heart of england
COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

Yearbook 2024/25

www.heartofenglandcf.org

#changinglivesslocally

Sonrisa Arts - credit Keiko Ikeuchi

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 £50 million to over 9,300 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.org

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From the Chair

Since our inception in 1995, the Foundation has championed vital grassroots organisations throughout the West Midlands and Warwickshire, and this year has been no exception. Guided by our mission to put the region on the map, we have focused our efforts on making sure these essential causes get the support they greatly deserve. It has been an immensely rewarding experience to observe the progress made by our board, staff and partners, and the positive difference we have made together over the last year.

In February 2025, we honoured the Foundation's 30th birthday with an intimate celebration event at St Mary's Guildhall in Coventry. The evening was a chance for us to think about the Foundation's remarkable achievements over the past three decades alongside some of our kind donors, grantees, and community partners. It also allowed us to consider the legacy we have created and the many worthwhile causes that have been brought to life through the grants we have distributed.

Reflecting upon our successes over the past 30 years has also given us the chance to determine where we want to be in the foreseeable future. In response to the changing landscape of the sector, we have launched an ambitious new five-year strategy that aligns with our vision and values. The strategy will act as a framework that will guide our grant-making processes and encourage us to grow to ensure we are doing our best to provide for the communities we serve.

We have committed to refining our operations to make sure our grants are accessible to all. We are determined to grow our endowment and cultivate relationships with new and existing stakeholders to ensure we have the resources necessary to help change the region for the better. We will make sure our diversity, inclusion and sustainability goals are consistent across everything we do. In doing so, I am confident that we will be able to reach our full potential.

With shifts in national policies and the growing demand for charities' services, this year has certainly brought new and unique challenges to organisations across the whole of the third sector. Despite this, I am incredibly proud of what the Foundation has been able to achieve and remain wholly optimistic that we will continue to do great things in the years to come.

Chris West
Chair

> **"It has been an immensely rewarding experience to observe the progress made by our board, staff and partners, and the positive difference we have made together over the last year."**

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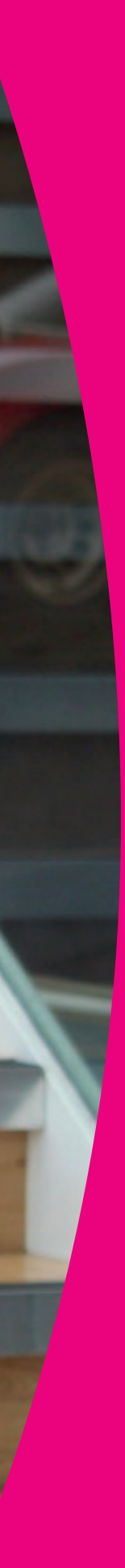
LOCALLY



From the CEO

The past year has been nothing short of remarkable for the Foundation. I'm incredibly proud of what we've achieved together – supporting the communities that need us most and continuing to be a steady presence in uncertain times.

We've not only maintained the trust of our long-standing donors, but also secured new partnerships and funding streams that will have a lasting impact across the West Midlands and Warwickshire. This year alone, we have awarded 951 grants totalling £10.5 million to support community-led projects. That's not just a number – it represents real people, real lives, and real change at a grassroots level.

But we must be honest about the challenges ahead. The voluntary and community sector is under immense pressure. Rising costs and growing demand are stretching organisations to their limits. Many of our charities are operating on the thinnest of margins – relying on every single pound to make a difference. Without increased investment, they face heartbreaking choices: cut services or somehow do more with less. Neither option is sustainable.

Now, more than ever, collaboration is not just a nice-to-have – it's essential. We need all sectors working together with a shared sense of responsibility and urgency. As a place-based funder, we remain committed to empowering our local communities – but we can't do it alone. We need to think differently, partner more widely, and create innovative solutions that match the scale of the challenges we face.

That's why we've launched a new three-to-five-year strategy – a bold and ambitious plan that sets out our vision, mission, and core priorities. It gives us a clear direction of travel and reaffirms our commitment to being responsive, inclusive and efficient in everything we do. I invite you to explore it further in this report and see how it will shape our future work.

> **"This year also marks the Foundation's 30th anniversary – a huge milestone, and an opportunity to reflect on how far we've come. I've seen first-hand the power of community over the past three decades – the determination, the innovation, and the passion that drive change from the ground up. And I know there is so much more to come."**

It's a privilege to lead the Foundation, and I remain as passionate as ever about creating a fairer, healthier, and more connected region. Thank you for your continued support, belief, and partnership. We truly couldn't do it without you.

Together, we are making a difference.

Tina Costello OBE
Chief Executive Officer

£5.8m

We awarded £5,819,981* to third sector organisations, social enterprises and individuals through a range of grants and donations throughout the year.

*Excluding ICF grants

73 funds

We manage a wide range of grant programmes and funds across a range of themes and properties.

Approx 290,000 people

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

772 awards

The Foundation awarded 772 grants and donations this year through a range of grant-making programmes.

