



Community First Annual Review 2024 - 2025

Vibrant Communities Brighter Futures

Registered Charity No: 288117

VAT Registration No: 639 3860 06

Company Limited by Guarantee Reg. No: 1757334 England

Registered with the Financial Conduct Authority No: FRN 311971

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Our Vision

Vibrant Communities, Brighter Futures

Our Mission

Connecting Communities
Tackling Disadvantage
Encouraging Enterprise
Inspiring Ideas, Innovating and
Delivering Excellence

Our Values

Effective	Enthusiastic
Trustworthy	Supportive
Encouraging	Pioneering

Highlights

Our team:

57

Full/part-time staff

16

Sessional staff

10

Trustees

Youth Action Wiltshire:



451

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers accessed our face-to-face respite and breaks activities

472

Young Victims of Crime (319) and young people facing challenges in their lives (153) accessed Splash activities and support

In our network:

246

Local Councils

189

Village halls

64

Transport groups

1.4k

Volunteers

We supported or delivered:



£586,151

Income generated to support our programmes and services in 2024-2025



£111,800

Distributed through the Household Support Fund



1,163 referrals

Received through the Carers Together Wiltshire partnership



243 people

Supported through our employability programmes



40,629 people

Reached through the Voice It, Hear It project



1,702

Young people visited our outdoor education centres

Welcome



Community First - Celebrating 60 years of support for people, places and communities in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Community First is a leading local charity (288117) and a member of the national Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) network. Through our work, we support people, places and communities in Wiltshire and Swindon, delivering vital local services which help to make communities stronger and more resilient. Our Patron is Her Majesty The Queen.

2025 marks the 60th anniversary of our founding on 1st November 1965. Initially founded as a Rural Community Council, Community First has a long history of delivering programmes and services which support rural communities. We are pleased to celebrate this important milestone for our charity. Join us as we reflect on the important work delivered by our teams over the last 12 months in our 2024-2025 Annual Review.

Our Programmes and Services

Our dedicated team of 57 full and part-time staff, 16 sessional workers and 10 Trustees, work together to manage and deliver a wide range of impactful programmes and services for people and communities across the county.

Youth Action Wiltshire provides support for Young Carers, young people facing challenges in their lives (including Young Victims of Crime) and young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), or at risk of becoming NEET.

We also offer enriching opportunities for outdoor learning and adventure through our Outdoor Education centres at Oxenwood and Linkenholt.

Over the last 12 months we have embedded the Carers Together Wiltshire programme to promote and deliver support to unpaid Carers aged 18+ (including Parent Carers and Young Adult Carers). Carers Together

Wiltshire is a partnership led by Age UK Wiltshire, with delivery partners Community First, Alzheimer's Support, Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Citizens Advice Wiltshire and Wessex Community Action.

Our Employability Programmes team supports individuals in overcoming barriers to work and education through the Building Bridges Programmes in Wiltshire and Swindon.

The Community Development team provides extensive support to a network of local village halls, community buildings, Town and Parish Councils, Link Schemes and Community Minibus Groups, along with a growing network of youth clubs and youth groups. Our Community Organising team leads outreach and targeted engagement such as the Get Out Get Active and Neighbourhood Collaborative projects.

We administer grants through the Landfill Communities Fund, Bradenstoke Solar Park Community Benefit Fund and the Household Support Fund. These grant funding programmes help enhance community facilities, offer cost-of-living support, reduce fuel poverty and support sustainability and environmental priorities. We also offer support to local Councils and groups who are interested in delivering affordable and/or community-led housing through the Rural Housing Enabler project and Wiltshire Community-Led Housing.

Our trading services provide tailored support and value to schools, groups and organisations. This includes Community Insurance for village halls, local councils and playing fields and Minibus Driver Awareness (MiDAS) training. Surplus from trading services is reinvested into our charitable work which directly benefits local communities.

Making a Difference in Local Communities

Health and wellbeing is a significant area of focus for our charity. Over the last 12 months we worked with organisations, community groups, Bath, North-East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) and Wiltshire Council on engagement projects related to health and wellbeing. This includes delivery of the second year of the Voice It, Hear It co-production and engagement project and the Neighbourhood Collaborative project, which aims to help local people, organisations and statutory services work together to improve health outcomes. Moving into 2026 we are working with Wessex Community Action on a hypertension project which will offer free, community-based blood pressure checks to identify high-blood pressure and signpost to appropriate health care providers.

We were pleased to see an extension to the funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund for the Building Bridges Wiltshire programme. This has allowed programme delivery to continue until the end of March 2026. The Building Bridges Swindon Programme is funded by The National Lottery Community Fund until March 2026. We are currently seeking continuation funding to secure the future of these award-winning programmes which help people overcome their barriers to employment and education.

As part of our commitment to supporting service users with the cost of living, we have taken part in Phases 5 and 6 of the Household Support Fund in partnership with Wiltshire Council. Over the last 12 months 463

households were given vouchers, 90% of these were supermarket vouchers. The total value of vouchers through the fund was £111,800.

We have continued to develop our ambitious plans for the redevelopment of Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre. We are excited to move forward with these plans subject to planning permission. Please keep an eye out for our upcoming Oxenwood Appeal and how you can be involved in securing the future of Oxenwood for future generations of young explorers and adventurers!

Reflecting on our Achievements

Reflecting on the past 12 months and 60 years of supporting communities in Wiltshire and Swindon, we are proud of our work and the lasting impact of our programmes and services. We would like to thank our staff team, volunteers, associates and Trustees for their support, enthusiasm and commitment. We would also like to extend a very warm welcome to new Trustees Fiona, Tim, Catherine, Philip and Michael. We are grateful to all our Trustees for the time and guidance they give to support the organisation.

Finally, we would like to extend our gratitude to all of our supporters, partners, members, donors and funders. Your support makes an invaluable impact as we continue our vital work and look ahead to 2026 and beyond.

