BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales · Charity number 1179442

Details

Status	Registered
Legal form	CIO
Registered	2018-08-03
Register	View on the Charity Commission register

Contact

Address	Stirchley Baths 2-4 Bournville Lane Birmingham B30 2JT
Phone	01217512992
Email	info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk
Website	www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

Activities

Objects: TO PROMOTE THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR AND PROMOTE THE EFFICIENCY AND EFFECTIVENESS OF OTHER CHARITABLE ORGANISATIONS FOR THE BENEFIT OF THE PUBLIC IN THE AREA OF BIRMINGHAM AND IMMEDIATE SURROUNDING AREAS (THE AREA OF BENEFIT) BY: I HELPING TO BUILD THE CAPACITY OF SMALL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS AND PROVIDE THEM WITH THE NECESSARY SUPPORT, INFORMATION AND SERVICES TO ENABLE THEM TO PURSUE OR CONTRIBUTE TO ANY CHARITABLE PURPOSE. II PROMOTING, ORGANISING AND FACILITATING CO-OPERATION AND PARTNERSHIP WORKING BETWEEN SMALL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS, STATUTORY AND OTHER RELEVANT BODIES IN THE ACHIEVEMENT OF THE ABOVE PURPOSE WITHIN THE AREA OF BENEFIT THE 'VOLUNTARY SECTOR' MEANS CHARITIES AND VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS. CHARITIES ARE ORGANISATIONS, WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR EXCLUSIVELY CHARITABLE PURPOSES IN ACCORDANCE WITH THE LAW OF ENGLAND AND WALES. SMALL VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS ARE INDEPENDENT ORGANISATIONS, WHICH ARE ESTABLISHED FOR PURPOSES THAT ADD VALUE TO THE COMMUNITY, OR A SIGNIFICANT SECTION OF THE COMMUNITY, AND WHICH ARE NOT PERMITTED BY THEIR CONSTITUTION TO MAKE A PROFIT FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION. VOLUNTARY AND COMMUNITY ORGANISATIONS DO NOT INCLUDE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OR OTHER STATUTORY AUTHORITIES.

Activities: BCM provides small community and voluntary groups with peer to peer, face-to-face support, enabling them to be more effective in their communities. To do this surgeries are held in informal venues

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across Birmingham where anyone with an idea to improve their community are welcome to visit. Additionally, workshops focused on topics such as funding and wider networking events take place.

Classification

- **How:** Provides Services, Provides Advocacy/advice/information, Acts As An Umbrella Or Resource Body
- **What:** General Charitable Purposes, Disability, The Prevention Or Relief Of Poverty, Economic/community Development/employment
- **Who:** Other Charities Or Voluntary Bodies

Geography

- Birmingham City

Finances

Period end	Income	Expenditure	Assets	Employees
2025-03-31	£172,019	£155,050	-	-
2024-03-31	£195,023	£181,202	-	-
2023-03-31	£162,918	£143,186	-	-
2022-03-31	£138,651	£108,342	-	-
2021-03-31	£83,524	£70,293	-	-

Trustees

Name	Role	Appointed
EMMA WOOLF MBE	Chair	2017-03-06
Catherine Sarah De Soyza		2023-10-20
Claudie Izai Lynn Richardson		2025-05-13
DIPALI CHANDRA		2017-03-06
David James Dudley Broome		2023-01-13
Karen Louise Cheney		2025-01-30
Lorna Yvonne Wallace-Davis		2025-09-02

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BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1179442

Accounts



Birmingham Community Matters

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2024 – 31 March 2025

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England & Wales: 1179442

Birmingham Community Matters

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Registered office:
Stirchley Baths, 2–4 Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT

Supported by

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

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Welcome

As the Chair of Birmingham Community Matters I am proud to be part of a community; a city, where the people who live, work and learn here are so engaged in making life better for their fellow citizens.

BCM is committed to continuing to helping those citizens reach their goals.

At a time when many external pressures seek to highlight our differences, BCM and the groups we support, are working tirelessly to emphasise the benefits of community and co-operation.

The success of these endeavours comes from the dedication of the volunteers trying to make change.

Our wonderful BCM volunteer helpers listen, support and meet people where they are, generously offering their years of experience and knowledge to help make Birmingham a great place to live for everyone.

We thank them, our host organisations and partners for enabling BCM to support communities this year.

This year, thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund, Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust and our other funders, we have been able to work on a bigger scale than before, with the support of an expanded team.



Emma Woolf MBE,
Chair of Trustees

Our organisation



Our vision

Strong and connected Birmingham communities where local needs are met.

Our mission

To support small and micro community organisations in Birmingham to connect and build their skills, confidence and resources.

Our approach

We use a peer support model where our BCM helpers support people as equals, rather than as experts. They don't give advice or answers and they nearly always end up learning something new too.

Our objects

BCM is established to promote the voluntary sector and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of other charitable organisations by:

1. Helping to build the capacity of small voluntary and community organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose

2. Promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between small voluntary and community organisations, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purpose within the area of benefit.





What we do

We see that micro and small community organisations are uniquely placed to identify and serve the needs of their communities. Whether tackling specific challenges or seizing opportunities, they have the local insight and relationships to make the changes they want to see.

We believe that all the qualities needed to build strong, sustainable community groups already exist. Our role is to help groups share and discover the knowledge they need.

We champion volunteers and volunteering. We seek to bring people together as peers to exchange knowledge, information, experiences and contacts, and to nurture a city of skilled volunteers.

We support and work with Birmingham-based partners who share our interest in developing strong local networks that bring about positive change in our city.



How we help

We achieve our objectives by:

Holding events in local neighbourhoods where people involved in running micro community groups have opportunities to meet, support and learn from one another

Sharing useful resources, templates and information to supplement peer learning and support - and distributing them via our monthly newsletter

Running group learning sessions around specific topics that are important to small groups - such as fundraising, financial management, working with volunteers, and aspects of local placemaking such as Community Asset Transfer and Neighbourhood Planning

Offering online support from skilled volunteers - generally around more complex issues

Giving online support to people who may have difficulty accessing our in-person events.

Our values



Thoughtful

People come first. We are compassionate towards one another, and our supportive working culture encourages us to be compassionate to ourselves as individuals and to model that style of working to the groups we support. We embed inclusivity and accessibility into everything we do.



Listening

Our motto (below) and our peer learning model reflect the value we place in each person's knowledge and experience. We seek to nurture a diverse team of employees, associates, BCM helpers and trustees, valuing the different worldview that every individual brings.



Adaptable

We are open to new opportunities, thoughts, and ways of doing things. We respond to the needs of the people and groups we support, as well as the changing needs of communities. We are innovative in our approach to reaching people, and keep our working systems flexible so we can react quickly to new situations — and we never assume we've got everything right.



Empowering

We are generous with our knowledge, connections and experience. We work with people to explore what their next step should be, rather than telling them what to do. We are comfortable with not having the answer straight away, taking an iterative approach to solving problems.



Authentic

We foster a culture of openness, sharing our failures as well as celebrating our achievements. We view mistakes as part of being human – and a vital way of learning. This frees us to try new things, 'fail fast' if needed, and find more effective ways forward.

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

Our core work

During the year, across all our different projects, we supported 372 unique service users.



In Year 2 of our three-year *Reaching Communities* project, funded by The National Lottery Community Fund, Birmingham Community Matters supported 372 individuals and community organisations across Birmingham. Our work continued to focus on what we know has lasting impact: confidence, competence, and connections.

For 2024/25, our priorities were to strengthen delivery of our core work, explore opportunities to grow in response to the needs of the groups we support, raise our profile and extend our reach across the city, and most importantly, continue supporting small volunteer-led community groups on their journey and in making a positive impact within local communities.

We continued delivering our popular get help with your community group sessions at venues across the city, where people sit down with a BCM helper and talk through their ideas and challenges, then come up with simple, suitable next steps together.

Alongside this, we ran online group sessions covering key topics to help groups get started, grow, secure funding, or develop their skills. We also shared a growing bank of useful templates, like sample constitutions, key policies, and monitoring recording forms.

Our monthly newsletter continues to be a trusted source of information filled with BCM updates, funding opportunities, free learning events and more. We kept up our online 121 meetings and responsive triage support by phone and email, making sure groups could access help in a way that works best for them.

We know there's no 'one-size-fits-all' approach and we tailor our support to suit each small group's stage and needs.

Helping Groups Grow – Again and Again

This year, we noticed a clear trend: many groups are returning to us for ongoing support. We're proud to have built the kind of trusted relationships where groups feel comfortable coming back as their needs evolve. As their projects progressed, we supported them through key stages from developing their initial ideas and setting up governance, to drafting constitutions, applying for funding, and learning how to monitor and evaluate their impact.

Our volunteer helpers, experienced people who offer guidance and a listening ear remain at the heart of what we do. This year, we grew our network, welcoming 3 additional volunteers and also including a new model where staff at host venues act as peer helpers, adding real community ownership to the support.

Spreading Further Across Birmingham

We continued working with local venues and organisations to widen our reach across the city – the map on page 15 shows where we've been active this year.

To help us plan for the future our Trustees commissioned an evaluation of our services to inform BCM's strategy through to 2026/27. As part of this, we hosted staff, trustee, helper and associate away days and ran our first ever stakeholder engagement event, helping us to co-design our future focus.



Changes to the Team

This year we said goodbye to Jo Burrill, our CEO, in July 2024 and welcomed Becky Coley into the role. Becky previously worked as a Project Officer with BCM. We also waved goodbye to Project Officer Claire Johnson, welcoming Francesca Jarvis-Rouse into that role in September 2024. In May 2025, our former Delivery Support Administrator, Mansukh Kaur Dhillon, stepped up to become our new Project Officer, a brilliant development and a testament to BCM's commitment of supporting our staff to develop and grow!

> **"I am super impressed with the session I had today. I felt welcomed and listened too. Deeply appreciated".**
>
> Feedback from an attendee at a **Get Help with your Community Group session**

Helping Groups Grow – Again and Again



Partnering with Neighbourhood Network Schemes and Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust

We continued to work with Neighbourhood Network Schemes. These are Birmingham City Council funded initiatives to strengthen communities, beat social isolation, and help older adults in Birmingham (as well as younger adults with additional needs) to lead happy, healthy lives. They do this in lots of ways. One way is by giving support and small grants to local community groups, recognising their vital role in bringing people together. We worked with Neighbourhood Network Schemes in the constituencies of Selly Oak, Perry Barr, Northfield, Yardley, Erdington, Sutton Coldfield and Edgbaston to boost the capacity and sustainability of identified community groups.

Thanks to new funding from Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust. BCM has been able to enhance our core offer to deliver focussed support for Sutton Coldfield groups at all stages of their development. We delivered topic-based learning sessions and networking events. Using a mix of our existing materials and new resources shaped by triage conversations and 121 feedback, we've helped groups at all stages of their journey.

> **"You have provided a clear road map for us to create our first funding application for our charity."**
>
> Feedback from attendees of our Bidwriting for small groups session

Supporting Local Campaigns

We have continued our support to the Save Birmingham campaign, supporting assets of community value workshops, fundraising efforts and promoting the localism act to small groups and how they can protect the spaces and services in their community.

Learning and Growing Ourselves

BCM also took steps to strengthen our own growth and sustainability by joining the Social Economy Growth Programme, led by the Aston Centre for Growth. Through the GROW programme, we participated in expert-led workshops and peer coaching, gaining valuable insights into how we can increase our trading income while continuing to maximise our impact for the communities we support.

> **"Very helpful and informative session. Staff were very knowledgeable and provided us with information as to how we could move our organisation forward."**
>
> Feedback from attendees at a Get Help with your Community Group session

This experience has played a key role in shaping our strategy for 2025/26. It's helped us explore new ways to diversify our income and evaluate the effectiveness of our services, ensuring we remain responsive, resilient, and relevant.

Looking Ahead

As we reflect on another busy and rewarding year, we're proud of how Birmingham Community Matters continues to evolve in response to the needs of the groups we serve. From 121 conversations to citywide learning sessions, everything we do is rooted in a belief in the power of small community groups and the volunteers who lead them.

This year we have strengthened our foundations, deepened our relationships, and broadened our reach. With the support of our funders, volunteers, partners, and the wider BCM network, we've had the privilege of supporting groups at every stage of their journey watching them grow, overcome challenges, and make a real, lasting difference in their communities.

As we move into the final year of our Reaching Communities project, we do so with energy, purpose, and optimism. We remain committed to building confidence, growing competence, and making connections.

We recorded the legal structure of the groups for whom we delivered more in-depth support:



- Individuals with no structure: **13%**
- Informal group without governing document: **14%**
- Constituted group/ unincorporated association: **16%**
- Charity Incorporated Organisation - CIO: **6%**
- Registered charity: **13%**
- Community interest company - CIC: **15%**
- Private limited company: **3%**
- Company limited by guarantee: **3%**
- Public sector body: **1%**
- Not known/Don't know: **16%**



- Governance: **31%**
- First steps: **2%**
- Compliance: **6%**
- Financial: **3%**
- Fundraising: **32%**
- Project support and delivery: **3%**
- Policies and procedures: **7%**
- Volunteering: **2%**
- Partnerships and networks: **3%**
- Marketing and promotion: **1%**
- Organisational development: **10%**
- Digital tools: **0%**

* Individuals are those at the very start of their journey, exploring options and yet to connect with others around their ideas

** Although our governing document precludes us from offering in-depth support to CICs, we did accommodate some social enterprises through attendance at webinars and by signposting them to support. This included CICs which were embarking on a change of legal structure to become CIOs.

During the period we supported 372 individuals and group representatives across Birmingham (some of whom attended more than one of our events):



33
facilitated in-person group learning sessions, supporting 112 people

17
online small group sessions, supporting 78 people

31
in-person peer support sessions, providing one-to-one support to 113 people

9
networking events

13
people received one-to-one support

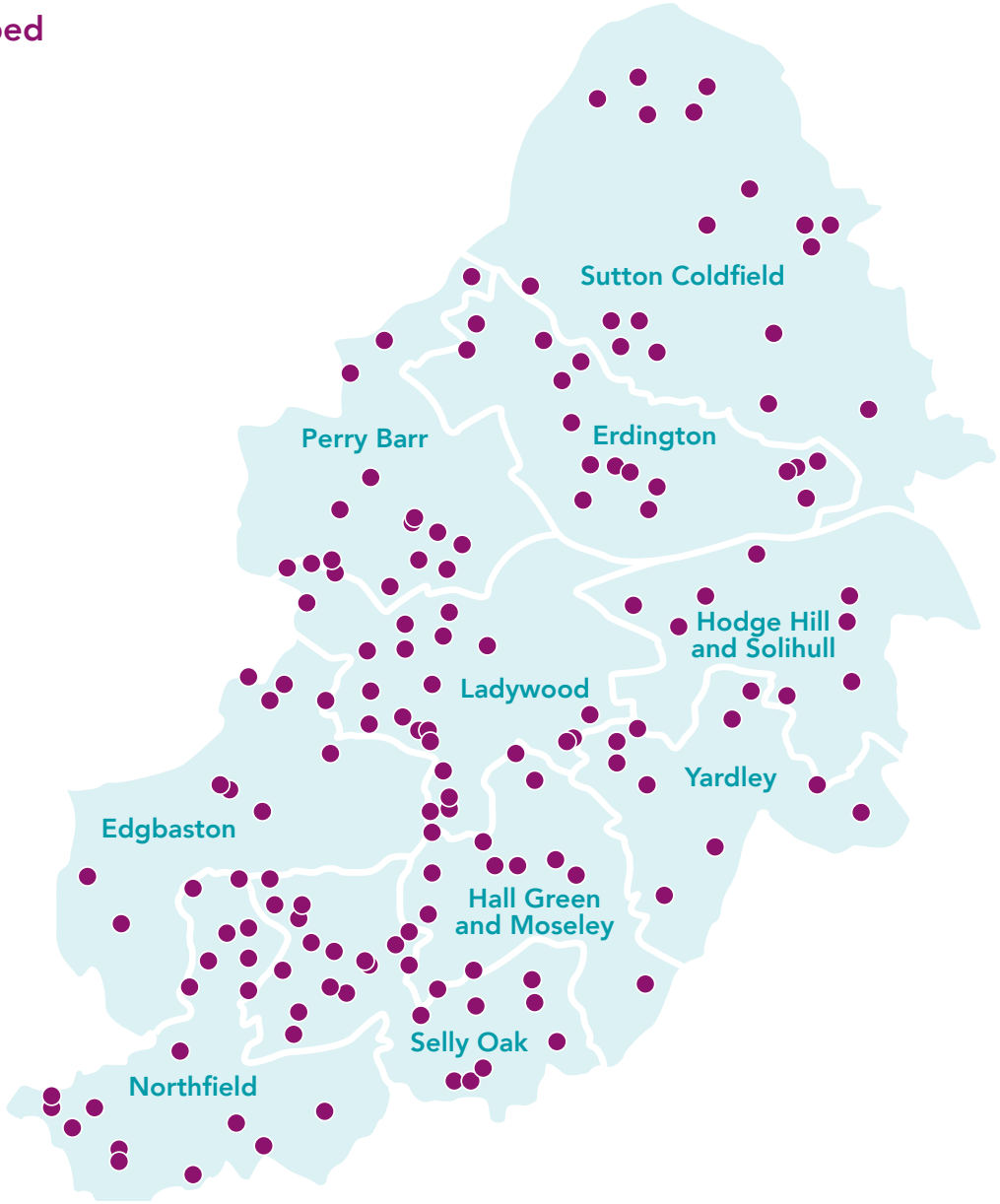
195
people received triage support

337
people were supported with information and resources

270
people accessed our support more than 2 times in a 12 month period

95%
of people said they would recommend the support to others

Groups and individuals we helped



Our newsletter in numbers:

1146

mailing list subscribers by the end of this reporting year, a percentage increase of 9%

47.7%

average open rate, higher than the average 33%* for nonprofit organisations

4.9%

clickthrough rate, higher than the average 2.79%* for nonprofit organisations

*Statistics from Mailchimp, the email platform we use.



