighbours Together Community Champions volunteering roles offer opportunities for skills development for local people and long term roles.</p> <p>W3RT CVS is working with Team Herts volunteering and other CVSs across Hertfordshire on preparations for Trustees Week in November 2022.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>

Diversifying funding		
<p>11. Review the Watford Helps Community Fund, to clarify its role in relation to similar funds, such as HCF's Coronavirus Relief Fund and WCH's Community Development Fund.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>The fund is administered by W3RT with grant awards being agreed with WBC. There are 3 'anchor' fund raising events during the year, plus some additional events during the year.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>Continue to engage with meetings and planning to refine process from start of next financial year 2022-23</p>
<p>12. Ensure that the administration of a revised Community Fund is done as collaboratively and transparently as possible. Consider support from a range of partners on this such as Hertfordshire Community Foundation.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>W3RT continues to work closely with WCF, and engages in discussions with the new local funders group.</p> <p>We have launched a new W3RT Community Funds webpage to improve transparency and access to information on all aspects of funds we manage. All information on funds, eligibility and application process for Additional Restrictions Grants, Health Protection Board funds and others across Watford and Three Rivers area can be found on these W3RT Community Funds pages.</p> <p>Contactless pay point is in position in Metro Bank collecting donations for Community Funds to support Watford-based groups. To date it has raised £63 during phase one of the two year project (Dec 2020 – May 2021)</p> <p>There is now another contactless pay point at the Central Leisure Centre to raise funds related to the WBC anti-begging homelessness campaign.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>

<p>13. Consider aligning Community Fund grants more closely to strategic priorities.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>W3RT is always led by the intentions, wishes and instructions of donors</p> <p>Activities to date:</p> <p>A member of staff leading on fundraising has secured donations from commercial donors that are ringfenced to specifically support local dementia projects, in line with the Mayor’s dementia friendly town initiative.</p> <p>We also successfully hosted the fundraising page for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor’s January ‘Walk in the Park for HomeStart’ on our new Nation Builder page. You can see the page here: https://www.w3rt.org/walkintheparkforhome-start</p> <p>Future activities:</p> <p>W3RT is aware of WBC also actively hosting fundraising events and we welcome their efforts in this area to support local charitable groups. We are also pleased to recently join the planning meetings for these so that we can offer our support with promoting them via our comms channels.</p> <p>We would welcome any discussion on how priorities can better benefit the local community as part of the wider discussions on future Community Funds outlined above with different income sources (e.g. corporate donors, W3RT fundraising events, WBC fundraising events). Such discussions need to be mindful that monies W3RT fundraises directly through our own events and activities will also need to be available to groups in Three Rivers.</p>	<p>Actions:</p> <p>Attend upcoming fundraising meetings with WBC to improve understanding of priorities and initiatives.</p> <p>Planning discussions with WBC on framework of Funds for 2022-23 financial year</p>
<p>14. Consider allocating part of the Community Fund to projects lasting more than 12 months.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>Will include this in part of current discussions around overall future strategy for the W3RT Managed Community Funds from April 2022 onwards.</p>	<p>Continue to engage with meetings and planning to refine process from start of next financial year 2022-23</p>
<p>15. Align reporting schedules of all Watford Borough Council ‘Business-As-Usual’ expenditure with the Voluntary and Community Sector to ensure strategic priorities are considered.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>We believe this is currently happening, but are open to discussions with the Council on any areas for further exploration.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>

<p>16. Consider a full-time fundraising post, to support the Community Fund and VCS groups through the CVS.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>WBC and TRDC have agreed £15k total provision for us grant managing ARG and HPB funds, which allowed us to temporarily increase the weekly contracted hours of one member of our team who is a fundraising specialist from half a day per week to 2.5 days per week.</p> <p>This additional staff time with a fundraising professional is allowing us to provide the Big Quiz in December (£3,800 final figure raised for Community Funds), a Night at the Races event in summer 2022 and also stewardship of other fundraising partnerships such as the WBC Golf Day. A W3RT staff member is now on the monthly WBC fundraising calls.</p> <p>Our CVS Lead, continues to support local groups with sustainable funding through the Herts Funding Database. We will consider this role as part of future planning from April onwards.</p>	<p>Continue to engage with meetings and planning to refine process from start of next financial year 2022-23</p>
<p>17. Consider how to explicitly support the Voluntary and Community Sector to build financial resilience and diversify income streams alongside traditional fundraising.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>W3RT CVS continues to offer support on business planning and fundraising strategies and access to the Herts Funding Database. With partners, we are planning 4 fundraising network events this year including a fundraising fair.</p> <p>We have also delivered a successful fundraising campaign for Homestart through our new fundraising platform Nation Builder for WBC Mayor and Deputy Mayor’s Walk in the Park for Homestart. This demonstrates future fundraising potential for local groups in addition to our wider offering.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>
<p>Information sharing</p>		