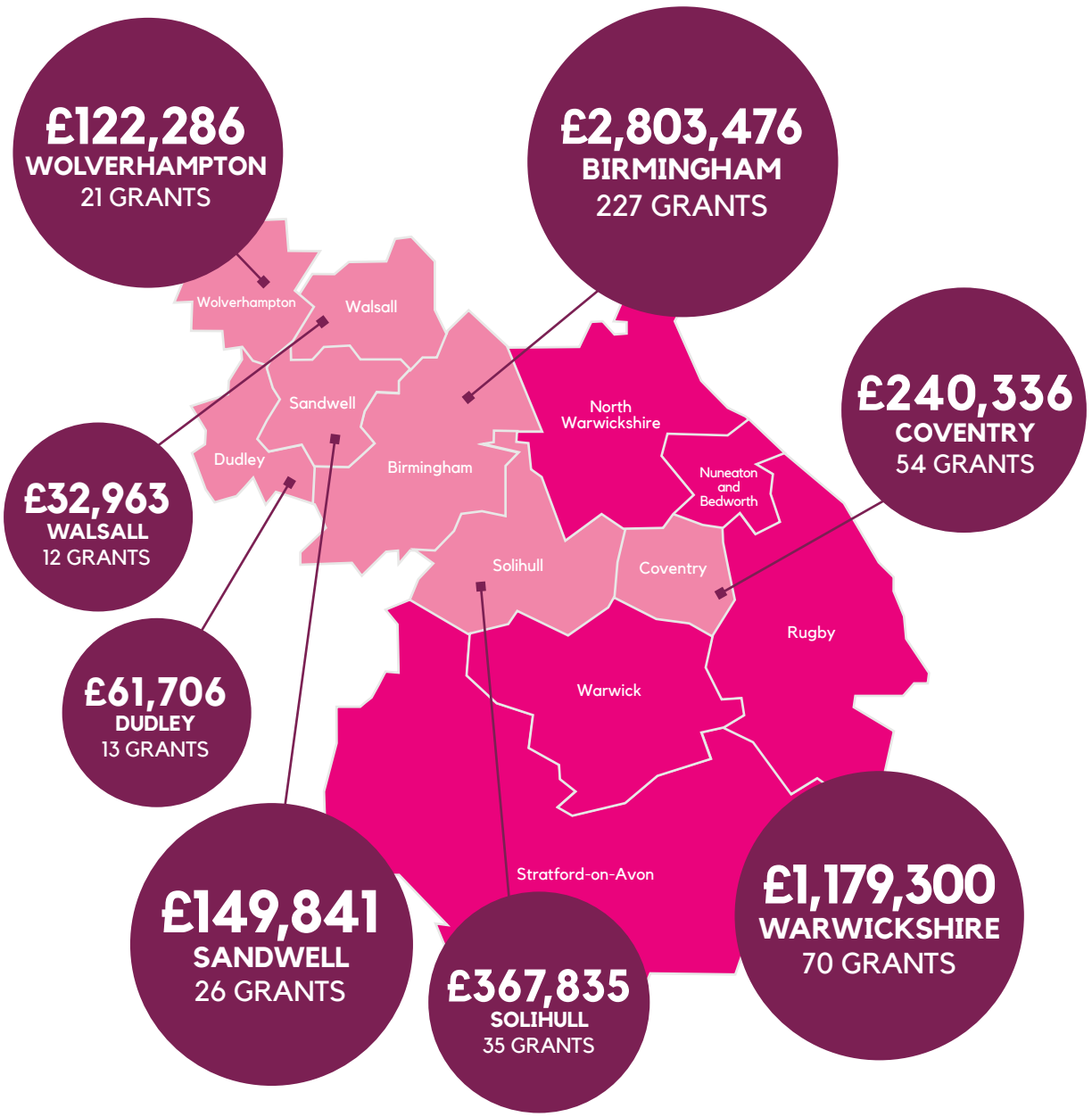
our average grant was

£7,539

Local Authorities' Breakdown

Representative of our West Midlands and Warwickshire Breakdown

† Excluding ICF grants



OVER £4.9M AWARDED

We awarded £4,952,764 to local authority areas through a range of grants and donations this year.

Our Top Six Funding Themes

Funding Breakdown

	£1,602,286 AWARDED	Strong Communities / Community Support and Development
	£1,145,444 AWARDED	Health, wellbeing and serious illness
	£642,542 AWARDED	Environment and improving surroundings
	£351,337 AWARDED	Mental health
	£325,046 AWARDED	Education, learning and training
	£300,963 AWARDED	Poverty and disadvantage

30th Anniversary

30 Years of Giving, £49M of Impact

In 2025, the Heart of England Community Foundation proudly celebrated our 30th anniversary. For 30 years we have had the privilege of serving and championing local communities and grassroots organisations who are transforming lives across the West Midlands and Warwickshire.

In our first five years of operation, the Foundation awarded around £213,000 to local organisations, but fast forward to 2024, and we have awarded more than £49 million in the form of around 14,000 grants.

In 2023/24, we were able to successfully deliver the largest grants programme in our history, the Inclusive Communities Fund – a Commonwealth Games legacy fund which resulted in our busiest year to date. Throughout recent years the Foundation has also regularly managed over 67 funds and programmes on behalf of private donors, businesses and local authorities and awarded more than £5 million in grants.

The Notables were invited to perform at the celebration event as one of the long-term beneficiaries of the Foundation.

> It's incredible to see the Foundation reach such a significant milestone. We could not have achieved this without the generosity of our donors and the incredible team at the Foundation, all of which are hugely passionate about the voluntary and community sector and believe in the power of local giving.
>
> The money we have distributed has helped countless grassroots charities and organisations and has made a positive difference to the lives of millions of people right across the West Midlands and Warwickshire.
>
> We're extremely ambitious and want to continue our work impacting communities across our area, so here's to the next 30 years and beyond!
>
> **Tina Costello OBE**
> CEO of the Foundation

The group, whose mission is to break down boundaries to participation, challenge common misconceptions and support positive community integration and cultural diversity, first received support in 2002 with a £600 grant.

The group has since received funding in 2004, 2007, 2009, 2015, 2022, 2023 and 2024, with their latest grant being £29,485 from the Inclusive Communities Fund to host two community events celebrating social inclusion and neurodiversity.

> We're extremely grateful for everything the Foundation has done for us over the years, and we would like to say a heartfelt thank you for all of their support.
>
> The money we have received has enabled us to increase our outreach work and connect with even more marginalised members of the community, not only in Coventry but right across the West Midlands and beyond.
>
> We would like to congratulate the whole team on their 30-year milestone and everything they have achieved during this time.
>
> **Dave Claridge**
> Musical Director for The Notables

At the Foundation, we are already looking ahead to the next 30 years as we remain determined to create a fairer, happier and healthier Midlands for all. Thank you to all the grassroots organisations working tirelessly to make this a reality, your unwavering support has been the key driving force fuelling our three decades of impact.

