



COMMUNITY GRANTS

Annual report 2025/2026



cambridge.gov.uk/**community-grants**

Cambridge City Council's Community Grants programme provides funding to voluntary, community and not-for-profit organisations to deliver projects that help **reduce social and economic inequality among Cambridge residents with the greatest need**.

During 2025/26, Community Grants were available through two funding streams: **grants of over £5,000** and **grants of £5,000 or less**.

For the first time in 2025/26, the council also awarded multi-year Community Grants funding to three organisations for a three-year period. These grants were designed to promote organisational stability and long-term sustainability. Building on this approach, the council has introduced a new three-tier funding model in future years, increasing its commitment to both multi-year and core funding.

The Community Investment Team (CIT) is responsible for administering the council's Community Grants programme. The team also manages the Homelessness Prevention Grants and Sustainable City Grants programmes. In 2025, the team introduced the Resettlement Community Grant Fund (RCGF), which supports projects that assist refugees and people seeking asylum in Cambridge. The team has also administered grants funded through the Shared Prosperity Fund (SPF), which supported community capacity building and feasibility work for transformational projects aimed at tackling inequality.

All aspects of these grant programmes are overseen by the team, from the initial assessment of applications through to end-of-project monitoring and evaluation. Alongside grant administration, the team provides year-round advice and support to community and voluntary organisations across Cambridge.

In 2025, the administration of these grants moved to a new online system. The introduction of the online portal has streamlined grant administration processes and made applying for funding simpler and more accessible.

During 2025/26, the CIT team processed **152 grant applications** from community and voluntary organisations across Cambridge.

"It really came across how much you all care about the organisations you work with. We really value the relationship we have built with you and the team."

Red Hen Project officer



Community Grants were awarded for activities that met the following priorities:

- Active lifestyles
- Arts and culture
- Community development
- Reducing poverty
- Employment support

In 2025/26, a total of **£1,113,717** was awarded as follows:

- **£528,000** in Community Grants (grants of over £5,000)
- **£119,604** in Community Grants (grants of £5,000 or less)
- **£466,113** in three multi-year grant awards

Our Community Grants mean:

- **85** groups were funded
- **87** projects and activities were delivered
- **79,626** Cambridge residents benefited from events, activities and projects.

On average, every **£1** of grant funding awarded is combined with a further **£4 to £5** of income raised by the group through additional fundraising. This means that the total value of grant-funded activities is estimated to be in excess of

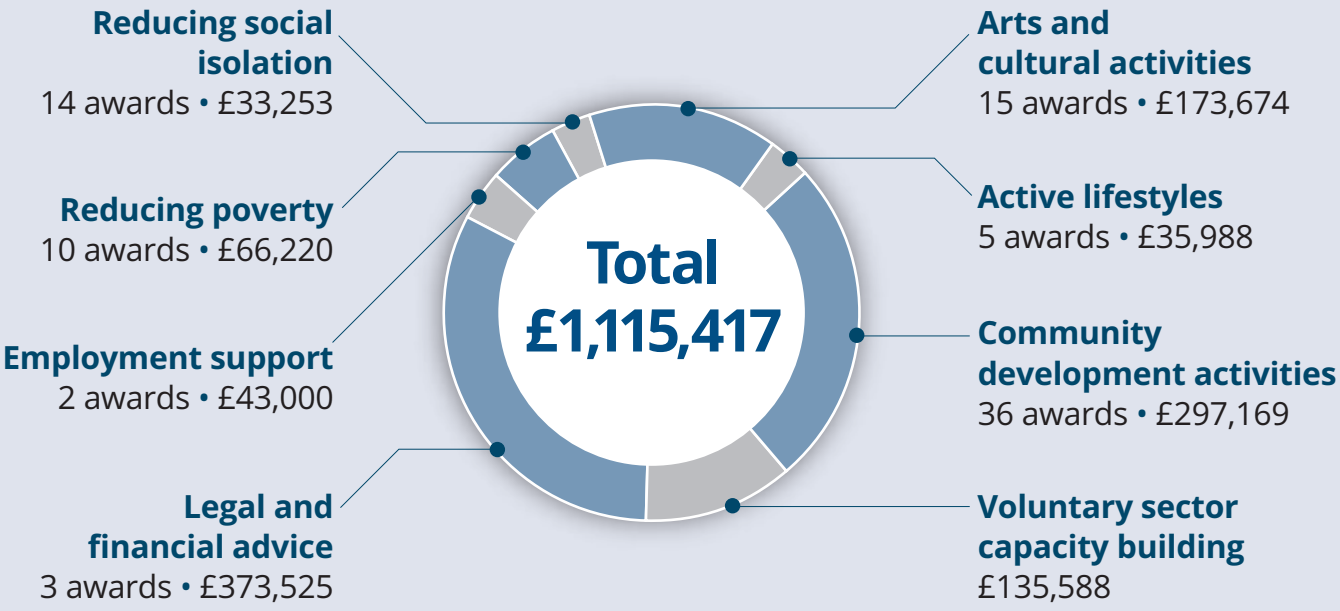
£4.9 million

Discretionary Rate Relief

A total of **£26,699.94** was awarded in Discretionary Rate Relief (DRR) to qualifying voluntary and community groups to reduce their business rates bills. This is in addition to the mandatory reliefs awarded by government.

