

Connect Charity

ORGANISATION SIZE / Sole Trader (1/2 employees)

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BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF YOUR CSR APPLICATION

Connect Charity was established as a brand to develop a business that delivers responsible and purpose led professional solutions to charities and small businesses. Originally it started as a part-time venture around other commitments but it soon became clear that working with a number of different organisations which faced similar challenges was both challenging and interesting as well as rewarding and we knew we were making a positive difference. Connect Charity deliver bespoke solutions into charities who have challenges with strategic planning, fundraising, marketing and team building and leadership. We work with Associates in some areas as we firmly believe that delivering the best possible solutions with the right expertise ensures that the outcomes are effective and bring positive results. We also aim to support SME's to deliver socially responsible business through CSR accreditation and ethical and value driven business solutions. This is an area of business that we are keen to expand and through the CSR Angel scheme we hope to bring more businesses together to deliver socially responsible business solutions. We believe that by bringing these two areas together we can deliver a 'circle of good' with positive outcomes for all stakeholders. The process of bringing together the two types of organisations means that they both benefit through sustainable support, improved business outcomes and impact that can be measured. We also hope that everyone enjoys being part of a team that has a great culture and supports the communities around them. The world is getting smaller!

OVERALL SUMMARY

Reviewing our CSR activities has been aligned with the 4 pillars that are suggested as follows:

Environment

We are based within a home office which is situated within the house and therefore shares all resources meaning that there are no independent facilities needed.

There is no travel to work although meetings are attended when necessary by car or public transport when appropriate. Alternatively, we use Skype for online meetings.

We use minimum electricity. The main ceiling light uses energy efficient bulbs. A desk lamp is used the majority of the time. Broadband facilities are shared.

Printing is limited and waste paper is recycled in the weekly domestic waste collection.

The office was recently refurbished with cost efficient furniture from Ikea, an environmentally responsible supplier. It was painted and decorated by our team in our own time.

Workplace

We believe in a flexible working environment and when deadlines need to be met we ensure that time is dedicated as needed, this can mean that the week can include flexible and out of office hours.

We try to take part in net-walking which brings people together to network as well as keeping fit and enjoying the outside environment. We strive to include wellbeing and a balanced approach to the workplace when we can.

We network regularly and believe that bringing people together through contacts that we meet is advantageous to both the

businesses and the people we meet. We believe that recommendation is a good way to work and word of mouth is the most successful and best way to get business. We have strategic alliances with other small businesses where we are able to deliver work together, an example is that when we ran a bespoke corporate shooting day for a local charity I worked with a professional photographer for our press shots and a sales company to help manage relationships on the day and the overall event management.

Family play an important role in our business and we juggle family commitments with work deadlines. We also encourage our families to get involved with events that we deliver and they are always willing to volunteer to help!

Community

We work with our community all the time. Last year I volunteered to take part in the

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Governments National Citizens Programme (NCS) Programme and became a Dragon, this involved sitting on a panel to judge presentations by the teams involved in the scheme. We were also involved in coordinating an opportunity for another team to take part in a communications project for a local charity and we even featured in their video.

We have provided pro-bono advice to local charities and individuals giving them advice about setting up a charity. We've also spent some time with a small counselling charity advising the CEO and their trustees about gaps in their fundraising delivery and how to move forward to become more sustainable and consistent with their income generation.

We support local community events and whenever it's appropriate we support our clients in the community by supporting their activities or promoting their events through our social media and networking.

We always look to work with local small businesses and promote their businesses when we can, an example is, when working with a local charity to deliver an afternoon tea event we sourced a local candle supplier to provide bespoke gifts for the guests and thanked and promoted them on social media.

Philanthropic

Working in the charity sector, we believe in supporting charities and we get stuck in! In 2016 we brought together a team of 22 men and women who took part in the 50k Thames Path Challenge – it certainly was a challenge in the persistent rain walking from Runnymede to Henley-on-Thames. We supported 9 charities as team 'Wonder Walkers' and raised £15k. We all had team tops which Connect Charity sponsored and each charities logo featured on the back. We even had a blind walker who completed the challenge with his guide. It was a brilliant achievement and meant that we had to commit a lot of time to train and give up weekends so family support was also an important part of the process.

Again in 2018 we took on another challenge, a team of 9 of us took on the mighty Jurassic Coast Challenge and walked 50k up monster hills and along cobbled beaches. It was a hard and at times daunting challenge but 7 of us completed it. It took me 19 hours as I finally crossed the finish at 2.45am. Team, 'Walking with Dinosaurs' spent hours training in a particularly hot summer, we walked through corn fields and up and down hills for miles to train, again taking evenings and weekends. The team raised over £7,500 for 8 charities that were

both small and local as well as national organisations.

We support events that are delivered both by us for our clients and the charities we work with. Our families also offer support and buy tickets for events as well as support them through sponsorship, buying raffle tickets, merchandise and using home collecting tins. We are always keen to support our smaller local charities as we know that they are the ones that struggle the most financially.

<https://csr-accreditation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/vfb/2018/12/Thames-Path-Challenge.pdf>

<https://csr-accreditation.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/vfb/2018/12/Jurassic-Coast-Challenge-.pdf>