Lynn Gibson - Chief Executive

Harry Tipple - Deputy Chief Executive

James Moody - Chair of Trustees

Our Patron and President

We would like to thank Her Majesty The Queen for her continued support and patronage of Community First. We are grateful for Her Majesty's commitment to the importance of programmes and services for rural communities. We would also like to thank Community First President and HM Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire Dame Sarah Troughton (DVCO). Dame Sarah was recognised for her exceptional service to Wiltshire by being made a Dame Commander of the Royal Victorian Order (DCVO) in the 2025 New Year Honours List.

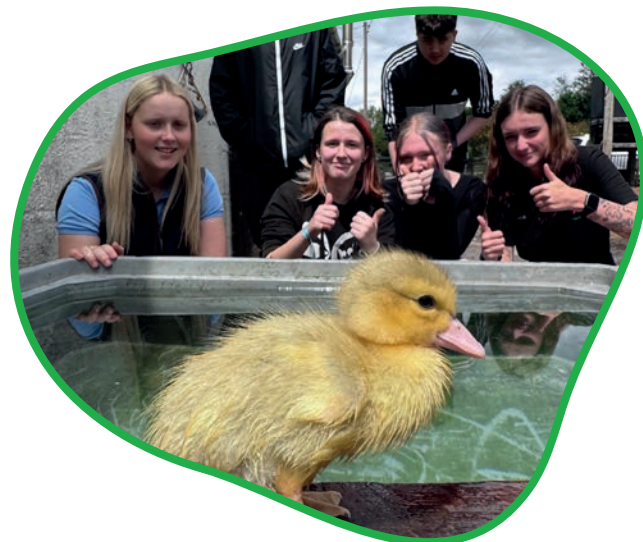
Photo Credit: Finnbarr Webster





Youth Action Wiltshire

Youth Action Wiltshire (YAW) is the award-winning youth work arm of Community First. Our team works with hundreds of young people each year through targeted support programmes for Young Carers, young people facing challenges in their lives, Young Victims of Crime and young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) or at risk of becoming NEET. Youth Action Wiltshire also offers support to new and existing youth clubs throughout the county.



YAW Highlights

Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carers Service

Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carers Service offers opportunities to achieve and thrive for Young Carers in Wiltshire. This includes support planning and reviews, respite activities, mentoring and coaching programmes, 'time to talk' sessions, training and counselling.

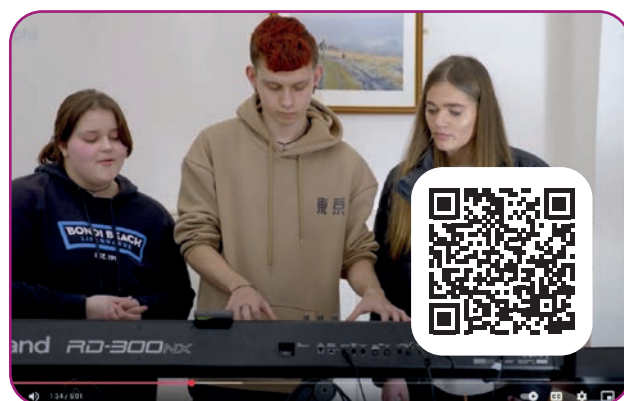


451

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers accessed our internal specific face-to-face respite and breaks activities.

230

A total of 230 face-to-face Young Carers (YC's) and Young Adult Carers (YAC's) specific groups, inclusive of residential provision have been delivered.



Bath Philharmonia - Young Carers Film

Splash

Splash offers support planning and reviews, an exciting programme of small group activities, mentoring, coaching, counselling and guidance for young people facing challenges in their lives. Splash offers a specialist support service for Young Victims of Crime (YVC) to help them cope with and recover from their experience.



472

Young people facing challenges in their lives including YVC participated in Splash activities and support.

“

“When I’m on Splash I feel I can be myself and not worry what others think.”

A Young Person

”



Young Victims of Crime (YVC)

319

Referred YVC accessed bespoke individualised Splash provision.

98%

Of new referrals received for YVC were initially contacted/ contact was attempted within 48 working hours.

95%

Of YVC reported engaging with Splash provision had helped increase their confidence and self-esteem.

Youth Club Support

Youth clubs give young people a low-cost place to go outside of school, offering them a sense of belonging. Club activities and support from club leaders allow young people to have fun, develop skills and build confidence and resilience for the future.

50

Face-to-face Young Carers clubs and 46 face-to-face Splash Clubs were delivered.





Outdoor Education

Community First owns and operates Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and manages Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre in partnership with The Blagrave Trust.

Over the last 12 months, 67 schools and organisations have made use of our outdoor education provision and 1,702 young people have benefited from outdoor education. This includes 340 young people supported through Youth Action Wiltshire who also visited the Centres as part of activities provided through our Young Carers, Splash and Project Inspire programmes.



1,702

Young people from schools, youth groups and YAW activities accessed Oxenwood and Linkenholt Centres.

67

Schools and organisations visited our Outdoor Centres over the last 12 months.



NEW Holiday Clubs at Oxenwood

We are now offering an exciting programme of outdoor adventure activities at Oxenwood during school holidays. Oxenwood school holiday clubs are for young people aged over 8 years and offer a chance to get outside, meet new people and have fun. The holiday clubs, which launched in Easter 2025, have been a hit with parents and young people. Activities on offer include mountain biking, water sports and bushcraft/survival skills. Visit www.oxenwood.org.uk/clubs

Redevelopment of Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre

We are currently working on the next stage of our ambitious plans for a £1.4m refurbishment of Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre. Community First purchased Oxenwood in 2019, following a successful local campaign to save the Centre from closure. Since that time we have fully embedded outdoor education into our organisation, recruited new team members, invested in the Centre and expanded service delivery into new areas including Alternative Provision and holiday clubs.

Whilst Oxenwood remains a popular and well-utilised venue for schools, clubs, groups and organisations, the Centre is in need of refurbishment to modernise the facilities and secure the future of Oxenwood for future generations of learners, adventurers and explorers.

