



# 2022

## ASPIRE 2 ANNUAL REPORT

KEEPING OUR COMMUNITY INFORMED AND INVOLVED

2022

# ASPIRE2

## ANNUAL REPORT



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## Message from the Chair

*Thankfully this year has been blissfully free of most Covid restrictions.*

*This has meant a return to normal for many of our activities such as:*

- day or residential visits to Ufton Adventure during the school holidays*
- almost daily use of the Aspire2 minibuses*
- a resumption of work with Reading University where we hold our visits for all Year Five pupils and our poetry competition*

*We have also been able to launch exciting new projects and initiatives such as our partnership with Beale Park and our Early Years Music project. Details of these and our other activities are detailed in the body of the report.*

*Fundraising in the present economic climate is proving difficult but I'm pleased to say that we've had some significant successes on this front and I would like to thank all our sponsors listed in the report. Without their support we simply wouldn't exist. I would like to give special mention to a wonderful contribution from our youngest ever sponsor – five year old Joseph who raised £465 running in this year's Green Park Challenge – a major achievement.*

*This is our first full year with our new Development Manager Helen Bligh in post and I'm delighted to say she's doing a splendid job in enabling Aspire2 to meet the enrichment aims of the charity. And with school budgets being increasingly stretched we know the how much the activities we fund are valued.*

*The year ahead is a very exciting one for Aspire2 with many new initiatives in the pipeline – and our new five year strategy will enable the charity to look further to the future as we grow.*

*Thank you for your continued support; with your help we will make a real difference.*

**Charlie Clare**

# Aspire2 Finance Report

FY21/22 was another challenging year for Aspire2. The ongoing effects of the Covid pandemic, combined with a lack of manager for the first half of the year, meant that the circumstances were not favourable for fundraising. However, the minibuses were successfully funded and plans were put in place for a much more positive year of income generation in FY22/23.

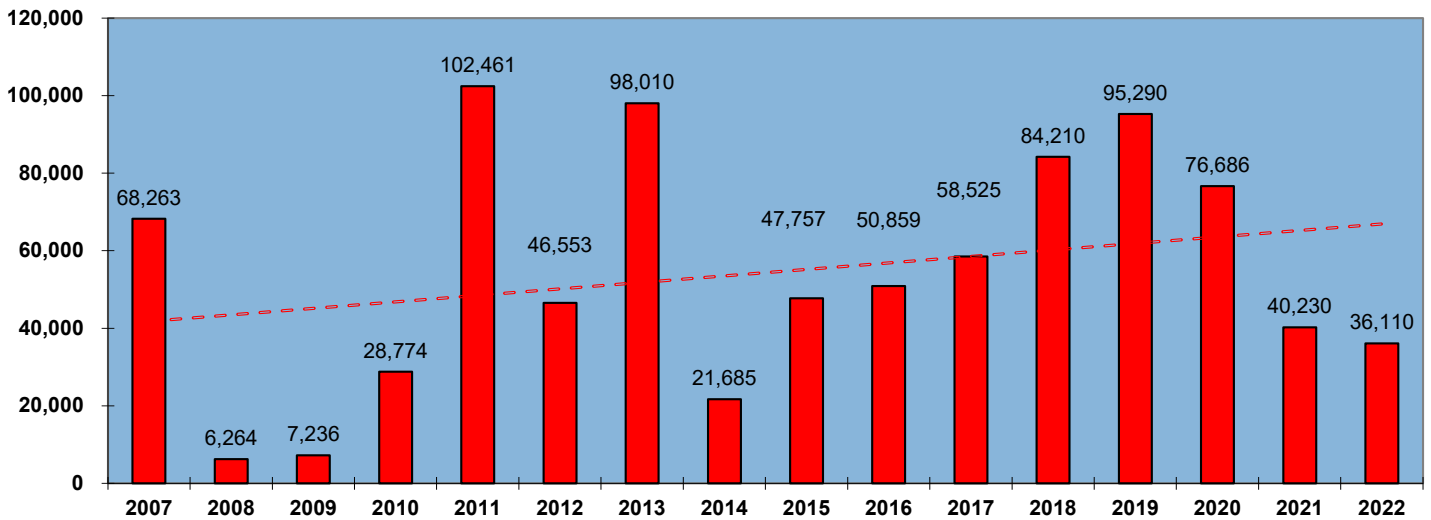
In terms of expenditure other than the minibuses, a number of trips to Ufton Court were funded, plus each school was given a budget to spend on 'post-Covid fun' for pupils.

