

the alice cross centre



**AGE CONCERN, TEIGNMOUTH AND SHALDON**

**ANNUAL REPORT**

**YEAR ENDED 30<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2020**



Company Registration Number 2338079

Charity Registration Number 800996

## Chairman's Report

This year has been perhaps the most difficult year since the Alice Cross was established. We are facing several challenges including the COVID crisis, which has had a devastating effect on our society. Without doubt the way the Alice Cross will operate in the future will be different from previous years.

The board are developing new ways in which the Alice Cross will function in the next 10 plus years. A new name has been proposed to help in our aim to appeal to a wider age range (40 plus), we are working towards ensuring financial independence from grants and how we respond to supporting the wellbeing of people as they live longer and are generally in better health compared to when Alice started our unique institution.

All staff, volunteers and trustees have provided immensely important contributions over the past year, none more so than our response to the COVID crisis. For those that do not know, we were the leading community group during this crisis and established the COVID crisis help line 01626 626626 which received more than 2500 calls for help.

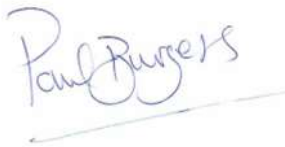
Services provided including shopping, befriending, meals, and a whole range of support to help vulnerable people in the community of Teignmouth and beyond. Our work in this area of COVID support is now entering the next phase and this will be a significant part of our work over the next 12 months.

I would very much like to place on public record the work of our centre manager, Julia Street. Her outstanding management and contribution to the Alice Cross Centre has been invaluable. She has been extremely dedicated and a true local hero whose contribution to our community has been inspirational. Additionally, our staff have gone above and beyond in their work over the past year.

There are a huge number of people to thank, too numerous to mention in this short report, who helped with our COVID response in March and April. I would particularly like to thank Peter Chatterton and Pauline Janin for their help with IT support and contacting people who called our help line. A special thanks to Charlie Bass for using his telephone support platform and to Richard Pike from Cooks foods who kindly donated 1000 ready-made meals. A special thanks also to Huw Weatherhead for his long-term involvement in our IT systems.

This year, several trustees who are at the end of their term as trustees are leaving us, a very big thank you to the following trustees Margaret Cobb, Keith Robinson, Helen Hodges, and Pauline Janin. I would personally like to thank Janet Edmondson for her tremendous work with fundraising over the years. All will be very much missed.

Whilst this year ended with the COVID crisis and the huge impact this will have on our organisation, I have no doubt whatsoever that with the support of all volunteers, staff, trustees and our "clients" the future of the Alice Cross is an opportunity for us all to work together to build a centre that will continue to make an outstanding contribution to our community.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Paul Burgess". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Paul Burgess, Chair of Trustees

8th October 2020

## Centre Manager's Report

This year has been very successful in making Age Concern Teignmouth & Shaldon – Alice Cross Centre a pivotal hub for the over 50's in Teignbridge and a focal point for services to the community.

Right up until lockdown and throughout this financial year, the centre was pursuing its new MISSION

“Supporting the community by making later life a fulfilling and enjoyable experience”

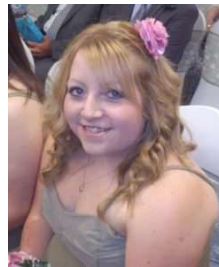
AND Vision statement -To be the Community Centre of choice for improved health & wellbeing for all

Many of our initiatives for increasing health & wellbeing including exercise classes, weight loss programme, healthy eating were fully attended. The centre was close to full occupancy in letting of rooms and our activities were complimented by those of other support agencies using our building to deliver vital services.

When Covid-19 struck and the ensuing lockdown hit, we had to act fast to switch our services from onsite at the Alice Cross and reach out to the community to support them.

