



Community First Annual Review 2025 - 2026

Vibrant Communities Stronger Futures

Registered Charity No: 288117

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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).

Photo Credit: Finnbarr Webster



Highlights 25/26

COMMUNITY FIRST

Our team:

48

Full/part-time staff

18

Sessional staff

9

Trustees

Youth Action Wiltshire:



512

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

553

Young people accessed Splash provision and 1,855 places on positive group work activities were filled

In our network:

242

Local Councils

192

Village halls

64

Transport groups

876

Halls and councils insured

We supported or delivered:



£77,729

Distributed to 288 households through the Household Support Fund



£482,623

Distributed through community grants programmes



1,560+

Referrals received through the Carers Together Wiltshire partnership



179 people

Supported through our employability programmes in 2025-2026



18,000 people

Reached through the Voice It, Hear It project



1,027,780

Over a million miles travelled by Link Scheme volunteers for the first time

A message from our Chief Executive and Co-Chairs of Trustees

We are pleased to introduce this year's Annual Review and to reflect on another year of supporting people, places and communities across Wiltshire and Swindon.

At Community First, our vision is 'Vibrant Communities, Stronger Futures'. This vision sits at the heart of our new strategic framework, which guides our work through three aims: Connecting Communities, Tackling Disadvantage and Building Resilience, and Strengthening Voice, Advocacy and Sector Leadership. Together, these aims provide a clear focus for how we will respond to changing needs, growing inequalities and emerging opportunities in 2027 and beyond. Our strategic framework is summarised on the next page.

Over the last 12 months, our teams have continued to deliver a wide range of programmes and services that make a real difference to people's lives. Through our community development work, we have helped strengthen local organisations, supported village halls, local councils and transport schemes, amplified community voices and worked alongside partner organisations to build stronger, more connected places. Our commitment to rural communities remains as important as ever, ensuring that people can access support, services, grants and opportunities regardless of their personal circumstances or where they live.

Supporting health and wellbeing is a key thread that runs through our work. As part of the Carers Together Wiltshire partnership, we have helped unpaid Carers (including Parent Carers and Young Adult Carers) access advice, guidance, assessments and support to improve their wellbeing. With new funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, Building Bridges continues to help people overcome barriers, improve confidence and mental wellbeing, and move closer to education, training and employment. Across our youth

services delivered through Youth Action Wiltshire, we have supported Young Carers, young people facing challenges in their lives and young victims of crime, helping them to build resilience, confidence and develop new skills. Our outdoor education centres at Oxenwood and Linkenholt provide transformative experiences, personal development and a connection with the natural environment. We also continue to work towards our goal of redeveloping Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre.

We are proud of the leadership role we play across the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector. By listening to lived experience, influencing decision makers and working together with local government and key partners, we help to ensure that community voices are heard and reflected in the design and delivery of local services. We were also pleased to sign the new VCSE Sector Partnership Framework with Wiltshire Council as part of our ongoing commitment to partnership working.

None of this would be possible without the dedication and professionalism of our staff and the many volunteers across our networks, including youth clubs and community transport groups. We would also like to thank our funders, donors and commissioning partners, whose support underpins our work. Finally, we are grateful to our Board of Trustees for their leadership and guidance, which helps to ensure our charity is ready to meet the challenges and opportunities ahead.

As we look forward, we will continue to build on local strengths and create opportunities which help people and communities thrive. Thank you to everyone who has been part of our journey this year.

Lynn Gibson (Chief Executive), Catherine Phillips and Piers Dibben (Co-Chairs of Trustees).

Community First Strategic Summary

Our Vision

Vibrant Communities, Stronger Futures

Strategic Aims

Connecting Communities

Supporting people and organisations to build strong, active and connected communities

Tackling Disadvantage and Building Resilience

Work alongside people to improve their health and wellbeing and support a brighter future

Strengthening Voice, Advocacy and Sector Leadership

Ensuring communities and the voluntary sector are heard, represented and involved in decisions that affect them

What we deliver

Rural Services and Community Development

Outdoor Learning

Youth Action Wiltshire

Leadership, Advocacy and Sector Support

Employability and Wellbeing

Trading and Specialist Services

Carers' Support

How we work

Providing practical and meaningful support

Connecting people, organisations and services

Working with communities

Listening to lived experience and responding

Building on local strengths and relationships

Working in partnership to improve outcomes



Building Bridges Programme



Achievements 2025-2026

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

Building Bridges Wiltshire

In Wiltshire, 115 adults and young people engaged with the programme, with 17% moving into employment, 11% progressing into education and 48% achieving job-searching outcomes. Participants were also supported to gain experience through volunteering (23%) and work experience placements (4%).

Building Bridges Swindon

In Swindon 64 adults received support through the programme, with 18% moving into employment, 40% progressing into education and 63% achieving job-searching outcomes. In addition, 35% of participants took part in volunteering opportunities and 18% completed work experience placements, helping them develop practical skills and build confidence.

Alongside these employment and education outcomes, both programmes delivered significant personal benefits. Participants reported increased employability through improved skills (78%), greater confidence (73%),

enhanced motivation (63%), improved communication skills (60%) and a greater ability to work comfortably with others (57%).

These outcomes demonstrate the important role wellbeing plays in achieving positive outcomes for participants.

10th Anniversary and Future Delivery

In 2026 the programme reached a key milestone, with Building Bridges celebrating its 10th anniversary. We were also pleased to be awarded grant funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, enabling us to continue delivering essential wellbeing and employment support until 2029.

