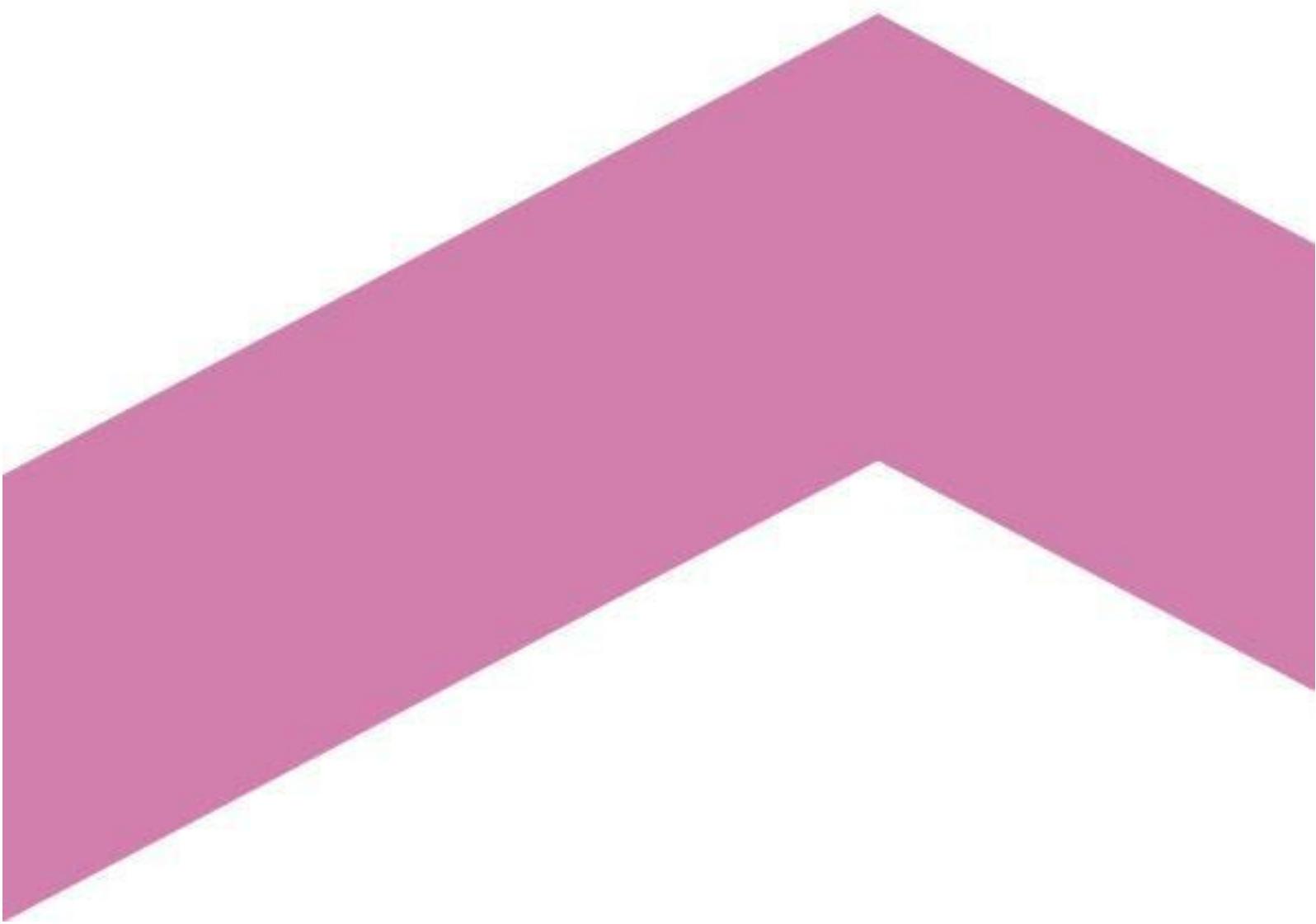


2022 Community Fund

2022/23 Report and Next Steps



Introduction – County Councillor Victoria Wilson, Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture

Staffordshire county councillors have a key role in their divisions. We are here to listen to and support residents, to help local knowledge shape the county council's work, and to strengthen the communities in which we live. One of the tools we have to help our communities is a small grant fund which we can use to invest in initiatives and projects for the benefit of local people across Staffordshire.

