

CASE STUDY

Cranfield Trust volunteer Sarah Jefferies worked with Home Start Stroud and Gloucester to facilitate a presentation, that would be accessible to all attendees, for the charity's AGM.



HOME START STROUD AND GLOUCESTER BACKGROUND

Home-Start Stroud and Gloucester was set up in 1999 in response to an identified need for a support service for local families that was free at the point of access, completely independent and available to all. In May 2020, Home-Start Stroud and Gloucester saw Cranfield Trust deliver a workshop on organisational resilience at Gloucestershire funder, Barnwood Trust's first ever virtual conference. This gave Alex Corgier, the charity's Scheme Manager, the idea to include a similar presentation at the charity's upcoming AGM, which under the circumstances was going to be held virtually for the first time.



THE ISSUE

The charity contacted Cranfield Trust to find out if they had a volunteer consultant who could facilitate such a presentation at relatively short notice. The charity needed a presentation that was accessible to all attendees, including the families the charities help, and focused on the challenges ahead – or as Alex put it in her application form, “strategic thinking in difficult and unprecedented times.”

Volunteer Sarah Jefferies had only joined Cranfield Trust in April 2020, but in an initial conversation with the regional Project Manager, she had revealed not only the right skills to put together appropriate content, but also the right experience to deliver an event remotely that would satisfy the brief.

HOW WE HELPED

The introduction was made and immediately Sarah worked with Alex and colleagues to research the topic, prepare slides, create a session plan and test the technology for delivering the event online. Through discussion, the decision was made to focus more specifically on personal resilience and wellbeing, in order to demonstrate support and regard for all those involved in maintaining such a crucial service to families. The objective of Sarah's session within the AGM was agreed as follows:





“Keeping Connected – a participative and practical session to reconnect with each other and think about resilience and wellbeing in challenging times”. The style of the session included keynote input from Sarah, small group discussions in virtual break out rooms and verbal/chat box sharing of insights and feedback across the whole group.

Sarah also assisted with the facilitation of discussion and feedback after all participants watched a video from the Home-Start Chief Executive, providing an update on strategy in response to the challenges of Covid-19. As Alex explained, this provided a, “real sense of collaboration across staff, volunteers and trustees” and she was touched by their “gratitude for the session, having time devoted to their own resilience and wellbeing.”

In Alex’s words, “The success of a public event like our AGM helps us to keep our profile and reputation as a well-run and considered organisation which helps us with funding, good relationships with funders and team-building, all of which have an impact on the service we are able to provide to our beneficiaries.”

As a result of working with Sarah, the AGM was able to reflect on the “new normal” and its impact on the organisation.

OUTCOME AND IMPACT

The presentation was popular with the charity’s audience, made up of their staff, Board, volunteers, clients and the wider community. The High Sheriff of Gloucestershire, Helen Lovatt, was in attendance, and celebrated the success of the event with a Tweet! Per feedback from Alex herself, “The AGM strengthened team spirit and leadership and showcased the strengths of our charity and our ability to adapt in challenging times.” Feedback from attendees included, “Really inspiring”, “Thoughtfully led meeting”, “A very positive experience that will fire us up to look at the service we give and develop it in new ways”. The volunteer also left the charity with an action plan around re-establishing connections, re-energising, identifying additional ways to maintain personal resilience and developing awareness of the sense of future possibilities. Alex reflects on the impact of the project and the positive outcomes, saying, “I believe that this facilitated AGM allowed us time to reflect on our services, to celebrate our achievements and to think about what the future might hold. I particularly felt that the meeting re-energised many people to embrace the positives of what the future might hold, how as an organisation we can, and will, continue to offer pivotal support to families when early intervention will be more important than ever! It has been such a positive experience working with the Cranfield Trust. From beginning to end, the support given was flawless. Sarah, the volunteer allocated to us, could not have been better suited to our charity and core values. I would highly recommend Cranfield Trust to any charity looking for strategic and/or business support.”

Would you like to learn more about our services?

Cranfield Trust offer a range of free and pro bono business support for the voluntary sector.

To find out more, visit www.cranfieldtrust.org or call our friendly team for an informal chat on 01794 830338.