

Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service

Annual Report & Accounts 2024/2025



Registered Charity No: 1199229

Merrymeade House,
Merrymeade Chase,
Brentwood, Essex CM15 9FE

REPORT OF TRUSTEES INCLUDING CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

The Trustees are pleased to present their annual report together with the financial statement of the charity for the year ended 31 March 2025.

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the Charities Act 2011 and the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012.

CHAIRMAN'S REVIEW

This past year has presented both significant challenges and exciting opportunities for Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service. The shift in the commissioning of infrastructure services created a great deal of uncertainty, particularly with the loss of core funding and no clear confirmation on whether the new commissioning model would offer continued financial support. In the face of this, we have remained focused on our mission and committed to strengthening our community work.

We responded proactively by increasing our efforts in fundraising and concentrating on the development of our Wellbeing Hub at Merrymeade House. I'm pleased to report that our efforts have delivered positive results—we have successfully secured new streams of funding to support both our infrastructure work and our wellbeing services, enabling us to continue providing vital support to the voluntary sector and local residents.

One of the standout developments this year has been the introduction of community weddings at Merrymeade House, a service previously held at the Town Hall. This has not only proven to be a popular and affordable option for local residents but has also created a valuable income stream that supports our wider community initiatives.

In addition, we have significantly increased the number of volunteers supporting our work. Their involvement has been instrumental in helping us to deliver a growing range of projects and services that directly benefit the community. This growth reflects the continued strength of local commitment to volunteering and the impact we can achieve when we come together.

Despite a difficult funding landscape, we are proud of what we have achieved together. The team, our volunteers and our partners have shown resilience, creativity and unwavering dedication to our community. On behalf of the Board of Trustees, I extend our deepest thanks to all our supporters, funders and partners. Your continued belief in our work makes everything we do possible.

Mrs S Murphy
Chair of Trustees

STRUCTURE, GOVERNANCE & MANAGEMENT

Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service is a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), governed by its Constitution adopted on 9TH June 2022.

Formerly known as Brentwood Council for Voluntary Service (an unincorporated organisation) we restructured as a CIO to strengthen our legal status and better reflect our evolving role in supporting the local community.

Trustees are appointed in accordance with the provisions of the Constitution and policies approved by the Board of Trustees. The Board has overall responsibility for the strategic direction, governance and financial oversight of the charity. Day-to-day management is delegated to the Director, who is supported by staff and volunteers. The Board meets regularly to review strategy, risk, operations and performance.

OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service is a local infrastructure organisation that supports voluntary and community action in Brentwood. We have been supporting our community for over **32 years** by providing advice, training and information to groups and individuals including practical advice on development and funding issues and volunteer recruitment.

Our vision, mission and values

Our vision is for strong and thriving communities across Brentwood.

Our mission is to promote, support and develop effective voluntary action and deliver collaborative projects and services to improve the well-being of Brentwood residents and communities.

Our core values are to be an independent, trustworthy, approachable and community-focused organisation providing professional, accessible and inclusive services and support.

The Charity's main activities include:

Infrastructure support: capacity building for voluntary groups

Brentwood Volunteer Hub: volunteer recruitment

Wellbeing support: through the Community Hub at Merrymeade House

Community engagement events & outreach

These activities further our charitable aims and deliver clear public benefit as required by the Charities Act 2011.

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

CORE	SERVICE	DETAILS
107 Affiliated Members	Support & Engagement	107 members supported ranging from small self help groups to large constituted VCS organisations with access to free funding advice, support with governance and charity commission compliance, regular news e-bulletins, networking events, volunteer recruitment, best practice & training.
64 VCS organisations assisted directly	Funding & Governance	49 VCS organisations assisted directly with one to one funding advice (identifying funding and applications reviews) and 15 organisations assisted with governance and compliance work. £328,940 of external funding attracted into the district as a result of this dedicated support.
57 VCS organisations attended	Community Matters Events	57 representatives from voluntary and community sector organisations attended our Community Matters Networking events to share ideas, forge new links/partnerships and raise the profile of the community work they do.
13 Projects awarded funding	Health Inequalities Fund Administrator 2024/2025	Brentwood CVS and Basildon, Billericay and Wickford CVS have partnered with The Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Partnership to administer the local Health Inequalities Fund The aim to support projects that address the underlying causes of health inequality at a local level.

