



2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Holbrooks Community
Care Association

Making Holbrooks a better place to live,
work and play

www.holbrookscmmunity.co.uk
contactus@holbrookscmmunity.co.uk



Chair's Foreword – Isabelle Osborne

I am delighted to present the Annual Report for Holbrooks Community Care Association. Over the past year, our organisation has worked diligently to adapt to the evolving needs of our community, adjusting our short-term priorities accordingly. Our efforts have been focused on aligning our plans and strategies across the range of services we provide, ensuring we continue to meet the needs of local residents effectively.

This report stands as a testament to the hard work and dedication of the centre's staff and management committee. Their unwavering commitment, often going above and beyond what is typically required, has enabled us to support a significant number of local people. We have successfully delivered an impressive variety of activities and events, all within budget and under tight deadlines.

The report not only highlights the many achievements of the past year in Holbrooks but also acknowledges the ongoing challenges we face. There is still much to be done to tackle inequalities, strengthen community resilience, and better integrate services to support Holbrooks residents.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone who has contributed to our success over the past year. From our dedicated staff and volunteers to our partners and funders, each has played a vital role in helping us deliver our services and achieve our goals. Together, we have built a strong foundation to drive positive change, and I am confident that with continued collaboration and community spirit, we can overcome future challenges and realise our shared ambitions for Holbrooks.

Looking ahead, our strategy places an even greater emphasis on partnership working. Collaborating with other organisations and engaging with our community will be vital to achieving our goals. By leveraging our strengths, we can move closer to our vision of making Holbrooks a better place to live, learn, work, and play.



Overview of 2023-2024

The cost-of-living crisis has brought significant challenges to the residents of Holbrooks, creating financial hardship for many families and individuals within the community. With rising prices and increased energy costs, many residents have found themselves struggling to afford basic necessities, including food and heating. The financial strain has impacted households across the community, creating an urgent need for support and resources to help residents cope with these difficult circumstances. In response to this crisis, Holbrooks Community Care Association stepped up to listen to the concerns of the community, identify their specific needs, and provide essential support to residents facing financial, social, and emotional challenges.

Working closely with partners such as Coventry Independent Advice Service and Coventry and District Credit Union, Holbrooks Community Care Association has been able to offer a range of services aimed at helping residents navigate the cost-of-living crisis. Through these partnerships, we have connected residents to vital resources, aiding with financial advice, benefit applications, and access to credit unions to support low-income families. By providing this network of support, we have been able to ease the burden on those most affected by the crisis, ensuring they are not left to manage these hardships alone.

As part of our commitment to supporting the well-being of families, we have delivered the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme, which offers free holiday clubs for children eligible for free school meals. These clubs provide nutritious meals, ensuring that children receive balanced and healthy food even outside of term time. Additionally, we have enriched these sessions with arts, theatre, and organised trips that promote well-being and provide positive experiences for children. For many of these young people, the activities offered through the HAF programme represent opportunities they would not otherwise have access to, allowing them to engage, learn, and develop in a supportive and enjoyable environment.

Our community-focused approach also extends to creating events and excursions for residents of all ages. We have organised trips to the seaside, holiday celebrations, and national festivities, which serve as opportunities for families and individuals to come together, share experiences, and strengthen community bonds. These events help to combat isolation by fostering unity and creating lasting memories, reinforcing the message that Holbrooks is a supportive and inclusive community. Recognising the particular challenges faced by older adults, who often report increased isolation, we have created a variety of social, health, and creative activities aimed at reducing loneliness and promoting well-being. These activities include yoga sessions, history groups, poetry circles, knitting gatherings, and model-making workshops, all of which provide opportunities for older residents to stay active, social, and engaged. By offering these programmes, we aim to create a sense of belonging and connection among our older community members, ensuring they have meaningful opportunities to socialise and stay mentally stimulated.

In an increasingly digital world, access to online services is essential; however, digital exclusion remains a challenge for some residents, particularly when it comes to accessing support for services like Universal Credit, energy assistance, and emergency food packages through the Household Support Fund, all of which require online applications. Many residents have reported difficulties in accessing these essential services due to a lack of digital skills. To address this, we have implemented Digital Inclusion sessions to help residents develop the skills needed to confidently navigate the digital world. Through these sessions, residents learn how to access online resources, apply for benefits, and stay connected with others. By empowering our community members to build digital skills, we are ensuring that they can engage with essential services independently and participate fully in today's digital society.