Case study

Helping Neuro Divas take their next steps

Neuro Divas is a warm and welcoming community group in North Birmingham. They host weekly coffee mornings at The Sanctuary, Castle Vale, creating a safe and supportive space especially for neurodivergent women.

It all began when the women attended an ADHD course run by Brews. During this time, they collectively realised there were no inclusive spaces for neurodivergent women and together, they decided to create one.

These gatherings are a chance for ADHD women to come together, chat, listen, or simply enjoy the company of others who understand. They also welcome all neurodivergent women.

The Neuro Divas were first highlighted to us by our colleagues at Erdington Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS), who saw their potential and encouraged them to apply for

Case studies continued

funding to support their sessions. But before applying, the group needed support with their structure—so Erdington NNS pointed them in BCM's direction for support.

We first met the group at one of our themed learning sessions which focused on structures and governance. This session explored different types of organisation structures and helped Neuro Divas decide what would work best for them as a community group. Having gained a clearer understanding about their options from this session, the group chose their structure as a constituted group.

As a newly constituted group, they were feeling confident and ready to move forward. They joined us at our "Bid writing for small groups" session, where they gained valuable skills and insights to start their funding journey.

In May, Neuro Divas joined one of our Get help with your community group sessions which gave them the opportunity to speak to us about funding opportunities. We gave them some more helpful tips and support on how to write a funding application, how to search for suitable funders, and how to build a project from their current location.

Realising how important financial knowledge is, they signed up for our "Working with money" session. This covered essential topics like committee roles, financial responsibilities, choosing and setting up a bank account, and understanding different funding streams—everything a growing group needs to manage money well.

Neuro Divas also attended our BCM meetup event, which provided an opportunity to share their vision and connect with potential funders.

They then dropped by our friendly "Cuppa and chat" session. We were impressed to hear all they had accomplished in only a few months. They started preparation on their funding application and had run a survey consultation with their members to help them demonstrate to funders 'the need' for their project.

On the day we shared tips to help them strengthen their application and explored where to find free resources. We also chatted about reaching out to businesses for corporate volunteering, how to grow their membership, and how to promote the group more widely.

Now, Neuro Divas are enthusiastically preparing to submit a funding application to the National Lottery Community Fund - and we couldn't be prouder of how far they've come!

> **"BCM has given us the support and confidence we needed to move forward with Neuro Divas. We are truly grateful for the guidance, encouragement, and opportunities they've provided. Thank you for believing in us. We look forward to continuing to grow together."**
>
> Neuro Divas



Case study

From ideas to applications: the West Midlands Turkish Association's story

The West Midlands Turkish Association (WMTA) is a registered Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) registered in April 2024. The charity that works to promote Turkish culture and education across the West Midlands. They organise community events and offer a range of cultural activities, such as music, dance, and language classes. Their aim is to support the Turkish community while preserving and sharing their cultural heritage.

The group was initially signposted to BCM by one of our host organisations, Selly Oak Quakers. They were seeking help with finding funding.

In January 2025, WMTA attended one of our Get Help with your community group peer support sessions. During this initial meeting, BCM discussed how to prepare their project ideas and activities and develop them into funding applications.

We helped them to identify the needs of their community members - we recommended they create a document outlining the specific

Case studies continued

needs of their community and how their proposed activities would address them. One method we discussed was carrying out a short survey to gather feedback directly from community members.

We then moved on to supporting them to prepare a project budget we went through putting together a clear budget for each project, including typical costs such as venue hire, insurance, session leaders, and banking charges. During this discussion we also discussed Gift Aid and signposted the group to the UK Government resources and registration page for further information.

Following the session, the group attended one of BCM's Learning sessions about bid writing, where we explored how to communicate their ideas clearly in funding application forms and how to link their planned activities to a funder's priorities.

Later that month, the group returned to another Get Help with your community group session to share their progress. They had consulted their members and used the feedback to start to design projects that reflected member needs. We supported them in identifying costs to include in their funding bids, such as costs for tutors and room hire, as well as helping them consider the longer-term outcome of their work.

The group gained significant insight and confidence thanks to their sessions with BCM. This has helped them to take the crucial steps forward to submitting their National Lottery application, which they are currently awaiting a decision on.

During the Get Help sessions, we also explored the group's longer-term ambition of buying their own building. While the idea was exciting, we talked through the practicalities involved — from health and safety and fire regulations to insurance, maintenance and ongoing running costs. The group took this on board and planned to reflect further. These conversations gave them a clearer picture of what future growth might involve, helping them to plan in a thoughtful and sustainable way.

> **"Birmingham Community Matters and its staff have been invaluable to our fundraising journey as a small and new charity. They have been so welcoming and supportive and always interested in what we have to say about our projects. Thanks to their help we were able to write and submit our project to the National Lottery Community Fund. Their support has also provided us with motivation to write larger project proposals that can significantly transform our charity in the future. We will definitely continue to work with BCM in the future".**
>
> Dr Tuğçe Syed
> Executive Assistant for Social Media and Projects at West Midlands Turkish Association

Further work and impact

Helping small groups to grow, connect and thrive

Alongside our citywide Reaching Communities programme, we have been working more with local partners to strengthen groups at a neighbourhood level. These projects have given us the chance to step in where groups needed focused support, and a little extra help was needed.

Building Capacity in Sutton Coldfield

With support from the Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust, we were able to do more for small groups in the north of the city. Over the past year we ran themed learning sessions, "meet the funder" events, and informal drop-ins at local venues. This is part of a larger 2 year programme of support.

The difference has been clear. 38 groups came to us for tailored support. They left feeling more confident about governance, fundraising, and managing volunteers. It wasn't just about tools like constitutions, policies and budgets. These sessions also built trust, confidence, and peer support helping groups feel part of a wider network and a stronger, more connected community sector.

Neighbourhood Network Schemes

Through our work with Neighbourhood Network Schemes across Birmingham, we continued to offer practical, place-based support. This included peer learning sessions, small workshops and 121 chats.

Over the duration of 2024/25, BCM's work has grown to supporting groups in 7 NNS constituencies across the city. Over the course of the year, groups used this support to take big steps forward. Some became constituted with clear roles and responsibilities. Others opened bank accounts, wrote budgets, recruited volunteers or submitted their first funding applications. And importantly, groups also started linking up with each other forming new peer networks, sharing ideas, and finding solutions together.

Supporting Birmingham's wider community voice

This year we also played our part in the Save Birmingham campaign, launched in response to the city council's financial crisis. We worked with key partners to host workshops on Assets of Community Value (ACV) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT), giving local people practical ways to protect the places and spaces they care about.

By sharing resources, running online sessions, and supporting groups to complete applications, we helped make sure small, volunteer-led organisations were not left out of the conversation about Birmingham's future. Most importantly, it helped ensure that community voices were part of shaping the city's future.

Structure, governance and management

Our people

BCM is registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (Association CIO) with the Charity Commission. Our board of trustees has responsibility for BCM's policies, its strategic direction and priorities. It also has full financial and legal responsibilities for BCM, its staff, activities, services, contracts and assets.

Thank you to our trustees who served BCM during the period covered by this report:

- Emma Woolf MBE, Chair
- Helga Edström OBE, Vice Chair
- David Broome, Treasurer
- Sandra Cooper
- Dipali Chandra
- Catherine De Soyza
- Emma Macpherson (resigned October 2024)
- Denise Peach (resigned October 2024)
- Karen Cheney
- Claudie Izai Lynn Richardson.

Thank you also to our core team:

- Jo Burrill, Chief Executive (until July 2024)
- Becky Coley, Project Officer - North and East Birmingham (until July 2024) Chief Executive (from July 2024)
- AD, Operations Support Officer
- Claire Johnson, Project Officer - South and West Birmingham (resigned April 2024)
- Francesca Jarvis-Rouse, Project Officer (appointed September 2024)
- Mansukh Kaur Dhillon, Delivery Support Administrator (until May 2025), Project Officer with responsibility for Marketing and Communications (from June 2025).

And associates:

- Rob Jones
- Rob Netherway
- Helen Harvey
- Marie Kreft, freelance marketing and communications.

A Fond Farewell and Thank You



At the end July 2024, we said goodbye to our CEO, **Jo Burrill**, as she moved on to a new role within the NHS. Jo played a pivotal role in shaping the organisation into what it is today.

Jo was instrumental in BCM's development helping to build a trusted, supportive network for small and micro community groups across Birmingham. Her leadership, dedication, and belief in the power of grassroots activity have left a lasting legacy.

Reflecting on her time with BCM, Jo shared: *"It has been a pleasure contributing to the establishment and growth of BCM, supporting small and micro community groups and voluntary activity across Birmingham. I have been lucky to work with a wonderful group of colleagues, trustees, volunteers and partners. I am delighted to leave BCM in a strong position and, with Becky at the helm, I know it will continue to flourish."*

We thank Jo sincerely for her years of commitment, compassion, and vision. She left BCM in a strong and confident place, and we wish her all the very best in her new role.

Our people continued

BCM helpers

We are hugely grateful for the dedication and knowledge of our BCM helpers – the people who work with us on a voluntary basis to give 121 peer support to small and emerging community groups across Birmingham. We truly appreciate the time they give, their ability to truly listen, and their generosity in sharing their experience and contacts to make a difference.

Stakeholder Meetup

In 2024, BCM held its first-ever stakeholder meetup, bringing together community groups, funders, partners, trustees, staff, associates, and volunteers for a day of connection, learning, and collaboration. The event provided an opportunity to share experiences, celebrate achievements, and explore the challenges faced by small community organisations across Birmingham.

The day featured networking sessions, small group discussions, and the launch of BCM's Seedcorn Fund. Importantly, it helped us to gain feedback, which will help us to shape the charity's strategic direction moving forward and ensure our support continues to reflect the real needs of local groups



Our partners



We are grateful to our colleagues in other infrastructure and capacity-building support organisations for being BCM's crucial supporters and collaborators.

Thank you (in alphabetical order):

- 3 C Solutions
- Anchor Point
- Aston Centre for Growth
- Birmingham and District Allotment Confederation
- Birmingham LGBT Centre
- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
- Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (BVSC)
- Bournville Quaker house
- Bournville Village Trust
- Brandwood Community Centre
- Cherished
- Cooperatives West Midlands
- Dads Lane Community Centre
- Digital Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Edgbaston Community Centre
- Four Oaks Methodist Church
- Full Gospel Tabernacle Church
- Grounded Cafe
- Groundwork West Midlands
- Hawkesley Community Centre
- Heart of England Community Foundation
- Holy Cross Church
- Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
- Locality
- Mere Green Library
- Mount Zion Church
- Moseley Exchange
- Nishkam Centre
- Neighbourhood Support and Development Unit at Birmingham City Council
- Pilotlight
- The Quaker meeting house
- Quinborne Community Centre
- Reaside Community Centre
- The Sanctuary
- Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- Save Birmingham
- Sport Birmingham
- St Cyprians Memorial Hall
- St Germains Church
- St Richards Community Centre
- Thrive
- The Trinity Centre
- West Midlands Funders Network
- Witton Lodge Community Association.

Our partners continued

Our work aligns with grantmaking in the region, from The National Lottery Community Fund, Heart of England Community Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Severn Trent Community Fund and the Neighbourhood Development Support Unit within Birmingham City Council. We have benefited from their support, their insight into the state of the sector, and their trust in us when referring groups for help.

Thank you to the following organisations for helping us to support Birmingham's small community organisations:

- Age Concern (Sutton Coldfield NNS)
- B8 Network
- Birmingham LGBT Centre
- Birmingham Settlement (Ladywood NNS)
- Brandwood Community Centre
- CASE at Soho Community Hall
- Christ Church, Yardley Wood
- Christ Church, Selly Park
- Communitea Cafe
- Friends of Cotteridge Park @ The Shed
- Gateway Family Services (Edgbaston NNS)
- Glebe Farm Library
- Manningford Hall
- Northfield Community Partnership (Northfield NNS)
- The Old Post Office, Stirchley
- Pype Hayes Golf Club
- Spring Housing (Perry Barr NNS)
- Stirchley Community Market.



Our partners continued

Thank you to the following organisations for hosting our events and activities:

- Advocacy Matters
- Edgbaston Community Centre
- Erdington Leisure Centre
- Hawkesley Community Centre
- Holloway Hall Community Assocation
- ISE - Women's Enterprise and Community Hub
- Moseley Hive
- Nechells POD
- New Heights, Kingstanding
- Our Place, Sutton Coldfield
- The Pavilion, Moor Lane
- Soho Community Centre
- St Thomas Church and Community Project - Yardley
- Stirchley Baths
- Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church
- Welcome Change, Glebe Farm
- West Heath Community Centre
- Warstock Community Centre.

Thank you to the following funders who have made our work possible:

- Aston Centre for Growth
- Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development Support Unit
- Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Erdington Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities England
- Northfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust
- Sutton Coldfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Yardley Neighbourhood Network Scheme.



"It felt wonderful to be connected to someone who shared their expertise on both our funding applications and community spaces. We received honest and constructive feedback which helped us to move forward as an organisation"

Jo-Anne from Noah's Star, a volunteer service to support children who have a premature or poorly younger sibling in neonatal hospital care in Birmingham.

Financial review

Our reserves policy

BCM has a reserves policy which is reviewed every 24 months. The current reserves policy is to hold to 14 weeks of overhead costs plus redundancy costs for existing staff. For the period 2024/2025 this would be a total of £19833 as a total.

Responsibilities of trustees

The trustees of Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) are responsible for keeping proper accounting records and for preparing an annual report and financial statements in line with the Charities Act 2011 and UK charity law. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the CIO's assets and taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud or other irregularities.

BCM's income in this financial year was below £250,000, as such the trustees have chosen to produce receipts and payments accounts.

In preparing these accounts the trustees ensure that:

- All money received and paid out by the CIO is properly recorded and explained.
- Accounting records are kept up to date and accurately reflect the CIO's financial position.
- The annual statement of receipts and payments gives a clear summary of the CIO's finances for the year.
- The annual report and accounts are submitted to the Charity Commission as required.

This annual report, covering the period 1 April 2024 to 31 March 2025, was approved by trustees of Birmingham Community Matters at their Annual General Meeting, held on 23rd October 2025.

Emma Woolf, Chair of Trustees.

Accounts

Receipts and payments accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2025

Receipts	Notes	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Grants	3	–	145,098	**145,098**	126,107
Donations		1,019	–	**1,019**	–
Other income	4	25,902	–	**25,902**	68,916
Total receipts		**26,921**	**145,098**	**172,019**	**195,023**
Payments					
Salaries and staff costs		1,728	100,960	**102,688**	121,133
Administrator's fees		–	–	**–**	1,350
Staff recruitment		–	609	**609**	–
Staff travel & subsistence		382	902	**1,284**	2,639
Staff training & development		400	–	**400**	2,361
Consultancy/partner costs		5,006	13,857	**18,863**	12,310
Fundraising Support		–	–	**–**	360
HR Support		–	–	**–**	–
Evaluation		–	–	**–**	–
Venue hire		1,669	2,280	**3,949**	2,951
Marketing		3,854	9,535	**13,389**	14,489
Website		1,303	1,199	**2,502**	9,678
Office costs		1,480	624	**2,104**	2,772
Insurance		885	–	**885**	747
Equipment		399	185	**584**	3,748
Independent Examiner's fee		975	–	**975**	950
Bookkeeping/accountancy		5,580	1,104	**6,684**	5,568
Bank charges		134	–	**134**	146
Overhead allocations to projects		(7,429)	7,429	**–**	–
Total payments		**16,366**	**138,684**	**155,050**	**181,202**
Net receipts over payments		**10,555**	**6,414**	**16,969**	**13,821**
Cash funds as at 31 March 2024	6	**58,758**	**45,135**	**103,893**	**90,072**
Transfers		**–**	**–**	**–**	**–**
Cash funds as at 31 March 2025	6	**69,313**	**51,549**	**120,862**	**103,893**

Accounts continued

Notes to the accounts

1. Receipts and Payments accounts

Receipts and payments accounts are statements that summarise the movement of cash into and out of the organisation during the financial year. In this context "cash" includes cash equivalents, for example, bank accounts where cash can be readily withdrawn to pay for debts as they become due.

