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# 2023-24

# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT



# WELCOME

This is my first year as Chair of CCB. I have been fortunate to assume this responsibility at a time when CCB is growing and has a secure financial foundation to enable improved and expanded service delivery. All our projects go from strength to strength. I was delighted that our bid for rural housing enabler funding was successful, and am proud of the way this project was resourced and launched in a very short space of time, making an immediate impact.

So what next? More of the same! Given the sound financial footing we have in place, we plan to invest resources to generate additional funds and free up our specialist team to increase their front-line work, further benefitting our communities.

We are particularly keen to expand and build on the following:

- The environmental & energy performance agenda through the community buildings work
- The 'activate village halls' work which provides multiple benefits across rural health & wellbeing.
- Developing new partnerships to increase outreach service provision in rural communities.

- Our fuel poverty advice service: by numbers our most impactful project. This is eminently scalable and could help communities with all aspects of managing the cost of living

## **Mark Nevitt, Chair of CCB**

This year we celebrate 50 years since the formation of our charity in September 1973. We have been reflecting on the impressive range of projects and services that have been delivered over the years, and have begun to think about where we want the charity to be in 50 years' time.

I am very proud of the work the team have delivered over the last 12 months. This report provides some facts and figures that illustrates the breadth of our work, alongside feedback in the words of our beneficiaries that evidences the depth of our work.

I would like to thank everyone in the CCB team, staff and trustees alike, for their hard work and dedication to supporting our beneficiaries: rural communities across the whole of Berkshire.

## **Tim Parry, Chief Executive Officer**

# VILLAGE HALLS

## Ensuring Berkshire's village and community halls are supported, safe and vibrant local assets

Village Halls in Berkshire come in a great variation of building ages, types and conditions from 1980s prefab to ornate 17th-century halls.

They present a wide range of challenges for the volunteers who look after them! The unifying features of these facilities are their importance in their communities and the commitment of the people who run them.

This year we entered the second year of our 5-year National Lottery Community Funded project '21st Century Halls'. For this project, we are working alongside committees to help improve and develop the facilities so that they are more energy efficient, environmentally friendly, financially sustainable and better connected with the communities they serve.

### What have we achieved in 2023-24?

So far we have audited over 40 halls and in the last year, we conducted **16 community hall audits**.

A large proportion of audited halls need work done to bring them up to modern thermal insulation standards;

- 33 halls need more roof insulation
- 27 have uninsulated or poorly insulated walls
- 28 halls have poorly or uninsulated floors

In early 2024 we set up a partnership with Wokingham Borough Council Energy Team to offer free, professional **Energy Reviews** for halls. We launched this service at our **Low Carbon Roadshow in January 2024**. The energy review reports offer detailed recommendations with cost estimates, information about suppliers, and specific details on financial and carbon savings.



# SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY BUILDINGS

In January 2024 we held a Community Halls Conference at Beech Hill Memorial Hall, attended by 30 individuals from 18 different Village Halls. The conference combined an open space workshop on the issues most pressing for attendees, with presentations from low-carbon energy and heating system suppliers.

## Accessing further funding opportunities

Thanks to a small grant from Sovereign Network Group (SNG) we are able to work with four village halls where SNG have customers, to help the hall committees improve their community engagement, and the diversity of their users, committee members and help the teams carry out community consultations.



# CASE STUDY

## Shaw-cum-Donnington Village hall

We audited Shaw-cum-Donnington Village Hall in June 2023 and spoke to Mary Carter, one of the Trustees. She explained why the hall is such an important asset to their community, how they benefitted from the audit and what outcomes they achieved with support from our 21st Century Community Halls project.

“Our parish is split down the middle by the A339 link road to the main A34 trunk road and does not have many amenities or facilities itself, being quite close to north Newbury. The hall is in a central position of the parish to link everyone together. The hall is very popular with families hiring it for parties, such as children’s birthday parties and baby showers on a Sunday afternoon and adult celebrations on Saturday evenings.