Our People

Without the support of the below, the work of Holbrooks Community Care Association would not have been possible.

Trustees

Isabelle Osbourne – Chair	Gill Yardley – Secretary
Sarah Jane Evans – Treasurer	Ann Lucas – Trustee
TT Karimu – Trustee	Mick Duggan – Trustee
Virumati Kansara – Trustee	

Staff at HCCA during 2023/2024.

Rachel Lancaster – Strategic Manager – Part Time – External support

Mark Graham – Development Officer – Full Time

Michelle Williams - Project Support – Part Time

Susan Murray – Admin and Finance Support – Part Time

Volunteers at HCCA gave freely of their time to help support the delivery of services:

Viru Kansara, Daniel Sabin, Maureen Lapsa, Susan Ryrie, Mick Duggan, Louise Dixon, Joseph Clifford, Pat Clifford, Meridith Womble-Lancaster, Lawrie Womble-Lancaster, Ted Sutton.

We would also like to give a special mention to all of the Holbrooks residents who have supported and guided the organisation throughout the year.



Partnerships

During the last year the HCCA has worked with the following partners:

Coventry City Council

Holbrook's Ward Councillor Rachel Lancaster

Council Departments:

Coventry Adult Education, Community Resilience Team, Culture and Leisure, City Development Directorate, Coventry City Council Community Development Team, Coventry City Council Library Service, #CovConnects

Community Partners

West Midlands Police, President Kennedy Secondary School, John Shelton Primary School, Holy Family School, Parkgate Primary School, Holbrooks Primary School, Holbrooks Community Centre, Coventry Food Network, Tesco – Arena, Morrisons – Holbrooks, Holbrooks Social supermarket, Evan's for Everyone, Henry Court, Cassilex Café, and Smart Learner.

Other Partnerships

Coventry and District Credit Union, Coventry Independent Advice Services, Coventry Foodbank, Purple planet packaging, St Luke's Church and Coventry Food Network.

Funding Partners

Coventry City Council – Library grant, Coventry city council – Business grants
Heart of England Community foundation, National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, Awards for All, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Coventry City Council Resilience Fund, Good things Foundation, Coventry City Council Device Bank, Coventry Building Society, 29th May, and HUBBUB .



Activity Report

Advice, Information, and Support Services

The Holbrooks Community Care Association recognises the importance of providing comprehensive advice, information, and support to help local residents navigate the challenges they face, particularly during the ongoing cost of living crisis. Our aim is to provide practical, accessible solutions that address financial, social, and emotional needs through a range of tailored services. This support often involves signposting individuals to specialist organisations or partner services that can offer further help, ensuring that everyone in the community can access the assistance they require.

To meet these needs, we have established strong partnerships with key local organisations, including Coventry Independent Advice Service (CIAS) and Coventry and District Credit Union (CDCU), who play an integral role in delivering advice and support to residents.

HAF Children's Activities

The Holiday, Activities and Food (HAF) program offers free holiday clubs and activities to children eligible for free school meals. Funded by the government, it provides nutritious meals and engaging activities during school holidays to support children's well-being and reduce holiday hunger. The program is aimed at reducing social inequalities and promoting healthy lifestyles. Local authorities and community organisations manage and deliver the program, ensuring that it reaches families in need and supports children's physical and mental health through enriching experiences and healthy eating. We have been a successful activity provider for the Holidays, Activities and Food (HAF) program since 2022, providing activities such as pantomime's & theatre experiences, arts and crafts, cooking lessons, pottery classes and family day trips to venues such as Skegness, Blackpool, London and Manchester, amongst many other activities.

Community Trips and Events

We have offered a diverse range of community trips and activities throughout the life of the project, all aimed at bringing people together and providing valuable resources for families and individuals. Here's an overview of some popular events and activities that have become staples at the centre.

A Trip to Blackpool Illuminations was a popular activity on the organisation's calendar, allowing 81 residents to enjoy a day out by the seaside. With Blackpool's many attractions, including the iconic Blackpool Tower and pleasure beach, and of course the famous Illuminations. This trip was designed to create lasting memories for all ages. Likewise, the Trip to Skegness was eagerly anticipated by the community. This outings to the seaside allow participants to relax, enjoy beach activities, and explore local attractions, making them a great way to bond with family and friends.

