



THE COMMUNITY FUND

Supporting charity and community projects in
Cambridge and London



In its second year the Community Fund has supported more people in both Cambridge and London with an ever greater range of projects.

Over £30,000 of Community Fund grants have been awarded since September 2021, partnering with new organisations and strengthening existing ties to increase the impact of the Fund.

A number of small projects were approved internally:

- Bursaries for extra-curricular activities to help children in north Cambridge pursue their hobbies, particularly sports, administered by the Red Hen Project
- Funds to help LGBTQ+ young people in Cambridgeshire travel to access youth groups, 1:1 sessions with youth workers, and family activities, through the Kite Trust
- Equipment for Cherry Hinton Scouts to start offering Duke of Edinburgh Award courses
- A support fund so Cogwheel Counselling can offer low-cost, early-intervention counselling to at-risk families in Cambridge
- David Silk has continued to mentor vulnerable young people in the community
- The Great Outdoors Art Exhibition, organised by Rowan, for adults with learning disabilities in Cambridge
- Artscaping sessions, part of an enrichment project run by the Cambridge Acorn Project at the North Cambridge Academy, for pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds

In addition, the Community Fund Board approved several large grants expanding and improving existing projects and launching new initiatives, while several projects funded in the last academic year have also come to fruition.

Building on last year's successful model, we have sought to tie together Community Fund grants with the School's Lenten Giving as well as using it as a way to develop the wider School ethos of social responsibility. To this end, £6,000 has been equally allocated between the outreach activities at St Faith's and The Leys to be used at their discretion to best benefit the local schools, charities and community groups with whom they work.

The Leys Connection, our parents' association, has kindly decided to support the Community Fund through their events. Any proceeds from social evenings like the Parent Wine Tasting held in October 2021 will be donated to the Community Fund. Emma Preston, a Leys parent, says, "the Leys Connection Committee is proud to support the Community Fund with their initiative supporting charitable projects in the local community. It is fabulous to see how much has already been achieved. We look forward to continuing to support the community fund with fundraising opportunities and assisting with practical volunteer support."

Barrett's Lenten Giving hot chocolate sale in aid of East Anglia Children's Hospices was a great success.



Helping young people with Romsey Mill



In March 2021 Romsey Mill received a grant to provide Youth Mental Health First Aid Training for their team. Romsey Mill are a Christian charity based in Cambridge, whose work focuses on creating better opportunities for vulnerable or marginalised families.

During the Covid-19 lockdowns, Romsey Mill found the 'at-risk' young people they work with were among the most seriously impacted, which led to serious repercussions and risks for their mental health. They therefore wished to train Romsey Mill staff to deal as effectively and confidently as possible with mental health crises in young people. Fifteen of their team undertook the Youth Mental Health First Aider qualification in September 2021.



Programme manager James Bennett explains:

"All those who undertook the training found it extremely helpful and provided feedback that it has improved their knowledge and confidence in responding to the mental health needs of young people, especially when they are facing a crisis moment."

"I found the training incredibly helpful because it has made me feel more confident about helping the young people who I work with in a mental health crisis. I feel like I can approach young people appropriately, with help from my ALGEE Action Plan. The training gave me a clear understanding of how to assist young people until further help is available or I have directed them to a suitable service to support them." - Youth Development Worker, North City

"I will be more confident in asking questions about suicide when needed. I am clearer about the sub-divisions of anxiety disorders which will help me when working with young mums who are living life with these disorders." - Young Parents Development Worker

James continues:

"The training not only equipped staff to deal with the mental health needs of young people but it also served as a reminder of the importance of looking after their own mental health. We are very grateful for the financial support that we received from the Community Fund towards the cost of the training - it has been extremely beneficial to the work of Romsey Mill."

"The training made me realise the importance of taking care of my mental health, in order to support the young people, I work with to the best of my ability." - Youth Support Worker

"The training has prompted me to address my own anxiety and to try to ensure I look after my mental health through mindfulness, walking etc." - Young Parents Development Worker



Romsey Mill have received a second grant in December 2021 from the Community Fund for a separate strand of their work led by their Youth Development Team. Having been shocked by a 2018 report that 1 in 10 schoolgirls in the UK are affected by period poverty, Romsey Mill started a Blue Bag initiative to offer free period products for all young people who menstruate in Cambourne, through schools, youth groups and foodbanks.

