



#domorelocal

OUR YEARBOOK 2023-24


heart of england
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

www.heartofenglandcf.co.uk

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ABOUT US

Heart of England Community Foundation is the leading, independent grant-making foundation in the West Midlands and Warwickshire. We raise and distribute funding to local community projects and initiatives. We are an accredited member of the UK Community Foundation network along with 47 foundations across the UK.

Our vision is to support communities across the West Midlands and Warwickshire to live happier, healthier lives. We work towards this by connecting generous donors who care with community causes that make a difference.

We have awarded over £40 million to over 8,400 good causes since our foundation in 1995. We have developed a dynamic portfolio of funds, working with a range of inspiring and generous private, public and corporate donors who share our commitment to a fair and thriving Midlands. You can find out more information about the Community Foundation and our work by visiting us online heartofenglandcf.co.uk

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FOREWORD & INTRODUCTION



Chris West
Chair

Last year was a period of significant growth and achievement for the Foundation. We expanded both the scope and impact of our grants, while also seeing considerable growth in our endowment.

A key highlight was our management of the £11.8 million Inclusive Communities Fund for the West Midlands Combined Authority, stemming from the 2022 Birmingham Commonwealth Games. This was a huge milestone as within seven months we were able to successfully allocate all £11.8 million to 388 projects across the region. We have now begun the learning and impact phase of this programme and we are excited to see the impact of this funding come to life.

While we were overseeing the Inclusive Communities Fund, we still successfully managed our existing grant programmes and actively pursued new funding sources and endowment opportunities to ensure our long-term sustainability. All of this has been made possible due to

the brilliant work of our team under the leadership of Tina Costello OBE, and the commitment of our trustees.

Tina's contribution to helping communities in the West Midlands has recently been recognised by her receipt of an OBE in the King's Birthday Honours. This is richly deserved, and it will only strengthen the Foundation's future in coming years. I am sure you will join me in extending congratulations to Tina.

This Yearbook now presents an opportunity to pause, take a breath, celebrate our success and move forward with determination. Our communities continue to face enormous challenges, and with a new Government and West Midlands Mayor, our role in supporting them is more vital than ever. We are fit and ready for the task, and we are committed to making the West Midlands a fairer, happier and healthier place.

Christopher T West



Tina Costello OBE
Chief Executive

As I reflect on last year, I'm incredibly proud of the Foundation's achievements in supporting our communities.

This past year has been momentous, highlighted by the success in retaining our fantastic existing donors and securing new, and significant contracts that will benefit communities across the West Midlands and Warwickshire.

We have invested £12.8 million to support 1,847 projects, a truly remarkable milestone in the Foundation's history considering we awarded a total of £2,000 in our first operational year. We have demonstrated that the Foundation can deliver programmes with ambition, agility and effectiveness and we hope this significant investment into our communities will help change lives locally. You can read more about the programmes we've delivered this year as you delve into our Yearbook.

Our future focus is now on developing our comprehensive 3–5-year strategy. This will guide our operations and ensure we continue to meet the needs of communities and provide an exceptional service to donors. The strategy will encompass our vision, mission and key objectives, providing a clear road map for the future.

We know that our region continues to have significant challenges in terms of health inequalities, housing and homelessness, the need for more access to green spaces and social cohesion. We also know that by working collaboratively with both the public and private sector, the voluntary and community sector can continue their vital work in tackling these challenges at a local level.

I am, as ever, filled with passion and optimism for the future and together with our supporters, donors, and the communities we serve, we will continue to build a lasting legacy of positive change.

Finally, receiving an OBE for my service to the charity and voluntary sector across the West Midlands and Warwickshire was an incredible surprise and far beyond my expectations. This honour is in recognition of the work we all do to make our region a fairer, happier and healthier place to live.

Thank you to everyone who supports our work and for being part of our journey.

HEADLINES FROM OUR YEAR

936 AWARDS

The Foundation awarded 936 grants and donations last year through a range of grant-making programmes.

£5.5

67 FUNDS

We manage a wide range and growing variety of grant programmes and funds throughout the year, across a range of themes and priorities.



**APPROX
400,000
PEOPLE**

are estimated to directly benefit as a result of our funding last year.



m

We awarded £5,565,394 to third-sector organisations, social enterprises and individuals through a range of grants and donations throughout the year.



Our
average
grant was
£5,981

LOCAL AUTHORITIES' BREAKDOWN

Representative of our
West Midlands breakdown

[†]Excluding ICF and Orbit donations

£2.2m
BIRMINGHAM
363 GRANTS

£1.2m
WOLVERHAMPTON
96 GRANTS

£316k
COVENTRY
88 GRANTS

£71.9k
WALSALL
20 GRANTS

Over
£5m

We awarded £5,290,375 to
local authority areas through a
range of grants and donations
throughout the year.[†]

