

GOOD OLD FURNITURE AVAILABLE (GOFA) REPORT – July 2025

I met with Graeme, the Manager of GOFA on 20 June 2025 and also met a number of other staff/volunteers and customers. GOFA started back in 1995, on a volunteer basis, connected to the Methodist Church. It became an independent charity in 2005.

The organisation is run by three full-time-equivalent staff, 10 volunteer Trustees and around 12 volunteers, working across the week. GOFA also has links with Learn Your Way and has had students on placement.

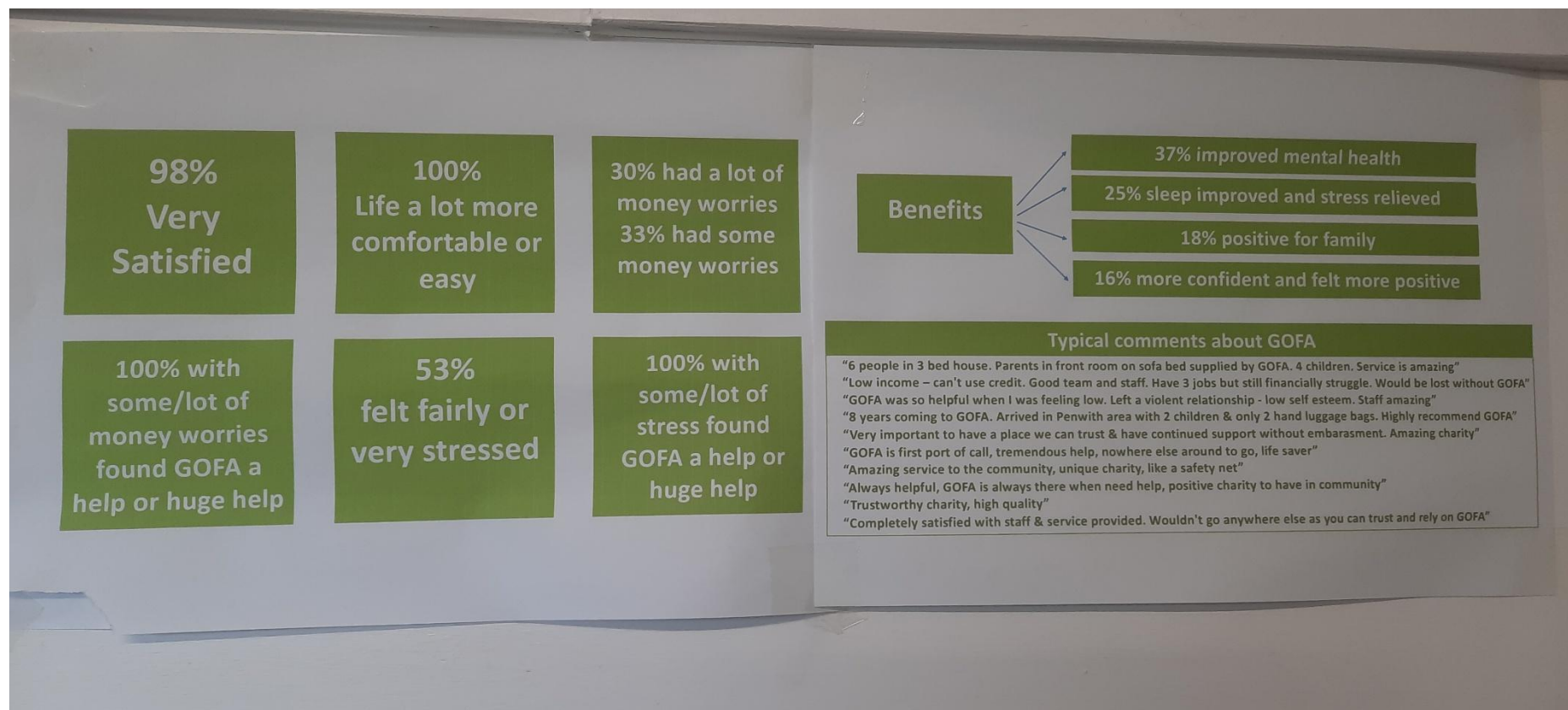
Principal funding comes from the sales of furniture. Apart from a one-off bid to the National Lottery, which funded the purchase of an electric van, GOFA does not seek external, independent funding, as they do not have the skills, knowledge and capacity to undertake sustainment funding. Their principal financial challenge is the rent for their current premises, which stands at £12K a year.

While their core work might be simply perceived as a transactional one, selling cheap, high quality furniture to vulnerable people in financial difficulties; Graeme spoke passionately and movingly about their core work **actually** being about building stronger communities and engaging with and making strong connections with vulnerable people, who are often excluded and isolated, so that they feel cared for and valued. Graeme recounted several anecdotes of occasions where they have provided a single item, say a bed, which was all that was asked for, but when they got to the flat, noticing that the fridge was broken and the washing machine unusable and offering these items for free, sensitively so as not to shame or embarrass the recipient.

