

Oarsome Chance

Annual review
2020/21



Richard Pohle/The Times

Contents

Welcome	4
Where we work	7
What we do	8
Extended support programme (ESP)	11
Covid-19	12
Programme update in numbers	14
Our impact	16
Social enterprise	18
News highlights	19
Financial update	20
With thanks	22
Our future	23

Welcome



“

Oarsome Chance opened its doors to work with and support some of our most vulnerable children and young people almost five years ago. I have been involved with the charity for the past four of these as a Trustee, Treasurer and, most recently, as Chair. It has been an incredible journey for the Charity and one that I have felt privileged to be a part of.

I'd like to take this opportunity to thank Paul O'Grady, who co-founded Oarsome Chance with his wife Emma, and was my predecessor as Chair. Paul's generosity and passion for OC's mission to provide opportunity to vulnerable young people has been remarkable.

Over the time I have been involved with OC, the Charity has gone from strength to strength. We are delighted to have achieved a high level of financial sustainability in such a relatively short time, which we hope stands us in good stead to continue to deliver the services that create such a positive impact and improve the life chances of so many of the young people we reach out to.

Our success and valued reputation is down in large part to the commitment and skills of our staff and dedicated volunteers, who give so willingly of their time and energy. Our team has proved pivotal to the Charity's success and I can genuinely say that, along with our

young people, there is very much a sense of belonging and being part of the 'Oarsome Family'.

The Charity has faced its challenges, most recently the COVID pandemic, but we have weathered the storm and have actually become more resilient as a result. Our turnover continues to increase and the breadth of what we have to offer continues to grow, not only on the water, but also in terms of the social enterprises we are developing. This allows us to provide bespoke care for our young people and contributes to our aim of helping every individual successfully transition to fulfilling careers, or back into mainstream education.

There are exciting times ahead and we are well placed to capitalise on this. To assist with this and to give greater depth to our senior management team, we have also recently recruited a Chief Executive Officer (CEO) to lead the day-to-day business of the Charity. It is the right time and in tandem we have commissioned a strategic review, which will provide the 'blue print' for the next chapter in OC's journey.

”

Rod Ashman, Chair of Trustees

Richard Pohle/The Times

Since 2017...

we have delivered more than

7000 curricular sessions

over more than

5000 participant days

And we have delivered over

1000 hours

of after-school and community activities

Our vision

Our vision is a society where all young people, regardless of their circumstances, feel safe and valued and have the best opportunity to learn the skills they need to achieve their potential and a successful future.

Our mission

Our mission is to provide a safe environment where young people learn practical skills, growing their confidence and resilience to give them the space and support they need to improve their future.

Our aims:

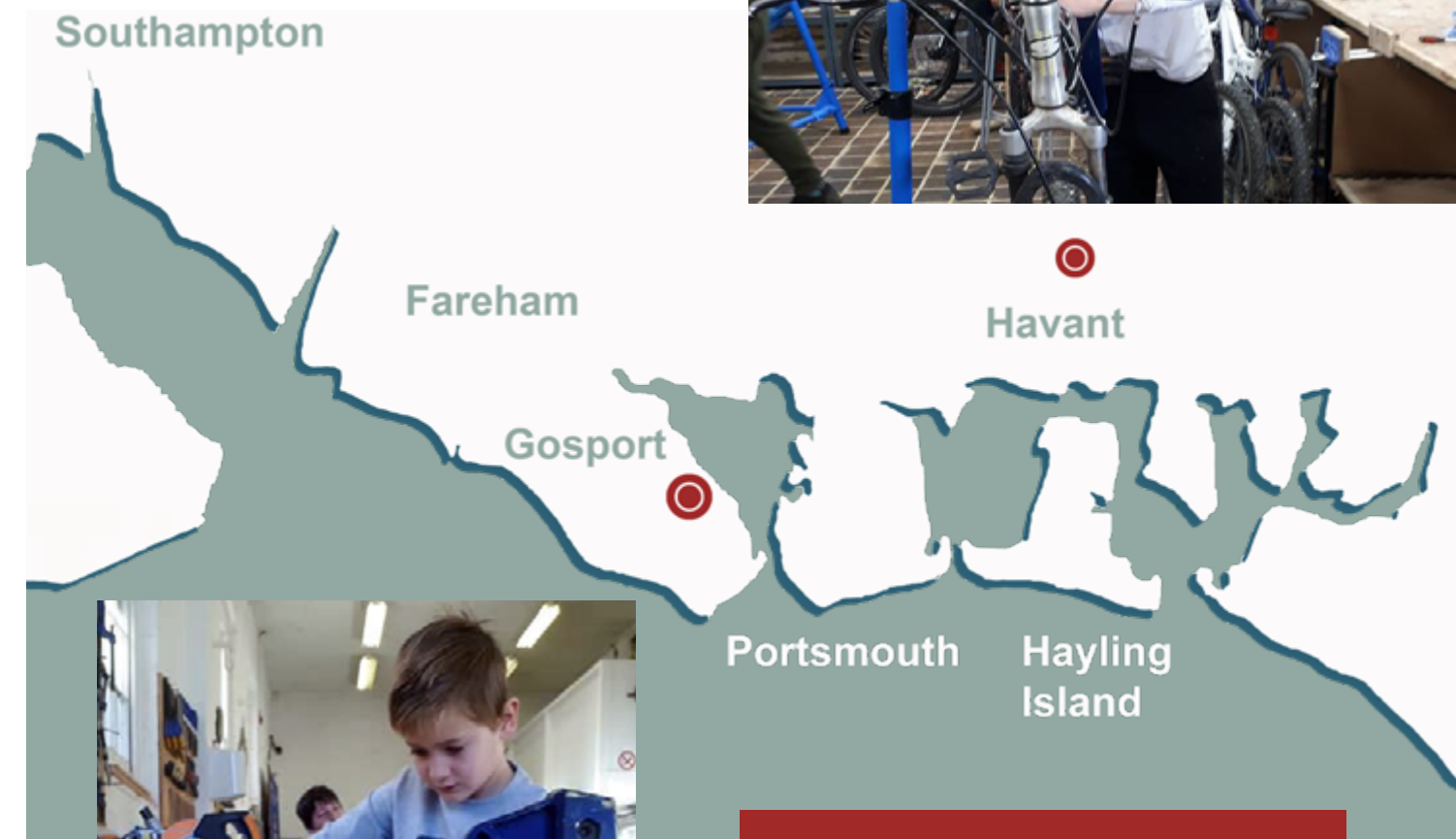
- To provide a safe supportive environment to engage young people who are disengaged from mainstream education and provide them with a place to belong.
- To provide vocational / practical training + physical activities to develop essential skills, re-engage with learning and improve employability.
- To support each individual to learn essential life skills: to teach the value of working with others; to foster a sense of achievement; to grow self-confidence and self-belief.
- To enable young people to gain accredited qualifications and facilitate opportunities for work experience and employment.
- To provide high quality support, training and supervision to staff to ensure they have the skills and capabilities required to deliver our services.
- To build effective relationships with local partners to ensure we are reaching the young people who will benefit most from our programmes
- To ensure the organisation is delivering against its aims by regularly reviewing progress, ensuring our delivery is appropriate and monitoring our impact.
- To ensure our organisation is sustainable and resilient in the long term through responsible governance.
- To develop a sustainable, repeatable educational model that can be replicated in other areas.



Where we work

Apex Centre, Havant

The Apex Centre based on the outskirts of Leigh Park, Havant. Our centre in Havant houses a fully equipped bike maintenance workshop and facilities for teaching Marine Engineering. It also incorporates a dry rowing studio



Maritime Workshop, Gosport

The Maritime Workshop occupies The Boathouse in the grounds of St Vincent college in Gosport. With a fully equipped workshop, Canvas Works studio and indoor rowing suite. Located by the side of Forton Lake, a tidal waterway, which provides direct access for on-water activities including coastal rowing and kayaking.

“ OC is providing a valuable practical, emotional and social learning environment that is helping to promote young people to make positive steps and goals in life... These young people are usually reluctant to engage with support services and the regard that they hold for Oarsome demonstrates the excellent approach. **”**

Feedback from a social worker from the Hants Youth Offending Team

What we do



Based in Gosport and Havant in Hampshire, Oarsome Chance delivers a rich blend of practical and sporting activities across programmes designed to engage, educate and cultivate essential skills.

OC's beneficiaries represent some of our area's most vulnerable children and young people. The wrap around support we deliver creates a Place to Belong that we've seen transform the outlook for young people who've had a sometimes traumatic experience of dealing with the mainstream system.



Carpentry & boatbuilding
in our fully equipped carpentry workshop in Gosport



On-water rowing
in wooden skiffs and kayaks on the neighbouring tidal waterway



Bike skills & recycling
in our bike maintenance workshop in Havant



Cycling
trips out to the local country park and mountain bike trails



Art activities
in a new fully equipped art studio at the Apex centre



External activities
including visits to skateboard parks and fishing trips

Curricular programme

We work with local partners, including schools, PRUs and the local authority to identify young people appropriate for our programmes, the majority of whom are excluded, or at risk of exclusion from school.

We work closely with our commissioners, the families of students, and the young people themselves, to provide the best plan for each one of them. The curricular programme runs 5 days a week during term time and students attend one to five days a week, taking part in a range of activities.