2. Grants

Grants are credited to revenue on a receivable basis, and all income is allocated to appropriate funds based on the income, and the amount of income receivable can be measured reliably.

Restricted funds are to be used for specified purposes as laid down by the donor. Expenditure which meets these criteria's is identified to the fund, together with a fair allocation of overheads and support costs.

Unrestricted funds are donations and other incoming resources received or generated for charitable purposes.

3. Grants Received

	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
National Lottery Reaching Communities	**97,338**	95,636
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS)	**19,975**	–
Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust	**17,785**	–
The Social Economy Growth Programme	**10,000**	–
Perry Bar Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS)	**–**	14,271
Perry Bar NNS Younger Adults	**–**	5,000
Seedcorn Fund	**–**	11,200
Total	**145,098**	**126,107**

Accounts continued

Notes to the accounts

4. Other Income

	Total funds 2025 £	Total funds 2024 £
Birmingham City Council	**4,800**	–
Yardley Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS)	**3,300**	–
Heart of England Community Foundation	**8,881**	–
Co-Operatives West Midlands	**1,000**	2,000
Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit (NDSU)	**3,070**	5,000
Spring Housing Association	**2,870**	–
United by 2022 Charity	**825**	–
Age UK Birmingham	**743**	–
Witton Lodge Community Association	**413**	4,550
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme (NNS)	**–**	20,000
Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit (Locality)	**–**	7,170
Northfield NNS	**–**	9,233
Erdington NNS	**–**	9,103
Sutton Coldfield NNS	**–**	5,280
Edgbaston NNS	**–**	5,000
Ladywood NNS	**–**	1,380
University of Birmingham	**–**	200
Total	**25,902**	**68,916**

5. Trustees & Staff Costs

During the financial year there were no remunerations paid to trustees (2024: nil).

No employee received emoluments of £60,000 or above (2024: nil).

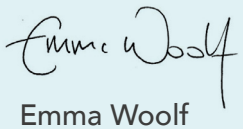
Accounts continued

Notes to the accounts

6. Fund Analysis

Fund Name	Balance as at 1 April 2024 £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfer of Funds £	**Balance as at 31 March 2025 £**
Unrestricted Funds	**58,758**	**26,921**	**(16,366)**	**–**	69,313
Restricted Funds:					
National Lottery Reaching Communities	36,301	97,338	(90,357)	–	43,282
Sutton Coldfield Charitable Trust	–	17,785	(15,956)	–	1,829
Selly Oak NNS	–	19,975	(17,614)	–	2,361
Seedcorn Fund	8,834	–	(4,757)	–	4,077
The Social Economy Growth Programme	–	10,000	(10,000)	–	–
Total	**45,135**	**145,098**	**(138,684)**	**–**	**51,549**
Total Funds	**103,893**	**172,019**	**(155,050)**	**–**	**120,862**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature 

Print name Emma Woolf
Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date 23rd October 2025

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Birmingham Community Matters on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025.

I report on the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2025 as set out on pages 27 to 30.

Respective Responsibilities of Trustees and Examiner

As the charity's trustees you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ("the Act").

The charity's trustees consider an audit is not required for this year under section 144 of the 2011 Act, and that an independent examination is needed.

It is my responsibility as independent examiner to:

- examine the accounts under section 145 of the 2011 Act
- follow the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commissioners under section 145(5) (b) of the 2011 Act, and
- to state whether particular matters have come to my attention

Basis of Independent Examiners Report

My examination was carried out in accordance with the Directions given by the Charity commission.

An examination includes a review of the accounting records kept by the charity and a comparison of the accounts presented with those records. It also includes consideration of any unusual items of disclosures in the accounts, and seeking explanations from the trustees concerning any such matters.

The procedures undertaken do not provide all the evidence that would be required in an audit, and consequently I do not express an audit opinion on the accounts.

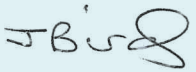
Independent Examiners Statement

I have completed my examination for the year ended 31 March 2025.

I can confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination which gives me cause to believe that in, any material respect:

1. accounting records were not kept in accordance with section 130 of the 2011 Act or
2. the accounts do not accord with the accounting records to comply with the accounting requirements of the 2011 Act

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Miss Jacqueline Bird F.M.A.A.T.
23rd October 2025

Community Accounting Lancashire C.I.C.
Foxfields
9 Norley Close
Chadderton
Oldham
OL1 2RA

Birmingham Community Matters

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

brummatters birmingham-community-matters birminghamcommunitymatters

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442

Registered office: Stirchley Baths, 2-4 Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1179442

Accounts



Birmingham Community Matters

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England & Wales: 1179442

Birmingham Community Matters

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2023 – 31 March 2024

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Supported by

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

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Welcome

At last it feels like we, and all the groups we work with, are able to return with renewed focus to making Birmingham a great place to live for all communities.

At Birmingham Community Matters that means getting back to our mission: to sit face to face with people, listen to their ideas, and help them explore their next steps towards making good things happen locally.

There are still many pressures that bring uncertainty and worry to our communities. Despite these - and sometimes in response to them - Birmingham is full of keen volunteers: makers, listeners, carers, crafters, grafters, gardeners, helpers. All of whom make our city an even better place to live.

This year, thanks to The National Lottery Community Fund and our other funders, we have been able to work on a bigger scale than before, with the support of an expanded team.

I believe success in improving communities comes from creative, tenacious and generous individuals coming together to make change. That's exactly what our volunteer BCM helpers are, helping people work through their ideas and problems, and sharing their own knowledge and experience. We thank them all for enabling BCM to support more small community organisations than ever. And our partners - new and long-established - for the extra reach and impact they help us achieve.

Thank you to everyone who has engaged with BCM this year and worked to make our city a great place to live.



Emma Woolf MBE,
Chair of Trustees

Our organisation



Our vision

Strong and connected Birmingham communities where local needs are met.

Our mission

To support small and micro community organisations in Birmingham to connect and build their skills, confidence and resources.

We call our approach peer support, as our BCM helpers support people as equals, rather than as experts. They don't give advice or answers and they nearly always end up learning something new too.

Our objects

BCM is established to promote the voluntary sector and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of other charitable organisations by:

1. Helping to build the capacity of small voluntary and community organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose

2. Promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between small voluntary and community organisations, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purpose within the area of benefit.





What we do

We see that micro and small community organisations are uniquely placed to identify and serve the needs of their communities. Whether tackling specific challenges or seizing opportunities, they have the local insight and relationships to make the changes they want to see.

We believe that all the qualities needed to build strong, sustainable community groups already exist. Our role is to help groups share and discover the knowledge they need.

We champion volunteers and volunteering. We seek to bring people together as peers to exchange knowledge, information, experiences and contacts, and to nurture a city of skilled volunteers.

We support and work with Birmingham-based partners who share our interest in developing strong local networks that bring about positive change in our city.



How we help

We achieve our objectives by:

Holding events in local neighbourhoods where people involved in running micro community groups have opportunities to meet, support and learn from one another

Sharing useful resources, templates and information to supplement peer learning and support - and distributing them via our monthly newsletter

Running group learning sessions around specific topics that are important to small groups - such as fundraising, financial management, working with volunteers, and aspects of local placemaking such as Community Asset Transfer and Neighbourhood Planning

Offering online support from skilled volunteers - generally around more complex issues

Giving online support to people who may have difficulty accessing our in-person events.

Our values



Thoughtful

People come first. We are compassionate towards one another, and our supportive working culture encourages us to be compassionate to ourselves as individuals and to model that style of working to the groups we support. We embed inclusivity and accessibility into everything we do.



Listening

Our motto (below) and our peer learning model reflect the value we place in each person's knowledge and experience. We seek to nurture a diverse team of employees, associates, BCM helpers and trustees, valuing the different worldview that every individual brings.



Adaptable

We are open to new opportunities, thoughts, and ways of doing things. We respond to the needs of the people and groups we support, as well as the changing needs of communities. We are innovative in our approach to reaching people, and keep our working systems flexible so we can react quickly to new situations — and we never assume we've got everything right.



Empowering

We are generous with our knowledge, connections and experience. We work with people to explore what their next step should be, rather than telling them what to do. We are comfortable with not having the answer straight away, taking an iterative approach to solving problems.



Authentic

We foster a culture of openness, sharing our failures as well as celebrating our achievements. We view mistakes as part of being human – and a vital way of learning. This frees us to try new things, 'fail fast' if needed, and find more effective ways forward.

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

Our core work

During the year, across all our different projects, we supported 371 unique service users.



By April 2023, with Covid-19 disruption an increasingly distant memory, we were continuing to deliver our mission with refreshed focus on face-to-face support and partnership building. Happily, we had more people to help us. Our trustees had recognised the need to change our staffing structure and grow our team, to meet the greater demand on our services. Thanks to their decision, and repeat funding from The National Lottery Community Fund, we were able to recruit another project officer and delivery support officer, and employ one of our freelance associates - also as a project officer.

In our recruitment process, we focused on finding colleagues who would help us establish new partnerships and further expand our reach across Birmingham — especially north and east of the city. And so with Becky, Claire and Mansukh on board, we began homing in on neighbourhoods with which BCM was less familiar. There, we formed ties with local community venues and support organisations who shared our passion for boosting the confidence, networks and success of nearby community groups. The map on page 13 shows you the geographical range of the support we delivered.

We continued to work with Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNSs). These are Birmingham City Council-funded initiatives to strengthen communities, beat social isolation, and help older adults in Birmingham (as well as younger adults with additional needs) to lead happy, healthy lives. One way they do this is by giving support and small grants to local community groups, recognising their vital role in bringing people together. So, alongside lead agencies, we worked with NNSs in the constituencies of Selly Oak, Perry Barr, Northfield and Edgbaston to boost the capacity of identified community groups. We did this mainly through learning events, on topics that included managing community buildings, risk assessments for buildings, managing money, recruiting and involving volunteers, and health & safety.

Our core work continued

We also continued our close working relationship with Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit (NDSU). Through joint events, we supported groups to access small grant funding and exercise their powers under the Localism Act, such as the community right to bid on listed assets. (See page 17.)

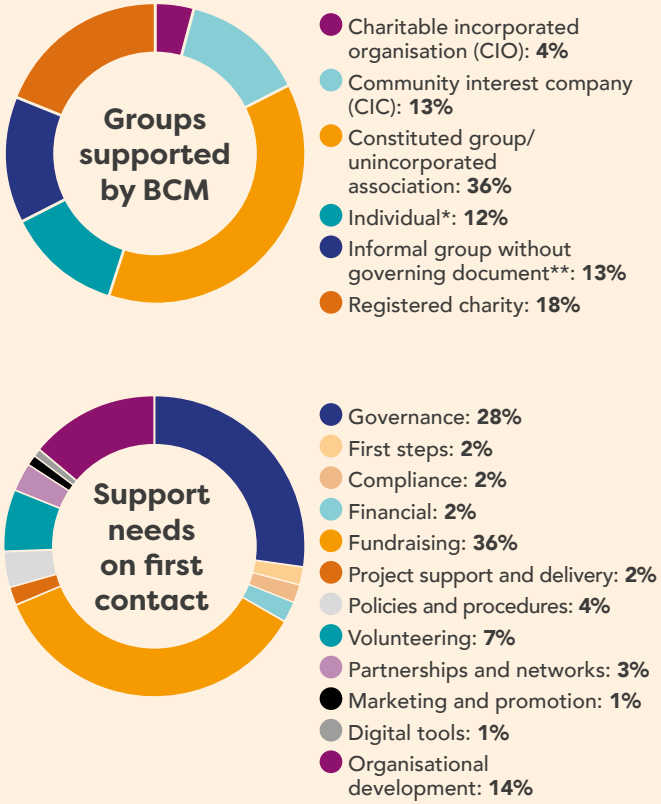
Witton Lodge Community Hub became one of our partners. Thanks to that partnership, we delivered hands-on sessions to help groups in Erdington apply for grants with a short deadline, as well as workshops on policies and procedures, governance, constitutions, and community bank accounts. The UK Shared Prosperity Fund made this all possible.

> **"I was helped to gain a better and clearer understanding [...] into what is required and needed to be a fundable [community residents' forum]"**
>
> **Sonya** from Burbury Residents' Forum.

As always, we listened to Birmingham's volunteers and small groups, and responded with events and workshops suited to their needs. We became highly attuned to the ways in which the cost of living crisis was affecting the city. We continued with our informal monthly Zoom briefing to talk about current funding opportunities. We held our 'Get help with your community group' session at many venues, enabling people to sit down, one to one, with a BCM helper and talk through their ideas and challenges, then come up with simple, suitable next steps together.

As well as holding events, we shared information to help people get their projects up and running, to help groups grow, or access funding, or upskill. We continued creating templates that small community groups can adapt, such as sample constitutions and policies. We host some of these on our website; others we share directly, with guidance. We also maintained our resource pages, including one on the cost of living crisis. We continued sending our popular monthly newsletter, featuring BCM updates and signposting people to grant funding, useful events and more.

We recorded the legal structure of the groups for whom we delivered more in-depth support:



* Individuals are those at the very start of their journey, exploring options and yet to connect with others around their ideas

** Although our governing document precludes us from offering in-depth support to CICs, we did accommodate some social enterprises through attendance at webinars and by signposting them to support. This included CICs which were embarking on a change of legal structure to become CIOs.

Our core work continued



During the period we supported 371 individuals and group representatives across Birmingham (some of whom attended more than one of our events):

15
facilitated in-person group learning sessions, supporting 50 people

22
online small group sessions, supporting 143 people

27
in-person peer support sessions, providing one-to-one support to 315 people

73
people received one-to-one support online

4
networking events

We always ask people we help about their 'confidence to take next steps' before and after our help.

On average, people reported a

28%
increase in confidence levels
(most people rated their confidence quite highly at 'before' stage)

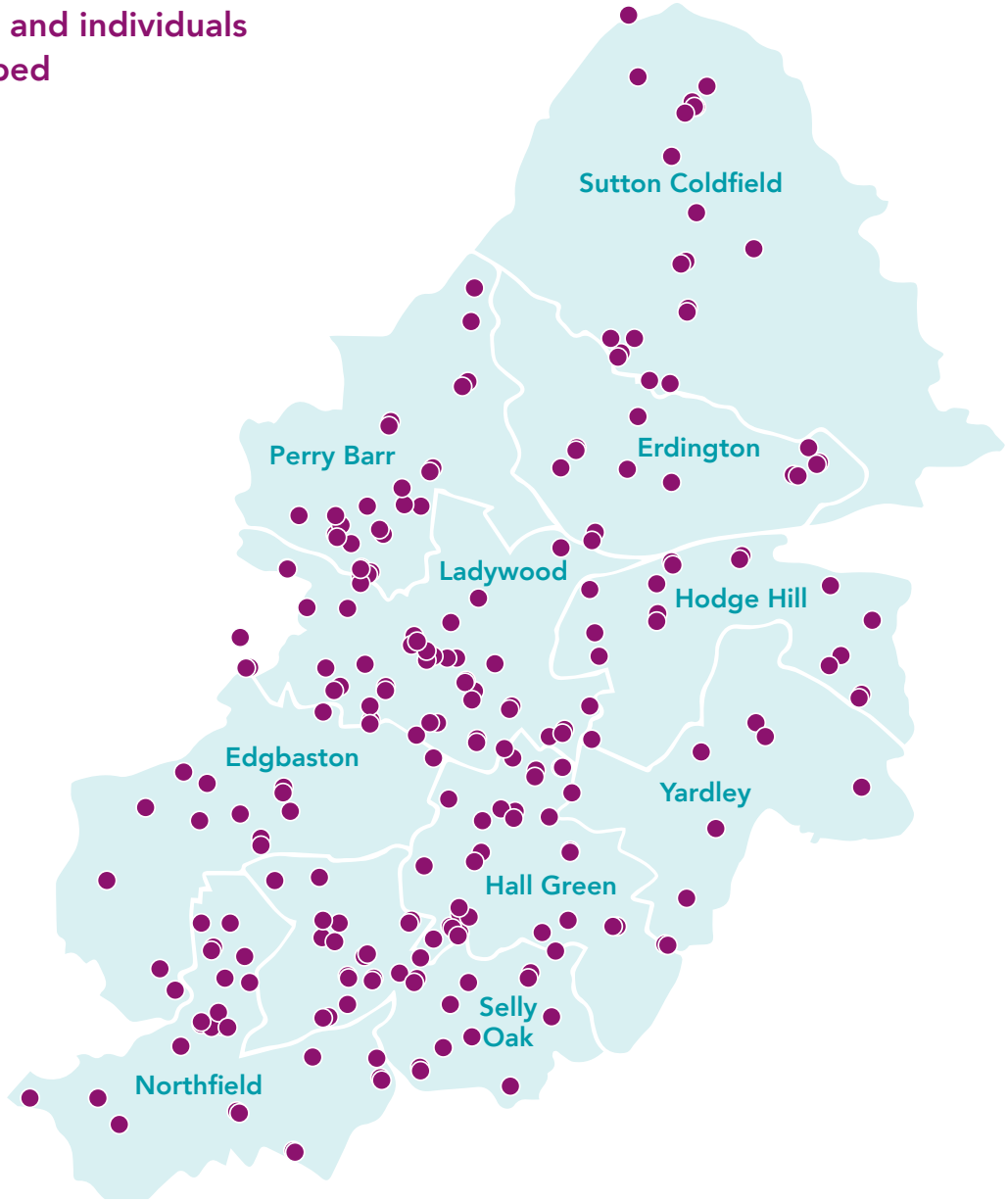
"**I feel that I can take the next steps confidently and I know that there is always help"**

Empress from Skate Buddies, a community group to help children, young people, adults and families to improve their mental, physical and emotional health through roller skating.

