

# 2023/24

## Annual Report



**Stratford-on-Avon District**  
Social Inclusion Statement  
Action Plan 2021 – 2024



## Stratford Social Inclusion Partnership Development Officer

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## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

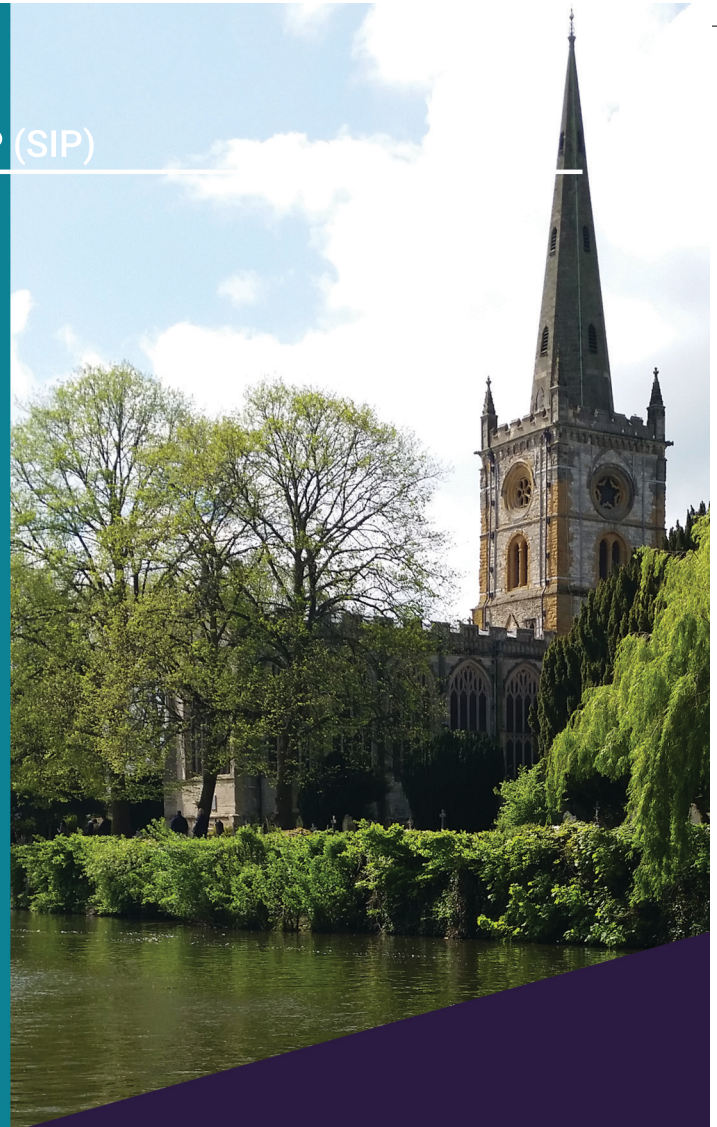
### Introduction

Welcome to the 2023-24 annual report for the Social Inclusion Partnership Development Officer (DO) work funded by Stratford District Council and hosted by Warwickshire & Solihull Community and Voluntary Action (CAVA).

This is the fourth full year of delivery that the role has navigated a Voluntary and Community Sector within the district grappling with a cost-of-living crisis, persistently high inflation, increased demand for services, diminishing funding opportunities, recovery from COVID and shifts in volunteer engagement.

This report outlines the achievements delivered in collaboration with, and in support of, Stratford-on-Avon District's Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP). It highlights the obstacles encountered, the funding secured for the district, and the networks and relationships established and sustained.

This will be the final annual report under the Social Inclusion Statement as the Partnership transitions to a new "Growing Opportunities" plan from 2024 onwards.



