



NEWSLETTER OCTOBER 2021

Dear Friends

As life has been slowly returning to something like normal, SCRATCH has continued to operate our essential projects, albeit with reduced numbers of volunteers. We are so grateful to those volunteers who have been with us throughout the last 18 months, helping us to continue to practically support those families referred to us as being in need.

At the end of August, we were finally able to celebrate with our volunteers at a BBQ. It was great to be able to get together in this way again and we were privileged to have the Mayor of Southampton, Cllr Alex Houghton presenting certificates to the volunteers. He is pictured here with Ann (Chair of our Board of Trustees). We are also pleased that the Mayor has chosen SCRATCH as one of his two charities for his mayoral year.



[NEW VEHICLE](#)

In our last newsletter we told you of the need for a second new van and we asked for your financial help. You heard and responded and so we were pleased to take delivery of our second new vehicle recently. We are particularly thankful to the LCP Foundation and Abri Housing for providing funds which, along with the insurance pay-out for our stolen vehicle and generous donations from many individuals, meant we could purchase the vehicle without the need for any loans / lease agreements.

[DORCAS PROJECT](#)

Our furniture re-distribution project has continued and is just as busy. At our year end (March 2021) we had carried out 1595 deliveries, helping 1926 adults and 1424 children. That was an 19% increase from the previous year.

In order to continue to meet demand, we currently need donations of double beds, wardrobes (single), chests of drawers, drop leaf dining tables, small sofas (must have fire safety labels attached) pillows and duvets (single and doubles). There is a particular need for suitable dining tables, as we have many families currently on our waiting list. Please do get in contact if you have any you can donate.

SHOPS

It was disappointing to learn on the first day that we were legally allowed to re-open our New Milton shop that we would have to close down. We were so grateful to Bradbeers for allowing us to use the wonderful premises rent free for a couple of years. Unfortunately, the pandemic had caused them to change the plans for the site and we had to leave. We are actively seeking new premises (at an affordable rent) either in Southampton or the New Milton area, but to date haven't been able to find anything suitable.

So, in the meantime we have set up an E-bay shop to sell items that are not suitable for our projects and to raise some additional income for SCRATCH. Please do check it out and let other people know about it. We are thankful to our volunteer David, who is currently running this on our behalf.

<https://www.ebay.co.uk/str/scratchcharitysouthampton>



FUNDING

The task of applying for grant funding is time consuming, frustrating and often fruitless. That is why regular monthly donations are so essential for us to continue operating. If you are able to support us through a monthly standing order payment it will help us to carry on our essential projects. Our website has more information - <https://www.scratchcharity.co.uk/donate/index.htm>

We have been using Virgin Money Giving as a means of collecting one off donations. Unfortunately, they are closing at the end of November so we will be setting up an alternative platform.

Despite many unsuccessful grant applications, we *have* recently been successful with two.

Our application to Hampshire and Isle of Wight Community Foundation (HiWCF) has given us a small pot of money that can cover the cost of furniture deliveries for very vulnerable households across Hampshire where there is no other money available to meet the cost.

Garfield Weston have helped us with a grant to cover part of the shortfall in funding for our general operational expenses.

We appreciate the financial support of both organisations.

Supported by

HiWCF
LOCAL GIVING FOR LOCAL NEEDS



Garfield Weston
FOUNDATION

[CHRISTMAS COMPLETE 2021](#)

Plans are well underway for our annual toy project and information will be on our website from early October - <https://www.scratchcharity.co.uk/projects/christmas-complete.htm>

We will again be operating the project with reduced numbers of volunteers and over a longer period of time. The arrangements worked well last year and with the threat of increased numbers of COVID infections as the winter approaches, we feel we need to take precautions to protect staff and volunteers who will be working on the project to make sure that we can complete all requests.

We are planning 4 sessions prior to the main project to do a few particular tasks such as checking donated games and puzzles, making up some baby packs, sorting out boxes of donated books. These sessions will be held on Tuesday 9, Monday 15, Thursday 18 and Tuesday 23 November all from 9.30am until 12. If you would be interested in helping please e-mail CC@scratchcharity.co.uk

Details and dates for volunteering on the main project are on the website. If you are interested in helping, please contact us as soon as possible as sessions do get booked up quickly.

There are Amazon wish lists on the website. This is an easy way for you to purchase gifts for the project that can be delivered directly to us.

Financial donations are always welcome. This allows us to purchase items where we know we are experiencing shortages for particular age groups. Cheques can be sent to us at SCRATCH (please indicate that it is for Christmas Complete), you can make a card payment by phoning the office on 023 8077 3132, or you can make a payment using the information on the Christmas Complete page on the website.

We will accept donations at our warehouse weekdays between 9am and 4pm. Unfortunately, we won't be operating any other drop off points this year.

Our needs are: -

- ◆ Age relevant toys (our age range is new-born up to 17-year-olds)
- ◆ Toiletries / stationery / makeup suitable for teenagers
- ◆ Books (we have plenty of pre-school books, the particular need is for those suitable for 8 years and over).
- ◆ Games and puzzles (especially those suitable for older children).
- ◆ Arts / Crafts / Colouring sets
- ◆ Sweets and Chocolate (with a sell by date of at least 31/01/22)
- ◆ Christmas wrapping paper
- ◆ Sellotape
- ◆ Large carrier bags
- ◆ Large cardboard boxes



Whilst we are willing to accept second-hand toys they must be of an excellent quality. If you have items that you would like to donate ask yourself the question, "Would I be willing to give this to my child / grandchild as their main Christmas present?" If the answer is no, then we can't take them as it costs us to dispose of

unusable items. We do reserve the right to turn away any unsuitable donations. Please don't be offended, we just want to provide the best that we can for the families that are referred. Second-hand donations can only be accepted up until 3 December.

Thank you once again for your support of this project – we couldn't do it without you.

CURRENT VOLUNTEERING OPPORTUNITIES

We are unfortunately not yet in a position to take on lots of new volunteers, but we do have three roles for which we are currently seeking recruits.

- ◆ Driver's mates / Warehouse Operative – assisting our drivers with the delivery and collection of furniture, sorting and storing donations, loading and unloading vehicles. Ideally the person applying should be available for at least one full day per week.
- ◆ Site Maintenance – helping to keep the site clean and tidy (including the outside areas). Hours can be negotiated.
- ◆ Mentors – we are seeking people who would be willing to act as mentors to potential volunteers with mental or physical disabilities.

If any of these roles appeal to you or you know anyone who might benefit from some regular volunteering, please contact polly@scratchcharity.co.uk

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

We will be holding our AGM virtually again this year via Zoom on Wednesday 3 November at 2pm. This will be an opportunity to find out more about the last year, plans for the future and ask those questions you have been wanting to ask but haven't had the opportunity. If you would like to join us for this event, please contact annette@scratchcharity.co.uk

Mike Smith & Annette Davis – Senior Management Team

On behalf of the SCRATCH staff team, Board of Directors and volunteers

Stay safe and well

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