Three-to-Five Year Strategy

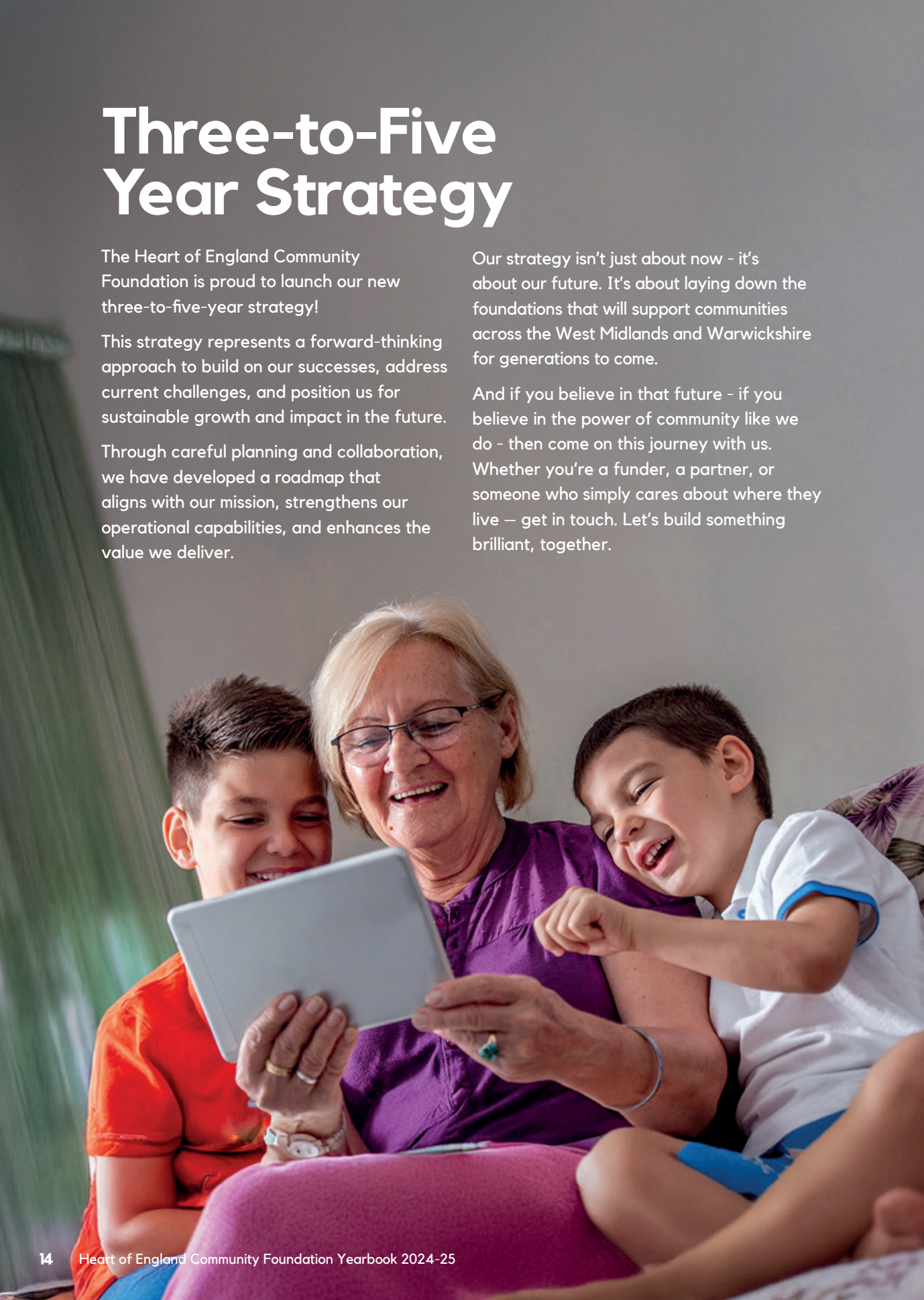
The Heart of England Community Foundation is proud to launch our new three-to-five-year strategy!

This strategy represents a forward-thinking approach to build on our successes, address current challenges, and position us for sustainable growth and impact in the future.

Through careful planning and collaboration, we have developed a roadmap that aligns with our mission, strengthens our operational capabilities, and enhances the value we deliver.

Our strategy isn't just about now - it's about our future. It's about laying down the foundations that will support communities across the West Midlands and Warwickshire for generations to come.

And if you believe in that future - if you believe in the power of community like we do - then come on this journey with us. Whether you're a funder, a partner, or someone who simply cares about where they live – get in touch. Let's build something brilliant, together.



Grant making

We're putting community voices front and centre. That means transforming our application forms, how we listen, and how we deliver. We're not here to create paperwork – we're here to create impact.

Fund development and endowment

By 2030 we're planning on distributing grants totalling £25 million and growing our endowment to £30 million.

Excellence

Trust is a massive component of how we work. As part of our strategy, we'll keep pushing for excellence in everything we do so that our partners, funders, and communities know they can count on us.

Technology

Data, AI and technology have transformed the way we live, work, and connect with the world around us. Whether it's learning how to embrace AI or strengthening our data about the communities we serve, we're determined to leverage technology to streamline our processes.

Belonging and sustainability

No strategy is complete without a commitment to diversity, equity, inclusion, and sustainability. Communities are diverse, local organisations are diverse, and the region is diverse, so we must replicate this diversity too. Diversity, inclusion and sustainability are the driving forces shaping how we work, who we partner with and what we stand for. Already, through our grant-making alone, we're helping to deliver on five of the UN's Sustainable Development Goals.