## The Team

Age Concern Teignmouth & Shaldon had 9 trustees during the year, 4 of whom have stepped down and 1 new trustee joining the board. Paul Burgess continues as Chair of trustees and Elizabeth Batson is replacing Keith Robinson as Treasurer. We extend our thanks to Helen Hodges, Pauline Janin, Keith Robinson, and Margaret Cobb for their tremendous contribution to the Charity in their time as trustees. We welcome Paul Scholes as new trustee. The General Manager, Julia Street is assisted by a part time Office administrator, Alison Fenton, part time Volunteer Coordinator, Yvonne Lamond, and part time cleaner, Susan Hingley. We have a great catering team and cook as well as over 50 volunteers.



Paul Burgess –Chair Trustees   Julia Street – General Manager   Alison Fenton – Administrator   Yvonne Lamond-Volunteer Coordinator

I would like to say what a pleasure it is to work with such an amazingly, hard-working and dedicated team as I do and I would personally like to thank and congratulate everyone on their resilience and perseverance during this incredibly challenging time.



The Centre would not function without the loyal band of over 50 volunteers giving an estimated **7500** hours a year – which would cost **£67,500**, if they were each paid £9 an hour. Without their help the Centre would find it almost impossible to function - so a huge thank you to all you wonderful volunteers.

In addition, COVID-19 saw a huge influx of new volunteers, mostly furloughed people, and members of U3A who wanted to support the more vulnerable & shielding people in our community, in any way they could. It was magnificent and many of those people have gone on to become regular volunteers with us.

We encourage younger people of all abilities to enhance their skills and experience as volunteers and provide work experience placements for local students and opportunities for Duke of Edinburgh participants to fulfil part of their challenges.

## Activities

The centre continued to offer its traditional range of activities to ensure the general, social, and physical wellbeing of our users. Exercise and dance classes improve strength and balance helping to prevent trips and falls, which are so prevalent in this age group and can lead to premature immobility. Our physical exercise classes are designed to help people of all ages, sizes and shapes, abilities, and mobility.

Line Dancing continues to have a good following with the lead of Viv Wilson MBE and chair-based exercise is a firm favourite with Clive. To cater for those who have commitments during the working week, we offered evening, afternoon and Saturday Pilates, Yoga and Eastern dancing classes.

Both seated and floor-based Yoga have been shown to improve blood pressure, alleviate the symptoms of arthritis and improve sleep, among many other benefits, including physical fitness and flexibility. The exercises, combined with relaxation and breathing techniques, improve overall health and wellbeing. Floor based Yoga was introduced during the year to cater for our more energetic users.

Pilates class helps to reduce the risk of injury which weight-bearing exercises can cause. Arthritis sufferers benefit because the gentle mid-range movements decrease the chance of joints compressing while maintaining the range of motion around them. For osteoporosis, the simple and standing Pilates leg exercises may increase bone density in both the spine and the hip. The mid-range motion of the exercises can help people overcome rigidity and become more flexible.

Art and craft classes encourage new hobbies or the rekindling of old interests and provide the time and space to pursue these. The centre also provides accommodation for a variety of local voluntary community groups, including Bridge, Chess and Choral society.



We have benefitted from Active Devon funding under the connecting actively to nature CAN scheme. Aimed at 55+ year olds. CAN funded a project with Southwest coast path and Alice cross, "couch to coast" encouraging people to start walking with an aim to doing small sections of the coastal path. The members of the group enjoyed it so much that they are continuing with their own walks.

We were able to run a 12-week, 50+ fitness course on Teignmouth Den and seafront, led by personal trainer Rob Wells to help people get back into fitness in a gradual way, incorporating stretching, simple exercise and running



*DCC – Connecting Actively to nature CAN 50+ Fitness with Rob Wells*

We have been able to continue our computer classes using iPads and hold regular drop-in days. With so many services actively encouraging online booking and communication, including prescription renewal etc., these classes ensure that our clients can manage new procedures with confidence and at the same time enable them to keep in touch with local, national and global issues as well as their often, scattered families. Demand for these classes is high and we are constantly seeking funding to continue to offer them.