The team has already supported two cohorts of participants into employment at Amazon Swindon BRS2 as part of the Careers 4 All programme working alongside Amazon, Phoenix Enterprises and BASE. The team is also working with Wiltshire Council to deliver the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

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

Building Bridges Achievements Since 2016



2,536

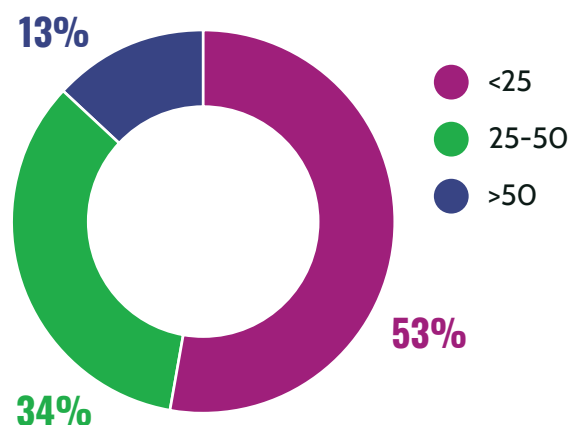
Total participants supported



Participant Demographics - Key Barriers

Disadvantaged	84%
Disabled or long-term health condition	60%
Lacks basic skills (maths, English)	46%
Ethnic Minority	10%
Ex-offender	9%
Homeless	7%

Participant Age on Joining



Employment Status on Joining

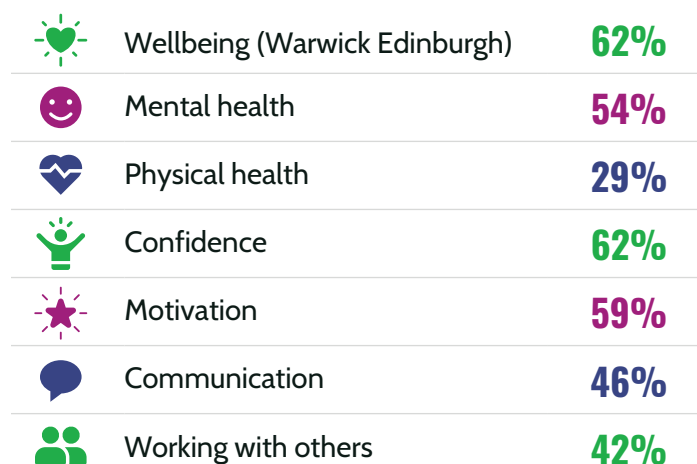


Outputs and Outcomes Delivered

Supported into:



Improvements:



Please note - Improvements are self-reported



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.



512

Young Carers and Young Adult Carers attended our programmes and on average they attended at least 4.4 times.

240

Newly identified & assessed Young Carers and Young Adult Carers were received from Wiltshire Council's IFD Carer's assessment team



"A Place to Brighten Your Mind" The Impact of Bath Philharmonia's Young Carer Projects

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.



553

Young people accessed Splash support service

1,855

Places on Splash positive group work activities were filled

Young Victims of Crime

85%

Of young victims of crime accessing support report Splash had enabled them to be better able to cope and build resilience to move forward with daily life

“

“Today I learnt I can meet lots of new people, try new things and have fun.”

A Young Victim of Crime

”



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.

24

Youth clubs or youth groups supported

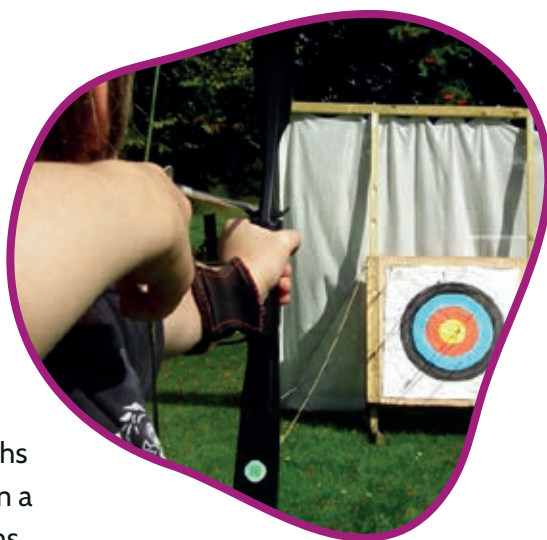




Outdoor Education

Community First owns and operates Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and manages Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre.

Our offer includes residentials for schools, groups and organisations, day activities and curriculum enrichment days. We also offer corporate away days and first aid training. Over the last 12 months 2,028 people have visited our centres from a total of 71 schools, groups and organisations.



71

Schools, groups or organisations attended one of our outdoor education centres in 2025-2026

2,028

Individuals attended our outdoor education provision in 2025-2026

Alternative Provision

In addition to residential and day visits we also offer Alternative Provision at our outdoor centres, providing specialist support for vulnerable young people who may struggle to access mainstream education. Through outdoor learning, adventure activities and personalised support, Alternative Provision helps young people re-engage with learning in a safe and supportive environment.

Alternative Provision is designed for pupils experiencing challenges such as low attendance, poor engagement, anxiety, low self-esteem, underdeveloped life skills or difficulties with relationships and behaviour. Programmes are tailored following an initial assessment and can range from one-off sessions to multi-week interventions.

Activities include bushcraft and survival skills, outdoor adventure and history-based learning, with a strong focus on developing resilience, confidence, independence, motivation and self-control. Participants benefit from experienced, fully trained staff, regular progress reporting and high standards of safety and quality assurance. Our team uses inspiring outdoor environments to support young people's social, emotional and physical development while providing meaningful pathways back into learning and education. Find out more at: www.oxenwood.org.uk.



The Oxenwood Appeal

The Oxenwood Appeal aims to raise £1.8 million to secure the long-term future of Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre. The appeal seeks to preserve and enhance the Centre which has supported generations of young people through adventure and outdoor learning. The funding will enable comprehensive redevelopment and modernisation of the facilities at Oxenwood, ensuring they remain safe, sustainable and fit for the future.

