



COLLECTIVE BUSINESS FUND

Update report

April 2025

About the Oxfordshire Collective Business Fund

The Oxfordshire Collective Business Fund started in 2022, and is a way for local businesses to make our county a better place to live and work, by pooling your funds together with other companies to amplify your reach and impact.

Through a collective fund, local businesses significantly increase their positive impact by combining contributions with other businesses and funders to make life-saving grants to Oxfordshire charitable organisations.

On behalf of the members of the fund, OCF identifies frontline charities and community projects that you might not otherwise be aware of. We conduct due diligence on grantees, and report back to donors on the impact of their giving.

OCF is Quality Accredited, confirming our excellence in governance, finance, philanthropy, and grant making, through OCF's membership of the UK network of community foundations.

Members of the Collective Business Fund

Members make a one-off or annual corporate donation to the fund of around £2,000.



Cover image: The Pump House Project, which received a grant of £14,700 to combat social isolation and loneliness and food poverty in Faringdon.



Fund focus in 2024–25: loneliness and isolation

The Collective Business Fund is used by OCF to pool corporate donations with those of other funders. In 2024, we combined the Collective Business Fund with money from Oxfordshire County Council and six different donor-advised funds held within OCF as part of the Community Capacity grants programme.

For the third year running, we have partnered with the County Council to deliver the Community Capacity programme, which funds grassroots charities to support people to live well in their community, remaining fit and healthy for as long as possible. This builds community resilience and increases independence for vulnerable adults in areas across Oxfordshire.

The types of activity funded by the Community Capacity grants range from providing antenatal groups for young parents, to healthy cooking classes, and groups reducing loneliness and isolation.

Charities applied for grants of £5,000–£20,000 as part of an open grants round in autumn 2024, with grants paid in December.



Filling a crucial funding gap

County Council funding allowed us to make much-needed grants to 24 different life-saving charities. However, we received many more good quality applications than we were able to fund, and we were able to leverage further funding by matching grant applications with some of the other funds we hold on behalf of individual philanthropists and their families, and individual local businesses.

Thanks to the David and Claudia Harding Foundation, the Meech Centenary Trust, the Jane Wates Patron Fund, the RWK Goodman Charitable Fund and the OCF Collective Business Fund, we were able to award a further six charitable grants to a total of £66,200, representing a 20% uplift to the funding supplied by the county council.

Being able to reach more charities than initially anticipated is a great example of how statutory organisations, philanthropists and local businesses can come together for greater impact.

A full list of grants made from the Community Capacity programme in 2024–25 can be found at the end of this report.



Case study: The Pump House Project

The Pump House Project is based in Faringdon and has a simple mission: to identify community needs and provide or facilitate support. They focus on combating social isolation and loneliness, improving physical and mental health, and easing food poverty.



The Old Theatre, with its central location and versatile space, has allowed the charity to expand over the past 11 years. The organisation provides affordable, welcoming spaces for all, supported by a dedicated team of staff and volunteers.

One of these activities is COGS Counselling, a service aimed at supporting young people's mental health, especially following the pandemic. Working with local schools, GP surgeries, and volunteers, the service has exceeded expectations, providing free counselling sessions to over 250 clients aged 12-25. The project now relies on grants to fund meeting rooms, insurance, DBS checks and administrative costs.

The Pump House Project also runs low-cost elderly exercise classes that promote physical and mental wellbeing, and the Community Fridge/Cupboard offers food to those in need. Additionally, the Cake Café provides affordable baked goods and hot beverages, serving as a welcoming space for social interaction and support from external organisations.

The Pump House Project applied to the Community Capacity programme, and a grant of £14,700 was allocated to the charity from the Collective Business Fund in combination with funds from the RWK Goodman Community Fund and the OCF Business Cares Fund, an invested endowment raised by former Managing Director of CPM Tony Stratton DL during his time as High Sheriff of Oxfordshire in 2014.



About the people supported

The Pump House Project has received positive feedback from numerous individuals involved in their various projects:

- The Crafty Crew group has received high praise from its attendees for its supportive, non-judgmental environment. Many members, who face challenges such as anxiety, depression, disabilities, and loneliness, have expressed how warmly they are welcomed and how inclusive the group is, regardless of age or gender. The group provides an opportunity to learn new hobbies, make lasting friendships, and serves as a therapeutic outlet for many, helping them feel valued and supported in their personal journeys.
- Attendees of COGS, the Counselling Service for Children and Young Adults, have shared heartfelt testimonials of the positive impact the service has had on their lives. One individual highlighted the exceptional care, empathy, and unwavering support provided by the team, emphasising how the counselling service helped them in ways words could not fully describe.
- One participant of The Urban Movement Academy, having achieved their Level 1 Parkour/Freerunning coaching qualification, shared how it unlocked new opportunities, including work coaching the next generation of kids. Their confidence in organising and instructing groups has grown significantly, positively impacting their personal life and character development as a young adult. They look forward to improving as a coach and completing their level 2 qualification.

What the grant is for

The grant is now being used to cover ongoing increased running costs due to the rise in users at The Pump House Project, where extra staff have been required to cover administration. These new positions have enabled the organisation to maintain the quality of its projects while accommodating the growing number of people being supported.

This investment will support the longevity of these projects, retaining the value of the work they do to build confidence, purpose and community cohesion. Keeping their doors open helps reduce isolation and loneliness, addressing mental and physical wellbeing, and benefiting individuals, the community and society as a whole.

The grant will allow the organisation to continue improving the quality of life for residents of Faringdon and surrounding villages, ensuring they remain responsive to the community's needs, while managing the current economic challenges and funding core costs. The project plays a vital role in unlocking potential, providing security, self-worth, and supporting mental and physical health across various social and economic dimensions, in a safe and supportive environment.



