

2024/25

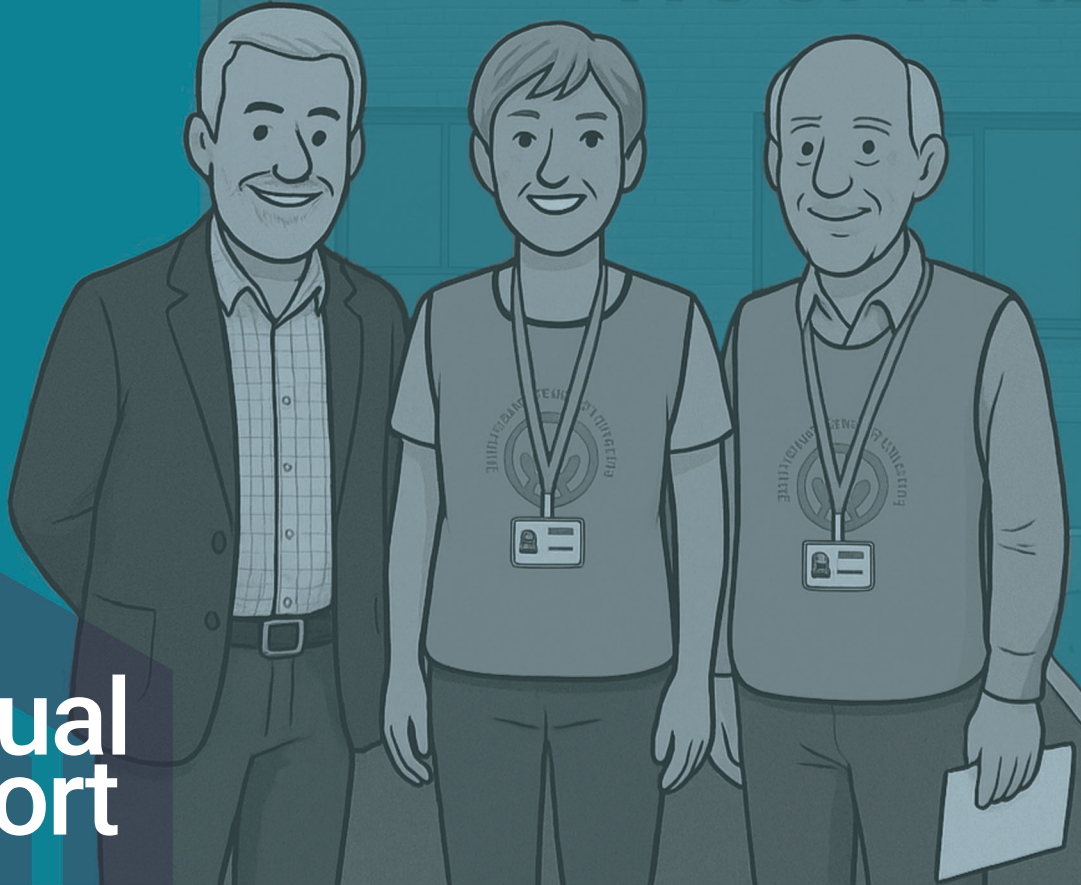
Annual Report

WARWICKSHIRE & SOLIHULL

CAVA



COMMUNITY & VOLUNTARY ACTION



Growing Opportunities
Stratford-on-Avon

2023-25



Stratford Social Inclusion Partnership Development Officer

Author: Chris Freeman

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP

Introduction

Welcome to the 2024–25 Annual Report for the Social Inclusion Partnership Development Officer.

This role is funded by Stratford District Council and hosted by Warwickshire and Solihull Community and Voluntary Action (CAVA).

The Development Officer began in post on 14 April 2020, during the height of the most significant public health crisis in over a century. Now in its fifth full year, the role continues to support the voluntary and community sector in the district as it faces several ongoing challenges. These include the cost-of-living crisis, political instability, increased demand for services, reduced funding opportunities, and changes in patterns of volunteering.

This is the first report produced as part of the district's Growing Opportunities Plan.



“

I just wanted to take a moment to thank you for all the support you have given me this year. Thanks for always being willing to listen and to help find solutions.