Continued through the year supplemented with the Trim Teign fitness programme which will increase the potential for weight loss by those who take part.

In January 2020, the centre hosted the launch of the CCG/VIH, and Dr Alan Desmond 28-day Plant based food challenge. The Happy Pear came to help launch the new diet and share their amazing recipes and online food plan. The participants were weighed, had blood & cholesterol checks at the start and end of the challenge. The Alice provided Vegan Wednesday home cooked plant-based meals and VIH held Friday shared lunches, so participants could exchange ideas and offer support to each other.

At the follow up evening at The Alice Cross in February the results were quite enlightening, with all the several hundred participants having decreased blood and cholesterol levels, in just 28 days. Dr Jenny Corser talked about the Whole Life project that would be a follow programme to help support people to make dietary and lifestyle changes to improve health & fitness.

Memory loss and dementia are becoming widespread and increasing problems and very often lead to isolation from the community for both sufferers and carers. A memory café held on a regular basis can curb this isolation and embarrassment by enabling sufferers, carers and friends to meet and chat unselfconsciously about their difficulties and be comforted by the fact that there are many people in a similar situation to their own. The atmosphere is relaxed and informal and participants can swap stories, ideas and tips on coping while taking part in a variety of activities to stimulate cognitive awareness. The aim is to provide support to the person with memory difficulty and an opportunity for the carer to have some stimulation and respite.



The pledge for the additional memory work was drawn in November. Additional craft sessions including a mosaics workshop were held with more planned.

This will be an enormous boost to our memory support work and will ensure we can continue providing the service long into the future. It will also enable us to introduce extra activities such as afternoon themed teas, exercise, dance, yoga and start a “dementia choir”.

## Catering

The daily weekday luncheon club continues, providing nourishing meals prepared in our 5\* kitchen. Takeaway meals have increased, and we deliver to those who are housebound and live near the centre. One of our principal charitable aims is to subsidise hot meals as the benefit they provide to those who would otherwise be eating alone are an important element of the services we offer. The lunches are a social occasion, and it is a service that men, who are often more difficult to reach and engage with, are keen to attend daily.

Sunday Roast Lunch is normally provided once a month and sometimes twice depending on demand and availability of volunteers to run it. This is a favourite with local people and there are now groups who come together sharing taxis who regularly attend as a social outing.

Monthly Drive n Dine, partially funded this year by Tesco Bags of Help fund, continues with the help of Dawlish Community Transport who provide transport to and from the event where required. Some of our volunteers support this by providing additional transport. Local care homes often join us for this monthly event and is an opportunity for their residents to socialise with different people.

Christmas day lunch was a tremendous success, attended by over 70 people. The team of 30 volunteers were led in the kitchen by Steve & Ruth Bentley and the day was supported by Mayor and Cllr Robert Phipps.



*Christmas Day Lunch 2019 – cooking by Steve & Ruth Bentley supported by Cllr Robert Phipps*



*Christmas Day Lunch kitchen volunteers*

The Centre is available for hire in the evenings and at weekends for parties and celebrations and gatherings of all sorts and we can cater for these and provide a bar service if required. Private afternoon and evening functions where we provide catering and full bar service ensures the bar does not make a loss.



## Open Days & Special Events

We supported the new Sea Shanty Festival in September with our team of volunteers and were grateful to be recipients of a £500 donation.

The Teignmouth carnival procession is now a firm favourite for us to attend and in August a gang of brightly coloured Eastern Dancers, volunteers, and members of The Teign singers helped us to parade through the town. Special thanks go to Sally, Caroline & Lesley for leading the Eastern dancers, and Jill & Andy Longford and Dave for providing the car and music for us to sing and dance to through the streets of Teignmouth.



We held several singing and party events, notably the Swinging 60's afternoon and the lovely joint Christmas party with Volunteering in health and their team.

