

Three-Year Review of Grant Giving

Shropshire Community Foundation

2023 to 2026



**Shropshire
Community
Foundation**



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Executive Summary

Over the past three years, Shropshire Community Foundation has strengthened its role as a locally focused philanthropic organisation, connecting donors, businesses, and public partners with grassroots groups, addressing some of the county's most pressing challenges.

Between 2023 and 2026, the Foundation invested more than £317,500 into community led initiatives across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin, supporting over 150 projects focused on health and wellbeing, loneliness and isolation, young people, crime prevention, employability, and cost-of-living pressures. Funding has reached thousands of residents and contributed to measurable improvements in wellbeing, confidence, resilience, and community connection.

The review highlights both the impact of locally focused philanthropy and the growing level of unmet need across the county. During this period, the Foundation received over £813,000 in funding requests, significantly exceeding available resources and reflecting increasing pressure on local charities and community services.

Through partnerships with donors, businesses, and public sector organisations, the Foundation has strengthened grassroots delivery, supported early intervention approaches, and increased investment in place-based, community-led solutions. Key themes emerging throughout the review include rural isolation, hidden deprivation, demand for preventative support and the growing importance of sustainable local giving.

Looking ahead, Shropshire Community Foundation remains committed to growing resources, strengthening partnerships, and ensuring communities across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are recognised, supported, and able to thrive.

Our Values



Integrity

Integrity is our first core value and a foundation for all others



Passion

We are passionate about creating transformative and sustainable change for all our communities



Honesty

We are committed to honesty, trust and transparency in all that we do



Compassion

We are compassionate, inclusive, and fair in our purpose



Collaboration

We actively encourage and engage in collaborative and partnership working – 'better together'



Professionalism

We are professional and independent in all our relationships

INTRODUCTION

Shropshire Community Foundation has worked to strengthen communities across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin by connecting donors and philanthropic partners with grassroots organisations and directing funding to where it can make the greatest impact.

WHAT WE DID

- Invested **over £300,000** in community-led initiatives with support from donors, businesses and public partners.
- Funded **more than 150 local projects** focused on improving wellbeing, reducing isolation, building life skills and strengthening social cohesion.
- **Supported thousands of residents**, contributing to measurable **improvements in quality of life**.
- Prioritised **funding for key local issues**, including health and wellbeing, loneliness and social isolation, crime prevention, support for young people, and cost-of-living pressures.
- Expanded **business-led giving** through themed and co-designed funding programmes.
- Ensured **strong governance** through transparent decision-making, rigorous oversight, and place-based delivery shaped by local insight and partnership collaboration.



Demand continues to exceed available funding: **we received £813,031 in requests against £317,500 awarded**, underlining the need to grow resources and partnerships.

Careful stewardship of legacy and endowment funds helps provide sustainable, long-term support for specific causes, while flow-through grants enable timely responses to urgent community needs.

These results reflect a shared commitment between community groups, donors, businesses and public partners, to effective place-based philanthropy, strong governance and collaboration. Our grant-making is guided by local insight and delivered with transparency and accountability.

This review sets out why a locally focused community foundation matters for Shropshire, and how our approach to grant-making has evolved.

A dedicated foundation for Shropshire is needed because the county's challenges, from rural isolation to pockets of urban deprivation, have not always been recognised through existing funding structures. Support for the voluntary and community sector can be fragmented and short term, making it harder for organisations to sustain services. A locally focused foundation helps provide a more coordinated, place-based approach, ensuring funding is targeted, stable, and responsive to the realities of Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin.



As we look ahead, we will keep learning from partners and applicants and focus on growing resources and relationships so we can respond to evolving needs across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.



ABOUT US

We are passionate about Shropshire and want all communities here to thrive.

Our aim is to create the greatest social impact possible by generating and investing donations and endowments, securing public funding, and delivering grants that address specific challenges in local communities.

Local Investment

We champion local giving, building partnerships with people and organisations who want Shropshire to thrive.

By listening to stakeholders and using local data, we build a clear picture of need. This helps us to advise donors and to direct funding where it can have the greatest impact. Together with our partners, we are growing a sustainable source of grant funding for people and places most in need.

Our Members

Local business investment

Shropshire's leading businesses and individuals are part of a collective committed to investing in the future of Shropshire and its people. Through Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC), members support our mission to build a long-term, sustainable source of strategic grant funding for communities and people most in need. Our effective collaboration helps us support grassroots charities and community groups.

Donors and Sponsors

Our donors and supporters are vital to our success and sustainability.

Without the generosity, support and commitment of our private donors and organisations featured in this report, we simply could not make such a positive difference across Shropshire.

We are deeply grateful for their contribution, and so are the communities and individuals whose lives their support helps to change.
Thank you.

Our vision



United, thriving communities across Shropshire where the people are happy, healthy, and fulfilled.

