

2022 - 2023



ANNUAL REPORT



brag enterprises
Enterprising People, Sustaining Communities

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CHAIRS REPORT

Another year has passed, and we are now moving forward into a year of a huge increase in the cost of living thus creating new pressures on our organisation both in service delivery and in the added personal pressure that is placed upon our staff. The cost-of-living increase along with the climate change issues will affect everyone in our organisation as well as our partners and clients around Fife.

I feel and worry deeply for our staff who coped through the two years of the Covid pandemic magnificently and can only hope that by continuing to work more closely and with a united team spirit they can move forward with the work that we do to alleviate poverty and social issues throughout the Fife region. I am very proud of the work that BRAG is doing to try and alleviate the growing issues of poverty and unemployment throughout Fife and am confident that the benefits in terms of improving the lives of many people will be felt for many years to come. It is normal for a chairman to focus on certain positive aspects of an organisation in the annual report, but I can assure you when I say that I regularly praise and talk about how I am impressed with the staff and board members of BRAG Enterprises and that I am extremely confident that we can continue to grow and expand the range of services that we provide.

It is an undisputable fact that this period of very high living costs is putting severe strain on the living standards of vulnerable people who are now under threat, this is the time that organisations such as BRAG have to step up and provide support and help to those most in need in our region. The Levenmouth projects and the Pantry at Crosshill are two outstanding examples of what we are about in helping local people and I look forward to seeing them grow as we move forward; these success stories are all down to the hard work and dedication of our existing staff members and I take my hat off to them, they are outstanding human beings and are to be commended for the skill and tenacity with which they have managed to keep these projects running successfully. Tough challenges lie ahead of our group over the next twelve months, but I am confident that our staff and management will continue the good work in support of Fife communities and the many varied clients who participate in our wide range of schemes and projects.

David Piper

Chair of Board of Trustees

MANAGING DIRECTORS REPORT

Not only did we have to recover from the impact of COVID-19 pandemic and its effects we then had Brexit and a war in Europe to deal with. The combination of all of these impacted upon every single aspect of our lives. The most notable has been the cost-of-living crisis which has hit everyone. Unfortunately, this impact has not been equally shared. People living in poverty have seen catastrophic changes in their income at a time of huge inflationary increases in essential items. Like them, our organisation has had to evolve quickly in 2022-23 to ensure we were able to continue to meet and serve the needs of the people we aim to support.

We've ensured we have continued to learn, adapt and evaluate our overall approach and the support we provided with regular service user and staff surveys have helped us to stay on the right track. In the past we had an approach of engaging and inspiring individuals that were sent our way. Post pandemic we are now having to add find to that approach. Unfortunately many of the people that need our help are not reaching out to us via traditional routes and we are now having to adapt our service design to ensure we now reach out to them.

The cost-of-living crisis is having an impact for sure, the last two quarters of 2021-22 were the toughest we have had to endure, and I would like to pay credit to the staff and our volunteers for their tenacity and hard work during that time.

Brian Robertson-Fern





2022-23 IMPACT

1480

VOLUNTEER HOURS

41



SQUARE START
FAMILIES
SUPPORTED



12,962
OF FOOD DIVERTED
FROM LANDFILL



8,757
PEOPLE RECEIVED
PANTRY PRODUCE

160

ADULT CLIENTS NOW
IN WORK



229
YOUNG CLIENTS
SUPPORTED

BRAG EMPLOYABILITY

BRAG have long built its reputation on providing opportunities based on individuals securing a job that helped them and their families prosper and grow.

Working with our Fife ETC partners we continued to deliver our own Spring Forward adult services (25+) across Fife on behalf of Opportunities Fife. These services are funded by both NOLB and UK Prosperity Funding. Our targets for the provision was spread across the Fife ETC Partnership with BRAG retaining 340 registrations with the remainder going out to our partners.

At the start of the year, we were given a much more manageable target compared to previous years. There was a directed move towards quality of service offer rather than just performance numbers and this allowed the teams to deliver in innovative new ways as we found it harder to find people needing our help.