To be eligible, groups must show that the activities taking place at their premises meet our funding priorities and outcomes. The level of relief awarded is proportionate to the number of beneficiaries who are Cambridge residents.

Activities were funded as follows...



With thanks to the **634 trustees** and **1812 volunteers** who supported the work of our funded organisations.

Contents



Community Grants over £5,000 6

Arts and cultural activities 7
Active lifestyles 10
Community development activities 11
Employment support 16
Reducing poverty activities 17

Community Grants of £5,000 and under 19

Activities that improve access to arts and culture 20
Promoting active lifestyles 22
Activities that bring communities together 23
Reducing poverty 26
Activities that reduce loneliness and social isolation 28

Multiyear funding 30

Multiyear funding 31





Foreword





It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Cambridge City Council's Community Grants Annual report for 2025/26.

The council has a proud record of supporting our most vulnerable and disadvantaged residents and combating inequality. This is epitomised by our Community Grants programme, a bedrock of our anti-poverty strategy.

During 2025/26, our Community Grants provided over £1.1 million of inflation-proofed funding for 85 organisations, helping them deliver support and activities for nearly 80,000 residents. The extent of help offered by a network of community and voluntary organisations across the Cambridge is incredibly impressive.

The organisations we fund address a wide range of needs within our communities. This includes financial advice, employment support, food advice, mental health and wellbeing support, helping those with learning disabilities, reducing isolation and loneliness, and encouraging creative projects and active lifestyles. Those supported include families, young people, and older residents, and funding recognises the needs of communities such as the LGBTQ+ community and people from ethnic minority backgrounds.

I am particularly pleased that multi-year grants to key partners such as the Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau, the Cambridge Ethnic Minority Forum, and Support Cambridgeshire have been established. Multi-year grants provide increased certainty and stability, enabling a more sustainable way forward and we have already made the decision to extend this approach to more partners in future years.

Alongside our Homelessness Prevention Grants, Sustainable City Grants, and our Resettlement Community Grants helping refugees and asylum seekers, the Community Grants programme has never been more needed at a time when the pressure on resources is intense. We remain absolutely committed to funding our partners in the sector who deliver support, advice, and activities that change people's lives for the better.

I want to thank all the voluntary and community groups that deliver such crucial support to our residents, and to also thank our Community Investment Team who do such an amazing job providing help and advice to all our partner organisations.

Councillor Mike Todd Jones
Cabinet Member for Communities



Community Grants over £5,000

Arts and cultural activities

36 AWARDS
£150,474

Funded organisations

- Cambridge Community Arts
- Cambridge Junction
- Kettle's Yard
- Museum of Cambridge
- New International Encounter Theatre Company
- Rowan Humberstone Ltd
- Sew Positive
- The Pink Festival Group
- University of Cambridge Museums

Funded activities include:

- Community festivals
- Creative workshops for young adults with learning disabilities
- Film-making projects for disadvantaged young people
- Inclusive after school drama club sessions
- Museum-based interactive and inclusive activities
- Storytelling, writing workshops and performances for children

Spotlight on...

Junction CDC

Delivering inclusive arts projects for disadvantaged young people.

- Total Arts and Total Arts Mini Bytes: free fortnightly accessible theatre and filmmaking sessions.
- Total Arts Festival: a two-day film festival showcasing **16** films and music videos created by young people.



- Contemporary Youth Choir.
- **62.5%** of participants reported trying new things since joining.
- **87.5%** made new friends through the programme.
- **72** young people participated in the activities delivered.

"My son loves going to Contemporary Youth Choir. He looks forward to it every week and is always in a great mood when he comes out. He usually struggles with group activities but says he feels safe there. The team do a brilliant job of creating a supportive and inclusive space. It makes him feel less isolated and has been a big confidence boost."

Parent

"I've never seen so much confidence in him. It's a level of engagement I've never seen before."

Parent

Pink Festival Group

Delivered the free Cambridge Pride festival, celebrating the contribution of the LGBTQ+ community to the cultural life of the city.

- More than **10,000** residents and visitors attended.
- Over **30** local charities and services were represented.
- More than **100** volunteers helped deliver a safe and welcoming event.
- Attendees enjoyed **50** hours of entertainment, performances and community activities.
- The event included a dedicated Youth Area and wellbeing spaces, delivered by The Kite Trust.

Rowan Humberstone Ltd

Creative classes for adult students with learning disabilities, and 'Rowan Rangers' Forest School.

"Rowan has improved my confidence and helped me to work as part of a team in a fantastic place."

Rowan student

"Rowan gives me a reason to get up in the morning, stimulates my brain and gives me something to do, rather than sitting at home."

Rowan student



New International Encounter Theatre

Creative workshops delivered with Year 5 pupils of Galfrid School.