“The audit helped the committee to understand what action was needed to improve heat efficiency at the hall, what options were suitable for our particular situation and how to prepare for this and find funding.

“Myself and other trustees prepared an assessment table of each item with ratings for priority and timeline then divided the actions into two levels: short term and longer term as all work has to be carried out over school holidays.

“After applying and getting a grant for part of the work at the end of 2022 we planned the loft insulation, replacement LED lights, asbestos removal from the boiler room over one holiday. Then we had a new boiler, radiators, and patio doors over the following school holidays.

“Now in 2024, we are still using the original audit to start following through on our longer term actions.”

**The audit had 20 recommended actions; 9 are complete and a further 4 are planned by the committee.**



# SERVING OUR MEMBERS

Our members form a vital part of the foundations of our charity, underpinning our governance, guiding the use of our charitable funds, and influencing the focus and direction of our work. They are the heart of the grassroots of rural communities in Berkshire.

Our **Community Buildings Advice Service (CBAS)** uniquely supports **volunteer village hall trustees and community building management committees**. This bespoke service is partially funded by our DEFRA grant, a grant from Wokingham Borough Council to lower fees in that unitary authority but mainly by our CBAS members paying an annual subscription fee.

In 2023/24 we were able to:

- Meet with and provide support to **24 village halls**
- Deal with **167 requests** for guidance and advice
- Deliver **6 specialised training sessions**.



In addition to our CBAS membership, we also offer a standard **CCB organisation or individual membership** offering discounted training courses, invitations to attend focus groups, receive our monthly e-bulletin, opportunities to become a Trustee of our charity and attend our annual conference and AGM.

## Helping those at rural disadvantage.

We also oversee the **CCB oil club** that helps those rural households in Berkshire that are off-grid and heat their homes with oil to bulk-buy.

In 2023-24 **our membership saved over £8,000** by ordering through the club compared to average prices. The average saving was 4.35 pence per litre.

# THANK YOU TO OUR MEMBERS

2023-24

## Community Buildings

### Advice Service Members

- Acland Memorial Hall
- Aldermaston Parish Hall
- Aldworth Village Hall
- Arborfield Village Hall
- Ashampstead Jubilee Hall
- Austen Leigh & Baldwin Institute
- Basildon Village Hall
- Beech Hill Memorial Hall
- Beedon Village Hall
- Beenham Victory Hall
- Berkshire Scout Association
- Binfield Memorial Hall
- Binfield Parish Council
- Bracknell Town Council
- Bradfield Village Hall
- Brimpton Village Hall
- Burghfield Parish Council
- California Association Ratepayers Hall
- Chaddleworth Village Hall
- Charvil Parish Council
- Cheapside Village Hall
- Chieveley Village Hall
- Colnbrook Village Hall
- Compton Parish Council
- Compton Village Hall
- Cookham Dean Village Hall
- Crowthorne Parish Council
- East Garston Village Hall
- Eastbury Village Hall
- Emmbrook Village Hall
- Englefield Village Hall
- Eton Wick Village Hall
- Finchampstead Memorial Hall
- Frilsham Clubroom
- Gilchrist Thomas Village Hall
- Grazeley Village Hall
- Great Shefford Village Hall
- Hampstead Norreys Village Hall
- Hare Hatch Village Hall
- Hermitage Village Hall