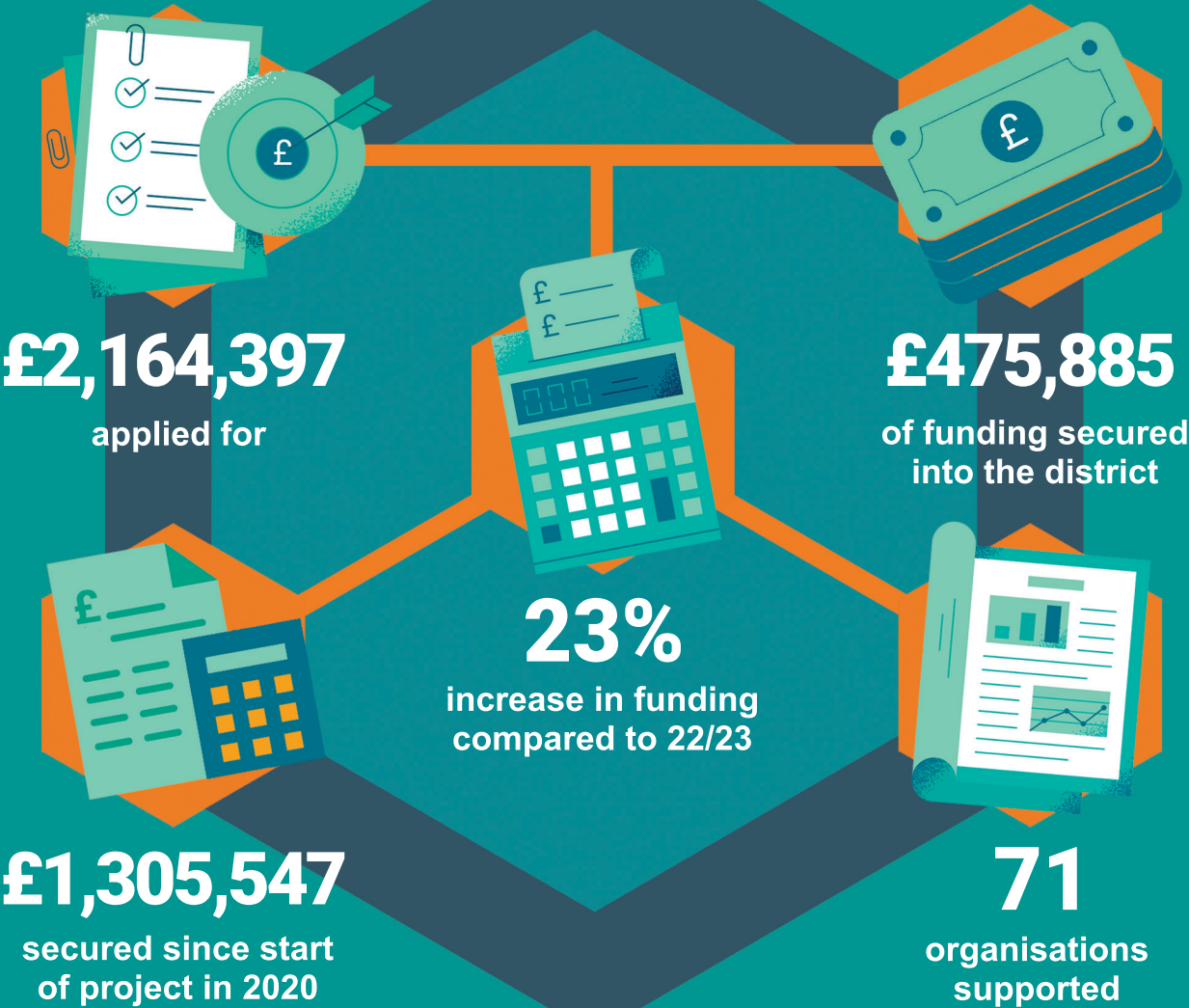
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*We would like to thank you very much for your huge contribution to our new village hall. We couldn't have done it without your help..*

- Wixford Village Hall Committee



Key Achievements 2023/24





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)



Indoor curling sets handed over to  
Ilmington Village by the Stour Health  
and Wellbeing Partnership



### Purpose of the Development Officer post

The Development Officer post's purpose is to support the voluntary and community organisations (VCO's) operating within Stratford-on-Avon district so that they may have a greater impact upon the priorities in the Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement (SIS).