In early 2025, Community First held an open day to discuss our vision with the community and share the architectural plans created by Batterham Smith Architects. We are continuing to progress towards the refurbishment and we are currently awaiting planning permission. Some of the plans for Oxenwood can be seen in the image below.

This is an exciting time for the team and we look forward to sharing more information as the project progresses.

The Oxenwood Appeal

Can you help to secure the future of Oxenwood for future generations of learners, adventurers and explorers? We need your help!

Community First aims to raise £1.4m to restore, refurbish and revitalise Oxenwood, ensuring it remains a vital educational and recreational space for young people and adults in Wiltshire and beyond.

Please keep an eye out for more information about The Oxenwood Appeal and get in touch if you would like to be part of this exciting project. This could include a fundraising activity, donation or other support to help us reach our goal. Email: info@oxenwood.org.uk



Batterham Smith
ARCHITECTS



Employability Programmes



Community First is the managing partner for the award-winning Building Bridges Programme, which helps people overcome their barriers to employment and education.

We are pleased that Building Bridges Wiltshire continues until the end of March 2026 with funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via Wiltshire Council. Funding for Building Bridges Swindon will also continue in to 2026, with funding from The National Lottery Community Fund.

Building Bridges Wiltshire

The level of barriers and challenges experienced by participants has risen significantly, with over 10% now needing formal safeguarding support. Despite these challenges, the team has worked with 142 adults and young people with 27% moving into employment, 20% moving into education and 36% moving into job search. 62% of participants reported improved overall wellbeing. This included 38 young people who were supported by Project Inspire in Wiltshire, with 60 face-to-face group work sessions delivered and 70% of young people exiting to a place in Education, Employment or Training.

Our support in Wiltshire also included employability and education support to people affected by homelessness and housing exclusion through our work with the Wiltshire Council Rough Sleeper Team.

Building Bridges Swindon

Significant barriers and challenges needing formal safeguarding support were also prevalent amongst participants supported by Building Bridges Swindon. Over the last 12 months, the team has worked with 56 adults in Swindon, with 14% moving into education, a further 14% moving into employment and 29% moving into job search. 59% reported improved wellbeing.

Inspire Swindon

The Inspire Swindon programme was funded by the UK Shared Prosperity Fund via Swindon Borough Council up to the end of March 2025. The team worked with 45 young people, with 44% moving into education and 20% moving into employment. 62% of young people who participated in Inspire Swindon reported improved overall wellbeing.

Community First is currently seeking continuation funding to secure future programme delivery for Building Bridges.

For more information about the programme and how to register please call: 01380 732821, email buildingbridges@communityfirst.org.uk or visit:

www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk



Funded by
UK Government



SWINDON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Wiltshire Council

243

Participants supported through employability programmes.

61%

Average increase in wellbeing across the programmes.

Shirley's Feedback

Feedback from Building Bridges Participant Shirley*

"I am writing to say a huge thank you to Building Bridges, and especially to my key-worker, Leoni. I don't feel I can adequately express just how much support, confidence and progress I gained during my year working with her.

Leoni made me feel that helping me was something she was genuinely passionate about. In the past, I've had key-workers with other organisations where it felt as though they were only assisting me because they were being paid or needed to tick boxes. With Leoni, it was completely different — I always felt seen, heard, and respected.

She encouraged me to explore new options but never pushed me beyond what I could manage. Through our work together, I gained a deeper understanding of myself and began to see where I might build a future career in a world that often doesn't feel designed for people like me.

Living with trauma-related mental illness means I don't function well in traditional employment, but with Leoni's support, I was able to consider new pathways that felt achievable and empowering.

We spent time exploring how I might become self-employed, looking at different ideas, and even starting to set myself up on social media. This has been a huge step forward in giving me hope for the future and the belief that I can create something sustainable for myself. Leoni also secured a laptop for me so I would have the tools I need to keep working towards my goals.

I also gained a huge amount from taking part in the resilience course with Meg. The skills I learned there have stayed with me and continue to make a difference in how I approach challenges and setbacks. That experience gave me both strength and practical tools which I know will serve me well as I move forward.

I am so grateful for everything Building Bridges has offered me, and especially for the patience, kindness and guidance Leoni and the team have shown throughout this journey. They have made a lasting difference in my life, and I will carry the skills and confidence I have gained with me into the future."

*Not her real name. Photo (above) is not of the participant.



They have made a lasting difference in my life, and I will carry the skills and confidence I have gained with me into the future.





Carers Together Wiltshire

Carers Together Wiltshire is a partnership led by Age UK Wiltshire, with Community First, Alzheimer's Support, Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Citizens Advice Wiltshire and Wessex Community Action. The partnership provides tailored support to unpaid Carers in Wiltshire. Carers Together Wiltshire is funded by Wiltshire Council and Bath, North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB).

We work together in partnership to support people who are providing unpaid care to another person, offering a range of support services such as:

- Information and advice
- Carer groups
- Carer assessments
- Activities and trips
- Referrals for support
- Carer ID cards
- Coaching, training and peer support

Over the last 12 months, our team received 1,163 referrals, completed 363 Carer Assessments and 264 Support Plans for Carers. Carers Together Wiltshire also hosted 205 Carer sessions and a further 45 events for Carers.

Parent Carers

As part of our work with the Carers Together Wiltshire partnership, Community First offers support for Parent Carers who provide care for a minor or adult child with a disability or long-term health condition. This includes a support conversation to discuss individual needs, information, advice and signposting and a Carers Assessment for Parent Carers caring for a child over the age of 18 if they meet the eligibility criteria for a funded service.

Over the last 12 months, we have hosted regular Parent Carer groups including face-to-face groups in Salisbury, Trowbridge and Devizes, as well as virtual evening groups. These sessions offer a friendly and informal space for Parent Carers to come together. We have also shared a monthly Parent Carers update with news, resources, information and training opportunities to support Parent Carers in their role.