"This is so important and so much more than the experience of theatre. It gives the children a voice, connects them to the community and promotes a sense of belonging. These stories are their stories; they reaffirm that the children have a part to play and that this community is theirs."

Headteacher, Galfrid School



The Museum of Cambridge

Events and projects designed to improve access to arts and cultural activities.

- **1,545** Cambridge residents participated in the funded activities.
- **1,228** residents participated in the 'Museum on a Bike' programme where collections were taken to communities with reduced access to arts and cultural activities.
- **604** people attended the Heritage Craft school holiday programme, delivered in areas of high deprivation.
- **11** new volunteers were recruited, giving over **145** hours of volunteer time.
- **95%** of participants felt that the activities enabled them to get creative.
- **62%** reported feeling more connected to their local history and cultural heritage.

"I love coming to these sessions, especially when there's lots of people and I can enthuse to them about the museum and the work we do."

Museum of Cambridge volunteer



Active lifestyles

2 AWARDS
£24,398

Funded organisations

- Cambridge United Foundation
- Level Water

Funded activities include

- Pan-disability football activities
- Specialist swimming sessions for disabled children

Spotlight on...



Cambridge United Foundation

Weekly pan-disability football sessions for adults and children including 'Parability' tournaments and Football for Mental Health sessions.

- **38** Football for Mental Health sessions delivered.
- **25** joint powerchair football sessions were provided as part of pilot project.
- **16** disability football festival sessions took place.
- **12** Bright Horizons café sessions were delivered.
- **13** adult disability tournaments were organised.
- **84%** of participants reported an improvement in their physical wellbeing.
- **82%** reported a positive impact on their sense of community.

Level Water

Provided specialised swimming lessons for children with disabilities helping them to improve their swimming skills and be active.

"This term our eight year old daughter got her 10-meter distance award. Learning and coordinating the movement and breathing needed for swimming are all really hard for her. But thanks to her one-to-one lessons, her confidence in the water has rocketed. She loves doing 'sinkies' and handstands."

Parent



- **94%** reported feeling welcome, safe and included.

"Everyone is made to feel welcome and included."

Participant

Community development activities

18 AWARDS
£263,328

Funded organisations

- Abbey People CIO
- Cambridge Hindu Association
- Cambridgeshire Older People's Enterprise
- Centre 33
- CoFarm Foundation
- Homestart Cambridgeshire
- King's Hedges Family Support Project
- Meadows Children and Family Wing
- Romsey Mill Trust
- The Kite Trust
- The Red Hen Project

Funded activities

- Aspire Plus, a programme for young people with autism
- Cambridge Hindu Association Over-50s Club
- Family support groups and programmes
- LGBTQ+ community forums and history month events
- LGBTQ+ youth groups
- Life After Abuse, a support programme for women
- Managing the harvest and caretaking of CoFarm
- Peer support for isolated mothers
- Promoting the wellbeing and interests of older people
- Schools Out programme for families with complex needs
- Someone To Talk To, a free advice service for young people aged up to 25
- Weekly Youth Club activities in Abbey ward

Spotlight on...

Home-Start Cambridgeshire

Peer support for socially isolated mothers experiencing mental health issues, who have a child under the age of 5. 2025/26 saw a 250% increase in self-referrals to Home-Start's support sessions.

- **59** individuals from **23** families received support.
- **70%** of attendees identified between three and five separate areas of need.
- **30%** were born outside the UK and had limited family support networks.

As a result of accessing Home-Start's support:

- **67%** reported improved self-esteem and confidence.
- **58%** reported improved ability to cope with their mental health.

"This group and my volunteer have been wonderful. I feel so different now."

A mother receiving support from Home-Start



Abbey People

A community charity that works to improve the wellbeing of residents in Abbey Ward by providing support services, community activities and welcoming spaces where people can connect and access help. Its work includes running a food hub, hosting regular community coffee mornings, managing East Barnwell Community Centre and The Hub, and delivering weekly youth club activities for children and young people from low-income households.

- **146** Food Hub sessions were delivered, supporting 350 residents.
- **4,380** household visits were recorded at Food Hub sessions.
- **48** weekly community coffee mornings were held with **50** residents attending.
- **1966** volunteer hours contributed by **271** volunteers to support the delivery of activities and services.



"Coming to youth groups has been positive for me. Before I started attending youth groups I rarely spoke to other people. Now I have space to be social and talk to others, including people I wouldn't usually have spoken to otherwise. This has allowed me to find out more about other people and find people who can relate to my situation."

Youth club member





Centre 33

The Someone to Talk To service provides in-person drop-in's, phone advice and support for young people aged up to 25.

- **2,087** young people supported through the service.
- **65** young people received money and benefits advice.
- **63** young people received employment and pathway support, including training, job search and application guidance.
- **269** accessed Centre 33's ongoing mental health support services.
- **30%** of young people were signposted or referred to Centre 33.
- **367** carers and professionals sought support or advice from the service.