After the success of this pilot, with the Community Fund's help they are now expanding this scheme into Cambridge city. They will be offering their 'blue bags' containing sanitary products, as well as an extra like shower gel, to their youth groups, the YMCA, hostels, and foodbanks. They are also working with local primary schools who are increasingly encountering this issue among their pupils.

The Leys Diversity & Inclusion Initiative

The Leys has been working to become an actively anti-racist institution, particularly in the wake of the Black Lives Matter movement which came to prominence in summer 2020. The Diversity & Inclusion Initiative, part-funded by the Community Fund, is a crucial element of this.

"The programme began on 4th November with a further 23 sessions due to take place this year. West and Fen Year 9 and Lower Sixth gathered in the Recital Hall for the first session, reflecting on the nature of identity and diversity. Will George and Sagan Daniels brought their experience of Leys life into the discussions – helping pupils understand how others might feel and understanding why micro-aggression happens. These sessions are very much a starting point for discussions that we hope will take place back in houses."

- Helen Hynd, Director of Pastoral Care

Sophie Coady, the Head Girl, has reflected on the importance of the Diversity & Inclusion Initiative for her and her fellow pupils:

"The Diversity & Inclusion Initiative training that I started last year has had a profound impact on me. Will and Sagan, two Old Leysians who spoke to us about the effects of diversity throughout their school lives and once they had left the Leys, provoked many conversations about racism, micro-aggression and bullying amongst friends and peers. These are topics that are often avoided, and can bring about awkwardness, however the training gave us an opportunity to hear anecdotes from our own peers.

Some of the questions asked by Sagan and Will were difficult and they presented scenarios to us, some of which had never crossed my mind. I remember feeling guilty that I had never contemplated some of the situations we covered. However, this has been extremely beneficial for me and the rest of the school community. A lot of the skills we learnt about the most effective ways to communicate, listen and act have been extremely transferable and have really helped our appreciation for each individual's backgrounds in our year group.

I vividly remember a friend in my year who said that they often felt nervous walking into town because of their race and how they might be perceived. I can recall a sense of shock in the room as many peers began to also speak up and express similar fears. This then sparked conversation back in house and around the community and has definitely had a long term effect on the awareness of diversity and inclusion within the school community.

I absolutely loved the Diversity & Inclusion course and I cannot express enough how important I believe it is and will continue to be to our community. It is rare to have the opportunity to discuss sensitive topics, that are so relevant, with your year group. To be asked such direct questions did feel intimidating at first, and I felt at the start that I wanted to say the 'right thing', but when we learnt about the importance of how you act and educating yourself, and began to listen to everyone's opinions and stories, I couldn't believe how valuable the lessons I learnt were and how they will continue to be in everyday life."

The Diversity & Inclusion Initiative has received a further grant from the Community Fund for the work to continue in 2022.



Practical support for our Cambridge community

Turtle Dove is a local social enterprise which supports young women who are, or are at risk of becoming, unemployed simply because they do not have the confidence or experience to seek employment. Their model is based around catering and staffing events of all sizes, which means they have been particularly hard hit by the pandemic reducing these opportunities.

In Spring 2021 Turtle Dove received a grant from the Community Fund to supply new uniforms for their team, as they looked forward to events re-starting on a larger scale. The new uniforms ensure the young women - who do not have the disposable income to purchase new smart clothing - look professional at all their events from festivals to singles nights to wine tastings.

We were delighted to be able to provide one of the first opportunities for the new uniforms to be worn, at our Parent Wine Tasting evening in October. Providing practical as well as financial support is at the heart of the Community Fund's philosophy, and so Turtle Dove were invited to work the event, itself a collaboration between the Leys Connection and the Development Office.



"Thank you so much for choosing and supporting Turtle Dove Cambridge. It was great to showcase our uniform you have funded as well as be there to support your event!"
- Kate Nation, Turtle Dove CEO



The ticketed event was a big success, with 60 parents attending and enjoying the expert tasting guidance of Mark Anstead of the Cambridgeshire Wine School. The Turtle Dove team were extremely professional and the new uniforms looked very smart. The Leys Connection said that "it was a privilege to watch at first hand the work of local charity Turtle Dove at the Wine and Cheese evening held at the Leys last term, providing and training the staff who worked at the event."

The Leys Connection also kindly agreed that all ticket proceeds from the evening would be donated to the Community Fund.

Thank you to My Linh from Turtle Dove Cambridge, who not only helped at the Wine Tasting, but was also photographer on the night and took these photos.

