

One Impossible Thing is a CIO and our objectives, as set out in our constitution, are:

the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances, by the provision of:

- (a) free recycled sports shoes to enable them to participate in sports and activities
- (b) promoting the benefits of recycling and reuse of sports shoes
- (c) raising awareness of the beneficial effect that participation in sports and exercise has on both mental and physical health.

Summary of our main activities

- Collecting preloved sports shoes in our permanent recycling bins in sports venues in Dacorum, Luton and St. Albans
- Collecting preloved sports shoes through Shoe Drives held by schools, sports clubs and businesses.
- Promoting recycling and reuse of sports shoes through encouraging clubs and schools to run Shoe Drives and issuing thank you certificates showing the amount of CO2 emissions saved
- Cleaning sports shoes through monthly group cleaning sessions
- Sorting the sports shoes in to size and type of shoe
- Working with schools, activity clubs for those on Free School Meals, refugee groups, homeless charities and other charitable organisations to establish their need for sports shoes and distribute the shoes through them

Overview

Since we started, we have distributed 3,827 pairs of preloved sports shoes. This equates to a saving of 53.578 tonnes of CO2 emissions.

Distributions

Schools

This financial year we worked with a number of schools in Dacorum and Luton to provide free sports shoes for their students. These included Galley Hill Primary School (Dacorum), Brockswood Primary School (Dacorum), Belswains Primary School (Dacorum), Lime Walk Primary School (Dacorum), Adeyfield Academy (Dacorum), The Hemel Hempstead School (Dacorum), Longdean School (Dacorum), Kings Langley School (Dacorum), Slip End Village School (Luton), Chiltern Academy (Luton) and Chiltern Way Academy (Wendover).

The senior schools tend to be in need of football boots. The schools have 3G astro pitches that they use for games lessons and after school clubs. They only allow moulded football boots (not trainers or astro boots) on these surfaces. Some families cannot afford the cost of an extra pair of sports shoes for their children.

Whilst the majority of shoes we deliver to senior schools are football boots, we also deliver trainers. For example Chiltern Way Academy caters for students with Social, Emotional and Mental Health needs (SEMH) and Autistic Spectrum Condition (ASC). PE lessons at the school are a great benefit to these students. It can help with their

attention span, their self esteem and their cognitive functions. It is also a platform for some students to excel, which in turn increases their confidence in other subjects. Many of the students don't have the right footwear. On the rainy day that we turned up, one boy had turned up to his PE lesson with a hole in his trainers, so functional sports shoes are a priority.

The primary schools tend to be in need of trainers for some of their pupils. But with the growing interest in girls football, primary schools are increasingly needing football boots for their newly formed girls football teams.

We have also worked with school support services in Dacorum, including Gade Schools Family Support and Dacorum Education Support Centre. Gade Schools Family Support have Family Support Workers who work with parents and children within the schools in Dacorum. Examples of those we helped included a mum who had two children with SEND. We provided football boots for her children so they could join in football lessons and in the school football club.

Dacorum Adventure Playgrounds

We worked with two of the Adventure Playgrounds in Dacorum. The Adventure Playgrounds provide a free play facility for children aged 8-16, where children can come and go as they choose without the need for a parent to supervise. The facilities are supervised by qualified staff. We provided trainers, astro boots and football boots for children that didn't have suitable footwear, so they could enjoy the outdoor facilities and astro football pitches that the playgrounds offer.

Pop Up Stands

We ran three Pop Up Sessions at The Active Hub over the summer holidays. These proved very successful in helping families access free sports shoes for their children for the new school year 23/24. We distributed 56 pairs of sports shoes over the three sessions. Although families tended to come in to the pop up sessions looking for sports shoes for their secondary school aged children, we also found that younger children and sometimes parents, were in need of sports shoes. We were happy to supply these to all that needed them.

Refugee groups

We worked with the Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) groups from Hemel, Hatfield, Welwyn Garden City and Stevenage. The group in Hatfield had managed to secure free use of Herts Sports Village for their refugees and needed trainers for those that wanted to use the sports facilities. They also had a volunteer who had started football sessions for some of the refugees and needed football boots for all the players.