Community First acquired Oxenwood from Wiltshire Council in 2019 and remains committed to safeguarding the Centre as a place where young people can build confidence, resilience and essential life skills. The redevelopment has been designed by Batterham Smith Architects, with planning permission already secured and strong support from the local community.

The project will transform the accommodation and facilities at Oxenwood, increasing residential capacity to approximately 60 beds and enabling significantly more young people to access residential and outdoor learning opportunities. Alongside improvements to the building, the redevelopment will support the expansion of programmes at Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre, including expanded outreach to schools, groups and the development of new activities and learning opportunities.

The investment will help ensure that Oxenwood can continue to provide life-changing experiences for young people, particularly those facing challenges in their lives. With work anticipated to begin from late summer 2027, the appeal represents a major investment in preserving the legacy of Oxenwood Centre while creating a modern, inclusive and sustainable outdoor learning and residential space for future generations.



Batterham Smith
ARCHITECTS



Carers Together Wiltshire

Carers Together Wiltshire is a partnership led by Age UK Wiltshire, with Community First, Beyond Dementia, Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Citizens Advice Wiltshire and Wessex Community Action. Funded by Wiltshire Council and Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB), the service provides support for unpaid adult Carers across Wiltshire.

Carers Together Wiltshire offers a range of services, including information and advice, Carer Assessments, support groups, activities and outings, referrals to specialist services, signposting to carer ID cards, and opportunities for coaching, counselling, and training.

Over the last 12 months, Carers Together Wiltshire received over 1,560 referrals which is a 38% increase in demand compared to the previous year. 98% of Carers were contacted within two working days of referral. The partnership completed 534 Carer Assessments and approved 617 Support Plans. In addition, 81 Young Adult Carer Transition Assessments were completed to support Young Carers moving into adult services.

Parent Carers

Community First supports Parent Carers through Carers Together Wiltshire. Parent Carers provide extra care and support to a minor or adult child. This care goes beyond normal parenting duties because the child has a disability, illness or additional needs. We have carried out Needs Assessments, offered advice and guidance, and facilitated regular face-to-face and virtual Parent Carer group sessions. Over 190 Parent Carers are subscribed to our mailing list, with monthly updates shared.

Young Adult Carers

For Young Adult Carers aged 18 and over, understanding their rights and entitlements can be particularly challenging. Many are faced with significant life decisions as they move into adulthood. Working alongside our Youth Action Wiltshire team, we have offered transition support for Young Carers who are moving into adult services. In addition to Transition Assessments (81), we provided 67 face-to-face respite group sessions including day activities and residential provision, with one or more Young Adult Carers attending each session.