The posts key duties and responsibilities are:

- Identify funding opportunities relating to SIP opportunities
- Ascertain the funding requirements of local Voluntary Community Organisations (VCOs)
- Identify opportunities for partnership, collaborative working and operational efficiencies related to SIS
- Take a lead in submitting funding bids
- Build and maintain key relationships
- Provide advice, support, and promote good practice in VCSE management, governance, and development.

A particular focus in 2023/24 was the support for Charities who were struggling to navigate a post Covid world. They had in instances spent reserves to support their communities during COVID or had lost volunteers or found post change difficult. Thankfully all those of this type were still running at the end of 23/24.



### Case study: Bishopton Community Centre Secret Garden

#### The Community

Bishopton Community Centre (BCC) is located within Stratford Upon Avon and serves the most deprived community in the district which is also one of the most deprived communities in England.

With support from CAVA the Centre became a CIO in 2020.

The Centre consists of a hall, kitchen, storage cupboards and overgrown outside space.



#### The Challenge

Traditionally BCC did not seek to apply for funding, they were happy to be a hiring hall and have several successful groups who use the facility.

A new Chair who was appointed in 2022 had a more ambitious vision and this coincided with the start of the CAVA Community Builder in late 2022 to provide additional support.

An early ambition was to rejuvenate the outside space which had become overgrown and neglected and put a door so that users could more easily access the garden.

#### Solutions

BCC worked with a variety of local volunteers and groups in particular Forest of Hearts to put together a costed proposal for the rejuvenation of the outside spaces and garden at the Centre. At the same time, CAVA's Community Builder was supporting the new Chair with the changes instigated at the centre. One of these tasks was to bring in CAVA's Development Officer. He worked with the BCC individuals and Community Builder to put together two applications for funding for what now became known as the 'Secret Garden Project'

An application to Stratford District Council's UK Shared Prosperity Fund was ultimately successful, securing £19,614.



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

### Outcomes

- BCC has been granted the largest amount of funding they have ever asked for
- The ambitious vision of the new Chair has been justified
- The change instigated at the centre has led to a successful funding application
- Green space will be enhanced in the most deprived community in the district
- The centre will be more attractive to new and old users helping to increase revenue when costs are increasing
- The support given by the Community Builder and key volunteers has been a critical factor
- Joint working and relationships between BCC, volunteers, the Community Builder, CAVA FGDO Officer, national government, Warwickshire County Council and Stratford District Council has been strengthened.

### Feedback

On hearing the good news two people who attend the Warm Hub at BCC:

Karen said *"It would be lovely to be able to sit outside in the nice weather"*

Angie said *"I would love to do some gardening outside and help keep it looking nice"*

Deputy Mayor, Cllr Dani Hunter, opens the garden.



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

### Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement 2019-2024

The Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Statement 2019-2024 is a partnership document created by Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) to achieve the greatest impact.

The Development Officer's work has supported the priorities as follows:

#### Stratford on Avon District Social Inclusion priorities- Highlights

##### Improve education, employment, and training, increasing income and reducing debt within priority areas

The Development Officer worked closely with Stratford District Council to promote and support group applications to the UK Shared and Rural England Prosperity Funds. 3 online webinars were organised with 168 delegates attending and over 100 viewings of the recordings on the CAVA YouTube Channel. Groups were then supported with a focus on those who could most impact on the SIP priorities.

A similar online webinar on CIL funding on the 24th of May 2023 also covered other capital funding opportunities available to the voluntary and community groups and how they could get additional help from CAVA going forward.

Many of the grants secured for groups also entailed either the engagement of construction companies, purchase of equipment or the recruitment of staff. For example, Warwickshire Reminiscence Action project (WRAP), Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership, Escape Arts, the Youth Collective and Homestart involved the continuation or recruitment of staff.