The charity's reserves remain relatively healthy, with a year of consolidation preparing for growth in the future.

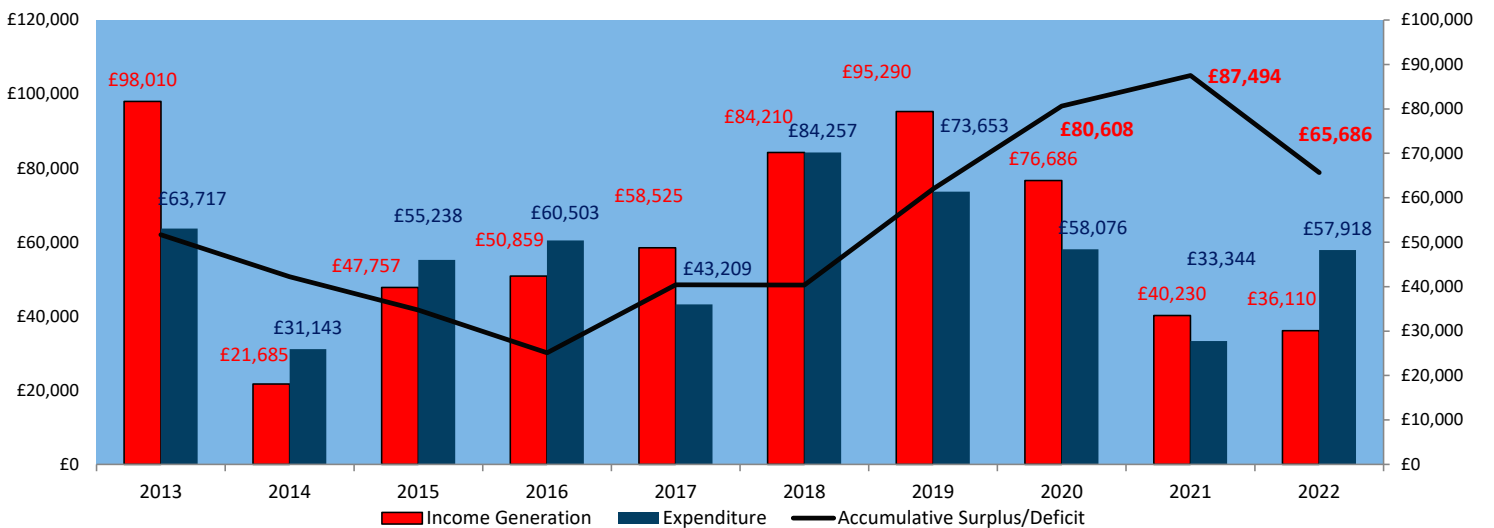
YEAR	Income Generation	Expenditure	Surplus/(Deficit)	Accumulative Surplus/Deficit
2022	£36,110	£57,918	<b>-£21,808</b>	£65,686
2021	£40,230	£33,344	£6,886	£87,494
2020	£76,686	£58,076	£18,610	£80,608
2019	£95,290	£73,653	£21,637	£61,998
2018	£84,210	£84,257	<b>-£47</b>	£40,362
2017	£58,525	£43,209	£15,315	£40,408
2016	£50,859	£60,503	<b>-£9,644</b>	£25,093
2015	£47,757	£55,238	<b>-£7,481</b>	£34,737
2014	£21,685	£31,143	<b>-£9,458</b>	£42,217
2013	£98,010	£63,717	£34,293	£51,675
2012	£46,553	£36,520	£10,033	£17,382
2011	£102,461	£108,855	<b>-£6,394</b>	£7,349
2010	£28,774	£15,477	£13,297	£13,743
2009	£7,236	£11,711	<b>-£4,475</b>	£466
2008	£6,264	£7,779	<b>-£1,515</b>	£4,921
2007	£68,263	£61,827	£6,436	