Our mission



Through philanthropy, to build a long-term source of sustainable, strategic grant funding for the good of those communities and people most in need across Shropshire.



What we do

Shropshire Community Foundation manages a range of philanthropic funds on behalf of donors, families, and organisations, ensuring they are carefully administered and directed to local charitable impact. We work closely with fund holders to align giving with their priorities, whether through long-term investment or short-term grant-making, helping to deliver meaningful change across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.



Permanent Endowment

This fund is a long-term investment where the capital is preserved, and only the income generated is used to provide sustainable funding year after year.



Long-Term Endowment

This fund invests capital over a fixed period (typically 10–25 years), with both income and the original investment drawn down to deliver funding over the fixed period.



Expendable Endowment

This fund is invested like a traditional endowment but designed to be fully spent over a fixed period (e.g., 5 years), with the capital distributed evenly each year and investment income boosting the total available for grants.



Held Fund

The fund is managed on behalf of a named organisation, the assets remain dedicated to charitable purposes aligned with the beneficiary's aims. It may be administered by the Foundation for efficiency or reach, but it is not owned by Shropshire Community Foundation.



Flowthrough Fund

Money in a flowthrough fund is not invested as an endowment but instead is awarded directly as grants over a pre-agreed timescale and often within a thematic remit. It enables donors or funders to see their resources deployed quickly and intentionally, making it particularly well-suited to short-term giving goals. Flowthrough funds are often used when there is a desire for immediate impact, supporting urgent community needs, time-limited projects, or strategic initiatives where outcomes are expected within a relatively short period rather than over many years.



Grants

Grants are awarded to individuals, groups and organisations, following scrutiny to identify the most current or emerging needs, we ensure that our grants are a catalyst for meaningful impact.

- Transparent and open application process
- Independent Grant awarding panel
- Impactful and evidence-based reports

The communities we help

Communities across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin experience a mixed picture of wellbeing, shaped by both rural isolation and urban inequality. While many areas are relatively affluent and enjoy a good quality of life, there are significant pockets of deprivation where people face persistent and overlapping challenges. These can be understood through ten key indicators.

Income deprivation

Households across parts of Telford and Shropshire experience low incomes and increased reliance on welfare support, limiting financial resilience and access to opportunities.

Employment deprivation

Rural areas often have fewer local employment options, while some urban communities face higher unemployment or reliance on lower-paid, less secure work.

Education, skills and training

Not all residents have equal access to qualifications or lifelong learning. Lower attainment in some communities restricts access to higher-skilled, better-paid employment and reinforces disadvantage across generations.

Barriers to housing and services

These are especially significant in rural Shropshire, where distance, transport limitations, and limited service availability can restrict access to healthcare, education, and shops. In contrast, some urban areas face housing affordability pressures.

Health deprivation and disability

In more deprived neighbourhoods, long-term illness, mental health challenges, and lower life expectancy are more common. Rural isolation can also make accessing healthcare services more difficult.

Crime levels

Rates vary across the area, but urban communities experience higher levels of antisocial behaviour and property crime, which can affect feelings of safety and community cohesion.

Geographic isolation

Many rural communities have limited public transport, reducing access to employment, education, and essential services.

Demographic pressures

Shropshire has an ageing population requiring increased health and social care support, while Telford's younger and more diverse population places greater demand on education, housing, and family services.

Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are places of contrast. While many communities thrive, others face multiple, interconnected disadvantages. Addressing these challenges together is essential to reducing inequality and improving long-term outcomes across the region.

Championing Place-Based Philanthropy

Making the Invisible Visible

Shropshire Community Foundation's chairman Selina Graham and trustee Mandy Thorn were recently invited to participate in Anthropy, contributing to national panel discussions on the role of place-based philanthropy in addressing inequality and strengthening communities.



Anthropy brings together responsible leaders and organisations to help shape a more united future for the UK. Through its cross-sector network, it supports new partnerships, influences policymakers, and encourages practical changes in how organisations work.

The panel explored key themes, including how to build donor confidence while backing community-led solutions; how to balance national visibility with local need; and how to identify and respond to hidden poverty beyond major urban centres.

Shropshire is often perceived as an affluent county; however, this can mask a more complex reality. In Telford & Wrekin, some neighbourhoods fall within the most deprived 3% nationally,¹ while in rural parts of the county, isolation, an ageing population, and limited access to services create significant but often overlooked challenges.

A central issue raised was the tendency for funding to follow visibility, an approach that can disadvantage rural and less densely populated areas. They emphasised the importance of making local need more visible by combining robust data with the lived experience of the communities we support.

They also reinforced that increasing visibility must not come at the expense of local voice. Guided by our principle of “by Shropshire, for Shropshire, in Shropshire”, we remain committed to ensuring that funding decisions are informed by those closest to the issues.