Due to limited capacity the DO post played an essential role in supporting WRAP with the recruitment of their new paid Charity Manager.



STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

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### Combatting Social and Rural Isolation

23 rural facilities covering communities such as Bidford, Southam, Napton, Langley and Harbury to name a few were supported in this year ranging from sports clubs to village halls who in many instances were keen to improve their building and reduce heating costs. There was therefore a high demand for capital funding.

Stratford Upon Avon Men Shed were continued to be supported as they looked for a permanent venue after leaving Foundation House when it closed. Grants were secured for the Shed as well as introductions to possible venues.

### Case study: Stratford Youth Collective

#### Background

Stratford Youth Collective is a new charity that brings together various partner organisations to support young people in Stratford Upon Avon. The founding members of the Collective include Escape Arts, ILeap, Lifespace Trust, New Meaning Learning, and Warwickshire Pride. Stratford Town Trust played a significant role in initiating the collaboration and provided financial support. The Collective has brought many benefits, but it also presented significant challenges in terms of different ways of working and facing considerable time constraints with their main provision.



#### Challenge

One of the immediate challenges facing the Youth Collectives was finding a new home for the universal youth provision that was previously funded by the Warwickshire County Council Targeted Youth Support program in 2022/23. The program was successfully run in the old H&M building located in Stratford Upon Avon, but the lease had run out, and they needed a new location. The ideal building for the program, The Ministry, had become available, but it required a lot of work and expenses to make it suitable for the young people of the town.



STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

### Meeting the Challenge

The Youth Collective successfully applied for funding from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund in 2023, with a key lead from Karen Williams, CEO of Escape Arts, who has been instrumental in driving the project. The Development Officer (DO) at CAVA worked closely with Karen on the application.

Additionally, the DO at Stratford assisted Karen in securing a larger funding of £149,000 from the Stratford District Council Community Infrastructure Levy fund. The support included advice on what to apply for, feedback on application drafts, template information on the strategic and policy context and links to previous years' applications and supporting documents. The DO also suggested not being too risk-averse with the size of the application. Furthermore, a webinar was conducted in collaboration with Stratford's district Council's Planning Team to aid groups in applying.

The partnership and relationship developed with the planning team enabled the application to include revenue funding for an invaluable Operations Manager for the Collective's first year. This was something that was not previously funded before by CIL.

### The Outcome

The future of the Stratford Youth Collective and the universal youth provision at the Stratford Youth Hub formally known as the Ministry is a lot more secure now than it was after they secured £149,000 of CIL funding.

The Stratford Youth Hub will serve as a central hub for professional youth-focused initiatives, programmes, and services. It will provide a safe and inclusive space for young people to engage in a range of activities, including arts, education, personal development, work experience, training and community engagement.





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

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### Supporting Older People

WRAP has existed for 25 years supporting people with cognitive brain disorders. They, like many groups, have taken time to recover from COVID lockdowns, losing beneficiaries in the process. A variety of funding applications were supported to get WRAP back on their feet and recruit a new Charity Manager. Their development needs were also addressed with significant support and guidance on the recruitment process for their new Charity Manager appointed in March 2024.



Attended and supported Men Shed's Stratford Upon Avon AGM and offered advice on identifying a new Shed in Town. Several funding applications were supported.

### Empowering communities to harness local resources and expertise to help themselves

Bishopton Community Centre (BCC) was supported with a National Lottery Cost of Living Fund application from which they secured £11k to replace kitchen equipment and a National Grid application, but that was unsuccessful. The centre successfully applied to UKSPF for the 'Secret Garden' project. This was a great example of a local hub, working in cooperation with the local Community Builder, other key groups, individuals and the Development Officer to secure funding.

Support was also given to workshops on the new GO Plan for the district and particular support was given to the population of the various drafts undertaken on the GO Plan, naturally feeding in intelligence and projects from the VCS sector.