Of the young people seeking support:

- **6%** were previously in care or care leavers.
- **20%** lived in some of Cambridge's most deprived wards.
- **23%** had 10 or more presenting needs.
- **27%** were not in employment, education or training (NEET).
- **29%** identified as LGBTQ+.
- **33%** were from ethnic minority backgrounds.
- **51%** reported having a disability.
- **83%** presented with at least two separate support needs.

Cambridge Hindu Association

Over 50's Club delivering chair-based exercises, informative talks, social lunches and outings.

- **19** sessions were delivered.
- **47** residents participated in the activities.

"Members come from different backgrounds and these sessions give them a chance to mingle with like-minded people, which is crucial for reducing isolation. They have an opportunity to get out of the house and participate in activities that bring them joy, an opportunity that would not exist without these meetings."

Over 50's Club organiser

King's Hedges Family Support Project

Family support drop-in sessions, support and information for families facing disadvantage and a range of complex challenges.

As a result:

- **500** families were supported.
- **49%** received information, guidance and training.
- **70%** learnt about additional services within their community.
- **86%** took part in healthy lunches at the sessions.
- **76%** learnt new skills while playing with their children.
- **1,843** instances of information and support with mental health were delivered.
- **70%** reported making new friends.
- **86%** felt happier about themselves.
- **70%** learnt about additional services within their community.



"I feel listened to, and I have people I can turn to which has made me a better parent. My son has come on leaps and bounds with his development. We've also been provided with food bank and energy vouchers which have also been very helpful."

Parent supported by the King's Hedges Family Support Project

Meadows Children and Family Wing

Family support drop-in sessions and Life After Abuse, Freedom and Freedom Forever programmes for women and their children recovering from domestic abuse. They also offer free creche, signposting and referrals to a range of specialist providers.

- **101** family support drop-ins were delivered.
- **38** specialist domestic abuse Freedom Programme sessions supported **214** women and **196** children.
- **179** local families were supported by the activities, including 74 new participants.
- **7** Cambridge Aid Fund applications for resources were made.
- **8** Household fund applications for £110 were successfully completed.
- **4** emergency rapid relief food boxes were distributed.
- **12** weekly cooking sessions were delivered with additional funding.

"I have got to know more about child behaviour patterns and how to handle when they are upset and how to be patient."

Family support sessions attendee

"For me what was important was opportunity to get familiar with toxic behaviours, and how to spot them. Also meeting other women and their stories was great experience, letting me feel included like never before."

Life After Abuse course participant

Romsey Mill Trust

Aspire Plus programme: a life and social skills programme for young people aged 17 to 19 with autism.

- **9** young people progressed from Aspire Plus to attend university.
- **2** participants progressed into volunteering roles with Romsey Mill Trust.
- **94%** of parents said attending Aspire youth club has had a positive impact on their child's wellbeing and mental health.

"Outside of this club my son has no other opportunity for socialising. In two years at college, he made no friends and spoke to no one. Aspire Club was his one social enjoyment of the week and still remains a focus of enjoyment each week. He has no other friends outside of this club. As parents, it's a huge help to know that he has contact with friends in the group and that it is a safe environment."

Parent

The Kite Trust

Weekly youth groups for LGBTQ+, neurodiverse and disabled young people aged 13 to 25, alongside one-to-one support, signposting, arts, sports and cultural activities and family support sessions.

- **88** young people attended youth group sessions.
- **226** online support sessions were delivered.
- **72%** reported increased confidence since accessing Kite's services.
- **78%** reported increased self-esteem.
- **84%** felt they had learnt new skills or knowledge.
- **94%** felt listened to at The Kite Trust.



Employment support

2 AWARDS
£43,000

Funded organisations

- Cambridge Women's Resources Centre
- The Papworth Trust

Funded activities include

- Employability and wellbeing workshops and courses for women
- Routeways to work programme
- Social enterprise bike shop

Spotlight on...

Cambridge Women's Resource Centre

Employability and wellbeing programme for women, providing courses, group activities, skills development and confidence building opportunities.

- **197** participated in inclusive group activities.
- **21** volunteers gave **456** hours of their time during the year.
- **50** women reported improved health and wellbeing, reduced isolation and increased confidence.
- **58** accessed food bank vouchers or hardship funds totalling £7,750.
- **81** progressed in skills development, including employment readiness.
- **101** women received targeted poverty support.
- **156** accessed the Free Shop.
- **8** women also engaged in volunteering opportunities.

"Cambridge Women's Resource Centre quite literally saved my life. Me and my family are eternally grateful for the practical help in a difficult financial time."

Woman supported by Cambridge Women's Resource Centre



The Papworth Trust

Weekly employment training and interpersonal skills development sessions for participants with disabilities.

"We are delighted to have been funded and are extremely grateful for your help."

Project Manager, Papworth Trust

"I have been given the opportunity to ease my way through solving things piece-by-piece, rather than walking away from things, which I have done in the past. I've learned how to communicate with colleagues by talking with the tutors and working alongside the other participants."

