

ADCA Chair's Annual Report 2023/24

REFLECTIONS ON THE LAST YEAR [Year ended 31 March 2024]

It was another busy year for ADCA with a variety of new activities in our clubs, including more musical performances with some dancing and lots of singing. We all know the words of the 'mid-century' hits - but not necessarily in the right order. We welcomed new members, carers and staff to our ADCA Team.

We continue to depend very much on our many partnerships with other local organisations, including Overwater Wheelyboat Services and their Wheelybus, Broad Lane Coffee Club, Wingate Centre and the Nantwich Thursday Club. Our partnership with Audlem Medical Practice and their Social Prescriber is crucial to our work including referring new people. Our landlords at Audlem Public Hall, Hankelow Methodist Church and Broomhall and Sound Methodist Church continue to provide us with warm, safe and cost-effective accommodation.

We are also blessed to continue receiving financial support from the National Lottery, Cheshire East Council, and Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board of the NHS, on top of many local donations – including from Audlem Charity Shop, Audlem Bowling Club and many individuals – towards our charitable work. Our fundraising team also brings in much needed revenue through our annual Craft Fair, Race Night, Prize Draws and stalls at various local events.

We rely as heavily as ever on our loyal and hardworking group of volunteers both in our clubs and with voluntary driving. We simply couldn't operate without them all.

ADCA very much operates as a team in which we all support each other in making sure all operations function well. Our members and carers are also involved in supporting us all with their humour, energy and longevity. We have celebrated more 90th birthdays during the year – which just goes to show that being a part of ADCA makes you live longer!

Our hard working staff team are at the heart of what we do. Their dedication, good sense, organisational skills and cooking flair are invaluable.

The ADCA Committee continues to look to the future in order to ensure our financial sustainability. It is a constant challenge to find new sources of funding and to recruit more volunteers and trustees.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND PERFORMANCE

A particular achievement is the development of our support for people living with dementia, and their carers, – including carer's breaks and trips to the seaside. A stronger emphasis on bringing in 'the power of music' to the Thursday Club and the Tuesday Club has had a marked effect on members' and carers' physical and mental wellbeing. This will be an increasing element of our work into the future.

During the year we have consolidated our new database – a valuable tool in helping us manage the service as well as providing statistics for our regular monitoring returns to our funders.

Our Medical Transport, Chiropody and Prescription Services remain an important part of how ADCA helps keep people healthy. These services are sustained by our Trustee and Volunteer leads and our team of voluntary drivers. Not forgetting the success of our Walking Netball club in the Town Hall which has brought women and men of all ages, including carers, to join in!

Our fundraising team does sterling work in more ways than one and is a crucial part of what we need to be doing while also raising ADCA's profile in the local community.

ADCA continues to welcome new members, carers and volunteers, and we always need more, although we now have a small waiting list for some of our clubs. ADCA staff and volunteers provide increasing levels of individual support to our members and carers, including home visits, helping to support people through difficult periods in their lives.

FUTURE DIRECTION AND PLANS

The main challenge for ADCA is ensuring future financial sustainability as we are now a relatively large rural charity, with a turnover of approximately £90,000, seven staff, nine trustees, over 100 members and over 40 carers.

A key aim is to seek a further three or five year Reaching Communities Grant from the National Lottery when our current grant runs out in October 2025. We also need to continue to be able to attract further grant funding from Cheshire East Council and the NHS, particularly for our dementia services. As Chair, I am the lead for obtaining grants but I rely on other trustees for help and support in this effort. The support of a professional 'bid writer' will continue to be essential.

Our current clubs and services are very much operating at full capacity and the ADCA Committee are clear that we cannot further expand our services as we have neither the physical space nor the capacity (including at Committee level) to do this. That does not mean that we will exclude other opportunities to provide better services within Audlem & District, but we mustn't put too much stress on our hard-working trustees.

Sustainability of our current offering has to be our priority, and doing things better and more productively wherever possible. This includes seeking and recruiting new trustees who might take on some or all of the many tasks the current committee members undertake.

Finally, all of us in ADCA must continue to work together as a strong team, and to support to each other. Our core values statement remains as true today as when we adopted it over ten years ago:

'We believe that all of us can be vulnerable at times, and we aim to protect and safeguard each other by working together with mutual respect and kindness.'