During the 2022-2023 year, we delivered our support in person both 1-2-1 and in groups. We held self-employment workshops, pre recruitment drives, confidence building sessions and walk and talk groups, alongside, outdoor activities, games design, VR workshops and a pool tournament. This change was very much to react to the change in service design where we had to find people needing our assistance. Given Fife's semi-rural nature, we supplied travel tickets and travel training whilst recognising we needed to support those with low mood and anxiety. After working with them to identify career options we completed interview preparation for work ready clients.

We continued to provide advice and guidance to those with an offending background, completing letters of disclosure and support with job searching, ensuring that the field of employment chosen was appropriate to the background and that unachievable goals weren't encouraged.



no  one
left behind





EMPLOYABILITY CASE STUDY #1

Mitchell was referred to BRAG by Leven Job Centre and after several phone calls to try and arrange a meeting, Mitchell attended BRAG offices. He was friends with another one of our clients, so they attended with him at his first meeting. They both cycled down from his home in Kennoway, where they live and during our meeting, he agreed to come on our programme. Mitchell had very limited work experience to speak of and had been long term unemployed. He lived alone in a council property and had a young daughter with whom he didn't have much contact with, through no choice of his. Mitchell lived a chaotic lifestyle at times and some of his friends are heavily involved in drink and drugs. Mitchell expressed his desire to work and make better choices in his life.

As Mitchell and Michael attended BRAG on their bikes, I discussed our up and coming Making Tracks cycle programme which was due to start the following week. They were both keen to attend this. We arranged with my colleague they would be collected in the van with their bikes from Kennoway and taken through to Lochore Meadows and Fife Cycle Park for the duration of the course. Mitchell attended this course every week for 8 weeks. By the time this had finished, Michael was working for BRAG under the Coalfield Worx project. Mitchell then applied for a secured position on the programme. He received assistance in managing his time and his salary and was able to then provide for his daughter. After working on the Worx project he was able to secure full time employment with an employer in Cupar.

EMPLOYABILITY CASE STUDY #2

This client with a history of reoffending self-referred to BRAG for advice with regards how to disclose their past to employers. Client had always been in work and when they received a conviction this all changed. As a result, they ended up unemployed for the first time in their life. We referred them over to CARF for advice around benefits as they were unsure what they were entitled to.

We provided guidance on what the client needed to disclose and how to do this. We worked closely with them to create a disclosure statement detailing the facts and progress made since. We advised on how to use the statement when applying for work. Due to the nature of their offence, they would now be unable to continue in their previous field of work and we updated their CV to reflect this.

Whilst we were working on the above the client became homeless and moved into a homeless shelter. This was a huge shock to them. After some time, they were given their own tenancy. We linked them in with Frontline Fife who supported them with some household items and provided support and guidance re their new tenancy. We helped them with job search including job broker support. Client A secured self-employment and we applied for funding to purchase suitable clothing for work.



CLIENT QUOTE

"Thank you for all your help and support. You have been there for me over the past few years. I have really appreciated your help, from the chats on the phone, doing my CV and documents to the additional services you have linked me up with. I have benefitted greatly from your input. You were supportive and non-judgemental when I really needed it. You helped me see there was light at the end of the tunnel. Now I feel I've got my confidence back and survived probably the worst period of my life. Thank you again for all your support and guidance."



SQUARE START FAMILIES

This year we found ourselves covering a very different geographical area than in previous years. We ceased delivery in the Levenmouth area. We offered full family support to families in Dunfermline and west Fife and based most of our provision at the Liberty Church in Dunfermline as well as working with a very small number of families in North-East Fife. We work closely with partners Youth First and Frontline Fife.

During the 2022-2023 year, we delivered our support in person both 1-2-1 and in groups, as well as maintaining a heavy online presence for those family members who were unable to participate in person. We held a summer fete which was very well attended, a family movie night, a Halloween party and we had a Christmas lunch with a visit from a VIP – Santa – who ensured all our children had a lovely gift for Christmas day.