If you know a Parent Carer who could benefit from the monthly update, please scan the QR code and share the link by text or email.

1,163

Referrals received through Carers Together Wiltshire.

363

Carer Assessments completed and 264 Support Plans created for Unpaid Carers.

205

Carer sessions run by the consortia and 45 events held for Unpaid Carers.

COMMUNITY
FIRST

Wiltshire
ageUK

as
alzheimer's
support

wsun
Wiltshire Service Users' Network

Wessex
Community
Action
Supporting
Community and Voluntary Activity

citizens
advice
Wiltshire



Sign up for the
Carers Together
Wiltshire Newsletter
to receive news and
updates for Unpaid
Carers.



Young Carers and Young Adult Carers

Community First offers support to Young Carers and Young Adult Carers through our own Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carers Service and through our Carers Together Wiltshire funding and partnership. Young Carers and Young Adult Carers look after a family member or loved one with an illness, disability, mental health condition or addiction. They may also help to care for siblings or elderly relatives.

58

Young Adult Carers accessed one to one support; 'Time to Talk', mentoring or coaching sessions and 56 Young Adult Carers attended our face-to-face respite and breaks activities.

The team has also supported the roll-out of the Young Carers in School Award and offered transition assessments and support for Young Adult Carers to move seamlessly as they move from a Young Carer to a Young Adult Carer.

For more information about Carers Together Wiltshire:

Call 01380 710 300

Visit: carerstogetherwiltshire.org.uk

For more information about Youth Action Wiltshire Young Carers Service:

Call: 01380 720 671

Email: wiltshireyoungcarers@youthactionwiltshire.org

Visit: communityfirst.org.uk/yaw/young-carers

Funded by:



Wiltshire Council





Voice It, Hear It

Voice It, Hear It (VIHI) engages with people living and working in Wiltshire to co-produce, co-design and co-develop health and social care services. The team works alongside people with physical disabilities, sensory needs, mental health conditions, learning disabilities, neurodiversity, long-term conditions, complex needs, older people and dementia, to help ensure their voice is heard and they are involved in shaping local services.

The VIHI project (now in its second year), is delivered by Community First, Wessex Community Action, Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Age UK Wiltshire, Alzheimer's Support and Celebrating Age Wiltshire. The project is funded by Wiltshire Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB).

Over the last 12 months, the team has produced five project reports, engaging over 600 people and generating 98 actionable recommendations from service user feedback. These reports covered a range of topics central to adult social care and wellbeing. This included the Care Quality Commission (CQC) Adult Social Care Inspection, the Wiltshire Council Prevention and Wellbeing Strategy Consultation and Learning Disability Life Expectancy. The Accommodation Strategy project saw the highest engagement overall, with 165 individuals contributing to 4 strategic recommendations for Wiltshire Council about the future accommodation needs of older people in Wiltshire.

In early 2025, Voice It, Hear It published the Homecare Report, which engaged 115 people and identified 41 key points for consideration. This reflected the complexity and importance of home-based care services and included input from those receiving care as well as unpaid Carers

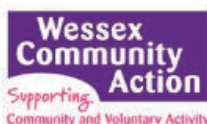
Beyond formal reporting, Voice It, Hear It strengthened stakeholder engagement, with 48 groups and organisations registered via the engagement form and many more stakeholders identified through project work and partner outreach.

Voice It, Hear It also convened a user panel to support the recruitment of the Director of Adult Social Care at Wiltshire Council, ensuring that lived experience was central to the interview process. The team held six Choice Group meetings and delivered multiple presentations to external organisations to help raise awareness and share insights from our work.

For more information about Voice It, Hear It, please email voice@communityfirst.org.uk or visit the website: www.communityfirst.org.uk/voice.



You can also view and download Voice It, Hear It reports, a summary of recommendations and the VIHI annual report on our website.



VIHI Impact at a Glance

12

Voice it, Hear It
(VIHI) projects



5

Completed reports
produced



3

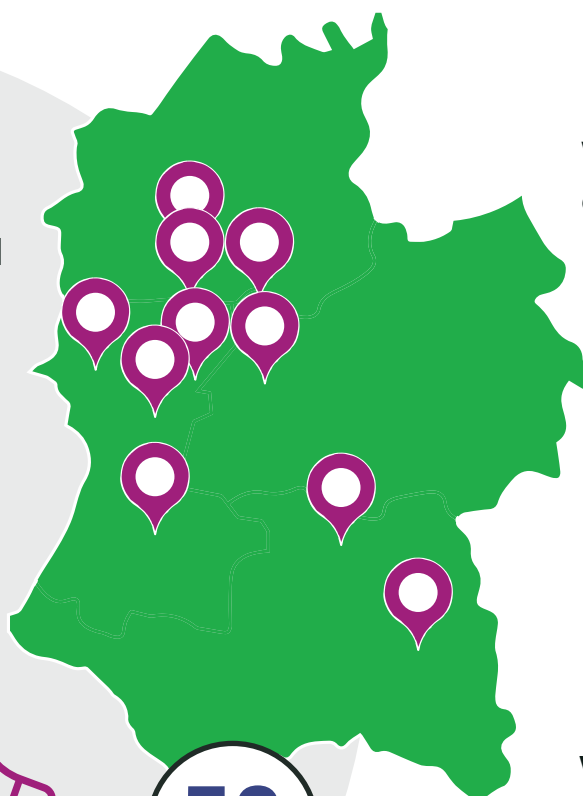
Summary reports
produced

98

Recommendations made to
Wiltshire Council as a result of
consultation and engagement

Geographical areas reached

- Amesbury
- Bradford on Avon
- Calne
- Chippenham
- Salisbury
- Corsham
- Devizes
- Warminster
- Trowbridge
- Semington



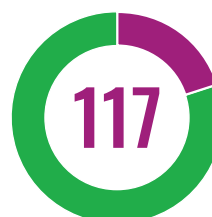
609



People engaged with surveys,
workshops and 1-to-1 sessions

50

Workshops and
1-to-1 sessions
hosted



New people
engaged

343

People took part in
VIHI surveys

40,629

People reached via Voice
It, Hear It communications
channels



Presentations
and 1-2-1
stakeholder
meetings

48

Stakeholders engaged



Wiltshire Village Halls Association (WVHA)

Community First offers a dedicated service for village halls and community buildings in Wiltshire and Swindon through the WVHA (Wiltshire Village Halls Association). WVHA is a membership service which offers comprehensive support including advice, guidance, advocacy, promotional assistance and networking opportunities for members.