## Income/Fundraising

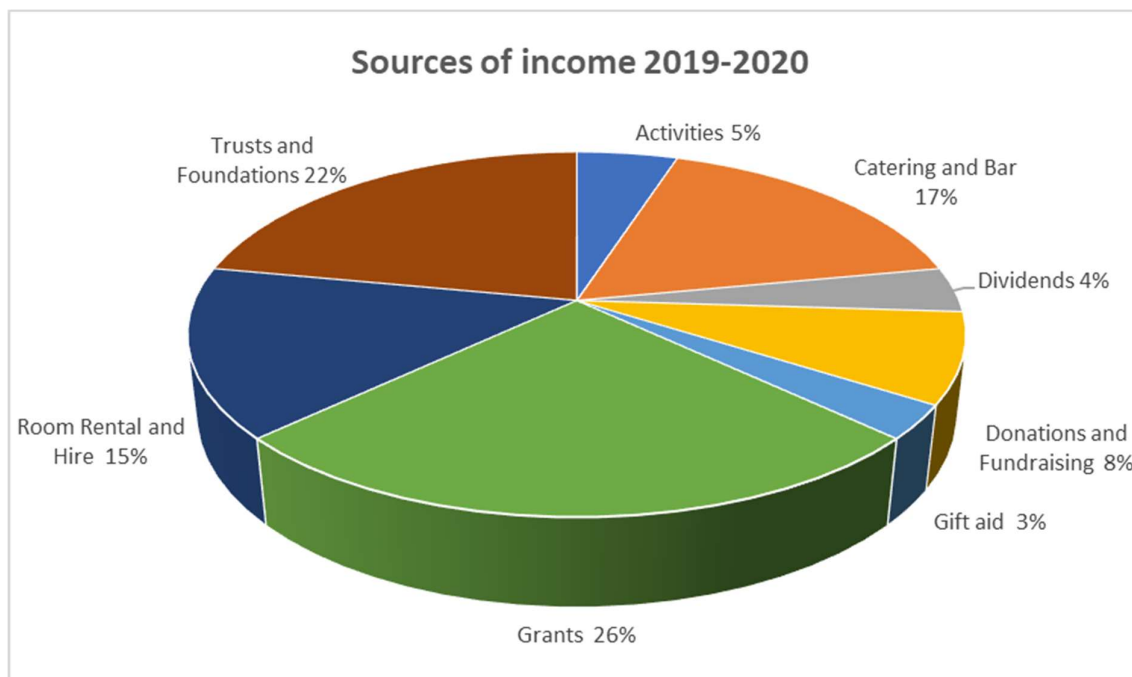
Income from activities and services increased to 52% this year (2018-19 46%) while grants increased to 26% from 6%, because of national & local COVID-19 grant support. Income from private donors, local businesses and organisations and income from charitable trusts and foundations were evenly balanced. Many of the Trusts and Foundations which contributed to our activities last year have continued to support us this year and their invaluable support is very much appreciated. Gift aid generated 3%.

We have held many fundraising events including music evening and singalongs with The Teigns, Christmas Fayre, Christmas Day Lunch and Doreen Large and team helped to raise our profile locally by participating in numerous tabletop sales in both Dawlish & Teignmouth including the Carnival and Back Beach festival.

The Rotary Club of Teignmouth have held several very successful quiz and food nights raising funds for both Alice Cross & other organisations including Teign Heritage centre. The Teignmouth tangent also held a successful quiz evening.

The centre was closed from end of March to August with only grant income coming in. The general manager remained at work and other staff members were furloughed, so the charity benefitted from the Government furlough scheme.

A massive thanks go to recently retired volunteer fundraiser Janet Edmonson for her tireless fundraising for this charity, she has been singly responsible for raising many thousands of pounds from trusts and grant providers over the last 8 years and she will be greatly missed.



Income was £105,298 (FY 2018-19 £107,961) -and expenditure £92,156 (FY 2018-19 £86,011) which included the additional member of staff, the volunteer coordinator.