1,560+

Referrals received
through Carers
Together Wiltshire

38%

Increase in demand

534

Carer Assessments
completed and 617
Support Plans approved

98%

Contacted within 2
working days



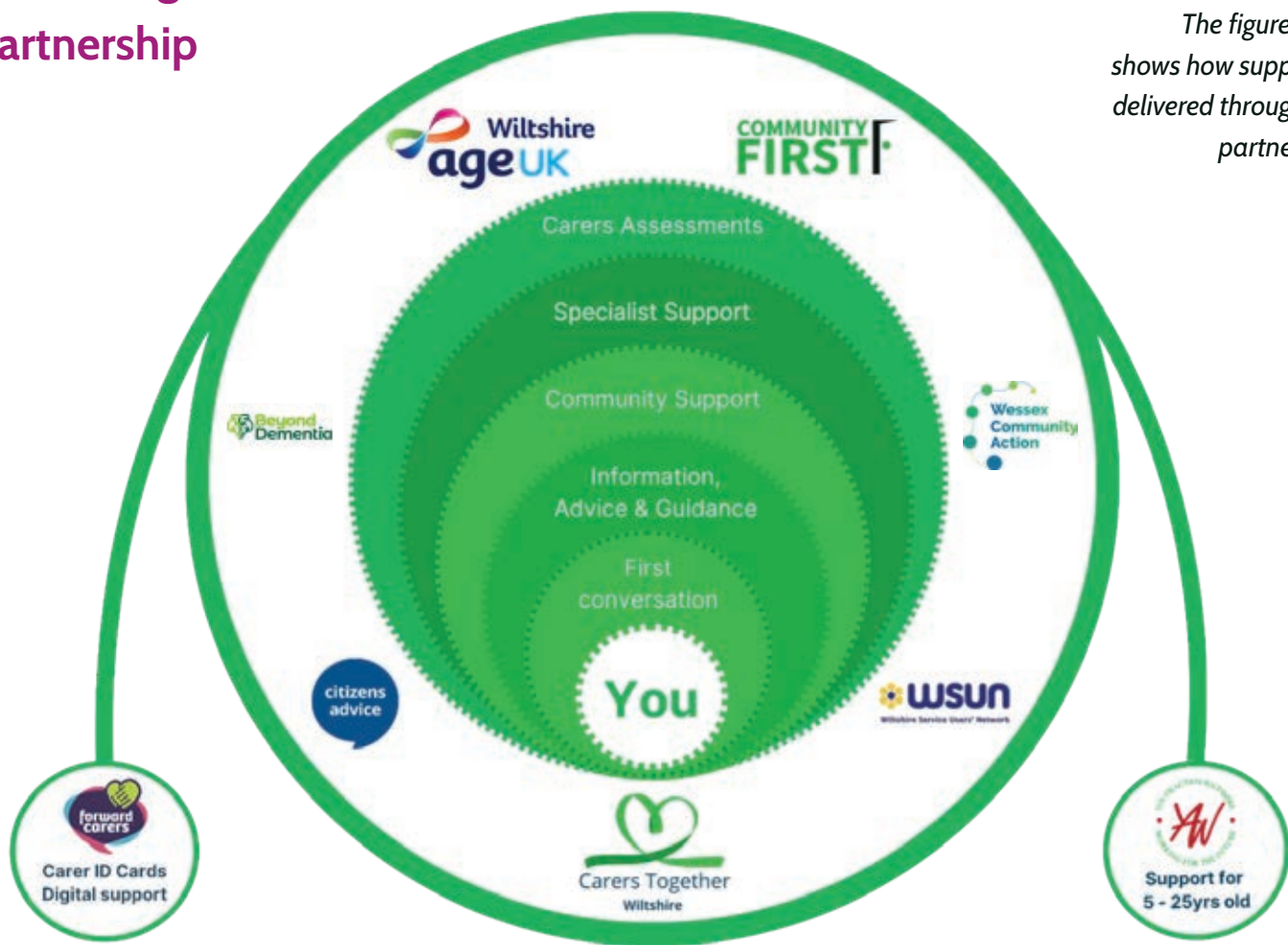


Sign up for the Carers Together Wiltshire Newsletter to receive news and updates.



Carers Together Wiltshire Partnership

The figure (left) shows how support is delivered through the partnership



Contact Carers Together Wiltshire:
Call 01380 710 300
Visit: carerstogetherwiltshire.org.uk

Contact YAW Young Carers Service:
Call: 01380 720 671
Email: wiltshireyoungcarers@youthactionwiltshire.org
Visit: communityfirst.org.uk/yaw/young-carers

Funded by:





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.



Voice It, Hear It is a partnership project led by Community First with Wiltshire Service Users' Network, Wessex Community Action, Age UK Wiltshire, Beyond Dementia 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).

Voice It, Hear It delivered four engagement projects over the last 12 months focusing on Homecare, Direct Payments, Oral Health and Community Equipment. In total 340 survey responses were received and 540 people contributed directly through engagement activities. The work was supported by 54 stakeholder groups and organisations, helping to gather a range of views from people and communities. The team will publish results from a Rural Health Community Engagement project in 2027.

VIHI project communications reached more than 18,000 people through social media channels, increasing awareness of engagement opportunities to our networks.

We were also pleased to secure continuation funding for Voice It, Hear it. For more information, please email voice@communityfirst.org.uk or visit the website: www.communityfirst.org.uk/voice.

“
Voice It
Hear It
”

540

People contributed
to Voice It, Hear It
engagement work in
2025-2026

340

Survey responses
were received from
individuals and groups

18k

Individuals reached
through VIHI
communications on
social media



As part of our aim of Tackling Disadvantage and Building Resilience, Community First works alongside people and communities to improve health and wellbeing. This is a theme that runs through many of our programmes and services.

Communities across Wiltshire and Swindon are experiencing rising demand for health and care support, rural isolation and limited access to services, as well as inequalities in opportunity, health and income. We aim to support communities to take action and shape their own futures, improve wellbeing and opportunities, and amplify voices to help shape services so they better meet local needs.

A large part of this work involves working in partnership with the local authority, BSW ICB and VCSE sector partners to deliver projects which support health and wellbeing. Community First is the Co-Chair of the local VCSE Sector Alliance. We are also pleased to play a role in influencing VCSE development within the Integrated Care Systems (ICS), Integrated Care Alliance (ICA) and Wiltshire and Swindon Youth Partnership.

Over the last 12 months, we have been involved in supporting the delivery of a new hypertension project which brings blood pressure checks directly into communities (see page 21), as well as producing a Community Blood Pressure Checks Toolkit. We have also supported commissioning workshops relating to new procurement regulations. The workshops were delivered in partnership with Monarch, with over 100 attendees.



Community First Achieves Disability Confident 'Employer' Status



Community First is pleased to share that we are now a Disability Confident Employer. This reflects our ongoing commitment to being inclusive, accessible and supportive in how we recruit and how we work. As part of the Disability Confident scheme, we are taking active steps to ensure our processes are fair, that barriers are removed wherever possible and that everyone has the opportunity to achieve and thrive in our organisation. This is an important milestone and we look forward to continuing to strengthen how we support current and future colleagues living with disabilities. We are also currently working towards Disability Confident 'Leader' status. Find out more via: www.gov.uk/disability-confident.



Link Schemes and Community Transport

Community First supports a network of 43 Link (volunteer car) Schemes and 21 Community Minibus Groups in Wiltshire and Swindon. Community transport is a vital service in a rural county like Wiltshire, especially for older adults, people living with disabilities and those with long term health conditions.

Link Schemes and Community Minibus Groups provide a lifeline to healthcare and other local services for some of the most vulnerable people in our communities, and Wiltshire is proud to have one of the most successful community transport networks in the country.

With funding from Wiltshire Council and BSW ICB, Community First provides advice, advocacy and practical support to community transport groups. We also share data with local partners to help identify transport needs and inform service planning through the Link Audit which is carried out each year.

In 2025, Link Schemes reached an important milestone, travelling over a million miles for the first time in the history of the Link Service. Link volunteers completed over 36,000 health-related journeys and carried out 55,992 everyday tasks. Volunteer hours increased by 19% to 159,681, with the contribution of 1,422 volunteers estimated to be worth over £2.9 million annually. This shows that Link volunteers are travelling further and offering more support than ever for local communities.

43

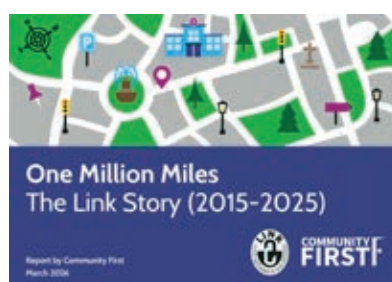
Link Schemes in our network.

21

Community Minibus Groups in our network.

