



**Shropshire  
Community  
Foundation**

**CASE STUDY:**

**McPHILLIPS  
COMMUNITY  
FUND**



**PAUL INIONS**  
**MANAGING DIRECTOR,**  
**McPHILLIPS**

**INTRODUCTION**

The McPhillips Community Fund is committed to improving the well being of communities across Shropshire by providing targeted support for mental health. The fund was launched in 2024 in partnership with Shropshire Community Foundation to mark the company's 60<sup>th</sup> birthday.

**VALUES**

McPhillips operate in the Civil Engineering and Construction sector and have a strong emphasis on Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) and Social Value embedded into business practice.

**LOCATION**

The fund focuses explicitly on communities where McPhillips' workforce live and work, across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.



**We didn't want to just write a cheque; we wanted to create something structured and lasting that would make a real difference.**



**For more information, visit:**

01743 29 10 10 | [info@shropshirecf.org.uk](mailto:info@shropshirecf.org.uk)  
[shropshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk](http://shropshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk)

## About SCF

### Aims & Objectives

Through our trusted network of independent, local experts, we manage funds, deliver grant programmes and connect communities across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, helping local giving create lasting, meaningful impact.

By working closely with donors, partners and grassroots organisations, we ensure funding supports the people, places and projects that make our county stronger, fairer and more resilient.

Supporting over

**18,000+**

**people**

across Shropshire,  
Telford & Wrekin

Investing in  
stronger communities



“The foundation's expertise in due diligence and impact tracking gives us complete confidence that our funding is being used effectively and creating genuine positive change in people's lives. They've made the entire process seamless for us, handling everything from grant applications through to monitoring outcomes”.

val Hardy, McPhillips



# About McPhillips Fund

## 2024 FUND SIZE: £20,000

- **Geographic focus:** Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin
- **Theme:** Mental health & wellbeing (preventative, community based)
- **Applications received:** £190,300 from 47 organisations
- **Grants awarded:** 6 organisations

## CHALLENGES

### Identifying local need

#### McPhillips identified the following:

- Rising mental health challenges (anxiety, depression)
- Social isolation, particularly in rural and semirural Shropshire
- Gaps in preventative, nonclinical mental health support
- Pressure on statutory services and long waiting times

## DESIRED OUTCOMES

- Reduced isolation and loneliness
- Improved mental wellbeing and confidence
- Increased resilience and coping strategies
- Stronger community infrastructure
- Demonstrable measurable outcomes from small grants

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The fund was shaped by NHS Digital, ONS, Public Health England and strong local VCS insight along with a clear un-met demand for early intervention and community-led support.

“This fund will ensure that the benefits of our success at McPhillips are shared with those communities, groups and organisations which most need our support and will ultimately help build a stronger region which is good for all of us”

Val Hardy, Company Secretary, McPhillips

## 2024 GRANT FUNDS WERE AWARDED TO:

**Community Resource** – Buddy System

**HomeStart Telford & Wrekin** – “Something More”

**Brightstar Boxing Academy** – Empower Programme

**Programme Amber Bee CIC** – Mental Wellbeing in Schools

**4 All Foundation** – Weekly Mental Health

**Designs in Mind CIC**

## OVERALL FUND IMPACT & MEASURABLE IMPROVEMENTS

- **1,254+** participants
- WEMWBS\*\* improvements **7%–50%**
- Brightstar: **100%** positive progression
- Amber Bee CIC delivered support to around 450 children across 45 primary schools
- Programmes sustained **beyond** grant period
- Voluntary sector **strengthened**

\*\* Warwick-Edinburgh Mental Well-being Scale designed to measure positive aspects of mental health

# BENEFICIARY SPOTLIGHT FOCUS:

## COMMUNITY RESOURCE – THE BUDDY PROGRAMME 2024

### DELIVERY

Community Resource's Buddy Programme supports adults in Shropshire facing loneliness, anxiety or depression. Trained volunteer buddies provide one-to-one emotional and practical support, building confidence and wellbeing.

Buddies help people access groups, reduce isolation, and form lasting connections. Funding through the McPhillips Fund allowed the training of more volunteers and expanded reach across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin.

In total 51 individuals were supported and 31 were matched with trained volunteer buddies. Activities ranged from walks, cafés, swimming, choirs and local groups.

**“Having a Buddy helped my mental health a lot. It built up my confidence and self-esteem and helped me realise that I could do ‘normal’ things again like I used to and like other people do.”**

Female participant, Age 40 yrs

### IMPACT

Participants regained confidence, routines and independence and many continued engaging without ongoing support.

### ACHIEVED OUTCOMES

- Participants using public transport again
- Independent attendance at community activities
- Sustained engagement post funding

**“Every pound of this fund is going exactly where it is needed most.”**



### IMPACT DATA

**135% over target engagement**

**Increased independent participation**

**Reduced isolation and improved mental wellbeing**

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# Why invest with SCF?



- Small grants can deliver big impact
- Community-led solutions work
- Demand for preventative mental health support remains high
- Local philanthropy strengthens the whole ecosystem

“Community based, preventative interventions can achieve measurable outcomes at relatively low cost.”

Sonia Roberts, Trustee, SCF

# Advice from McPhillips

- Start with local need, not optics
- Build long-term partnerships, not one-off donations
- Trust place-based intermediaries like SCF
- Embed CSR into organisational culture
- Invest in storytelling and impact evidence



“When we invest in communities across Shropshire, we are investing in the communities where our own people live.”

Paul Inions, McPhillips

Targeted local funding,  
**lasting** meaningful  
change.

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