



Working with Worcestershire

OUR IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024



www.worcscf.org.uk

Who are we?

Since 2003, Worcestershire Community Foundation has been helping local charities and community groups support essential causes across Worcestershire.

We provide vital support where there is real need, working with partners to deliver timely, responsive and proactive funding programmes.

We welcome support from donors of all kinds.

In this period, we raised and distributed £617,539 of funding to support 93 local projects, representing a diverse range of needs.

We are a place-based charitable grant maker for the whole county, dedicated to helping to ensure Worcestershire is a better place to live and thrive.

We are non-partisan and passionate in supporting diverse communities to have a better quality of life. We champion local causes and raise and deliver funds which really make a difference.

We are part of a national network of 47 community foundations in the UK which provide crucial support to communities everywhere.



WCF Trustees at Malvern Cube YCT



www.worcscf.org.uk

Foreword from our Chair of Trustees

2023-2024 was another productive period for our Foundation, responding to funding needs throughout Worcestershire. Over 18 months, we distributed over £600k to 93 community projects addressing a large variety of causes.

It has never been our strategy to align ourselves with a particular need or challenge. We instead seek to focus on the smaller charitable organisations, which deliver vital work but may find it hard to raise crucial resources. Our job is to enable these charitable entities to benefit from grant making programmes and donors, in turn ensuring that funders and donors can direct their support in the most effective way.

During this period, we focused on setting up new funds, working closely with local statutory agencies in the co-production of programmes that reflect real needs among local communities.

Partnering with West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner John Campion, the Inclusive Communities Fund evolved as a pilot project for marginalised and isolated groups who felt excluded from society. We distributed £90k to 15 innovative projects, engaging nearly 13,000 beneficiaries and 500 volunteers.

The range of minority groups reached by the programme included: women and girls; children and young people; people with disabilities, SEND and mental health issues, the vulnerably housed and homeless; ethnic minorities; minority religious groups; refugees; veterans; ex-offenders; the LGBTQ+ community and survivors of domestic abuse. This Fund was four times over-subscribed, demonstrating the huge need for this kind of focus.

We also worked closely with Worcestershire County Council to develop our new Strengthening Worcestershire Fund to support disadvantaged local communities struggling with the impact of the cost-of-living. During 2024, we raised £56k to combine with £131k from the County Council, which was distributed to a broad range of community groups doing some of the most impactful work in the county. A second round is being rolled out in 2025.

In November 2023, we set up our Friends of WCF membership scheme, to coincide with our 20th anniversary celebrations.

As always, we were delighted to work in support of the High Sheriff Fund which raised and distributed over £30k from a range of community initiatives. We also worked closely with our in-memoriam funds, Tom's Fund and the Carl Ellson Clinical Innovation Fund, which supported a fantastic, health-based project run by the Myriad Centre.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank our generous donors, without whom we would not be able to provide the local support so badly needed; our President Lord Lieutenant Bea Grant; patrons and trustees who give so generously of their time and wisdom; the Friends of WCF; and not least our small executive team, who work so hard to help WCF create maximum impact throughout Worcestershire.

As always, our main priority is to secure ongoing funding to support a sustainable community sector in the county; with this in mind, we look forward to working with you all over the next months.