£57.6k
DUDLEY
12 GRANTS

£315k
SOLIHULL
69 GRANTS

£894k
WARWICKSHIRE
118 GRANTS

£170.5k
SANDWELL
39 GRANTS

OUR TOP SIX FUNDING THEMES

1

£939,540

AWARDED

Strong Communities /
Community Support and
Development

2

£714,409

AWARDED

Poverty and
disadvantage

4

£415,037

AWARDED

Health, wellbeing and
serious illness

3

£641,212

AWARDED

Social connection
for those experiencing
chronic loneliness

5

£406,822

AWARDED

Environment and
improving
surroundings

6

£280,656

AWARDED

Mental illness

£11.8 MILLION AWARDED VIA 388 GRANTS TO COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS ACROSS THE MIDLANDS



The Inclusive Communities Fund (ICF) represents a remarkable achievement for our Foundation—distributing approximately four years' worth of grant making in just seven months, this fund is the largest programme we have ever delivered in the Foundation's history. Inspired by the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games, the fund was designed to support and empower community-based organisations to tackle local challenges by offering them access to new opportunities and legacy funding from the Games. The Inclusive Communities Fund was made possible by the UK Government through the Department for Culture, Media, and Sport (DCMS) and was overseen by the West Midlands Combined Authority (WMCA). Through this fund, we have been able to direct grants to diverse communities and organisations from across the region.

An estimated 37,000 people are expected to benefit directly from the activities being delivered by the 388 organisations who have received a grant. These projects aim to create a positive and lasting legacy for their communities by enhancing

access to arts and culture, improving physical health, and promoting wellbeing and positive mental health.

Through the different streams of the fund, applicants were able to apply for large, medium, small and small works grants. We awarded £1,961,481 in large grants, £5,657,904 in medium, £1,964,564 in small and £2,233,861 in small capital works grants.

Whether the project involved hiring a van to deliver free hot meals to vulnerable families or organising a theatre production for young adults with additional needs, administering this fund has expanded our reach and knowledge about the diversity and scale of creative projects being delivered across the Midlands.

We have also supported organisations who had never applied to the Community Foundation before. Over the next few pages you can read more about some of the incredible initiatives we have supported through the programme.

Statistics reported here are from
November 2023 to May 2024.

BIRMINGHAM
£2,524,630
AWARDED
88 AWARDS

TELFORD
& WREKIN
£531,544
AWARDED
19 AWARDS

COVENTRY
£1,008,010
AWARDED
28 AWARDS

CANNOCK CHASE
£266,977
AWARDED
11 AWARDS

WARWICKSHIRE
£891,242
AWARDED
39 AWARDS

TAMWORTH
£319,117
AWARDED
10 AWARDS

388
TOTAL AWARDS

DUDLEY
£842,034
AWARDED
34 AWARDS

REGIONAL
£1,176,097
AWARDED
27 AWARDS

WOLVERHAMPTON
£833,057
AWARDED
28 AWARDS

SHROPSHIRE
£546,933
AWARDED
20 AWARDS

WALSALL
£797,886
AWARDED
22 AWARDS

SOLIHULL
£756,980
AWARDED
25 AWARDS

REDDITCH
£246,557
AWARDED
10 AWARDS

SANDWELL
£1,076,736
AWARDED
27 AWARDS

RADIO LOLLIPOP

Radio Lollipop is dedicated to the healing power of play, providing joy and laughter to hospitalised children. With one-in-four children admitted to a hospital before the age of 14, Radio Lollipop offers a critical respite from medical treatments, allowing children to request songs, win prizes, and hear their voices on the radio.

£11,950
GRANT RECEIVED

Recently, Radio Lollipop Birmingham received an £11,950 grant to purchase a LolliTrollie. This hi-tech trolley, designed by founder Hedley Finn OBE, includes bubbles, disco lights, fiber optics, a balloon pump, karaoke and sensory equipment for deaf and blind children. It serves as a mobile mini radio station, bringing entertainment directly to young patients, distracting them from their illnesses and creating moments of happiness.

The LolliTrollie is new to Birmingham but has been successfully tested in other UK and overseas stations. The project will enhance volunteer recruitment, encourage donations, and ensure the charity's sustainability.

Wendy Ferguson, the Director of Radio Lollipop said:

"The support from Heart of England Community Foundation and the Inclusive Community Fund provides a really important step for us to

expand our Radio Lollipop service to include a LolliTrollie. It means we can reach more children on the wards at Birmingham Children's Hospital, building on our existing service to offer a much more interactive experience for more children, adding to the fun and excitement and delivering play to assist healing and wellbeing.

"One example is when we met with a little girl who has sight difficulties. She was so excited as she remembered Radio Lollipop from her last admission. She loves the music we play and the company of the volunteers. For all the children, but especially those with sensory impairments, the LolliTrollie will provide an important and exciting extra dimension to our play, fully immersing them into a sensory world of sound, music, touch and light. We are so excited and cannot wait for our LolliTrollie to be completed and delivered so that we can start this new chapter for Radio Lollipop in Birmingham."



LEGACY WEST MIDLANDS

Legacy West Midlands is a Birmingham-based charity that celebrates local heritage and diverse communities through various programmes in sports, arts, heritage, and youth engagement. Throughout 2024, they will deliver a community arts programme called Journeys, funded with a grant of £142,551. The programme will feature contributions from six local partners: Handsworth Creative, Simmer Down, Kalaboration Arts, Saathi House, and Nowka Bais.

£142,551
GRANT RECEIVED

The aim of the Journeys programme is to celebrate the cultural heritage of Commonwealth communities, raise the profile of cultural organisations, and put the West Midlands region on the map.