MEMBER FEEDBACK:

‘Brentwood CVS and The Essex Community Tree Network, have had (over the years) a really good working relationship. It would be fair to say, that we (ECTN) have called on them on many occasions, to ask for help and advice. They have some excellent staff, who are very knowledgeable in areas where ECTN need support.

2024 was especially challenging for the Essex Community Tree Network and once again, Brentwood CVS came to our aid. We at ECTN cannot thank them enough for all they have done. We couldn't have got to where we are today without them’

Essex Community Tree Network

(supported with governance, organisational structure change and volunteer recruitment).

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

CORE	SERVICE	DETAILS
<p>198 New Volunteers</p> <p>50% Increase in volunteering opportunities available</p> <p>16,817 views on Social Media</p>	<p>Brentwood Volunteer Hub</p> 	<p>Supporting Individuals: The Brentwood Volunteer Hub has relaunched this year with an expanded focus on making volunteering more accessible and impactful. It now offers a streamlined online platform for individuals to find local opportunities that match their skills and interests.</p> <p>303 referrals, with a 21% placement rate, significantly higher than national benchmark of 15%</p> <p>Supporting Organisations Additionally, the hub provides enhanced support for organisations in recruiting and managing volunteers with new online resource library freely available.</p> 

MEMBER FEEDBACK

Our membership of CVS has resulted in our charity being able to recruit two volunteers recently. One who has been trained as a sound engineer and another who will be our new secretary. The staff at CVS were instrumental in helping us tailor the role to meet our needs. The online 'advertising' process was straightforward and worked perfectly for us.



What a great service CVS provides to organisations looking to recruit volunteers.

Thank you so much for your assistance.

Brentwood Talking Newspaper

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

	SERVICE	DETAILS
12 Local Community Events Supported	Supported Events	<p>Brentwood CVS supported community events organised:</p> <p>Slipper Swaps, Family Fun Days and Job Fair distributing Community Support Bags : included our directories and information to connect residents with local services, activities and support networks and opportunities to volunteer locally.</p>
64 Community Support Bags distributed	 <p>Brentwood CVS hosted a Slipper Swap event at Merrymeade House with partners</p>	

BCVS	PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
120 Winter Warmth bags 5 Electric Throws 40 Microwave Soup Mugs & Soup packets	Winter Warmth Initiative	<p>Initiatives to support those residents whose health and wellbeing were at risk and struggling with the cost of living during winter months</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Winter Warm packs included warm items such as thermal hat/socks/gloves, fleece blanket, snood, room temperature gauge and essential information on local services ie. Brentwood Community Directory and information on cost of living support • Electric throws distributed to residents struggling with fuel costs • Microwave-safe soup mugs and soup packets Distributed to provide vulnerable individuals with a warm & comforting meal
		<p>Brentwood CVS staff, volunteers and Brentwood Council staff making up Winter Warmth Bags</p>	

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

BCVS	PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
<p>over 400</p> <p>copies of BCVS Community Directories distributed</p>	<p>Community Directories</p>	<p>Brentwood CVS produced & hard copies distributed:</p> <p>Community Directory: Comprehensive list of local voluntary groups and support organisations</p> <p>Social Activities, Fitness & Health for Adults Booklet: lists social clubs, , fitness activities focuses on promoting an active & healthy lifestyle</p>	<p>Over 400 hard copies distributed at CVS events and supported events. Also used by Social Prescribers, Community Trailer, Sports in Confidence Physiotherapists and other Community 'Warm' Hubs/Food Hubs</p> <p>Easier for local residents to find out help and services in their communities.</p> <p>Focuses also on promoting active and healthy lifestyle, giving residents a practical way to improve physical and mental wellbeing which can lead to reducing social isolation</p>