Jonathan Chenevix-Trench

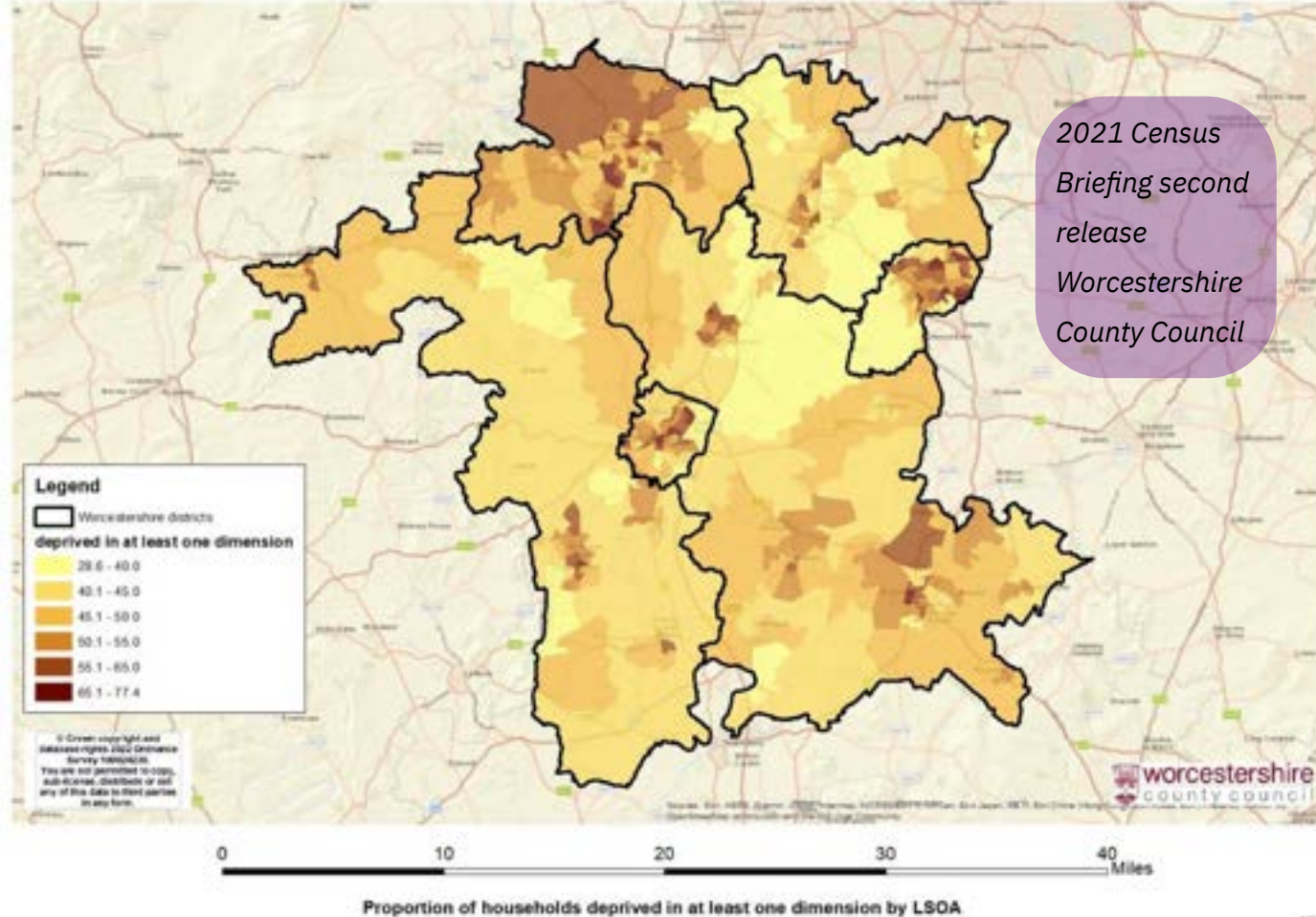


What's been happening during 2023-24 ...

This period has, as always, proven a busy one for us; we have been working in new partnerships with local statutory organisations and developing and delivering innovative funding programmes which really reflect the needs out there.

Worcestershire's communities have continued to face growing life challenges of all kinds, worsened by the cost of living situation and a change of government with new priorities and taxes.

You can see the enormous range of themes and projects we have supported - from disadvantaged young people and marginalised communities, to people simply struggling to live.



2021 Census
Briefing second
release
Worcestershire
County Council

**Total sum awarded
£617,539**

**Number of grants
93**

**Number of different groups helped
64**

The fact is Worcestershire's communities need our support more than ever, so we rely on our supporters, funders and donors to help us meet ongoing challenges head-on.

Our work

Some of the people and projects we've supported ...

- Children & young people
- Community cohesion
- Community sports & arts
- Disability & poor health
- Domestic abuse
- Food banks
- Homelessness
- Isolation
- Mental health & wellbeing
- Minority groups
- Older people
- Food & fuel poverty
- Refugees
- Schools
- Veterans
- Volunteer networks

Here are some of our funds:

- **The High Sheriff Fund:** supporting each High Sheriff's individual funding ambitions, from young people at risk of crime to mental health.
- **The Arts Fund:** rolling grants for inspirational arts/culture and wellbeing projects.
- **The Community Fund:** a fund which gives to a range of exceptional projects with strong outcomes.
- **Strengthening Worcestershire Fund:** working in partnership with Worcestershire County Council to support disadvantaged local communities continuing to experience the ongoing effects of socio-economic challenges.
- **Inclusive Communities Fund:** working in partnership with the West Mercia Police and Crime Commissioner to support minority groups.
- **The Tom Jones in Memorium Fund:** a fund commemorating the life of a unique young person by supporting sports and water safety provision.



A snapshot of Worcestershire

Worcestershire continues to face challenges of disadvantage and social need, with major impacts on local communities.