There were 189 village halls and community buildings in membership of WVHA over the last 12 months, with a 90% positive feedback rating amongst member halls and buildings. This is a fantastic rating which reflects our ongoing commitment to supporting these vital spaces which play such an important role in bringing communities together.

In Spring 2025, Community First once again participated in the national #VillageHallsWeek campaign. This is an annual campaign led by Action with Communities in Rural England which shines a spotlight on the contribution village halls make to rural communities. The theme of Village Halls Week 2025, which took place between 17-23 March, was 'celebrating, encouraging and supporting volunteers.'

To mark the occasion our Village Halls and Community Building Advisor Heather hosted a village halls networking afternoon at West Lavington Village Hall.

189

Village Halls and
Community Buildings
in membership.

90%

Satisfaction rate based
on support given to
members.

This special event for volunteers of WVHA member halls was all about connection. This included sharing knowledge, experiences and ideas to support and strengthen the spaces that bring communities together. Heather was also joined by the Community First Community Insurance team and Grants Manager Mary to offer advice and guidance relating to village hall insurance and applying for grants.



The event featured a fantastic line-up of speakers covering key topics that impact village halls and community buildings. From fire safety and waste management to the fascinating history of village halls and digital booking solutions.

Thank you to all the village hall and community building volunteers who attended to exchange ideas and enjoy some well-deserved tea and cake.

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

246

Parish and Town
Councils in
membership.

247

Participants received
specialist training
from WALC.

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) offers support, guidance, resources and training for a growing network of Town and Parish Councils in Wiltshire and Swindon. We are pleased that membership of WALC has grown from 228 to 246 Councils over the last 12 months.

It has been a busy year for WALC with local elections for Wiltshire in May 2025 and a programme of training, webinars and information to welcome and support new Councillors in their role. 44 training courses were delivered in 2024-2025 with 247 participants attending. Courses included Councillor Fundamentals, Local Council Finance Explained, Budget Setting and Being a Successful Chair. WALC has also hosted a number of survey surgeries on a range of topics of interest to Councillors and Clerks.

WALC hosted its annual conference in November 2024 with 90 attendees. The conference featured a keynote address from Andrew Towler, National Planning Advisor at the SLCC, on the updated National Planning Policy Framework. The conference also featured workshops on topics including accessible play parks, developing public transport, Rural Housing Enablers,



preparing for elections, flood preparedness, and Neighbourhood Planning

The WALC service has been uplifted with support from Local Council Advisor and County Officer Ian Nockolds, with an 80% satisfaction rate amongst Councils in membership.

In addition to offering support for Councils, Clerks and Councillors, Ian has also launched The Local Councils Podcast and a range of webinars which can be viewed on the Community First YouTube channel.



Listen to the The Local Councils Podcast on Spreaker:



View the webinars on YouTube:

www.youtube.com/@communityfirstwilts



MiDAS: Essential Training for Minibus Drivers



Community First offers Minibus Driver Awareness (MiDAS) training for schools, groups and organisations.

MiDAS is a nationally recognised scheme designed to enhance both driving and safety standards for drivers of minibuses. The Department of Education and Department for Transport highly recommend that all minibus drivers complete this training scheme and MiDAS is a recognised training programme for drivers to comply with Section 19 / 22 permits. The scheme is governed by the Community Transport Association (CTA) with Community First as an approved training provider.

Community First offers two MiDAS programmes:

- **Standard** - Consisting of a theory and practical assessment.
- **Accessible** - To follow 'Standard' training, designed for drivers who will be transporting wheelchair users.

Training is delivered by our highly qualified and experienced MiDAS Instructors Martin Carter and Alan Russell.

Drivers will be provided with access to the CTA website to complete the theory assessment prior to the practical assessment. On successful completion of both theory and practical, drivers will be able to print their MiDAS certificate through the CTA website.

Certificates are valid for four years.

Bookings:

If you would like any further information on

MiDAS training, please email:

midas@communityfirst.org.uk

www.minibusdrivertraining.org.uk



Visit our new
MiDAS website to
find out more!

***"Excellent
course. Great
trainer!"***

Training Feedback

MiDAS Pricing

Standard Driver – £165 (+VAT)

Accessible Driver – £205 (+VAT)

Weekends subject to agreement.

Minimum 3 drivers per booking. Prices are per person.

Community Development & Community Organising

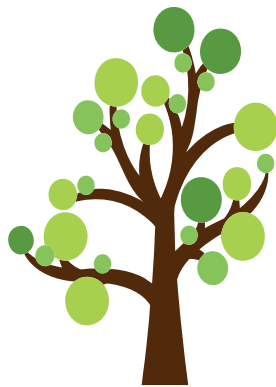
Community First uses Community Organising as an effective way to engage with people and communities locally. Through this approach, our trained Community Organisers are able to meet and engage a wide range of people, including those from harder-to-reach groups and people who are digitally excluded.

Neighbourhood Collaborative Project

Over the last 12 months our Community Organising team has worked to develop the Neighbourhood Collaborative project. A Neighbourhood Collaborative is a partnership of individuals, organisations and community members working together to tackle health inequalities and improve the wellbeing of people in a specific local area. The project is delivered by Community First, with funding from Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB).

