



Annual Review
July 2019 - August 2020

Welcome by the Chairs, Sue Nash and Caroline Arthur



When we became joint Chairs of ECHO we certainly could not imagine all the upheaval that would happen in ECHO and the rest of the world within a few months.

The Covid-19 crisis caused huge changes for our staff, participants and volunteers, and we were impressed by their patience and dedication. In particular we would like to thank our Chief Officer Mike Cook for steering ECHO through this difficult time.

Even with staff working from home, we managed to support our participants throughout the shut-down. The trustees are incredibly grateful for the way everyone adapted to this change in routine with such imagination and good humour. It has been great to stay in touch online and on the phone, but as we write this we are looking forward to the re-opening of projects at the end of July and seeing our friends and colleagues face to face again.

Over the past year, despite Covid-19, ECHO has gone from strength to strength. The new computer system is up and running and really improves our ability to be more efficient and effective. We have succeeded in bidding for some large grants (especially from Lloyds and the National Lottery) for money to run ECHO during the crisis. We have also had some smaller grants for direct support to the projects and participants. And we must thank Herefordshire Council and our participants, who have kept on supporting ECHO with payments during the shut-down.

As always, our participants are at the heart of all we do, so we are delighted that despite all the restrictions the Rep Group has continued to make an important contribution to the management of the organisation.

October 2020 is the start of ECHO's 30th Anniversary Year, and we look forward to being able to celebrate this with everyone.

Notes from the Chief Officer, Mike Cook



It has been a year of two halves and many of the plans that we had, have had to be put on hold due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

Over the last year we have invested in some new tools and systems to help us run ECHO. We introduced 'Lamplight' an online database to help us store and manage all our information securely.

We also moved onto Microsoft Office 365, which allows people to work from anywhere more easily. Little did we know at the time how important these new systems would become.

We already knew that ECHO was a great organisation, but Covid-19 has shown that we are really focussed on our community. Whilst the virus meant that our doors were closed to participants, the staff worked tirelessly to ensure that we were in touch with as many participants and volunteers as possible. We provided activities, welfare calls and even some Zoom meetings – anything to help stay in touch with everyone.

We ask a lot of our staff and everyone supported the decisions we needed to make during the lock down. This meant asking some staff to be furloughed, whilst others were required to work throughout the period. We are lucky to have such a great team who are focussed on the needs of those we support.

We are also now working to our new 3 year plan (2020 to 2023) and you will see the 6 new aims we have throughout this plan. We think that they really represent what is important to ECHO and we hope that you do too.

Covid-19 is not over yet, but ECHO has worked through the disruption. We are confident that due to the careful way we have managed our finances and due to the support we have had from Herefordshire Council, The Lottery and others we will be able to continue our services into the future, and keep ECHO going as the dynamic and vibrant organisation it is.

Our Vision:

A society where all people with disabilities
are heard, valued, respected and
supported to make choices

Our Mission:

We want to make a positive difference to the lives of people with disabilities in Herefordshire, supporting them to both feel and be valued members of the community.

Our Values:

In all our work, ECHO believes that people need:

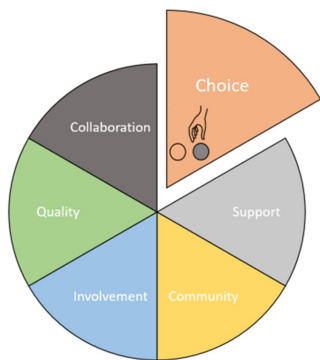
- To be recognised and treated as individuals
- To be valued in their local community
- To have friendships and relationships
- To have meaningful choices which enhance quality of life
- To have expectations of achievement
- To have the opportunity to be heard on issues that affect their lives
- To have support from good quality trained staff
- To take an active part in planning and decisions that affect their lives

Our Aims:

ECHO has six aims that we want to see reflected in all the work that we do.

These are the things that are important to us and our participants.