The discussion also highlighted the growing role of local philanthropy. Initiatives such as the Acorn Fund, Shropshire Investors in Community, and named flow-through grants show how local businesses are increasingly supporting grassroots organisations, helping to build a more sustainable, locally rooted culture of giving.

Participation in this national forum reinforced both the challenges and the opportunities ahead. While structural barriers remain, particularly in accessing national funding, Shropshire's strengths lie in its communities, partnerships, and emerging culture of local giving. Looking forward, our focus remains on making hidden needs visible, strengthening local leadership, and ensuring that all communities across our county are recognised, resourced, and able to thrive.

Business Investment

Growth in Business-Led Giving

"When we launched the McPhillips Community Fund, we wanted to do something genuinely meaningful to mark our 60th anniversary. We didn't want to just write a cheque; we wanted to create something structured and lasting that would make a real difference to people's lives across Shropshire."

-Paul Inions, managing director at McPhillips

Businesses are among the leading contributors to grant funding in Shropshire.

Through the membership of Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC), they have developed a deeper understanding of local challenges and the priorities of the communities where they operate. This insight is driving a shift beyond traditional corporate giving, with businesses increasingly investing directly in grassroots organisations and community-led solutions. What is emerging is a model of place-based philanthropy where financial support is matched by active partnership, in which partners are involved in the grant-giving process, including visits to see the funds in action, shared responsibility, and a commitment to lasting, locally rooted impact.

Be Part of It

Join a movement that's building a stronger Shropshire from the ground up. If you're looking to align your business with values that matter, we'd love to welcome you as a Shropshire Investor in Community.

Let's do good, together.



Grant Distribution and Growth

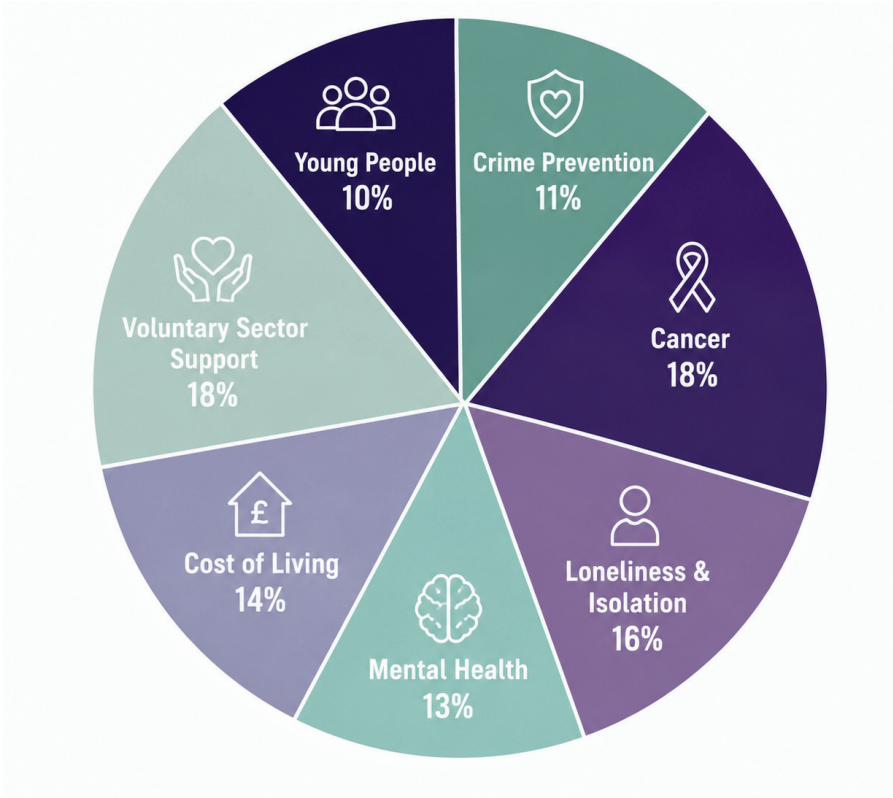
Over the past three years, Shropshire Community Foundation has consistently exceeded expectations.

We have **invested a total of £317,500 in local communities**, reflecting both the growing capacity of our funds and increasing demand for support across Shropshire.

Year-on-year performance				
Year	Target	Actual	Above Target	Growth from previous year
2023/24	£20,000	£46,047	+130%	-
2024/25	£50,000	£64,000	+28%	+39%
2025/26	£100,000	£207,500	+108%	+224%

This sustained growth shows our focus on directing resources where they can achieve the greatest benefit, while managing funds responsibly and transparently.

Each grant programme is shaped by ongoing research that brings together local data, sector insight, and lived experience. This ensures our funding remains needs-led, timely, and aligned with community priorities. It also creates a practical route for funders and stakeholders to engage more deeply with local challenges: we share the evidence behind our decisions, invite discussion, and encourage partners to help shape priorities, building shared ownership of both decisions and impact.