Alongside the light touch and sociable activities, we designed an approach that supported a move from social isolation, we also delivered Trauma Informed Parenting workshops, first aid training, digital skills training, and travel training. We supported parents with housing and benefit issues, delivered homework classes and cooking and shopping on a budget sessions.

Our achievements against our targets were 40 registrations out of 41 families supported, we also had 2 moved into jobs and one progressed to university.



FAMILIES - CASE STUDY

This family was referred to us via Social Work in April 2022.

Initial referral came in citing isolation, poor mental health and evidence that they were struggling as a family. They assessed the family and started to engage with them with a view to improving overall family life.

The client was a single parent to 5 children, 3 with additional needs. They were in their own property; however, it was very overcrowded, and they were on the waiting list for a 5-bedroom house to suit all the needs of the family. The partner was not involved in the family dynamics due to a history of domestic violence.

The parent had poor mental health, felt isolated, and needed some support to help deal with day to day family life. The individual started attending each week with 3 of the children who played and learned with staff. When the children were playing with other workers, the client felt able to open up more about the homelife and the barriers they faced.

One of the older children was a teenager who has psychogenic mutism due to PTSD and, after speaking with client, was assessed and referred to the Step-In course ran by Fife Council – the client was happy that the child was now planning for their own future and allowed her to focus on themselves.

Client accessed our own in-house training. This included a food hygiene certificate, Leader cookery courses, Trauma Informed Parenting Workshop. A referral also went into FEAT to address mental health management. They were also provided with cookery and cleaning packs for the home and a slow cooker to help ease the costs of cooking for a large family.

It has taken the client some time to feel comfortable with workers and they were initially hesitant to ask for more help. Since then, we have applied for a bus pass for them, put a referral over to Fuel Poverty team within Fife Council, a food bank referral, and most recently support from a Short-Term Housing Support Worker for 6 months to help manage their finances better. Our team also helped with appointments and to make in-roads into improvements in the client's mental health state.

The client now feels a sense of relief and continues to engage with support, groups, and training and has a much more stable home life.



'GET MOVING' CYCLING PROGRAMME

BRAG delivered a 4-week programme with funding we secured from Cycling UK. Participants were given the opportunity to take part in engaging cycling sessions as well as educational classroom sessions. The programme offered participants a safe environment, to build confidence and get back on their bikes.

TOGETHER LEVENMOUTH HUB

Together Levenmouth have had a busy year. After employing eight brand new staff, some of which were furthest from the job market, we opened our High Street hub in April 2022. Set up to bring much needed footfall to the High Street it came equipped with Gift Shop, Escape Rooms, Adventure Golf and a Coffee shop whilst also hosting a community lottery and monthly market. It went from strength to strength in its first 6 months with a sustained increase that would have seen it financial stability by December that year.

Unfortunately, there was a huge fire in neighbouring properties, and we have not been able to open it again due to ongoing safety concerns. However, In the meantime, our staff have not sat around idle. They have completed 45 Warm Space sessions over the winter helping people have a free space to go where they could get warm and be fed. We also ran a free Santas grotto for 300 local children where they also received a present from Santa. They picked 20 bags worth of litter from local Levenmouth beauty sites as well as completing around 1000 hours of work for other local charities and community groups. They served in the local foodbank, worked in the foodbank warehouse. At CLEAR and Silverburn Park they planted 2000 trees and 200 poppy seeds, where they also gardened and cleaned. Throughout all of this they served thousands of drinks and food to local people. Additionally, they have continues to run free bingo for the elderly and those socially isolated and get around 30 people per session each week.

We are hoping to be able to re-open the Hub in November this year with plans to develop other exciting activities.