One Million Miles - The Link Story (2015-2025)

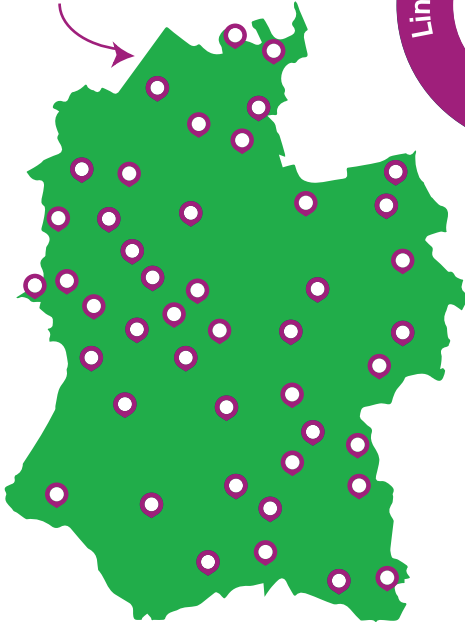
In 2025 Community First published One Million Miles: The Link Story 2015-2025, a landmark report celebrating a decade of volunteer contribution. The report highlights how Link volunteers have travelled over 9 million miles, offered 1.36 million hours of support and delivered an estimated £17.3m in social and economic value to the county between 2015-2025. You can view the report by scanning the QR code below. Thank you to all of the volunteers who made this possible and for their dedication, service and commitment.



Link Scheme Audit 2025

April 24 - March 25

Link Scheme map of Wiltshire



Link Good Neighbour Schemes
43

The total number of Link Schemes is unchanged from the 2024 Link Audit

1,422

Number of volunteers involved in Link Schemes in Wiltshire and Swindon



33

Average volunteers per Link Scheme

% change in Link Volunteers from 2024

-5%

1,027,780

Miles travelled by volunteers in 2025

55,992

Everyday tasks completed in 2025

36,895

Health related journeys carried out in 2025

In 2025 Link volunteers offered:



159,681 hours

Economic value (EV) based on hourly rate:*



£2,970,066

Average added EV per volunteer in 2025:



£2,088

The economic value of Link Schemes is calculated based on ONS South West Average hourly pay - for all jobs at £14.43 per hour.



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 192 village halls and community buildings in membership of Wiltshire Village Halls Association over the last 12 months. This is a slight increase from 189 halls in the previous year. The service is also rated highly amongst village hall members, with a 90% overall satisfaction rate.

WVHA plays an important role in helping village halls and community buildings to come together, share best practice and learn from each other. Over the last year, we have held two networking events for village hall volunteers. This included a networking event during Village Halls Week 2026, with around 50 people attending. The event featured presentations from the Wiltshire Bobby Van Trust, ARC Thermal Heating Solutions and Wiltshire Association of Local Councils, as well as a discussion on volunteer recruitment and succession planning. TJB Funding was available to answer funding questions, and the Community Blood Pressure Team carried out nine checks.

192

Village Halls and
Community Buildings
in membership.

90%

Satisfaction rate
amongst member halls
and buildings

In 2025-2026 Community First supported three village halls to apply for funding through the Platinum Jubilee Fund. The Platinum Jubilee Fund offers grant funding to help make modest improvements to rural community buildings in England. The fund is managed through Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE) and WVHA offers support to village halls and community buildings who wish to apply for funding.



Chapmanslade Village Hall received £8,000 from the Platinum Jubilee Fund to install a solar PV system with battery storage to help the hall reduce reliance on electricity for heating and lower energy use and carbon emissions. Ogbourne St Andrews Church received £24,700 to install toilets and a kitchen, providing facilities that make the building more practical and welcoming for community use.

For more information visit www.wvha.org.uk or email: mrobinson@communityfirst.org.uk.

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC)

242

Parish and Town
Councils in
membership

85

Training offers to
Parish and Town
Councils and Clerks

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) offers guidance, resources and training for a network of 242 Town and Parish Councils in Wiltshire and Swindon.

Over the last 12 months, WALC has focused on providing practical advice, training and opportunities for councils to engage with partners and share good practice. Training continued to be a key area of activity, with 85 training opportunities offered to councils and Clerks. These sessions helped Councillors and Officers develop their skills, knowledge and understanding of local government responsibilities.

Member feedback remained positive, with a satisfaction survey receiving 160 responses and demonstrating strong engagement from local councils. Overall satisfaction was around 80%, with advice and support services receiving the highest ratings. These results highlight the value members place on timely guidance and assistance in supporting their day-to-day work.

WALC also successfully delivered its annual conference, providing members with an opportunity to hear from speakers, discuss current issues and network with



colleagues from across the sector. Strong working relationships were maintained with both Wiltshire Council and Swindon Borough Council, and plans are already underway for the next annual partnership event, which will take place in Swindon.

Work began on a review of the WALC Executive Constitution which aims to ensure that governance arrangements remain effective and fit for the future.

County Officer Ian Nockolds has hosted and produced a number of podcasts and webinars on a range of subjects including Youth Engagement, Section 106 and Community Infrastructure Levy, and HR and Governance for Local Councils. Podcast guests have included Perry Holmes, Lance Allen and George McCaffrey.

WALC webinars can be viewed at:

www.youtube.com/@communityfirstwiltshire

You can listen to The Local Councils Podcast via Spreaker or Apple Podcasts:

<https://podcasts.apple.com/ie/podcast/the-local-councils-podcast/id1813418749>





Rural Housing Enablers and Community-Led Housing



Department
for Environment
Food & Rural Affairs

By Becky Hopkinson (Rural Housing Enabler)

Through Wiltshire Community-Led Housing and the Rural Housing Enabler project, Community First aims to promote sustainable and affordable housing in Wiltshire and Swindon. Over the last 12 months the team has worked with Parish Councils and community groups, with 13 communities in conversation about rural affordable housing and 14 affordable homes in the pipeline.