- Holyport War Memorial Hall
- Hurst Village Hall
- Knowl Hill Village Hall
- Leckhampstead Village Hall
- Midgham Village Hall
- Mortimer Community Centre
- Old Windsor Memorial Hall
- Padworth Village Hall
- Pangbourne Parish Council
- Pearson Hall
- Purley Memorial Hall
- Purley on Thames Parish Council
- Shaw-cum-Donnington Village Hall
- Speen Parish Hall
- Spencers Wood Village Hall
- St Pauls Parish Rooms
- St. Nicolas Church Centre
- Stanford Dingley Parish Council
- Sulhampstead Village Hall
- Sunningdale Parish Council
- Sutton Hall, Stockcross
- Swallowfield Parish Council
- Thatcham Parish Hall
- Thatcham Town Council
- The Cornerstone
- The Croft Hall
- The John Cumber Hall
- The Morrell Room
- The Pinder Hall
- The Victory Hall (Farley Hill)
- The York Club
- Tidmarsh Village Hall
- Tilehurst Village Hall
- Town & Manor of Hungerford
- Twyford District Youth & Community Building
- Victory Room (Bucklebury)
- Wargrave Parish Council
- West Ilsley Village Hall
- Wokingham without Parish Council
- Woolhampton Village Hall
- Wraysbury Village Hall

## CCB Members

- Beedon Parish Council
- Beenham Parish Council
- Bradfield Parish Council
- Bray Parish Council
- Bucklebury Parish Council
- Cold Ash Parish Council
- Datchet Parish Council
- Earley Town Council
- East Garston Parish Council
- Eton Town Council
- Finchampstead Parish Council
- Frilsham Parish Council
- Hungerford Town Council
- Keep Mobile Community Transport
- Lambourn Parish Council
- Peasemore Parish Council
- Ruscombe Parish Council
- Shaw-cum-Donnington Parish Council
- Stratfield Mortimer Parish Council
- Streatley Parish Council
- Twyford Parish Council
- Warfield Parish Council
- West Ilsley Parish Council
- White Waltham Parish Council
- Wokingham Town Council

# RURAL HEALTH & WELLBEING

Our **Activating Village Halls** project has forged partnerships with physical fitness providers and our village halls to set up local, fun, accessible-to-all sessions in rural communities throughout Berkshire.

The classes, aimed at people over 65, combine 45 minutes of exercise led by a trainer and 'co-pilot' who support participants in a range of ways.

The sessions are run in rural locations in Berkshire. After exercise the second part of the session is the 'social' time for tea and a chat after the exercise. Just as important as physical exercise is the chance to help your mental health by enjoying the company and conversation of others.

We have been working successfully with partners including MOVEability, Everyone Active, Chieveley Village Hall and Hermitage Village Hall.

MOVEability leads the session delivery and builds relationships with clients and communities.

In the last year, this project developed further with a new class in Lambourn Leisure Centre.



# FEEDBACK

"Before starting the classes, my joints were stiff, and I kept having leg cramps, so coming to these classes has helped a lot. Plus, it has helped my asthma as well."

"Thanks to these classes I'm walking further, have stronger joints and feel more supple"

"I enjoy the exercises and the social interaction has been really good."

"I have health problem which make it hard to do new activities, now I am able to more on the allotment and travel to town"

"It encourages me to leave the house even on a cold or wet day. Otherwise, I might stay at home watching rubbish telly!"

## Bev from Lambourn

"I've had the dreaded carpal tunnel for 30 years but after 6 weeks of classes with Debbie, I can now move my wrists in a circular motion which I haven't been able to do for three decades."

Perseverance is the key!

I'd encourage others to come and keep coming."

# SUPPORTING LOW-INCOME FAMILIES IN BERKSHIRE WITH THEIR UTILITY BILLS

This project provides advice and guidance on reducing home energy costs to low-income families in Berkshire, in both urban and rural areas. It also provides training to the professionals and practitioners that support these families.

Over the last 12 months we have been able to help families build their skills and confidence in taking action to reduce their energy and water costs and deal with utility debt.

57 referrals were received for in-depth bespoke telephone advice – often these conversations can involve multiple calls and be complex.

We attended **21 drop-in sessions** at Children's Centres, schools, and Homestart groups, giving bespoke advice to **159 families throughout Berkshire**.

**Five training sessions** were delivered to frontline workers supporting low-income families – **80 practitioners** were trained who will be able to pass on this information to **10,805 families** over the 6 months following the training. This ensures that even more families in Berkshire receive support with their home energy costs.