Participant

Reducing poverty activities

5 AWARDS
£48,500

Funded organisations

- Cambridge Housing Society Ltd Group
- Cambridge Money Advice Centre
- Cambridge Online
- Cambridge Sustainable Food CIC

Funded activities include

- Batch cooking sessions for low-income residents
- Design and implementation of a new Food Justice Alliance
- Digital inclusion projects
- Holiday lunch programme for school-age children in low-income households
- Social, leisure, creative activities
- One-to-one support for vulnerable women in supported housing

Spotlight on...

Cambridge Housing Society's Corona Community Project

Social, leisure and creative activities, alongside one-to-one support for vulnerable women in supported housing.

- **15** women participated in allotment activities.
- **12** women participated in creative projects.
- **10** applications were made to the Household Support Fund.
- **9** received support with Universal Credit and pension-related matters.
- **99** received support with budgeting, finance and debt management.
- **7** women were referred to the Food Bank for food and household essentials.
- **6** women received assistance with Housing Benefit claims.
- **4** women were supported with Personal Independence Payment (PIP) applications.
- **3** applications were made to the Cambridgeshire Local Assistance Scheme for white goods and shopping vouchers.
- **3** women received support with costs associated with setting up home.



"Corona House supported me to resolve a debt that arose without any notice or explanation. I was extremely anxious about it, as I struggle with paperwork and phone calls. It was a huge relief to not be alone with it. Solving this debt problem was one of many things I have received help with recently. I am so thankful to Corona House for being there for me through difficult times when I was really struggling."

Sarah, support recipient

Cambridge Sustainable Food

Promoting sustainable food practices across Cambridge through the development and implementation of the new Food Justice Alliance focusing on food insecurity, collaboration and longer-term food systems change. The project included the development of a Cambridge Charter on Food Justice and Security, a volunteer programme supporting Alliance members, coordination of surplus food delivery to 45 community food hubs, information sharing with 14 community cookery groups, and the provision of free healthy lunches and activities for low-income families during the school holidays.

- **110,648** meal equivalents were distributed across the city.
- **47,768kg** of surplus food was redistributed.
- **6** Food Justice Alliance steering group meetings were hosted.
- **96** people attended the annual Food Justice Alliance conference.
- **2,582** lunches were served during the school summer holidays.
- **462** members of Fairbite supermarkets collected food for an average of 3 people per household.
- **81** people attended the Shah Jalal Food Hub.
- **101** volunteers contributed **3347** hours in support of these projects
- **2,346** visits to holiday lunch events, including **1,414** children.
- **42** holiday events were delivered by **9** providers across the city.

"The impact of this initiative reaches far beyond those we can easily count. Its potential influence extends across a wide range of people experiencing poverty in our community."

Project Manager, Cambridge Sustainable Food



Cambridge Online

Digital inclusion, skills training, equipment and internet access for disadvantaged residents. Cambridge online delivered:

- **1,082** remote support sessions to 758 individuals.
- **262** in-person digital support sessions.
- **115** direct beneficiaries received digital inclusion support.
- **107** devices, including laptops were distributed.
- **47** people received SIM card and mobile connectivity support.
- **7** sessions were delivered in residential homes,
- **£25,300** worth of devices and connectivity were distributed.



Community Grants of £5,000 and under

"This grant is crucial to sustain our community activities, and we really appreciate the council's support."

Turkish and Kurdish-speakers in Cambridge Association

Activities that improve access to arts and culture

2 AWARDS
£23,200

Funded organisations

- Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust Ltd
- Cambridge Film Trust
- Centre for Computing History
- Indian Cultural Society
- The Sixth Sense Collective
- Little Bulgaria UK CIO
- Reeshe Persian Language School CIC
- Trumpington Community Drama Group

Funded activities include

- Annual South Asian arts, music, dance and food festival
- Inclusive drama sessions and performances for children and young people
- Persian New Year wellbeing event
- Pilot creative activities and a Youth Forum for young people
- Seasonal events to celebrate and preserve Bulgarian culture in the city
- Science, Technology, Engineering, Mathematics (STEM), IT and computing: family activity days for low-income families
- Film industry workshops, education and mentoring for disadvantaged young people aged 16 to 24

Spotlight on...

Cambridge Film Trust

The Youth Lab: a programme of fortnightly outreach, one-to-one support and mentoring sessions for disadvantaged young people aged 16 to 24, providing of workshops, education and mentorship with industry professionals.

- **17** new participants were recruited to the Youth Lab.
- **67%** identified as disabled or living with a long-term health condition.
- **12** participants identified as neurodivergent or living with a mental health condition.
- **44%** identified as LGBTQ+.
- **32%** identified with an ethnic minority background.
- **23%** were from economically disadvantaged households.
- **8** former participants progressed into industry employment.



Centre for Computing History

Family Activity Days for low-income families, providing STEM, IT, coding and computing activities.

- **47** people attended the Storytelling and Interactive Tour events.
- **34** people attended the Repair the Games Console workshops.
- **45** people attended the Discovery Box activity.
- **33** people attended the BBC Micro sessions.
- **38** people attended the Micro: Bit sessions.
- **45** people attended the Conducting Carrots workshops.