CHOICE



To support our participants to be happy & healthy
with a variety of stimulating choices

ECHO offers real choice to our participants. Having lots of different things to do means that there is something for everyone and all abilities.

At Studio Mirai we welcomed Nic Bullock as the new team leader. Everyone has worked really hard to improve the site and make it more open and organised. This means that participants can now undertake a wider variety of woodwork and furniture projects.



For those who like a good yarn, Storytelling took its participants around the world and throughout time with the tales they learnt about. With their imagination they went to medieval markets and trips to Holland and Rome to learn about Julius Caesar.



Staying fit and healthy is really important and our Sports and Leisure activities help participants keep active. Being fit and healthy means people can live more independent lives and require less support from other services.



Meeting friends and having fun helps our mental health. This is why ECHO runs lots of social events. Whether it is relaxing at Club night and The Rendezvous; music and dancing at Yam Jams; or a weekly wind down at Friday Club.



We continue to run a really varied programme of Leisure and social activities, with regular session of Football and Tennis.

Our walking group is led by participants who are qualified walk leaders who plan the routes and make sure everyone is safe.



Sports have so many benefits that we have joined with Sports partnership Hereford and Worcester and are now the lead for the Special Olympics in Herefordshire. This means that there will be more opportunities for participants to join in the community as we work with sports clubs and groups to be more inclusive.

For those participants who want to challenge themselves we will also be organising opportunities to compete with others in and around the county.

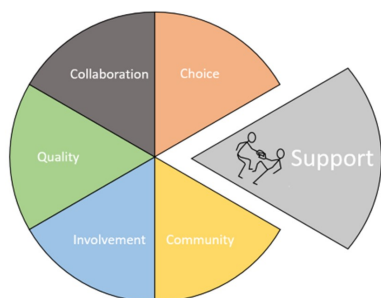
Leominster Tennis Club ran their first Special Olympics event with some coaching followed by a tournament for their 'New to Tennis' group that our participants attend. The event was a great success and a trophy was presented at their annual awards.



"In the tournament I was a bit lucky – I nearly went out in the first round! I felt joyful to get to the final and I was really proud to win and it was great to be awarded the trophy at the tennis club's Awards Night.

I feel like my tennis is improving. I like being a member of the club and getting to play with other people."

Louis, Tournament Winner



SUPPORT



To support our participants to be happy & healthy
with a variety of stimulating choices

ECHO prides itself on the quality of support that we provide to our participants.

About Face our theatre company is a great example of how we support people. Our theatre company is made up of a variety of groups that have something for every ability. From the introductory Drama club, people can move to the activities that suits what they want to achieve. This could be performing as part of the main company, learning theatre skills or drama and stage craft.

This year our Main company has been performing 'Creation' their new production. It has been great to see each of the actors grow in confidence and see the performances improve with each show.

Our other groups also pulled together some new creations of their own with the Drama club delivering 'Migratus' and the Drama and Stagecraft group 'Rats'.



**About Face
Theatre Company**



Tim's story

When Tim started his journey with About Face he was a young man fresh out of college. He joined our training group which ran for two years. After this he joined our fun drama club and then the main company.

Over the years we have seen Tim develop from a quietly spoken, shy man to someone with a big voice and bigger ideas. He is always willing to take on any challenges that come his way. I think being part of About Face has helped Tim to become who he is. Last year he was successful in joining a Directors

course in Bradford run by Mind The Gap, a theatre Company like ours that works with actors with learning disabilities. He had to apply for this, write saying why he wanted to do the training and travel to Bradford and stay in a hotel. Suzie Owens supported Tim. They had quite an adventure as it happened during the floods last year. They had cancelled trains and late nights to deal with.

Since joining the main company Tim has been on tour with us. Touring is always very hard work and there are a lot of unknowns that need to be navigated. One of the best things about touring is that we get to venues that would be beyond our reach and meet lots of interesting people. Supporting the actors to enjoy these experiences and keep them going when they are tired is crucial.