- Community Champion

Key Achievements 2024/25



£1,976,716

supported groups
to apply for



25%

increase in funding
compared to 23/24



£1,903,410

secured since start
of project in 2020



£597,363

of funding secured
by groups for social
inclusion priorities

74
organisations
supported



5th

annual year
on year increase
in funding

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)



12341876

Date _____

Pay **STRATFORD DISTRICT GROUPS**

£1,584,197

ONE MILLION, FIVE HUNDRED AND EIGHTY-
FOUR THOUSAND, ONE HUNDRED AND
NINETY-SEVEN POUNDS ONLY

Signed _____

Cheque No
•000213•

Branch Sort Code
13 • 34 • 56

Account No
12345678•

Purpose of the Development Officer post

The Development Officer post's purpose is to support the passionate and incredible 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) and growing opportunities plan.

The posts key duties and responsibilities are:

- Identify funding opportunities relating to Social Inclusion Priorities (SIP) opportunities
- Ascertain the funding requirements of local voluntary community organisations (VCOs)
- Identify opportunities for partnership, collaborative working and operational efficiencies related to SIS
- Write and/or 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
- To play the role of Father Christmas.



Case study: Stratford Centre's Together

The Community

The town of Stratford-upon-Avon is home to approximately 26 community venues that are available for public hire and use. These facilities range from prominent spaces such as the Royal Shakespeare Company (RSC) and local churches, to entirely volunteer-run community centres. Many of these centres provide vital services and resources to some of the district's most disadvantaged communities.

The Challenges

While engaging with local organisations, the Development Officer was approached by several centres facing difficulties in balancing the day-to-day management of their facilities with the development of broader community initiatives. Drawing on previous experience supporting other centres in transitioning to charitable status, the Development Officer recognised a recurring challenge: many lacked the volunteers and specialist knowledge needed to manage their operations effectively.

At the same time, the Development Officer had been in conversation with Stratford Town Trust. Prior to the COVID-19 pandemic, the Trust had facilitated regular meetings between local centres to explore shared concerns and opportunities. However, these gatherings had ceased with the onset of the pandemic.

Solutions

In partnership with Stratford Town Trust, the idea of establishing a peer support group for community venues in the town was revived. The first workshop, facilitated by CAVA, was held on 11th September 2024 and brought together 12 representatives from various centres, with a further 4 sending their apologies.

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

The session focused on exploring the types of support CAVA could offer, identifying how Stratford Town Trust might assist, and collectively identifying the key challenges and needs of the centres. Several immediate actions were agreed upon.

A second meeting, led by Stratford Town Trust, was held on 28th November 2024 and included a presentation by the Communities Team from Stratford District Council.

Outcomes

Stratford Town Trust committed to compiling a list of reliable contractors for the benefit of all centres. All participating venues have agreed to continue meeting regularly. A streamlined approach to supporting all 26 centres is now in place, allowing for greater efficiency, improved practice, and more collaborative funding applications.

Additionally, a dedicated meeting was arranged between the centres most in need and the Trust's Buildings and Facilities Officer to share practical advice and expertise.

These discussions also generated fresh ideas for securing additional support through joint funding bids. As a result, several centres have begun collaborating on the 'Community Anchor Project' - an initiative designed to develop community centres into central hubs of local support, rather than simply functioning as hireable halls. This work is being supported by the Development Officer, with further funding applications anticipated.

The Rosebird Centre.



The Growing Opportunities Plan: 2023-2026

The Growing Opportunities Plan replaced the Social Inclusion Statement and Action Plan 2019-24. The objectives were updated to reflect the national and countywide approach to Levelling Up, whilst ensuring the focus in Stratford-on-Avon District was on the communities, places and people who need the most support. The plan is hosted by the Social Inclusion Partnership (SIP) and facilitated jointly by the District and County councils. The Social Inclusion Partnership consists of Public, Private and, voluntary organisations from within the district who provide service and support to residents. The SIP was formed in 2014 and this is the third plan co-created to address social inequality across Stratford-on-Avon District.

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

Stratford on Avon District Social Inclusion priorities- Highlights

Improve education, skills and increasing financial resilience

Various VCO groups were supported with applications for funding to employ staff, including Warwickshire Reminiscence in Action Project, Stour Health and Well Being Partnership, New Hope Counselling and Stepping Stones.

Bishopton Community Centre's application for funding from Warwickshire County Council to feed residents was also supported and was successful.

Stepping Stones is a local charity who support the homeless and socially excluded. It supports by provision of a safe space for a hot meal and a chat, ancillary support (podiatry, hairdressing, benefits surgery, life skills etc.) and so raising self-worth.