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Get involved now:
tina@heartofenglandcf.co.uk
07540 360015

Grant Spotlight | Refugee and Migrant Centre

Finding Home as a Refugee

Established in 1999, the Refugee and Migrant Centre (RMC) is an award-winning Wolverhampton based charity, and their vision is to create "a society where newcomers feel welcome, valued and lead dignified lives."

RMC recognises that for many of the refugees and migrants who live in the West Midlands, their only goal is to lead a safe and peaceful life. However, refugees are often faced with the daunting challenge of communicating in a new language. The low levels of spoken English present throughout the refugee community inhibits successful integration within society, not only acting as a physical barrier but also as a psychological barrier – immediately indicating a person's differing cultural background.

RMC received a £7,380 grant extension from the Know Your Neighbourhood Fund (KYN). KYN is a DCMS-backed programme designed to reduce chronic loneliness and boost volunteering in England's most disadvantaged areas. Launched in January 2023, the fund initially allocated up to £30 million (with £19 million government funding plus match contributions) running through March 2025. Due to its success, the fund was later extended until March 2026 with an additional £4.5 million.

With their grant extension, RMC have been able to continue successfully delivering 'English as a second language' (ESOL) classes to more than 30 students each day. Every class is organised and delivered by passionate volunteers, and once participants have successfully completed their classes, RMC empowers them to return as volunteers to help build their confidence in a time that can be volatile and overwhelming.

Yet, integration is more than a language. RMC has found that their refugee and migrant participants are eager to go one step further and get directly involved in activities designed to enhance the places they now call home. With their grant extension, RMC have also begun partnering with local charities and organising volunteering opportunities so they can learn how to volunteer in a safe environment.

£7,380
GRANT RECEIVED

> **I came to the UK because I was not safe in Kuwait. In Kuwait you do not have any rights. We cannot work. We cannot travel. We cannot get hospital treatment. We are stateless.**
>
> **Now I am safe. When I first came to RMC, I could not speak any English. Now I can speak, read, write and understand quite well. I help the other students from Kuwait in my ESOL class.**
>
> **I am confident and happy.**
>
> **Participant**

Their participants have been able to volunteer with the likes of The National Trust and the Wild Side Activity Centre and partake in green space restoration projects designed to benefit entire communities.

RMC continue to offer free, impartial and confidential advice and assistance to beneficiaries in Wolverhampton and the wider Black Country who have arrived or migrated from 162 different countries. Thanks to RMC's consistent support and determination, the lives of real people, from real places, are improving every day.

The Joy of Volunteering

Based in Wolverhampton, Access to Business provide professional services supporting local people into employment. One of their most recent projects, utilising their £7,380 Know Your Neighbourhood grant extension, involved developing the Wolverhampton Access 4 All (WA4A) volunteering coordination group.

The group was created to act as a user-led network, where long-standing beneficiaries could guide new beneficiaries to start a successful and fruitful volunteering journey – a journey designed to grant vulnerable and isolated individuals with the skills they need to become proactive members of society again.

A Project Coordinator at Access to Business, said:

"This work has shown just how powerful lived experience can be in helping others take their first steps into volunteering. WA4A has not only built a supportive community, it has also empowered people to turn their own journeys into pathways for others. The impact has been real, lasting, and deeply personal.

When people who have faced the same challenges come together to guide others, it creates something far more meaningful than any advice we could give alone. This funding hasn't just supported a project, it's helped grow a movement of empathy, confidence, and community-led change. Ultimately, it has enabled us to develop more opportunities for a chance to enhance social inclusion, improve overall confidence, and gain practical experience for all participants in the future."

The group enrolled and trained ten individuals monthly on topics such as: how to identify social opportunities, accessing local support services, AI and fundraising. The wide variety of topics covered meant individuals were gaining skills that would aid them in their personal lives as well as their professional pursuits.

£7,380
GRANT RECEIVED

> **After coming to the UK from Ukraine due to the war, I had nothing. I was at the lowest I have ever been, but Access to Business gave me hope and a future. If it wasn't for Jess and Jas, I would not be here now.**
>
> **Participant**

> **After working for 30 years, I was made redundant which knocked my confidence and mental health. I came to A2B and started from the bottom. I now have got my life back and had mental health support. A2B saved my life! Thank you.**
>
> **Participant**

Access to Business further utilised their grant extension by offering specific professional support for their beneficiaries, offering a free job club on Fridays and 1-1's for those in need of tailored support.

Access to Business has been a lifeline for some of Wolverhampton's most vulnerable individuals. They are a reminder of the transformational impact that can occur when personal barriers such as mental health and social isolation are lifted.

You're as Young as You Feel

Over the past year, we have distributed a total of £79,634 through the Coventry Building Society Fund, which was designed to support local community-based projects in Coventry. With a focus on addressing isolation and vulnerability, charities and community groups could apply for up to £10,000 to support projects based in the local area. Coundon Care Seniors Club are one of 14 organisations that have been funded through the programme this year. Their dedicated team have been tackling loneliness by providing care and companionship to their elderly visitors since 1984.

Coundon Care Seniors Club supports older people above the age of 65, welcoming them with a warm, friendly atmosphere, home-cooked meals, and fab entertainment. The service is offered for 50% less than comparable day care facilities in the city to ensure it is accessible to those in need.

Whilst many of their members suffer from dementia, loneliness and limited mobility, the Coundon Care team help to shoulder this responsibility, giving respite not only to their visitors, but to their families and carers alike. Recently, the senior's club has drawn attention from across the globe through their viral TikTok videos.

Like many community-based organisations, Coundon Care Seniors Club relies on donations and grant funding to deliver their incredible work. In 2024, a grant of £1,970 was awarded to Coundon Care for the procurement of essential kitchen equipment. As a part of the refurbishment of their centre in Tile Hill, Coventry, a new commercial dishwasher and refrigerator were purchased to help meet the demand for their services, which has grown in recent years.

