

Annual Grant Making Report 2025 -2026

Introduction

In 2025-2026, we awarded 504 grants worth a total value of £4,598,648 to voluntary sector organisations across the West Midlands & Warwickshire. It was a year in which we launched new funds centred on important themes, such as the Net Zero Fund, and explored new ways of delivering grant-making.

We are proud to work alongside several valued donors who entrust us with delivering funding where it can make the greatest difference. Thank you for your continued trust and support.

Looking ahead to 2026–2027, we are committed to developing new donor partnerships while nurturing our existing relationships, helping us to meet the increasing needs of our communities. Alongside this, we will continue to strengthen our systems and processes, including reviewing our end-of-grant monitoring forms to improve the experience for both donors and grant recipients.

Key highlights from this year's report include:

- £5, 587,292 million awarded
- 826 single grants and donations awarded
- Approx 196,247* people supported
- 32% application success rate
- 72 separate funds delivered
- Average grant size £8,518*

*Excluding donor directed awards and donations.

Peddimore Fund – IM Properties

2025 -2026 was the final year of the Peddimore Fund. Our partnership with IM Properties began in 2018 as they prepared to deliver a major new employment development at Peddimore, on the edge of Birmingham.

Peddimore was planned as a high-quality employment site, attracting national and international manufacturing and logistics businesses and supporting up to 6,500 jobs. Given the scale and regional importance of the scheme, IM Properties committed to a long-term approach to placemaking, ensuring economic growth was matched with social and environmental benefit. As part of this commitment, IM Properties established the Peddimore Community Fund.

Established in 2018, the Peddimore Fund supported local community organisations with grants of up to £2,000, funding projects that addressed real local priorities.

Funding themes included:

- Health Mental wellbeing
- Education and training
- Young people and families
- Community environment
- Sport and physical activity

Due to high levels of deprivation and need, priority was given to organisations working in Erdington and Perry Barr, alongside neighbouring wards.

Impact:

£156,000 awarded

70 community projects funded

6-year programme

IM Properties have also dedicated additional support with these communities beyond the life of the grant; offering time and resources to ensure it delivers a lasting positive legacy in communities.

Tipton Education Fund – Sandwell MBC

This was also the final year of the Tipton Education Fund. The Tipton Education Fund is one that the Foundation took over the management of following the closure of the Birmingham & Black Country Community Foundation in 2013.

Our Tipton Education Fund had grants of up to £2k to support educational projects that:

- 👏 Overcame barriers to learning
- ☀️ Raised aspirations of children & young people
- 👨👩 Supported family learning
- 📖 Encouraged children to read outside of school

Impact:

£161,407 awarded

59 projects funded

This was a unique opportunity because this is one of very few funds which could support schools.

The above provides a snapshot of some of our work this year. I hope that you find this report useful and insightful. If you would like any further information on our grant making, please feel free to contact me at Shamiela@heartofenglandcf.co.uk

Shamiela Ahmed

Senior Manager – Programmes

Summary of Grants Awarded:

Fund Name	No of Grants	Amount Awarded
1892 Foundation	1	£3,500
Alan Edward Higgs Charity	10	£9,799
Axa Enterprise Fund	1	£2,055
Birmingham & Black Country Communities Fund	63	£163,938
Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust – ICCR Health Inequalities	3	£11,763
Birmingham Fairer Futures Localities	37	£1,486,560
Birmingham Mail Fund	4	£4,236
CCLA Care Leavers Scheme	2	£50,000
Charles Burrell Fund	1	£2,202
Community Energy Warwickshire Fund	7	£12,868
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Large	7	£55,000
Coventry Building Society Community Fund - Small	14	£22,333
Coventry Building Society Payroll Giving	3	£19,841
Coventry Community Fund	5	£9,640
Coventry Nursing Fund Grants	3	£7,000
Coventry, Solihull & Warwickshire Communities Fund	35	£79,978
Deutsche Bank Small Grants	6	£58,550
Drayton Manor Park Foundation	9	£21,994
Greggs Foundation	1	£588
Harry Payne Fund	63	£89,100
IM Properties Community Fund	29	£74,020
IM Stratford 46 Community Fund	8	£35,000
James Kenning Fund Grant	2	£4,771
Know Your Neighbourhood Fund	12	£261,660
Mayflex UK Ltd Fund	1	£202
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Citywide	3	£328,528
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Edgbaston	11	£68,751
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Northfield	15	£111,853
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Capacity Building Edgbaston	2	£1,666
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Digital Microgrants	8	£15,420
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Capacity Building Edgbaston	1	£13,928
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Edgbaston	8	£43,697
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Northfield	8	£54,836
Net Zero Fund	8	£65,185
North Solihull Community Help Fund	8	£57,122
Orbit Fund	1	£1,585