98.3%
of people said they would recommend the support session to others

Our core work continued

Groups and individuals we helped



Our newsletter in numbers:

1052
mailing list subscribers by the end of this reporting year, a percentage increase of 17%

40.7%
average open rate, slightly higher than the average 40.04%* for nonprofit organisations

7.8%
clickthrough rate, significantly higher than the average 3.27%* for nonprofit organisations

*Statistics from Mailchimp, the email platform we use.



Case study

Helping an individual to realise her vision for 'green care'

At Woodgate Valley Urban Farm, Sue established an outdoor therapeutic space for vulnerable children and young people. We have been delighted to support her in achieving her goals - and to see how Reboot Green Care has evolved into a national consultancy.

We first met Sue in 2021 when she was exploring her vision to set up an outdoor space for children experiencing school refusal – perhaps due to their special educational needs such as autism and/or high anxiety. Sue had seen the therapeutic value in 'green care', enabling children to engage with nature and animals to support their education. She wanted to find a suitable place or partner with whom she could move her vision forward.

Sue sat with our BCM helpers to look at all aspects of her research and ways to turn her learning into action. Together we explored the merits of various organisational structures,

Our core work continued

potential partnerships and the processes of recruiting trustees, business planning and raising funds. One of our BCM helpers has experience with therapeutic horticulture and relevant contacts in care farm sites, which was especially useful. Another has deep knowledge of charity governance rules, which helped Sue through the process of taking on the trusteeship of an existing charity – Woodgate Valley Urban Farm.

With the help of corporate volunteers and grant funding, Sue transformed the site at Woodgate Valley. It became an accredited Care Farm — meaning it is nationally recognised for providing therapeutic use of farming practices. Sue also launched Reboot Green Care there in July 2023 as an NHS-funded project. Participants could be referred by parents and guardians, local authorities, healthcare commissioners, the police and other professionals. It supported 48 children with a diagnosis of (or self-identifying as having) autism. Participants would have one-to-one and small group sessions on the farm and in the woodland, caring for animals and engaging with nature.

Reboot Green Care is now a standalone organisation that works nationally to support local authorities to put in place green care as early intervention for children, particularly those with additional needs and those facing exclusion. Reboot also offers consultancy services to forest and farm sites.

Sue stepped down as a trustee at Woodgate Valley Urban Farm, but not before securing £95k of grant funding for the farm, £28k of funding for the Reboot project, and a royal visit from Prince William.

> **“BCM were key to me achieving my goal of setting up a site to support vulnerable children. Their helpers’ ability to connect me with other organisations was invaluable. To have a service in the geographical area where you want to make a difference, that is free, is so very important to individuals and organisations such as myself who are all committed changemakers. I would not have been able to pay for their level of support. The amount of people that they indirectly helped by supporting me is huge. Thank you”**
>
> Sue, Reboot Green Care.

Case study

Empowering a group to empower others

BCM supported a small group in Bordesley Green that works across Birmingham with people from the Sudanese community. Many of the group's beneficiaries first arrived in the UK seeking asylum; some having been evacuated from the ongoing civil war. The group started informally in 2022, distributing food and essential items to families with young children.

In 2023, two members approached us for help with developing the group, which did not then have a formal structure. They wanted to be able to support more people, seek funding, and find a more permanent physical space from which to run the group. They had identified people's needs for ESOL (English for speakers of other languages) classes, for more information on accessing services, and for practical assistance with accessing benefits, housing, healthcare and schools.

We supported the group over several months, sending information and resources, and checking in on their progress. A BCM helper met with the two members to explain various legal structures and a simple constitution that the group could adopt. Together we worked through the process of opening a community bank account, discussing ways to ensure dual authorisation when managing public money.

In a follow-up call, we were happy to hear that the group had progressed well, adopting a constitution and opening a bank account. To bolster their resources, we helped them connect with similar and larger groups that provide emergency support in the city. We also shared a safeguarding template, offering guidance on adapting it to suit their own activities, management structures and practices.

Because the group also expressed an interest in running a small mother-and-toddler group, and IT and ESOL conversation classes, we explored with them what running such activities would involve, and supported them to complete an application to Awards for All — a National Lottery programme to foster social connections through community activities.

The group was successful in receiving £9355 in grant funding to support its aims. We have since offered help with monitoring and impact measurement.

Further work and impact

Supporting our communities to save the Birmingham places and spaces they love

In September 2023, Birmingham City Council issued a Section 114 notice of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, effectively declaring bankruptcy. We knew many people would be worried about resulting cuts to Birmingham services and facilities. We were - and are - worried too.

But we are determined to hold fast to our mission and share a message of positivity, which is that: *When we work with other people, we have more power than we may think to bring about change in our neighbourhoods and the city as a whole.*

We have always promoted the ways in which people can collaborate to protect the places they value. We have held information sessions on designating Assets of Community Value (ACV) and Community Asset Transfer (CAT), for example. An ACV register held by a local authority highlights which assets (buildings and green spaces) are valued by communities. It sets a moratorium on any possible sale of an ACV, giving community organisations the 'community right to bid': to raise funds to buy that asset before its private sale is allowed. Meanwhile, CAT is a process for passing the management of a building into the hands of a community organisation. We worked with Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit (NDSU) to hold those sessions, so people could understand the process and learn about the support that NDSU offers to help with it.

Following the Section 114 notice in Birmingham, we have redoubled our efforts to show communities the power they hold when working together. We maintain and update a specialist resources page on our website with templates and ACV/CAT webinar recordings to give people the latest information. In 2023 we partnered with Save Birmingham - a non-political campaign asking people to nominate their favourite places and highlighting the legal tools they can use to protect those places from private sale. Working together with Save Birmingham, the membership organisation Locality and NDSU, we held even more ACV/CAT sessions: seven in this reporting period. These included online 'walkthroughs' of the ACV form, plus in-person workshops to help people complete their nominations. We added this content to our resources page and YouTube channel, so groups can access it at any time.

Further work and impact continued

local visions



Inspiring communities to make change happen in their areas of the city

We have sought to make information about Neighbourhood Planning more accessible to people in Birmingham.

We worked with Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit (NDSU) and the membership network Locality to create an easy-to-understand Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit for Birmingham. Our collaboration and the resulting website (toolkit) are called Local Visions: **localvisions.co.uk**. We launched this in April 2023.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities funded this work, through its Neighbourhood Planning Pilots Programme.

Local Visions is designed to:

- Inspire Birmingham residents to consider Neighbourhood Planning where they live
- Give people insight, support and guidance to create a Neighbourhood Plan.

"BCM (working with Locality as a delivery partnership) were professional, flexible, creative and responsive. They worked constructively in partnership with us and residents who are developing, or already have, a Neighbourhood Plan – to capture their input including via short films. Highly recommended!"

NDSU Team,
Birmingham
City Council.

Birmingham City Council

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities



What is a Neighbourhood Plan (NP)?

A Neighbourhood Plan (NP) is a legal document setting out a community's wishes for the use and development of land in a designated area. It is created by and for the local community. Among other things, an NP can include policies for protecting green spaces, safeguarding or developing community facilities, and allocating sites for housing. Once an NP is brought into force, council planners must take its policies into account when making planning decisions for that area. An NP can't solve every issue in an area, but it does hold legal weight. It gives a community legal powers to influence future development.

Structure, governance and management

Our people

BCM is registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (Association CIO) with the Charity Commission. Our board of trustees has responsibility for BCM's policies, its strategic direction and priorities. It also has full financial and legal responsibilities for BCM, its staff, activities, services, contracts and assets.

Thank you to our trustees who served BCM during the period covered by this report:

- Emma Woolf MBE, Chair
- Helga Edström OBE, Vice Chair
- David Broome, Treasurer (appointed October 2023)
- Dipali Chandra (Treasurer until October 2023)
- Chris Bonnard (resigned October 2023)
- Sandra Cooper
- Catherine De Soyza (appointed October 2023)
- Emma Macpherson
- Denise Peach (appointed October 2023).

Thank you also to our core team:

- Jo Burrill, Chief Executive
- Becky Coley, Project Officer - North and East Birmingham
- AD, Operations Support Officer
- Claire Johnson, Project Officer - South and West Birmingham
- Mansukh Kaur Dhillon, Delivery Support Administrator.

And associates:

- Rob Jones, associate
- Marie Kreft, freelance marketing and communications
- Kerry Leslie, freelance graphic design and administration.

Special thanks to:



Chris Bonnard who stepped down from our board in October 2023, having been a founding trustee for BCM and, until 2021, our Vice Chair. We are so grateful to Chris for his wisdom gleaned from an impressive career in the voluntary and community sector, particularly around governance, as well as his endless patience and kindness. For all those qualities and more, we're delighted that Chris remains with us as a BCM helper.



Kerry Leslie, our associate graphic designer and team support superstar, who created BCM's visual identity and who was instrumental in bringing the Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit together (see page 18).

Kerry left freelance life and BCM in autumn 2023 to take up a post at Birmingham City Council, which now benefits from Kerry's digital savviness, thoughtful service design and commitment to inclusion.

Our people continued

BCM helpers

We are hugely grateful for the dedication and knowledge of our BCM helpers – the people who work with us on a voluntary basis to give one-to-one peer support to small and emerging community groups across Birmingham. We truly appreciate the time they give, their ability to truly listen, and their generosity in sharing their experience and contacts to make a difference.

Pilotlight

BCM took part in Pilotlight 360, an intensive coaching programme in which business leaders take a close look at a charity with the aim of building its resilience. Pilotlight's support came at a perfect time, as we had grown from an organisation of two employees to five, and were busy broadening our reach across Birmingham.

Our three Pilotlight mentors and project coordinator conducted a thorough review of BCM, focusing on our strategy impact map, finance and fundraising, operations and strategic planning. They gave us a valuable outside perspective of our work. We thank them for the confidence and insight they gave us as we continue to develop our relatively young charity.





Our partners

We are grateful to our colleagues in other infrastructure and capacity-building support organisations for being BCM's crucial supporters and collaborators.

Thank you (in alphabetical order):

- Birmingham LGBT Centre
- Birmingham Open Spaces Forum (BOSF)
- Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (BVSC)
- Bournville Village Trust
- Cooperatives West Midlands
- Digital Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
- Locality
- Neighbourhood Support and Development Unit at Birmingham City Council
- Pilotlight
- Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- West Midlands Funders Network
- Witton Lodge Community Association.

Our partners continued

Our work aligns with grantmaking in the region, from The National Lottery Community Fund, Heart of England Community Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Severn Trent Community Fund and the Neighbourhood Development Support Unit within Birmingham City Council. We have benefited from their support, their insight into the state of the sector, and their trust in us when referring groups for help.

Thank you to the following organisations for helping us to support Birmingham's small community organisations:

- Age Concern (Sutton Coldfield NNS)
- B8 Network
- Bells Farm Community Centre
- Birmingham LGBT Centre
- Birmingham Settlement (Ladywood NNS)
- Brandwood Community Centre
- CASE at Soho Community Hall
- Christ Church, Yardley Wood
- Christ Church, Selly Park
- Communitea Cafe
- Firs and Bromford Community Hub
- Friends of Cotteridge Park @ The Shed
- Gateway Family Services (Edgbaston NNS)
- Glebe Farm Library
- Holdford Drive Community Hub
- Kingstanding Leisure Centre
- Moseley CDT
- Manningford Hall
- Northfield Community Partnership (Northfield NNS)
- Old Oscott Community Centre
- The Old Post Office, Stirchley
- Pype Hayes Golf Club
- Spring Housing (Perry Barr NNS)
- Stirchley Community Market.



Our partners continued

Thank you to the following organisations for hosting our events and activities:

- Advocacy Matters
- Asda Minworth Supercentre
- Edgbaston Community Centre
- Erdington Leisure Centre
- Firs and Bromford Hub
- Grove Tenants Hall
- Hawkesley Community Centre
- Holloway Hall Community Assocation
- ISE - Women's Enterprise and Community Hub
- Kings Heath Cricket & Sports Club
- Moseley Hive
- Nechells POD
- New Heights, Kingstanding
- Oikos Café
- Our Place, Sutton Coldfield
- The Pavilion, Moor Lane
- Soho Community Centre
- St Thomas Church and Community Project - Yardley
- Stirchley Baths
- Sutton Coldfield Town Hall
- Sutton Coldfield United Reformed Church
- Welcome Change, Glebe Farm
- West Heath Community Centre
- Warstock Community Centre.

Thank you to the following funders who have made our work possible:

- National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities England
- Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development Support Unit
- Severn Trent Community Fund
- The Dulverton Trust, via Heart of England Community Foundation
- Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme
- Northfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme.



"I'm incredibly grateful to BCM for their unwavering support, especially in helping us address governance challenges. I wholeheartedly recommend their services to anyone looking to make a positive impact in their community. They are true champions of grassroots initiatives, and their expertise is a valuable asset to anyone striving to create positive change"

A volunteer for Stechford Neighbourhood Forum.

Financial review

Our reserves policy

BCM has a reserves policy which is reviewed every 24 months. The latest policy was reviewed and approved on 20 October 2023. The current reserves policy is to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to twelve weeks of outgoing resources for critical operations plus redundancy costs for existing staff. For the period 2023/2024 this would be a total of £20,977 as a total.

Based on BCM's budget for 2024/2025, a minimum designated reserve of £14,957 is required. Actual free reserves are £58,759, which is slightly in excess of policy.

Responsibilities of trustees

Trustees are responsible for preparing BCM's annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report with the commission applies to all CIOs, irrespective of income.

Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year in order to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of BCM as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) and of the income and expenditure including the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

In preparing these statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles set out in the Charities Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP)
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the CIO will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the CIO and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the CIO and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

This annual report, covering the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024, was approved by trustees of Birmingham Community Matters at their board meeting, held on 17 October 2024.

Emma Woolf, Chair of Trustees.