### Aspire2 – Income History



### Aspire2 – Accumulative Reserves at February 2022



# Projects & Activities Supported by Aspire2

Over the last year, Aspire2 has been able to restart many of the activities that were cancelled during the Covid pandemic. This has also given us a chance to reflect on our aims and objectives, and to ensure we are planning for the future with a new five year strategic plan.

## Minibuses

Thanks to our partnership with the John Sykes Foundation, we have been able to lease two 17 seater minibuses for five years. The minibuses are available for all Whitley schools to book throughout the year, to use for school trips, events and activities that will open up new opportunities to pupils.

The minibus system is working extremely well, with each of the vehicles booked out most days during term time – we are grateful to The Ridgeway Primary School for their help and supporting in hosting the minibuses.

During their first year of use, the minibuses have been booked out over 300 times, and have travelled over 8,000 miles. Almost 6,000 children have been on a trip in an Aspire2 minibus.



## Ufton Court

This year has been the final year of Aspire2's original ten year agreement with Ufton Court for free trips for Whitley children. A total of 17 trips have run throughout the year, with over 300 children experiencing the activities Ufton Adventure has to offer, as well as using the Aspire2 minibuses for their travel.

These trips have included pupils from Year 3 to Year 8, plus whole family trips for children with additional needs. Aspire2 has also run two residential trips.

Next year we are looking forward to renewing our relationship with Ufton Court and offering more trips to Ufton Adventure, with a focus on delivering trips and activities that will specifically need the needs of children living in Whitley. We are very grateful to Ufton Court for their continued support in offering their unique facilities for the use of Aspire2's beneficiaries.

## Podcast project



Local charity The Rock Academy has rolled out our podcast project to all primary schools in Whitley, following a successful pilot last year. Originally designed for Year 6 children to express their experiences of lockdown and of the pandemic, this project has evolved to encapsulate a wider sense of children's reflections of the past and hopes for the future. The podcast project allows children the opportunity to reflect on their own experiences, and to use their own voices to express their hopes, dreams and ambitions. The use of podcast technology to record their stories helps to make this project relevant and exciting to this age group, and offers them a modern alternative to a school radio station or newspaper. The pupils have been very interested in the technology used and are keen to learn how they can create their own podcasts in the future.

## Year 5 University Day

Unusually this year we have held two Year 5 University Days – but across two different school years. On each occasion we hosted all of Year 5 from five different primary schools, totalling almost 300 pupils. They enjoyed a lecture from an academic in one of the university's impressive lecture theatres on subjects as diverse as The Atmosphere, Pharmacology and The Science of the Brain. The children then embarked on a tour of the university campus with their teachers, and had the opportunity to ask current students questions about university life.

## University Poetry Competition

We were delighted to return to running our schools poetry competition this year, hosted by the University of Reading. The standard was extremely high, with over 80 entries in total, written and performed by pupils from Nursery right up to Year 10. We are grateful to the University of Reading and St Joseph's College for providing expert judges, to Whitley



## Aspire2 Partnerships and Funders

Aspire2 are very fortunate to partner with a number of fantastic institutions, charities and business.

### **The Earley Charity**

We are very grateful to the ongoing support of the Earley Charity, which is instrumental in helping us to deliver enrichment activities for children in Whitley. Their continued involvement is much appreciated.

### **John Sykes Foundation**

Aspire2's partnership with the John Sykes Foundation really has opened up the wider world for Whitley children. Their generous funding towards our minibus leases has enabled us to commit to providing transport for all Whitley schools for a total of five years. We have already seen a huge demand for the minibuses, meaning children can go on trips and adventures that otherwise would be financially unachievable. This project has already made a fundamental difference to Whitley children and we are very grateful for the freedom it offers them.

