**Worcestershire Community Foundation distributes £1m to local causes during Covid pandemic**

One of Worcestershire’s largest charitable hubs has handed out over £1 million over the past 18 months to support charities, good causes and community groups who were severely impacted by the Covid-19 pandemic.

Worcestershire Community Foundation (WCF) has distributed funds to 374 community projects across the county in 2020/21 to help them overcome the challenges presented by the crisis.

The Foundation, which is part of the fourth largest funding network in the UK, launched its Covid-19 Response Appeal in 2020 to help local community projects stay afloat and deliver much-needed emergency response services during the pandemic.

The programme channeled funding from organisations - including the National Emergencies Trust, Made by Sport, the Co-op Foundation and Barclays Bank - with the Foundation also raising nearly £200,000 through two separate local appeals.

Following the success, the Foundation has now released an Impact Report which underlines the success of its work over 2020/21. The report details the significant amount of funding provided for volunteer networks, programmes for vulnerable people in deprived areas, and vital supplies of food and essential goods for isolated people and communities. It also details larger ‘seed funding’ grants awarded - including digital resource for The Recovery College for those facing mental health and wellbeing challenges, and a community skills development project for young people in the Stanley Road area of Worcester.

David Shaw, chair of Worcestershire Community Foundation said: “While demand for voluntary and community services increased by 78% during Covid, traditional methods of operating and fundraising were no longer viable. This resulted in vastly reduced income for charities and community groups at a time when people needed them the most.

“Since the pandemic took hold, communities in Worcestershire have really suffered, with many experiencing the effects of isolation, poverty and a reduced quality of life.

“We are a very small team which runs on minimal overheads, but we changed our entire way of working amid the pandemic to ensure the most vulnerable people in our communities could receive support.

“We are very proud to have worked so closely with our amazing local Voluntary and Community sector to overcome the challenges presented by this crisis. We hope the impact of the shared learning we have gained will take us into a more resilient future as a funder, with the support of stronger partnerships with local donors and funders”

Since 2003, WCF has distributed over £3 million to charities and good causes - building key partnerships with supporters and funders to help reach as many local people in need as possible.

 **Notes for editors:**

* To access a copy of the Report please click on [www.worcscf.org.uk](http://www.worcscf.org.uk/) or email lucy.wcf@comfirst.org.uk for a hard copy to be sent to you.
* For further information on Worcestershire Community Foundation go to www.worcscf.org.uk/
* To talk to WCF about making a donation, setting up a fund or supporting local communities contact Development Director lucy.wcf@comfirst.org.uk

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