

Community Matters

Issue 2

HIGGS
& SONS
SOLICITORS

Just for the record

After a remarkable 2015 supporting the Alzheimer's Society and raising a then record amount of £17,000, 2016 proved to be even more impressive.

Our chosen charity of the year was the Stroke Association. After a year of organising a whole host of activities, from the perennial favourites of the annual quiz and football tournament, to the ever popular cake sales through to some brand new events, the total raised for Stroke Association was an incredible £23,994.66.

It is a real testament to everyone here at Higgs, that a firm of our size is able to raise such a phenomenal amount of money. But even more remarkable is the hard work, dedication and commitment of colleagues across the firm who not only help to fundraise, but commit untold hours to working directly with our charities, making a real difference to our community.

We hope the following pages will inspire you to get involved in our community work. After all, we've just had two consecutive record breaking years – and it would be a shame if we couldn't make that three in a row!



Understanding the value of learning

One of the stand-out community events of the year saw 50 primary school children come to Higgs for a learning and activity day.

The Business and Enterprise Challenge was organised in partnership with the Rowley Learning Trust.

The aim of the event was to help the Year 5 students develop an understanding of the world of work and learn just how important it is to be literate and numerate. The day also showed the pupils that co-operation and negotiation, taking risks, planning and teamwork are all essential tools needed to succeed in business.

Jean Knight, Development Officer for The Rowley Learning Trust said: "The Trust is incredibly grateful to Higgs & Sons for helping to raise the aspirations of the children regarding their future careers and lives within their communities."

Tim Jones commented "Playing our part in the community where we work is really important to us here at Higgs and we were delighted to host this successful learning day."



2015 a year to remember

It took a lot of hard work and imagination, but the record breaking total of £17,000 made it all worthwhile.

Highlights included a wonderful performance from Higgs' choir who won the national Legal Harmony singing competition; a Denim for Dementia and Own Clothes Day in the Spring gave people the chance to cast off their usual business attire in aid of charity. The summer saw 48 teams battle it out on the pitch in the six a side football tournament, whilst Autumn saw the slightly less physical (but equally competitive) annual quiz at Molineux! WWFC also featured in the All Stars game which saw Higgs XI take on a team of former Wolves players.

In addition to our support for Alzheimer's Society, we also collected Easter eggs and Christmas presents for Wolverhampton's Haven project and through our commitment to BITC, colleagues helped to transform the gardens of Mary Stevens Hospice, amongst much, much more.



So to all our cake bakers, walkers, quizzers, gardeners, singers, footballers, wolf runners, organisers, helpers and supporters – a huge thank you for making Higgs' 2015 charity support such a huge success.

On the edge



The volunteers who thought the first Community Matters project of 2016 was going to be a walk in the park were in for a rude awakening.

Helping to clear out areas of woodland on Kinver Edge was always going to be physically demanding, but 26th January 2016 also happened to be one of the wettest, windiest days of the year.

The weather didn't put off volunteers Lynne George, Lorraine Hill, Liz Hickman, Jenna Beckett, Steve Chaplin and Sarah Murphy however, and even birthday boy Mike George managed a smile as the team donned waterproofs to help the park rangers clear brambles and saplings that were threatening the growth of heather on the Staffordshire beauty spot.

"It was a great day," commented Steve Chaplin. "The weather was a bit of a challenge, but our spirits were kept high by our camaraderie and a constant supply of chocolate."

Holiday support for the homeless

In August, a series of collection boxes were posted around the firm – and duly filled with items such as tea, coffee and toiletries.

The items, which were collected throughout August and September, were then donated to the Good Shepherd Ministry in Wolverhampton who support the homeless in and around the city.

If you want to get ahead...

Hats for Headway asked colleagues to wear a hat to work and make a donation in aid of Headway Black Country. The event helped to relieve the tension on what could have been a nervous day for Higgs' superstitious colleagues as it was held on Friday 13th May!



...two record breaking years

A night at the musicals

In May the Ruskin Glass centre in Stourbridge was filled with crystal clear voices, as Higgs' choir, 'Legally Sound', collaborated with the Stroke Association choir for a 'Night at the Musicals'.