Journeys will include the live musical performance of This Train, which celebrates the life and work of Sister Rosetta Tharpe and transatlantic black music, with shows taking place in Birmingham, Wolverhampton and Coventry. Outdoor arts and learning experiences will be delivered for 1,260 children from local primary schools in Handsworth and Sandwell, alongside park tours for 400 visitors. Saathi House will run a youth theatre project – Minit Saathis – in Aston, culminating in free performances for participants. Additionally, Nowka Bais will host an event featuring a

Bangladeshi dragon boat regatta in Brindley Place, complete with street food and stage performances.

Saraya Hussain, Managing Director of ISRA-UK, one of the Nowka Bais community partners, said:

“Nowka Bais, and boat racing in particular is a really good opportunity for women because they end up doing something they never thought that they would do, and when you do something that you never thought you would do, it boosts your confidence!”

By engaging local people from diverse backgrounds and offering opportunities for volunteering and skill-sharing, the Journeys programme will bring together varied audiences and participants, fostering community cohesion and cultural enrichment for local communities.

WOLVERHAMPTON ELDER ASIANS AND DISABLED GROUP

The Wolverhampton Elder Asian and Disabled Group (WEAD) has been serving their local community since 2002. Their mission is to support the needs of elderly and disabled people from Asian backgrounds, across the city.

Their Caring and Coping Project received an £8,650 grant, which will enable the organisation to deliver weekly workshops to boost mental health and wellbeing for Asian elders. These sessions focus on increasing self-esteem, managing mental health, and developing social networks, particularly for those feeling low or isolated. The project addresses the stigma around mental health in the Asian community and encourages open discussions on challenging issues like suicide prevention and depression.

Workshops cover stress, anxiety, relaxation techniques, and confidence building through group activities and one-on-one support. Participants also have the opportunity to connect, build bonds, and form friendships.

A range of participants from the project told us:

"I wait for Thursday to arrive so I can meet my friends and enjoy chatting to them as I am home alone the rest of the week."

£8,650
GRANT RECEIVED



"I visit the group on Tuesday morning and talk to my friends about things happening in the world, I like a debate!"

"I love coming to the group on Thursdays to see my new friends – we eat and chat sometimes we will have a dance to Indian music!"

"I see the ladies on a Thursday, we have a chat and a good laugh, this helps to break my week up."

Through the Caring and Coping Project, WEAD offers Asian elders a safe space to discuss mental health while enriching their lives with social interaction and emotional support. This is particularly vital for a community that frequently encounter stereotypes and language barriers. We look forward to witnessing the positive impact the Wolverhampton Elder Asian and Disabled Group will continue to have in their community.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT IN ACTION



Community Empowerment in Action (CEIA), based in Telford, has been at the forefront of addressing financial hardship, enhancing health and wellbeing, and creating pathways for education and employment for minority groups since 2010.

£33,828
GRANT RECEIVED

The organisation directly supports black and minority ethnic communities by providing services to improve their mental, emotional and physical health through targeted sports activities and community-based interventions. It is the only service provider of its kind in Wellington.

CEIA received a £33,828 grant from the Inclusive Communities Fund to launch a diverse community fitness and wellbeing initiative. The project features a range of engaging activities aimed at enhancing physical fitness and strengthening community bonds, including volleyball, cricket, women's swimming and football. Additionally, a comprehensive Happy, Healthy Support Network that offers both emotional and practical support, further enriching the benefits of these physical activities.

Each activity is held weekly, with sessions lasting two-to-three hours, over 34 weeks, in local community settings. CEIA has employed a part-time Community Project Coordinator and two Facilitators to manage and deliver the services.

Imran Riaz, who is facilitating the volleyball sessions, said:

"The volleyball project has been hugely successful in Wellington, with 34 regular attendees. This

project is mainly attended by Pakistani men from the College, Hadley and Leegomery and Arleston wards. This project is a lifeline for many working-class men. 89% of men that attend our project are taxi drivers who have very little opportunity to engage in physical activities. Therefore, we give them an opportunity to engage in a sport that is not only physically demanding but brings them into the community, improving their mental health, emotional wellbeing and fitness. We have gained tremendous support from community members, which has built confidence and motivation.

"We have been able to bring to the forefront and tackle issues arising from a lack of service provision that contributes to health inequality. Furthermore, we have been able to support and empower men and the wider community to achieve happier, healthier lives through common action and lifestyle change. We consider the volleyball project to be a vital service."

CEIA is addressing the specific needs of black and minority ethnic communities, particularly those who have experienced a significant reduction in exercise levels since the pandemic. The ongoing success of the volleyball project, along with other activities, demonstrates CEIA's pivotal role in improving community wellbeing and resilience.

TEAM PUMPKIN BOXING

Since 2022, Team Pumpkin Amateur Boxing has been a cornerstone of the Dudley community, dedicated to improving the lives of residents through their commitment to health and fitness. The club's mission is to enhance the physical and mental wellbeing of individuals who are unemployed, out of education or training, and those dealing with mental health challenges.

They received a £18,994 grant from the Inclusive Communities Fund to launch their transformative 'Punching Forward to Wellbeing' project. This initiative provides daily one-hour boxing sessions every weekday morning for up to 20 participants per session, aiming to help individuals establish a positive routine, boost their physical fitness, and enhance their mental health.