> **People come in here and say there is a lovely warm feeling. We call it the magic.**
>
> **When they are here, they forget about the preconceived ideas they have had put on them and they become who they want to be.**
>
> **Kay Smith, Day Care Manager**

£1,970
GRANT RECEIVED

The new facilities will enable the Coundon Care team to more efficiently cater for a larger number of visitors, which will in turn give support staff more time to tend to their vulnerable members.

Kay Smith has been involved with Coundon Care for almost 10 years. At first, Kay had only planned to stay at the centre for a short time, but like many, she was captivated by the centre's warm, family atmosphere. The centre has become a lifeline for the many families it supports, giving its visitors the chance to forget any personal barriers they may be facing and simply have fun.

Inspiring Sustainable Action

Based in Solihull, IM Properties is one of the UK's largest private property developers and investors. Since their establishment in 1987, they have become industry leaders in sustainable construction. Embedded in their work is a commitment to leaving behind a tangible legacy across the communities they operate in.

The William Wilson Turner Foundation

Our partnership with IM Properties sprung from our shared mission to help local causes that matter. The Peddimore Community Fund was launched in 2018, with the aim of supporting projects local to the Peddimore Employment Park based in the North-East of Birmingham. They have since expanded their offer, establishing the IM Properties Communities Fund in 2023 to support community-based organisations throughout the whole of the West Midlands. Inspired by IM Properties' 'Sustainable Futures Framework', groups can apply for up to £3,000 for projects that address one of three themes: People, Place, and Planet. Since its inception two years ago, the IM Properties Communities Fund has supported innovative pilot projects, the procurement of essential equipment, and the development of existing services that have proven to be indispensable. In this year alone we have awarded over £100,000 to 43 local charities and community groups whose work has touched the lives of thousands.

> **"For many participants — particularly older adults who had lost partners or were experiencing loneliness—the sessions became a consistent source of warmth, connection, and emotional well-being. Weekly gatherings offered structure and something to look forward to, providing a safe, inclusive, and welcoming space. All participants—volunteers and attendees alike—benefited from the opportunity to share skills, create friendships, and come together as a community."**
>
> **Joan Blaney, Volunteer CEO of The William Wilson Turner Foundation**

Clothing Coventry

For older people living in Sandwell, The William Wilson Turner Foundation's weekly 'Soup and Social' became an opportunity to come together, socialise, and enjoy delicious home-cooked soup over the cold winter months. Using food purchased from organisations like Incredible Surplus to reduce food waste, participants were invited to take part in creative craft activities, dance sessions, and contribute to new menu suggestions all while enjoying nutritious soup. The project was made possible with a grant of £2,975 from the IM Properties Community Fund.

With a grant of £3,000, Clothing Coventry have been able to sustain their second-hand clothing delivery service. The grant has enabled Clothing Coventry to support the work of their delivery driver, which will allow them to distribute approximately 15,000 items of clothing over the next 9 months to people in need across the city. Clothes are delivered on a weekly basis to food banks, children's centres, warm hubs, and refugee housing in Coventry, so that vulnerable people have access to good-quality, season-appropriate clothing. The delivery service will be particularly impactful for people living in extreme poverty and those who suffer from health issues who may have difficulty accessing their central hub in Hillfields.

The support we have received from IM Properties has been invaluable in our efforts to unlock the limitless potential of grassroots organisations across the region. The involvement of IM Properties' staff in the decision-making process has given them the chance to shape the impact of their donation in line with their own sustainability aims.

> **These clothes have helped build my confidence, and I know that my children have appropriate clothes for the weather.**
>
> **It was a nice feeling, especially since I was in dire need of them as I didn't have the money.**
>
> **Some of Clothing Coventry's users**

At the Heart of England Community Foundation, we have a wealth of knowledge of the communities we support. In our 30 years of giving, we have built relationships with thousands of charities and community groups - but it is through our relationships with generous donors like IM Properties that we are able to make the West Midlands a fairer, happier, and healthier place to be. If you are looking to make a difference and want to support local causes that matter to you, join us in our mission to impact lives and change the region for the better.

Unlocked Funds Bring Bell Green ABC New Ring

Bell Green ABC (Amateur Boxing Club) have been awarded £5,000 after the Foundation joined together with Coventry City Council to unlock dormant assets to benefit the voluntary and community sector in Coventry.

The ringfenced charitable funds, which were donated to the council by philanthropists hundreds of years ago for causes not relevant to today's society, were uncovered by the Foundation in conjunction with the Charity Commission's revitalising trusts initiative, which highlights dormant charity assets that have been lost in the system over long periods of time.

The money has been added to the Foundation's own funds that target improving communities across Coventry, which in-turn create a long-term source of income for the voluntary and community sector in the city.

Bell Green ABC, based at Bell Green Working Men's Club, was the very first recipient of a grant from the funds and has used the £5,000 to purchase a new boxing ring as well as paint to revamp the gym, creating a more welcoming space.

The club was taken over by Damon Croft just last year, and it has since gone from strength to strength, welcoming an increasing number of young people through the door and being a recognised name in the boxing circuit.

Damon hopes that the new ring will see even more local children take up the sport.

> **"I'd like to say a huge thank you to the Heart of England Community Foundation and Coventry City Council for this grant.**
>
> **Having a brand-new facility like this will have a massive impact on the club. We've been on a really good journey so far, but we do lose some children because they move on to clubs with better facilities. The new ring will change that.**
>
> **Boxing has so many benefits for young people – it not only helps with fitness, but also improves their focus, self-discipline and confidence, and we've had so many parents comment on how much their child's behaviour and manners have improved since being with us."**
>
> **Damon Croft, Head Coach**

£5,000
GRANT RECEIVED

> **The gym also provides young people with a safe space to come where they feel comfortable and can make new friends, rather than them hanging around on the streets or being in front of screens.**
>
> **I'll also be looking to expand what we offer at the gym including launching some new fitness classes for adults, and the new ring will really support this.**
>
> **Damon Croft, Head Coach**

Grant Spotlight | Growth Path Services

Pathways to Success

Organisations can apply to the Birmingham and Black Country Communities Fund for up to £3,000 for projects that help to address specific needs in the local area. Grants from the programme are awarded from the earnings of the Foundation's endowment, which is made up of contributions from individuals, private companies, and trusts.