Non-curricular programme

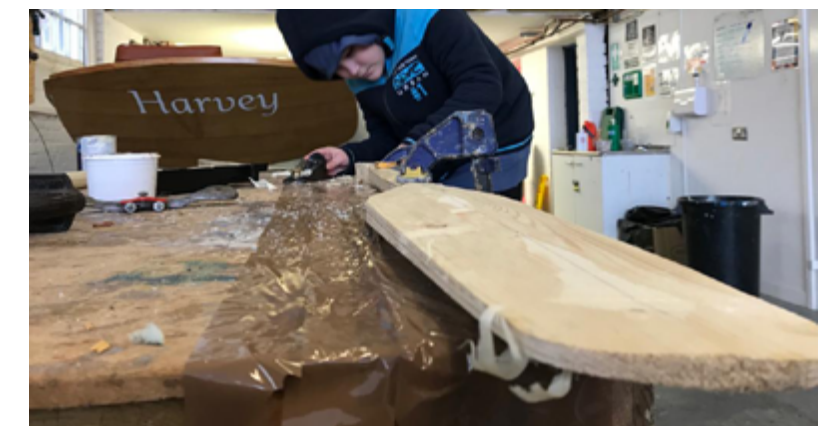
There is very little opportunity for disadvantaged young people in the local area to gain access to their local water resource. OC delivers in a unique way a blend of creative / workshop and sporting activities in after school sessions in collaboration with local community groups and schools.

Post 16 programme

As some of our older beneficiaries have 'graduated' from our core programmes, we recognise that the OC community is still essential support as they leave the school system.

Our post 16 training framework gives them vital continuity and engagement with learning, while also facilitating technical skills training, work experience and a path to employment.

We want to see our young people into full time work through our post 16 training and apprenticeships and links to local business. Post 16 training pathways include boat building, marine engineering and offshore sail training, including Royal Yachting Association (RYA) qualifications. Where appropriate, OC also facilitates apprenticeships for students – we have two apprentices currently attending college part time and working on our programmes, with two more potential apprentices waiting in the wings.



Canvas skills
re-purposing donated sails into products



Sailing
RYA affiliated, OC crews take part in regattas and arrange trips with external organisations



Marine engineering
learning how to repair and maintain marine engines



Indoor rowing
on our indoor 'erg' rowing machines



Guided online learning
online learning facilitated on-site in conjunction with an education provider



School
students attending school accompanied by their OC key worker

Extended support programme (ESP)

New project

It is widely recognised that young people experiencing social, economic and emotional deprivation as well as educational difficulties are four times more likely to experience low mood and psychological distress than others and are at greater risk of mental health difficulties.

In recognition of the importance for OC to determine and implement the additional support needed for each young person attending our programmes, the ESP project has been designed to embed a supportive mental health component into our service delivery.

Thanks to funding from The Berkeley Foundation and The Tudor Trust, OC were able to launch the ESP project in September 2020, with the recruitment of an external Project Lead to guide the project. The ESP Project Lead has been working with and alongside the staff team to gain an understanding of the needs of the young people, staff, and charity as a whole. Moreover it has achieved a better understanding of what makes Oarsome Chance

successful with its young people where other educational provisions may have not had success.

This early phase of the project has included additional specific training and supervision for support staff and more in-depth support for specific young people initially identified as needing more one-to-one support. Over the last few months, those young people no longer require such intensive work and are fully integrated into OC workshops and activities (or even partially back at school).

As ESP moves into the next phase, the Project Lead will continue to progress plans for staff development as well as trial further evaluation methods to gain a greater understanding of the impact of our work for individual students and beyond.



Case study

“This is the first place I have ever felt you genuinely wanted me here”