A special thanks to Matt Hooper and the Teignmouth Co-op team, who have provided great support to the charity this year in food donations and their Local Community Fund which raised £3426.44.



*Matt Hooper Store manager & Julia Street*

## Other Services

The centre continues to hold a regular foot clinic and delivers counselling and holistic therapies, including Swedish massage and pedicures, through partner organisations. The Royal Voluntary Service Drink Wise age alcohol support counselling and group sessions ended in March when funding ran out. We continue to support the Teignmouth Community School Enrichment programme by providing cooking & craft sessions and many students take placements with us to gain work experience.

We host partner organisations such as Devon carers to provide support for carers locally and Teign Aid who support people facing homelessness and needing support in benefit applications.



## COVID -19 Work and what our Volunteers did

When the COVID-19 pandemic hit on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2020, we had to close the doors to our regular clients and income to the charity stopped. We were no longer able to support our clients in all the ways we normally do.

Local Council emergency Funds enabled our organisation to take the lead on setting up a local response to the pandemic. We brought all the community groups and quickly established that we needed a single point of call number 01626 626626 for our community to call, to get help. The phonenumber provided 4 options for older, vulnerable, shielding, people to choose from, to get help with emergency shopping & prescription delivery, telephone befriending and support, help with meals to be delivered to the home and much more. It turned out to be a real lifeline for local people. Many other statutory and voluntary organisations closed their doors and so people were left with little or no support. The phone system was designed such that a voicemail would be received to the call line as an MP3 recording, that could automatically be diverted to a number that was dealing with the particular option the client was enquiring about. The recipients could work remotely and listen to the calls when it suited them. The initial response was overwhelming, we received so many calls and had no way to log them!

The main problems we faced were lack of helpers, inadequate IT equipment & IT skill sets, knowledge of what was available locally, to sign post people to, how to let people know what we were doing and how to do that with very little funding. We leafleted the town to let people know what we were providing, we set up a Facebook site for information, we had to update our IT equipment, accessories, programmes, apps etc. We had to learn to use new programmes such as Zoom, Teams, Google docs, it was a steep learning curve. Our staff, apart from the manager, were furloughed, so we relied upon a new cohort of volunteers that came forward who were mostly furloughed themselves and the U3A. We put a rudimentary vetting procedure in place to protect our clients who would be speaking to these new volunteers. These volunteers were provided with protocols on telephone befriending, shopping and COVID procedures, identity badges, high vis jackets, PPE and as much support as we could to enable them to operate safely and efficiently to provide support to the community. Training and support were provided via email and zoom and 2 key volunteers, Vanda & Caroline who worked tirelessly alongside the manager at The Alice Cross Centre. We created a google doc that was sharable to all the telephone call loggers and we kept a record of all the calls and what help they needed, and we provided. We received referrals from Teignbridge CVS, Assist Teignbridge, DCC Adult social care, Social workers, and many local people as well as families living remotely from their older, loved, ones that they could not visit. We worked closely with local business to provide food hampers and shopping from Morrison's and Coop and pharmacies to support them with prescription delivery. It was impossible to get food delivery slots from the major supermarkets and many of our clients did not have facilities to do online shopping. We subsidised meals & shopping where it was required with the funds we applied for.

Thanks go to Peter Chatterton for his enormous contribution to supporting us to achieve a logging system for our help line calls and to install and manage the new IT systems.

The service ran from 23rd March to end of August 2020 and we received over 2000 calls, we supported over 400 people with the different services, delivered over 200 prescriptions, did over 200 shopping trips and over 50 new volunteers signed up for the period.

### Vanda Rudge - a retired Community Mental Health Nurse.



When the helpline was initially set up, we were overwhelmed with offers of support from people many who were furloughed, to help those who would have to self-isolate. My roles were overseeing the telephone befriending service. I did this by matching people with similar interests and life experiences. As a result, two ladies have become firm friends. Some of the gentlemen have said that "we are meeting up for a pint when this is all over."