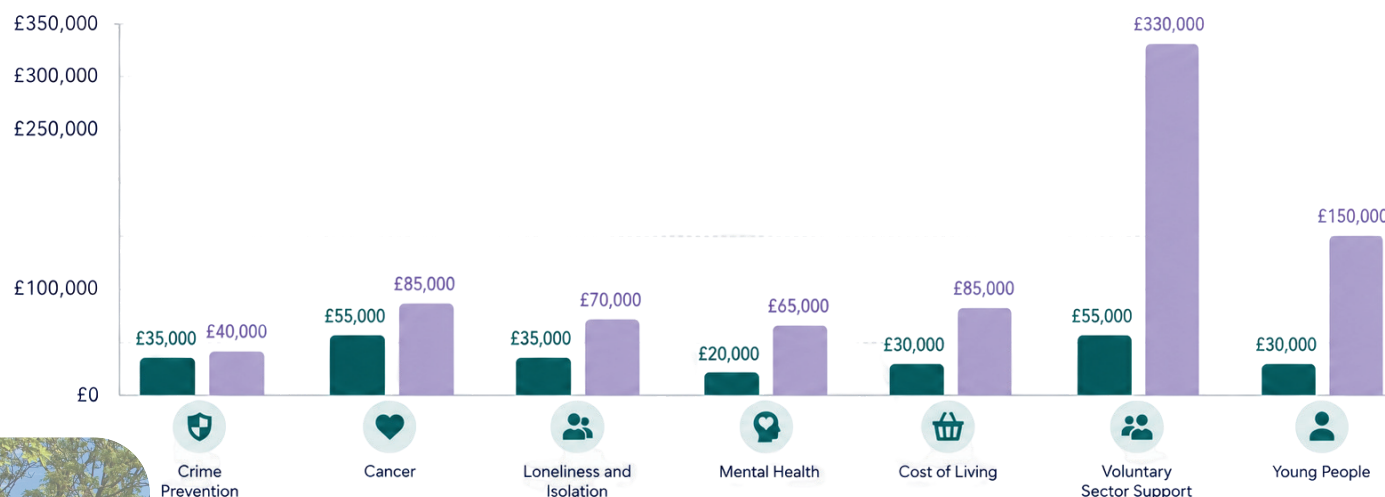


Demand is doubling – Support is struggling

Across our grants, we have seen particularly high demand for voluntary sector support and youth provision. This highlights a funding gap in the local voluntary sector, especially for core costs and early-intervention services.



Overall, these figures show a sustained and significant shortfall between need and available funding. They reinforce the importance of growing our resources and partnerships so we can support more vital community work across Shropshire.



Areas of Funding

Health and Wellbeing

The need



Across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin, many individuals and families face significant physical and mental health challenges, often compounded by rural isolation, financial pressure and limited access to support services. Demand for community-based wellbeing and peer support continues to grow.

Over 7,255 children were referred to mental health services in Shropshire during 2023/24. ²

Funding



Funding has been diverse from acute illness to mental health and wider support networks.

Targeted, community-led funding is making a measurable difference to the health and wellbeing of people across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin and Mid-Wales (for the Lingen Davies Cancer Support Fund). Through focused investment in cancer support and mental health initiatives, individuals and families are experiencing improved resilience, reduced isolation, and renewed hope.

- Childhood cancer (Zac's Fund rounds 1-3)
- Mental health & Men's Mental Health (Mc Phillips 2 rounds)
- Cancer support groups (Lingen Davies Cancer support)



Impact

Improving Health and Wellbeing

Through focused investment in cancer support and mental health initiatives, individuals and families are experiencing improved resilience, reduced isolation, and renewed hope.



Supporting Children and Families Affected by Cancer



Zac's Fund, established in 2018, continues to provide vital financial and emotional support to children and young people facing cancer. Grants have eased the intense pressures families experience during diagnosis and treatment, reducing stress and improving overall wellbeing.

Parents report feeling more supported and better able to cope, while children benefit from increased confidence, happiness, and engagement in everyday life, helping to counterbalance the trauma of serious illness. Funding for organisations has also strengthened peer support and reduced isolation, with early outcomes showing improved mental health and understanding of diagnosis among young people.

"Zac's Fund has made such a meaningful difference... it's allowed her to create a safe and comfortable space."

Grant recipient (parent)



Building Stronger Cancer Support Networks



The Lingen Davies Cancer Support Fund is helping to grow sustainable, community-led peer networks across the region. By prioritising areas with higher deprivation and limited services, the fund enables people affected by cancer to connect, share experiences, and support one another.

These peer-led groups are reducing isolation and creating accessible, ongoing support systems that strengthen community resilience.