"To join forces with the Stroke Association's choir on a night when we were fundraising for them made it all the more special," commented Nyree Applegarth.

To end the year, the choir put on a carol concert here at Waterfront HQ. The festive night proved a real hit and was a fitting way to end a remarkable year of fundraising.



Under pressure



In April, the Stroke Association paid a visit to put colleagues to the test.

Higgs' blood pressure testing day took place as part of a national stroke prevention week, when the Stroke Association carried out checks on staff here at Brierley Hill.

Louise Lawless, community and events fundraising manager for the Stroke Association, said: "The 'Know Your Blood Pressure'

campaign helps people to understand the link between high blood pressure and stroke.

"The check is quick, easy and painless and we recommend everyone gets tested to reduce their risk of having a stroke."

The blood pressure testing day was also held in support of the firm's ongoing employee Health and Wellbeing policy.

No pain, all gain



May saw colleagues help local schoolchildren learn about healthy attitudes to eating and living when they once again took part in the Business in the Community's (BITC) Give and Gain Day.

The day of fun and sporting activities was held at Tipton Sports Centre, where Higgs worked in partnership with ERIKS to provide an exciting, informative day for over 120 children from schools across the Black Country.

Melita Bown commented: "The event helps children to start thinking about leading more active lifestyles, eating a balanced diet and sowing the seeds for a healthier future."

Resolve to raise funds

In March, 18 intrepid Higgs runners tackled the tough terrain of the Resolution Run around the grounds of Hagley Hall.

Those taking part were: Lindsey Bate, Jenna Beckett, Emma Hadley, Clare Griffiths, Siobhan Turner, Rebecca Green, Matt Dudley, Mark Hand, Sarah Cornick, Sarah Murphy, Nyree Applegarth, Kate Owen, Claire Hanke, Steve Chaplin, Joe Cowles, Jamie De Souza, Julia Lowe and Annabel Kay.

Not all 2016's fundraising focussed on the Stroke Association.

Scope was a particular beneficiary of our support as colleagues set a target of £1500 to help this much needed charity. A series of unique events was arranged notably the Promise Auction with bids including a holiday in Portugal, a trip in an Aston Martin DB9 and a 'Come Dine With Me' gourmet experience.

Following the auction, Higgs staff took over the Stourbridge Scope shop for the day, donating items and encouraging local shoppers to come and take advantage of the bargains on offer.



These endeavours helped to raise an amazing £2605 for Scope, far in excess of the original target and to the delight of the charity.

Higgs' 10th anniversary football tournament raises £7k for charity



The excitement of Euro 2016 was nothing compared to the drama of Higgs & Sons' 10th annual charity football tournament which took place at Stourbridge Rugby Club in June.

The tournament saw 48 teams contest the trophy with eventual winners Mazars beating Santander in a close final.

The tournament helped to raise an incredible £7,000 for the Stroke Association.

Richard Griffiths comments: "When it started in 2006, there were around 10 teams taking part. It has grown year on year so that now we have a waiting list of local businesses and professional organisations who want to get involved."

The year ahead

As the end of the year approached, we asked colleagues to put forward their nominations for Higgs & Sons' charity of the Year 2017.

First all we want to thank you for all the suggestions as all of the nominated organisations do terrific work and we know that many of them are dear to the hearts of those who made the nomination.

That made it an extremely tough decision, but after much deliberation we are thrilled to announce the Higgs & Sons charity of the year for 2017 is the NSPCC. We are looking forward to working alongside them to raise much needed funds and awareness of the work they carry out in our community.

To find out more about the work of the NSPCC go to www.nspcc.org.uk

We're supporting

NSPCC

But what about you?

How can we ensure we make the most of our relationship with the NSPCC, and get you involved?

What events and activities would you like to see in this year's community programme? What would inspire you to commit those hours to helping us make 2017 another record breaking year?

Send your thoughts, ideas and questions to Tim Jones tim.jones@higgsandsons.co.uk