The team has worked across key focus areas and groups. Activities include outreach and engagement with farmers at Salisbury Livestock Market, understanding how women in rural communities access information about health and wellbeing and exploring preventative strategies for individuals at risk of developing hypertension (high blood pressure). The Devizes Collaborative has also worked to improve emotional resilience and wellbeing in young people aged 11-14 years, by engaging with Devizes and Lavington Schools and Lavington Youth Club.

The project is ongoing and a comprehensive Engagement Guide for BSW ICB and Neighbourhood Collaboratives is currently in progress.



250

People engaged with the Neighbourhood Collaborative project.

100

People engaged through Get Out Get Active (GOGA) events.

Get Out Get Active

Community First is a delivery partner for the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme which is led by Wiltshire and Swindon Sport (WASP) locally. Age UK Wiltshire and Wiltshire Council are also involved in supporting the programme as delivery partners.

Get Out Get Active is a national programme led by Activity Alliance that supports disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy being active together through fun, inclusive and local physical activities

Our Community Organising team has continued to support the delivery of the GOGA programme locally, with 20 days of engagement carried out and over 100 people engaged in GOGA activity over the last 12 months. Get Out Get Active programme delivery will continue into 2026.



Get Out Get Active



Rural Housing Enablers and Community-Led Housing

A shortage of affordable homes for people in Wiltshire and Swindon is an issue of concern for some rural communities. In 2024 the Department of Environment, Farming, and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced a programme of funding for Rural Housing Enablers (RHEs). The aim of this programme is to increase affordable housing delivery to meet local need in smaller rural communities (defined as less than 3,000 people). The Rural Housing Enabler programme is managed by Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE), with local delivery partners including Community First in Wiltshire and Swindon.

The role of Rural Housing Enabler is led by Trevor Cherrett and Steve Vaux. Trevor is the Chair of Wiltshire Community Land Trust and Steve is Chair of Seend Community Land and Asset Trust, a highly successful Passivhaus scheme in Hook Hollow, Seend.

The aim of the Rural Housing Enabler project is to boost the supply of new rural affordable housing by providing support for communities and landowners to identify sites and work with housing associations and local authorities, to deliver high quality homes that meet local need through small scale schemes.

In practice this has meant setting up a Steering Group comprising Community First, the project team, Wiltshire Council and White Horse Housing (WHH). Work so far has focused on attempting to streamline the process of developing affordable homes through:

- Establishing need by local housing needs surveys.
- Identifying suitable sites, in consultation with local planning officers, and where possible within local Neighbourhood Development Plans.
- Supporting local communities, especially where they are attempting community-led housing initiatives such as Community Land Trusts.
- Negotiating agreements between communities and landowners, developers and local authorities, for example through Section 106 Agreements with developers to provide a proportion of affordable homes.
- Developing effective policies and strategies with local planning and housing officers to deliver more affordable homes in Wiltshire villages.

Trevor and Steve are working with several villages across Wiltshire, including Aldbourne, Alderbury, Broad Chalke, Broad Hinton, Cherhill, Colerne, Great Bedwyn, Heytesbury, Holt, Idmiston, Landford, Manningford, Market Lavington, Pewsey, Tisbury and West Lavington.

The project is currently funded until March 2026. For more information about Rural Housing Enablers and Community-Led Housing, please visit:

www.wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk

Or email info@wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk



Community First offers specialist insurance for local councils, village halls, community buildings and playing fields associations. Our policies are underwritten by trusted provider Zurich.



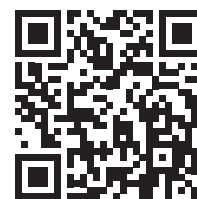
- ✓ **Trusted Provider**
Our scheme is underwritten by Zurich, a leading provider.
- ✓ **Flexible Cover**
Pay only for the cover you want.
- ✓ **Best Value**
Competitive prices and no hidden costs.
- ✓ **Comprehensive Protection**
Offering comprehensive protection.
- ✓ **Expert Team**
Our insurance team are friendly, dedicated experts.
- ✓ **Not for Profit**
Surplus is reinvested into local communities.

“

“Every village hall has different needs, the team at Community First have insured our hall for a number of years and we are really happy with the service and level of cover. The policy has an array of benefits tailored to meet our needs and at a really competitive price.”

”

Visit our
website to
request a **FREE**,
no obligation
quotation



Call: 01380 732809

Email: communityinsurance@communityfirst.org.ukwww.communityinsurance.co.uk



Link Schemes and Community Transport

Community First is proud to support a network of 64 independent transport groups who operate throughout the county. This includes 43 Link Schemes and 21 Community Minibus Groups.

For some residents, particularly older adults, people living with disabilities and those on a low income, accessing public or private transport can be a real challenge. This can mean barriers to healthcare and other essential services, especially in rural areas. That's where Link and community transport groups step in, helping people stay connected to their communities. Some Link Schemes also offer additional 'Good Neighbour' services, such as help with shopping, collecting prescriptions, friendly visits and small household tasks.

Community First plays a key role in supporting local transport groups by offering expert advice, advocacy and practical support. Each year, we share Link Scheme data with the Local Authority and other stakeholders to help identify transport needs and ensure services are properly resourced. In 2024, Link Schemes travelled over 860,000 miles, including 29,761 health-related journeys and completed over 50,00 tasks for people in need in their communities. Compared to 2023, this represents:

- 35% increase in tasks completed
- 27% increase in health-related journeys
- 17% increase in miles travelled

43

Link Schemes in our network.

21

Community Minibus Groups in our network.

Link volunteers gave over 134,000 hours of their time which was a 24% rise from the previous year.

Whilst overall volunteer numbers have fallen slightly from 2023 (-6%) the amazing support and contribution of 1,494 current Link volunteers, represents an estimated economic value of more than £1.6m each year in the county.