Accounts

Receipts and payments accounts

for the year ended 31 March 2024

Receipts	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total 2024 £	Total 2023 £
Grants	-	126,107	**126,107**	131,418
Other income	68,916	-	**68,916**	31,500
Total receipts	**68,916**	**126,107**	**195,023**	**162,918**
Payments				
Salaries and staff costs	41,752	79,381	**121,133**	58,344
Administrator's fees	-	1,350	**1,350**	15,019
Staff recruitment	-	-	**-**	1,024
Staff travel & subsistence	633	2,006	**2,639**	567
Staff training & development	825	1,536	**2,361**	568
Consultancy/partner costs	8,756	3,554	**12,310**	31,731
Fundraising Support	360	-	**360**	1,860
HR Support	-	-	**-**	1,655
Evaluation	-	-	**-**	175
Venue hire	423	2,528	**2,951**	607
Marketing	2,825	11,664	**14,489**	10,929
Website	9,287	391	**9,678**	10,994
Office costs	2,672	100	**2,772**	3,905
Insurance	747	-	**747**	307
Equipment	560	3,188	**3,748**	606
Independent Examiner's fee	950	-	**950**	575
Bookkeeping/accountancy	5,568	-	**5,568**	4,248
Bank charges	146	-	**146**	72
Overhead allocations to projects	(9,114)	9,114	**-**	-
Total payments	**66,390**	**114,812**	**181,202**	**143,186**
Net receipts over payments	**2,526**	**11,295**	**13,821**	**19,732**
Cash funds last year end	**42,432**	**47,640**	**90,072**	**70,340**
Transfers	**13,800**	**(13,800)**	**-**	**-**
Cash funds this year end	**58,758**	**45,135**	**103,893**	**90,072**

Accounts

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

10.1 Cash funds	Unrestricted funds £	Restricted funds £	Total funds 31/3/24 £	Total funds 31/3/23 £
Bank balances	**58,758**	**45,135**	**103,893**	90,072

10.2 Restricted fund balances	Fund balance at 1/4/2023 £	Receipts £	Payments £	Transfers	Fund balance at 31/3/2024 £
National Lottery Reaching Communities 2023-2026	25,450	95,636	(84,785)	-	**36,301**
Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme	(5,774)	14,271	(9,153)	656	**-**
Northfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme	10,000	-	-	(10,000)	**-**
Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme	5,000	-	-	(5,000)	**-**
Perry Barr NNS Younger Adults	-	5,000	(5,544)	544	**-**
Dulverton Trust	5,000	-	(5,000)	-	**-**
Severn Trent Community Fund	7,964	-	(7,964)	-	**-**
Seedcorn Fund	-	11,200	(2,366)	-	**8,834**
Total	**47,640**	**126,107**	**(114,812)**	**(13,800)**	**45,135**

Transfers from unrestricted funds have been made to cover project overspending. Transfers from restricted funds relate to income treated incorrectly as restricted in the prior year, income was under service level agreements and consequently should not have been restricted.

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature

Print name Emma Woolf
Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date 19 July 2024

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's report to the trustees of Birmingham Community Matters on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Community Matters ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2024 which are set out on pages 25 and 26.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under Section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent Examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1. Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or
2. The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Karen Hanlan, ACA, ACIE
Date: July 2024

Karen Hanlan, Independent Examiner Ltd
1 Saracen Close
Ettington CV37 7SZ

Birmingham Community Matters

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

brummatters

birmingham-community-matters

birminghamcommunitymatters

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442

Registered office: Stirchley Baths, 2-4 Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1179442

Accounts



Annual report and accounts

1 April 2022 — 31 March 2023

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England & Wales: 1179442.



Birmingham Community Matters

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2022 — 31 March 2023

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442.

Registered office:
Stirchley Baths,
2—4 Bournville Lane,
Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT

Supported by

COMMUNITY FUND

#sellyoaknns
@SellyOakNNS

Perry Barr Constituency
Neighbourhood Network Scheme

locality
Communities ambitious for change

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk
www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

@brummatters **/birminghamcommunitymatters**

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Welcome



In 2022, BCM - like many community organisations - was able to look up from the pandemic and begin to see what 'normal' looks like again.

We were glad to start bringing back our key face-to-face activities – where aspiring and more experienced community activists could meet again in person.

We had learned, from our pandemic experience, how to add online support to our services – while maintaining our 'coffee and a chat' ethos for helping communities achieve the change they want to see.

Throughout the pandemic we had seen increased demand for BCM's services - and this has continued. It has been possible for us to meet that need because of the support we have received from The National Lottery Community Fund (TNLCF), Birmingham City Council and our other funders.

We are really pleased to be able to say that TNLCF granted us continued funding from January 2023. This has enabled us to increase the staff team so that we can continue to develop new services in more neighbourhoods. We have also welcomed new trustees as we continue to seek to broaden and diversify our board.

Our original plan, back in the pre-pandemic days, was to concentrate on forming partnerships with existing community organisations, who could host BCM services in familiar venues for their communities.

This came to a quick end with the lockdowns but with the new funding we are looking forward to forging these partnerships for the benefit of our communities.

Looking ahead: through our relationships with small and micro groups, and our partners, we are continuing to develop the understanding of how the community sector in Birmingham works. And crucially, listening to what our communities want to achieve and what support they need to see change happen.

Emma Woolf MBE,
Chair of Trustees

Our organisation

Our vision

Voluntary and community action is encouraged and celebrated in our city, with people empowered to make change happen – no matter how small. Ideas flourish and Birmingham communities grow stronger and more connected.

Our mission

Birmingham Community Matters aims to boost the development and sustainability of small voluntary and community groups in and around Birmingham. Our peer support and learning network inspires people into action and gives them space to share their skills, knowledge and experience.

We call our approach 'peer support and learning', as our volunteer BCM helpers support people as equals, rather than as experts. They don't give advice or answers and they nearly always end up discovering something too.

Our objects

BCM is established to promote the voluntary sector and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of other charitable organisations for the benefit of the public in the area of Birmingham and immediate surrounding areas by:

1. Helping to build the capacity of small voluntary and community organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

2. Promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between small voluntary and community organisations, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purpose within the area of benefit.

What we do

We see that micro and small community organisations are uniquely placed to identify and serve the needs of their communities. Whether tackling specific challenges or seizing opportunities, they have the local insight and relationships to make the changes they want to see.

We believe that all the strengths needed to build strong and sustainable small and voluntary groups exist among the volunteers of groups themselves. Our role is to facilitate networking and exchange between volunteers across Birmingham to spread their knowledge, goodwill, inspiration and resources even more widely.

We champion volunteers and volunteering. We seek to bring people together as peers to exchange knowledge, information, experiences and contacts, and to nurture a city of skilled volunteers.

We support and work with Birmingham-based partners who share our interest in developing strong local networks that support communities and bring about positive change in our city.

How we help

We achieve our objectives by:

- Holding events in local neighbourhoods where people involved in running small and micro community groups have opportunities to support and learn from one another

- Running group learning sessions around specific topics that are important to small groups - such as fundraising, financial management, working with volunteers, and aspects of local placemaking such as Community Asset Transfer and Neighbourhood Planning

- Sharing useful resources, templates and information to supplement peer learning and support - and distributing them via a monthly newsletter

- Offering online support from skilled volunteers - generally around more complex issues

- Giving online support to people who may have difficulty accessing our in-person events.

Our values

Thoughtful

People come first. We are compassionate towards one another and our supportive working culture encourages us to be compassionate to ourselves as individuals and to model that style of working to the groups we support. We embed inclusivity and accessibility into everything we do.

Listening

Our peer support and peer learning model reflect the value we place in each person's knowledge and experience. We seek to nurture a diverse team of employees, associates, BCM helpers and trustees, valuing the different worldview that every individual brings.

Adaptable

We are open to new opportunities, thoughts, and ways of doing things. We respond to the needs of the people and groups we support, as well as the changing needs of communities. We are innovative in our approach to reaching people, and keep our working systems flexible so we can react quickly to new situations — and we never assume we've got everything right.

Empowering

We are generous with our knowledge, connections and experience. We work with people to explore what their next step should be, rather than telling them what to do. We are comfortable with not having the answer straight away, taking an iterative approach to solving problems.

Authentic

We foster a culture of openness, sharing our failures as well as celebrating our achievements. We view mistakes as part of being human – and a vital way of learning. This frees us to try new things, 'fail fast' if needed, and find more effective ways forward.



During the year, across all our different projects, we supported a total of 242 existing or start-up voluntary groups

Our core work

Delivering peer support and learning for small voluntary and community groups across Birmingham

This year followed a time of change for BCM, due to the Covid-19 pandemic. We had adapted to bring peer support and learning to small and micro voluntary groups through a mixture of face-to-face and online delivery.

Our return to in-person events was slower than we had anticipated. Demand for our help had grown, and the needs of groups had changed. Our community partners were also adapting: seeking to help with new challenges within their local communities while experiencing challenges of their own.

We continued to operate with a staff team of two (with support from one part-time associate), while our trustees worked with staff to consider what BCM's future structure should look like.

During this period, we held regular drop-in sessions online for any group wishing to talk through their ideas and challenges with BCM helpers. We supported more organisations through online one-to-one sessions and small group sessions. Our reach across Birmingham grew as a result.

"I am now at a level ten in confidence in being able to move forward with my group. You helped me by explaining the different structures I could take for my idea and made me feel at ease about taking it slow if I needed to, though at the same time making me feel reassured that there is help available if and when I need it. I am very happy BCM exists!" - from someone exploring setting up a charity focusing on maternal health and wellbeing



During the period we supported 100 individuals and group representatives across Birmingham

29 groups were supported through one to one online sessions with a volunteer

41 groups supported through 18 online sessons

23 groups had help from a skilled volunteer at an in-person event

32 further groups supported with information and resources, either on email or telephone

Our core work

We were pleased to host 'meet the funder' events with representatives from the Severn Trent Community Fund, easyfundraising and the National Lottery Heritage Fund. We held information events for groups interested in Localism - namely on the topics of Community Asset Transfer and Assets of Community Value. We also ran an online 'Learn about: grant fundraising' workshop.

Resuming in-person events has been a highlight for us all

Working alongside partner organisations to enhance and complement their work is key to our approach, so we were delighted to run support sessions at events organised by the Birmingham LGBT Centre, the Birmingham Warm Welcome Network, Get Grants, the Severn Trent Community Fund and the West Midlands Funders Network.

We were also glad to return to Soho Community Hall, Stirchley Baths and The Old Post Office, and hold sessions in the new-to-us venues of West Heath Community Centre and Ward End Wellbeing Centre.

We are very grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities England programme for supporting our work - and for renewing this support in December 2022.

We are also grateful for the contribution of Severn Trent Community Fund, the Dulverton Trust via the Heart of England Community Foundation, the Lillie C Johnson Foundation, the CB Taylor and HH Taylor 1984 Trust and the Grimmitt Trust for their contributions to support our core work.

We ask people we help about their 'confidence to take next steps' before and after our help.

On average, people report a

68.8%

increase in confidence levels

We recorded the legal structure of the groups for whom we delivered more in-depth support:



- Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO): **8%**
- Community interest company (CIC): **15%**
- Constituted group/ unincorporated association: **28%**
- Individual**: **12%**
- Informal group without governing document***: **11%**
- Other*: **8%**
- Registered charity: **18%**



- Exploring: **6%**
- Financial: **1%**
- Fundraising: **33%**
- Getting started: **11%**
- Governance: **23%**
- Organisational development: **14%**
- Other: **1%**
- Partnerships and networks: **8%**
- Policies and procedures: **3%**

* Other indicates an eligible structure, such as company limited by guarantee

** Individuals are those at the very start of their journey, exploring options and yet to connect with others around their ideas

*** Although our governing document precludes us from offering in-depth support to CICs, we did accommodate some social enterprises through attendance at webinars and by signposting them to support. This included CICs which were embarking on a change of legal structure to become CIOs.

How we supported these groups

The most common topics we supported people with were:

Governance
Including choosing a legal structure for groups relative to their size and purpose; steps to constituting a group or registering as a CIO

Getting started
Exploring ideas, learning about how to run voluntary groups, thinking about getting others involved

Fundraising
Identifying funding needs, searching for funders, making strong applications, thinking about managing grants and funding

Financial
Managing money in and out, putting together budgets (*a lot of help with budgets was included in Fundraising category)

Organisational development
Exploring the planning and development stages of a group, policies and procedures.

Marketing
Such as managing social media, setting up a simple website or promoting groups

Partnerships and Networks
Linking with other similar groups, engagement with local networks and useful contacts.

Neighbourhood Network Schemes

Helping to boost the sustainability and effectiveness of small groups for people aged over 50 (and younger adults with additional needs)

Neighbourhood Network Schemes (NNS) in Birmingham work to strengthen communities and help older adults in our city to lead happy, active, healthy lives. They also support younger adults who have additional needs.

One strand of NNS work is giving help and small grants to boost local community groups, recognising their vital role in connecting people and helping to tackle isolation and loneliness. These groups hold events and run services that promote active lifestyles and togetherness.

Each constituency in Birmingham has a lead organisation that is responsible for developing its local NNS. In the Selly Oak and Perry Barr constituencies, that lead organisation is Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit (NDSU). We've been pleased to work with the NDSU to understand the specific needs of both those constituencies, and to develop bespoke packages of support for local groups.

In the period covered by this annual report, we have:

- Given dedicated support so we can understand specific challenges and opportunities for every group
- Delivered eight drop-in peer support sessions, across both constituencies and at larger networking events - exploring topics that included governance and structures, grant and trust funding, developing a fundable project, health and safety in community buildings, engagement with a target community and working with volunteers
- Sent BCM staff and skilled volunteers to deliver ongoing, one-to-one support to 93 groups across the Selly Oak and Perry Barr constituencies, focusing on more complex issues, such as financial management, fundraising, policies and procedures, and monitoring/measuring impact.

We have also worked with Birmingham Settlement, the lead agency for Ladywood NNS, to run a set of funding surgeries. At these one-to-one sessions, delivered by a BCM team member, we supported groups with developing and defining projects, and showing how to bring together a successful funding proposal.



©Jesse Gerald Photography

"We needed help with learning how to record our income and completing funding application forms, including support in how to write them. The help we received from BCM was communicated across so easily. Staff are pleasant, understanding and helpful and recognised the needs of our group. We received step-by-step guidance and the information was broken down for us into an understandable format. Since working with BCM we have found it easier to budget for the year. The help with funding applications has enabled us to feel confident with completing applications in the future" - Old Oscott Elders

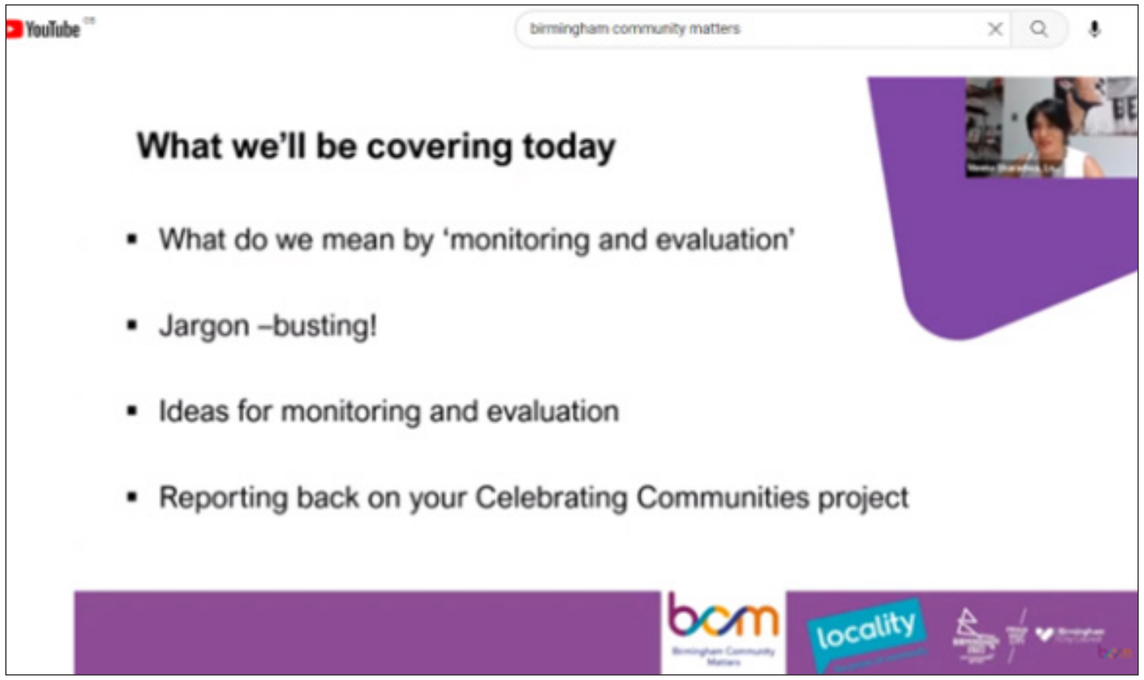
Celebrating Communities

Helping small and micro groups bring their projects and activities to life, in celebration of the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games

In 2021/22 we were delighted to support 280 groups in applying for Celebrating Communities grants. This was Birmingham City Council's fund to help community organisations hold events to celebrate the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games. In partnership with Locality, we gave application and planning guidance to prospective applicants through workshops and webinars. We created an application handbook and added a resources page to our website.

In 2022/23 we were pleased to continue this partnership by supporting the groups which had received a grant. This time, we helped them with mobilising their plans in the run-up to the Games.





From April to June 2022, we ran online peer support sessions to help groups explore key considerations in planning and running their celebratory events. We held seventeen sessions and 76 different groups attended them.

The topics we covered included:

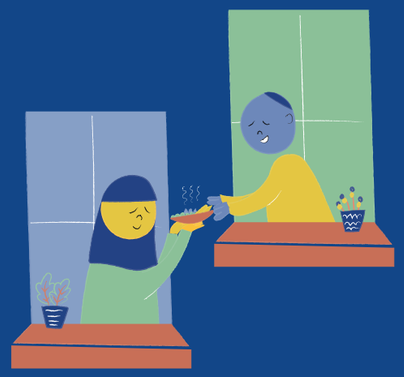
- A checklist for running a community event
- Completing Birmingham City Council's 'Use of parks' form so people could legally and safely hold their events in the city's green spaces
- Working with volunteers to hold an event
- Completing the grant conditions form (this included support with policies if needed).