Peddimore Community Fund	7	£19,373
Positive Futures Fund	34	£167,741
RECOM Fund	2	£4,989
Sandwell Community Fund	11	£30,737
Solihull Community Fund	1	£694
Solihull Support & Prevention Fund 2025	20	£101,349
South Birmingham Friends Institute Fund	22	£41,701
Tipton Education Fund	11	£39,972
Together in Solihull Fund	4	£6,000
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund - Capital	6	£730,055
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund - Revenue	1	£35,000
Warwickshire Fund	2	£4,868
Wesleyan Community Fund	6	£55,000
Women & Girls Fund	10	£100,000
Youell Family Fund	4	£12,000
Grand Total	541	£4,598,648

Grants Awarded Outside of Our Region:

Fund Name	No of Grants	Amount Awarded
Wesleyan Community Fund	28	£248,222

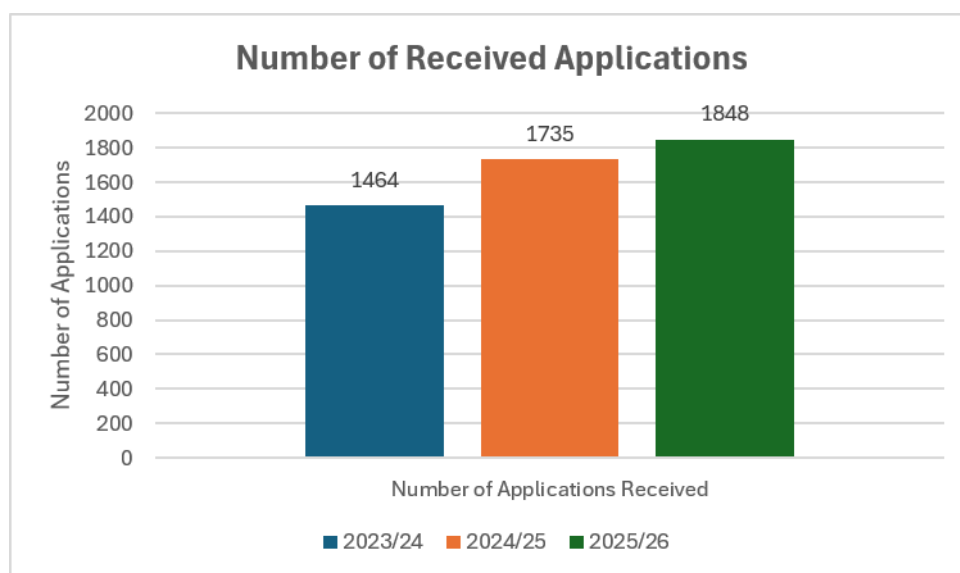
Donor Advised Funds and Donations:

Fund Name	No of Donations	Amount Donated
29th May 1961 Charitable Trust Regulars	10	£9,000
29th May Small Grants	6	£15,950
Charles Burrell Fund	1	£7,798
Helping Hearts Co-op Fund	55	£33,021
Jaguar Land Rover Solihull Employees Charity Fund	5	£2,569
Mike Holland Trust Fund	2	£3,030
Neighbourhood Network Scheme BCM Fund	1	£17,988
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Capacity Building Edgbaston	18	£35,297
Neighbourhood Network Scheme Capacity Building Northfield	26	£12,892
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Capacity Building Edgbaston	3	£3,242
Neighbourhood Network Scheme YA Capacity Building Northfield	19	£9,359