# NATASHA'S STORY

Natasha was referred to our Project Manager, Helen Dean, for telephone advice by a Family Support Worker at the Family Hub in Newbury.

**Helen said, "When I called Natasha she was having a very stressful time with a new meter being fitted replacing a faulty one, though the new meter hadn't been credited with the £50 she had put on the old meter the day before."**

**"Natasha and her partner had no money left to put on the new meter, could not wait to receive a cheque for the credit from their supplier Ovo, and did not know what to do."**

**"I advised Natasha to call their supplier, explain the situation and ask for the £50 to be credited. Natasha kept in touch with me while making the call via text which meant I could help advise her on what to say."**

**"The outcome of the call was that the meter was credited there and then with £50 and with a £32 payment as a gesture of goodwill for the trouble she had with the situation. Natasha also explained the debt the faulty meter had left her in."**

# NATASHA'S STORY

Over six months Helen was able to advise Natasha how to sort out her bills over multiple calls so it wasn't overwhelming. Natasha agreed to a small repayment a week off her debt and claimed Thames Water Help, which halved her water bill.

**Natasha said "Before speaking to Helen I had buried my head in the sand with debt from bills that I was confused with. Helen gave my live feedback and support via text message while I was on the phone to the electricity company. Helen's knowledge helped clear over half the debt and has made the payback manageable."**

Natasha added that after receiving advice from Helen she feels:

**"Organised and on top of my bills, they don't feel scary anymore, they're set up on direct debits and I feel confident that I can pay them monthly."**

**"The help received from this project has been my saving grace. I now feel in a good space when moving into my new property to be more responsible and not keep incurring debt."**

# DEVELOPING STRONGER RURAL COMMUNITIES

During the year we received funding from Adult Community Learning team at West Berkshire Council to deliver unique training opportunities to adults in West Berkshire.

We have an alliance with Volunteer Centre West Berkshire to help provide a range of courses to those who are part of the voluntary sector in this geographical area.

Our highlights from this project include working with the British Red Cross to bring essential first-aid skills to our rural areas. We were able to ensure that 40 learners in Chaddleworth and West Isley increased their confidence in being able to help in an emergency.

One major area of specialism for CCB is being able to support and provide training to the volunteers who run our community buildings. In 2023-24 we were able to train a further 90 rural residents to develop new skills and knowledge on the following topics:

- Key Policies & Good Governance for Your Community Building
- Funding & Fundraising for Your Village Hall
- Financial Planning & Budgeting
- Low Carbon Roadshow
- Building Community Consultation



**Voluntary Sector  
Training Alliance**  
Supporting the voluntary sector



# PROVIDING EXCELLENT COMMUNITY TRAINING OPPORTUNITIES



In November 2023 we were thrilled that our favourite Village Hall Tutor Kate Meads was recognised at the West Berkshire Council Learner Achievement Awards.

Kate won the Tutor, Teacher, Trainer Award for her enthusiasm and ability to see the needs of volunteers and people who run our Community Buildings and create new courses to develop and support them.

**“Thank you for the training- I feel so much more confident now to help people if needed and I am sure other people feel the same after today. “**

**“I really enjoyed sharing experiences and thoughts with other hall members.”**

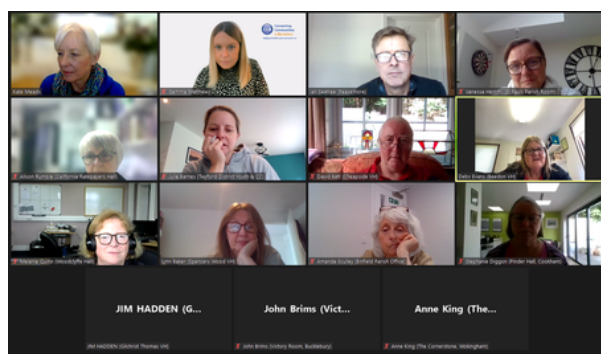
**“The variety of funders ranging from the big hitters like the National Lottery through to the smaller ACRE loan facility which I have never heard of previously.”**

**“I now have the potential to save a life! “**

**“Lots of useful information at today’s session and I also really enjoyed the networking aspect.**

“

**I valued hearing what other local village halls are doing and their ideas.**



# RURAL AFFORDABLE HOUSING

In February we launched a new Rural Affordable Housing Service offering free support to rural communities in Berkshire to get the affordable housing that their communities need.