The sessions, which are free of charge, are delivered by two qualified boxing instructors who integrate boxing techniques with general fitness exercises. Participants have access to a state-of-the-art boxing gym, equipped with exercise bikes, treadmills, weights, and a full gym circuit. Each participant is also paired with a gym sponsor who provides guidance on improving their CVs and supports them in applying for jobs effectively. Additionally, the programme includes a healthy eating initiative, offering fresh fruit to all participants to promote better dietary habits.

The need for this project was identified through collaboration with local charities, West



£18,994
GRANT RECEIVED

Midlands Police, and Dudley Council. These organisations recognised a significant demand for community-based fitness programmes to support people experiencing unemployment and mental health issues.

Carl Collins, a boxing coach at the club, said:

"The sessions have improved mental health awareness within the community, and it's been great seeing people improve in confidence and seeing their overall wellbeing improve. We have had comments such as 'feeling better, feeling more positive, feeling much fitter, sleeping better' and one person has also lost nine pounds in weight."

Team Pumpkin Amateur Boxing is reshaping their local community by identifying and responding to the needs of its most vulnerable members, delivering an engaging fitness programme in the process. They are committed to ensuring that everyone, regardless of their life situation, has access to fitness opportunities and a supportive community.

Many funded projects from the Inclusive Community Fund addressed multiple themes, with...

£939,698

was awarded to initiatives solely focusing on arts and culture

£472,383

was awarded to initiatives solely prioritising physical health



£2,602,878

was awarded to initiatives solely designed to improve mental wellbeing

INSPIRING INCLUSION, INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY



In March 2024 we hosted our very first International Women's Day event at Ikon Gallery in Birmingham. The event was developed and delivered in partnership with Investec Wealth & Investment (UK), and it was nothing short of inspirational. Organisations from across the West Midlands came together to celebrate the incredible women and girls in our region and to emphasise the importance of championing inclusivity throughout the year.

Our Chief Executive, Tina Costello OBE, led the event, giving attendees the chance to hear from high-profile leaders across the public, private and third sectors who are leading the charge on social value and inspiring inclusion in the West Midlands.

The event included a panel of prestigious speakers including Nicola Toyer, who leads the charities team at Investec Wealth & Investment (UK); Alethea Fuller, Deputy Chief Executive for the West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner; Emma Joy Smith, a Partner at law firm Shakespeare Martineau; Marcia Lewinson, who has led Birmingham charity Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS) as Chief Executive for 25 years; and people motivator and strength psychology professional Dani Grieveson, who serves as an advisor for the Financial Times.

Our keynote speaker, Rosie Ginday MBE, the founder and Chief Executive of Miss Macaroon, shared her journey of how she created a business that not only makes delicious macaroons, but also reinvests 100% of its profits to help young people gain life-changing skills. This commitment is exemplified by the Macaroons That Make a Difference (MacsMAD) programme, a 10-week course designed for 18–35 year olds who are facing long-term unemployment in the Midlands. Trainees on the MacsMAD course spend five weeks honing their skills in a training kitchen before advancing to work alongside professional chefs. 86% of the participants reported that they felt more confident about entering the workplace after joining the MacsMAD programme.

It is wonderful to reflect on how a grant of £1,000 from the Community Foundation back in 2013



has blossomed into a thriving enterprise that has touched so many lives.

Tina said:

“Inspiring Inclusion represented a fantastic opportunity to celebrate women and girls and to remind everyone that ongoing efforts are needed to bring gender inclusivity into all our spaces, across all sectors, throughout the year. It was wonderful to see so many delegates from across the region and to hear from inspirational female leaders making a difference in the West Midlands.”

Now, we’re taking the next step by establishing the Women and Girls Fund to support projects taking on issues affecting women and girls across our region, from lack of access to sports, domestic violence, and income inequality to reproductive rights, mental health, and self-esteem challenges.

This fund will be dedicated to addressing the nuanced needs of women and girls across the Midlands.

While much work remains to be done to support women and girls—one of the most vulnerable demographics in our community—we take pride in our history of grant-making and the outstanding female-led organisations and projects we have supported. Over the past year, we have awarded multiple grants to the value of £97,946 to various local organisations across the region working to support women and girls in all areas of life. An estimated 56,527 women and girls are expected to benefit because of this funding. For instance, in 2023, the Solihull Moors Foundation received a £9,450 grant from the Solihull Fairer Futures Fund to create a Women’s Health & Support Group.

SOLIHULL MOORS



The Birmingham and Solihull Integrated Care System created the Fairer Futures Fund to support innovative projects that improve health outcomes and address inequalities.

Established in 2018, the Solihull Moors Foundation is an independent charity stemming from the community arm of Solihull Moors FC, and they are dedicated to supporting disadvantaged individuals in their local community.

Based on consultations with local women and community organisations, Solihull Moors recognised the critical need for a dedicated women's group in Solihull. Feedback highlighted a gap in local support addressing women's health and wellbeing. In response, Solihull Moors utilised their Fairer Futures grant to launch a Women's Health & Support Group, dedicated to improving the lives of women in their community.

The weekly support sessions allowed up to 30 women to share stories, discuss concerns, and engage in activities designed to boost their health and wellbeing. By focusing on topics like gender inequality, period poverty, mental health, and menopause, the group were able to tackle female issues head-on.

Solihull Moors also prioritised a range of activities to boost the confidence of their female participants, including breathing exercises, yoga, sound therapy, resistance training and pilates. Additionally, all their dedicated support staff underwent Mental Health Awareness training to ensure that they are well-equipped to provide guidance and create a safe space for attendees.