Rural Housing Enablers

Across our rural communities, many people who have grown up in a village, work locally or have close family connections are finding it increasingly difficult to afford a home in the place they call home. Young people are often forced to move away, older residents may struggle to find suitable accommodation to downsize into and local employers can find it harder to recruit staff who can afford to live nearby. A lack of young people and families in the community can also make it challenging to maintain class sizes in local schools and the viability of local businesses.

The Rural Housing Enabler service is hosted by Community First and supports local organisations and Parish Councils to understand and respond to the needs of their communities. Rural Housing Enablers provide an independent and impartial service, working with Parish Councils, community groups, housing associations and local authorities to explore local housing needs and identify opportunities to provide affordable homes.

13

Communities in
conversation about rural
affordable housing

14

Affordable homes in
the pipeline

The role is not about promoting development for development's sake. Instead, it is about helping communities understand whether there is a genuine local housing need and, where there is, exploring appropriate solutions with relevant partners.

Each community is different, so the first step is always to gather evidence and understand local needs. The Rural Housing Enabler works with Parish Councils to provide impartial advice, explain the affordable housing process and help communities make informed decisions about the options available to them.

Rural Housing Enablers can support communities through every stage of the process, from designation and community engagement to survey design, data analysis, policy writing, submission, examination and referendum.

For more information contact:

info@wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk

www.wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk

Community Engagement and Community Organising

Over the last 12 months, our Community Organising team has supported a range of projects including engaging with women in rural communities, completion of the Neighbourhood Collaborative project, a 'Roots and Shoots' project with Wiltshire FA, engagement activities to support Get Out Get Active (GOGA) and a new hypertension project.

In 2025, Community First worked with Bath and North East Somerset, Swindon and Wiltshire Integrated Care Board (BSW ICB) on the Neighbourhood Collaborative project. The project has now concluded, with funding in place until the end of 2026. The project has supported emotional resilience for young people in and around Devizes, the farming community that attends Salisbury Livestock market (providing healthcare needs) and explored preventative measures around hypertension covering Chippenham, Corsham and Box. As part of the Neighbourhood Collaborative project, Community First also produced a comprehensive engagement guide for partners and community organisations.

The Community Organising team delivered a new project focussing on women in rural communities, with 4 health-related engagement sessions hosted and funding has been secured to deliver more engagement sessions. The team also evaluated the 'Roots & Shoots' programme with Wiltshire FA, evidencing the positive impact of football, mentoring and trusted relationships on young people's wellbeing, confidence and engagement. The findings will support future funding applications and programme development.

This year, the Community Organising team supported the delivery of a new hypertension partnership project with Wessex Community Action, Voluntary Action Swindon (VAS) and 3SG. The project,



22

Days of engagement delivered through Get Out Get Active

507

People identified as having amber or red blood pressure readings

which is funded by BSW ICB, aims to improve early detection and prevention of cardiovascular disease by bringing blood pressure checks directly into local communities. Blood pressure checks have been carried out in a range of different venues and events including Salisbury Livestock Market and the SLCC Health and Wellbeing Day.



Community First continues to be a delivery partner for the Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme which is led by Wiltshire and Swindon Sport (WASP). Age UK Wiltshire and Wiltshire Council are also involved in supporting the programme as delivery partners. GOGA is a national programme from Activity Alliance which supports disabled and non-disabled people to enjoy being active together through fun, inclusive and local physical activities. Over the last 12 months, our team has carried out 22 days of engagement, promoting Age UK Daytime Discos for the over 55's, Fitness and Friendship groups, Carer Café's and GOGA activity sessions.

Get Out Get Active



Grants and Funding

42

Total projects
awarded funding.

£482k

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 2025-2026 a total of 31 projects were approved, with £405,623 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 2025-2026 BSPCBF approved 11 projects, with £76,743 paid to eligible groups and organisations.

LCF Funding (2025-2026)



Total projects approved: 19

Total funding approved: £138,747



Total projects approved: 12

Total funding approved: £267,132

BSPCBF Funding (2025-2026)

BRADENSTOKE SOLAR PARK COMMUNITY BENEFIT FUND

Total projects approved: 11

Total funding approved: £76,743

Bradenstoke Village Hall Refurbishment

Bradenstoke Village Hall has long been an important community facility, providing a venue for clubs, activities, events and celebrations for residents of Bradenstoke, Lyneham and the surrounding area. Over time, the condition of the building had deteriorated, with increasing heat loss and ageing windows and doors. The internal and external decoration of the building had also become tired and worn.

Thanks to grant funding from the Bradenstoke Solar Park Community Benefit Fund, a full programme of internal and external redecoration was carried out. This included replacement of rotten and draughty windows and doors. The works improved the appearance, comfort and energy efficiency of the building, creating a more pleasant environment for existing users and future hirers.



The refurbishment has left Bradenstoke Village Hall in a stronger position for the future, enabling it to continue supporting the community and providing opportunities for people of all ages to come together, participate in activities and enjoy a welcoming space.

Household Support Fund and Crisis & Resilience Fund

The most recent phase of the Household Support Fund (HSF7) delivered between 2025-2026, provided vital financial assistance to households experiencing financial hardship. With funding from Wiltshire Council, Community First distributed £77,729 in vouchers to 288 households. The majority of support was for food costs which accounted for 89% of vouchers offered. 9% of vouchers were allocated to wider essential household needs and 2% were for energy and water bills.