Funded by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs. (DEFRA) this project aims to enable small numbers of affordable homes to be built, in suitable locations to meet local needs – led by the local community.

Our mission over the next year is to connect with numerous parish councils and rural community groups to address housing needs in their areas. If you believe there is a housing need in your village or parish, our Rural Housing Enablers are here to help.



**Funded by  
UK Government**



**Rural Thames Valley Partnership**



## Eligibility Criteria for Support:

- Parishes with a population under 3,000 can receive direct support.
- Assistance includes identifying local housing needs, finding potential locations, and forming partnerships with suitable housing providers.

## For Larger Parishes:

- If your parish has a population greater than 3,000, we can offer general advice on community-led housing initiatives.
- We provide resources and links to further reading to support your housing projects.

## Contact Us:

Reach out to one of our dedicated Rural Housing Enablers, to discuss how we can support your community's housing needs:

Maria.Kelly@ccberks.org.uk

Barry. Malki@ccberks.org.uk

# MEET THE TEAM

2023-24



**Tim Parry**

Chief Executive Officer



**Maria Kelly**

Rural Housing Enabler



**Barry Malki**

Rural Housing Enabler



**Kate Meads**

Community Buildings  
Advisor



**Gemma Matthews**

Office & Communications  
Manager



**Helen Dean**

Project Manager



**David Jennings**

Project Development  
Officer

## 2023-24 BOARD OF TRUSTEES



Mark Nevitt



Sarah Morland



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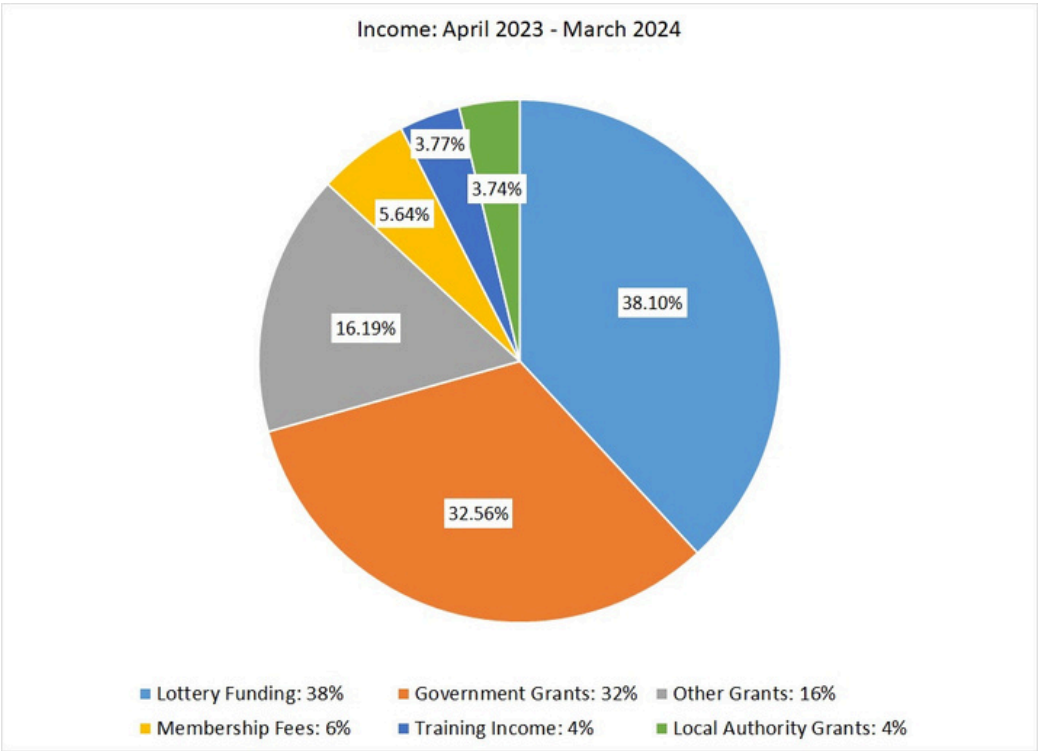
Peter Thorn