Coming up at OCF

Thank you so much to the businesses who have supported the Collective Business Fund since 2022. You are all making a difference by giving to Oxfordshire.

We are committed to continuing to support local communities with the issues we outline in our flagship report Oxfordshire Uncovered. We will continue to pool businesses' contributions with our other funders as we go forward.

In 2025 we will be celebrating OCF's 30th's birthday! Please save the date for these key events this year:

- **Thursday 12th June**, 4–6pm – Summer drinks on the rooftop at the Courtyard by Marriott Hotel, 15 Paradise Street, Oxford OX1 1LD
- **Tuesday 2nd December**, 5–8pm – 30th birthday celebration on Giving Tuesday at a venue TBC.

We hope you can come along and find out about the impact OCF has had thanks to you and many others throughout our history.

What your business can do

 RENEW YOUR COMMITMENT	 SHOUT ABOUT YOUR INVOLVEMENT
<p>The number one action you can take to support us is to give again to the fund!</p> <p>Donations of every type and level help, as it's through the combined power of businesses, local authorities, philanthropists and trusts that we can make bigger difference.</p>	<p>We'd be so grateful if you would share the fact that you have supported this work.</p> <p>Encourage your own business networks to join you by giving to OCF's Collective Business Fund. OCF can work with you on joint publicity on your website and social media.</p>



Contact

If you'd like to discuss either of these subjects, or raise any queries, OCF's Deputy CEO Kate Parrinder is available for a 121 discussion or meeting.

Kate Parrinder, Deputy CEO

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Community Capacity grants awarded 2024

Organisation funded	Amount awarded	Type of activity funded	Local authority
Ark T	£19,300.00	Arts-based initiatives to foster emotional wellbeing and reduce loneliness and isolation	Oxford
Berin Centre	£19,799.00	Costs for a Community Outreach Manager to support adults with a range of needs	South Oxfordshire
Bridewell Gardens	£20,000.00	Develop a community garden at Carterton Health Centre	West Oxfordshire
Cotteslowe and District Community Association	£10,910.00	Groups to support groups identified as being at high risk of loneliness and isolation	Oxford
Gatehouse	£20,000.00	Providing a counselling service to people experiencing or at risk of homelessness	Oxford
Grow Families	£7,524.40	Set up antenatal groups to support their existing young families offering	Vale of White Horse
Leaffield Village Hall	£9,807.60	New chairs and better path to enable older people to better access the groups held in the hall	West Oxfordshire
Mandala Theatre	£15,850.00	A year-long film project to reach isolated young people from the global majority and deprived areas	Oxford
Marston Community Garden	£6,636.00	Make community allotment and forest garden more accessible for users	Oxford
Maymessy CiC	£19,866.80	Healthy cooking classes and wellness workshops	Vale of White Horse
Metta Centre for Trauma Therapy (formally MEET)	£20,000.00	Deliver low cost / free trauma therapy to address inequalities and promote resilience	Countywide
My Life My Choice	£18,637.00	Project coordinator salary to deliver health and happiness programme	Countywide
Northway Together	£9,600.00	Bringing the community together through a community kitchen and café	Oxford
Open Door	£5,952.00	Reducing isolation and loneliness for refugees and asylum seekers	Oxford
Oxford Peoples Theatre	£17,406.00	Providing an inclusive space to engage people with the arts who are on low income and at risk of isolation	Oxford
Oxfordshire Family Support Network	£13,850.00	Staff costs to help deliver support services to families of people with learning disabilities	South Oxfordshire
Oxfordshire Volunteer Befriending Service	£8,920.00	Core costs for volunteers who provide unpaid family carers with support and a break from their caring responsibilities	Oxford
People Place Participation	£18,815.00	Expand volunteer groups in gardening and biodiversity, reaching those who live in significant deprivation	Oxford



Organisation funded	Amount awarded	Type of activity funded	Local authority
Q1 Hub	£19,623.00	Supporting local residents who are experiencing isolation and loneliness	South Oxfordshire
Riverside Counselling	£8,928.00	Costs to cover venues where counselling service is held supporting adults and young people with mental wellbeing	South Oxfordshire
Root and Branch Westmill	£20,000.00	Core costs to deliver therapeutic gardening and craft activities for people experiencing trauma and enduring mental health difficulties	Vale of White Horse
Sound Resource	£9,011.00	Delivering Moving Music in the community and community hospitals to promote wellbeing through singing and music	West Oxfordshire
Volunteer Link Up	£19,500.00	Core costs to support community transport services and befriending service	West Oxfordshire
Witney Food Revolution	£7,000.00	Core costs to support its mission to reduce food waste while tackling food poverty	West Oxfordshire
TOTAL	£346,935.80		

In addition, a further £66,200 of grants to-date have been awarded to six additional charitable organisations, thanks to the generosity of donors who hold a donor-advised fund with OCF.

Organisation funded	Amount awarded	Type of activity funded	Local authority
Branch Trust	£12,000.00	Staff and running costs to deliver therapy, life skills course, connect café and intergenerational work	West Oxfordshire
Enrych Oxfordshire	£13,200.00	Increase capacity and volunteer numbers for activities to support people with disabilities	West Oxfordshire
Life Centre - Wychwood Baptist Church	£9,800.00	Costs to support the free community café bringing together elderly people	West Oxfordshire
My Vision	£10,400.00	Core costs to deliver services supporting people with sight loss	Oxford
Pump House Project	£10,400.00	Extra staff costs due to the increased users at The Pump House and their counselling project	West Oxfordshire
Transition Chipping Norton	£10,400.00	Costs to continue physical activities, building community connections and enable people from different ages and backgrounds to come together	West Oxfordshire
TOTAL	£66,200.00		

GRAND TOTAL	£413,135.80	30 groups funded
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