I also oversaw the prescription collection and delivery. We liaised with all the local pharmacies to create a process that worked for them and kept our volunteers safe.

Sometimes working on the helpline was more taxing than others. Often there was a ray of light from someone that would lift my spirits. It was lovely when someone rang up for support and then thanked our team for the service and the work we were doing. It was good that for relatives or friends that lived far away to know and be reassured that their person was being helped and kept safe.

I recall one evening, after what had seemed a long day on the helpline, I delivered a prescription to a house in Holcombe. I knocked on the door heard someone shout back, thank you and I noticed an envelope with Alice X on, which contained a donation, that was uplifting.

There are many things I will take from the COVID-19 lock down. But the main thing was the sense of community, and how this town pulled together to help and support each other in time of need.

**Caroline Philips** - During the first lockdown, I was asked if I would help vet volunteers for shopping for vulnerable people, befriending and delivering prescriptions. I set up a template and vetted approximately 40 volunteers, contacting a reference for each one. Next, I was asked if I would coordinate the volunteer shoppers and prescription. We helped approximately 300 older or vulnerable people in and around Teignmouth. After a month or so, my colleague Vanda took over organising the prescription collection to balance out the workload. We worked very hard in those first couple of months of Spring/Summer as we were developing the system as we went along, and had to learn how to use the emerging spreadsheet as we carefully recorded our contact with our clients. We wanted to make sure no one fell through the net and it felt very rewarding to know you were making such a difference. The volunteers felt useful and needed and the older people felt supported, so it was a win win situation.

My own work as a masseuse and selling caravan holidays was halted but I did manage to tutor a few hours a week online. As mostly single friends, we were able to support each other to combat our own feelings of isolation and loneliness, and although it was not a completely smooth ride, it was very fulfilling. It highlighted much need for networks of friends in the area. Some of our volunteers have continued supporting their clients and have made lifelong friends. It strengthened my friendships with the other Alice Cross volunteers, helped me to stay well, as I suffer from a mild bipolar condition and taught me some new computer and communication skills. Thank you for giving me the experience and trusting I would do a good job!



A wonderful outcome has been that many of the telephone befrienders have made a permanent connection with their telephone befriendees and are keeping in contact and have even gone out together. We have received a small pot of funding to help us develop the physical strength of our regular users with their buddy volunteers, so they can do exercise, build confidence and go out again and can feel more confident in these new times. The community has really been brought together by our work and we have received an influx of younger volunteers who want to be regularly involved with us. We have increased the number of men we have as volunteers too.

Thank you to the amazing volunteers that worked tirelessly during the lockdown, to our trustees for supporting my role, to the staff and to all the charity's wonderful volunteers and friends for their continued belief in the aims and aspirations of this organisation. Your help will enable us to move with these changing times to create a centre of excellence in supporting the over 50s in Teignbridge

## The Future

We are involved with the work in the re configuration of NHS & Primary care services locally through attendance of regular meetings, whilst The Alice Cross will not relocate to the new GP site, we will be working very closely to provide additional services to support the NHS initiatives of preventative healthcare.

Nationally there is a focus on looking at lifestyle choices to improve people's health and find alternatives to traditional medicine prescription. There will also be much work to do on supporting people with Mental & Physical health challenges that have been exaggerated by the effects of lockdown, social isolation, social distancing, and the new restrictions upon us.

We continue with IT upgrades and upskilling our staff to work remotely and using live digital programmes including Office 365, Teams, Zoom, and Google docs. It is an essential thing for the charity to embrace and employ rapidly changing work methods. Many thanks go to Huw Weatherhead for his ongoing support of our IT infrastructure, both software and hardware.