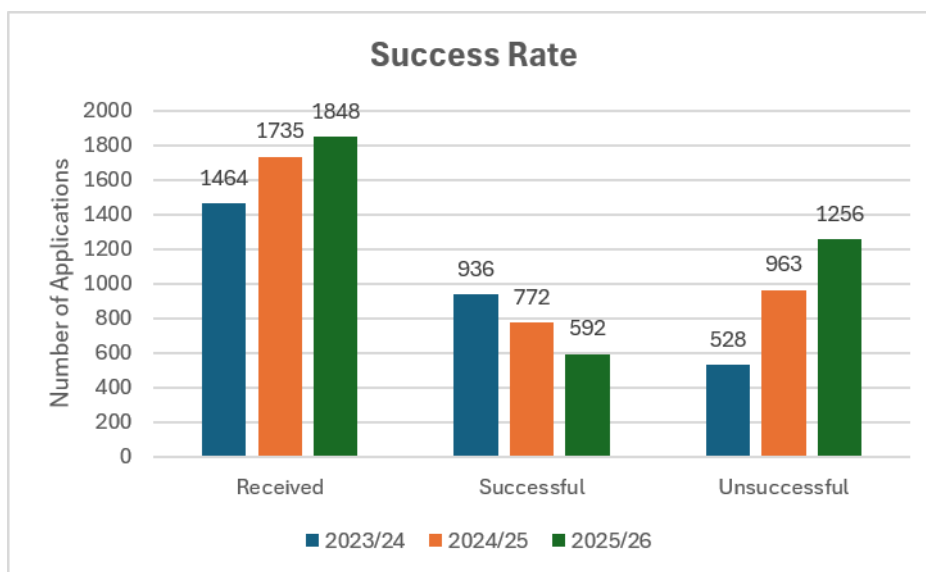
Stellantis Employee Fund	21	£6,765
The Brummie Bursary	1	£20,000
The Windsor Academy Trust Community Fund	19	£10,003
Torrington Fund	2	£2,560
Wesleyan AGM Vote Fund	1	£16,895
Wesleyan Climate Action Fund	3	£56,775
Wesleyan Education Fund	3	£70,000
Wesleyan Equality Fund	8	£74,956
Wesleyan Flexible Fund	3	£94,750
Wesleyan Health Fund	3	£54,697
Wesleyan Mutuality Fund	31	£60,000
Wesleyan Schools Fund	5	£55,000
Wesleyan Wellbeing Fund	2	£40,876
Youell Family Fund	9	£27,000
Grand Total	257	£740,422

Our Grant Making: Success Rates

Across our programmes we have differing success rates. This is due to the level of budget vs the demand. In some cases where a fund is oversubscribed, we can move some applications to other funds, but this is not always possible.



We received a total of 1,848 applications in 2025/26. This is a 6.5% increase in the amount of applications we received compared to the previous financial year.



The success rate for applications we've received in 2025/26 was 32%. Compared to the previous year, the total success rate for applications has decreased by 28%.

New Programmes:

IM Properties Stratford 46 Community Fund

We had the pleasure of launching another fund in partnership with IM Properties. This time focussing on Stratford upon Avon.

The £105,000 fund aims to support projects addressing one of the following priorities as part of IM Properties Sustainable Future Frameworks:

People - Promoting positive change including projects that:

- Support health and wellbeing
- Promote inclusion and diversity within the community

Place - Strengthening communities projects that:

- Promote and encourage community cohesion
- Tackle social isolation and/or help to build social networks
- Help to raise aspirations and provide learning opportunities for children, young people, adults and families

Planet - Enhancing the natural environment projects that:

- Promote education and awareness of sustainability

- Encourage resource efficiency by reduction, recycling and reusing of waste materials
- Support environmental initiatives including wildlife and habitat creation

Net Zero Fund

Working with Community Energy Warwickshire we launched the Net Zero Fund with a budget of £67,500.

Supporting organisations across Coventry, Solihull and Warwickshire who were looking to improve their energy efficiency.