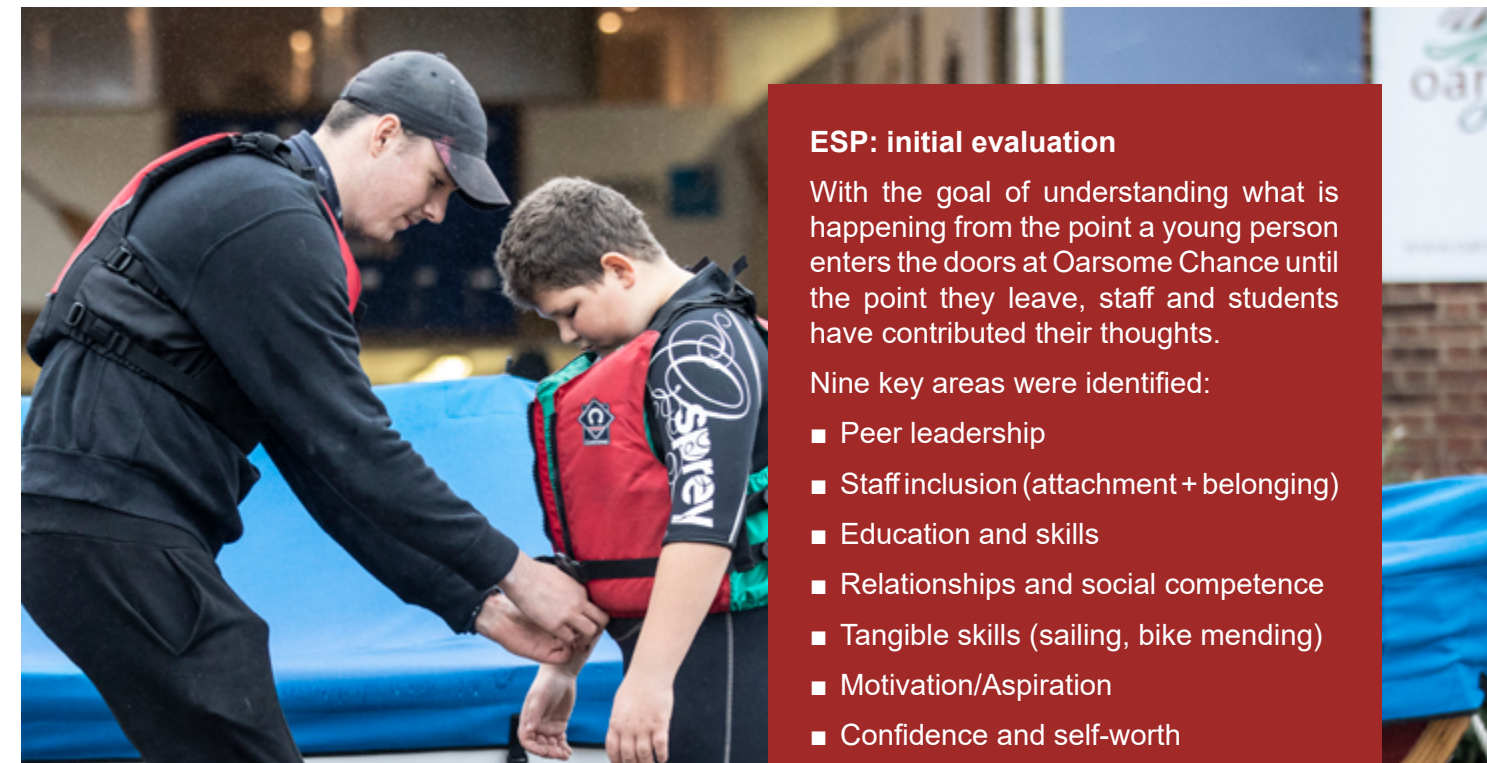
A looked after child, known to the police since he was a four year old, Jason had never settled in education.

Jason was referred to OC at the age of 12 and found the activity programmes and the welcoming community a place to settle and belong. The wrap around support he received from OC provided genuine pastoral care - nurturing where he had previously experienced violence.

OC has since given him an in depth and diverse route to employability through vocational training and work experience. Jason is now on a boat building apprenticeship, while also working his way through an RYA Offshore Sailing Yachtmaster scheme.

By slowly building his confidence and self belief and providing real opportunities to help him find a brighter future, OC has helped Jason completely turn his life around.

Richard Pohle/The Times



Richard Pohle/The Times

ESP: initial evaluation

With the goal of understanding what is happening from the point a young person enters the doors at Oarsome Chance until the point they leave, staff and students have contributed their thoughts.

Nine key areas were identified:

- Peer leadership
- Staff inclusion (attachment + belonging)
- Education and skills
- Relationships and social competence
- Tangible skills (sailing, bike mending)
- Motivation/Aspiration
- Confidence and self-worth
- Emotional self-care, coping strategies
- Boundaries, self-management

Covid-19

The global pandemic has had a huge impact, not only on our organisation, but also the young people we work with and the wider community.

Over the course of this year, we have responded rapidly to the fast-changing situation and at all times with the needs of our young people as our priority. The impact has been felt across our whole organisation:

On our operation:

As we entered the first lockdown in March / April 2020, government guidelines indicated that educational provision for vulnerable young people should remain open and this allowed us to ensure that we could keep our doors open and continue to offer our essential support to our core beneficiaries. We very quickly adapted our service delivery for our core curricular programmes to ensure they were as Covid safe as possible – smaller groups, more 1:1 work, increasing outdoor activities and ensuring mask wearing and increased cleaning down of all communal areas.