We will work to rebuild the traditional on- site services of the charity within the new guidelines. More of our work will be taking us out to people in their homes, as we deliver hot meals to them and support them with shopping and prescription delivery. We will be moving some of our activities online, CST therapy for memory support and some exercise classes. We are looking for funding to help us connect people digitally and through IT to the many activities there are available to us post lockdown.

However, we believe very strongly that bringing people out of their homes to meet and socialise, take part in activities, upskill, and make friends will be the biggest part of our work in the next 6 months. There will be an even greater need to help people rebuild their lives, regain strength, mobility, and confidence. We will focus on supporting those marginalised groups to achieve this.

We will continue to work in close cooperation with VIH, Assist, Teignbridge CVS, and other local charities to reduce duplication of services and improve the support for all older people locally.

## Thank you

Finally, we would like to say a massive thank you to all our donors, volunteers, staff and partners, including any we have unwittingly not listed, for all the hard work and support you have given us over this last year.

AGE UK Devon  
Albert Hunt Trust  
Annandale Charitable Trust  
Assist Teignbridge

Cllr Sylvia Russell - Devon County Council  
Charity of Stella Symons  
Crash Box & Classic Car Club of Devon  
Dawlish Community Transport  
Devon County Council -Covid Fund  
Douglas Arter Foundation  
Dr & Mrs A Darlington Charitable Trust  
Elmgrant Trust  
Fairfield Charitable Trust  
Green Hall Foundation  
Heydown Trust  
Hugh Diamond- Teignmouth Folk Concert  
Jo Collet, Beryl Coombs, Anthony Powell, The Teigns  
Janet Edmondson – volunteer fundraiser  
The League of Friends of Teignmouth Hospital  
Mayor & Cllr Robert Phipps & the Promenade kiosks  
Marianne & Alan Gibson –, PAT testing  
Our evening volunteer bar team, Dave, Kevin, Louie, Lynn, Vanda  
Our sing along entertainers Beryl Coombs, Jo Collett, Richard Wadey, Malcolm & Martin  
Pete Williams- Pellow Carpet and flooring  
Robert Phipps Jnr and the Adventure Golf kiosk  
Rotary club of Teignmouth and Dawlish  
Sir John & Lady Amory's Charitable Trust  
Sir Jules Thorn Charitable Trust (Ann Rylands programme)  
South Devon and Torbay CCG  
Sportsbug – TDC  
TAAG  
Teignbridge CVS  
Teignmouth Traders Association  
The 29th May 1961 Charity  
Tesco Newton Abbot & Teignmouth  
Teignmouth Tangent  
Tozers Solicitors  
Tracy Higgs Town clerk and team  
U3A  
Volunteering in Health  
Weatherheads Web  
W G Edwards Charitable Foundation

Alice Cross Eastern Dancers  
ASAP Printing  
B-C H 1971 Charitable Trust  
Clare Milne Trust  
Co-op Community Fund  
Charles Hayward Foundation  
Devon Carers  
Coop Teignmouth  
CAN project - DCC  
Devon Football Association  
Devon Community Fund-Covid Fund  
Dawlish Ladies Luncheon club  
Fare Share  
Greenwood Accountancy Ltd  
H.I.T. S  
Incredible Fund

John Vaughan

Norman Family Charitable Trust

Royal Voluntary Service  
R S Brownless Charitable Trust  
Sainsbury's Dawlish  
Scott Richards Solicitors  
Sport England  
Teignbridge District Council  
Teign Heritage Centre  
Teignmouth Town Council  
Teignmouth Shanty Festival  
Teignmouth Dementia Action Alliance  
Tesco Bags of Help Fund  
Tom Peters (Neil Peters)  
The Teigns singing group  
Tula Trust Limited

Viv Wilson MBE  
Whistle Stop Cafe bikers  
W O Street Charitable Foundation

Sincere thanks to the trusts, foundations and private individuals who prefer to remain anonymous for their support.

If you would like to sponsor an activity or event at Alice Cross, please do get in touch!

*Julia*

Julia Street – General manager