Tackling disadvantage and poor mental health, Growth Path Services are one of 44 charities and community-based organisations that have been awarded through the fund this year. With a focus on supporting vulnerable young people aged 16-29 into education and employment, Growth Path Services work in some of Birmingham's largest areas of deprivation: Aston, Erdington, Kingstanding, Lozells, and Nechells.

In March 2025, Growth Path Services were awarded £2,000 to provide tailored resilience training sessions for young people who are not in education, employment or training. The person-centered sessions sought to equip participants with valuable life skills in addition to real qualifications that will uplift them and encourage them to become independent. Delivered by Birmingham Mind, the resilience training sessions focus on stress management and emotion regulation, teaching participants how to cope with stress, difficult emotions, and personal issues. The project aligns with Growth Path Services' mission to break the cycle of poverty by enabling young people from disadvantaged backgrounds to achieve their own success.

It can be difficult for young people, particularly those from disadvantaged backgrounds, to openly discuss their mental health, but Growth Path Services' training model is tried and tested. The resilience training sessions were delivered as part of an 'Introduction to Construction' course, which has supported over 2000 young people into education,

£2,000
GRANT RECEIVED

employment and training since its inception. In addition to the qualifications received, upon finishing the course, participants are given references to show other potential employers they have what it takes to succeed.

> **I would explode when things got tough, at my mum, my girlfriend, anyone around me. Teachers, anyone. I didn't see any other solution. I needed to calm down and step away. Better that than just kicking off. That behaviour was getting me nowhere. I'm going to use this toolbox all the time.**
>
> **Try to remember that the way I'm feeling is stress and I can deal with it in ways that don't make the situation worse.**
>
> **Participant**

Grant Spotlight | Sonrisa Arts

Happy Healthy Families

Sonrisa Arts deliver creative music and dance workshops in Warwickshire, with a particular focus on offering people living in underserved communities the chance to engage with the arts. Following the success of their pilot project in Camp Hill, Nuneaton, Sonrisa Arts were awarded £3,000 from the Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Communities Fund to deliver additional workshops for children and their parents. The project, aptly named 'Happy Healthy Families', combined exciting interactive performances with the opportunity for families to connect with each other in a fun and welcoming environment.

Founded in 2022, Sonrisa Arts seek to improve people's mental health through the transformative power of the creative arts. They work with vulnerable people within the local community, ensuring that those in need have access to the arts regardless of their health or financial position. The project specifically targeted young children aged 3-6, as well as their parents and carers.

One parent said:
"I'm so happy that we can access this for free as otherwise we couldn't do it."

Based in Nuneaton – historically one of the most deprived towns in the whole of Warwickshire – the sensory workshops addressed barriers to mental health services by allowing families to take part in the project free of charge. Often, some of the most vulnerable people in our local communities lack the access to mental health support. In this project alone, Sonrisa Arts reached 78 children and their families, using the creative arts as a tool to captivate the children, aid their development, and allow their relationships with their parents and carers to blossom. They discovered the project had a significant impact on children with additional needs, and that children learning English as an additional language could engage with their peers more confidently.

£3,000
GRANT RECEIVED

> **Observing the joy on children's faces when they experienced the magic of the theatre for the first time and watching the bond between parent and child develop during the workshops as they danced and moved together showed us the power dance and live music have to improve health and wellbeing.**
>
> **Kath Kimber-McTiffen**
> **Artistic Director of Sonrisa Arts**

To wrap up the project, participants were invited to a special performance of 'Dance in the Dark' at the Albany Theatre in Coventry. Created by the Sonrisa Arts team, the show helps children to explore their fear of the dark through music, dance, and imagination.

Safe Havens for People in Need

Dedicated to making Coventry the UK's first restful city, Coventry Resting Spaces have made it their mission to provide free, accessible quiet spaces across the city centre for those in need.

People with hidden disabilities or mental health issues often find it challenging to overcome the overwhelming pressures caused by loud, bustling public areas. When dealing with anxiety, sensory overload, or chronic pain, having a designated safe environment to go to will enable many of these people to better participate in their local community.

Coventry Resting Spaces were awarded £2,216 for the development of a sensory room within Coventry's central library. Following the feedback they have received from people with lived experience of autism, the grant has allowed them to purchase packs of sensory equipment which can be loaned out to people in the community. Sensory tools such as fidget toys and ear defenders can be the key to relieving stress and anxiety. This new lending scheme will ensure this equipment is available for free to anyone in need.

Ashley Kirton, the founder of Coventry Resting Spaces, has lived experience of Asperger's syndrome. Without access to a designated quiet space, Ashley would duck into shop doorways or public toilets to try to bring his anxiety down. He felt inspired to create safe havens across the city following the COVID-19 pandemic, hoping to reduce isolation for people who struggle with sensory overload and help increase access to local services within the city centre.

This project was funded through the Coventry, Warwickshire and Solihull Communities Fund, which was designed to support local community solutions that tackle disadvantage and promote health and wellbeing. Coventry locals can find purpose-built resting spaces at the Central Library, Saint Mary's Guildhall, The Herbert Art Gallery, FarGo Village, and the Methodist Central Hall.

> **All I needed was a place to rest to bring my anxiety down. Maybe on a bean bag. I needed a designated space. Somewhere to relax and chill out. Away from the crowds and the loud noises. Somewhere where I wouldn't feel nervous and that security wouldn't tell me to stand up, or where I'd be obliged to buy a drink, or where the public would stare at me.**
>
> **Ashley Kirton, Founder of Coventry Resting Spaces**

£2,216
GRANT RECEIVED

Introducing Dan and Saying Goodbye to Paul

Thank you, Paul. Welcome Dan!