We also worked with Care 4 Calais, Needham Hotel (Hitchin) and Active Luton. Active Luton set up a Friday indoor football session for refugees. Many of the refugee did not have any suitable shoes and were playing in bare feet. We provided trainers to them.

Inclusive United

Inclusive United are a CIC who run activity and sports sessions for underrepresented groups. They run a futsal session on a Friday for people with learning disabilities. We provided sports shoes for some of those that attended these sessions.

New Hope

New Hope is a homeless charity based in Watford. We provided them with 42 pairs of trainers and walking boots. The majority of these were for those that attend their support centre - The Haven. Two of the problems facing those living on the streets are issues with mental health and the boredom that each day brings. One gentleman who they used to support, would walk from Watford to Hatfield and back, every day, to

both overcome his boredom and to help improve his mental health. So our shoes offered a small respite to the day to day living of those on the streets.

Dacorum Girls Football Tournament

Dacorum School Support Network work with both primary and senior schools across Dacorum to encourage sport within schools. On International Women's Day (8th March) they held a girls football tournament for primary school aged girls. The majority of Dacorum schools attended and we went along to give out football boots to girls that didn't have them. We found a few girls who only had school shoes to play in and lots of girls who needed football boots as they were sliding around in their trainers.

Active Luton

Active Luton organise Energise Luton Holiday camps to run free activity clubs during school holidays, for students on FSM. The camps are funded by the Dept for Education. We provided 44 pairs of trainers so they could be distributed to some of those students who attended their Christmas camps.

High 5 and HAPpy Camps

These camps are similar to the Active Luton camps, offering free activity camps to students on FSM, but they are based in Hertfordshire. We supplied 90 pairs of trainers in total to these camps that Apex 360 organised in the February half term and Easter holidays.

Shoe Drives

We had our biggest ever Shoe Drive in February this year, when Oaklands Wolves Basketball Club collected 158 pairs of preloved sports shoes. Players, coaches and supporters all donated their preloved sports shoes through donation points they had set up in their St. Albans and Welwyn Garden City campus. They presented a cage full of sports shoes to us on one of their match days.

Other organisations who were involved in Shoe Drives this financial year were Osborne Property, Chineham Park Running Club, Hatfield Police Station, Westbrook Hay School, St. Albans Hockey Club, Thrive Homes, My Refill Life, Welwyn Garden City Hockey Club, Boness Vats, Rebound Redkites Netball Club and Harpenden Arrows Running Club.

Storage

At the end of the last financial year we were storing our shoes in the old Debenhams building. We had to move out in May 2023, when it was sold. We secured some space at The Active Dacorum Hub, in a decommissioned toilet and shower block. We bought some shelves and set up our storage in there. This space is currently being used to store all our shoes once they have been cleaned.

We are outgrowing this space but there may be the opportunity to expand in to one or two other connected rooms. This would give us the opportunity to store both our dirty and clean shoes at this one location. At the moment we are still storing our dirty shoes in a different location. We could then run all of our shoe cleaning sessions at The Active Hub, keeping all of the shoes in one place. This would cut down on time wasted moving shoes backwards and forwards between locations.

Volunteers

Until the end the calendar year of 2023, we were 100% reliant on volunteers to run the charity. The majority of volunteers we engage with help to clean the shoes we receive in. We have two ways our volunteers do this. We hold monthly/bi-monthly (dependent on need) shoe cleaning sessions. This is normally held for three hours on

a Friday at the studio of one of our ex-trustees. The dirty shoes are stored here and volunteers come in for as long or as little as they like, to help clean the shoes. It has become quite a social occasion with volunteers getting stuck in and chatting with others.

The other way that volunteers can help to clean the shoes, is in their home. The majority of these are Duke of Edinburgh students who are required to volunteer for a three month stint as part of their Bronze Award. We drop off a basket of shoes with them each week, which they clean. We then pick up the basket the following week and drop off the next basket of dirty shoes. This financial year we had seven DofE students volunteering.