MAIN BENEFITS AND AIMS OF THE PROGRAMME WERE:

1. Fitness - Low impact exercise so it's easier on joints, therefore, being suitable for all ages groups
2. Healthy lifestyle - Reduces the risk of heart disease/Type 2 Diabetes/stroke
3. Build confidence meeting new people/ reduces social isolation and riding a bike
4. Bike ability and road safety
5. Basic maintenance of bike
6. Reducing carbon footprint, encouragement to use bikes for shorter journeys rather than using the car





THE PANTRY @BRAG & ENERGY EFFICIENCY SUPPORT

The Pantry opened its doors to our newly refurbished Pantry shop and 'Mary Pit Stop' Café on Tuesday 5 April 2022, with John Bayne from Baynes the Bakers formally cutting the ribbon. The launch event gave the team a chance to celebrate our Lottery funding.

Our members now enjoy shopping in the Pantry shop and stopping for a coffee and catch up with friends in the Café. The Pantry continues to see an increase in people accessing our food provision. The cost-of-living crisis has impacted everyone in the last year and has only highlighted further the need for extra support. Whilst we do still have a waiting list in operation we are trying to support as many people as we possibly can, whilst ensuring that we have enough stock to keep the Pantry running at capacity. The Pantry team and volunteers continue to do an excellent job, they are a dedicated and

innovative team, providing a variety of food for our local community, offering recipe bags whilst also focusing on continuing to reduce food waste. The Mary Pit Stop Café is now the hub of the community on a Thursday and it has fast become a vibrant social space for people to meet, have a chat, get help with affordable food, energy advice and sometimes just provides them a safe place to meet new people, reducing social isolation and anxiety.





As part of our ongoing poverty reduction measures, the Pantry offered Energy Efficiency support thanks to funding we received from Centricas Energy for Tomorrow Fund. Over the last year this programme has been a huge success and in the current climate our members have benefitting hugely from the Energy Efficiency Sessions. As well as the 1:1 support/ telephone advice sessions/home visits and the Handy Service provision which offers the installation of LED bulbs, Thermal Curtains, Microwaves, slow cookers, fuel vouchers, food vouchers, cosy packs including gloves, scarf and thermos flasks as well as a new boiler. All of which have made a huge difference to the lives of our Pantry members. The financial gains amount to a staggering £13,998.00 worth of support including clearing fuel debt for members. This is obviously offered in line with support from advisors to avoid continuing issues in the future, an action plan is worked on collaboratively and other appropriate energy efficiency measures are put in place as well as ensuring that those that qualify are receiving the benefits that they are entitled to, offering help and support to access these benefits, warm home discount where necessary.

Energy advice - Impact Statement

“As a result of the support received, Mr H learned ways to reduce his energy consumption and costs. He felt more confident working his heating controls and better informed of the support available to him. The thermal curtains helped retain heat in the living room and reduce draughts from the window. The LEDs reduced his costs for lighting and the microwave provided a more energy efficient way of cooking. The cosy pack will help Mr H stay warm when it is cold. He was also awarded £260 from the Home Heating Advice Fund. This will help him stay on supply and allow him time to budget better for his bills. If he is awarded the Warm Home Discount, this will be a further £150 to help with his fuel costs. The total monetary value of the support Mr H received was to the value of £645”.

IN THE LAST YEAR WE HAVE.

DIVERTED 12,962KG OF FOOD

from landfill and used it to feed our local community instead.

Provided food and supported
8,757 INDIVIDUALS.

15 VOLUNTEERS

regularly involved in the Pantry over the last year.

OVER 1,480 VOLUNTEER HOURS

involved in the delivery of the Pantry over the last year.





FORMULA 24 STEM PROGRAMME - IN PARTNERSHIP WITH YOUTH JUSTICE AND AUCHMUTY HIGH SCHOOL, GLENROTHES

This project formed part of the Gannochy Trust funding which we had ringfenced for several years as we were unable to run provision throughout Covid. We worked closely with Fife Youth Justice staff to deliver this provision to school leavers who had no positive destination post school. This has been a challenging programme, however, the school competed in their first F24 race event in the spring of 2023. Getting to the race event has been a huge achievement for the young people involved who had previously disengaged with learning. However, being involved in the event and experiencing the race day gave them the determination to overcome technical issues on the day and get the car back on the track. Their hard work meant they brought home the Best Portfolio Trophy highlighting their F24 journey which was a huge success! The team also achieved their Dynamic Youth Awards through participation in the project and a variety of STEM activities. The programme was also run in partnership with Leviton manufacturing based in Glenrothes who are keen to bring to life career opportunities within STEM industries, offering workplace visits, talks and supporting with the build of the F24 car as well as providing tools and equipment.