A noteworthy change this year has been the appointment of Dan Boardman-Weston, Chartered Fellow of CISI and CEO of BRI Wealth Management, as a Foundation Trustee. Dan joined BRI Wealth Management in 2011 and has held roles of increasing seniority within the investment team. He was appointed Chief Executive in April 2022 after completing an MBA at Warwick Business School, specialising in the strategies of high growth companies. Outside of his professional pursuits, Dan is the Chairman of a charitable trust and is a member of his local parochial church council.

Dan is enthusiastic about beginning his philanthropic journey with the Foundation.

> **"I'm delighted to be joining the Heart of England Community Foundation as a trustee. It is an organisation that plays such a vital role in our local communities and supporting such worthy causes across the Midlands. It's a privilege to be joining at such an exciting juncture and to be working with a team that is dedicated to making a meaningful and lasting impact across the region."**
>
> **Dan Boardman-Weston**

As we welcome Dan to the Trustee team, we must also bid farewell to Paul Belfield. Paul has been a part of the Foundation team for over 15 years after becoming a Foundation Trustee in 2009. After a successful career in banking Paul brought a wealth of knowledge and expertise. Not only did Paul serve as the Foundation's Chair from 2013 to 2017, but he has actively been involved in the Foundation's sub-committees and has chaired numerous panel meetings. In particular, during the administration of the Inclusive Communities Fund, Paul played a key role by leading panel meetings and assisting in the delegated decision-making process alongside Tina Costello OBE.

> **"I have thoroughly enjoyed my time with the Foundation over the last 15 years and have particularly enjoyed working with such a diverse and dynamic team.**
>
> **The work undertaken by the Foundation is more relevant today than ever before, providing vital funding for those in need. I am also pleased to have witnessed and contributed to the growth of the Foundation during my tenure as we are now able to support more deserving causes than ever before. I wish the Foundation and all those associated with the charity continued success."**
>
> **Paul Belfield**

Listening to Our Communities

As part of our ongoing commitment to meaningful community engagement, we asked local groups to share a few words that best describe their experience working with the Foundation. This word cloud is a visual summary of those responses.

Words like **"community," "supportive," "funding," "local," and "helpful"** stood out most — highlighting the trust, care, and collaboration that define our relationships. We were also heartened to see values such as **"approachable," "inclusive," "understanding," and "kind"** featured throughout.

These responses affirm that we're building lasting partnerships with grassroots organisations that are grounded in compassion, accessibility, and mutual support. Thank you to every group that took the time to share their voice with us. You help shape the heart of what we do.

FOR A FAIRER, HAPPIER, HEALTHIER MIDLANDS

simple
responsive
diverse
proactive
professional
local
fair
resourceful
effective
friendly
change-makers
money
lifeline
helpful
projects
modern
opportunity
grants
involvement
support
organised
accommodating
safety
caring
enabling
compassionate
approachable
partnership
application
generous
innovative
relevant
supportive
culture
love
community
initiatives
champion
encouragement
amazing
funds
care

A Summary of Our Financial Statement for the Year Ending 31st March 2025

Our Financial Performance

Income and Endowments	2024/25	2023/24
Donations and Legacies	190,617	591,418
Income from Contracts	12,473,737	14,253,378
Rental Income	121,319	124,739
Investment Income	526,345	475,587
Bank Interest	237,518	174,045
Other Income	2,258	1,500
Total	**13,551,794**	**15,620,667**

Expenditure		
Grants and Funding Contracts	10,744,175	13,343,613
Property Costs	10,846	26,312
Building Better Opportunities	-	36,174
Support Costs	767,165	687,185
Governance	12,000	12,000
Raising Funds	78,765	60,445
Investment Management Costs	73,718	61,843
Total	**11,686,669**	**14,227,572**

Foundation Funds		
Endowment Funds	20,875,417	21,411,109
Restricted Funds	4,157,040	2,975,979
Unrestricted/Designated Funds	1,413,772	1,185,894
Unrestricted General Funds	1,588,131	1,076,222
Total	**28,034,360**	**26,649,204**

Net Assets		
Investment and Properties	22,001,127	22,462,965
Net Current Assets	6,033,233	4,186,239
Total	**28,034,360**	**26,649,204**

Endowment Funds

Endowment funds	2024/25	2023/24
Alan Higgs Fund	512,956	538,023
Annie Bettman Fund	305,210	314,433
AXA Fund	229,212	219,231
Birmingham Fund	382,113	394,263
Birmingham Mail Charity Fund	58,436	60,360
Building Better Lives Fund	4,535,166	4,548,595
Coventry Community Fund	400,459	420,029
Coventry Nursing Trust Fund	367,073	385,013
Deutsche Bank Grassroots Fund	162,705	168,064
Friends Provident Fund	13,465	12,877
George & Vera Bryan Grassroots Fund	229,596	237,158
Harry Weston Fund	71,704	72,308
Harry Payne Fund	3,653,703	3,797,704
Heart of England Fund	745,781	770,070
High Sheriff of Warwickshire	228,307	239,464
James Kenning Fund	61,499	64,506
Jumping Through Hoops Fund	1,288,045	1,336,559
Kingscliffe Fund	178,080	183,462
Mills & Reeve Grassroots Fund	76,058	78,563
Mike Holland Fund	168,010	176,220
Orbit Heart of England Fund	177,092	169,382
Property for Kids Grassroots Fund	29,884	30,868
PSA Peugeot Citroen Fund	377,781	389,199
Solihull Community Foundation Fund	301,405	316,135
Sandwell Community Fund	399,981	419,528
South Birmingham Friends Fund	2,788,245	2,771,145
Torrington House Fund	285,740	273,300
Trustees' New Deal Fund	188,406	196,599
Warwick Lying -in - Trust Fund	49,322	50,947
Willenhall Community Trust Fund	77,533	81,322
Wolston Fund	104,405	109,507
Youell Family Fund	2,427,984	2,502,584
Other Endowments	61	83,691
Total	**20,875,417**	**21,411,109**