Following the conclusion of HSF7, the Household Support Fund was replaced with the new Crisis & Resilience Fund. The revised programme places greater emphasis on immediate crisis intervention and longer-term financial stability. It is structured around three key outcomes: providing crisis support through Crisis Payments and Housing Payments, improving financial resilience by helping residents access advice, manage their finances and build long-term stability, and strengthening local support networks through enhanced partnership working and community coordination.

To support delivery of these outcomes in Wiltshire, Community First has secured funding from Wiltshire Council to expand mentoring provision through the Building Bridges Programme. This includes the recruitment of a dedicated Resilience Mentor and two additional Employment and Education Mentors. These roles will provide tailored support to individuals and families, helping them improve their financial independence, access training and employment opportunities, and develop the skills and confidence needed to build a stronger and more resilient future.



Driver Assessment

Community First offers Minibus Driver Awareness (MiDAS) training for schools, groups and organisations. MiDAS is a nationally recognised standard for the training and assessment of minibus drivers. This includes voluntary organisations and groups who operate at least one minibus and organisations such as local authorities, schools and sports clubs who operate a fleet of minibuses. Over the last 12 months our team of MiDAS Instructors have trained 299 drivers.

New Car and MPV Assessment Scheme (CaMPAS)

We have recently expanded our training offer with the introduction of a new Car and MPV (Multi Purpose Vehicle) Assessment Scheme (CaMPAS) for schools, and organisations. The programme was developed by our experienced team of driver trainers, who are also approved trainers for the MiDAS scheme. The new offer is designed to support organisations that use cars and MPVs as part of their service or activities. This includes those that use 'grey fleet' arrangements where staff or volunteers use their own vehicles for work.

CaMPAS helps schools, groups and organisations demonstrate their commitment to driver safety and duty of care. The assessment scheme combines an online Highway Code theory test with a practical driving assessment carried out at the client site using their own vehicles. Drivers who successfully complete both practical and theory elements receive a certificate which is valid for 3 years.

299

Drivers trained through
MiDAS scheme in
2025-2026

21

Drivers trained through
new CaMPAS scheme
since launch in 2026

Delivered by a team of retired Police Class One Advanced Drivers with extensive driving and vehicle expertise, CaMPAS draws on advanced driving principles and complements our existing MiDAS training service. The introduction of CaMPAS provides an additional service for organisations seeking to enhance driver competence, manage risk and promote safe driving within their workforce and volunteer teams.



Prices for CaMPAS are £70 (+VAT) per person with a minimum of 4 drivers per booking. Prices for MiDAS Standard are £165 (+VAT) per person and £205 (+VAT) for MiDAS Accessible with a minimum of 3 drivers per booking. For more information visit www.minibusdrivertraining.org.uk to complete a booking enquiry or email: drivertraining@communityfirst.org.uk



Community Insurance

482

Village halls and
community buildings
insured

394

Parish and Town
Councils insured

Community Insurance is a specialist insurance offer from Community First for village halls, community buildings, playing fields association and local councils. Through the service, we offer comprehensive and flexible insurance policies with support from our friendly and professional team. Policies are underwritten by Zurich.

Over 850 village halls and local councils were insured under the scheme over the last 12 months, with 482 village halls and community buildings and 394 town and parish councils trusting Community First and Zurich for their insurance needs. We also have a specialist insurance offer for Link (volunteer car) Schemes, with 24 Link Schemes insured under the scheme.

Community Insurance generated over £50k surplus in 2025-2026, with income reinvested back into local communities through our services for young people, rural support and community development, and employability programmes.

Community Groups Insurance

We have recently established a new referral offer with Zurich to help community groups and not-for-profits access insurance tailored to their individual needs. The offer is available to organisations including community groups, allotment associations, gardening clubs, men's



sheds, youth clubs and volunteer-led organisations. Zurich provides a range of insurance options designed specifically for the voluntary and community sector.



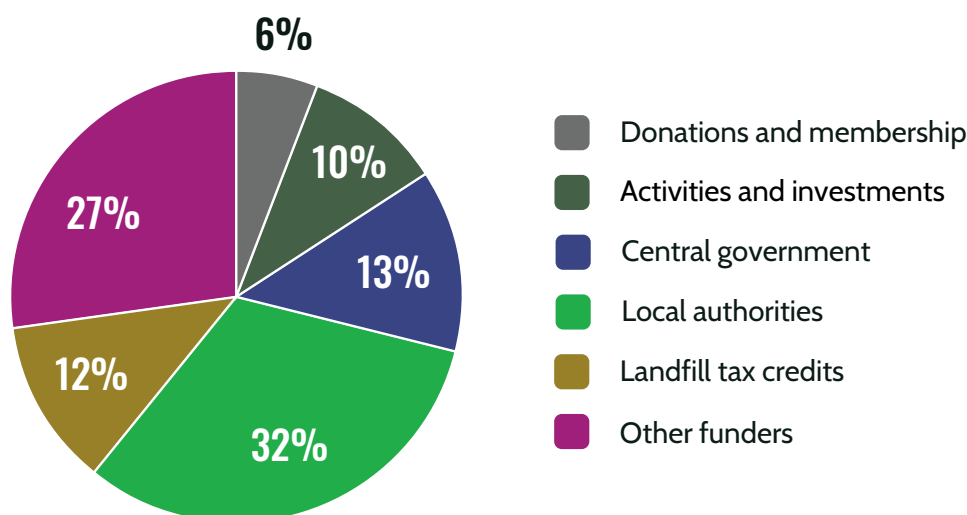
This partnership enables us to signpost organisations to a trusted insurance provider while also generating income through referral commissions when policies are taken out and renewed. For further information, enquiries can be directed to Zurich: enquiries.team@uk.zurich.com. You can also find out more about the scheme via: www.zurich.co.uk/charity-insurance/community-groups-insurance

If taking out a policy under Zurich Community Group Insurance, please mention that you heard about the scheme through Community First in Wiltshire. Our team is also on hand to offer advice and support by email: communityinsurance@communityfirst.org.uk or by telephone: 01380 732809. You can also visit our website for a free, no obligation quotation: www.communityinsurance.co.uk.