[Read their stories here.](#)

Supporting People's Mental Health



The McPhillips Community Fund has supported grassroots projects delivering preventative, non-clinical mental health support. The programme reached over 1,250 participants with a focus on peer support, physical activity, and community engagement, particularly in rural and underserved areas. Reported outcomes include:

- Increased confidence, and reduced isolation
- Measured improvements in mental wellbeing
- Progression into employment, volunteering, and training.

By empowering local organisations and supporting individuals at critical moments, these funds are strengthening communities and building more resilient support systems across the region.

Loneliness and Social Isolation

The need

One in 20 adults across Shropshire report that they feel lonely "often or always"³

This theme saw very high engagement from grassroots organisations and reached a broad range of communities.

Community-led projects across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin are helping people reconnect, reducing loneliness, improving wellbeing and creating routes into wider community life.

- Welcoming Spaces (Telford & Wrekin Council)
- Acorn Fund
- Bridgnorth Aluminium Community Fund

Creating Connection Through Welcoming Spaces

Launched in early 2024 funded by Telford & Wrekin Council, Welcoming Spaces engaged more than 300 adults through inclusive, locally delivered sessions.

Activities included gentle physical activity, creative and social sessions, and wellbeing support.

Participants reported improvements in mobility, confidence and emotional resilience, alongside regular opportunities to meet others in warm, accessible community settings. **Reported outcomes included:**

- More frequent social contact and reduced feelings of loneliness
- Better mental wellbeing and increased physical activity
- Stronger local connections and peer support

Volunteers and intergenerational activity strengthened community cohesion, and several projects have continued to develop beyond the initial funding period.



"Adult loneliness can be a big challenge, particularly during the winter, so these welcoming spaces are providing a vital lifeline to so many people."

Councillor Kelly Middleton

Expanding Impact Through the Acorn Fund

Shaped by Shropshire Investors in Community members, who prioritised loneliness and isolation as a key issue, the Acorn Fund supported more than 2,000 people accessing supported activities and services.



Participants commonly describe feeling better supported and less alone, with many forming friendships and informal peer networks (including WhatsApp groups). As a result, many people have:

- Joined other groups and continued interests independently
- Increased confidence to take part in community life and get out more
- Moved into volunteering and other community roles

Projects have also reduced barriers for people with SEND (Special Educational Needs and Disabilities), carers, and those living in rural or isolated areas. Safe, welcoming environments are often described as an “anchor” or a “highlight of the week”. By investing in connection, confidence and opportunity, these projects are strengthening local networks as well as improving individual wellbeing.

Locally designed support is creating lasting change, with several initiatives continuing and expanding beyond the original grant period. It is great news that Bridgnorth Aluminium has also opted to support this cause with its recently launched grant, continuing support for those who are lonely and living in isolation.



Crime Prevention

Grooming, county lines, and coercion are growing threats for young people across Shropshire.⁴

- HSF 1&2 (Crime Prevention – Young People)
- Online Abuse and Cyber Crime (PCC)

Separate grants enabled a more targeted approach, with youth-focused work addressing early support, opportunities and inspiring young people, while online crime prevention activity has concentrated on cyber-crime and risks affecting all age groups.

Targeted, community-led funding is helping to prevent crime, reduce vulnerability, and create safer communities. Through investment in early intervention and trusted local organisations, these programmes are supporting our communities and protecting those most at risk.

Tackling Fraud and Protecting Communities

Complementing this theme, funding through the Police and Crime Commissioner has supported community-based scam awareness and victim support initiatives. These programmes are addressing the growing threat of fraud, including courier scams, romance fraud, and online exploitation by:

- Raising awareness and improving digital and financial safety
- Supporting victims experiencing financial and emotional harm
- Reaching vulnerable groups, particularly older people and rural communities

Together, these initiatives show how early intervention and community action can prevent crime before it occurs. By supporting young people, raising awareness of emerging risks, and strengthening local networks, funding is helping to build safer, more resilient communities across the region.

Supporting Young People at Risk

The High Sheriff's Fund has prioritised youth engagement as a key approach to crime prevention. With additional support from Aico Ltd, grants have funded organisations delivering projects that reached over 300 young people, with some projects running beyond the life of the grant.

Through sport, mentoring, creative programmes, and therapeutic support, young people have been provided with safe spaces and positive alternatives to crime and anti-social behaviour. Targeted sessions have also raised awareness of risks such as County Lines, grooming, and substance misuse. Projects have delivered clear outcomes:

- Improved confidence, behaviour, and emotional resilience
- Increased engagement with education and community activities
- Reduced exclusions and safer decision-making
- Stronger relationships with trusted adults and support networks

Activities such as boxing, youth clubs, equine therapy, and leadership programmes have helped young people develop life skills, manage emotions, and build aspirations. Many initiatives focused on those facing the greatest barriers, ensuring inclusive access for young people with additional needs or from disadvantaged backgrounds.

