



2024/2025 ANNUAL REPORT

Holbrooks Community
Care Association

Making Holbrooks a better place to live,
work and play

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Chair's Foreword – Isabelle Osborne

It gives me great pleasure 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.

The centre has faced uncertainty about the future of the library service, sadly the communication from the City council was poor at best and despite huge local opposition we believe the library will be removed from our centre leaving a huge gap for the community.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all our dedicated staff and volunteers, partners and funders who have contributed to our success over the past year. 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.

Isabelle Osborne



Chair of Holbrooks Community Care Association

Overview of 2024-2025

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, securing funding to open a community fridge in the centre open three days a week.

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.

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.

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
Mick Duggan – Trustee	Simon Grove – Trustee
Edward Sutton - Trustee	

Staff at HCCA during 2024/2025.

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

Claire Haymes – Receptionist – Part time – Joined January 2025

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

Viru Kansara, Daniel Sabin, Maureen Lapsa, Susan Rylie, Eileen McArthey, 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 combined authority & Groundwork, Warwick University – NHS training, 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, Holbrooks Parkrun, Evan's for Everyone, Henry Court, Cassilex Café, and Smart Learner.

Other Partnerships

Coventry and District Credit Union, Coventry Independent Advice Services, NHS, Coventry Foodbank, Purple planet packaging, 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

Consulting the community

We were successful in a five-year funding application to the National Lottery Community Fund which will allow us to further be developing and expanding the essential work HCCA has provided, 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.

We have begun extensive consultations and engagement activities conducted with the community, ensuring that our efforts remain relevant and impactful. This 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.

Key Findings

- **Age Range:**
 - Services now mainly support those aged 35+ (previously more 65+).
 - Lack of feedback from young people, despite good uptake.
 - *Action:* Create youth-focused consultation and projects (e.g., via HAF).
- **Gender Identity:**
 - 45% of users are male, but most responses came from females.
 - Transgender and non-binary users did not participate in feedback.
 - *Action:* Target men's groups for consultation, explore funding for an Inclusion Worker to engage hard-to-reach groups including LGBTQ+.
- **Ethnicity:**
 - 28% of responses came from minority ethnic communities, an increase but still limited.
 - *Action:* Develop Inclusion Worker role to engage these groups more effectively.

Services Accessed

- **Food Support:** 73% (highest demand – supermarket, café, fridge, foodbank vouchers).
- **Advice & Support:** 62% (benefits, debt, housing, older people's services).
- **Groups & Activities:** 57% (wellbeing, history, creative writing, men's group, knitting).
- **Events:** 42% (Bands in the Park, Christmas Fete, HAF).
- **Library:** 34%.
- **IT Services:** 37%.
- **External Services:** 23% (health & training).

Service Priorities & Actions

- **Food Support:**
 - Remains top priority – need to balance demand with affordability/sustainability.
 - Explore community café, affordability checks, debt/budgeting advice.
- **Advice & Support:**
 - Secure long-term CIAS partnership.

- Expand to cover housing, employment, form filling, older people's services.
- Employ a Young People's Services Coordinator.
- Create a professionals' support network.
- **Activities:**
 - Keep wide range, ensure continuous feedback.
 - Partner with external providers for workshops & fitness.
 - Explore subsidised/nominal charges with funding support.
 - Employ an Activity Coordinator

Local Issues Raised

- **Top complaints:**
 1. Litter & dog mess
 2. Traffic/speeding & parking
 3. Social isolation
- Many feel reporting issues to council/police is ineffective.
- Concerns about repercussions when reporting antisocial behaviour.
- General feeling that some residents lack respect for the area.

Overall Summary:

The consultation shows HCCA is widely used, especially for food, advice, and social activities. Key gaps are engaging young people, men, and minority groups. Food support remains the most critical need but must be delivered sustainably. There's also strong demand for advice services, inclusive activities, and stronger community pride initiatives.