The Development Officer acted as a sounding board, identified funders they could apply to and offered guidance on a large funding application.



STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Reducing Rural Inequalities

Village Halls and community facilities are vital resources to combat social isolation in the rural communities and the post offered support and guidance to the following facilities:

- Harbury Scout Hut
- Old Alcester Library
- Bidford Crawford Hall
- Henely Library
- Warmington Village Hall
- Tamworth in Arden Tennis Club
- Shipston - Townsend Memorial Hall
- Brearley Village Hall
- Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick Village Hall
- Snitterfield Village Hall
- Langleigh Village Hall
- Temple Herdewyke
- Harbury Library
- Clifford Chambers Village Hall
- Marston Sicca Parish Council
- Upper Lighthorne Parish Council
- Studley Youth Foundation
- Southam - Graham Adams Centre-Flying Fields

Support included identification of funding sources, guidance on legal status, signposting to property advice, transfer of assets to a CIO, environmental funding, signposting to WRCC Halls Together, incorporation, constitutions and governance.

The Development Officer was delighted to attend the official re opening of Wixford Village Hall in August 2024. The Development Officer worked closely to support the Committee over the previous years in securing over £423,927 from a variety of funders. Warwickshire CAVA were pleased to be included on the supporter board which had been made from recycled floorboards from the old, condemned hall as a result of the support provided through the Development Officer. Since re opening the hall has gone from strength to strength and has again become a vital community asset.





STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Improving Health and Wellbeing

The Development Officer provided advice and support to 7 Charity Trustee Chairs or Chief Executives whose charities were going through difficult times either in terms of funding or workload pressures. Thereby reducing or alleviating some of the significant stress they were undergoing.

Young Minds Matter are a Warwickshire charity who aim to support young people through a mentoring service, building resilience, self-esteem and confidence. Support was given on the development of their Case for Support which is a resource they can then use to apply for funding or secure donations.



A drop-in workshop was organised at Venture House in collaboration with Menopause Knowledge. Attendees included representatives from the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), the NHS, and other local groups. The aim was to develop projects following the workshop.

Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project have been supporting people with cognitive brain disorders or disability for over 25 years. They were supported with a variety of funding applications over the year.

Stratford Upon Avon Men Shed aim to reduce social isolation in people over 50 years of age. Unfortunately, they still could not secure a new home after having to leave Foundation House in 2023. However, they were supported to secure funding from the Rural England Prosperity Fund for a mobile shed in a van. Support was also given on the running of their AGM.

Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership were continued to be supported, and their lottery success is captured in a Case Study in the report. The development of a Toy Library in Shipston was also supported through identification of funding sources.

Social Inclusion Partnership supports unique community led health and wellbeing partnership to secure £292,708 of funding

Background

The Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership (SHWP) became a registered charity in 2020. Serving the south of the Stratford District - including Shipston-on-Stour and surrounding villages - SHWP brings together around 40 organisations with a shared purpose: to improve the health and wellbeing of all residents in the Stour area through collaborative partnership working.

The Challenge

By 2023, it was increasingly clear that SHWP's Trustees and volunteers were operating at full capacity. With the charity heavily reliant on a small group of dedicated individuals, there was a growing risk of burnout and the vulnerability that comes with key person dependency. Simultaneously, the development of the Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub in Shipston presented a major opportunity to expand SHWP's reach and impact - if the charity could increase its capacity.

Solutions

In August 2023, SHWP's Chair and the CAVA Development Officer jointly conceived '*Growing the Future*', a project designed to help the Partnership evolve by enabling the recruitment of a paid staff team, the adoption of an ABCD development approach, utilising the new health and wellbeing hub and at the same time having a greater impact. However with limited capacity and core volunteers already stretched thin, the Partnership faced a significant challenge: who could drive this pivotal initiative forward with the Chair of Trustees?



STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)



STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Initial Phase Contributions

Recognising the strategic importance of SHWP, its role in working collaboratively with 40 organisations across the district and its inclusion in the districts Growing the Future plan, the CAVA Development Officer stepped in to help progress the first phase of '*Growing the Future*'. This initially involved drafting the project framework using PRINCE2 methodology. Then working with the Chair to facilitate three Trustee Board workshops and an advisory group session with key stakeholders. The DO was also able to input the learning from the Clopton and Bishopton Community Builder programme and Locality's Community Anchor model.