Alongside individual impact, funding has strengthened local organisations, supporting staff training, safeguarding, and long-term programme delivery.

Young People

The need

A continued decline in local youth services across the county is limiting access to safe spaces, support, and opportunities.

Young people in Telford are more than twice as likely to live in deprivation as those in rural Shropshire.⁵

Funding and Impact

Targeted investment in young people is unlocking potential, building confidence, and supporting pathways into education, training, and employment for our young people

The DENSO JCE Grant, is the first time we have had two organisations coming together to fund the same cause supporting grassroots organisations delivering youth-led, creative, and skills-based projects for young people aged 16–25. The fund focuses on those facing the greatest barriers, including care leavers, home-educated young people, and those living in areas of high deprivation.

By investing in locally trusted organisations, the programme is reaching young people who are often excluded from mainstream opportunities, helping them build confidence, develop skills, and shape their futures.

- “Inspiring Young People” (DENSO JCE)
- NEETs/economically inactive (PaveAways Fund)
- Cost of living crisis (NFU Mutual Acorn)
- Women and under-represented in construction STEM (Dodd Group)



Building Skills, Confidence and Pathways

Funded projects provide tailored, inclusive support that responds to individual needs. Activities include mentoring, counselling, employability training, and hands-on learning experiences.

Projects are designed to be flexible and accessible, ensuring no young person is excluded and include:

- **Therapeutic support and mentoring** helping young people overcome isolation and build readiness for work or education
- **Outdoor and nature-based learning** developing practical skills, teamwork, and awareness of green careers
- **Employability and life skills programmes** offering CV support, budgeting, and real-world experience
- **SEND-focused youth leadership** empowering neurodivergent young people to build independence and influence services
- **Equine-assisted learning** improving emotional regulation, communication, and confidence in a supportive environment

The DENSO JCE Grant demonstrates how targeted, grassroots funding can create meaningful, long-term change. By equipping young people with the skills, confidence, and support they need, these projects are helping them move forward into positive futures, while strengthening the communities they are part of.



Cost of Living

A growing theme from 2025 onwards, with grants focused on both immediate relief (e.g., food banks) and longer-term support (e.g., employability). This represents a shift towards building systemic economic resilience.

*As many as 30% of children in areas across Shropshire live in households experiencing poverty.*⁶

- **UKSPF VCSE support programme (Telford and Wrekin Council)**
- **Millichope Foundation**

Funding and Impact

Over the past three years, Shropshire Community Foundation has distributed a range of targeted funding programmes that directly respond to rising cost-of-living pressures, barriers to employment, and the need for improved skills pathways for young people. Three notable examples, the NFU Mutual Fund, PaveAways Fund, and Dodd Group STEM Fund, demonstrate how locally focused philanthropy is supporting both immediate need and long-term opportunity.

The NFU Mutual Fund, match-funded with the Acorn Fund, supports community organisations working with vulnerable households affected by the cost-of-living crisis, particularly in rural areas. By funding food support, community hubs, and wellbeing initiatives, it has helped reduce the immediate pressures of rising household costs, especially for those facing rural isolation and financial hardship.

The PaveAways Fund has focused strongly on improving employability and skills development. It has supported projects that help people build confidence, gain qualifications, and move towards sustainable employment. This includes training opportunities and support for individuals furthest from the labour market, helping to address both unemployment and underemployment across the county.

The Dodd Group STEM Fund has been specifically designed to increase opportunities for young people, particularly young women, to engage in science, technology, engineering, and maths. Delivered in partnership with Shropshire Community Foundation, the fund supports initiatives that inspire participation in STEM subjects and create clearer pathways into skilled careers. It aims to address long-standing gender imbalance in technical industries while strengthening future employment prospects for young people in the region.

Together, these funds demonstrate a joined-up response to key local challenges:

- Cost of living support through immediate community-based relief
- Employment pathways through skills development and confidence building
- Future-focused skills investment through STEM engagement and opportunities for young women

Collectively, they show how targeted, locally administered funding can both ease current hardship and build long-term economic resilience across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

Funding for Infrastructure

This fund supported the resilience and sustainability of local charities and community organisations. This fund saw exceptionally high demand (**£234,320 requested vs £45,000 awarded**) and highlights significant pressure on local charities and infrastructure support.

7

Evidence indicates that one in four charities holds less than three months' financial reserves.

UKSPF Telford and Wrekin Council

The UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) has enabled Shropshire Community Foundation to deliver targeted, place-based funding that responds directly to local priorities.

Through this programme, grants have supported community organisations to strengthen employability, reduce barriers to opportunity, and address the wider impacts of the cost-of-living crisis. Funding has been used to develop skills, support people into work, and enhance community resilience, particularly for those facing disadvantage.

The UKSPF has also encouraged partnership working and locally driven solutions, ensuring that investment is aligned with both economic development goals and the needs of communities across Telford & Wrekin.