Two participants from the group said:

"The women's wellbeing sessions have been brilliant at encouraging me to enter a gym. I was always nervous and sceptical about resistance training, but these sessions made me feel comfortable and confident to take care of myself physically and mentally."

"The groups have been a fantastic experience. I've enjoyed every session and have felt a noticeable benefit in both my physical and mental health. Pilates sessions at Solihull Moors have helped me loads."

A staff member commented:

"Receiving the funding for the women's group has been transformative for our organisation. It has allowed us to offer specialised wellbeing sessions that have made a significant difference in the lives of many women. These sessions not only encourage physical fitness but also build confidence and promote mental health. We are thrilled with the positive feedback and are committed to continuing these programmes in the future, as they have become a valued part of our community."

By listening to the needs of their community and responding by offering targeted support, the Solihull Moors Foundation has made a lasting positive impact on the lives of local women in Solihull.

KAUSHALYA UK

The Birmingham & Black Country Communities Fund supports projects tackling disadvantage or social exclusion. The grants are awarded from the earnings of several endowment funds, which are created from contributions by individuals, companies and trusts managed by Heart of England Community Foundation.

Another fantastic organisation working tirelessly to improve the lives of women across the region is Kaushalya UK. With a simple yet profound aim to uplift and empower women, Kaushalya UK offers a range of vital services to make this vision a reality. These include domestic abuse support, where trained community leaders assist women in dealing with serious situations, providing crucial guidance and resources. Additionally, they host exclusive women-only events featuring speakers from around the world, who share powerful stories and practical advice on gaining confidence and independence, helping women realise their potential.

In 2023, Kaushalya UK received a £1,972 grant from the Birmingham and Black Country Communities Fund to host their Dance Wellness project for isolated women in Walsall. The project allows service users to meet at a central location, have a cup of tea, conversation and enjoy physical exercise through dance.

Aarti Thakrar Patel, who leads the sessions, said:

"The funding from the Heart of England Community Foundation made a difference to our organisation, Kaushalya UK, as it has given us the support and confidence to carry on delivering these sessions, without the need to worry about covering our costs. This project is needed in the community as it gives our service users hope and the opportunity to meet



new people, most of whom are pensioners living isolated lives. Our eldest service user is 83 and she loves coming to our sessions, getting the weekly dose of friendships and exercise."

Kaushalya UK's ongoing efforts have not only provided immediate relief and companionship for isolated women but have also laid the groundwork for a stronger, more connected community.

As more organisations like Kaushalya UK and the Solihull Moors Foundation continue to uplift and empower women, we believe that the West Midlands is poised for a vibrant and promising future.

SUPPORTING FEMALE VICTIMS OF DOMESTIC ABUSE

The Wesleyan Community Grants Fund – created by the Wesleyan Foundation – was established to support grassroots charities in delivering essential community services aimed at enhancing the quality of life for individuals across the Midlands.

£10,000
GRANT RECEIVED

In 2023, Women Acting in Today's Society (WAITS) received a £10,000 grant from the Wesleyan Community Grants Fund to support the costs of a full-time refuge support worker. WAITS is dedicated to supporting female victims of domestic violence, providing refuge accommodation and a range of vital support services in Birmingham. Support workers are often the first point of contact for women in refuge, offering listening support, practical help, and guidance to ensure timely and necessary assistance. With a significant rise in domestic abuse cases, WAITS offers a critical lifeline for women escaping violent relationships.

A support worker stated:

"Being a consistent refuge support worker, thanks to grant funding, has really helped build trust with the residents who come from volatile environments of domestic abuse. Offering stable support means they have a safe and comfortable place to recover and grow. Without the worry of services being interrupted or staff constantly changing, residents don't have to start over all

the time. Consistency is so important for women rebuilding their lives. It helps them feel secure and supported, making a big difference in their journey to heal and move forward."

A WAITS resident remarked:

"You give me hope and make me believe that my situation is temporary, and things can change for the better. I'm in a new chapter in my life because of WAITS, it's a wonder service for women who have been through the worst in life, it will help you get your life back on track. SS is so passionate in her role it's not just a job for her. She enjoys what she does, she's so kind-hearted and she will go far in life."

As WAITS continues to navigate the increasing demand for its services, the partnership with the Wesleyan Foundation stands as a testament to the impact that targeted community support can have. The ongoing support from organisations like WAITS is essential for addressing the complex needs of survivors and paving the way for a future free from violence.

REVITALISING TRUSTS: SUPPORTING PEACE EDUCATION IN THE WEST MIDLANDS

In 2023, through our Revitalising Trusts Programme, we acquired the transfer of the South Birmingham Friends Institute Trust (SBFIT) to our Foundation, ensuring a lasting legacy for the charity, as well as for disadvantaged communities in the West Midlands. The transfer included £1.2 million of long-term investments and five residential properties, which were transferred into a new, named fund within our endowment. The former trustees are still actively involved with decision making and are firm friends of the Foundation.

The Revitalising Trusts Programme is an initiative designed to unlock resources from charitable trusts who are inactive, dormant or struggling to attract new trustees. We collaborate with the Charity Commission for England and Wales to facilitate this process, offering comprehensive support to the trustees of the charity or trust at every stage of the process.