Referrals come from a variety of sources, including word of mouth, West Cornwall Hospital, Women's Aid, Adult Social Care, GPs and schools. I have referred many people to GOFA in my years of work in Children and Families Social Work and as a Support Worker with adults with complex needs.

Since applying for National Lottery funding GOFA have continued to gather satisfaction data from customers and the recent, incredibly positive results are attached to this report.

Andy Law



PENZANCE COMMUNITY FLORA GROUP REPORT – July 2025

I attended my first PZ Flora Committee meeting on 10 June 2025 and subsequently met one-to-one with the Chair – Jane Barber. PZ Flora Group (PZFG) is run by a small Committee with a bank of around 18 volunteers. Mid-week, PZFG can expect a cohort of 4 – 5 volunteers and at the weekend, a cohort of around 8 – 10. In high season, PZFG might well do in excess of 250 hours work in a month, 2 days a week. This does not take into account the numerous hours of administrative work required to run and manage such an organisation.

Their main areas of responsibility cover planters from the Station, Information Centre, Wharf Road, Abbey Basin, the perimeter of St John's Hall, the sunken garden of the Library, the top of Morrab Road and the Fire Station Memorial Garden. They also cover all 240 hanging baskets, including the troughs at the bottom of Chapel Street. The hanging baskets are maintained in collaboration with Trevenna Cross.

Current funding is made up of a patchwork of funding from Cornwall Council, Penzance Council and the BID. PZFG also have done/occasionally do, small fund-raising events/initiatives.

PZFG have two main challenges. The first challenge is capacity, both in capability as well as in the extent of the work they wish to do. Jane is the first to admit that given the average age of the volunteers and Community members (many are well into their seventies), the amount of hard physical work they are able to accomplish is decreasing and will only continue to decrease.

The other challenge in capacity is one of scope is. Jane was absolutely clear and adamant, that they do not want to extend their work/areas of responsibility. The Committee is clear that what they currently do, is what they want to carry on doing and no more. I discussed reaching out to new and younger volunteers to bring capacity, but Jane was adamant that the PZFG would not extend its responsibilities even with additional volunteers.

The second challenge is one of uncertainty of funding as their funding has to be requested every year and is not guaranteed. At the Committee meeting I attended, the Vice-Chair Emily requested that funding for the PZFG be added to the Precept. In my meeting with Jane, she formally requested that the Town Council consider offering guaranteed annual funding for a period of at least three years, perhaps via an SLA.

Andy Law

PENZANCE & CONCARNEAU TWINNING ASSOCIATION REPORT – July 2025

I attended my first Twinning Committee meeting on 10 June 2025, along with The Mayor and Councillors Bonnie Jackson and Penny Osborne. The Association currently has 46 paid-up individual members and 5 paid-up groups, with 339 members on Facebook. They have a busy diary of events for 2025/2026 (attached) and Councillors are encouraged to attend events they are able to and support this important cultural Association.

Much of the meeting was dedicated to fine detail discussion about itinerary arrangements for the July visit of 18 visitors to Penzance from Concarneau, including a visit to Geevor, a “formal” dinner at The Alverne and an informal buffet at the Cricket Club, with music planned to be provided by the Golowan Band, although they were yet to confirm.

There was also discussion about the visit to Les Filets Bleus Festival in Concarneau in August, with 4 invitations received for the Chair and Consort and the Mayor and Consort. The Mayor of Concarneau has agreed a visit to Penzance in September and there are early plans afoot to invite him to formally open St Anthony’s Gardens.

Following the Committee Meeting, it was evident that the Golowan Band were going to find it challenging to make the Cricket Club buffet, with intense pressure on their diary. I have offered for my duo “Shiver me Timbres” to provide the music for the event (free of charge of course!) and this has been gratefully accepted by the Chair.

Andy Law



Newlyn Community Flora Group – Activity Report

This community volunteer group works to enhance Newlyn's green public spaces, operating under Cormac's volunteer scheme. Open to all, the group always welcomes new volunteers—no experience needed, just an interest in gardening and a love of being outdoors with a friendly team.

Recent Activities:

- **Summer Planters:**

14 vibrant summer planters have been installed across Newlyn, including Barron's Square (opposite the Co-op), above the Old Harbour, and in St Peter's Hill car park. Most of the plants were grown from seed in the group's polytunnel.

- **Flower Bed Maintenance:**

Extensive weeding, pruning, and planting have been carried out at several locations:

- Duke Street car park
- Peake's of Tolcarne area
- Chywoone Hill (opposite the Centre)
- Cherry Tree bed (at the bottom of Old Paul Hill)
Overhanging brambles and branches have been cleared, and gaps filled with new plants.