UKSPF was delivered to extremely tight timescales. The flexibility and responsiveness of the voluntary and community sector not only ensured delivery within the timeframe but also enabled programmes to exceed all targets set.

Support for Community Spaces

Village halls and community buildings are vital local assets. They host social groups, health and wellbeing activities, youth provision, and local services. Many are ageing and struggle to afford essential capital works.

The Millichope Foundation, in partnership with Shropshire Community Foundation, is pleased to offer funding to support the development, improvement, and sustainability of community and village halls across Shropshire. The Shropshire Village Halls and Community Spaces Fund is designed to help local organisations enhance facilities, create welcoming spaces, and ensure these vital hubs continue to serve as centres for community activity, social connection, and local events.



Endowment Grants

High Sheriff Fund



Founded in 2022 by the then High Sheriff for Shropshire, Dean Harris, the Fund has benefited from the support of successive High Sheriffs. Selina Graham’s fundraising efforts contributed a significant £90,000, while Mandy Thorn, supported by Aico, enabled the launch of the first flow-through grant programme. This provided £15,000 for youth crime prevention initiatives in 2023, followed by a further £12,000 awarded in 2025. Today, the Fund holds investments of over £109,000.

Through sport, mentoring, therapeutic programmes, and social education, it has helped young people build confidence, feel safer, and engage more fully with their communities.

By supporting grassroots organisations embedded within their communities, the Fund has delivered measurable outcomes not only for individuals but for the wider community. Young people are not just receiving support, they are being heard, valued, and equipped with the skills to shape their futures

“I’ve learned how to effectively convey ideas and information in a clear and engaging manner.”

Service User

The first funding round showcased a diverse portfolio of initiatives focused on improving wellbeing, safety, and opportunity. From early intervention to prevent crime, to projects promoting inclusion and community-led solutions, the Fund has prioritised approaches that address challenges before they escalate. In total, more than 300 young people directly benefited from the first round, many of whom were facing social isolation, additional needs, exclusion, or vulnerability to exploitation. By investing in trusted local organisations and youth-led programmes, the High Sheriff’s Fund has driven meaningful, lasting change, helping both young people and their communities to flourish.



Zac's Fund

Zac's Fund was originally set up in 2018 to raise £500,000 so that four-year-old Zac Oliver of Broseley could be treated in Philadelphia for a rare strain of lymphoblastic leukaemia. The community fundraising was a huge success, and Zac was able to receive the treatment, and today he remains cancer-free.

The legacy of that fundraising effort, in partnership with Zac's family, is providing financial support to children and young people with cancer across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. It distributed its first grant in 2023 and launched three funding rounds totalling £42,000 and bringing relief to 21 families and organisations.

Dalian Atkinson Legacy Fund (DALF)

Dalian Atkinson, was a local Premier League footballer who played nationally and internationally, DALF was launched in 2024 by Shropshire Community Foundation in partnership with the Atkinson family. It was established to honour Dalian Atkinson's legacy by increasing access to sport and physical activity for young people across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin. Working alongside key partners, including the Aston Villa Foundation and Sumo Nutmeg, the Foundation is building DALF as a long-term endowment fund to ensure sustainable impact. These partnerships, alongside our wider network of supporters, are critical in growing the fund and extending its reach. The Foundation aims to launch the first grant round in 2026, marking an important step in delivering targeted support to grassroots organisations and young people across the county.

John Allat's Educational Foundation Fund

We recently acquired the John Allat Fund, which has operated in Shropshire since 1930 and was at risk of becoming dormant. The trustees are working with Shropshire Community Foundation to grow the endowment and award grants that support young people aged 11–25 in education. We aim to launch the first grant in 2026.

Acorn Fund

The Acorn Fund is a communal endowment fund designed to grow over time. It enables donors to contribute smaller, regular gifts into a collective fund that builds into a permanent endowment, generating sustainable income for local grants. By pooling contributions, the Acorn Fund supports grassroots organisations addressing priority needs across Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin, while also providing a simple and flexible route for individuals and businesses to begin their philanthropic journey and become part of the Foundation's wider network of supporters.

Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC)

A Community of Purpose, Pride, and Progress



Launched in partnership with the High Sheriff of Shropshire 2022/23, Selina Graham, Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC) is open to organisations of all sizes seeking to make a meaningful, sustainable, and lasting difference to those most in need across the county.

Shropshire SIIC supports the Shropshire Community Foundation in its mission to build a long-term, strategic source of sustainable grant funding for the benefit of communities and individuals across Shropshire.

As a collective, SIIC members work collaboratively not only to help fund the core costs and growth of our own county community foundation by Shropshire, with Shropshire, in Shropshire, but also to achieve greater impact, helping to build a stronger future for the county by supporting grassroots community groups, charities, and the people they serve. At a recent event, members shared their experiences:

"A real feeling of doing the right thing... the businesses represented could move mountains and all because they want Shropshire to thrive."