Thanks to regular core funding from South Birmingham Friends Fund, Peacemakers – a branch of the Central England Quaker Charities group – has been able to commence their West Midlands Peace Education Project to build peaceful schools and communities through education.

With nearly 40 years of experience, Peacemakers have worked in hundreds of schools, focusing primarily on Key Stage 2 students and staff. They offer established programmes, tailored advice, and resources to equip both students and staff with the skills needed to build and maintain positive relationships.

Sara Hagel, the Director of Peacemakers said:

“Peacemakers long term funding relationship with SBFIT, has provided us with vital core support. Support which has helped sustain our work of giving children, and adults who work with them, peace-making skills, and helping schools to model ways to build and repair relationships at all levels. SBFIT donations (amongst others) help cover our core expenses, which we aim to cover from fundraising so that we don’t have to pass these costs onto schools. Core costs cover rent, materials, publicity and staff time which is the major component. This

time enables us to build relationships with schools and academies, develop new materials and strands of work, manage all the daily functions of an office and a charity and participate in networks with other peace educators to build awareness and practice.”

In 2023, Peacemakers worked with 54 schools and delivered their programmes to 1,468 people. Schools reported that children had more confidence and empathy, developed their listening skills, found their voice and built their emotional literacy, wellbeing and self-esteem. Teaching staff also had greater confidence as they were equipped with new strategies to help deal with conflict.

A range of teachers commented:

“Learning for peace is highly valued in our school. It is worthwhile on so many levels: not just for the weekly peace circles but also for problem solving and affirmation.”

“The Learning for Peace staff training was excellent – staff invest more in making it work with support from a passionate trainer.”

“Lunchtimes don’t seem to be as chaotic as before. They have grown in maturity and self-confidence.”

“A brilliant scheme, looking forward to implementing it into school next year.”

Transferring the South Birmingham Friends Institute into a dedicated fund allows projects like the peace education initiative to create positive change and build more empathetic schools for students and staff, contributing to a happier, healthier and fairer region for all.

THE JOY OF LIVING IS IN THE GIVING

“The joy of living is in the giving” - a motto that Alf Youell lived by, and Valerie Youell continues to embrace.

As a lifelong philanthropist, local builder, and property developer, Alf Youell MBE ONZM significantly contributed towards the growth of the Foundation and served as our patron from 2002 to 2012. He initiated the Youell Foundation and Youell Family Fund, which now carry on Alf's legacy by awarding grants to projects and initiatives that support some of the most disadvantaged people in our communities. Since 2005, over 60 grants have been awarded, worth £338,645, to grassroots organisations across the region.

Alf also donated two properties to the Foundation. The barns were transformed into lovely office premises. These commercially rented properties support the operational costs of the Foundation.

His wife, Valerie, remains a committed and much valued supporter and champion of our work.

Valerie said:

“We loved that Heart of England was helping small, local concerns that can't get money from anybody else. That was always our thinking from day one, non-national charities run by volunteers.

“Without Tina, the Foundation wouldn't be where it is today. She's so obviously honest, passionate about the charity, and she enthuses others. That's what's good about her.

“I deal with a lot of charities, and nobody has the enthusiasm that Tina has. She cares about the charity and wants to do the best she can for it; she's not interested in doing the best for herself. The people I've been in touch with at the charity are lovely people who genuinely care about its mission.”

Based in Stratford, the Crafty Lunch Club CIC are continuing Alf's legacy by using a £3,000 donation from the Youell Family Fund to continue supporting disabled adults and their carers through weekly social and recreational activities.

In response to increasing demand, the Crafty Lunch Club used their grant to hire a community centre, allowing them to accommodate more participants and expand their project. Previously limited to a single room, the expansion to two rooms significantly improved the club's ability to cater for the increased demand from the community. One room now provides a quieter environment for those requiring more space, such as wheelchair users or individuals who prefer a calmer setting. This change has been instrumental in making the club more inclusive and comfortable for all attendees. The expansion has enabled the Crafty Lunch Club to serve over 90 adults per week, and during their



grant period alone, they supported a total of 1,350 beneficiaries.

The Crafty Lunch Club further utilised their grant by investing in high-quality craft materials and resources, such as tie-dye kits and clay, enhancing the quality of their activities and offering participants the chance to explore new creative activities.

Beth Clarke, Group Leader of the Crafty Lunch Club, said:

“The donation given to our group gave us not only the security to keep running but also the scope for us to grow and welcome new members. It has enabled our group to invest in quality resources that will last for a long time. The Crafty Lunch Club CIC has become a social lifeline for so many people who are often left isolated and detached within their local community. This grant has allowed our fabulous group and its members to thrive and flourish and we are so grateful for your support! Thank you.”

Lauren, a participant, shared:

“The Crafty Lunch Club is the best day of my week. I get to see my friends and do different crafts, which I love. We always have so much fun.”

A carer commented:

“Bringing clients to the club has made such a difference. We’ve seen the people we support grow in confidence and make local friends. They talk about The Crafty Lunch Club all week! It’s so nice for us carers to come, do different things, and chat with others. We all fight over who can come each week!”

Without Alf and Valerie’s support, fantastic organisations like the Crafty Lunch Club might not have had the same opportunities or resources to serve their communities and expand their offerings. The Youell Family Fund is a powerful reminder that we all have a role to play in helping our communities flourish and prosper, as the joy of living is in the giving.