It was brilliant to see people engaging with the information we shared, and supporting one another with their own knowledge and resources.

"We loved being involved with this fund, which accompanied a once-in-a-lifetime event for Birmingham and helped to carry the excitement and energy of the Commonwealth Games into smaller community events and activities across the city. During our delivery, we got to know a huge range of small groups doing innovative, inspiring work around the themes of the fund: 'Getting Active', 'Ready, Steady, Fun' and 'Celebrating Culture'. Seeing their projects come to life reinforced BCM's belief that community groups have so much power to tackle social isolation, get people moving, bring people together of different ages and backgrounds, and generally make Birmingham an even better place to live"
— Jo Burrill, BCM's CEO

local visions

Birmingham's Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit



A collaborative project with Locality, for Birmingham City Council (BCC)

We know many residents and community groups are interested in the possibilities within the planning process to improve neighbourhoods, protect buildings and green spaces, and care for the environment. In the past we have held workshops on Assets of Community Value and Community Asset Transfer with BCC's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit. Attendees showed us how wonderfully placed local people and groups are to recognise what's important to their communities and to come together to look after them.

Building on this work, we were delighted to partner with Locality on a project for BCC, as part of the Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities' Neighbourhood Planning Pilots Programme. Together we created a resource to make people aware of the possibilities in Neighbourhood Planning and give them a step-by-step guide to bringing their community together to draft, refine and bring into policy a Neighbourhood Plan (NP).

Our collaboration and the resulting website (toolkit) are called Local Visions: www.localvisions.co.uk.

With the Local Visions Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit, we are proud to have turned complex planning information into easy-to-understand guidance to help people in Birmingham:

1) Decide whether an NP is the right tool for the change they'd like to see in their area of the city

2) Walk them through each step involved in creating an NP and outline the support available along the way.

While offering inspiration and encouragement, the toolkit also conveys the limitations of Neighbourhood Planning. It suggests alternative mechanisms for making change happen, and ways to bring a local community together to consider people's wishes for the future.



BCM's role in Local Visions

BCM's role in the project included gathering and creating content (words, imagery and videos) and building the website. We worked with people who have already embarked on a Neighbourhood Planning journey in Birmingham to capture their stories in order to strengthen the toolkit.



Thank you to those people in Balsall Heath, Beeches, Booths and Barr (3Bs), Jewellery Quarter, Small Heath and Soho and Handsworth for their valuable insight.

"We commissioned the fantastic, highly skilled BCM Team to work with us and develop the online Birmingham Neighbourhood Planning Toolkit – enabling communities to access accurate, accessible and clear information, in an engaging format, about how they can be utilised to improve local areas. www.localvisions.com is the result and we are delighted, as are local residents and partners who have used it so far. This was a key part of our Dept Levelling Up Housing and Communities funded Neighbourhood Planning pilot programme in Birmingham. BCM (working with Locality as a delivery partnership) were professional, flexible, creative and responsive. They worked constructively in partnership with us and residents who are developing, or already have, a Neighbourhood Plan – to capture their input including via short films. Highly recommended!" — NDSU Team, Birmingham City Council

Birmingham City Council

Department for Levelling Up, Housing & Communities

Case study:
Arts All Over The Place (AAOTP)

We give ongoing support to AAOTP, having helped the management committee to register the group as a charity

Since 2007, AAOTP has been providing community arts projects, exhibitions and engagement events for adults with mental health problems in Birmingham.

AAOTP celebrates the creative talents of people who have (or who have had) mental health problems across all arts, as well as promoting the value of the arts in mental health recovery.

In 2017, AAOTP's chair Cathy Crossley attended a BCM session in Balsall Heath.

Cathy explained that the management committee wanted to register AAOTP as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) but had received feedback from the Charity Commission about refinements needed to its governing document and objects.

Over several sessions, BCM worked with Cathy and team to explore AAOTP's governance and make the necessary updates needed to satisfy the Charity Commission's criteria for awarding charity status. Taking this time and care gave AAOTP's management committee the chance to work through all registration documents and understand how best to run AAOTP as a charity.

With BCM's support, AAOTP successfully registered as a CIO in June 2018.

Since then, AAOTP has sought BCM's support on a range of further matters – for example, in defining trustee roles, planning for the recruitment of staff, and accessing funding to cover its core costs.

"I always get a friendly welcome, and a listening ear from someone who understands our issues and can suggest a positive way forward. It means a lot to know I can go and discuss the issues without judgement and have free help to move Arts all Over The Place onwards so we can continue to serve our community" - Cathy Crossley, AAOTP

Case study:
Kings Heath Action for Refugees

Kings Heath Action for Refugees

We helped this Kings Heath group with preparations for becoming a charity

Started in 2015, Kings Heath Action for Refugees (KHAR) works with local individuals, groups and schools to help refugees. KHAR delivers community fundraising events, promotes awareness, and gives befriending, support and solidarity for refugees and asylum seekers living in Birmingham, and for people seeking safe passage across Europe.

KHAR's chair Lucy contacted BCM when the community group was considering the idea of registering as a charity. One of KHAR's partner organisations was closing, which was set to have a big impact on KHAR. Lucy wanted to know what becoming a charity would mean for KHAR regarding its operations, as well as extra administration and reporting responsibilities.

Lucy met with BCM helper Emma, who has a deep understanding of the various legal structures of community organisations.

Together they explored the pros and cons of registering KHAR as a charity.

From this conversation emerged the fact that KHAR had a pool of potential trustees with the right experience to carry out additional reporting.

After deciding alongside KHAR's management committee that becoming a CIO (charitable incorporated organisation – a charity) was the right choice for KHAR, Lucy returned for another chat with BCM. This time Lucy met BCM helper Chris, who has specialist experience and interest in charity registration, operations and governance. Chris and Lucy looked at the difference between CIO foundation and association models. They worked through ways to decide on objects that are charitable and fit within the criteria set down by Charity Commission. Lucy went away to draft KHAR's objects and governing document, and Chris later reviewed them and made further suggestions.

Lucy and the team secured charity status for KHAR in 2022.

"BCM have been invaluable as always. Their support has really helped us get to where we need to be. We're very lucky to have access to a free service" — Lucy, Kings Heath Action for Refugees

Structure, governance and management



Our people

BCM is registered as a charitable incorporated organisation (Association CIO) with the Charity Commission. Our board of trustees has responsibility for BCM's policies, its strategic direction and priority. It also has full financial and legal responsibilities for BCM, its staff, activities, services, contracts and assets.

Thank you to our trustees who served BCM during the period covered by this report:

Emma Woolf MBE, Chair
Helga Edström OBE, Vice Chair
Dipali Chandra, Treasurer
Chris Bonnard
Sandra Cooper
Emma Macpherson
David Broome (co-opted 12 January 2023)
Denise Peach (co-opted 12 January 2023).

Thank you also to our core team:

Jo Burrill, Chief Executive
Becky Coley, Project Officer - North and East Birmingham
AD, Operations Support Officer
Claire Johnson, Project Officer - South and West Birmingham
Mansukh Kaur Dhillon, Delivery Support Administrator
Marie Kreft, freelance marketing and communications
Kerry Leslie, freelance graphic design and administration
Rob Jones, associate.

BCM helpers

We are hugely grateful for the dedication and knowledge of our BCM helpers – the people who work with us on a voluntary basis to give one-to-one peer support to small and emerging community groups across Birmingham. We truly appreciate the time they give, their ability to truly listen, and their generosity in sharing their experience and contacts to make a difference.





Our partners

Thank you to those senior officers from Birmingham City Council, especially colleagues from the Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit, who have provided invaluable support to our trustees and staff. Their insight gives us strategic context to the development of BCM across Birmingham.

We are grateful to our colleagues in other infrastructure and capacity-building support organisations for being BCM's crucial supporters and collaborators.

Thank you (in alphabetical order):

Birmingham LGBT
Birmingham Open Spaces Forum
Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (BVSC)
Bournville Village Trust
Coalition for Efficiency (which closed in spring 2023 and is already missed)
Digital Neighbourhood Network Scheme
Institute for Social Entrepreneurs
LawWorks
Locality
Neighbourhood Support and Development Unit at Birmingham City Council
Pilotlight
Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
Sport Birmingham
West Midlands Funders Network.

Our work aligns with grantmaking in the region, from the National Lottery, Heart of England Community Foundation, Heritage Lottery Fund, Severn Trent Community Fund and the Neighbourhood Development Support Unit within Birmingham City Council. We have benefited from their support, their insight into the state of the sector, and their trust in us when referring groups for help.

We have also been pleased to work with the following organisations to deliver activities that support voluntary and community groups in Birmingham:

Age Concern
B8 Network
Birmingham LGBT
Birmingham Settlement
CASE at Soho Community Hall
Gateway Family Services
Holloway Hall Community Association
Kingstanding Regeneration Trust
Northfield Community Partnership
The Old Post Office, Stirchley
Spring Housing
Stirchley Baths
Stirchley Community Market
Thrive
Ward End Wellbeing Centre
West Heath Community Centre.

We are grateful for financial contributions to our work from:

National Lottery Community Fund Reaching Communities England
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme
Perry Bar Neighbourhood Network Scheme
Locality
Birmingham City Council's Neighborhood Development Support Unit
Severn Trent Community Fund
Lillie Johnson Charitable Trust
The Grimmit Trust
CB and HH Taylor 1984 Trust
The WE Dunn Charitable Trust
The Dulverton Trust, via Heart of England Community Foundation.

Financial review

Our reserves policy

BCM has a reserves policy which is reviewed every 24 months. The latest policy was reviewed and approved on Saturday 8 April 2022. The current reserves policy is to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to eight weeks outgoing resources for critical operations plus redundancy costs for existing staff. For the period 2022/2023 this would be a total of £12,500 as a total. Based on BCM's budget for 2023/2024, a minimum designated reserve of £20,977 is required. Actual free reserves are £42,432, which is slightly in excess of policy.

Responsibilities of trustees

Trustees are responsible for preparing BCM's annual report and financial statements in accordance with applicable law and United Kingdom Accounting Standards. The duty to file accounts and the trustees' annual report with the commission applies to all CIOs, irrespective of income.

Trustees are required to prepare financial statements for each financial year in order to give a true and fair view of the state of affairs of BCM as a charitable incorporated organisation (CIO) and of the income and expenditure including the income and expenditure of the charity for that period.

In preparing these statements, the trustees are required to:

- Select suitable accounting policies and apply them consistently
- Observe the methods and principles set out in the Charities SORP
- Make judgements and estimates that are reasonable and prudent
- State whether applicable UK Accounting Standards have been followed, subject to any material departures disclosed and explained in the financial statements
- Prepare the financial statements on the going concern basis unless it is inappropriate to presume that the CIO will continue in operation.

The trustees are responsible for keeping proper accounting records that disclose with reasonable accuracy at any time the financial position of the CIO and enable them to ensure that the financial statements comply with the Charities Act 2011. The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the CIO and hence for taking reasonable steps for the prevention and detection of fraud and other irregularities.

Accounts

Receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2023

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2023	Total 2022
Receipts	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Grants	-	131,418	131,418	127,211
Other income	31,500	-	31,500	11,440
Total receipts	31,500	131,418	**162,918**	**138,651**
Payments				
Salaries and staff costs	4,824	53,520	58,344	45,683
Administrator's fees	-	15,019	15,019	12,200
Staff recruitment	-	1,024	1,024	-
Staff travel & subsistence	122	445	567	714
Staff training & development	-	568	568	1,263
Consultancy/partner costs	8,850	22,881	31,731	25,791
Fundraising Support	1,860	-	1,860	-
HR Support	1,655	-	1,655	-
Evaluation	-	175	175	950
Volunteer costs	-	-	-	72
Venue hire	120	487	607	329
Marketing	-	10,929	10,929	11,504
Website	5,141	5,853	10,994	3,007
Office costs	316	3,589	3,905	2,483
Insurance	-	307	307	475
Equipment	-	606	606	185
Independent Examiners Fee	-	575	575	550
Bookkeeping/Accountancy	-	4,248	4,248	3,064
Bank charges	-	72	72	72
Total payments	**22,888**	**120,298**	**143,186**	**108,342**
Net receipts over payments	**8,612**	**11,120**	**19,732**	**30,309**
Cash funds last year end	**33,965**	**36,375**	**70,340**	**40,031**
Transfers	**(145)**	**145**	**-**	**-**
Cash funds this year end	**42,432**	**47,640**	**90,072**	**70,340**

Accounts

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 31/3/23	Total funds 31/3/22
10.1 Cash funds	**£**	**£**	**£**	£
Bank balances	**42,432**	**47,640**	**90,072**	70,340

10.2 Restricted fund balances	**Fund balance at 1/4/2022**	**Receipts**	**Payments**	**Transfers**	**Fund balance at 31/3/2023**
	£	**£**	**£**		**£**
National Lottery Reaching Communities 2019-2022	19,853	35,734	(55,632)	45	-
National Lottery Reaching Communities 2022-2025	-	41,204	(15,754)	-	25,450
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme	2,722	18,330	(21,152)	100	-
Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme	8,800	-	(14,574)	-	(5,774)
Northfield Neighbourhood Network Scheme	-	10,000	-	-	10,000
Edgbaston Neighbourhood Network Scheme	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
NDSU Citywide mobilisation	5,000	5,000	(10,000)	-	-
Dulverton Trust	-	5,000	-	-	5,000
Severn Trent	-	11,150	(3,186)	-	7,964
Total	**36,375**	**131,418**	**(120,298)**	**145**	**47,640**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature

Print name Emma Woolf

Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date 20th October 2023

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Community Matters on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Community Matters ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2023 which are set out on pages 29 and 30.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1.) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or

2.) The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Karen Hanlan, ACA, ACIE
Date: 20th October 2023

Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Ltd,
1 Saracen Close
Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Birmingham
Community
Matters

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442.

Registered office: Stirchley Baths, 2-4 Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT.

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

@brummatters **/birminghamcommunitymatters**

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1179442

Accounts



Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England & Wales: 1179442.

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2021 — 31 March 2022



Birmingham Community Matters

Annual report and accounts

1 April 2021 — 31 March 2022

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442.

Registered office:
Stirchley Baths,
2—4 Bournville Lane,
Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT.

Supported by

COMMUNITY FUND

#sellyoaknns
@SellyOakNNS

Perry Barr Constituency
Neighbourhood Network Scheme

locality
Communities ambitious for change

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk
www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

@brummatters **/birminghamcommunitymatters**

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Foreword



The period covered by this report saw the UK emerging from the coronavirus pandemic and imagining what the 'new normal' would look like. At BCM we wondered: how can we use what we learned from the lockdowns to find even better ways to support micro voluntary groups across Birmingham?

We'd never thought of online provision as being inclusive and people-friendly, but Covid-19 forced us, like many organisations, to reach people via new platforms (thank goodness for Zoom!).

Many people found it easier to access our support digitally for reasons that included work or caring commitments, budget constraints or disabilities.

So we expanded our reach – not only geographically but in the scope of our support.

Lots of us missed meeting in person, though. The accidental ideas that come from casual conversations; connecting with old friends and making new ones. The chances to build local networks. So BCM's new normal is a 'hybrid' service. As well as resuming in-person events, we are offering online information and learning sessions.

Behind the scenes we're busy building local networks and boosting community venues that host Birmingham's brilliant groups, activities and voluntary services.

Our core work was made possible with a Reaching Communities grant. We are grateful to the National Lottery Community Fund for its flexibility and support throughout our changes.

What the last couple of years has shown is that, whatever your plans, you need to be ready to change and adapt. BCM wants to see micro community groups thriving - making Birmingham an even greater place in which to live, work and learn. We are ready to adapt to make that happen.

We are looking forward to working with more volunteers and more anchor organisations, embedded in their communities, recognising their role at the heart of everything we do.

Thank you to everyone who enables BCM to help Birmingham's community groups and volunteers do what is important to them.

Emma Woolf MBE,
Chair of Trustees

Our organisation

Our mission

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) aims to boost the development and sustainability of small voluntary and community groups in and around Birmingham.

Our peer support and learning network inspires people into action and gives them space to share their skills, knowledge and experience.

Our vision

Voluntary and community action is encouraged and celebrated in our city, with people empowered to make change happen – no matter how small. Ideas flourish and Birmingham communities grow stronger and more connected.

We call our approach peer support and learning, as our BCM helpers support people as equals, rather than as experts. They don't give advice or answers and they nearly always end up discovering something too.