On a daily basis we needed to reach out to parents / carers and commissioners to plan attendance and activities. We also stepped up our pastoral care for students, including increased transportation to and from home and providing meals for attendees. Unfortunately our non-curricular activities were suspended, as restrictions prevented us from keeping these programmes running (apart from a short window in Autumn 2020).

We saw an initial dip in participant numbers, but as the Summer term progressed, the numbers of young people in regular attendance returned to pre-Covid levels and have remained there. Although the numbers of young people attending at any one time remained relatively constant, the average number of days each student attended increased significantly.

The adapted, flexible service delivery has become the 'new normal' for our programmes. From January 2021 we introduced daily Lateral Flow Device testing for all students, staff and visitors, which allowed us to operate in an educational 'bubble' and continue to deliver our rich blend of engaging activities for our young people. We have endeavoured to ensure, in our centres at least, that young people continue to experience the same activities, support and community, so that they have access to continuity and stability in otherwise chaotic lives.

On our young people

For many of our beneficiaries, OC provided a safe space and respite during very stressful times. With the increased levels of anxiety and uncertainty felt by all, our services helped to provide support and continuity, with benefits that are felt beyond the young people themselves, into their home lives and their local community. OC is increasingly becoming a central hub for partnership agencies around the care of our young people; for a time, due to the closure of other provision, we were the only consistent support they could access.

The increased level of intensive support has been incorporated into our operation, probably permanently. Despite restrictions or lockdowns, we are expecting a long period of recovery for our beneficiaries, as the long and unprecedented repercussions of the pandemic stretch into the years ahead.



On us financially:

During the first lockdown, with the uncertainty around attendance and commissioning, some of our staff were furloughed. However, from May 2020, most of our staff were back working on site as our service delivery built up again. The more intensive Increase in salaries of over 40%

However, with the increase in levels of commissioning, our income from commissioning fees more than compensated for the increase in

salary costs. We were also fortunate to secure external funding, including a sizeable grant from the DCMS funded National Lottery Coronavirus fund and received continued support from our regular Trust and Foundation funding partners. This means that we were in the fortunate position of coming through the year with our reserves intact and in a strong position to remain sustainable in the year ahead.



Case study

Before coming to OC, Joe had displayed difficult behaviour at home and school. Excluded from secondary school, Joe was referred to OC and didn't look back from day one, fully immersing himself in OC's activities and thriving.

With OC's support Joe passed his GCSE Maths & English and is now in his fourth year of a Marine Engineering apprenticeship. As a part of his training, Joe has experienced a season of work experience with RS commercial divers, has earned himself a work placement on the world class Alex Thomson Racing team and a summer working with a high-performance rigging company. He also has over 1500 offshore sailing miles around Europe, and a Fastnet race under his belt

Joe also works part time at OC and acts as a mentor, inspiring younger students following in his footsteps.

OC has totally transformed Joe's prospects – he is on track for a City & Guilds level 3 qualification along with a raft of other internationally recognised qualifications from the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) and British Canoeing.

OC has opened the door to incredible opportunity for Joe and a long fulfilling career in and around the marine industry.

Programme update in numbers



Average student attendance



Activity sessions delivered



Young people attending



Participation days



Members of staff



Commissioning partners



Richard Pohle/The Times

“Without OC, he would be lost in the system. It’s a sense of belonging and he’s happy.

He doesn’t have to conform, he is a square peg in a round hole at school. OC allow him to be himself. Staff are non-judgemental.”

Feedback from parent survey

Our impact

2020/2021 update

With the introduction of our impact measurement programme ‘Measuring the Good’ in early 2019 we are recording data against metrics led by the four key areas which form OC’s ‘framework for success’



Young lives changed

Making a difference for the young people we support: improved engagement, attendance and behaviour and ultimately individual achievement and employability.

Participation

89% attendance on OC programmes in 2020/21

Attendance rates for us are more than an output measure - simply engaging with a learning environment is a significant success for those students with more severe behavioural issues.

Engagement

1:1 surveys with beneficiaries, carried out termly (3 times a year) designed to measure how young people attending our programmes feel about themselves.

In the last year, this survey showed 96% of our curricular students agreed with positive statements about feeling useful, doing something valuable and being proud of what they have achieved.