WHAT DOES COMMUNITY MEAN TO YOU?

"For us, community is all about providing a space for all people to feel included and valued. It is a space that is inclusive, creative, playful and joyful."

Peter Burgess, Director of
Fantastic Journeys CIC

"It represents a vital support network where people with similar experiences can find emotional, social, and practical assistance. Community offers a space of mutual understanding, where experiences are validated."

Marie-Claire Kofi,
Founder and CEO of
Plasma of Hope

"Community to us, suggests togetherness and solidarity, it must be inclusive and consider the differing nature of people and their unique needs and aspirations. Non-judgmental and positive, community serves to make those most disaffected from society a part of something tangible."

Urban Goodies

"Community to us is to have people from all walks of life, race, religion, and or disability, train and support each other in a safe and welcoming environment."

Craig Cunningham,
Warley Amateur Boxing Club

As we look forward to 2025 and the Foundation's upcoming 30th anniversary, we reflect on the incredible impact that local community organisations create and shape whilst enriching their communities. Here, our community partners share what "community" means to them...

"To us, community means compassion in action by breaking down barriers and coming together without judgement and with bucket loads of kindness! We rely on the local community to donate pre-loved baby items so our clients can re-use them. We couldn't do what we do without community support!"

Caroline Dolan,
Elayos Fundraiser

"Community means bringing people together in their local places and spaces to power up change, creating the experiences and opportunities that our participants want and need."

Powered by CAN

"For us, community means relationships amongst a group of people who hold something in common. These relationships are based on trust, care and belonging."

UBD (Urban Development
Birmingham)

"To us community means creating connections that celebrate and promote South Asian arts, culture, and heritage. Community for Sampad is working together to honour cultural traditions while encouraging contemporary innovation."

Sampad South Asian
Arts and Heritage

"Community" is a word added to our name in recent times and it reflects in a very broad sense what our allotments mean to those who use the facilities and what we strive to do for both members of the allotments and our community."

Bernard Peffers, Committee Member,
Weddington Community
Allotment Association

OUR FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

A SUMMARY OF OUR FINANCIAL STATEMENT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

ANNUAL REVIEW FIGURES

INCOME AND ENDOWMENTS

	2022/23	2023/24
Donations and legacies	£6,049,674	£591,418
Income from Contracts	-	£14,253,378
Rental income	£90,277	£124,739
Investment income	£371,235	£475,587
Bank interest	£55,811	£174,045
Other income	£68,828	£1,500
TOTAL INCOME	£6,635,825	£15,620,667

EXPENDITURE

Grants and Funding Contracts	£2,866,131	£13,343,613
Property Costs	-	£26,312
Building Better Opportunities	£9,650	£36,174
Support Costs	£528,034	£687,185
Governance	£12,912	£12,000
Raising Funds	£58,664	£60,445
Investment Management Costs	£47,710	£61,843
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£3,523,101	£14,227,572

FOUNDATION FUNDS

Endowment Funds	£19,465,474	£21,411,109
Restricted Funds	£2,141,526	£2,975,979
Unrestricted/Designated Funds	£1,225,008	£1,185,894
Unrestricted General Funds	£750,397	£1,076,222
TOTAL FUNDS	£23,582,405	£26,649,204

NET ASSETS

Investment and Properties	£20,416,723	£22,462,965
Net Current Assets	£3,165,682	£4,186,239
TOTAL NET ASSETS	£23,582,405	£26,649,204

Endowment Fund VALUATION 2023/24

ENDOWMENT FUND NAME	2022/23	2023/24
Alan Higgs Fund	£493,365	£538,023
Annie Bettman Fund	£287,297	£314,433
AXA Fund	£200,134	£219,231
Birmingham Fund	£364,530	£394,263
Birmingham Mail Charity Fund	£55,181	£60,360
Building Better Lives Fund	£4,168,614	£4,548,595
Coventry Community Fund	-	£420,029
Coventry Nursing Trust Fund	£353,054	£385,013
Deutsche Bank Grassroots Fund	£153,644	£168,064
Friends Provident Fund	£11,757	£12,877
George & Vera Bryan Grassroots Fund	£216,810	£237,158
Harry Weston Fund	£63,312	£72,308
Harry Payne Fund	3,501,494	£3,797,704
Heart of England Fund	£704,001	£770,070
High Sheriff of Warwickshire	£219,588	£239,464
James Kenning Fund	£59,150	£64,506
Jumping Through Hoops Fund	£1,227,853	£1,336,559
Kingscliffe Fund	£167,628	£183,462
Mills & Reeve Grassroots Fund	£71,822	£78,563
Mike Holland Fund	£161,593	£176,220
Orbit Heart of England Fund	£154,627	£169,382
Property for Kids Grassroots Fund	£28,219	£30,868
PSA Peugeot Citroen Fund	£355,609	£389,199
Solihull Community Foundation Fund	£289,894	£316,135
Sandwell Community Fund	£384,705	£419,528
South Birmingham Friends Fund	£2,739,458	£2,771,145
Torrington House Fund	£249,485	£273,300
Trustees' New Deal Fund	£180,282	£196,599
Warwick Lying - in - Trust Fund	£46,575	£50,947
Willenhall Community Trust Fund	£74,571	£81,322
Wolston Fund	-	£109,507
Youell Family Fund	£2,369,684	£2,502,584
Other Endowments	£111,536	£83,691
TOTAL ENDOWMENT FUNDS	£19,465,473	£21,411,109