Our objects

BCM is established to promote the voluntary sector and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of other charitable organisations for the benefit of the public in the area of Birmingham and immediate surrounding areas by:

1. Helping to build the capacity of small voluntary and community organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

2. Promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between small voluntary and community organisations, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purpose within the area of benefit.

Our values

Thoughtful

People come first. We are compassionate towards one another and our supportive working culture encourages us to be compassionate to ourselves as individuals and to model that style of working to the groups we support. We embed inclusivity and accessibility into everything we do.

Listening

Our motto (below) – and peer support and peer learning model – reflect the value we place in each person's knowledge and experience. We seek to nurture a diverse team of employees, associates, BCM helpers and trustees, valuing the different worldview that every individual brings.

Adaptable

We are open to new opportunities, thoughts, and ways of doing things. We respond to the needs of the people and groups we support, as well as the changing needs of communities. We are innovative in our approach to reaching people, and keep our working systems flexible so we can react quickly to new situations — and we never assume we've got everything right.

Empowering

We are generous with our knowledge, connections and experience. We work with people to explore what their next step should be, rather than telling them what to do. We are comfortable with not having the answer straight away, taking an iterative approach to solving problems.

Authentic

We foster a culture of openness, sharing our failures as well as celebrating our achievements. We view mistakes as part of being human – and a vital way of learning. This frees us to try new things, 'fail fast' if needed, and find more effective ways forward.



Achievements and performance

In the reporting year 2021-22 we were busy embedding our hybrid approach to working – a responsive mixture of digital and in-person services that came about as our response to the pandemic.

We worked hard in creating new partnerships and developing our 'infrastructure' - people, systems and use of technology – to offer the highest-quality support to Birmingham's micro community groups.

Working with our stakeholders, trustees and staff team, we adopted a new way of measuring our impact, which assesses BCM's resilience, scope, reach, quality and influence. Our new systems help us collect information about the groups we work with and the progress they make.

Our volunteer BCM helpers have been, as always, the backbone to our activities. Their flexibility and commitment remains essential to our resilience and success.

"I am so grateful for your help and support. It means that I can spend more of my limited time on doing the community work, rather than trying to find out how to take the next steps and gathering the information that I need. Thank you!"



We have enjoyed ...

Supporting people to unlock potential in their neighbourhoods

With Birmingham City Council's Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit, we began running information and discussion sessions around Assets of Community Value and Community Asset Transfer, for groups with an interest in protecting important local places.

Expanding our Neighbourhood Network Scheme support

We value our ongoing links with Birmingham's Neighbourhood Network Schemes, which build stronger communities for older residents of the city. We have worked with Hodge Hill, Ladywood, Perry Barr and Yardley NNS-funded groups, helping to strengthen their work in preventing social isolation and loneliness. We have been funded to give specialist support to Selly Oak NNS and - from January 2022 - Perry Barr NNS groups.

We supported 42 Selly Oak NNS groups with workshops, online sessions and in-depth, one-to-one guidance around governance, financial governance and management, volunteer recruitment and risk assessments.

Helping groups apply for Celebrating Communities grants

In 2021, preparations for the Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games were in full swing. Birmingham City Council funded BCM and Locality to help micro groups wishing to celebrate the Games and create a legacy in their local communities. Together we provided 'Celebrating Communities' grant application and project support to 280 different organisations across Birmingham, through online briefings and workshops. We gave 50 of those groups one-to-one support with preparing their grant applications.

Enhancing our communications

We launched our new website. It gives people a simpler way to access support from BCM and is an effective place from which we can share and grow our bank of useful resources, templates and information.

Our monthly newsletter has continued to be a valuable communication tool, championing Birmingham's voluntary groups and sharing useful information. By the end of March 2022 we had over 800 subscribers, with an open rate in this reporting period of 37 per cent.

(The average across all industries according to Mailchimp is 21.33 per cent and for the non-profit sector is 25.17 per cent.)

Achievements and performance: the statistics

In the reporting period 2021-22, our Reaching Communities project supported 99 individuals and small and micro community groups.

We delivered our service via:

- Email and/or telephone
- Group sessions
- Online workshops
- Dedicated one-to-one support from our BCM helpers.

Of the groups we supported:

- 30% were unincorporated associations
- 21% were small charities*
- 21% had no structure or had not yet chosen a structure
- 9% had another eligible structure, such as company limited by guarantee or co-operative
- The remaining 19% came to us via webinars or workshops and did not state their structure.

Although our governing document precludes us from offering in-depth support to CICs, we did accommodate 26 social enterprises through our webinars and by signposting them to support.

“It’s been useful ... being able to talk ‘shop’ [with someone] who understands the difficulties small groups and charities have.”

**BCM defines this as one paid member of staff, or none.*

“I got more information to move ahead. This information will help me understand how to deal with the problem and how to start, where to start, where to go.”

The most common topics people asked us for help with

Governance

Including choosing a legal structure for groups relative to size and purpose, steps to constituting a group or registering as a CIO.

Fundraising

Including ways to fundraise, grants and trust funder programmes, tools and bulletins for finding funding opportunities.

Marketing

Such as managing social media, setting up a simple website or promoting groups.

Organisational development

Including the start-up, planning and development stages of a group, policies and procedures.

“Being awarded our charity status was thrilling. We’re so excited for what this means for us moving forward and in all honesty would not have taken this plunge without the considered guidance and support from BCM. I would definitely recommend them to any voluntary groups like ours looking to expand, take steps such as registering or just for guidance.” - Lucy, Kings Heath Action for Refugees.

A 78% boost in confidence

At the beginning and end of our interactions with people we supported, we took a measure of their ‘confidence to take next steps’ - with regards to their group or project. On average, people reported an increase of 78% in their confidence to take next steps after receiving support from BCM.



Case study:
Fruit & Nut Village

We helped this Stirchley community group to become a charity.

Fruit & Nut Village was operating as part of a community interest company and wanted to become a CIO in its own right. The team also asked us for help with understanding the roles of trustees.

We signposted them to Charity Commission information on registering as a charity and setting up a constitution. We then held a one-to-one session to explore this further, discussing appropriate 'objects' and how these would align with the charity's many activities. We answered questions around selecting a registered address. We looked together at the roles and responsibilities of trustees. We signposted Fruit & Nut Village to many resources, including trustee induction and refresher courses.

Our overall aim was to help Fruit & Nut Village find and support trustees that are confident and effective in working for public benefit, acting in the new charity's best interests and managing resources.



"We would not have got our charity off the ground without this support. Setting up a charity looked very complex but with some steering, signposting and detailed guidance it became far simpler than initially anticipated. We are extremely grateful for the guidance we received that really allowed us to move from pilot project, dipping a toe in the water, to that of a serious, constituted CIO with a clear focus and direction"
- Rob Tilling, Fruit & Nut Village.

Case study:
CASE (Carol's Advisory, Support & Everything Else)

We helped this Handsworth community group with applications, documentation and connections.

We met Carol of CASE in 2019, before the pandemic, and held a busy BCM drop-in session at Soho Community Hall. During the outbreak, we supported Carol to prepare successful applications for emergency Covid-19 funding – exploring together what funders look for from applications and addressing their priorities.

We have since helped CASE to establish finance management systems, policies and procedures, and plan budgets. We have connected CASE with mutually helpful organisations – including Fareshare (which redistributes unsold food) and community-led housing groups.

We have also helped Carol approach larger organisations such as supermarkets to ask for donations of equipment (including sewing materials) to help with running CASE sessions that meet people's needs and interests.

When BCM restarted in-person sessions after the lifting of coronavirus restrictions, Soho Community Hall was the first venue we worked with.



"As a micro voluntary group with no access to resources, being in touch with Birmingham Community Matters was extremely helpful to me. I would never be able to afford the advice you have given me, if this was in the private sector. The patience and guidance you have given me to develop my skills, I'm truly grateful for and would like to thank you all, for your time and patience" - Carol Henry, CASE.

Our next steps and priorities

The uncertainty of the pandemic is mostly behind us, but its impact on the communities we work with has not gone away. We expect day-to-day running to become even more challenging, due to the cost-of-living crisis.

BCM's own resilience, our partnerships and connections and our ability to amplify the voices and impact of Birmingham's small voluntary and community groups will underpin all we do.

For BCM, staying agile and responsive in uncertain times is essential - ensuring that our own systems, policies and processes are fit for purpose and that they prioritise the people seeking our support.



To continue enhancing the scope, reach and quality of our impact we will:

- Work with existing anchor organisations to cover more parts of Birmingham and support a greater variety of groups and individuals
- Continue sharing high-quality communications (through our newsletter, social media and blog), and grow our mailing list.

To continue expanding our influence we will:

- Relaunch our stakeholder group, following the pandemic hiatus, to shape and develop our work
- Analyse data on those we support, as well as on the wider sector, to develop our services, champion the needs of micro community groups, and target groups and areas of Birmingham with which we don't yet have contact
- Recruit additional trustees to further enhance the capacity, skills and diversity of our board.

To ensure our resilience we will:

- Grow our pool of volunteer helpers to reflect Birmingham's geography and demography, prioritising their training and development so they can help small voluntary and community groups to achieve their aims
- Develop our staff team to ensure our hybrid way of working is as effective as possible
- Continue sourcing and developing resources such as templates, guides and videos - and use our new website as a vehicle for sharing them
- Continue developing links with support organisations whose work complements our own and to whom we can refer groups we cannot support (such as social enterprises and larger groups)
- Continue to review and update our policies, communications and practice around Equity, Diversity and Inclusion and also Environment and Sustainability.

Structure, governance and management



Our people

BCM is a small voluntary organisation, registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Associated CIO) with the Charity Commission. The board of trustees has responsibility for BCM's policies, its strategic direction and priority. It also has full financial and legal responsibilities for BCM, its staff, activities, services, contracts and assets.

Thank you to our trustees who served BCM during the period covered by this report:

Emma Woolf MBE (Chair)
Helga Edström OBE (Vice Chair)
Dipali Chandra (Treasurer)
Chris Bonnard
Sandra Cooper
Emma Macpherson

Thank you also to our core team:

Jo, Development Coordinator
Afsari, Development Assistant
Claire, Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme
Marie, marketing and communications
Kerry, graphic design and administration

And associates:

John Ellery, Get Grants
Rob Jones, Misfits Music

BCM helpers

We are hugely grateful for the dedication and knowledge of our BCM helpers – the people who work with us on a voluntary basis to give one-to-one peer support to small and emerging community groups across Birmingham. We truly appreciate their flexibility and enthusiasm in helping us to adopt our post-pandemic way of working - moving from informal, face-to-face events to more in-depth sessions online.



Structure and governance

Everyone at the table: we're seeking to diversify our board

Having a diverse range of voices at board level is one step all small charities like BCM can take to breaking down society's bigger structural inequalities.

We want to broaden and deepen the strengths of our board. The people BCM supports have a huge multiplicity of experiences, ethnicities, skills, worldviews and roles. Reflecting this diversity in our organisation will help us to better serve the city, as well as challenge BCM's working practices to ensure we keep growing and learning.

Recognising there are many barriers preventing people from becoming trustees, we aim to be clear about the time commitments involved in serving at board level. We pay travel expenses so that no-one is out of pocket for transport or personal reasons.

And to encourage younger people to apply, we value skills, knowledge and ideas over experience. We strongly believe that volunteering with BCM should represent a chance to grow, so we supply resources and learning opportunities to help all BCM trustees continue developing their knowledge.



Our partners

We are thankful to senior officers from Birmingham City Council, especially Karen Cheney and colleagues from the Neighbourhood Development and Support Unit, who have provided invaluable support to our trustees and staff. Their insight is giving a strategic context to the development of BCM across Birmingham.

We are grateful to our colleagues in other infrastructure support organisations for being crucial supporters of and collaborators with BCM. Thank you:

- Locality
- Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (BVSC)
- Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- West Midlands Funders Network
- Bournville Village Trust Community Development Team
- Coalition of Efficiency
- Birmingham Partners.

This year we have begun to align our offer with the grantmaking of funders in the region especially National Lottery funding officers and colleagues at Heart of England Community Foundation and Severn Trent Community Fund. We have benefited from their support and insight into the state of the sector and their trust in referring groups to us in need of support.

We have also been pleased to work with the following organisations to deliver activities to support voluntary and community groups in Birmingham:

- Age Concern
- Age UK
- Aston Villa Community Foundation
- Birmingham Settlement
- CASE @ Soho Community Hall
- DigiKick
- Disability Resource Centre
- Gateway Family Services
- Holloway Hall Community Association
- Karis Neighbourhood Scheme
- Moseley Community Development Trust
- New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council
- Northfield Community Partnership
- PohWER
- Saathi House
- Stirchley Baths.

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Perry Barr Constituency
Neighbourhood Network Scheme

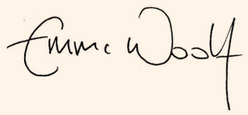
locality
Communities ambitious for change

Financial review

Our reserves policy

BCM has a reserves policy which is reviewed every 24 months. The latest policy was reviewed and approved on 24 June 2020. The current reserves policy is to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to four weeks outgoing resources for critical operations for the financial year 2021/2022 (£4000). The target for 2022/2023 is to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to eight weeks of outgoing resources (£8000) for critical operations plus an estimate for redundancy for existing staff (£4500)

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature 

Print name Emma Woolf
Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date 14 Oct

Accounts

Receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2022	Total 2021
Receipts	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Grants	34,250	92,961	127,211	81,874
Other income	11,440	-	11,440	1,650
Total receipts	**45,690**	**92,961**	**138,651**	**83,524**
Payments				
Salaries and staff costs	-	45,683	45,683	44,435
Administrator's fees	1,600	10,600	12,200	3,000
Staff travel & subsistence	-	714	714	-
Staff training & development	-	1,263	1,263	262
Consultancy/partner costs	10,960	14,831	25,791	5,236
Professional fees/evaluation	-	950	950	600
Volunteer costs	-	72	72	-
Venue hire	-	329	329	-
Marketing	200	11,304	11,504	11,087
Website	-	3,007	3,007	-
Office costs	484	1,999	2,483	2,154
Insurance	-	475	475	464
Equipment	-	185	185	302
Independent Examiner's Fee	-	550	550	550
Bookkeeping/accountancy	-	3,064	3,064	2,203
Bank charges	-	72	72	-
Total payments	**13,244**	**95,098**	**108,342**	**70,293**
Net receipts over payments	**32,446**	**(2,137)**	**30,309**	**13,231**
Cash funds last year end	**6,519**	**33,512**	**40,031**	**26,800**
Transfers	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Cash funds this year end	**38,965**	**31,375**	**70,340**	**40,031**

Accounts

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 31/3/22	Total funds 31/3/21
10.1 Cash Funds	**£**	**£**	**£**	£
Bank Balances	**38,965**	**31,375**	**70,340**	40,031

10.2 Restricted fund balances	**Fund balance at 1/4/2021**	**Receipts**	**Payments**	**Fund balance at 31/3/2022**
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**
National Lottery Reaching Communities	21,709	72,961	(74,817)	19,853
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme	11,803	10,000	(19,081)	2,722
Perry Barr Neighbourhood Network Scheme	-	10,000	(1,200)	8,800
Total	**33,512**	**92,961**	**(95,098)**	**31,375**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature

Print name Emma Woolf
Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Community Matters on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2022.

I report to the trustees on my examination of the accounts of Birmingham Community Matters ('the Charity') for the year ended 31 March 2022 which are set out on pages 23 & 24

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the trustees of the Charity you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the 2011 Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Charity's accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed all the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the 2011 Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

1.) Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or

2.) The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

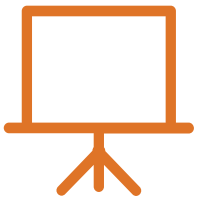
Karen Hanlan, ACA, ACIE
Date

Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Ltd,
1 Saracen Close
Ettington, CV37 7SZ

Birmingham
Community
Matters







Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442.

Registered office: Stirchley Baths, 2-4 Bournville Lane, Stirchley, Birmingham B30 2JT.

info@birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

www.birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk

@brummatters **/birminghamcommunitymatters**

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY MATTERS

England & Wales - Charity number 1179442

Accounts

Birmingham
Community
Matters

Making the most of a difficult year: our pandemic story



Annual report and accounts

1 April 2020 — 31 March 2021

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) is a charity registered in England and Wales: 1179442.

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8 Responding

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9 Expanding our reach

10 Engagement and interaction

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Birmingham Community Matters

Our mission

Birmingham Community Matters (BCM) aims to boost the development and sustainability of small voluntary and community groups in and around Birmingham.

Our peer-to-peer learning network inspires people into action and gives them space to share their skills, knowledge and experience.

Our vision

Voluntary and community action is encouraged and celebrated in our city, with people empowered to make change happen – no matter how small. Ideas flourish and Birmingham communities grow stronger and more connected.