Richard Pohle/The Times

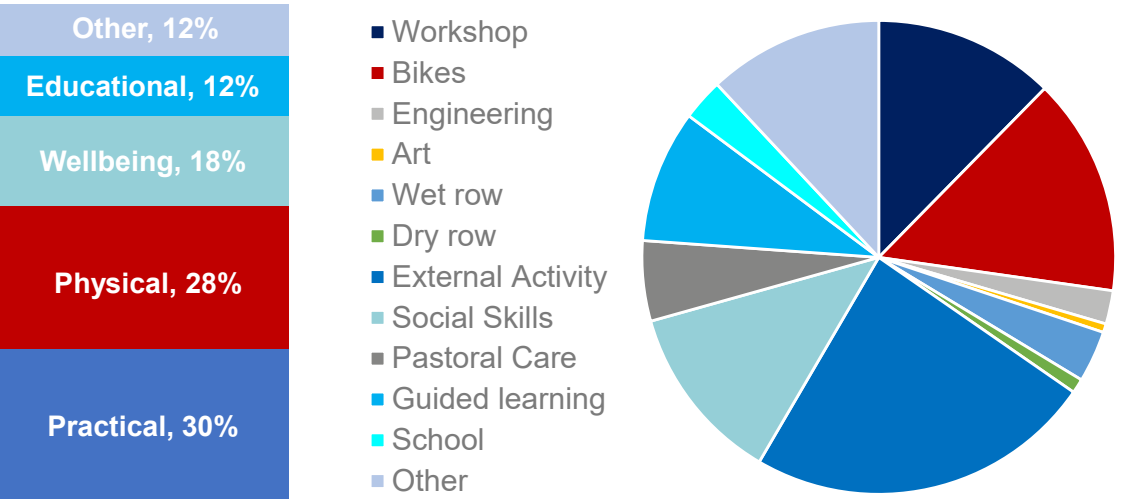
Scale & Reach

To ensure we support the young people we can help the most while seeking to expand our reach.

Activity sessions

Our core curricular day is divided into three 2½ hour sessions and activity is planned to meet the needs of the students who are attending. We track the delivery of these sessions and the session split by

type illustrates the rich blend of activities engaging our young people. In this year we delivered 3206 participant sessions across practical, physical, wellbeing, educational and other activities.



3206
participant
sessions
delivered

*An engaging
blend of
practical
and physical
activities*

A place to belong

Providing high quality pastoral care, to create a safe space for young people to engage and grow.

Helpfulness

Our parent / carer survey found that our students have shown an **overall improvement in helpful behaviour. 85% noted an improvement in behaviour in at least one area**, with particular emphasis on Volunteering to help and being more caring.

Passionate care

In a 1:1 survey which measures how our beneficiaries are feeling about coming to OC, young people are given a range of non-hierarchical statements to choose from (e.g. 'I learn new skills', 'It's boring here', etc). Results from the survey showed **over 89% of their responses were for positive statements with 64% of those being strongly positive.**

Continuity

To strive to be organisationally sustainable to ensure we continue to serve our key objectives

Funding mix:

Organisational sustainability is a high priority for us, as continuity of support for the vulnerable young people we work with is critical. With careful management, including the introduction of monthly cashflow monitoring, we have been able to successfully maintain this throughout the pandemic and we are happy to report that we have been able to protect our reserves despite the Covid crisis.

Reputation

Quarterly trustee meetings and termly team meetings to discuss and avert reputational issues.

“ *A is making more positive choices now and is in a much happier place in his mind* ”

Feedback from parent survey

Social enterprise

Social enterprise is an integral part of our plans going forward. As our social enterprise projects grow steadily they will increasingly contribute to OC's overall financial sustainability. Importantly this also provides a steppingstone into the workforce for OC students via vocational training, accredited qualifications and real life work experience.



Canvas Works

www.canvasworks.org

Producing and selling a range of products crafted from upcycled sails, Canvas Works provides an activity that engages students of all ages, who enjoy creating products while learning essential workplace skills. Online sales of Canvas Works products (e.g. bags and bracelets) unfortunately slowed significantly due to the impact of Covid, however Canvas Works has remained busy producing bespoke items for local customers, including garden furniture covers and sail covers.



Oarsome Bikes

Our bike recycling project at the Apex Centre is now well established. Bike maintenance and recycling is an excellent training tool and entry level into engineering, with young people working towards Velotech awards (national standard accredited qualifications).

OC plan to introduce a public facing retail counter at the Apex centre - this will not only help to build bike recycling income, but also extend the opportunities for training and building links with the local community.

Oarsome Skiffs

Oarsome Skiffs, are our own bespoke boat-building kits made up of custom-cut plywood pieces. They are designed to be quick to build and result in a rowing skiff ideal for young people to use, being very buoyant and with accessible entry. This year OC have sold on two of the Oarsome Skiff kits to another educational group to build within their programmes. The skiff building activity forms an integral part of our post 16 boat building training pathway. See the news highlight (right) about the help our students received from our corporate partners, International Paints

News highlights



'Virtual' Portsmouth Pull May 2020

Due to the Covid lockdown, we made our fundraising rowing challenge, the Portsmouth Pull, an online event.