Worcestershire ranks 9th in the UK for rising deprivation levels

27,750 (5%) of residents live in the top 10% of England's most deprived areas, notably Worcester City, Redditch & Wyre Forest

Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2022
Worcestershire County Council

30,500 (11.7%) of all households claim Universal Credit, with many facing a cut
Worcestershire County Council

Over 43% of Children in Need have suffered for over 2 years, with lower attainment levels than their peers.

22% of young people aged 17 to 24 years have a probable mental disorder.

32.2% of children live in poverty
Annual Summary Joint Strategic Needs Assessment 2024
Worcestershire County Council

16.5% of households are living in fuel poverty
Department for Energy Security and Net Zero



Stepway volunteers

To support our local communities Worcestershire Community Foundation is **listening to the sector** to hear what is needed; **growing new funds and working in strategic partnerships** to address real issues; **building key relationships** with new funders and, **planning new campaigns** to engage local donors and philanthropists and work with them on innovative initiatives.

We will continue to work with funders, supporters and donors who share our values, believe in the county and really want to find sustainable solutions.

Our stories

There are so many to tell.

Here's what some groups and beneficiaries say our grants mean to them ...

"I have found all aspects of dealing with Worcestershire Community Foundation to be extremely positive. The application and reporting process are robust but accessible and the communication from your team is excellent."

Malvern Cube Projects



Sky Autism Fundraiser

www.worcscf.org.uk

"Seeing the Mayor actually listen to our ideas made us realise that we have the power to make a difference. Organising the car wash and the sports tournament wasn't just fun; it felt like we were really changing things for the better."

Worcester Community Trust Youth

"I cannot take my children out in the shared garden; there are neighbours using drugs and all sorts around me. Without this group the children wouldn't ever be outside."

Oasis Community Hub Warndon Parent

"Parenting a child with complex difficulties can feel very lonely and I am very grateful to Aurum for offering such expert help."

Parent of Autistic Child

"Aurum is a lifeline. I cannot express enough just how beneficial it has been to have a group of like-minded people to speak to. They are filling a frankly huge gap in the black hole that is women's autism support."

Aurum Beneficiary



Worcester Film Festival

"Without Maggs, I'd still be sleeping rough next to a dual carriageway."

Maggs Day Centre Beneficiary

"One client who self-harms, actually handed in a scalpel to staff after our session and it is these small wins that can have an impact."

St Paul's Hostel

"I'm really proud of the booklet I've helped make, and it's made something that was very upsetting at the time feel a bit better, as now I might have helped someone else ask for help."

Our Way Self Advocacy Beneficiary

Our stories

Here are a few case studies where a grant has made a real impact on people's lives ...

Our Way Self Advocacy: A client approached them after he made a female friend online. She wanted to meet, which he was happy to do. However, before they met she started asking him to send her money. He felt uncomfortable doing this and wasn't sure how, so asked staff if they could help. They spoke to him about the relationship and explained the dangers of this. On discovering the person was based abroad they supported him in reporting it and blocked her from further contact.

Open Trail: When one young man began riding with them, he struggled to make eye contact, lacked both

confidence and friends. Today he is sailing over the jumps, cheering on and being cheered on by his friends, talks openly and confidently, welcomes newcomers and is right at the core of everything at the bike park.

Wyre Forest Nightstop: 'J' was referred by Kidderminster College, most of her siblings were in care and mum had severe mental health problems. They provided a Nightstop placement, clothes and toiletries and re-homed her cats. They finally supported her to a place at Malvern Foyer where she reports she *'feels happy and safe'*.



Monday Night Club



Megan Baker House



Worcester Theatres

Our stories continued ...

ASPIE: An isolated young man with no friends, contacted them in desperation. He could only cope with counselling, being too introverted to engage with other members. Gradually, his confidence increased, he joined the Games Group and now has a circle of friends. He was helped into volunteering in line with his special interest and through their partnership with the Shaw Trust's Pioneer Project has since successfully gained employment.