In Upper Lighthorne residents were supported to set up a Residents Association, support was also given to the Upper Lighthorne Support Partnership.

The Development Officer worked collaboratively with the Clopton and Bishopton Community Builder to develop a funding plan for the project. Meon Vale Residents Association was supported with information on how to set up a youth club, funding opportunities for a variety of projects, their ➡



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

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Cllr Grant application and they were linked with Foundation House to take away furniture from the closing Centre to a new home in the village hall. Discussions and initial work were also done on identifying potential funding for a new Community Builder post in Meon Vale.

### Case study: Bishopton Community Centre Trustee training and workshop

#### Background

Bishopton Community Centre (BCC) is located within Stratford Upon Avon and serves the most deprived community in the district which is also one of the most deprived communities in England. With support from CAVA the Centre became a CIO in 2020. The Centre consists of a hall, kitchen, storage cupboards and overgrown outside space.

#### The Challenge

Traditionally BCC did not seek to apply for funding, they were happy to be a hiring hall and have several successful groups who used the facility.

A new Chair who was appointed in 2022 had a more ambitious vision and this coincided with the start of the WCAVA Community Builder in late 2022 to provide additional support.

The new Chair was keen to recruit new Trustees and existing Trustees up to speed on their legal responsibilities, get more involvement and improvement.

#### Solutions

CAVA's Development Officer had built up a good relationship with the new BCC Chair and new Trustees. Several successful funding applications were completed in cooperation with the Centre in 2023.

The Chair asked if CAVA could run a Trustee induction for the new and existing Trustees which covered the legal responsibilities of a charity Trustee.

## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

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At the same time CAVA offered to do a Health Check with the BCC Trustees to see which were its strengths and areas for improvement.

So, on Tuesday 6th February 2024 the morning was taken up with an interactive workshop on the legal responsibilities of a charity trustee and the distinction and overlaps between running a community centre, organisation and charity.

In the afternoon the Trustees were joined by CAVA's Community Builder and Community staff from Stratford and Warwickshire Council's. Who went through the newly revamped Organisational Health Check.

Following the workshop CAVA worked with the Chair to create a new Continuous Improvement plan for the Centre based on the actions from the morning and afternoon.

### Outcomes

- BCC Trustees are now all aware of their legal responsibilities
- They are aware of the overlap but distinction between running a charity, community Centre and organisation.
- The Centre now has a continuous improvement plan looking at the critical areas for a charity and organization such as governance, safeguarding, fundraising etc.
- BCC should be on a more sustainable footing in terms of governance and key organisation aspects.





## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

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### Health and Wellbeing

A wide variety of groups were supported during the year such as Alcester Health and Wellbeing Partnership, Dad Matters, FACES For ALL CIC who were wanting to develop the old library in Alcester into a day centre for adults with a disability.



Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership continued to go from strength to strength and was highlighted in the new Growing Opportunities Plan as an example of best practice in community empowerment and engagement. The DO supported on a variety of funding applications and guidance on the recruitment of their first paid member of staff. A start was also made on the Partnership's 'Growing the Future' project which aims to develop a step change in the capacity of the Partnership with securing funding to employ a paid staff team for the Partnership. The Development Officer played a key role in supporting the setting up of the project in collaboration with the Trustees and facilitated 3 Trustees workshops to move the project forward. The total cost of the project is estimated to be around £300,000 with applications planned for 24/25.

### Delivering Afghan Relocation & UKRS Refugee Resettlement Scheme

A fortnightly Stratford Activities meeting was attended and supported. This was set up in response to people seeking asylum coming to live in Stratford town. The group aims to create activities for the residents.

In cooperation with colleagues in Warwick District and Warwickshire County Council a group of local Afghan refugees were supported as they progressed to set up an Afghan support charity in South Warwickshire.