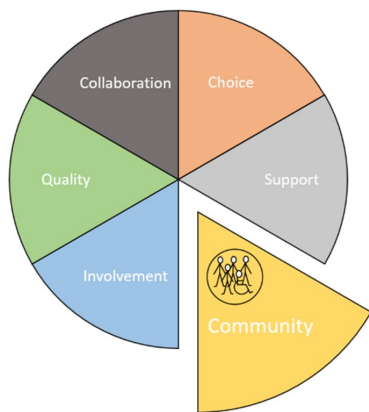
Tim

“Being in About Face gives me confidence and I like being with my friends. I have always wanted to be an actor, I love being on stage, it brings me out, I found out I had a bigger person inside me. Usually I am quite nervous. I am new to the theatre company, I was a student here but now I am in the main company.”

Suzie

“Tim thrives on challenges, during Bradford he volunteered himself to go on stage always putting himself forward, even though he is usually shy. Tim is incredibly independent only wanting assistance in understanding things better. It is clear from our Bradford trip he learns a great deal by observing others. His self awareness helps him grow as an actor.”





COMMUNITY



To support people to have a good social life, to help them keep in touch with friends and get involved in the community

ECHO believes that we need to be part of the community in which we live. This opens up new opportunities and helps to change attitudes to disability.

Eaton Barn has built up a community all of its own and is supported by a whole range of local people. This year the hard work of the team at Eaton was recognised by the Royal Horticultural Society as part of their 'In Your Neighbourhood awards'. Eaton Barn received the highest level award a level 5 'Outstanding'. That was even more amazing as it was the first time that a new entrant has ever got the top award!



Lifelinks were out and about in their local area this year. They continue to shop for their customers who can't get out and do it themselves. It gives our participants a chance to help others and learn some useful skills for independence whilst doing it. The groups also made a number of trips out including to Shobdon Airfield, a trip on a barge and bowling. When Friday Club had a fundraiser Lifelinks came to Leominster to support them and see some old friends, helping to strengthen the ECHO community.



Community Centres are the at the heart of their area and ECHO's Saxon Hall Café is helping to keep this community well fed!

Our participants help to cook and serve tasty healthy meals to the people using the centres. Having a café gives a welcoming space where people can relax and meet friends.

Our participants have also used the opportunity to gain their Food Hygiene certificates, something that they can use outside of ECHO if looking for a job. The role that the café plays in the community has been recognised by the Co-op who have supported this project.

The team at Saxon Hall Cafe



Partnership working in the community

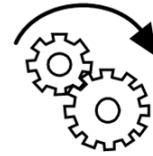


In Leominster The Priory Centre can be regularly found at the market selling homemade preserves and crafts. The Priory Centre is the ECHO project that is best suited to supporting participants with more complex needs and we make sure that whatever someone's ability that they are able to join in all the activities.

Involving everyone is so important that the participants, staff and friends of ECHO all came together to raise funds for an Acheeva Bed to allow one of our participants to do just this. The bed is fully adjustable which means the participant can come out of their wheelchair and be comfortably positioned to take part in whatever activity is going on



INVOLVEMENT



To give the time, respect and support needed for our participants to be involved in the planning, decision making and the running of ECHO

ECHO encourages everyone who uses our services to become members. Being a member of ECHO means that participants have the opportunity to vote at our AGM, giving them the chance to shape how the charity develops.

As well as giving participants real choice of what they do with the variety of projects that we run, we also make sure that there are different options to choose from in the activities they do.



Every year we also carry out a 'Participants Say' with all the groups at every Day Opportunity. To do this our Participant Involvement worker visits to find out what they think about their project using a fun exercise. Project staff aren't part of the group as we find that people feel more able to answer honestly about what works well and what can be improved without them there.

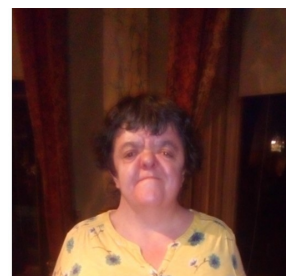
Did You Know?