<p>18. Review the Watford Helps networks, clarifying the roles of groups such as the Mayor’s Volunteering Planning Group in line with the One Watford review. Ensure that there is scope across Watford for VCS leaders to input to both operational and strategic discussions and decision-making.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>Activities to date:</p> <p>W3RT has made recommendations re: long-term networks and look forward to discussions.</p> <p>Networks are still re-emerging only gradually from the effects of lockdown, we will make proposals as part of the One Watford review.</p> <p>We are currently exploring opportunities to deliver digital networking or discussion groups through our Nation Builder site. We will continue to regularly review networks and align CVS networks to others to help fill gaps and avoid conflicts. W3RT Head of Community Development was happy to recently feed into the Terms of Reference of the Watford Volunteer group and recommend additional members who represent local BAME and other underrepresented groups.</p> <p>W3RT CEO continues to host the County-wide Herts Community Leaders Forum on a monthly basis with good representation across Watford. This forum covers wider strategic objectives affecting the VCS sector such as transition from Clinical Commissioning Groups to Integrated Care Systems and inputs into the regional sector’s VCFSE Alliance to feed into this work.</p>	<p>Continue to engage with meetings and planning to refine process</p>
<p>19. Review principles of CVS approach so as to minimise any possible conflicts of interest between W3RT’s support to its members and its role as a service delivery organisation.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>The report highlights some concerns expressed. We are open to further discussions in this area and responding positively to demonstrate transparency and offer reassurance.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>
<p>20. Review the CVS staffing role at W3RT to ensure more WBC input with regards to strategic and operational responsibilities, with the aim to encourage long-term staff who can build up strong local knowledge and relationships.</p>	<p>Status: Green – complete</p> <p>Our CVS Lead is a local resident and active volunteer and meets several times each week with teams across WBC. Our Community Funds Coordinator is also a local resident with strong connections across the local charity and corporate sector.</p> <p>New Head of Community Development role was appointed and joined in June 2021 and is attending regular strategic meetings with WBC. Any feedback on how these roles are meeting this recommendation would be gratefully received.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>

<p>21. Consider how to support VCS with collection, analysis and data sharing on changing needs across Watford, as part of wider approach by WBC and statutory partners.</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>Activities to date:</p> <p>Our new ICT platforms Golden Volunteer and Nation Builder (see end of report for screen shots) are now live and starting to generate a considerable amount of data on local activities. This will include volunteering, fundraising and engagement information. Golden volunteer use to date includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 250 registered accounts on the platform • 15 organisations including W3RT have roles being advertised on the platform • 34 different opportunities listed on the platform • All the opportunities can be found here - https://www.w3rt.org/volunteer <p>W3RT Head of Community Development took a strategic decision to migrate all W3RT Community Fund application forms to digital versions this year. Additional questions were added to forms around size, structure, cause and demographic of local groups so there is data available on local groups that applied. This data will be shared at the end of the financial year and will help to inform our new CVS membership strategy.</p> <p>Future activities:</p> <p>By the end of the financial year we will be able to share more detailed insights on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • volunteering activities, • fundraising activities • engagement levels for local charitable groups • general data on types of groups and causes accessing Community Fund monies <p>Census information will be available soon and W3RT looks forward to working with the Council to identify areas of need or development relevant to the VCS sector locally.</p> <p>Challenges:</p> <p>We aim to ensure that all Watford residents are aware of our new Golden volunteer platform to help them find local volunteering activities and we're also proactively promoting to students at West Herts College. W3RT CVS communications isn't usually targeted at the general public, so we would appreciate support from WBC marcomms team to promote our new Golden volunteer platform to members of the public.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>Prepare end of year reports including data insights</p>
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<p>22. Consider the groupings and “themes” used to categorise VCS organisations as a means to link new and emerging groups to those with similar aims</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>W3RT CVS regularly links new groups to more established groups, and our new Community Directory on Nation Builder and system data will assist with establishing and supporting thematic networks.</p> <p>W3RT CVSs existing sector knowledge, supported by data from our new systems will help us to identify groups supporting underrepresented causes and/or communities locally.</p>	<p>Complete with communications ongoing</p>
<p>23. Refresh the CVS’ KPIs on actively engaging with business so as to lay out explicit plans on how to share knowledge and skills between local businesses and the VCS (noting that businesses can also learn from charities).</p>	<p>Status: Amber – in progress</p> <p>Activities to date:</p> <p>We are keen to maintain positive engagement with corporate groups that will benefit the local VCS relating to skills sharing, corporate volunteering or fundraising and partnership opportunities.</p> <p>With that in mind, W3RT CVS has initiated monthly meetings with Watford Chamber of Commerce to share initiatives and facilitate communication. One member of the Community Development team also regularly attends Chamber events to share our initiatives and maintain positive connections with the business community.</p> <p>Future activities:</p> <p>We would like to host an event for local charitable groups on corporate fundraising and partnerships as part of our Fundraising Network later in 2022, ideally with involvement of the Chamber of Commerce.</p> <p>Initial meeting with Watford BID and Head of Community Development scheduled for end of January to open discussions.</p> <p>We are in discussions with Atria around hosting a volunteer recruitment event at the centre during Volunteers’ Week 1-7 June.</p>	<p>Action:</p> <p>Explore corporate partnership event opportunity in Q1 or Q2 of 2022-23 financial year</p> <p>Finalise plans for Volunteers’ Week event at Atria during Volunteers’ Week 1-7 June</p>