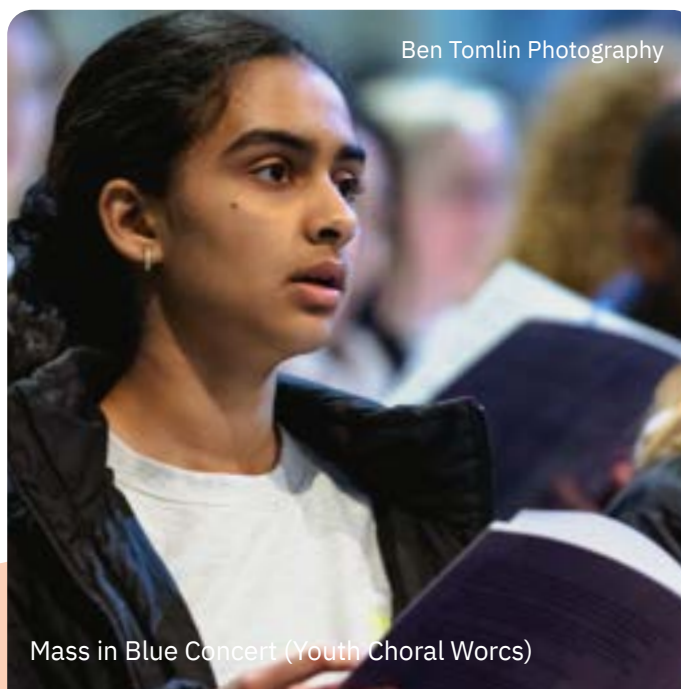
Yellow Scarf: 'B' from Lithuania suffering from stress and anxiety had started to lose control over the amount of alcohol he consumed. Thanks to their walk and talk he has found a healthy alternative and was able to turn back from this downward spiral.

Heart of England Forest: After her experience with Young Foresters 'M' asked to support their Mini Foresters 'group as part of her Duke of Edinburgh silver award. She is now considering working with children and young people herself when she is older.

Stepway: For one veteran their Community Payback Scheme gave him back some self-esteem and a sense of belonging. He is now employed by them as a valued member of the team, focused on a brighter future with his offending behaviour behind him.



Tom's Fund Sports Festival



Ben Tomlin Photography

Mass in Blue Concert (Youth Choral Worcs)



Oasis Community Hub Warndon

Our stories continued ...

Maggs Day Centre: Staff worked consistently with 'C' to address his substance use, mental health, homelessness and access to services to get his life back on track. They supported him to reduce his alcohol dependency and engage with Cranstoun, register with a new GP, get on the Council housing register and Housing4you, open a bank account and be placed into temporary accommodation.



Carers Careline

"I felt really comfortable participating in this workshop and I now feel more confident to speak up in conversations relating to these issues."

LGBTQ+ Awareness Training Attendee

"A youth worker is like a friend and a mentor, but with professional boundaries."

Young Person - The Hub Bromsgrove

"I was at the end of the road, and was regularly suicidal. If ASPIE hadn't been there for me I may never have got the help and support I needed."

ASPIE Beneficiary

"Conflict coaching helped me understand my child, especially the teenage brain. The mediators were amazing, very understanding, no judging and helped me and my family come back together."

Wyre Forest Nightstop Beneficiary

"Soon after I separated with my partner I didn't have any friends due to all friends being the ones we had together. I was feeling alone until I joined the group, I feel like I belong somewhere and have someone to talk to."

International Women's Group Member



Kemp Hospice Counselling

"I did not think anyone would support me because of the nature of my crime. Stepway have been non-judgmental and supported me by giving me the opportunity to work in a safe environment. This has improved my mental health and I feel a sense of self-worth."

Stepway Veteran

"I feel like I have come out of a nightmare that I could not wake up from and now I just want to keep experiencing all the things I was numb to and enjoy life like I should."

"Thank you for not judging me and making me see the light at the end of the tunnel. I feel hope now that things can be better for me and my children."

Sandycroft Clients

Our stories continued ...

Sandycroft: A client with child protection in place presented with mental health, antisocial behaviour and addiction issues. A multi-disciplinary team provided her with support for her complex situation. An IDVA assessment identified her as medium risk down from high risk after the abusive relationship with the perpetrator ended. She is now making significant improvement as well as showing more resilience for her and her children.

Mentor Link: Before 'C' was referred he had regular school suspensions and may have become a candidate for a permanent exclusion. His school reports they are delighted to say his attitude towards school has improved no end, as has his behaviour, and they are sure this is in no little part due to the work his mentor has done with him.

The Hub Bromsgrove: 'A' was getting into trouble at school, having issues at home and arguments. She didn't mix with peers at first, was hard to engage in conversation and, spent a lot of time on her phone, sitting away from people. School found her behaviour



challenging. With praise and encouragement she began to engage in arts, crafts, cooking, team and board games and conversations with peers. She then helped plan some community events. She is now getting along better at home, has more friends at the club and seems happier within herself. The school have fed back that she is doing well and getting into less trouble.



Mentor Link

THANK YOU!

To all our supporters,
sponsors and funders
who help us to make a
real impact in the lives
of Worcestershire's
communities!



Monday Night Club Photo: Fall-Taylor



Elgar Festival



Bromsgrove Hub Tuesday Club



Worcester Paint Festival



MAKING A DIFFERENCE TO YOUR COMMUNITY



 Worcestershire Community Foundation

 Worcestershire Community Foundation/Lucy Wells

 @worcsgiving



www.worcscf.org.uk

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