We hosted a Christmas Grotto to coincide with the Festive Tractor Parade, of bringing festive cheer to children and their families. This event features a grotto where kids can meet Santa Claus and includes a parade of festively decorated tractors, adding a unique and exciting touch to the Christmas celebrations. The Community Marketplace was an event where local vendors, crafters and community members came. Marking national occasions, the centre also organised events for the Queen's Jubilee and King's Coronation and D Day, alongside other celebratory gatherings, bringing people together to commemorate these significant moments. With live screenings, food, music and various activities, these events foster a sense of unity and pride in the community.

Supporting Older People: Social, Health, and Wellbeing Activities

To address the needs of older people in the community, the centre has expanded its range of social, health, and wellbeing activity groups. These initiatives aim to reduce social isolation and improve physical and mental wellbeing. This was made possible by the service securing a grant from Coventry Building Society to undertake this work. This started in June 2023

One popular offering is low-impact yoga and exercise classes, tailored to those with limited mobility or seeking gentle ways to stay active. These sessions focus on flexibility, balance, and relaxation, ensuring that participants of all fitness levels feel comfortable and supported. Attendees have reported feeling more energised and experiencing reduced joint pain and stiffness.

For those interested in local history and culture, the History Club provides a space for older residents to share stories, memories, and learn about the area's heritage. The club also encourages members to conduct research, creating a sense of connection to the past while fostering social engagement. This year residents came together to write a book about their memories of Holbrooks, sharing photographs and stories, a valuable piece of social history.

Creative outlets have also been established, such as the Poetry Group and Knitting Group, where individuals can explore their creative side. The Poetry Group provides a welcoming space for members to read, write, and discuss poetry, allowing for emotional expression and mental stimulation. Meanwhile, the Knitting Group brings people together to create handmade items while offering a relaxing environment for conversation and friendship.

For those with a passion for intricate craftwork, the Miniature Model Making Group allows participants to design and build small-scale models. This activity helps improve fine motor skills, concentration, and provides a fulfilling hobby that nurtures creativity.

Each of these groups plays a significant role in promoting a sense of belonging, purpose, and companionship among older members of the community. Feedback from participants highlights how these activities have helped them form new friendships, gain confidence, and feel more connected to others. By offering a wide variety of social and physical activities, the centre ensures that older residents can stay active, engaged, and supported in all aspects of their health and wellbeing.

Digital Inclusion Sessions: Bridging the Gap

To combat social isolation and disadvantage, the centre formed a partnership with #CovConnects and the Good things Foundation to ensure that residents of Holbrooks had reduced digital exclusions. Digital Inclusion Sessions started in January 2023 to empower community members, particularly older adults, to engage with technology. These sessions focus on building digital literacy skills, such as how to use smartphones, tablets, and computers, and cover essential topics like internet safety, managing emails, and navigating social media platforms.

One of the core aspects of these sessions is ensuring participants feel confident in staying safe online. The internet safety workshops teach users how to protect personal information, recognise scams, and create strong passwords, which helps them browse the web with confidence and security. For many

attendees, these lessons have been vital in reducing anxiety about the potential dangers of using technology.

Additionally, the sessions cover how to use devices, from setting up mobile phones to troubleshooting common tech issues. Participants learn how to use essential apps, such as messaging and video call services, enabling them to stay connected with friends and family. This knowledge helps them access services online, from shopping to banking, reducing reliance on others and promoting independence.

The social benefits of digital inclusion are substantial. Attendees can now connect more easily with loved ones who may not live nearby, reducing feelings of isolation. By joining online communities, social media platforms, and group chats, participants are able to maintain and develop relationships in a way that wasn't previously possible. The sessions also encourage peer-to-peer learning, where attendees share experiences and tips with one another, fostering a supportive environment.

The confidence gained through digital skills has significantly impacted the quality of life for many, enabling them to participate in an increasingly digital world. Participants have reported feeling less socially isolated, more in control of their everyday activities, and better equipped to engage with modern communication tools. By improving digital access, the centre helps bridge the digital divide, making sure no one in the community is left behind.

In addition to our various support initiatives, we have partnered with the Good Things Foundation and the National Databank to address digital exclusion within the Holbrooks community. In today's increasingly digital world, access to the internet is essential not only for social connection but also for accessing vital services, applying for jobs, managing finances, and staying informed. However, many residents in our community face barriers to reliable internet access due to financial constraints, leaving them isolated and unable to fully participate in modern society. By partnering with these organisations, we are able to distribute free data SIMs to individuals and families who lack internet connectivity, helping them overcome this barrier.

Positive Impact and outcomes

In 2023-2024, the organisation has supported in total **424** individuals through **2250** attendances.