The aims of the fund were as follows:

- Improving the energy efficiency of community buildings through e.g. insulation, energy efficient heating and lighting systems
- Community renewable energy generation e.g. solar PV and battery systems
- Encouraging community food production through sustainable use of natural resources e.g. rainwater harvesting and other infrastructure improvements at allotment sites and community gardens
- Promoting carbon-neutral transport through electric car sharing schemes, community EV chargers, improving cycle and walking routes etc
- Reducing waste of food and other resources through e.g. community larders/kitchens, repair cafes, libraries etc

Women & Girls Fund

Supporting women and girls is an area our Chief Executive is deeply passionate about. Recognising the unique challenges and inequalities that many women and girls continue to face, we launched our own fundraising campaign for the Women & Girls Fund.

The fund enabled us to take a more flexible and targeted approach to grant-making, allowing us to reach and support organisations dedicated to improving the lives of women and girls across our region. Through this funding, we were able to invest in projects addressing a wide range of issues, including mental health and wellbeing, domestic abuse, social isolation and confidence-building.

By working closely with specialist organisations, the fund helped ensure that women and girls could access the support, opportunities, and resources they need to thrive, while strengthening the network of community groups championing gender equality and empowerment across our region.

The Foyle Foundation Fund

The Foundation was proud to announce that we were selected as one of only twelve community foundations across the UK to receive a £200,000 legacy donation from the Foyle Foundation as part of its final round of charitable giving.

The Foyle Foundation was established in 2000 to implement the will of the late Christina Foyle, who died in 1999 leaving most of her estate to charity. As an independent grant making trust the Foyle Foundation distributes grants to UK-based charities (primarily arts and learning) and schools. The Foundation's long planned spend down and closure took place in December 2025 distributing over £185 million in total, including a number of legacy projects with long-term benefit.

Grants will be awarded over a period of two years. In the first year we focussed on supporting local organisations in Coventry, Solihull, and Warwickshire to reduce their environmental impact and improve energy efficiency.

Grants of up to £5,000 will be available, and applications should align with one of the following priorities:

- Improving the energy efficiency of community buildings (insulation, efficient heating/lighting systems).
- Community renewable energy generation (e.g., solar PV, battery systems).
- Supporting sustainable community food production (e.g., rainwater harvesting, infrastructure at allotments and community gardens).
- Promoting carbon-neutral transport (EV chargers, shared transport schemes, cycling/walking routes).
- Reducing waste and supporting resource reuse (community larders/kitchens, repair cafés, libraries of things).

Birmingham & Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust (BSMHFT) – ICCR Health Inequalities