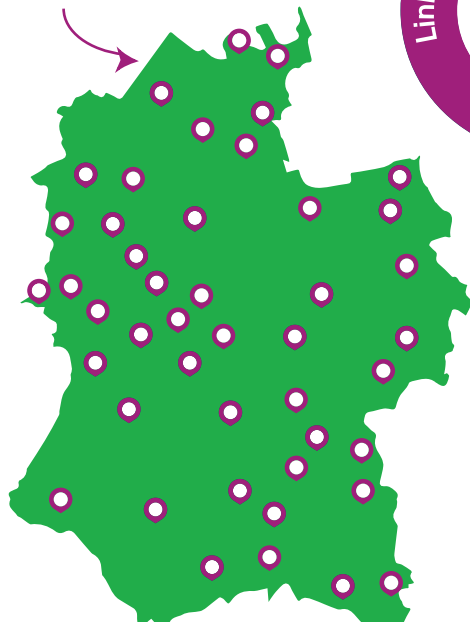
To every Link or Community Minibus Group volunteer in Wiltshire and Swindon, thank you. Your contribution makes a real difference in the lives of vulnerable and isolated residents and we are grateful for all you do.



Link Scheme Audit 2024

April 23 - March 24

Link Scheme map of Wiltshire



The total number of Link Schemes has increased by 1 since the 2023 Link Audit

1,494

Number of volunteers involved in Link Schemes in Wiltshire and Swindon



35

Average volunteers per Link Scheme

% change in Link Volunteers from 2023

-6%

868,681

Miles travelled by volunteers in 2024

54,365

Everyday tasks completed in 2024

29,761

Health related journeys carried out in 2024

In 2024 Link volunteers offered:



134,532 hours

Economic value (EV) based on hourly rate:*



£1,678,959

Average added EV per volunteer in 2024:



£849.39

The economic value of Link Schemes is calculated based on ONS South West Average hourly pay - for all jobs at £12.48 per hour.



Grants and Funding

43

Total projects
awarded funding.

£545k

Total funding awarded
to groups.

Community First manages and administrates the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF) in Wiltshire and Swindon. The LCF offers capital funding for local community, heritage and environmental projects in areas where local landfill operator sites or depots are located. The LCF provides funding which improves community facilities for the future. Funding for the LCF in Wiltshire and Swindon is received from landfill operators The Hills Group Ltd and Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd. In 2024-2025 a total of 34 projects were approved, with £489,421 paid to community groups and organisations.

Community First also administrates the Bradenstoke Solar Park Community Benefit Fund (BSPCBF), a local grant fund for Parishes abutting the former RAF base at Lyneham and groups inside MoD Lyneham. In 2024-2025 BSPCBF approved 9 projects, with £55,855 paid to eligible groups and organisations.

LCF Funding (2024-2025)



Total projects approved: 18

Total funding approved: £121,737



Total projects approved: 16

Total funding approved: £367,684

BSPCBF Funding (2024-2025)

BRADENSTOKE SOLAR PARK COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Total projects approved: 9

Total funding approved: £55,855



Bradford on Avon Boat Club



In Autumn 2024, Bradford on Avon Boat Club completed an expansion of its boathouse at Barton Bridge. With 197 members from Bradford on Avon and the surrounding areas, the Club has seen a steady rise in participation across both rowing and canoeing disciplines in recent years.

The expansion marks the culmination of a ten-year journey driven by a commitment to improve facilities for the future and accommodate increased demand, especially for equipment storage.

Originally founded as the Bradford on Avon Rowing Club in 1873, the organisation re-branded in 2024 to become the Bradford on Avon Boat Club. The Club has members of all ages who compete locally, nationally and internationally in both rowing and canoeing. As the Club evolved to become a registered charity, there was a need for more space. Charity status also enabled the Club to access new funding streams to support expansion plans.

Bradford on Avon Boat Club approached Community First in July 2023 with an application for grant funding from the Landfill Communities Fund (LCF), towards the cost of expanding the boathouse. The application was successful and the Club received £10,000 from The Hills Group through the LCF.

Bradford on Avon Boat Club also received funding from The Medlock Charitable Trust, Bradford on Avon Town Council, Wiltshire Council and the Colonel Llewellyn Palmer Trust as part of the expansion project.

Work on the boathouse began in 2023 and was completed in September 2024, with the official opening of the new boathouse taking place on 30th November 2024. The newly enlarged boathouse offers significantly more storage for rowing boats and canoes, supporting the Club's ambition to grow its membership and enhance training and competition capabilities.

For more information please visit:

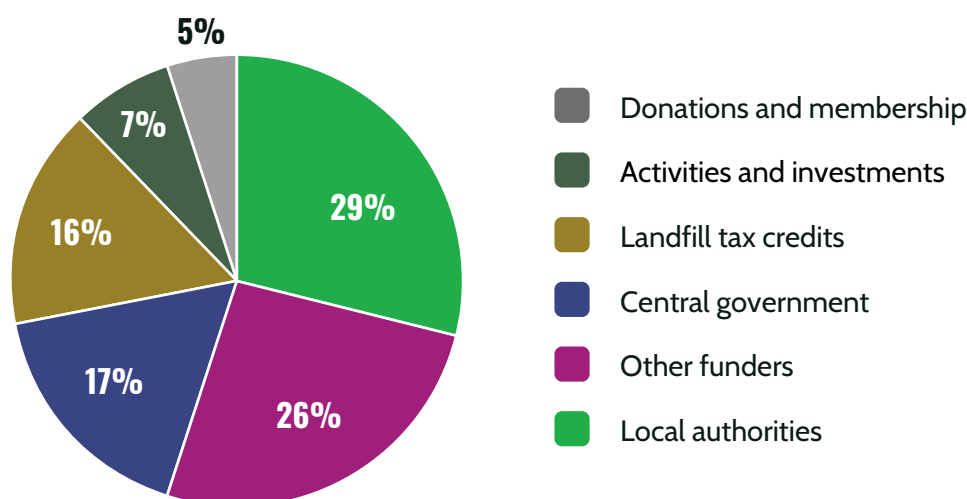
www.boabc.org.uk

Photo Credit: Bradford on Avon Boat Club.