We were able to broaden our funding criteria for 2022/23, whilst still focusing on the key principles of supporting projects aimed at helping residents look after themselves, the people around them, and the places where they live. This means that the 2022 Community Fund has helped some of our voluntary and community partners to implement new initiatives, whilst also supporting others to develop plans and projects they had already implemented in 2021.

One of the major successes of last year's Fund, was that we were able to support communities to come together and celebrate Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee. This was an incredible accomplishment, achieved by an extraordinary lady, and it was only right that the occasion was celebrated so enthusiastically. I am immensely proud that we were able to support some of these celebratory events to take place. Building on this success we are pleased that the 2023/24 fund has already been used to support local celebrations and activities centered on the Coronation of King Charles III.

This report gathers only some of the examples from the huge range of projects and organisations that the funding supported, but I hope that it gives you a sense of how our members continue to support communities in ways that make a real difference. As always, I am grateful for your hard work in engaging with and supporting your local community groups with this successful Community Fund.

Finally, many of you will be aware that Pete Barker left the Member and Democratic Services team in April 2023. Pete has administered the fund since April 2019, and I'm sure you will all join me in giving our thanks for all the support he has provided over the years, and in wishing him well in his future role in the Strategy team. The day-to-day administration of the Fund is now in the capable hands of Chantelle Denham and Simon Humble. If you have any issues, please get in touch with them and they will be ready to help with any queries you may have.

**County Councillor Victoria Wilson
Cabinet Member for Communities and Culture**



Background

The 2022 Community Fund launched on 19 April 2022 and ran for new applications until 31 October 2022.

It saw £2,500 allocated to each County Councillor. Councillors were able to use as much or as little of this as they wanted to support projects which needed it, or to work together with other councillors and jointly support bigger projects.

The criteria for the 2022 Community Fund was broadened to make it easier for community groups to access funding for a wide range of projects, including around the Queen's Jubilee. Funding was made available to applicants fulfilling one of the following three criterion:

a. Community projects about looking after ourselves

For example:

- i. Projects which will support and enhance personal physical health.
- ii. Projects which will support the improvement of wellbeing, resilience and independence.

b. Community projects about looking after those around us

For example:

- i. Projects to connect people in communities to support, or to each other.
- ii. Projects to give children and young people the best start in life, and the chance to achieve their potential.
- iii. Projects which will support those who need additional help.

c. Community projects about looking after your place

For example:

- i. Projects which will enhance the places where we live.
- ii. Projects which will further develop our community spaces.
- iii. Projects that will bring people together to increase community spirit, including celebrating the Coronation of King Charles III.

Success of the Fund

Whilst the Covid pandemic was no longer affecting the everyday lives of residents in the way it did in 2020 and 2021, the long-term effects were still being felt by our community and voluntary groups. Many had been established in response to the pandemic, filling the gap left by businesses or organisations that, sadly, closed their doors and were unable to reopen them.

This funding has been a direct part of supporting the communities of Staffordshire in the delivery of a range of projects that included:

- Jubilee parties
- Children's activities
- Holiday activities
- Sports clubs
- Support for the older generation
- Support for the lonely
- Seasonal celebrations
- Equipment purchases
- Remembrance Activities

A wide range of projects received funding. County Councillors have played a huge role in promoting and encouraging applicants, with a final total of £120,523 allocated, supporting 180 different groups and organisations. The total cost of projects supported equated to £932,240.23.

As in the 2021 Community Fund there was no financial minimum match funding for applications to the 2022 Community Fund, other than in applications made from Parish Councils or businesses. Staffordshire's communities continue to need flexible support, and the fund allowed county councillors to use their investment to help.

Below are some examples of the types of projects that have received funding through this year's fund.

Community projects about looking after ourselves

Ashley & Loggerheads Community First Responders

The Community Fund grant of £1000 was put towards a new Responder vehicle for the Ashley & Loggerheads Community First Responder group, to replace their aging vehicle which was becoming expensive to keep on the road. As the group receives no funding from West Midlands Ambulance Service they can only continue with generous donations from the local community and grants and awards from Community Funds.