We call our approach peer-to-peer learning, as our Community Matters Helpers support people as equals, rather than as experts. They don't give advice or answers and they nearly always end up discovering something too.

Birmingham Community Matters

Our objects

BCM is established to promote the voluntary sector and promote the efficiency and effectiveness of other charitable organisations for the benefit of the public in the area of Birmingham and immediate surrounding areas by:

1. Helping to build the capacity of small voluntary and community organisations and provide them with the necessary support, information and services to enable them to pursue or contribute to any charitable purpose.

2. Promoting, organising and facilitating cooperation and partnership working between small voluntary and community organisations, statutory and other relevant bodies in the achievement of the above purpose within the area of benefit.

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@SellyOakNNS

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

Foreword

To tell Birmingham Community Matters' story of change and growth during the Covid-19 pandemic needs a little context: a potted history of our relatively new organisation.

BCM began in 2016 as a group of community volunteers who saw there was a lack of free, local and 'human' support for people in Birmingham who wanted to start and run small community organisations. We held face-to-face drop-in sessions around the city, expanding our services when we became a charity in 2018. Thanks to a grant in 2019 from the National Lottery's Reaching Communities fund, we took on staff to support the work of BCM's volunteer founders.

We all found ourselves facing a global pandemic in 2020. The challenge for BCM was to keep providing human contact and support when everyone was stuck at home and/or continuing to work in even more demanding circumstances than usual.

As community organisations adapted to the crisis and found ways to help people through, we were more determined than ever to offer them real, human support - even though it had to be at a physical distance.



We found ways to go online that maintained social connections with groups across the city. We also developed new services to meet the needs of the people that the pandemic had turned into volunteers for the first time - including workshops held via Zoom.

Thanks to the adaptability of staff, trustees, associates, Community Matters Helpers and partners, BCM did not stand still in 2020. By going online, we made many more connections across the city. Now coronavirus restrictions have eased, we plan to keep some of our online support in place - recognising that it is more accessible for many people.

Thank you to everyone who has been a part of BCM so far. Having survived and even thrived through a difficult time, we are excited for the next chapter in the story of our new and growing charity."

Emma Woolf MBE,
Chair of Trustees

Our adaptation story

‘Making the most of a difficult year’

In March 2020, the Covid-19 outbreak forced us to cancel in-person events and find alternative ways to deliver our support.

Being a small organisation, with team members already used to flexible home working, attending online meetings and delivering webinars, we felt confident in our ability to adapt.

> ***“If we need to be physically distanced then we must be even more socially connected.”***
>
> Since the start of the pandemic we have preferred to use the term ‘physical distancing’ rather than ‘social distancing’, recognising that social interaction has never been more important.

Listening, reflecting and sharing

It was quickly apparent that the voluntary sector was grappling with unprecedented challenges while assuming a critical role in people’s wellbeing. Rather than jump in with our own interpretation of solutions, we listened and reflected on what frontline community organisations needed to deal with the crisis.

We created and shared resources for community groups on:

- Funding
- Research
- Adapting their services
- Staying in contact with and looking after their volunteers
- Mental health.



Delivering... differently



The pandemic galvanised our city's many existing volunteers - and inspired people to get involved in their communities.

We began delivering one-to-one sessions online. We responded to people's individual queries via telephone consultations and then matched them, via video call, with the Community Matters Helper best placed to help.

We received many enquiries from people setting up groups, as well as from people seeking to formalise their current groups. We helped people overcome challenges around managing money and establishing policies and procedures to meet the needs created by the crisis.

We hosted webinars and workshops on emergency funding and boosting funding success. We encouraged informal discussion during these sessions, and found they became important spaces for people to share ideas and worries at a stressful time.



"I feel a lot more confident about what I am doing and it now feels more achievable and I don't feel I have to put off what is planned for the next steps"

— feedback from someone starting a voluntary organisation in response to Covid-19.

Responding...

Rather than holding one to two events per week, as we had planned pre-lockdown, we were soon running a responsive 9-5 service.

To keep being efficient and reduce pressure on our Community Matters Helpers, we began hosting 'bite size' sessions for small groups of people, answering common questions.

"Do we need a structure for our voluntary group?"

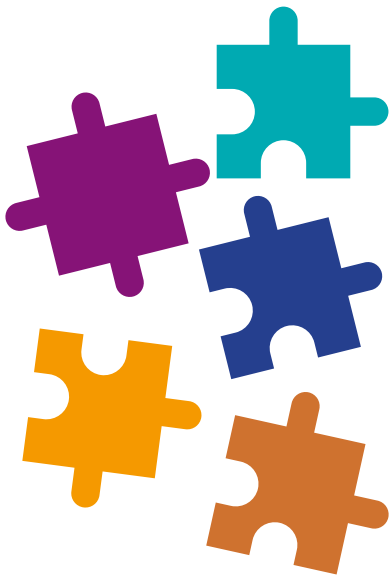
"What is a management committee?"

"How do I open a community bank account?"

Our achievements

This year, we are proud to have sustained BCM's social, supportive ethos by:

- Holding online one-to-one sessions - a new offering for BCM, giving people vital support with developing their community activities.
- Engaging new Community Matters Helpers to contribute to these sessions, expanding our network and and giving volunteer support of more than 100 hours.
- Holding funding update webinars at the beginning of the pandemic, giving people essential help at a time when the funding landscape had changed suddenly and dramatically.
- Hosting multiple groups of people at workshops on funding, delivered by an experienced bid writer, offering useful feedback on unsuccessful bids, helping them improve future application success.
- Enabling peers to learn from one another's experiences in group Zoom sessions - on topics that included choosing a structure, risk assessments, safeguarding, and bringing volunteers back safely.



Expanding our reach

Delivering our services digitally during the pandemic meant we expanded BCM's reach across Birmingham – faster than we could have done by organising in-person events at venues around the city.

A learning opportunity

Before the coronavirus outbreak, the format of our drop-in sessions meant anyone could turn up with any question, and receive support from the Community Matters Helpers who happened to be volunteering on that day.

The changes enforced by the pandemic enabled us to fine-tune this approach, thanks to the initial contact required to schedule online sessions.

We now learn lots more about groups and their ideas or challenges prior to a video call, asking preparatory questions, matching them with a suitable Helper and providing resources if needed.



Engagement and interaction

This year we have been working to raise BCM's profile by:

- Sending a monthly email newsletter (and the occasional bulletin) to around 600 subscribers across the city.
- Keeping our social media platforms updated and engaging, gaining 746 new followers on Twitter (taking our total to over 2,000), and growing our Facebook following to nearly a thousand people from Birmingham and the Black Country.
- Keeping our blog fresh, with posts relating to Trustees' Week, qualification opportunities, Black Lives Matter and more.
- Maintaining an extensive page of resources for community groups responding to the coronavirus pandemic. We retired this page recently to focus on the new website.
- Holding a callout for a web developer, interviewing three strong candidates and commissioning Paul Tranter from Citrus Frog to build a new, user-friendly website that will improve our online presence, convey clearly what we do, and grow with us. Paul has been working with us through the lockdowns to develop the smart, highly accessible new site, which will soon be found at *birminghamcommunitymatters.org.uk*.

Our new website was made possible by the National Lottery's Reaching Communities fund. Its second phase (coming soon) will allow us to develop and share resources and opportunities for Birmingham's community groups as well as adopting a new CRM system to manage and keep in touch with these contacts better.

"This is a wonderful little newsletter. It's full of useful info with some lovely light bits too. Keeping it real for people and keeping it sane! That's what people want.

I will share some of this more widely - thanks! Keep up the good work you wonderful people"

— a reply to our April 2020 newsletter.



@brummatters

/birminghamcommunitymatters


THANK
YOU
SO
MUCH

Structure, Governance and Management

BCM is a small voluntary organisation, registered as a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (Associated CIO) with the Charity Commission. The board of trustees has responsibility for BCM's policies, its strategic direction and priority. It also has full financial and legal responsibilities for BCM, its staff, activities, services, contracts and assets.

Thank you to our trustees who served BCM during the period covered by this report:

Emma Woolf MBE (Chair)

Chris Bonnard (Vice Chair)

Dipali Chandra (Treasurer)

Sandra Cooper

Helga Edström OBE

Emma Macpherson (appointed in May 2020).

"From the outset of the pandemic when we had to pause face-to-face events, our trustees were amazingly supportive. They backed our ideas to adapt the way we deliver BCM's services.

They were sensitive to our increased caring responsibilities outside of work. Their flexibility and compassion enabled us, in the long run, to achieve more than we thought possible at the beginning of the pandemic"

— Jo Burrill, Development Coordinator.



Our people

Thank you also to our core team:

Jo, Development Coordinator
Afsari, Development Assistant
Claire, Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme
Marie, marketing and communications
Kerry, graphic design and administration

And associates:

John Ellery, Get Grants
Rob Jones, Misfits Music
Francesca McDowell, Elevate
Manisha Patel

Community Matters Helpers

We are hugely grateful for the dedication and knowledge of our Community Matters Helpers – the people who work with us on a voluntary basis to give one-to-one peer support to small and emerging community groups across Birmingham. We truly appreciate their flexibility and enthusiasm for working so differently during the pandemic - moving from informal, face-to-face events to more in-depth sessions online.

During the period covered by this report, Community Matters Helpers gave 322 hours of their time to our sessions, at an approximate economic value of £6,353.



Our partners

We are thankful to senior officers from Birmingham City Council, especially Karen Cheney and colleagues from the Neighbourhood Development Support Unit, who have provided invaluable support to our trustees and staff. Their insight is giving a strategic context to the development of BCM across Birmingham.

We are grateful to our colleagues in other infrastructure support organisations for being crucial supporters of and collaborators with BCM. Thank you:

- Locality
- Small Charities Coalition
- Birmingham Voluntary Sector Council (BVSC)
- Sandwell Council of Voluntary Organisations (SCVO)
- West Midlands Funders Network
- Migrant Works CIC (MiFriendly Cities project)
- Bournville Village Trust Community Development Team
- Coalition of Efficiency
- Birmingham Partners.

This year we have begun to align our offer with the grantmaking of funders in the region especially National Lottery funding officers and colleagues at Heart of England Community Foundation and Severn Trent Community Fund. We have benefited from their support and insight into the state of the sector and their trust in referring groups to us in need of support.

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- Karis Neighbourhood Scheme
- Moseley Community Development Trust
- New Frankley in Birmingham Parish Council
- Northfield Community Partnership
- PohWER
- Saathi House
- Stirchley Baths.

Supported by COMMUNITY FUND

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@SellyOakNNS

Our values

One of our development tasks this year was to establish a set of values that underpins our day to day work. We worked with staff, volunteers and trustees to prepare these values. When we can resume our face-to-face events, we will be checking in with partners and supporters to make sure that they agree.

Thoughtful

People come first. We are compassionate towards one another and our supportive working culture encourages us to be compassionate to ourselves as individuals and to model that style of working to the groups we support. We embed inclusivity and accessibility into everything we do.

Listening

Our motto (below) – and peer-to-peer learning model – reflect the value we place in each person's knowledge and experience. We seek to nurture a diverse team of employees, associates, Community Matters Helpers and trustees, valuing the different worldview that every individual brings.

Adaptable

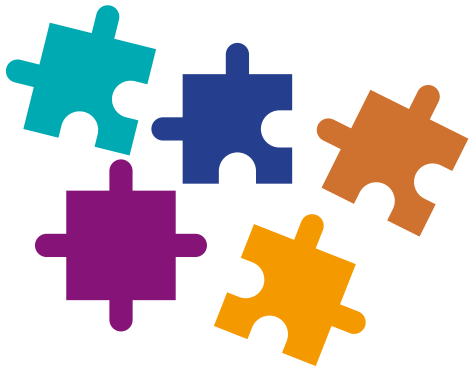
We are open to new opportunities, thoughts, and ways of doing things. We respond to the needs of the people and groups we support, as well as the changing needs of communities. We are innovative in our approach to reaching people, and keep our working systems flexible so we can react quickly to new situations — and we never assume we've got everything right.

Empowering

We are generous with our knowledge, connections and experience. We work with people to explore what their next step should be, rather than telling them what to do. We are comfortable with not having the answer straight away, taking an iterative approach to solving problems.

Authentic

We foster a culture of openness, sharing our failures as well as celebrating our achievements. We view mistakes as part of being human – and a vital way of learning. This frees us to try new things, 'fail fast' if needed, and find more effective ways forward.



Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach

Our next steps

"I feel refreshed. I feel energised to look at this again with fresh eyes"

— feedback from our first online session from a committee member of a group which helps new migrants.

As Birmingham emerges from the pandemic, we look forward to supporting community and voluntary groups in person again and reaching people who may be digitally excluded – those who rely on community venues and face-to-face conversations to get most of their information.

We will continue building our diverse network of community venues across the city which can host these sessions – while nurturing strong ties with our existing partners.

Recognising the increased accessibility and efficiency afforded by video calls, we will continue delivering online sessions alongside our real-life events.

Some of our drop-in sessions may be a physical and virtual hybrid, with a digital screen for people who cannot, or would prefer not, to come in person to the venue on that day.

We will continue to hold small group sessions on important topics, their content informed by the community groups we support and the challenges they face or the questions they ask.



Priorities for the coming months

- ☐ Continue seeking and securing funding to maintain BCM's operation and further enhance our support to the city's volunteers and communities
- ☐ Recruit more Community Matters Helpers to reflect Birmingham's geography and demography
- ☐ Support and develop our existing team – of staff, associates and volunteers
- ☐ Continue to put out high-quality communications, and grow our mailing list
- ☐ Continue sourcing and developing valuable resources - and capitalise on our new website as a vehicle for sharing them, as well as for raising awareness of BCM
- ☐ Recruit additional trustees to further enhance the capacity, skills and diversity of our board.

Financial review

Our reserves policy

BCM has a reserves policy which is reviewed every 24 months. The latest policy was reviewed and approved on 24 June 2020. The current reserves policy is to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to four weeks outgoing resources for critical operations for the financial year 2020/2021 and as a target for 2021/2022 to hold as free reserves a level equivalent to eight weeks of outgoing resources for critical operations plus an estimate for redundancy for existing staff.

Accounts

Receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total 2021	Total 2020
Receipts	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Grants	-	81,874	81,874	46,649
Other income	1,650	-	1,650	-
Total receipts	**1,650**	**81,874**	**83,524**	**46,649**
Payments				
Salaries and staff costs	-	44,435	44,435	20,973
Administrator's fees	-	3,000	3,000	-
Staff recruitment	-	-	-	49
Staff travel and subsistence	-	-	-	347
Staff training and development	-	262	262	140
Consultancy/partner costs	-	5,236	5,236	3,870
Professional fees/ evaluation	-	600	600	1,175
Venue hire	-	-	-	150
Marketing	-	11,087	11,087	200
Office costs	36	2,118	2,154	172
Insurance	-	464	464	312
Equipment	-	302	302	1,403
Independent Examiner's Fee	-	550	550	-
Bookkeeping/ accountancy	450	1,753	2,203	-
Total payments	**486**	**69,807**	**70,293**	**28,791**
Net receipts over payments	**1,164**	**12,067**	**13,231**	**17,858**
Cash funds last year end	**5,355**	**21,445**	**26,800**	**8,942**
Transfers	**-**	**-**	**-**	**-**
Cash funds this year end	**6,519**	**33,512**	**40,031**	**26,800**

Accounts

Statement of assets and liabilities at the end of the year

	Un-restricted funds	Restricted funds	Total funds 31/3/21	Total funds 31/3/20
10.1 Cash Funds	**£**	**£**	**£**	**£**
Bank Balances	**6,519**	**33,512**	**40,031**	**26,800**

10.2 Restricted fund balances	**Fund balance at 1/4/2020**	**Receipts**	**Payments**	**Fund balance at 31/3/2021**
	£	**£**	**£**	**£**
National Lottery Reaching Communities	11,838	71,874	(62,003)	21,709
Selly Oak Neighbourhood Network Scheme	9,607	10,000	(7,804)	11,803
Total	**21,445**	**81,874**	**(69,807)**	**33,512**

Signed on behalf of the Board of Trustees

Signature

Print name Emma Woolf
Chair, Birmingham Community Matters

Date 5 November 2021

Report of the Independent Examiner

Independent Examiner's Report to the Trustees of Birmingham Community Matters on the receipts and payments accounts for the year ended 31 March 2021.

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Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

Accounting records were not kept in respect of the Charity as required by section 130 of the Act; or

The accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.

Karen Hanlan, ACA, ACIE
Date: 5 November 2021

Karen Hanlan Independent Examiner Ltd,
12 Waterloo Close, Wellesbourne, CV35 9JG

Birmingham
Community
Matters







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@brummatters **birminghamcommunitymatters**

Everyone has something to learn and everyone has something to teach