Summary of Funding Awarded

Fund name	No of awards	Amount awarded
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust Regulars	14	£8,500
29th May Small Grants	3	£3,062
Alan Edward Higgs Charity	9	£9,372
Axa Enterprise Fund	1	£1,783
Birmingham & Black Country Communities Fund	27	£66,379
Birmingham Fairer Futures Citywide	42	£1,645,082
Birmingham Mail Fund	1	£1,300
Care Leavers Fund	1	£50,000
Charles Burrell Fund	1	£5,000
Community Energy Warwickshire Fund	10	£16,771
Coventry 2021 Fund	1	£37,269
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Large	6	£55,000
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Small	9	£15,240
Coventry Building Society Payroll Giving	2	£9,394
Coventry Community Fund	1	£5,000
Coventry Nursing Fund Grants	1	£2,216
Coventry Warm Space Fund	3	£11,833
Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Communities Fund	33	£62,879
Dulverton Trust Fund	21	£99,995
Harry Payne Fund	62	£98,400
Heart of England Fund	1	£9,996
Helping Hearts Co-op Fund	77	£27,608
High Sheriffs Warwickshire Fund	2	£2,500
IM Properties Community Fund	43	£117,454
International Children's Games Fund	1	£16,536
Jaguar Land Rover Solihull Employees Charity Fund	7	£10,450
Kinghurst Community Fund	1	£300
Know Your Neighbourhood Fund	5	£10,750
Leamington Bid Fund	9	£1,910
Longleigh Foundation Fund	3	£19,059
Mayflex UK Ltd Fund	1	£2,998
Mike Holland Trust Fund	2	£1,559
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Edgbaston	10	£61,750
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Northfield	15	£87,612
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Capacity Building Edgbaston	16	£23,741
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Capacity Building Northfield	23	£21,352
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Citywide LGBT Microgrants	1	£500
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Capacity Building Edgbaston	5	£10,330

Fund name	No of awards	Amount awarded
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Capacity Building Northfield	13	£16,241
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Edgbaston	6	£40,917
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Northfield	8	£50,623
Orbit Fund	3	£7,409
Peddimore Community Fund	11	£23,752
Peugeot Fund	2	£3,880
PHP Fund	2	£10,000
Positive Futures Fund	19	£94,282
Solihull Community Buildings Fund	6	£258,720
Solihull Community Fund	1	£1,182
Solihull Fairer Futures Fund	5	£49,703
Solihull Winter Support and Prevention Fund	14	£50,000
South Birmingham Friends Institute Fund	12	£22,812
St George Earl Fund	4	£25,200
Stellantis Employee Fund	18	£4,674
The David East Fund	5	£7,070
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Medium Grants	93	£3,551,595
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Small Grants	78	£829,720
The Inclusive Communities Fund - Small Works, Refurbishments, Renovations	8	£346,631
The Windsor Academy Trust Community Fund	6	£2,355
Tipton Education Fund	5	£27,253
Together in Solihull Fund	3	£4,500
Together in Solihull Ukraine Fund	2	£12,000
Torrington Fund	6	£10,661
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund - Capital	6	£705,139
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund - Revenue	6	£276,727
Wesleyan AGM Vote Fund	1	£18,840
Wesleyan Climate Action Fund	4	£75,000
Wesleyan Community Fund	35	£303,879
Wesleyan Education Fund	4	£88,333
Wesleyan Equality Fund	8	£73,041
Wesleyan Flexible Fund	6	£48,424
Wesleyan Mutuality Fund	31	£89,988
Wesleyan National Fund	14	£28,155
Wesleyan Wellbeing Fund	6	£165,669
West Midlands Combined Authority - Community Environment Fund	18	£486,596
West Midlands Combined Authority - Green Grants	4	£82,077
Youell Family Fund	8	£24,000
Grand Total	951	£10,547,927

Meet our Team

Tina Costello OBE
Chief Executive

Shamiela Ahmed
Senior Manager: Programmes

Jayne Taylor-Farren
Senior Manager: Finance

Helen Kendrick
Senior Manager: Operations

Samantha Davis
Senior Manager: Operations (Maternity Cover)

Zain Khan
Systems & Data Officer

Paramjit Kaur
Finance Officer

Jenny Whateley
Programme Manager Inclusive Communities Fund

Jack Harnett
Business Support Assistant

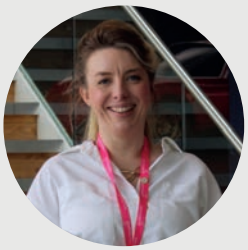
Zoë Sweeney
Programme Manager

Joanna Plaisant
Grants Officer

Avni Sarai
Senior Communications Officer

Charleene Jefferson
Executive Officer

Abigail Tilden
Office Administrator



Lucy Winter
Grants Officer

CHANGING LIVES LOCALLY

Patrons & Presidents

Sally Carrick
Patron

Tim Cox
Lord Lieutenant of Warwickshire
President

Meet our Board

Chris West
Chair

Michelle Vincent
Treasurer

Calum Nisbet
Trustee

Dan Boardman-Weston
Trustee

Jude Jennison
Trustee

Richard Port MBE
Trustee

Paul Belfield
Trustee

Alethea Fuller
Trustee

Our Strategic Partners and Corporate Donors

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LAND
ROVER

MAYFLEX
A Sonepar Company

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Charitable Foundation

NORTHFIELD
Community Partnership

WESLEYAN
we are all about you

Solihull
METROPOLITAN
BOROUGH COUNCIL
URBS IN RURE

UKCOMMUNITY
FOUNDATIONS

West Midlands
Combined Authority

Our Annual Yearbook is kindly supported by:

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