Burntwood Town Council - Dementia Friendly Walk

Burntwood Town Council received funding to support the town's first Memory Walk, organised in partnership with Burntwood Dementia Friendly Community. Over 50 people attended the 1.2 mile walk despite the torrential rain!



The walk generated interest locally and raised some much needed awareness of the challenges of living with or caring for someone with dementia. Walkers heard about the importance of supporting those in our local community affected by

dementia, and walkers remembered loved ones by writing the names of who they were walking for and attaching them on our Memory Tree which is now displayed in the foyer at the Old Mining College.

Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport

Moorlands Voluntary and Community Transport (MVCT) is a small charity that provides transport to those in need across the Staffordshire Moorlands. They run a voluntary car scheme that enables people to attend medical appointments, and a community transport scheme that has three wheelchair accessible minibuses that enable community group members to attend activities. The grant was used to provide the volunteer minibus

drivers with new high-vis coats and vests complete with the MVCT logo; these are vital for the warmth and safety of the volunteer drivers and give reassurance to the often older, vulnerable passengers.

Stafford Friends of the Donna Louise Hospice for Children and Young People - Gazebo and tables for fund raising events

The Stafford Friends of the Dougie Mac Hospice for Children and Young People (Formerly The Donna Louise) raise funds for the Hospice which provides outreach, respite and end of life care for children and young adults and their families who live in Mid Staffordshire, North Staffordshire and South Cheshire.

As a group they sell a variety of home-made jams, marmalades, pickles, chutneys, and at their events they also sell home-made cakes and desserts, seasonal gifts and 'everyone a winner' tombola. The grant from the community fund, which was supported by four Councillors, enabled them to purchase a robust gazebo and three sturdy tables.

Community projects about looking after those around us

Lichfield Arts Fuse Festival 2022

The Fuse Festival took place over the weekend of Friday 7 to Sunday 9 July 2022. More than 15,000 people attended over the three days, over 20 community groups were represented in the arena along with a joint dance project with the Lichfield Festival, more than a thousand volunteering hours were expended over the weekend.



Hidden Warriors CIC - Support for Cost of Living



The Community Fund received by Hidden Warriors CIC allowed them to purchase a storage shed to support their Food and Clothing Bank that has been set up in Silkmore. The storage shed is a secure place where dry foods and clothing can be stored, and the project has directly helped individuals and families within the Community.

The Ridwares Women's Institute Community Allotment

As part of the Community Spirit initiative in the village of Hill Ridware, members of the Ridwares WI took on half an allotment with the other half being cared for by the pupils of Henry Chadwick School.

The allotment was divided into sections for growing vegetables, fruit bushes and flowers, and a small pond was also added which encouraged a lot of wildlife on the plot. A large bug hotel, a hedgehog house and bird boxes were put up and a compost bin was also purchased. Various wildflower seeds were planted and provided a riot of colour and interest throughout the summer.



This project encouraged people to work together and the fresh produce that was grown was shared out. Pumpkins were grown and members of the youth club did some carving for Halloween, and they also made soup at one of their meeting nights.

West Chadsmoor Family Centre - Grow with us



West Chadsmoor Family Centre received the Community Fund to help update its garden area and to buy equipment to be used in the garden and allotment.

They were able to purchase bark for the garden and a set of wheelbarrows which have been used in the allotments by most of the children who attend. They also purchased small trowels for the children to use when helping to plant flowers for the garden and vegetables for the allotment. Further to this they purchased benches for adults which matched the children's benches purchased the year before. They generally improved both the look of the garden and the facilities available. This enabled the families attending to have a more positive experience in their outside area.

Life Stream Church - 'Coffee House' Toddlers

The Community Funding received was put towards the purchase of a 'Pack Away' Soft Play Kit which is used to provide an exciting and enhanced play facility for the benefit of families in the community. Weekly 'Coffee House Toddler' sessions see babies and toddlers enjoying the soft play and a local SEND group has been delighted to use the soft play on a monthly session basis, providing a much-needed facility.



In the very near future the church will be opening its 'Coffee House' where the soft play will be an integral part of providing a safe environment for babies and toddlers to play whilst parents/carers enjoy a relaxing cuppa!