– Craig Hughes, Chrisbeon

"Inspiring to hear the difference our collective support is making."

– Shaun Carvill, Clickingmad Ltd

"Excellent in every way... validated our decision to participate."

– Hugh Strickland, Aaron & Partners LLP



Connect with Like-Minded Leaders

Our events go beyond networking, they are purposeful gatherings of business leaders who care deeply about their community. As one guest described, there is ***“a tangible good vibe... an interesting and fun group.”*** Members consistently say they feel valued, particularly when hearing directly from funding recipients and seeing the impact firsthand.

Celebrate Shropshire

Join a community of organisations proud to invest in and champion the place we call home. Members frequently leave our events with a renewed sense of pride in Shropshire.

Align with Your CSR Goals

Partner with us to strengthen your corporate social responsibility ambitions, delivering authentic, locally driven impact without commercial agendas.

Gold, Silver or Bronze

We value every SIIC member and the commitment membership represents. This year we are introducing three levels (Gold, Silver and Bronze) to recognise those able to contribute beyond membership and to reflect different levels of ongoing commitment.



**Growing
stronger
communities
together**

3 Year Service Review – Stakeholder Feedback

Continuous Improvement

Over the past three years, Shropshire Community Foundation has consistently sought feedback and engaged with peer foundations to shape and inform its activities *'by Shropshire, with Shropshire, in Shropshire'*. This ongoing learning approach has strengthened delivery, responsiveness, and strategic focus.

Partnerships and Funder Engagement

The Foundation has built a broad and diverse funding base by working with private donors, corporate partners, and public-sector funders. This has strengthened both reach and long-term resilience. A key development has been the growth of co-designed and themed funding programmes, with increasing alignment between donor priorities and identified community need.

Grant Process

Over this period, the Foundation has developed a structured and consistent approach to grant-making. The dataset demonstrates a clearly defined grant lifecycle, including launch and closing dates, panel decision timelines, and established reporting milestones.

There is a consistent grant-making process across programmes, alongside increasing sophistication in programme design. This includes the introduction of structured funder check-ins (e.g. we do mid-term or, usually, 6-month reviews), improving alignment between funding cycles and reporting requirements. Overall, there is strong accountability supported by robust oversight mechanisms.

Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC)

Shropshire SIIC supports the Foundation's mission to build a long-term, strategic source of sustainable grant funding, benefiting communities and individuals across Shropshire. Its membership has grown, with members feeling valued and sharing a real sense of purpose in supporting grassroots community groups, charities, and the people they serve. Members frequently report a renewed sense of pride in Shropshire and a stronger connection to place-based giving.



Conclusion

Over the past three years, Shropshire Community Foundation has developed into a strategic and influential local funder, with stronger systems, deeper partnerships, and a growing understanding of community need.

The evidence highlights both the effectiveness of grant distribution and the scale of unmet demand across the county.

Looking ahead, there is a clear opportunity to build on this foundation by increasing funding capacity, deepening partnerships, and continuing to target resources where they can deliver the greatest long-term impact for communities across Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin.

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Acknowledgements

This three-year review has been made possible through the time, commitment, and generosity of many people and organisations across Shropshire and Telford & Wrekin. We are grateful to everyone who has helped shape the Foundation's growth and ensured that funding reaches communities where it can make the greatest difference.

In particular, we thank our patrons, Anna Turner, Lord Lieutenant of Shropshire, and Garrison Sergeant Major A J (Vern) Stokes OBE MVO DL, as well as our Board of Trustees; Graham Wynn, Judith Lancaster, Roger Pemberton, Selina Graham, Dean Harris, Sonia Roberts, Ben Powell, Mandy Thorn, Ruth Martin, Kate Boughton, Andriane Usherwood-Brown and our Investment Committee, chaired by Rhoddy Swire DL with Frank Bury and Jonathan Evans, for their leadership, governance, and stewardship of the Foundation's funds.

We also recognise the dedication of our staff team and the many volunteers and ambassadors who give their time, expertise, and local insight, strengthening our relationships across the county and helping us deliver a responsive, community-rooted grants programme.

Finally, thank you to our private donors, corporate supporters, Shropshire Investors in Community (SIIC) members, and public sector funders; to our delivery partners working on the ground; and to every group that applied for funding and shared learning and impact. Your commitment continues to build a stronger culture of local giving and a more resilient Shropshire.

This was always about building a Shropshire Community Foundation by Shropshire, with Shropshire and in Shropshire. Our strength is in our partnership, our collaboration and our shared love of our county and humanity... together we are stronger.

If you would like to know more about what we are doing and who we have been supporting, and who is supporting us, or maybe get involved, please visit our website www.shropshirecommunityfoundation.org.uk