Little Bulgaria CIO

Delivered cultural events celebrating and preserving Bulgarian traditions, music and dance.



The Sixth Sense Collective

Delivered drama workshops and produced a play exploring autism, created by a neurodivergent cast and production team.

"Amazing cast and incredible performance. Every teacher should watch this."

Audience member



Promoting active lifestyles

3 AWARDS
£11,590

Funded organisations

- Bangladesh Welfare and Cultural Association
- Cambridge Disabled Kids Swimming Club
- The Good Gym

Funded activities include

- Volunteering-based physical activity sessions
- Sports and social activities for the Cambridge Bangladeshi community
- Weekly swimming sessions for children with disabilities and their families

Spotlight on...



Bangladeshi Welfare and Cultural Association

Sports and social activities for members of the Cambridge Bangladeshi community, alongside weekly swimming sessions for women.

Cambridge Disabled Kids Swimming Club

Weekly swimming sessions for children with severe disabilities and their families at the Windmill Hydrotherapy Pool.

"Swimming has given our daughter the opportunity to build confidence in the water while for us as parents it gives us the chance to connect with others and form supportive friendships."

Parent



Activities that bring communities together

18 AWARDS
£33,841

Funded organisations

- Arbury Carnival Committee
- Cambridge Acorn Project
- Cambridge African Network
- Cambridgeshire Vietnamese Refugee Community
- Cherry Hinton Residents Association
- Chesterton Festival Committee
- Christ's Pieces Residents Association
- Connected Lives
- Friends of Logan's Meadow
- Friends of Midsummer Common
- Friends of Mill Road Cemetery
- Mill Road Winter Fair Association
- Queen Edith Community Forum
- St Andrew the Less Community Project
- The Expert on Myself (TEOM) CIC
- The Wildish Club
- Turkish Kurdish Speakers in Cambridge
- York Area Residents Association

Funded activities include

- Community fairs and festivals
- Community heritage centre workshops
- Events and activities for the Cambridge Caribbean community
- Monthly community breakfast for Turkish and Kurdish speakers
- Nature-based and creative activities for older residents
- Neighbourhood community activities
- Social and cultural activities for the Cambridge Vietnamese community
- Events and activities for low-income families
- Specialist neurodivergence training for community organisations
- Volunteer maintenance of Mill Road Cemetery
- Weekly family support sessions for mental health and wellbeing

Spotlight on...

Cambridge African Network

Social and leisure activities, including children's fortnightly dance sessions, a seaside trip, monthly Ubuntu social gatherings for older community members and Black History Month celebration event at Storey's Field Centre.

- **98** people went on the day trip.
- **110** people attended the Black History Month event.
- **14** children attended 13 Afrobeat and African cultural dance sessions.
- **6** public performances were delivered by the children participating.
- **4** Ubuntu sessions were attended by 14 residents.



Arbury Carnival Committee

Annual free community event for residents of all ages, held in Arbury Town Park.



Cambridge Arts Theatre Trust Ltd

Piloted a Youth Forum creative programme offering industry skills development and career pathway opportunities for 129 young people aged 16 to 25.

"It's been an incredible experience. It broadened my areas of the theatre I would have never considered in the past. The industry is much more open than people think, every opportunity is an open opportunity, there are so many different skills and the more you expose yourself to it the more it has to offer."

Participant



Friends of Logan's Meadow

Delivered community nature-based activities in Logan's Meadow encouraging residents to connect with nature and with one another.



Christ's Pieces Residents Association

Delivered a community picnic on New Square, featuring music, storytelling, children's games and community activities.

"I attended the community picnic with my family, but I would have gone alone to join in the happy event. I'm widowed and live alone. Thank you to the people who worked hard to make this possible."

Local resident

Mill Road Winter Fair

Celebrated the 20th Anniversary of the Mill Road Winter Fair, a free community event featuring music, dance, food, art, parades and children's activities.

- **10,000** people attended the event.
- **110** commercial, community and voluntary sector stalls took part.
- **52** busking acts performed at the fair.
- **3** parades took place.
- **3** stages and activities in various community and faith centres.
- **100** volunteers helped to manage the event.

"I just wanted to say thank you to you and your team for a lovely Mill Road Winter Fair! Your hard work really paid off, and it was great to see so many people having such a good time."

Cllr Dinah Pounds, Former Mayor of Cambridge (2025/26)

"We had so many meaningful conversations with both existing and new customers. They all loved the fact that we were local!"

Food vendor

The Expert on Myself (TEOM) CIC

Delivered specialist neurodivergence training to voluntary and community organisations through six neurodivergent trainers with lived experience.

"The workshops brought people together who would likely not otherwise have met. We all came together as equals in a safe and comfortable environment where everybody's experiences and questions were met with respect. People were able to take new knowledge away with them, which they will hopefully use to educate and help others whom they interact with in their day-to-day lives."