Our other volunteers are our trustees. During this financial year we saw two trustees leave and we appointed a paid Charity Manager. David Foulkes came to the end of his tenure and decided not to stand again. Fiona Foulkes resigned as a trustee and became the Charity Manager.

The trustees have defined roles. Our current trustees are Ray Gardiner (Chair), Rebecca Hemmant-Low (Fundraising Business Trustee), Sam Ward (Marketing Trustee) and Lynsey Hanafan (Volunteer Trustee). We are actively looking for two more trustees, including a Financial Trustee.

Financial details

Revenue

Rather than organising fundraising events, as we did in our previous financial year, we switched tack and concentrated on applying for grants to earn income.

Initially we were turned down by The National Lottery Community Fund, but they suggested we apply for a smaller amount through their Awards for All fund. At the end of the calendar year we heard we had been successful in securing £9,000. At the same time we applied for a grant from Hertfordshire Community Foundation. In December we received news that we had been awarded £9,000 through their grant scheme.

In terms of charity partners, we continued to be one of two charities supported by a monthly pub quiz night. This continued to June 2023. We received a total of £438 from the quiz organisers in this financial year.

In terms of community donations, we received a donation from Berkhamsted Rotary Club for £250 in July 2023.

We also took part in the Hemel Hempstead Rotary Christmas Santa Sleigh and in January 2024 we received £350, a share of the money raised.

We raised a total of £19,038.

Expenditure

We spent a total of £4,400.13. As we received the money to fund a Charity Manager towards the end of the financial year, it means that our revenue is quite a bit more than our expenditure. This will balance out in the coming financial year.

Approximately half of the money spent was for the wages for the Charity Manager. Other larger costs included our IT expenses (website platform, domain, email addresses) which was £492.16 in total; shelving for our storage (£274.92) petrol reimbursement costs for volunteers (£183.15), baskets and branded bins for shoes

(£146.49) and public liability insurance (£105.60). A complete breakdown of all costs can be seen in our budget breakdown.

Summary

Moving in to our second year we were delighted to be recognised for our work by both The National Lottery Community Fund and HCF, who had faith in our ability and cause, to fund our work. We need to ensure that we can carry on funding our work, so we are looking at a number of funding streams moving in to the financial year 24/25. Grants, fundraising events, business sponsorship and merchandise are all ways we are looking to fund our work.

Fundraising events we are looking at next financial year include a preloved Fashion Show, One Impossible Week and as a charity partner to the Boxmoor Virtual Marathon.

Storage is still an ongoing factor, with shoes still split over two locations, meaning there is a lot of wasted time in the logistics of running the operation. An ideal situation would be one place where people drop in if they need sports shoes, shoes can be delivered, cleaned and packed up, and volunteers can come on a regular basis to help in all this work. The opportunities that may unfold at The Active Hub could help in this. In the meantime we still need to hold Pop Up Sessions for people to pop in to, regular shoe cleaning sessions and we need to look at recruiting volunteer drivers to help pick up shoes from our permanent recycling bins.

Report prepared by
Fiona Foulkes
Charity Manager and Founder
One Impossible Thing
2nd April 2024

Actual costs 23/24

	Total
Recycling baskets/bins	£146.49
Membership fees	£40.00
Marketing	£5.42
Cleaning and shoe repairs	£98.08
Storage equipment	£288.42
IT	£492.16
Stationery	£32.97
Bank fees	£1.44
Insurance	£105.60
Salary	£2,919.40
Petrol reimbursements	£183.15
Volunteer expenses	£87.00
TOTAL	£4,400.13

Actual revenue 23/24

	Actual 23/24
Supporter Led events	
Rotary Santa Sleigh	£350.00
The Patch Pub Quiz	£438.00
Community Donations	
Berko Rotary	£250.00
Grants	
HCF	£9,000.00
National Lottery	£9,000.00
TOTAL	£19,038.00