Our participant Trustees give 1145 hours of time to ECHO each year. This is the equivalent of 3 full time members of staff

ECHO involves its participants in running the charity at every level. Our participant trustees are full members of the Board and make sure that the decisions we make as an organisation are right for all our service users. They meet every week for trustee support to do the work they need to do and to talk about the issues that affect ECHO. This support from Our Participant Involvement Worker means that our participant trustees understand what they need to do, are prepared for meetings and can give their opinions with confidence.

Bev Davies, REP Group member and Trustee

“ I am proud to be a trustee and be able to speak up for ECHO participants. I can also make sure that the Board do a good job and run ECHO well.”



The ECHO Rep Group is our service user group. Their job is to ask participants for ideas and find out what they think about ECHO. The Rep Group is a sub-group of the Board and works with staff and trustees to make sure ECHO runs the kind of good quality services participants want. ECHO wants to be ‘Participant Led’ so the Rep Group speak up to make sure this happens in our projects and in running our charity.

They also work with people and organisations outside of ECHO. When Herefordshire Council was deciding how to spend its money the Chief Executive, Alistair Neill, visited the Rep Group to find out what they do and ask them what they thought. A researcher from Australia visited them to ask for help with her project about Accessible toilets, and they support the work of the Learning Disability Partnership Board



During Covid-19 the Rep Group have learnt to use Zoom and to run their meetings online. This has given them new skills and confidence to represent ECHO participants in the best way they can.



Adult Community Learning

Through the Adult Community Learning programme, funded via Herefordshire Council we have been able to run a programme of courses within our projects teaching new skills and increasing participants knowledge.

We helped to train participants and people from other organisations what it means to be a good volunteer and how to support people who have a disability. These skills were then used in other ECHO projects to help support our participants get the most out of what they do.

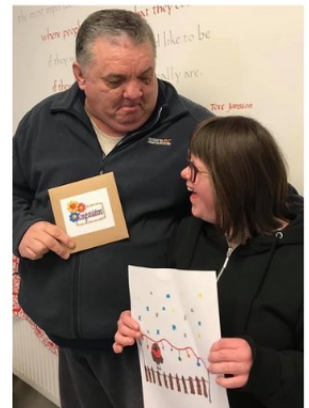
We also ran courses in women's health, building a story and recycling and sustainability. By being creative in how we teach the courses we know that everyone can take part and demonstrate their learning. No matter what the course is about all of them increase participant confidence and pride in what they do.

It is not just the support that they get at ECHO that is important to how our participants develop, support at home is also really important. This is why ECHO wants to strengthen the links between what we do here and our participants families and other support. Joining up the support people have





Celebrating a year in pictures





QUALITY



To provide high quality services that are integrated,
visible and have value to the community

ECHO been awarded the 'Trusted Charity Mark'.

This scheme is a quality mark run by NCVO
(National Council for Voluntary Organisations),
looks at 11 areas to see if the charity is well run.

Having an outside organisation look at how ECHO
works is really important as it makes us look at
how we do things and identifies areas where we
are doing well and those things that we need to
improve.



A key to ECHO's success is the dedicated team of staff and volunteers.
Everyone is focussed on the support and wellbeing of our participants and this
is what makes our projects the effective, caring spaces that they are.

We invest in our staff to ensure that they keep up with all the training necessary
to deliver high quality activities safely. We ask a lot of our staff and they are
always going above and beyond in the support they provide.

As well as our regular staff we also have an excellent team of relief staff that
we could not do without, as they provide the cover we need to keep projects
going when staff are on holiday or ill.

Did you know ECHO has 38 paid staff, 8 relief staff
and over 150 volunteers?

Volunteering at ECHO

Our volunteers are a really important part of ECHO and we couldn't do what we do without them.

Our Inclusive Volunteering project, funded by the National Lottery Community Fund continues to support the projects and our volunteers to make the most of the opportunity.