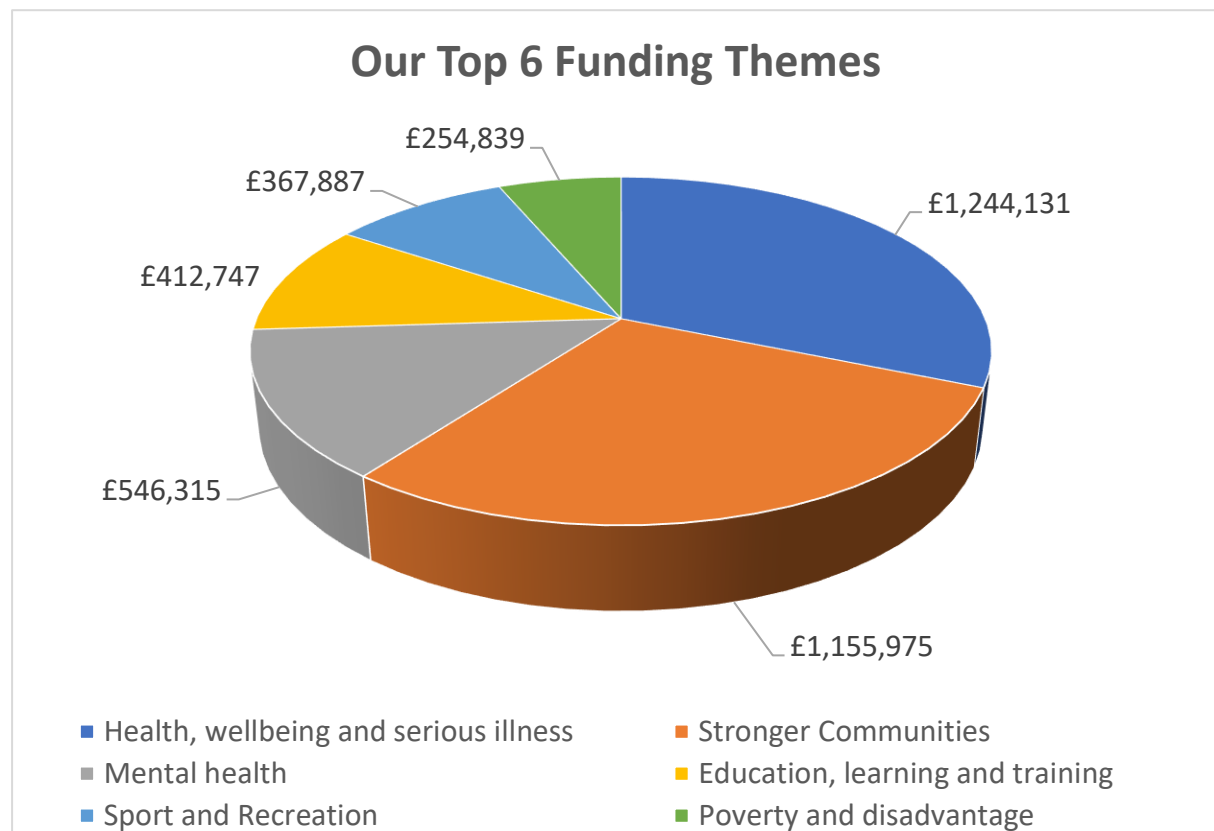
The BSMHFT's Community Transformation Co-production small and large grants are the Foundations first co production grants.

The main purpose of the Mental Health Community Transformation Programme is to increase access to diverse community health services. This includes providing access to new and integrated models of primary and community mental health for adults and older adults with Severe Mental Illness and expanding the geographical footprint of new integrated models of primary and community mental health to support all communities across Birmingham & Solihull.

The fund aims to support initiatives and/or resources that have been identified or developed through co-production to address mental health and wellbeing which will:

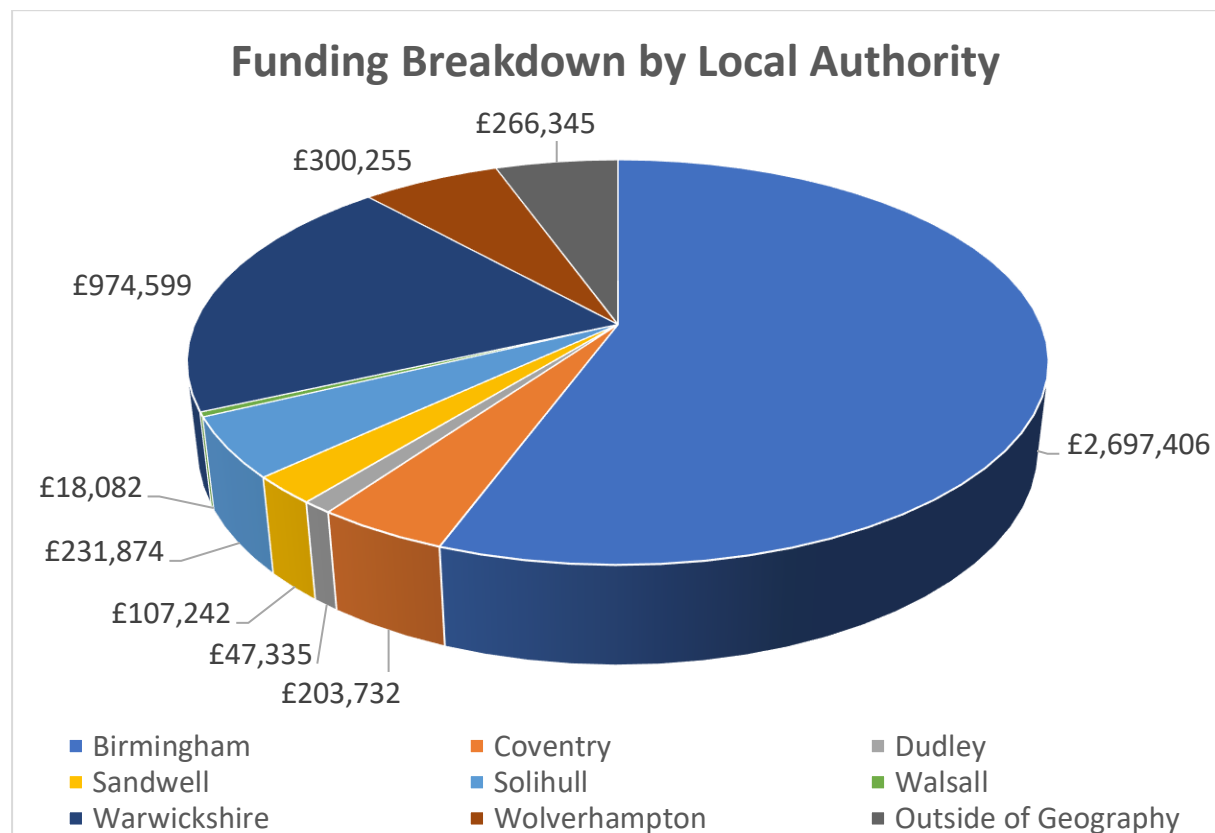
- Alleviate loneliness & Isolation via engagement, Learning and Support.
- Raise the awareness of Mental Health to Community Members.
- Challenge stigma that leads to barriers of access, improving access.
- Improve knowledge of Services, Pathways & how to access them.
- Build skills & competences of community champions, increasing MH, volunteers, peer support and workforce opportunities.
- Deliver bespoke MH support at a community level promoting self help.

Funding Themes:



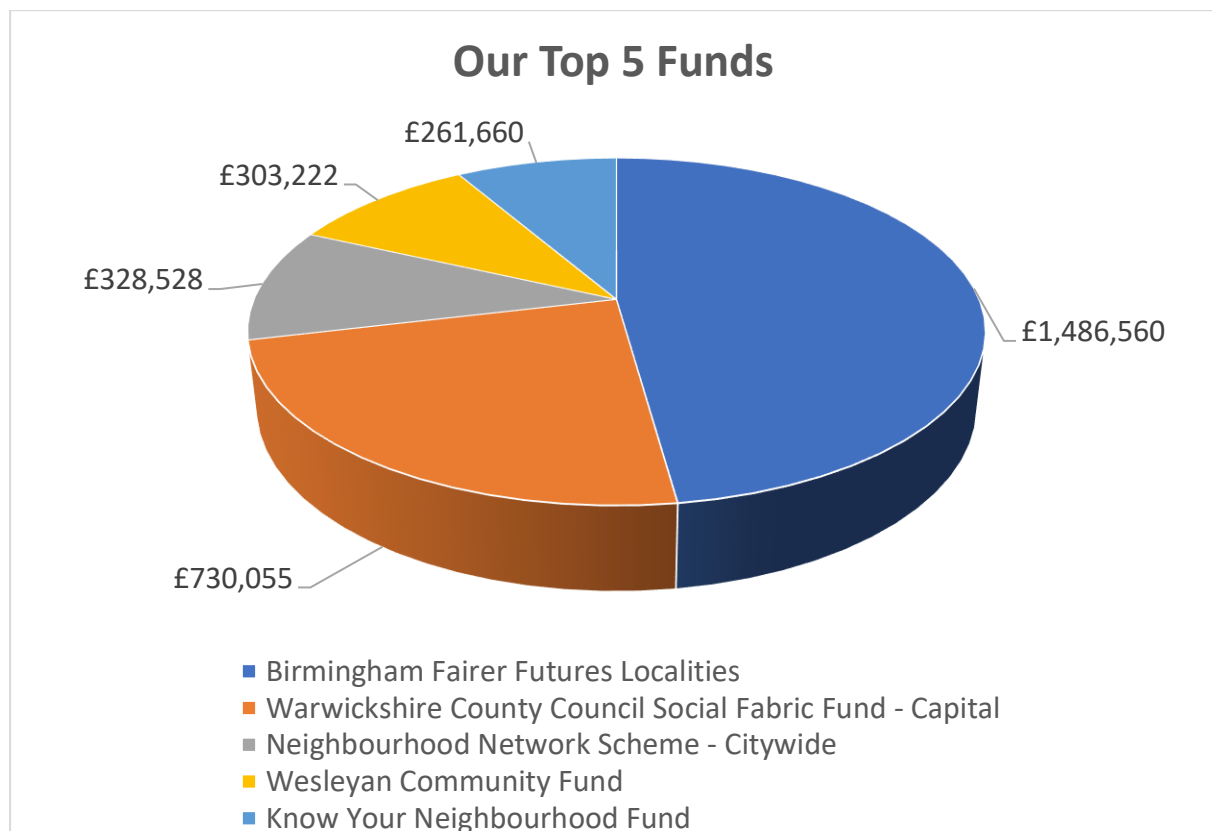
Theme	Amount Awarded
Health, wellbeing and serious illness	£1,244,131
Stronger Communities	£1,155,975
Mental health	£546,315
Education, learning and training	£412,747
Sport and Recreation	£367,887
Poverty and disadvantage	£254,839