COALFIELDS WORX

This new project was part funded by Coalfields Regeneration Trust and was intended to provide fully paid placements to local unemployed trainees. The new Supervisor bedded in well with the two adult trainees and a youth trainee in post by 1st October. They kept themselves busy doing work at at our Crosshill and Methil sites to get hands on with the tools and equipment. We then offered the service out to the Cowdenbeath area, and the team were involved in local letter picking, planter repairs and other community works. They all attended portable scaffold tower building (PASMA) training along with them obtaining CSCS tickets which would allow them to work in construction.



coalfields **worx**@brag





FINANCIALS

2021-22

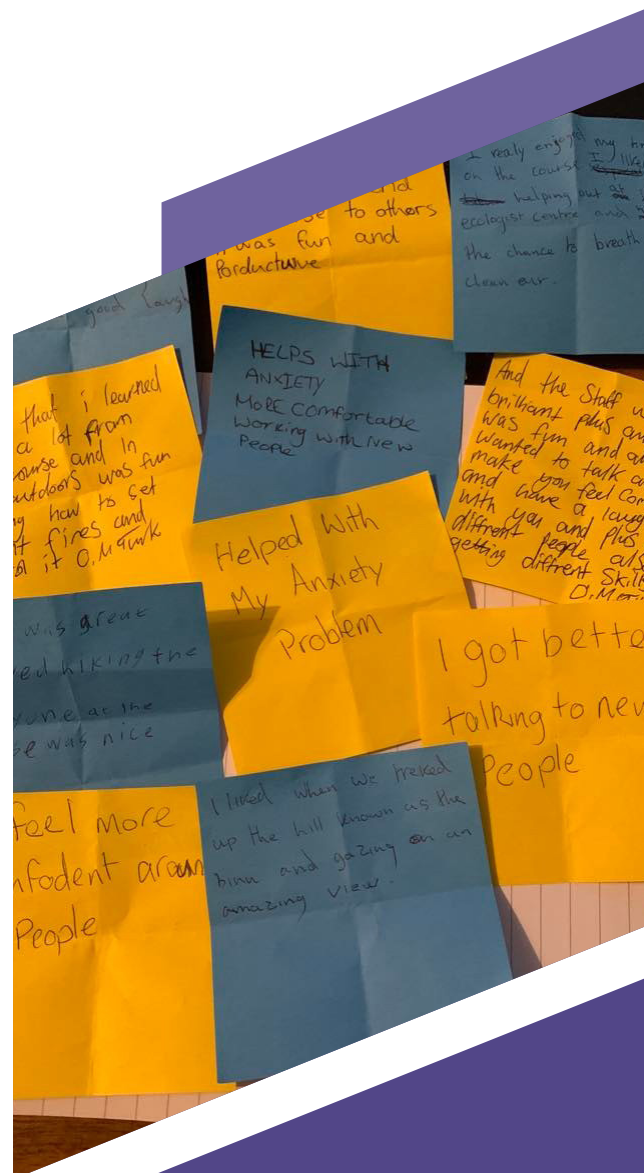
Income	£2,148,962
Expenditure	£1,552,978
Year end surplus	£595,984
(deficit)	(£533,177 restricted)
Balance Sheet value	£2,206,179

2022-23

Income	£1,931,691
Expenditure	£1,963,318
Year end surplus deficit	(£31,427)
Balance Sheet value	£2,174,752

As the organisation enters its 35th year of existence, we will enter a period of reflection and celebration of our past whilst exploring what our future may look like. We have shown we have the skills to adapt to any need so here's to the next 35 years.





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