### **Youth Music**

Aspire2 is delighted to be a funded partner of Youth Music, supported by the Arts Council and the National Lottery. Their funding is key to our Early Years Music project, and has enabled us to launch this project across all nursery settings and in the community. Embedding music at an early age will deliver long term benefits in many areas of learning for all children in Whitley.

### **BCF**

Funding from the Berkshire Community Foundation has contributed towards our Early Years Music project and has enabled us to grow this project to support more children. We are looking forward to building on our relationship with BCF in future years.

### **Reading Borough Council**

Over the last year Aspire2 has built relationships with several different departments in the council, and has benefited from council funding towards project and core costs. We are continuing to strengthen and build on this relationship and are grateful for the ongoing support we receive from across the council.



schools for holding their own internal competitions to make our shortlist, and to all the children who wrote and performed with confidence and poise.

### **Beale Park Trips**



A new partnership with Beale Park this year has allowed every child in Year 2 across Whitley to experience a day out seeing the animals, countryside and (most importantly for some!) the train at Beale Park. With their entry provided at no cost by Beale Park and the Aspire2 minibuses available for transport, this was a trip that schools were able to provide completely free of charge to their Year 2 pupils.

### **Early Years Music**

Our biggest project launch of the year has been our Early Years Music project, which began in September. In partnership with Berkshire Maestros, professional Early Years Music teachers are visiting all nursery classes in Whitley once a week to deliver a half hour music session. This is supplemented by a weekly session in the community café, for younger children and those who do not attend a school nursery setting. This project will run for two years in total, and includes training school staff to deliver sessions and provision of music resources for each setting. Although it is still early days the feedback is excellent, with teachers reporting that the children are very engaged already and asking to sing the songs again after the sessions have finished.

### Journo Portfolio

Aspire2 is extremely grateful for a donation from its first key corporate partner, Journo Portfolio. This funding will help us to deliver more projects, to more children, and will make a significant difference to our ability to deliver large scale projects in future, such as the Whitley Carnival.

### Ufton Adventure

Ufton's relationship with Aspire2 is now ten years old, and there is much to celebrate and be grateful for in terms of the number of trips that have been provided to allow Whitley children to experience everything that Ufton Adventure has to offer. Their programmes develop life skills that are vital for future success, including confidence, determination and teamwork. We are very much looking forward to developing our relationship with Ufton further, and to working together to offer an even more effective provision for Whitley children in the future.

### The University of Reading

Aspire2 has worked closely with the University of Reading over many years, and the opportunities they offer Whitley children are very much valued. It has been wonderful to be able to visit the university again, and as we revive past events they are being updated and refined to better serve our community. We are developing ever closer ties with the university and are grateful for their support.

### Reading Voluntary Action

RVA continue to offer Aspire2 advice and support in many aspects of running the charity, and their help is very much appreciated.

### WCDA

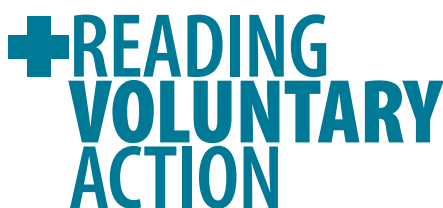
We are proud to work closely with the Whitley Community Development Association to deliver our projects with the people of Whitley, and in association with the local community. By working in and with the community, rather than delivering to or for them, we are able to ensure that our projects are well received and deliver strong impact for our beneficiaries.