Local Authority:



Local Authority	No of Awards	Amount Awarded
Birmingham	248	£2,697,406
Coventry	53	£203,732
Dudley	20	£47,335
Sandwell	29	£107,242
Solihull	52	£231,874
Walsall	7	£18,082
Warwickshire	71	£974,599
Wolverhampton	24	£300,255
Outside of Geography	35	£266,345

Our Top 5 Funds:



Funding Programme	No of Awards	Amount Awarded
Birmingham Fairer Futures Localities	37	£1,486,560
Warwickshire County Council Social Fabric Fund - Capital	6	£730,055
Neighbourhood Network Scheme - Citywide	3	£328,528
Wesleyan Community Fund	34	£303,222
Know Your Neighbourhood Fund	12	£261,660

Summary

The Foundation has had another successful year of grant-making. However, as in recent years, the demand for funding continues to increase while available funds remain limited, meaning our grant panels have had to make some difficult decisions.

Next year will see an even tougher year, with the Foundation having fewer confirmed funds at the start of the new financial year.

Our communities continue to face challenging times, which in turn means the voluntary and community sector is experiencing increasing demand for its services.

The demand has increased sharply due to:

- Cost-of-living pressures
- Mental health needs
- Poverty and inequality
- Reduced statutory (council/NHS) preventative services

This is creating the issue of more need but less capacity.

The voluntary and community sector is also facing the following challenges:

Workforce and volunteer challenges

Issues include:

- Difficulty recruiting and retaining paid staff due to low pay compared to public/private sector
- Difficulty recruiting trustees
- Heavy reliance on volunteers who are themselves under pressure (cost of living, ageing volunteer base)
- Burnout among trustees and leaders

Premises, infrastructure, and running costs

Especially relevant in Warwickshire towns and suburban West Midlands areas.

Issues include

- Rising rent and energy costs
- Difficulty maintaining community buildings
- Loss of affordable local venues

Fragmentation and inequality in access to funding.

Issues include:

- Larger, established charities tend to secure most contracts
- Smaller grassroots groups struggle with capacity – it is often also said that these are organisation led by minority communities)
- Digital and administrative burdens disadvantage smaller organisations

The types of funding which would support the voluntary and community sector the most include:

- Core unrestricted funding
- Multiyear funding
- Flexible infrastructure and capacity-building funding

It would be great to work with new donors to develop exciting new programmes to help support some of the above needs. We are a place-based organisation, rooted in our community, we are agile and are able to respond to need quickly.

If you are a potential donor looking to support communities across the West Midlands and Warwickshire please don't hesitate to contact our Chief Executive Tina Costello – Tina@heartofenglandcf.co.uk