Finances

Incoming resources: £3,310,973

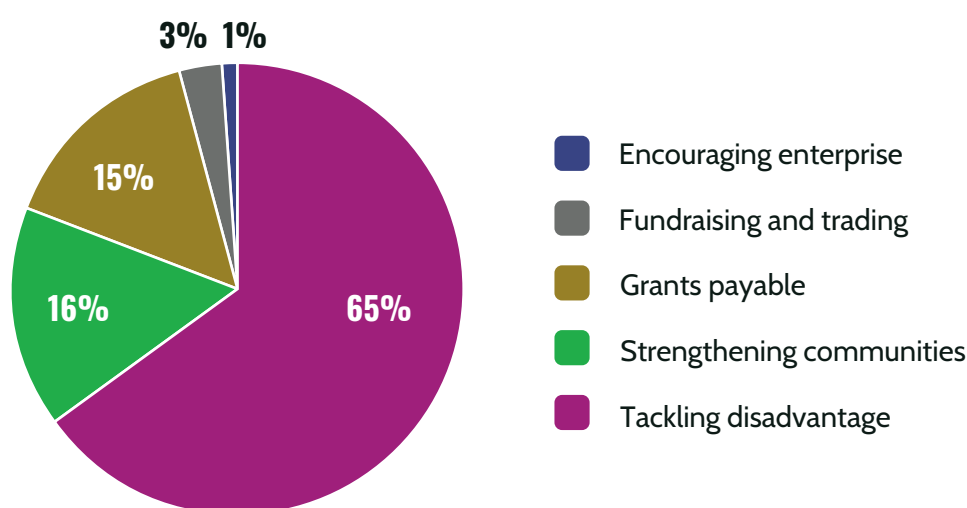


The financial report uses information taken from the full Community First financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2025, prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Financial Reporting for Smaller Entities" 2015 and applicable accounting standards which received an unqualified audit.

The finance report may not contain sufficient information to enable a full understanding of the financial affairs of Community First. For further information the full Report and Financial Statements and the Independent Auditors report can be obtained from the Company Secretary.

The full report and financial statements were approved by members of the Board of Trustees on 29th July 2025 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies.

Resources expended: £2,932,498



Funder Acknowledgement

The work of Community first has been made possible with financial support and contributions from the following groups and organisations in the year ended 31 March 2025:

AAFH UK Youth	Hedley Foundation	SVO (Calne) Ltd
Age UK Wiltshire	The Hugo Halkes Charitable Trust	Southampton Water Activity Centre
Accommodation Welfare Committee	Henry C Hoare Charitable Trust	Swindon Borough Council
ACRE	Hills Waste Ltd	Tall Ships Youth Trust
Active Plumbing Supplies (Malmesbury) Ltd	Honeypot Children's Charity	The Beaufort Christmas Bazaar
Amy Kent Interiors	Integrated Care Board	The Inchcape Foundation
Animation Workshop	JA Rendell	The Julia and Hans Rausing Trust
AW Gale Community Trust	Jack & Maddie Cookery School Team	The Julius Silman Charitable Trust
BA ASA Ltd SW	Jane James Associates	The National Lottery Community Fund
Bath Phil Creative Learning Team	JH King Charity	The Semma Fund
Bingham Kindergarten	Johnson Brothers	The Stonehenge School
The Blagrove Trust	Knight Frank LLP	The Underwood Trust
Boleh Trust	Marlborough College	The Young Carers Development Trust
Bradenstoke Solar Community Fund	Magdalen Farm	The Youth Adventure Trust
Bradford on Avon Lions	Masonic Charitable Foundation	The Vintage Entertainer
Bradford & Winsley	Melksham Town Council	Tom Hall Charitable Trust
Community Sports Association	Monahans	Trowbridge Guild of Community Service
Bradford on Avon Rotary Club	NHS BANES	WASP
Brewster Maude Charitable Trust	NHS Wiltshire	Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
Business Education Trust	OFGEM RHI	Wiltshire Community Foundation
Caenhill Countryside Centre	OJM Advisory Limited	Wiltshire Community Land Trust Ltd
Chippenham Lions	Patrick & Janie Dear	Wiltshire Council
Corsham Town Council	Pewsey Vale School	Wiltshire Music Connect
Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd	Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon	Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team
DEFRA	Radnor Charitable Trust	Wiltshire Scrapstore & Resource Centre
Devizes Lions	Rotary Club of Bradford on Avon	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
Dorothy House Hospice Care	Salisbury Cathedral	Walker Logistics Limited
E&S Shops Ltd	Salisbury City Community Lottery	
EAP Sells Trust	Sam Evans Architecture	
Easy Fundraising	Savernake Teenagers Charity	
English Heritage	Skillset Learning	
Flaxlands Farm	St Mary's School	
Friends of Youth Action Wiltshire	Stampede Sports	
Greatwood Charity	Steppes Travel Ltd	
GW UK	Susannah Dibben Flowers	
GUL Outdoor Therapy	Sustain Wiltshire	

We would also like to acknowledge the support of all our partners.

The Charity has also benefited from the generous support of many individuals whose donations and gifts have enabled services to be maintained and expanded.

COMMUNITY FIRST



1965 - 2025

*Celebrating 60 years of support for
people, places and communities in
Wiltshire and Swindon.*

Vibrant Communities, Brighter Futures

Patron:

Her Majesty The Queen

President:

Dame Sarah Troughton (DCVO), HM Lord-Lieutenant of Wiltshire

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Instagram: @CommunityFirstWiltshire

LinkedIn: [linkedin.com/company/community-first](https://www.linkedin.com/company/community-first)



Registered Charity No: 288117

VAT Registration No: 639 3860 06

Company Limited by Guarantee Reg. No: 1757334 England

Registered with the Financial Conduct Authority No: FRN 311971