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)



Prospective Link of Hope Trustees



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

### Impact and Value

A key responsibility of the Development post is to work with VCS groups to secure funding so that they may make a greater impact on SIP priorities. The work can take many forms such as working through the thousands of charitable funding opportunities available and identifying those which are most likely to be successful for a group, providing evidence and data, sense checking and proof-reading applications, advising content and actually writing funding applications for those groups who lack the capacity and/or capability but are doing key SIP priority work within Stratford-on-Avon district. This table highlights the funding applications made in the 2023/24 year that the Development Officer was able to support.

GROUP/ORGANISATION	FUNDER	RESULT	APPLIED FOR	AWARDED
WRAP	Janet and Brian Moore	Unsuccessful	£10,000	
WRAP	Heart of England Community Foundation	Unsuccessful	£8,065	
Bishopton Community Centre	Mental Health Transformational Fund	Successful	£2,000	£2,000
Homestart South Warks	Stratford Town Trust	Successful	£20,000	£13,300
Young Minds Matter	Warks Private Hospital Charitable Trust	Successful	£14,940	£5,000
WRAP	Stratford Town Trust	Unsuccessful	£33,991	
Tredington WI Hall	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£2,000	£2,000
Harbury Scout Hut	Stratford District Council	Unsuccessful	£525,000	
Meon Vale Residents Assoc.	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£2,000	£1,090
Youth Collective/Escape Arts	Stratford District Council	Successful	£149,000	£149,000
Stour Health and Wellbeing	Stratford District Council	Successful	£36,400	£17,000
Bishopton Community Centre	Stratford District Council	Withdrawn	£19,443	
Forest of Hearts	Stratford District Council	Unsuccessful	£35,014	
Ratley Village Hall	Stratford District Council	Unsuccessful	£3,500	
Forest of Hearts/SWFT	Stratford District Council	Successful	£25,000	£25,000

## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

GROUP/ORGANISATION	FUNDER	RESULT	APPLIED FOR	AWARDED
Stratford Sports Club	Stratford District Council	Successful	£80,000	£64,294
Spring Housing	Stratford District Council	Successful	£28,485	£28,485
Stratford Timebank	Stratford District Council	Successful	£5,200	£5,200
Shipston Town Council	Stratford District Council	Successful	£25,000	£25,000
Stour Health and Wellbeing	National Power	Unsuccessful	£9,500	
Bishopton Community Centre	Stratford District Council	Successful	£19,614	£19,614
Bidford Parish Council	Janet and Brian Moore	Successful	£3,000	£3,000
Little Compton Bowls Club	National Lottery Community Fund	Unsuccessful	£9,500	
Escape Arts	National Lottery Community Fund	Successful	£65,000	£37,206
FACES FOR ALL	Community Ownership	On hold	£750,000	
Escape Arts	W Cadbury	Unsuccessful	£19,950	
Dallas Burton FC	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£1,250	£1,250
SW Prostrate Cancer Group	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£500	£350
Ratley Village Hall	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£500	£350
Holy Trinity Church	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£500	£500
Shipston Foodbank	National Lottery Community Fund	Successful	£20,854	£17,715
Bishopton Community Centre	National Lottery Community Fund	Successful	£11,500	£11,500
Stepping Stones	Stratford Town Trust	Successful	£19,500	£19,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing	Police and Crime Commissioner	Successful	£14,781	£14,781
The Queer Parenting Project	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£750	£750
Southam Rugby Club	HS2 Fund	On hold	£66,000	
Aunty Jen Productions	Arts Council England	Unsuccessful	£14,030	
WRAP	Patrick Trust	Successful	£3,500	£1,500
WRAP	W E Dunn	Successful	£3,500	£1,000
WRAP	Dumbreck Trust	Submitted	£4,000	
WRAP	Misses Barrie Trust	Submitted	£4,000	
WRAP	F C Stokes	Submitted	£4,000	
WRAP	C A Rookes	Submitted	£7,000	