Community projects about looking after your place

Tatenhill Memorial and Thanksgiving Hall

Following support from the Fund the Tatenhill Memorial and Thanksgiving Hall have taken delivery of 100 new chairs and a new stage system, all on easily moveable trolley systems.

The new chairs replace plastic stacking chairs and the staging provides multiple options for concerts, theatre, fashion shows and other events. We have re-engaged with Live & Local and expect to be hosting our first events in the Autumn following the recent release of the latest Menu of shows.



Meanwhile, 50 of the replaced chairs were passed on to a local fundraising team to support their outdoor and barn dance events.

Roots Larder CIC - Community Room Refurbishment



With the funding received Roots Larder were able to purchase lockable storage cabinets and signage for our new community room. The CIC provides a wide range of services and activities on its site; the new cabinets have enabled them to store

numerous items that help us carry out our activities.

Other groups use the community room and it is helpful for them to be able to safely store their equipment.

Many of the activities support members of the public from diverse groups, including, the elderly, those isolated, suffering poor mental health, anxiety / depression, young people with emotional difficulties and those experiencing financial hardships. The groups and activities have helped provide a safe comfortable space to come together, share skills and learn new skills.

Wombourne Parish Council - Queen's Jubilee Music Concert

Wombourne Parish Council held a free outdoor concert for residents on Friday 3rd June 22 - the event ran from 1pm to 8pm. Six bands of varying genres played throughout the day. The Parish Council felt it was important to ensure the Commonwealth was represented as well as local talent, so the bands included a reggae band, jazz band, local rock choir, bhangra group, war time/nostalgic group and local mod group. It is estimated some 5000 visited during the day. As the event was completely free for residents, the grant funding was put towards the cost of running the event. Please see this link for a video from the day: <https://youtu.be/hFm6yyq6a1s>



Longdon Village Jubilee Celebration

Longdon Community Group secured funding last year to support its Jubilee celebrations.

Many groups from within the village joined together to help to celebrate the occasion. The overs 60's held a Tea dance, the Flower club decorated the bridge in the village, the WI produced cream teas by the hundred. An afternoon of family events including bouncy castles, tug of war, adults v kids football, and a mobile Buckingham palace with dressing up stage took place.



These case studies demonstrate a handful of the projects the Community Fund has supported throughout the year. You can find more information on all of the projects we have supported at the following link: [2022 Community Fund - Staffordshire County Council](#)

2023/24 Fund Promotion

Members' Community Fund – Staffordshire Council of Voluntary Youth Services (SCVYS) Funding and Networking Event 2023

In April 2023 officers from Member and Democratic Services attended a funding and networking event organized by SCVYS to promote the Members Community Fund 2023.

The event was well attended by representatives of voluntary organisations and Charities from all areas of Staffordshire, seeking funding for initiatives ranging from arts projects to substance abuse prevention. All interested parties were advised that the Fund opened on 9 May 2023 and that they should contact the appropriate County Councillor(s) for the area of their Project prior to submitting an application.

Next steps

Following the success of the 2022-23 Community Fund, and the fact that the principles aligned with the Council's #DoingOurBit campaign, it was clear that there was no need to make wholesale changes to the focus for the 2023-24 fund. This means that it will continue to support projects aimed at helping residents look after themselves, the people around them, and the places where they live.

The success of last year's support for Platinum Jubilee projects guided us to the conclusion that the 2023 fund should also be used to support local celebrations and activities centering on the Coronation of King Charles III. However, the major scale of local elections taking place across Staffordshire in May 2023 meant that the Community Fund would not open for new applications until 9 May 2023. Because this missed the Coronation weekend, it was agreed that retrospective applications would be permitted, but specifically and only for costs related to Coronation activities. This was also time limited, with retrospective Coronation-related applications only accepted until the end of June 2023. This meant that projects and parties could still proceed in the knowledge that they would likely receive support from the Community Fund after the event, subject to the support of local members and all other points of the application and funding request fitting within the rules of the fund.

Conclusion

The 2022 Community Fund played a successful part in helping communities to look after themselves, the people around them, and the places they live. By #DoingOurBit, we intend to build on this success in 2023-24, with councillors continuing to use their fund to help groups, activities and communities across Staffordshire to develop and thrive.