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 on a weekly basis.

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; 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. These 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.

In partnership with Coventry city council, we hosted our Bands in the park event with the Mudlands string band which proved to be a popular choice, again bringing people into the centre, and we hosted two exhibitions on the same day: Holbrooks of Yesteryear and a Miniature and Model show.

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 and funded again this year.

Wellbeing Wednesdays are popular, offering 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.

Community fridge

Food waste is a big issue. A third of all food produced globally is wasted. If it were a country, it would be the third biggest emitter of greenhouse gases globally. Most of this food waste is avoidable and could have been eaten had it been better managed. Community Fridges are one tried and tested way of stopping good food ending up in the bin and promoting a spirit of sharing and mutual support within a community. Surplus perishable food is donated by local businesses, local Morrisons, Bookers and Tesco stores, or members of the public and then made available for collection by people who need it. Unlike food banks, our fridges are available for anyone to use and give residents an opportunity to access healthy food, share recipes and spark ideas around wider social and environmental action. Our aim is that our Community Fridge will cut food waste, build stronger bonds within the community and provide people with nutritious, perishable food items. This year has seen the fridge accept 2125kg, the weight of an average female elephant, and give out 1749.33 kg the average weight of two camels!

Digital Inclusion Sessions: Bridging the Gap

To tackle digital exclusion and reduce social isolation, Holbrooks Community Care Association (HCCA) has continued to strengthen its partnership with #CovConnects, Adult Education, the Good Things Foundation, and the National Data and Device bank. Together, we are ensuring that residents of Holbrooks – particularly older adults and those facing disadvantage – can develop the skills and access they need to thrive in today's digital world.

Our Digital Inclusion Sessions have continued into 2024–2025 with strong participation and growing impact. The sessions are designed to give community members the confidence and ability to use smartphones, tablets, and computers. Training covers:

- Everyday digital skills such as email, video calling, online shopping, and banking.
- Social media and messaging apps to stay in touch with family and friends.
- Troubleshooting common tech issues and setting up devices.

A key focus remains internet safety. Through workshops, participants learn how to protect their personal information, spot scams, and create secure passwords. For many, these lessons have been life-changing in reducing anxiety about going online.

Digital inclusion is about more than just skills – it's about relationships. Attendees have used their new abilities to stay in touch with relatives across the country and even abroad, reducing feelings of loneliness. Many have joined online groups and community forums, helping them feel more connected

and engaged. Sessions also encourage peer-to-peer learning, where participants share tips and experiences, creating a supportive environment of mutual encouragement.

Expanding Access Through the National Databank

While skills are essential, access to the internet is just as critical. Through our partnership with the Good Things Foundation and the National Databank, we have been able to provide free data SIMs to individuals and families without reliable connectivity. This support has opened up opportunities for residents to:

- Apply for jobs and training.
- Access healthcare, benefits, and other vital services online.
- Stay informed about local and national news.
- Maintain independence by managing finances and personal tasks digitally.

The difference these sessions and initiatives have made is clear. Participants report:

- Feeling more confident and secure when using technology.
- A reduction in social isolation, as they can now stay in contact with loved ones.
- Greater independence, with the ability to carry out tasks online without relying on others.
- Increased opportunity, from applying for jobs to engaging with wider online communities.

By bridging the digital divide, HCCA is ensuring that no one in Holbrooks is left behind. Through continued training, access to data, and partnership working, we are helping residents not only connect with technology but also connect with each other and the opportunities of the modern world.

Positive Impact and outcomes

In 2024-2025, the organisation has supported in total **905** individuals through **3399** attendances.

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

- **79%** have reported reduced financial hardship
- **87%** have reported reduced social isolation
- **96%** have reported improved mental wellbeing.
- **54%** have reported improved physical wellbeing
- **92%** have reported to have gained more self-confidence,
- **96%** have reported improved access to essential services.

Becoming energy efficient and reducing our carbon footprint.