A comprehensive funding search, identifying 36 potential funders was undertaken and applications submitted to a range of funders. A National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities Stage 1 application was also written and submitted which was successful. The DO helped with the Chair's pitch to South Warwickshire University NHS Foundation Trust and the Ellen Badger League of Friends, both of which secured additional funding.

Phase 2 Contributions

Following the successful Stage 1 bid to the National Lottery Community Fund, the DO continued to provide vital support through Phase 2 by Identifying and securing further funding through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund and the Access Fund to hire consultancy support to submit the stage 2 application for the lottery and set up as a charity who could employ staff. The DO drafted the specification for the tender and ensured continuity of the project by helping to brief the consultants during a period when the SHWP Chair was temporarily unavailable. Once the consultants were engaged the DO advised on the recruitment process and documentation required for the Chief Executive's role.

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Outcomes

- £186,708 awarded from the National Lottery Community Fund over three years
- £88,000 secured from South Warwickshire Foundation Trust and the Ellen Badger League of Friends
- £18,000 secured for additional consultancy support in project phase
- £80,000 of funding pending for decisions
- SHWP has avoided future potential volunteer burnout and mitigated key person risk
- The Partnership is set to play a key role in the new Ellen Badger Health and Wellbeing Hub
- A unique, community-led model for health and wellbeing improvement has been enhanced - one with the potential for replication across other parts of the district and county
- SHWP is now better positioned to address longstanding health inequalities in the Stour area
- Key action within the districts Growing Opportunities plan achieved.





STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Empowering and strengthening local communities

As expanded upon as a Case Study, the Stratford Centres Together group met for the first time and a second meeting was held in this year.

As a result of SCT and the support from Stratford Town Trust a workshop was held by the Trusts building manager on health and safety and compliance for community facilities. A central database of contractors was also developed.

The Development Officer collaborated with the Bishopton Community Centre and the Ken Kennett Centre to co-develop a proposal to further enhance these vital community hubs. The 'Stratford Community Anchor Project' identifies key barriers preventing these centres from maximising their impact and proposed solutions to address these challenges. This has benefited from the links developed with other Stratford centres developed through the 'Stratford Centres Together' group.

Residents Associations on new housing estates were supported in Shipston, Meon Vale and Southam in this year. Upper Lighthorne Support Partnership continued to be supported.

Advice was also given to Upper Lighthorne Parish Council and the local Community Champion on groups governance, legal status of groups and facility development/funding.

Meon Vale Residents Association were supported with a funding search and were introduced to Paint Stratford as they were looking for a graffiti artist to do some work with local young people on the estate.

Bishopton Community Centre and the Ken Kennett Centre were supported to apply for a Councillor Grant for their graffiti art installations.

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Impact and Value

ORGANISATION	APPLIED TO	AMOUNT APPLIED FOR	RESULT	AMOUNT SECURED
Men Shed Stratford upon Avon	Rural Englnd Prosperity Fund	£49,950	Successful	£49,950
Men Shed Stratford upon Avon	National Lottery	£20,000	Unsuccessful	£0,00
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£10,500	Successful	£10,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Access Funding	£10,000	Successful	£7,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Garfield Weston	£30,00	Awaiting	£0,00
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	WPH Trust	£10,000	Unsuccessful	£0,00
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Heart of England Energy	£30,000	Awaiting	£0,00
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Heart of England CF	£2,500	Successful	£2,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	The Fore	£30,000	Unsuccessful	£0,00
Escape Arts	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£19,950	Successful	£19,500
Paint Stratford	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£5,000	Successful	£5,000
FACES for ALL	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£50,000	Successful	£50,000
FACES for ALL	Community Ownership	£1,000.000	Unsuccessful	£0,00
Stratford Sports Club	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£39,500	Successful	£39,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Inclusive Communities	£11,900	Successful	£11,900
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Patrick Trust	£1,500	Successful	£1,500
Priors Hall Village Hall	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£25,000	Successful	£25,000
Priors Hall Village Hall	BIFFA	£15,500	On Hold	£0,00