Workshop attendee



Reducing poverty

5 AWARDS
£17,720

Funded organisations

- C3 Church
- Cambridge Money Advice Centre
- Church of the Good Shepherd
- Cambridge Science Centre
- Fairbite Food Club: Queen Edith's Community Forum

Funded activities include

- Poverty-reduction initiatives for low-income individuals
- Advice and support for financial problems
- Food Hub and Community Market
- Social and wellbeing activities
- Transport provision to after-school STEM Club sessions

Spotlight on...

Cambridge Science Centre

Free transport for children living in North Cambridge to 24 sessions of after-school STEM Club at Cambridge Science Centre.

"Thanks for keeping our children curious and learning."

Parent

"My child came home last week and said how much fun he had at Science Club. He explained what he did and how he changed the proportions and quantities of the ingredients he used. Thank you very much for providing interesting and engaging activities to promote their learning."

Parent



Cambridge Money Advice Centre (CMAC)



Provided free, confidential advice and support to address and reduce personal debt.

- **63** people received face-to-face debt advice.
- **190** meetings were held with clients at CMAC's Barnwell office.
- **13** people either entered or completed Debt Relief Orders (DROs).
- **£279,337** of debt was cleared through these DROs.
- **2** people who had a total of £6,550 debt written off through Debt and Mental Health Evidence Forms.
- **1** person who had suffered domestic abuse had a debt totalling £10,089 written off.
- **79%** of people reported feeling more confident about the future as a result of the support they received.

CASE STUDY

'P' moved having fled domestic abuse. Her perpetrator was at that point in prison as a result of his actions against her. Although she had previously been in a well-paid job with great prospects and had a beautiful house, she had to leave everything behind. The only thing to come with her (apart from her children) were her debts.

With her permission, CMAC shared evidence with creditors explaining the circumstances in which the debts had arisen, many as a result of the perpetrator's actions. Some creditors agreed to write off debts, while others provided additional time and flexibility to help her regain financial stability.

C3 Church

Wraparound support and poverty reduction initiatives for low-income families.

- **107** individuals received support.
- **37** families accessed the Impact Hub, supporting households facing hardship.
- **74** households accessed the Community Market, improving access to affordable food for low-income families.
- **31** All Nations Café sessions were delivered, with informal English-language support.

The Church of the Good Shepherd

Weekly Community Living Room sessions and Food Hub for low-income families and residents.

- **2,500** free bags of food were distributed.
- **4,500** meals were provided .
- **100** residents attended holiday lunch sessions.

"When I retired, I was struggling, and coming here has really helped me."

Community Living Room user

Activities that reduce loneliness and social isolation

18 AWARDS
£33,253

Funded organisations

- Boishakhi Cultural Association
- Cambridge Creative Synergy
- Cambridge Gateway Club
- Cambridge Pop-up Social Group
- Denis Wilson Court Social Club
- Growing Together
- Lifecraft
- Mallu Café
- Merry-Go-Round Toy Library
- Sabr Arts and Craft Therapy
- St Martin's Church
- Thriving Beyond the Label CIC



Funded activities include

- Activities for young people with disabilities and life-limiting conditions
- Arts-based wellbeing group for vulnerable ethnic minority women
- Making Good craft and woodwork sessions
- Peer-based and therapeutic sessions for adults
- Social activities for older residents
- Social event for ethnic minority families with neurodivergent children
- Social and leisure club for disabled adults
- Social and sports activities for the Cambridge Kerala community
- Social sessions for isolated parents and their children
- Summer day trips for low-income families
- Weekly breakfast club for low-income residents
- Weekly pop-up social events and film screenings
- Wellness, craft and leisure activities for neurodivergent and disabled adults

Spotlight on...

Merry-Go-Round Toy Library

Fortnightly stay-and-play sessions, alongside low-cost toy and baby equipment rental, at Ross Street Community Centre.

- **30** new families joined in 2025/26.
- **68** parents rented toys, signed up for services or made a donation.
- An average of **28** people attended each session.

"It's close to home, easy to get to, and it often runs when other activities are not running. It's a good way to see neighbours and get out of the house."

Parent



Boishakhi Cultural Association

Summer day trip for Cambridge Bangladeshi families.

"The trip is the only opportunity for us to go out together; we look forward to it all year."

Parent

Growing Together

Delivered Making Good craft and woodwork sessions at Barnwell Community Centre.

"The sessions have helped my anxiety levels to reduce and my resilience has improved. I also feel less lonely and more connected to my community. Having a routine to stick to, along with my medication, has definitely helped my mental health improve."

Participant

Sabr Arts and Craft Therapy

Weekly arts and craft-based wellbeing group for vulnerable ethnic minority women in Arbury and Chesterton.

"Being part of this group has also given me the opportunity to meet new people. Everyone is so kind and welcoming, which made me feel comfortable from the very beginning. It has truly been a positive and supportive environment for me."



Group member

Cambridge Pop-Up Social Group

Weekly social events and film screenings at Ross Street Community Centre.