Through feedback from these individuals, we can report the following outcomes

- **76%** have reported reduced financial hardship
- **82%** have reported reduced social isolation
- **91%** have reported improved mental wellbeing.
- **62%** have reported improved physical wellbeing
- **89%** have reported to have gained more self-confidence,
- **94%** have reported improved access to essential services.

The centre has built strong relationships with local residents and Councillors. Issues raised by the community, such as littering, traffic problems, and antisocial behaviour, have been discussed in council meetings, with efforts underway to resolve these concerns. Service users who volunteer for the organisation have reported increased confidence and skills, and they take pride in giving back to their community.

Finance

The organisation has worked hard to source external funding to enable service delivery and activities for local residents and this is evidenced in Statement of financial accounts below. Since the its closure due to the Pandemic, the centre found that footfall had significantly dropped as had external funding opportunities. With the introduction of the National lottery funding, giving extra security and enabling the organisation to recruit staff, the organisation has been able to focus resources and better manage finance on a long term footing.

<u>Holbrooks Community Care Association</u>		
<u>Receipts and Payments Account 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024</u>		
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
Income including Grants, Funding, Donations, etc		155,832.42
<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
Wages (inc. NIC, Pension costs, Casual, etc)	82,368.58	
Prof Services/Fees (inc. Management)	17,258.16	
Rent, Rates & Services	842.53	
Repairs, Renewals, Equipment ,etc	4,017.29	
Printing, Postage, Stationery & Marketing	1,803.89	
IT Costs	1,318.17	
Insurance	2,688.76	
Telephone & Broadband	1,635.78	
Accountancy and Payroll	935.00	
Utilities	9,184.12	
Bank Commission & Charges	98.68	
Misc. (inc. Travel, Food, HAF, Lottery, etc)	16,449.61	
		138,600.57
<u>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)</u>		<u>17,231.85</u>

<u>Holbrooks Community Care Association</u>		
<u>Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024</u>		
<u>ACCUMULATED FUND</u>		
Brought Forward	112,837.22	
Excess of Receipts / (Payments)	17,231.85	
		<u>130,069.07</u>

Represented by:-


<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash at Bank		129,872.23
Cash in Hand		196.84
		<u>130,069.07</u>

Prepared from the books, records, and information supplied and certified to be in accordance therewith.

Note Please note Cash at Bank of £129,872.23, £107,700.00 is Restricted Funds

45 Baginton Road
Styvechale
Coventry
CV3 6JX

June 2024


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The Future

We are in the process of submitting a comprehensive five-year funding application with the goal of further developing and expanding the essential work HCCA has provided over the past year. The plan is designed to build resilience within the Holbrooks community by equipping residents with the skills and knowledge to manage issues they currently rely on external services to address. By promoting independence and empowering individuals, we aim to create a stronger, more self-sufficient community that can better navigate future challenges.

Through this funding, we will bring in additional services tailored to the specific needs identified within the Holbrooks area. These needs have been highlighted through extensive consultations and engagement activities conducted with the community, ensuring that our efforts remain relevant and impactful. The funding will enable us to establish programmes focused on skill-building, financial literacy, digital inclusion, wellbeing support, and social connection—core areas identified as priorities by residents.

Our expanded services will include workshops, training sessions, and accessible resources that empower residents to address their own needs, from managing household budgets to accessing digital services independently. We will also work closely with community organisations and local partners to offer targeted support for vulnerable groups, including older adults, families on low incomes, young people and those seeking employment or educational opportunities. By investing in these areas, we hope to reduce reliance on emergency support and build a community that is resilient and prepared for the future.

Additionally, the five-year plan emphasises the importance of sustainable community development by creating local networks of support. By training local volunteers and establishing peer-support initiatives, we will enable residents to support one another, creating a culture of mutual assistance and shared responsibility. Our vision is to make Holbrooks a model of community resilience, where residents have the confidence and resources to manage challenges independently, with access to local support networks whenever they need them.

This grant funding will make it possible to embed these services within the community, ensuring long-term support and continued growth. We are committed to working collaboratively with residents, continually assessing and adapting our services to meet evolving needs and building a robust framework for future resilience.

In conclusion.

The centre will continue to listen to its community, identify gaps in services and aim to provide good quality services to meet the needs of residents.

It is a testament to the hard work of long-term volunteers and local residents, coordinating a response to support the community in very difficult times, bringing local people together to make a real difference; they have made Holbrooks a better place to live, learn, work and Play.

Photos