The team of rowers who took on the challenge on dry rowing machines in their homes and gardens, pulled out all the stops to raise over £1500 for the charity.



Pop Up Paddlesports, July 2020

OC were approached by Friends of Hardway to help deliver activities for young people in the Hardway area for the Summer of 2020, as the area had suffered some bouts of anti-social behaviour in the Summer of 2019. OC devised a programme of fun water-based activities (kayaking and paddleboarding) with all the action taking place on previous trouble hotspot Hardway Green. Reports from local residents were that the buzz created by the Pop Up Paddlesports made a fantastic impact on the area. We've just finished another successful event (Aug 21), and we'll be back again in 2022!



Akzo Nobel training for our post 16 trainees, Nov 2020

Our post 16 trainees working on our Oarsome Skiff boat building project were really lucky to have expert training and guidance from our charity partners AkzoNobel.

Tim and his colleague Dean from AkzoNobel (International Paints Ltd) coached our trainees on the preparation and application of the paint finish on the Oarsome Skiff they have built. A huge thanks to them and to AkzoNobel for the donation of the materials. To learn these skills from industry professionals is a fantastic experience for the students - skills for life and future employment.



New electric minibus launched by the Mayor of Gosport, June 2020

We were honoured to receive a visit from the Mayor of Gosport Councillor Zoe Huggins in June who unveiled our new exciting 100% electric vehicle.

Our new electric vehicle is in keeping with our commitment to minimising our environmental impact, as well as reducing transport costs – saving money, while saving the planet! We were very fortunate to be awarded funding from The Clothworkers' Foundation as well as The Bernard Sunley Foundation to help with the purchase of the new eco-friendly vehicle.



OC featured in The Times, Dec 2020

OC was selected by Sported, the UK's largest network of community sports groups, as one of the twelve case studies to feature in the Times and Sunday Times Christmas appeal.

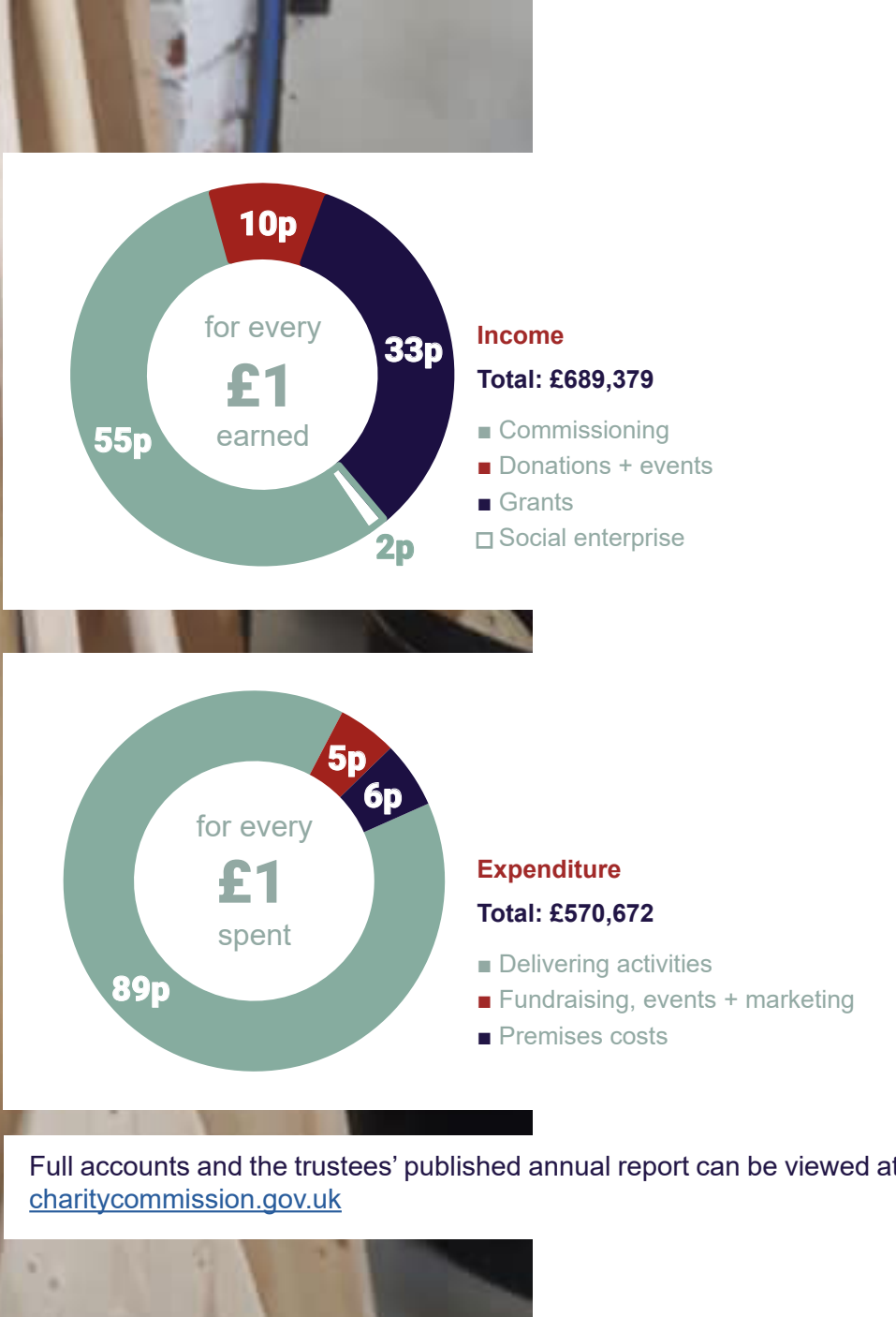
For a small charity to receive national exposure in this way was fantastic and we have had new supporters reach out to us after reading the article. Many thanks to Sported for giving us the opportunity to be a part of their campaign.