Thriving Beyond the Label CIC

Delivered a community event for ethnic minority families with neurodivergent children. The event included:

- speech, language and health check consultations.
- question-and-answer sessions on education, health services, speech and language.
- signposting to additional resources.
- digital resource corner.
- the launch of the 'Thriving Interests' initiative, designed to nurture and celebrate neurodivergence.



Multiyear funding

"The three-year funding cycle has given us the financial stability to plan effectively and relieve pressure on staff, helping us to retain them. Our budgeting and forecasting have become more accurate, helping us to make effective decisions about our services and opportunities for further funding sources."

CAB officer

Multiyear funding

3 AWARDS
£466,113

Funded organisations

- Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)
- Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF)
- Support Cambridgeshire

Funded activities include

- Free, legal, specialist debt and money advice
- Specialist welfare rights casework
- Support, advice and training to strengthen community organisations
- Specialist support, advice and training for organisations serving ethnic minority communities

Spotlight on...

Cambridge and District Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB)

Free, independent financial and legal advice service for Cambridge residents.

- **16,071** Cambridge residents received advice and support for a total of **22,573** issues.
- **746** people received specialist benefit advice.
- **£5,386,303** in income was gained for people receiving support.
- **£144,180** in reimbursements was obtained.
- **£1,300,967** of debt was written off.
- **£198,240** worth of repayments were successfully rescheduled.
- **88%** of benefits appeals were upheld.
- **1,536** Cambridge residents were given financial advice and support, including maximising incomes and money management.
- Volunteer support contributed an estimated **£936,954** in social value.
- **44** successful appeals made to His Majesty's Courts and Tribunals Service.
- **39** of these appeals were successful.
- **66** people received support with specialist benefit appeals.
- **108** benefit decisions were challenged.
- **368** benefit claims were made.
- **141** people received support with benefit renewals and reviews.
- **129** clients were assisted with specialist benefit claims.
- **1,536** Cambridge residents were given financial advice and support, including maximising incomes and money management.

"I got excellent advice on the phone at very short notice, followed by a longer written summary of options. Everything was handled in a calm and compassionate manner and with professional excellence."

Resident receiving support from CAB

Cambridge Ethnic Community Forum (CECF)

CECF run the Cambridgeshire Human Rights and Equality Support Service (CHESS), providing free advice, advocacy and representation on discrimination, equality, diversity, inclusion and human rights. Support covers areas including education, employment, housing, policing and welfare benefits. CECF also offers organisational assistance, representation and advocacy support, as well as a capacity building service for ethnic minority community organisations.

- **9** ethnic minority groups received organisational development learning in 23 fortnightly sessions.
- **3** ethnic minority organisations received specialist finance and management learning in 3 dedicated sessions.
- **4** consultation meetings were held with ethnic minority organisations.
- **3** community events were supported, including Black History Month events and the African Caribbean Research Group's Winter Ball.
- **55** individuals received advice and assistance through CHESS.
- **72%** of those accessing services were women.

CASE STUDY

CECF supported a group to successfully become a Community Interest Company (CIC). Following an online advice session with them, guidance was provided on establishing a CIC and selecting the most appropriate category to register as. Their model articles of memorandum and association were amended during the session.

After the initial application was unsuccessful, a further online advice session was held. During this session CECF reviewed the community benefit information provided within the application and supported the group to strengthen and update its submission. Following re-submission, the application was successful.

"The funding was a contribution to salary and cost of CHESS services. Without it, it would have been impossible for CHESS to deliver our services. In other words, the impact of this multi-year funding is that CHESS can continue to provide 10 hours per week advice, assistance, representation and advocacy to our service users."

CECF Officer





Support Cambridgeshire

formerly Cambridgeshire Community Voluntary Service (CCVS)

Provides capacity-building support, advice and training to strengthen community organisations. The organisation also promotes partnership working, volunteering, leadership development and community engagement, helping local groups identify needs and develop solutions that improve lives.

- **645** hours of support was provided to **353** voluntary organisations.
- **260** enquiries relating to fundraising and finance received approximately **68** hours of support.
- **144** enquiries relating to volunteer management and recruitment, with approximately totalling **75** hours of support.
- **212** enquiries were made relating to governance and policies, with approximately **153** hours of support.
- **113** enquires were made to assist with setting up a new group or charity, totalling **77** hours of support.
- **29** live training sessions were delivered to **343** attendees.
- **4** Volunteer Manager Networks were delivered to **57** attendees.

CASE STUDY

'A' had recently relocated to the city and was feeling quite isolated. Unsure where to begin, she attended Support Cambridgeshire's online coffee morning and follow-up guidance helped her understand the wide variety of volunteering roles available locally.

This support enabled her to choose opportunities that were local and flexible, allowing her to get involved gradually. Over time she became actively involved in several community initiatives. She now volunteers at a social supermarket, has also co-founded a campaigning group advocating for healthcare access for migrants, coordinates a network supporting refugees and supports activities within her faith community.

"I now feel very settled here in this lovely city. Volunteering has made such a difference to that. I found that volunteering close to where I live really helped. I got to know people who live in the same area and so links began to grow."

Volunteer 'A'





cambridge.gov.uk/**community-grants**