### The CEP

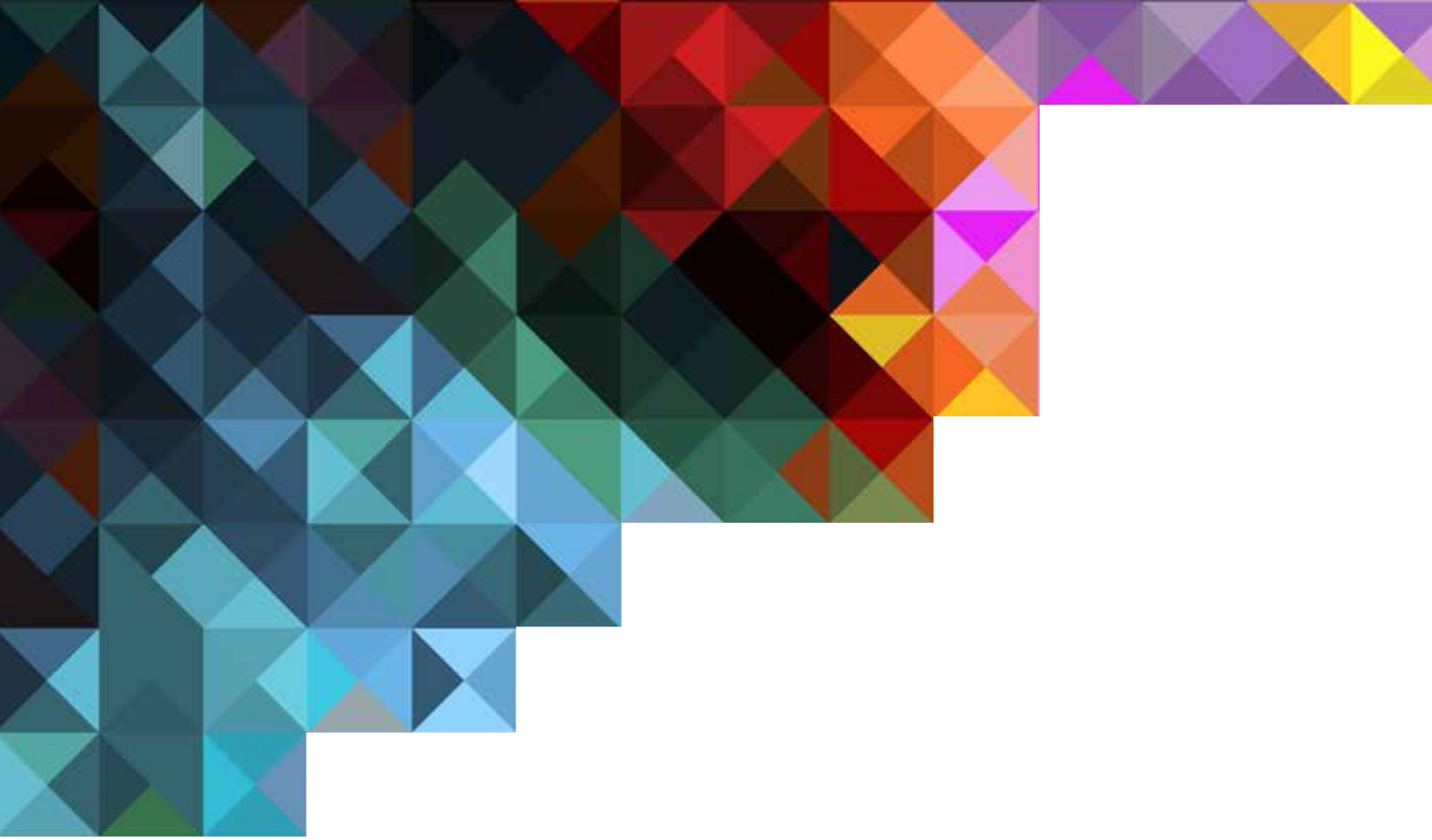
The Reading Cultural Education Partnership supports Aspire2 by providing links to arts organisations, enrichment opportunities and vital advice and support. We are grateful to the CEP for inviting Aspire2 into their community.

### Leighton Park School

We have developed a strong relationship with Leighton Park over the last year, and very much appreciate their support in offering sporting, cultural and artistic opportunities to pupils in our Whitley schools.







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