In the autumn of 2024 Holbrooks community care association successfully applied for funding from West Midlands combined authority to undertake work to make the centre more energy efficient.

This work included installing solar panels, renewing the loft insulation and some of the ceiling insulation tiles, external wall insulation to a significant proportion of the building, and a review of the heating system and replacement thermostatic valves.

This work was completed within budget and has made a significant difference to the Consumption of electricity within the centre, thus reducing both utility expenditure and carbon emissions.

In conclusion.

The centre has built strong relationships with local residents, support organisations and Councillors. Issues raised by the community, such as littering, traffic problems, and antisocial behaviour, have been discussed with local Councillors, and then 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.

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.



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 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.

The centre had a carry forward of £130,069.07, sourced £209,489.98 of external revenue funding, spending £177,400.98 on service delivery of projects to support the community and leaving a carry forward into 2025/26 of £162,158.07.

£158,831.00 of the carry forward is restricted funding and is already allocated to both revenue and capital spend for that year.

Our financial information is audited by PJ Williams accountants on a yearly basis.

Accounts for 2024.25

Holbrooks Community Care Association

Receipts and Payments Account 1st April 2024 to 31st March 2025

RECEIPTS

Income including Grants, Funding, Donations, etc	209,489.98
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PAYMENTS

Wages (inc. NIC, Pension costs, Casual, etc)	90,147.65
Prof Services/Fees (inc. Management)	22,360.16
Rent, Rates & Services	1,397.31
Repairs, Renewals, Equipment ,etc	38,655.82
Printing, Postage, Stationery & Marketing	562.00
IT Costs	4,581.80
Insurance	716.32
Telephone & Broadband	13.06
Accountancy and Payroll	990.00
Utilities	3,830.65
Bank Commission & Charges	127.07
Misc. (inc. Travel, Food, HAF, Lottery, etc)	14,019.14
	<u>177,400.98</u>

EXCESS OF RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)

<u>32,089.00</u>

Holbrooks Community Care Association

Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2025

ACCUMULATED FUND

Brought Forward	130,069.07
Excess of Receipts / (Payments)	<u>32,089.00</u>
	<u>162,158.07</u>

Represented by:-

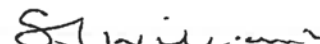
CURRENT ASSETS

Cash at Bank	161,878.56
Cash in Hand	279.51
	<u>162,158.07</u>

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

Note Please note Cash at Bank of £161,878.56, £153,831.00 is Restricted Funds

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P J WILLIAMS & CO

May 2025

The Future

2025/26 will be a year of change for the organisation, it seems inevitable that the centre will lose the library and so thought will need to be given to the use of the main reception area. HCCA has worked closely with SKY and so given the resources available an IT hub would be a sensible idea.

The centre will still want to have an offer of books for adults and children, so a book exchange will operate when the centre is open: It is hoped that the 'Book Nook' will be managed by volunteers and work like a book swap and lending system hybrid.

This year will see us consolidate current services and expand to establish and identify new support networks. We will use the information gathered from our community to create support groups for vulnerable sections of the community (seniors, single parents, at-risk youth etc..) to combat social isolation.

We hope to develop mentoring programs, pairing experienced community members with those facing social disadvantage, to support them to access services and volunteering opportunities.

Working with Coventry and District Credit Union (CDCU) we will develop financial Support Programs: Introduce financial aid programs, opportunities and support with access to community funds and grants to alleviate financial hardships.

CDCU will provide guidance on budgeting, saving, and accessing financial resources working in partnership with those who access services at the centre and at Holbrooks community centre social supermarket.

A planning application has been lodged with Coventry City council to extend the back of the property and put in new toilets and a kitchen we hope to hear back in the new financial year.

As ever the organisation wants to celebrate Holbrooks, share events such as the bands in the park and the Christmas tractor run and deliver days out for residents. We hope you can help us make Holbrooks a better place to live learn work and play