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

GROUP/ORGANISATION	FUNDER	RESULT	APPLIED FOR	AWARDED
WRAP	E and D Cadbury	Submitted	£7,000	
WRAP	W D Cadbury	Submitted	£20,000	
WRAP	Baron Davenport	Successful	£8,000	£500
WRAP	Heart of England Community Foundation	Unsuccessful	£40,630	
WRAP	Field Family Trust	Unsuccessful	£3,000	
Welcombe Radio	WCC County Councillors' Grant Fund	Successful	£2,000	£2,000
Escape Arts	29th May 1961 Charitable Trust	Successful	£5,000	£5,000
Escape Arts	C A Rookes	Successful	£2,000	£2,000
TOTAL APPLIED FOR			£2,164,397	
TOTAL - SUCCESSFUL				£475,885

## Build and maintain key relationships

Building and maintaining key relationships is a key responsibility of the Development Officer.

The table below highlights those organisations/partnerships/networks to which the Development Officer has worked and added value to in 2023/24.

Alcester Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Bidford Parish Council
Alcester Town Council	Bishopton Community Centre
Angling School	Brearley Village Hall
Artyfolk	By Your Side
Aunty Jen Productions CIC	Crafty Lunch Club
Avon Bowling Club	Crawford Memorial Hall
Barnardo's	Escape: Community Arts

## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

FACES FOR ALL CIC	Shipston Foodbank
Forest of Hearts	Shipston Proms
Fred Winter Centre	Shipston Town Council
GLOSS - Great Ladies of Shipston and Surroundings	Snitterfield Playing Field
	Snitterfield Village Hall
Graham Adams Centre	South Warwickshire Prostate Cancer Support Group
Harbury Guides and Scouts	
Harbury School Parent Teacher Association	Southam Town Council
Harbury Village Library	Spring Housing Association
Heart of England Mencap	Stepping Stones Stratford on Avon
Henley Community Fridge	Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership
Henley Guild Hall	
Holy Trinity Church	Stratford District Council
Home-Start South Warwickshire	Stratford in Bloom
Ken Kennett Centre	Stratford Sports Club
Langley Village Hall	Stratford Timebank
Little Compton Bowls Club	Stratford Town Council
Marston Sicca Parish Council	Stratford Youth Theatre
Men's Shed Stratford upon Avon	Stratford-on-Avon District Social Inclusion Partnership
Meon Vale Residents Association	
Napton Church	Street Art Theatre
Net Zero Stratford	Tanworth and Camp Hill Cricket Club
New Hope Counselling	The Bear Pit
Paint Stratford	The Parenting Project
Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick Village Hall	The Shakespeare Hospice
Queer Parenting Project	Time Out Group
Ratley Village Hall	Townsend Memorial Hall
Rosebird Community Association	Tredington WI Hall



## STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Upper Lighthorne Residents Association	Welford Sports Club
Warwickshire & West Midlands Association of Local Councils (WALC)	Wellesbourne Wanderers FC
Welcombe Radio	Wixford Village Hall
Welcome Here Stratford	

### Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2023/24 annual report highlights the significant contributions made by the Development Officer in supporting and strengthening the Voluntary and Community Sector within the Stratford-on-Avon District.

Despite the ongoing challenges for the VCSE, the Stratford Development Officer’s efforts have advanced social inclusion and well-being across the district.

Particular thanks must go to all the groups that do such important work throughout the district, supporting many of the communities most vulnerable people.

The achievements detailed in this report underscore the positive impact that strategic and dedicated support can have on the growth and resilience of voluntary and community organisations. As demonstrated, the Development Officer’s role remains vital in nurturing a thriving, inclusive, and interconnected community.

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*We have been successful with funding bids with the help and support of CAVA.*

- Alcester Town Council

WARWICKSHIRE & SOLIHULL

**CAVA**



COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ACTION



Scan this code with  
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about SIP online.

**Warwickshire & Solihull Community And Voluntary Action (CAVA) in Stratford-on-Avon District**

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