- **Rosebud Garden Improvements:**

Benches have been restored with new timber, using materials provided by Cormac via the Volunteer Programme. Regular maintenance of Newlyn's only formal garden continues, including weeding, pruning, and gradually clearing the lower tier to reopen its stunning views across Mount's Bay.

- **Polytunnel:**

Hundreds of seeds have been sown and seedlings potted up for sale at our fundraising stall—raising over £600 so far this year. Proceeds will go toward purchasing more plants for Newlyn's green spaces and seeds for next season.



- **Gwavas Playing Field:**

A family fun day was held in April when we brought along vegetable and flower seeds and seedlings for children to pot up and take home. One of the most popular activities at the event it seems!

We were also invited to meet Cllrs and members of Mawnan Junior Playing Field to share our experience as part of the Urban Green Shoots project which has transformed this playing field into a beautiful haven for both people and wildlife.



A big thank you to the local Cormac team based at Long Rock for collecting green waste and organising its composting.

For any questions or to get involved, please don't hesitate to get in touch.

Cllr Penny Osborne

Newlyn, Mousehole and Paul Ward



CHAPEL ST CREATIVE CIO

Registered Charity 1199383

TRUSTEES' REPORT TO PENZANCE COUNCIL

July 2025

We achieved our initial charitable goal of saving Centenary Hall for community use in February 2024 when we completed the purchase of Centenary Hall. In the immediate aftermath we were preoccupied with maintaining community usage of the Hall whilst delivering £40,000 of repairs and refurbishments before the Government's COF grant funding deadline expired (end Jun 24). Over the past 12 months we have been focussing on developing longer term plans for the building whilst delivering some early wins.

The goals of our long-term plans for the building are financial sustainability, a higher occupancy rate, a broader usage (wider demographic) and improved accessibility for wheelchair users. The main project elements are:

- Creation of an event/performance space in the Main Hall (1st floor) complete with pull down seating for 100 people, lighting and sound system. The performance space will serve current Hall users who currently need to decamp to alternative venues to mount public events but more importantly it will provide an inexpensive venue for local groups wishing to put on events. The performance space will provide a new revenue stream whilst broadening usage of the Hall which is currently dominated by children and young adults.
- Installation of a photovoltaic solar and battery system to reduce burdensome energy costs whilst simultaneously reducing the Hall's carbon footprint.
- Installation of an accessible toilet and a wheelchair platform lift to the first floor to make the Hall wheelchair friendly.

The CIO received List Building Consent for its plans on 21 March 2025. The installation of an accessible toilet (part of the plan) was completed recently as part of a package of improvements funded by a National Lottery Community Fund grant of £19,450 awarded in November 2024. The accessible toilet will allow Shallal (a community arts charity), currently an occasional user of the Hall, to deliver a regular programme whilst also allowing the CIO to meet its statutory and charitable accessibility obligations. The CIO is currently considering its funding strategy for delivery of other elements of its long-term plans.

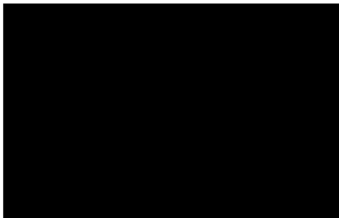
There have been several short term 'wins' in addition to the accessible toilet project. The aged gas central heating boiler was replaced in Nov 24 leading to a reduction in gas consumption and associated energy costs over the winter months. Studio 3 on the ground floor was refurbished in August last year, with a lot of volunteer effort provided by Hall users and especially The Big Dance Company. The National Lottery grant also allowed refurbishment of a further two 'chapel style' windows either side of the Hall

entrance meaning that approximately 60% of the Hall's iconic 'chapel style' windows have now been refurbished. The chapel style windows are a key feature of the Grade II listed building and important as part of the setting of the adjacent Grade II* Methodist Church which has similar windows.

The objectives of CSC CIO are to provide community space for community groups to deliver services from, objectives similar to those of village hall or community centre. Maximizing occupancy (hire income) and reducing operating costs (especially heating costs) are central to keeping hire fees affordable and the charity in surplus. Currently, in a typical week, between 250 – 300 children and adults visit Centenary Hall to participant in an activity.

The CIO 's financial year ended on 30th June and preliminary figures for the 2024/2025 indicate the CIO broke even or made small surplus despite contributions to important refurbishment projects. In the medium to long term the Trustees are seeking to establish a larger financial reserve and an earmarked fund for exceptional maintenance arisings on the Grade II listed building.

The Trustees are pleased to report that Centenary Hall is thriving and that whilst there is still a lot to do to realize the Hall's full potential as a community facility, the outlook is positive and very different from bleak outlook when the building was advertised for sale on the open market in 2021. The difference is the result of concerted community action supported by Penzance Council and subsequent help from Central Government.



Robert Love
Chair of Trustees

14th July 2026

Cllr Peter Lapin