<p>24. Work with W3RT to create a proactive action plan to better engage with all parts of the Voluntary and Community Sector, particularly those that support underrepresented communities including those from BAME communities and those smaller groups that may not have their own physical spaces.</p>	<p>Status: Green - complete</p> <p>Activities to date:</p> <p>The Head of Community Development is exploring our approach to equality, diversity and inclusion locally. We have strong connections across the local sector in relation to older people and disability groups and are keen to proactively engage more with underrepresented groups.</p> <p>To better engage with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic (B.A.M.E) communities, we hosted a successful Engagement Event with participation from WBC in September 2021 and staff have worked hard to build good connections and trust across local communities. This work is ongoing and in collaboration with other County-wide initiatives such as CDA Herts, HCC, Herts Equality Council and multiple relevant local charities and faith groups. W3RT CVS staff all attended the WBC Community Forum on 11th January 2022 and will continue to support this initiative.</p> <p>To better engage with disabled people locally, W3RT Community Development Team facilitated an in-person meeting between Watford Deaf Club and staff from West Herts NHS Trust Hospitals to discuss accessibility in autumn 2021. As a result the “<i>Let Me Hear You, Let Me See You</i>” Forum meetings have been reintroduced focusing on access for individuals with sensory disabilities. The forum consists of Lead nurse for Patient Experience, Audiology Manager, CEO Hertfordshire Hearing Advisory Service, Chair of Disability Watford, Disability Panel representatives, Disability Champion, GP Liaison and Freedom of Information Manager, PALS Manager, Trustee at CAB-Patients Panel and Secretary for Corporate Nursing.</p> <p>W3RT is part of this proactive forum to ensure that our local deaf community and those with other sensory disabilities have equal access to health services. We are also attending regular meetings with the Sensory team at Herts County Council to learn more about County-wide initiatives that may benefit Watford communities.</p> <p>Future activities:</p> <p>W3RT CVS commissioned a focused, qualitative research project on LGBT+ communities experiences of the local VCS services and will be sharing results and plans for next steps once they are available.</p>	<p>Complete, with communications ongoing</p>
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Golden Volunteer Platform screenshot

<https://www.w3rt.org/volunteer>

The screenshot shows the 'Volunteering Hub' page for Watford & Three Rivers Trust. The page features a dark blue header with navigation links: Home, About, Services, CVS, Funding, Venues, News, Take Action, and Volunteering Hub. There are also buttons for 'Join', 'Donate', and 'Login'. The main content area is divided into three sections:

- Current Opportunities:** A large card for 'Collection & Delivery Volunteer' with a 'DOWN TO VOLUNTEER' button.
- Volunteer Match:** A list of interest categories with checkboxes: Art & heritage, Families & youth, Equality & inclusion, Poverty & homelessness, Sport & fitness, Wellbeing & aging, Faith, Community action, Environment & animals, and Global development.
- Upcoming Opportunities:** A table listing three opportunities with 'CHECK IT OUT' buttons.

Duration	Opportunity	Location	Action
Ongoing	Become a W3RT Digital Champion and help reduce Digital Isolation		CHECK IT OUT
Ongoing	Help support Watford's residents at Sewaday's Foodbank	Northwood, Watford	CHECK IT OUT
Ongoing	Come and Join the Pump House's Volunteer Team	Local Board Road, Watford	CHECK IT OUT

Registration form fields: First Name*, Last Name*, Email*, Mobile phone, and a 'Register' button.

Nation Builder fundraising platform screen shot

<https://www.w3rt.org/walkintheparkforhome-start>

Walk in the park for Home-Start



Watford & Three Rivers



**WATFORD
BOROUGH
COUNCIL**

We are excited to confirm that Peter and Aga are walking Watford's 17 award winning Green Flag parks on January 8th to raise vital funds for Home-Start Watford and Three Rivers. All of the money raised will support vulnerable families from the Watford area.

Being a parent has never been easy. It can be lonely, frustrating, heart breaking and overwhelming. Life-changing events can happen to anyone. All parents struggle at one time or another. That is why Home-Start is ready to support families through their toughest times. For more information, please visit <https://home-startwatford.org.uk/>

£855.00 raised so far. Help us get to £1,000.00

Select an amount

£10 **£20** **£30**