Financial update

Overview

The trustees applied careful and prudent monitors on the financial position of the charity as we entered an uncertain year around Covid-19. The higher costs associated with a higher intensity of service delivery were reflected in a 36% increase in expenditure on the year before.

However, due to a significant increase in commissioning which saw a 69% increase against the previous year and by increasing other external income by 31%, OC came through the year with a surplus.



Richard Pohle/The Times

Case study

“ Since coming to OC I have really changed into a different person. I feel more confident and that I belong with you guys. I have come on so far and with what I have done and the new things I have tried that have been brilliant for me. I do not know what I would have done if I was not with OC. ”

Amy was referred to OC due to unmanageable behaviour in school, including an extreme violent outburst. Amy has been diagnosed with learning difficulties and autism.

Amy found in OC a safe secure, non judgemental place where everyone is treated with respect and kindness - equally from staff to students and peer to peer. She had never experienced an educational setting like it in her previous 12 years of primary and secondary education.

As Amy was treated as an equal, she behaved like an equal and as her confidence has grown she has taken on a mentor role within OC, beginning training as a water sports instructor and much more.

With thanks

We are extremely grateful to our funding partners, without whom we would not be able to deliver our life changing work



29 May 1961 Trust
Alpkit Foundation
Ernest Hecht Charitable Foundation
George Bairstow Charitable Trust
HIWCF - National Emergencies Trust
The Holbeck Charitable Trust

Lord Barnby's Foundation
The Syder Foundation
The Leigh Trust
The Tabhair Trust
The W F Southall Trust

Corporate partners

Oarsome Chance has forged many valuable corporate partnerships whose support provides resources and opportunities that add amazing value to the work that we do.



Our future



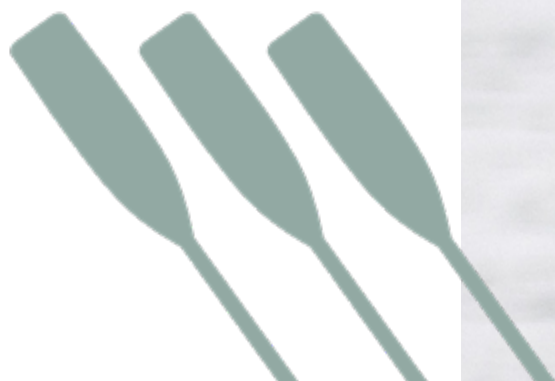
Looking ahead, we continue to face complex challenges due to Covid and our focus for the coming year is to maintain our high level of support and continue to deliver our rich blend of learning and engagement activities to vulnerable young people.

However, we are also keen to keep the organisation moving forward as it matures, and with this in mind the OC trustees have decided to turn our focus to our strategy development. We have seen the remarkable

change that is possible with the young people we work with, through the unique OC approach to engagement and support. The trustees would like to be able to extend the reach of this impact and have begun a thorough stakeholder review (including young people, staff and external partners) which will help OC establish a strategy for the organisation for the next 3-5 years.

Stop press...

We are pleased to report that as of August 2021, OC will have a new full time CEO who will work with the existing team at OC to continue the strategic work and deliver on the strategic aims it will establish.



Richard Pohle/The Times

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Website www.oarsomechance.org



Charity no. 1167787

Make a donation

Every donation we receive, no matter how large or small, helps us to make a difference in the lives of very vulnerable young people.

If you would like to make a donation, please visit our website which provides you with secure options for your payment:

www.oarsomechance.org/donate