Finances

Incoming resources: £2,828,594

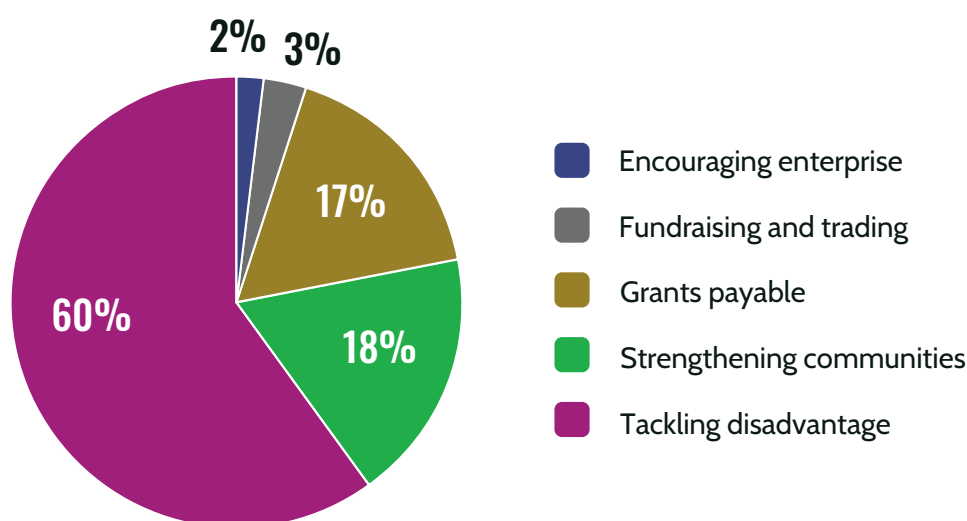


The financial report uses information taken from the full Community First financial statement for the year ended 31 March 2026, prepared in accordance with the Companies Act 2006, the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP) "Financial Reporting for Smaller Entities" 2015 and applicable accounting standards 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 30th July 2026 and will be submitted to the Charity Commission and the Registrar of Companies.

Resources expended: £2,934,475



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 2026:

AAfH & UK Youth	Historic England	Tall Ships Youth Trust
Age UK Wiltshire	Hugo Halkes Charitable Trust	The Beaufort Christmas Bazaar
Accommodation Welfare Committee	iVisualise	The Blagrove Trust
ACRE	Integrated Care Board	The Farm Cookery School
Bath Phil Creative Learning Team	James Weir Foundation	The Honeypot Children's Charity
Big Give Trust	Jane James Associates	The Inchcape Foundation
Boleh Trust	JH King Charity	The Julius Silman Charitable Trust
Bradenstoke Solar Community Fund	John Rendall	The National Lottery Awards for All
Bradford on Avon Lions	Johnson Brothers	The National Lottery Community Fund
Bradford & Winsley Community Sports Association	Knight Frank LLP	The National Trust
Bradford on Avon Rotary Club	Lansdowne Lodge of Unity	The Nicolson Community Centre
Caenhill Countryside Centre	Laverstock & Ford Parish Council	The Semma Fund
Calne Lions	Lyneham & Bradenstoke Parish Council	The Stonehenge School
Castle Combe PCC	Marlborough College	The Underwood Trust
Catalina Trust	Magdalen Environmental Trust	The Young Carers Development Trust
Charities Trust	NHS BANES	WASP
Chippenham Lions	NHS Wiltshire	Walker Logistics Ltd
Cocoon UK	National Benevolent Charity	Wiltshire Association of Local Councils
Co-op Local Community Fund	OFGEM RHI	Wiltshire College
Corsham Town Council	OJM Advisory Limited	Wiltshire and Swindon Community Foundation
Crapper & Sons Landfill Ltd	Omnes Ad Unum - St John With St Mary Church	Wiltshire Community Land Trust Ltd
DEFRA	Openwork Foundation	Wiltshire Council
DCMS	Patrick & Janie Dear	Wiltshire Council Area Board Youth Grants
Dorothy House Hospice Care	Pewsey Vale School	Wiltshire Outdoor Learning Team
EAP Sells Trust	Plum Layton Charitable Trust	Wiltshire Scrapstore & Resource Centre
Easy Fundraising	Police & Crime Commissioner for Wiltshire & Swindon	Wiltshire Wildlife Trust
Edington Parish Council	Prism The Gift Fund	Youth Adventure Trust
English Heritage	Purton Community Café	Zest Personal Development
Estate of A Fox (legacy)	Radnor Charitable Foundation	
Flaxlands Farm	Salisbury Cathedral	
Folio Theatre Company	Salisbury City Community Lottery	
Fowler Architecture & Planning	Salisbury Museum	
Friends of Youth Action Wiltshire	Skillset Learning	
George Veterinary Group	St James's Place Charitable Foundation	
Greatwood Charity	St Mary's School	
Greensquare Accord	Stampede Sports	
GUL Outdoor Therapy	Strategic Insurance Solutions Mena Ltd	
Hedley Foundation	Southampton Water Activities Centre	
Hills Waste Ltd	Swindon Borough Council	

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.



Vibrant Communities, Stronger Futures

Patron:

Her Majesty The Queen

President:

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

Community First

Unit C2

Beacon Business Centre

Hopton Park

Devizes

SN10 2EY

T: 01380 722 475

W: www.communityfirst.org.uk

E: enquiries@communityfirst.org.uk

Twitter: @CommFirstWilts

Facebook: @CommunityFirstWiltshire

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