Initiatives with Wesley's Chapel and Leysian Mission

The Soapbox Youth Centre provides tailored support to young adults facing redundancy and isolation, or at risk of dropping out of education.

A grant from the Community Fund supported Sally Rush, Soapbox's Community Worker for Younger Adults, to continue youth mentoring and support for 2-4 hours per week, as part of her full-time role at Wesley's Chapel. Sally intensively mentored three individuals, each of whom completed 15 sessions in addition to self-directed work. One young person with autism was supported to make an application for further education; another was supported to exhibit original art and develop a plan for self-employment in gaming and game development; and third, who has a serious disability, was helped to develop life skills for greater interaction and independence.

In addition to this, two local university student volunteers were trained to become peer mentors, building the capacity and sustainability of the programme.

"The Leadership on a Journey exhibition provokes reflection about what leadership is. We are displaying John Wesley's actual 18th-century buckled shoes alongside the walking boots worn by the Reverend Inderjit Bhogal (the first President of the Methodist Conference born outside the UK) to walk from Sheffield to London to petition for better treatment of asylum seekers in 2000. We expect to ask visitors and others to photograph their shoes to add to a display, with stories, integrated with objects and artefacts from our existing collection. Engaging visitors from faith backgrounds and none, this part of the exhibition responds to Ephesians 6.15: 'as shoes for your feet put on whatever will make you ready to proclaim the gospel of peace'."

- Reverend Jen Smith, Superintendent of Wesley's Chapel



The Community Fund supported the Leadership on a Journey exhibition, with associated learning resources, held at Wesley's Chapel. Deanna Lyncook was appointed in August 2021 after a national search to bring together the exhibition by collecting oral histories, objects, videos, and other exhibition resources, as well as coordinating the publicity and communications.

Over 300 people came to the previews, and the exhibition was officially opened in September 2021 by the President of the Methodist Conference, the Reverend Sonia Hicks.

The exhibition shows the history of activism in anti-poverty and anti-racism work, peace making, housing justice, and gender equality made accessible through objects, video, oral history, and individual's lives and stories. After a phase showing the history pre-1950, the 'recent present' exhibition will showcase individuals and communities from within contemporary Methodist life in the UK, set alongside existing artefacts and stories from the collection of the Museum of Methodism. Leys students will, as they have in past, create art in response to items from the exhibition.



Looking forward

The Community Fund Board approved six further projects in December 2021.

The Cambridge City Council received a three-year grant for their Grassroots Physical Activity & Sports Grants Scheme. This will allow at least 16 children every year to enjoy a physical activity or sport of their choice, that would otherwise be too expensive for their family. The City Council will ensure families in the greatest need will be helped, and particularly children who are just starting out exploring activities, complementing existing funding already available for children to develop their skills at a County, regional or national level.

The Kings Hedges Family Support Fund received a grant for their Mini MAGIC programme, to help children feel more confident starting school or nursery. MAGIC is a programme already run by KHFSF for parents, focusing on areas chosen by beneficiaries: Mental wellbeing, Attachment to routines for children and parents, Growing in confidence, I can play, Cooking up a storm on a budget. The Community Fund grant will provide a Mini MAGIC creche while the parents' activities take place and provide simultaneous activities for the children. These will include child yoga, speech, language and literacy practice, food preparation, and games to develop motor skills.



"Mini MAGIC will provide opportunities for people to socialise and make new friends. This is especially important in the wake of the pandemic."

- Hannah Chong, Kings Hedges Family Support Project

The Romsey Mill Blue Bag Project will be tackling period poverty, as described above.

The Cambridge Royal Albert Homes provides 30 subsidised homes for independent people of retirement age with modest income and connections to Cambridge. They have received a grant to help with resurfacing their footpaths with modern materials to prevent slipping and falls, as well as making life easier for those with limited mobility. The Royal Cambridge residents have also recently enjoyed visits from St Faith's pupils who play music and sing to entertain the residents, as well as bringing both cake and lots of positivity! President Edward Thackray says "it is truly heartwarming to witness the interaction between the two generations that are so far apart."



The Leys Diversity & Inclusion Initiative and the Leadership on a Journey exhibition at Wesley's Chapel have also received funding for a second year.

The Community Fund works alongside the other charitable initiatives at The Leys, including lots of volunteering by pupils, a range of outreach activities, and Lenten Giving (previously the Lenten Appeal).