This project is set up with a focus on encouraging and supporting people with additional needs to volunteer. ECHO knows that with the right support everyone can contribute and that we are stronger by bringing in a range of experiences.



Fundraising and support

To keep ECHO running in the way that we want, requires us to constantly look for funds to add to the money that our fees bring in. This year, the Marketing and Fundraising group have produced a fundraising plan which sets out the income targets that we aim to meet over the next few years. We also plan to recruit a dedicated fundraiser to help us meet these ambitious totals.

We have also been working with other organisations to review how and what ECHO does. Pilotlight is a group of business people who are working with our Chief Officer bringing their experience to help us to shape our thinking. Through our Lloyds Bank grant we will be looking at recruitment of Trustees and how we can better measure the benefits of what we do.





COLLABORATION



To build connections with other organisations and support our participants to join their activities, giving them more opportunities.

Whilst ECHO can do a lot we know that only by working with other organisations can there be real choice for our participants. This is why ECHO partners up with other like minded organisations.

Rose Tinted Rags in Hereford is a great example of partnership working. We run this project with Tina and Karen of Green Eyed Monster and they provide the creative drive and experience that helps our participants create some amazing textile items. ECHO helps with the recruitment of participants, liaising with the Council and other administrative tasks.

One of our most popular projects Yam Jams, is a partnership project with Encore Community Music. Encore help to support the artists, rapper Lofty and his DJ Rich, while ECHO helps to arrange the venues and advertise the opportunity to our participants. This partnership brings music and fun to our participants regardless of ability/disability, but particularly suitable for people with profound and complex needs.

Other partnership projects include Saxon Hall Café, Sunday Company and with a number of community organisations such as Leominster Football Club and Leominster Tennis Club.

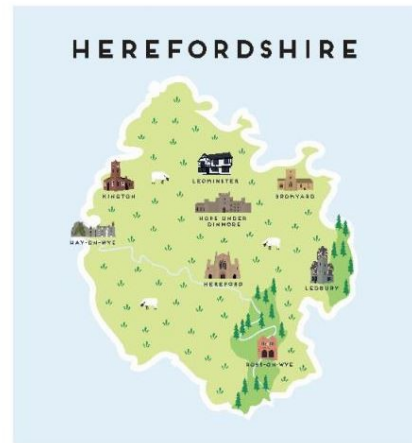


ECHO also plays an active role in groups and forums in the County that bring organisations together.

Herefordshire Action Together (HAT)

is a partnership of charities, social enterprises, organisations and groups across Herefordshire who are working together to improve the quality of life for children, young people and adults in the County. We believe that by working together we are stronger as a sector. HAT produces a brochure that promotes the many organisations offering opportunities in Herefordshire, that makes it easier for people to choose the activities that will suit them best.

Herefordshire Activities Together
Something for everyone to do in our beautiful county



HAT is a partnership of charities, social enterprises, organisations and groups across Herefordshire
We are working together to improve the quality of life for children, young people and adults
Inside you will find the broad range of our activities
We hope there is something for everyone
This booklet is free of charge

ECHO is also part of the Learning Disability Partnership Board a forum that is run by Herefordshire Council that meets four times a year to discuss the work that is going on to help people with learning disabilities. ECHO represents its participants and members and ensures that their voices are heard when designing services.

As part of our Inclusive Volunteering project, ECHO also organises a steering group made up of a variety of organisations that supports our work and provides a collaborative, joined up approach to support people with additional needs in finding volunteering opportunities across Herefordshire.