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

ORGANISATION	APPLIED TO	AMOUNT APPLIED FOR	RESULT	AMOUNT SECURED
Harbury Scout Hut	UK Shared Prosperity Fund	£50,000	Successful	£50,000
WRAP	W E Dunn	£1,500	Successful	£1,500
WRAP	Baron Davenport	£3,000	Successful	£500
WRAP	Stratford Town Trust	£35,000	Unsuccessful	£0.00
WRAP	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£1,500	Successful	£1,500
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	National Lottery	£186,708	Successful	£186,708
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Social Fabric Fund	£92,899	Unsuccessful	£0.00
Bishopton Community Centre	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£1,000	Successful	£1,000
Bishopton Community Centre	Stratford Town Trust	£36,250	Successful	£12,886
Bishopton Community Centre	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£999.00	Successful	£999.00
Bishopton Community Centre	One Stop Stores	£960.00	Unsuccessful	£0.00
New Hope Counselling	Stratford Town Trust	£15,500	Successful	£13,820
Meon Eco Group	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£350.00	Successful	£350.00
Stratford Family Group	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£2,250	Successful	£2,250
WRAP	Heart of England Energy	£20,000	Awaiting	£0.00
WRAP	WPH Trust	£10,000	Unsuccessful	£0.00
WRAP	29th May Trust	£3,000	Successful	£3,000
WRAP	Heart of England CF	£3,000	Successful	£3,000
WRAP	National Lottery	£20,000	Awaiting	£0.00
Shipston Home Nursing	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£3,000	Successful	£3,000
Warwickshire CAVA	Community Builder Yr2	£55,000	Successful	£55,000
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	South WFT	£26,000	Successful	£26,000
Stour Health and Wellbeing Partnership	Ellen Badger League	£10,000	Successful	£10,000

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

ORGANISATION	APPLIED TO	AMOUNT APPLIED FOR	RESULT	AMOUNT SECURED
Clopton Community Action	Warwickshire County Council (WCC)	£1,000	Successful	£1,000
Snitterfield Village Hall	Heart of England Energy	£2,000	Successful	£2,000
ARC Brooke Arts Hub	Heart of England Energy	£35,000	On hold	£0,00
TOTAL APPLIED FOR		£1,976,716		
TOTAL - SUCCESSFUL				£597,363

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 2024/25.

1st Stratford Scout Group	Bishopton Community Centre
Afghanistan Link of Hope	Brill Equine Therapy Centre
Alcester Town Council	Clifford Chambers Village Hall
ARC Arts Rising Collective	Clopton Community Action Group
Bearley Village Hall	Cotswold Equine Therapy Centre
Bear Pit Theatre	Crafty Lunch Club
Begin 2 Network	Crawford Memorial Hall

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Escape Arts	Shipston Bookfest
Everyone Active	Shipston Home Nursing
FACES FOR ALL CIC	Shipston Residents Association
Flying Fields Residents Association	Shottery Memorial Hall
Fred Winter Centre Steering Group	Southam Heritage Collection
Graham Adams Centre	St Andrew's Parish Church
Harbury Guides and Scouts	St Leonard's Church
Harbury Heritage Group	Stepping Stones Stratford On Avon
Harbury School Parent Teacher Association	Stour Health and Wellbeing
Harbury Village Library	Partnership
Henley Community Library	Stratford District Council
Holy Trinity Church	Stratford Family Club
Langley Village Hall	Stratford Museum
Lifeways	Stratford School
Mad Atomic Theatre Company	Stratford Sharks Swimming Club
Menopause Knowledge CIC	Stratford Sports Club
Men's Shed Stratford upon Avon	Stratford Timebank
Meon Vale Residents Association	Stratford Upon Avon Foodbank
MS Society West Midlands	Stratford Youth Collective
Net Zero Stratford	Studley Youth Foundation
New Hope Counselling	Tamworth in Arden Tennis Club
Paint Stratford	Temple Herdewyke Village Hall
Parenting Project	TEPLO
Phoenix Players	Townsend Memorial Hall
Priors Marston and Priors Hardwick Village Hall	Trust Green
Rosebird Community Association	Tysoe Heritage Group
Royal Shakespeare Company	Ukes of Ale
Rubbish Friends	Upper Lighthorne Parish Council

STRATFORD SOCIAL INCLUSION PARTNERSHIP (SIP)

Warmington Village Hall	Welcombe Radio
Warwickshire County Council (WCC) - Community Team	Young Minds Matter
Warwickshire Reminiscence Action Project	

Conclusion

In conclusion, the 2024/25 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.

Thanks must go to all the groups that do such important work throughout the district, supporting many of the community’s most vulnerable people. Without their work and involvement there would have been no success.

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.

“

I cannot thank you enough for the support and encouragement you have given me in putting both the EOI and the full grant application together which has resulted in such a great outcome.

- New Hope Counselling

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

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