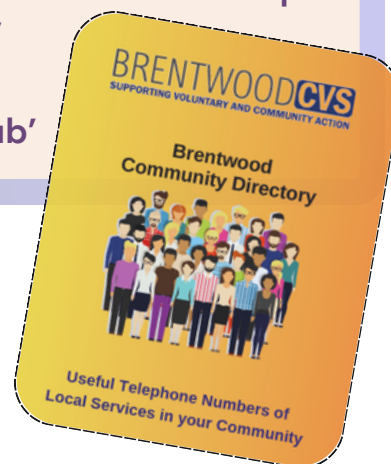


FEEDBACK

'A few months ago we had social services and a nurse in our hub with a vulnerable foodbank customer. They were thrilled to take a copy of your information sheets with numbers and organisations that can help.

That booklet is a superb resource'

Brentwood Baptist Church 'Food Hub'



ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

Our base at Merrymeade House, with flexible rooms available for use and hire, has become a vibrant Community & Wellbeing Hub, fostering connection, support, and opportunities that enhance the lives of local residents.

BCVS	PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
687 VISITS by local residents to weekly hub	Community 'Warm Hub' Cafe	<p>To support those residents struggling with the cost of living, providing free refreshments, porridge and soup</p> 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Providing a warm and safe environment, • 79 residents signposted/given additional information or support information 
28 Residents supported with IT	Digital Support	<p>Residents supported with technical related device issues to improve their skills or capabilities</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve digital competent, and confidence
478 VISITS by local residents to weight management session	Weight Management	<p>A free weekly weight management session</p> <p>46 new registrations</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improving the health of the local residents with access to free weight management • Weight loss can reduce the risk of heart disease, and some cancers, thereby also reducing the impact on health services
19 Books exchanged	Community Book Exchange	<p>A new addition to the Community Cafe offering free access to second hand books</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Encouraging literacy and promoting relaxation • Creating opportunities for social connection, shared interests, and conversation
26 Wellbeing Walks	Wellbeing Walk	<p>Weekly wellbeing walk in the Country Park</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Our gentle wellbeing walk helps people build connections, enjoy nature, and support their physical and mental wellbeing

ACHIEVEMENTS & PERFORMANCE

BCVS	PROJECTS	DETAILS	OUTCOME
65 VISITS by ukrainian teenagers to dedicated social hub	Ukraine Social Hub	Social Hub for Ukrainian teenagers & younger Ukrainians	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A monthly social hub for Ukrainian teenagers: Organised games night to foster connection and engagement, addressing the lack of such activities in the community. • A parent and child Rhyme time session to the lack of activities for Ukrainian parents and children, to help prevent isolation and loneliness.
BCVS	SERVICE	DETAILS	
182 Community-led sessions facilitated	Community & Wellbeing Hub Room hire	Regular activities and/or training accommodated, providing more benefit to local residents.. This includes activities such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Alzheimer's Society –Singing for the Brain session • Blue Flower Support – Informal dementia support for families • Provide 'Social Prescribers'– Mental health support group & seated yoga • Shaw Trust – Support for long term unemployment • Carers First – Adult carer support service • Pulse Healthcare (NHS contractor) – Diabetes Programme 	
161 Community Weddings hosted.	Community Wedding Venue	<p>Hosting Community weddings at Merrymeade House has become a vital initiative for Brentwood CVS, generating sustainable income to support key projects and reduce reliance on external funding. This service has helped raise awareness of our mission, while reaching new audiences, including potential volunteers and supporters</p> <p>For the local community, these weddings provide residents with an accessible and affordable option for for hosting their special day. This inclusivity ensures that all members of the community can access a lovely venue without financial strain.</p>	

FINANCIAL REVIEW

Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service

INCOME AND EXPENDITURE ACCOUNT YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2025