**HEREFORDSHIRE'S
LEARNING DISABILITY
PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

everythi|g about us but not without us

Money

This is a summary of how we have spent our money this year. Full copies of our accounts are available from the ECHO Office

Summary Income & expenditure for the year ending 31/3/20

	2019	2020
INCOME FROM:		
Generated funds	£99,587	£114,732
Charitable activities	£668,569	£643,871
Total income	£768,156	£758,603
MONEY SPENT ON:		
Fundraising costs	£16,332	£20,959
Charitable activities	£741,798	£790,077
Total money spent	£758,130	£811,036
Balance	£10,026	-£52,433
Money brought forward	£331,645	£341,671
Money to carry forward	£341,671	£289,238

Balance Sheet for Year ending 31/3/19

	2019	2020
Current Assets	£388,530	£314,525
Creditors	£(46,859)	£(30,086)
Net Current Assets	£341,671	£284,439

FUNDS

Restricted	£49,368	£29,695
Unrestricted General	£189,021	£240,320
Unrestricted Designated	£103,282	£19,223
TOTAL FUNDS	£341,671	£289,238

Fundraising

Knowing we have the funds available to continue our work is crucial to providing the best possible service we can.

There are many ways you can help support our work with a financial gift, small or large. You can choose to help a particular project or ECHO as a whole, knowing whatever you give will enable us to create more choices and more opportunities.

To donate, head to the website www.echoherefordshire.org.uk or contact the ECHO office on 01568 620307

Thank you

to everyone who gives a regular monthly donation by direct debit and all the people who have made a one off donation, organised a fundraising event, bought a draw ticket or put a coin or two in our collecting tins

A special thank you to our Funders and Donors

Arts Council England	Leominster Co-op	Elmley Foundation
Childwick Trust	Leominster in Bloom	Eveson Charitable Trust
Co-op	Leominster Town Council	GMC Trust
Croft Trust	Clarnor Estates	Herefordshire Council
EF Bulmer Benevolent Fund		

The **Eveson**
Charitable **Trust**



Leominster
Town Council



Supported using public funding by
ARTS COUNCIL
ENGLAND



THE
CHILDWICK
TRUST



Herefordshire
Council



COMMUNITY
FUND

Co-op Group's Local Community Fund



A special thank you to our Volunteers

Alisha Eyton	Della Ellison-Smith	Jocelyn Hughes	Melody Breeze	Simon Harris
Alison Jones	Deryn Welch	Joe James	Michelle Tilbury	Sonia George
Amy Jude	Edmund Proctor	John Stuchbery	Mike Jones	Stacey Ewers
Andrew Thompson	Elaine Heal	Joy House	Molly Leary	Steve Estell
Angela Jauncey	Elaine Willis	Kate Fielden	Monika Kupisiewicz	Su Pollard
Ann Tether	Elizabeth Chapman	Kathryn Smith	Nichola Hurley	Sue Hall
Ann Bellamy	Emma Garvey	Katie Bufton	Nicholas Burt	Sue Nash
Annie Evans	Emma Marvel	Katie Gaster	Nicholas Haines	Susan Blake
Annie Gamble	Emma Tustin	Katie Llewellyn	Nicola Honey	Susan Harvey
Annie Penning	Gavin Long	Kevin Smith	Nigel Hall	Susan Holland
Astrid McBride	Georgia Evans	Kevin Bound	Oliver Wood	Susan Jones
Barbara Dowse	Geraint Jones	Kevin Stuchbery	Olivia Evans	Suzanne Thomas
Barbara Jenkins	Glenys Nash	Kim Holland	Owen Cowden	Suzi Underwood
Bella Hesbrook	Godfrey Moss	Lama Choesang	Paul Baines	Thomas Arthur
Beth Sanderson	Gilly Craddock	Lauren Ware	Paul Scott	Tiffany Bateson
Bethany Layton	Hayley Williams	Lesley Stewart	Pete MacKenzie	Tony White
Bev Davies	Heather Hughes	Leslie Walker	Peter Cooper	Tracey Caine
Blaise White	Helen Richards	Linda Crump	Peter McKay	Vicki Davies
Carl Crippin	Humphrey Clement	Linda King	Peter Turner	Vivian Webb
Carol Cross	Ian Banks	Lindsey Evans	Philip Brown	Vivien Geen
Carole Hill	Ina Willis	Louise Ingram	Rachael Salinas-Castillo	Yvonne Mifflin
Caroline Wood	Irene Novadnieks	Louise Jordan	Rachel Exelby	
Caroline Arthur	Jackie O'Connor	Mand Hamblin	Rebecca Gratton	
Caroline Gwynn	Jan Holbrook	Margaret Wallis	Richard Crook	
Chantal Ellis	Janet Healey	Marianne Simpson	Richard Williams	
Charles Ellis	Janet Smith	Mark Thomas	Richard Hyde-Smith	
Chelsey Newton	Jason Stuchbery	Mark Harrison	Richard Pollard	
Cheryl Hewitt	Jean Singleton	Mark Rusling	Rose Hunt	
Chris Blum	Jeanette Reid	Mark Wakeman	Sara Lewis	
Claire Tolley	Jeanette Washington	Martyn Upshaw	Sarah Hefferman	
Colette Sinclair	Jennifer Harrison	Mary Horner	Sarah Jenkins	
Daisy Coffey	Jenny Hopkins	Matthew Jones	Simeon Blackwell	
Darren Morgan	Jim Howden	Maureen Morton		
		Mel Townsend		