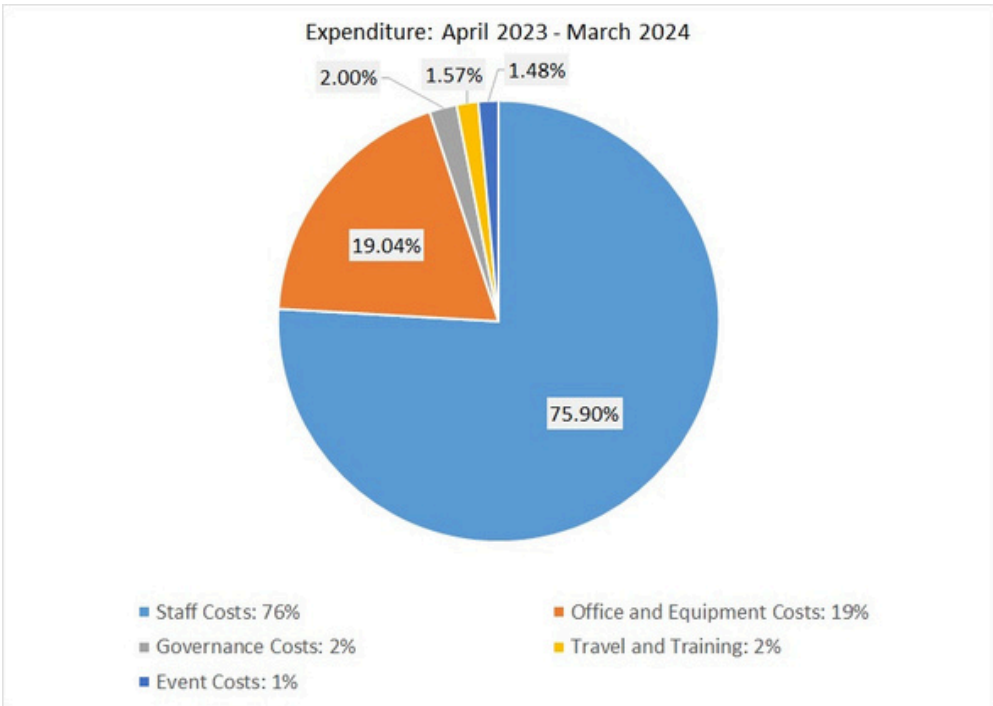
Bob Lyon

# Finances: 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024

Total Income: £215,245



Total Expenditure: £203,620



Please note that these are draft figures and are subject to an independent examination. For details, please see the CCB Annual Report and Accounts 2023-2024 once it is published.

# ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Thank you to our staff team, trustees, and members. We would also like to express our immense gratitude to all of our funders and supporters;

- Berkshire Community Foundation
- Bob Lyon
- Bracknell Forest Borough Council
- Bridge Interiors
- Curious Connections
- Department for Environment Food & Rural Affairs
- Easyfundraising
- Garth Pearce
- Grenville Annetts
- Get Berkshire Active
- Lemon Booking
- McCarthy Stone Foundation
- Norris & Fisher
- Oil Fuel Poverty Solutions
- Reading Voluntary Action
- Sonata
- Sovereign Network Group
- The Good Exchange
- The Grocers Charity
- The National Lottery Community Fund
- The Pargiter Trust
- The Royal Countryside Fund
- The Syder Foundation
- West Berkshire Council
- Wokingham Borough Council
- Yattendon & Frilsham Fete