Summary of Funding Awarded

FUND NAME	AMOUNT AWARDED	NO. OF AWARDS
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust Regulars	11	£6,750
29th May Small Grants	4	£6,800
Alan Edward Higgs Charity	4	£3,940
Annie Bettman	1	£6,774
AxA Enterprise Fund	2	£2,165
Birmingham and Black Country Communities Fund	47	£92,359
Birmingham City Council Income Maximisation Fund	44	£948,649
Birmingham Mail Fund	2	£1,569
Birmingham Sports Association Fund	8	£8,183
Breathe Better Air Fund	10	£48,104
Brethertons Fund	3	£3,000
Bristol & West 97 Fund	1	£598
Building Better Lives Fund	1	£40,053
Community Energy Warwickshire Fund	4	£5,200
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Large	9	£65,315
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Small	4	£8,000
Coventry Nursing Fund	2	£4,472
Coventry Solihull Warwickshire Fund	42	£90,748
Coventry Warm Space Fund	10	£41,100
Deutsche Bank Opportunity Grants	4	£19,743
Drayton Manor Park Fund	4	£7,908
Dulverton Trust Fund	23	£106,274
Esmee Fairbairn Foundation Fund	1	£54,153
Gowlings WLG Fund	2	£10,000
Graham Griffiths Fund	18	£40,610
Greggs Foundation Fund	9	£17,412
Harry Payne Food Bank	2	£4,000
Harry Payne Fund	75	£106,850
Heart of England Fund	2	£12,000
Helping Hearts Co-op Fund	77	£34,562
High Sheriffs Warwickshire Fund	1	£2,500
IM Properties Community Fund	51	£118,076
Jaguar Land Rover Solihull Employees Charity Fund	10	£19,849
Know Your Neighbourhood Fund	81	£1,171,666
Leamington Bid Fund	17	£3,203
Mayflex UK Ltd Fund	3	£6,000

FUND NAME	AMOUNT AWARDED	NO. OF AWARDS
Mike Holland Trust Fund	2	£4,591
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - City Wide	9	£65,630
Neighbourhood network scheme - Older Adults	50	£173,582
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Younger Adults	25	£83,598
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Citywide LGBT Microgrants	12	£2,999
Orbit	619	£140,555
Orbit Donor Directed	1	£3,815
Peddimore Community Fund	13	£28,060
PHP Fund	10	£75,000
Positive Futures Fund	12	£58,069
Sandwell Community Fund	1	£300
Solihull Celebrating Solihull Communities Fund	1	£3,261
Solihull Community Fund	2	£3,909
Solihull Fairer Futures Fund	17	£165,580
Solihull Hong Kong BNO Fund	6	£29,000
Solihull Warm Welcome Hub Fund	15	£51,151
South Birmingham Friends Institute Fund	11	£25,000
Stellantis Employee Fund	13	£5,079
The David East Fund	11	£20,505
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Large Grants	34	£1,961,481
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Medium Grants	78	£2,092,989
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Small Grants	126	£1,148,164
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Small Works, Refurbishments, Renovations	53	£1,887,230
Tipton Education Fund	6	£16,997
Together for Solihull Fund	15	£81,750
Torrington Fund	6	£8,931
Vital EV Solutions	1	£4,500
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund	19	£712,677
Wesleyan Community Fund	7	£55,676
Wesleyan National Fund	48	£92,221
Wesleyan Small Grants Fund	1	£1,381
West Midlands Combined Authority Community Environment Fund	11	£429,579
West Midlands Combined Authority Green Grants Fund	10	£250,577
Youell Family Fund	13	£29,933
GRAND TOTAL OF FUNDING AWARDED	1847	£12,832,355

MEET OUR TEAM



Tina Costello OBE
Chief Executive



Helen Kendrick
Senior Manager - Operations



Shamiela Ahmed
Senior Manager - Programmes



Jayne Taylor-Farren
Senior Manager - Finance



Zain Khan
Systems & Data Officer



Paramjit Kaur
Finance Officer



Jenny Whateley
Programme Manager -
Inclusive Communities Fund



Sarah Lafford
Grants Officer



Zoë Sweeney
Programme Manager



Jack Harnett
Programme Administrator -
Inclusive Communities Fund



Avni Sarai
Senior Communications Officer



Charleene Jefferson
Executive Officer



Bal Kaur
Grants Administrator



Joanna Plaisant
Grants Officer



Abigail Tilden
Office Administrator



Tia Horton
Grants Officer



Lucy Winter
Grants Officer

MEET OUR BOARD



Chris West
Chair



Michelle Vincent
Treasurer



Calum Nisbet
Trustee



Jude Jennison
Trustee



Cleo Morris
Trustee



Alethea Fuller
Trustee



Paul Belfield
Trustee



Richard Port MBE
Trustee

OUR STRATEGIC PARTNERS AND CORPORATE DONORS



OUR PATRONS & PRESIDENTS



Sally Carrick
Patron



Stellantis
Corporate Patron



Tim Cox
Lord Lieutenant of
Warwickshire
President



Sir John Crabtree
OBE DL
President

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