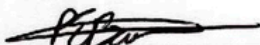
2023-2024 £		Total £	Unrestricted £	Restricted £
	Income			
133,189	Grant Income	49,854	17,853	32,001
28,514	Other Income	43,490	43,490	0
161,703	Total	93,344	61,343	32,001
	Expenditure			
81,682	Staff Costs	92,215	77,633	14,582
22,000	Other Costs	6,964	6,064	900
103,682	Total	99,179	83,697	15,482
58,021	Surplus / (Deficit)	(5,834)	(22,353)	16,519
		0		

BALANCE SHEET

2023-2024 £		
	Current Assets	
100,978	Current Account	101,380
21,665	Reserve Account	65,799
	Capital Reserve Account (14 day notice)	0
	Essex Savers Account	
	Petty Cash	
	Income in Arrears	
	Expenses Prepaid	
	Less Creditors	
(13,222)	Income Received in advance	(50,000)
	Expense accruals	(13,593)
109,420	Total	103,586
	Represented By: -	
51,399	Balance Brought forward	109,420
58,021	Current year Surplus/Deficit	(5,834)
109,420		103,586

I have reviewed the above Income and Expenditure Account for the year ending 31st March 2025 and confirm it is in accordance with the financial records of the Brentwood Community & Voluntary Service

Phoebe Barnes ACCA



Date

12/10/25

STATEMENT OF TRUSTEES' RESPONSIBILITIES

The trustees are responsible for preparing the annual report and accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 and the Charitable Incorporated Organisations (General) Regulations 2012.

They must ensure that:

- proper accounting records are kept, showing the financial position of the charity;
- the accounts give a true record of the charity's income and expenditure for the year; and
- the report and accounts comply with the Charities Act 2011 and the charity's Constitution.

The trustees are also responsible for safeguarding the assets of the charity and taking reasonable steps to prevent and detect fraud and other irregularities.

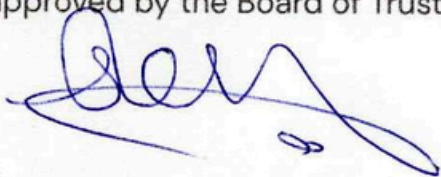
Approval

This report was approved by the Board of Trustees on 11th November 2025 and signed on their behalf by:

Signed:

Mrs S. Murphy

Chair of Trustees



Thank You

We extend our sincere gratitude to the following funders for their generous support and commitment. Your contributions enable us to continue our vital work, strengthen our services, and create lasting positive change within our community. Your partnership is integral to our success, and we deeply appreciate your trust in our mission. Thank you for your ongoing support and dedication

Brentwood Borough Council
Essex Community Foundation
Fowler, Smith & Jones Trust
Albert Hunt Trust
Tudwick Foundation
Edgar E Lawley Foundation

&

In-Kind donations from:
Home Instead Brentwood, Billericay & Upminster
Merrymeade Tea Room

TRUSTEE BOARD 2024/2025

Sheila Murphy – Chair

David Tee – Vice-Chair

John Fry – Treasurer

Dee Truesdale

Joanne Rayment

Susan White

Steve Willoughby

STAFF

Diane Fairchild – Director

Arsen Poghosyan – Funding & Information Officer

Bex Foreman – Co-ordinator

John Stammers – Part time Wedding Host

Helen Dobie – Part time Wedding Host

VOLUNTEERS

Toni Thouvenel – Volunteer Ambassador/Weight Management

Jerry Wright – Volunteer IT support

Derek Fryer – Volunteer Community Support

Claire Hunt – Volunteer Community Support

Linda Hutchins – Volunteer Community Support

Linda Eastaugh – Volunteer Weight Management

Balvinder Bhogal – Volunteer Weight Management

Diptii Shah – Volunteer Weight Management

Lesley Maynard – Volunteer Weight Management

Jane Grover – Volunteer Admin support

Christie Guest – Volunteer Wedding Host

Malcolm Finnegan – Volunteer Wedding Host

Harriet Rathborn – Volunteer Social Housing Gardener

Mark Soper – Volunteer Social Housing Gardener

Occasional Volunteers supporting Community Projects:

Peter Taylor, Kieran King