Chief Officer

Mike Cook

Management Team

Cath Baker

Nick Baker

Jess Mackenzie

Maggie Percy

Kelly Holland

About Face Theatre

Company

Nick Baker

Letty Flynn

Jess Mackenzie

Linzi Morgan Whitting

Suzie Owens

Juliet Stroucken

Clever Betsy

Liz Evans

Julie Baldwin

Rebecca Tabram

Eaton Barn

Community Garden

Sarah Powell

Bev Waterfield

Finance

Mary-Jane Bayliss

Inclusive Volunteering

Denise Kerwood

Claire Mee

The ECHO Staff Team July 19 — August 20

Leisure & Social

Nick Baker

Letty Flynn

Lucy Tisdale

Lifelinks (Wednesdays)

Liz Evans

Lyndsay Maples

Lifelinks (Fridays)

Pete Kerwood

Lyndsay Maples

Jacqui Stewart

Market & Fundraising

Lisa Woakes

Office Team

Nataliya Asenova

Kay Beeden

Jody Gorle

Laura Marsh

Our News Our Views

Mary Simpson

Participant Involvement

Steph Baines

Rose Tinted Rags

Karen Meiklejohn

Tina Walton

ECHO Relief Team

Mabel Bostock

Martha Fosberry

Caroline Fuller

Elaine Heal

Sarah Hefferman

Hannah Seger

Lucy Tisdale

Helen Richards

Terri Wilson

Saxon Hall Café

Jacqui Stewart

Storytelling

Denise Kerwood

Studio Mirai

Dave Bordewey

Nic Bullock

Gill Hill

Sue Parkinson

The Priory Centre

Dave Bordewey

Zoe Bradley

Elaine Heal

Gill Hill

Kelly Holland

Hannah Seger

Ian Waterfield

Weaving

Maggie Percy



In 2016 we changed the ECHO logo to this

And now in 2020, we are excited to share the new version.



And finally a word from our Patron, Nat Hone

“ Pandemic? What Pandemic? All in the amazing Echo family have been determined not to let the very extraordinary times through which we are living, be more than an obstacle course through which you have all steered. I pay tribute to you all for your cool determination to “get on with it” as best you can. I understand that your charity managers, volunteers and those they help have all been keen to do whatever they can while managing the risks in a sensible and proportionate way.

Echo is admired and supported throughout the County. Your number one admirer is your Patron. Well done all.”



European Union
European
Social Fund



**Education & Skills
Funding Agency**

ECHO

40 West Street
Leominster
Herefordshire
HR6 8ES

Contact

01568 620307
01568 620308
echo.info@echoherefordshire.co.uk
www.echoherefordshire.org.uk

Charity number 1096449

Company number 4475254

Errors & Omissions Excepted

Accurate as date of publication,
October 2020