



2023/2024 ANNUAL REPORT

Holbrooks Community
Association

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Chair's Foreword – Joseph Clifford

Holbrooks Community Association continues to go from strength to strength, demonstrating growth not only through the ongoing improvements to its facilities but also through the unwavering commitment and exceptional efforts of its dedicated staff and volunteers. The strides made in enhancing the building have been remarkable, with further upgrades planned to ensure the community centre remains a warm, welcoming, and well-equipped hub for all who visit. It is truly inspiring to see how these changes are transforming the centre into a vibrant and engaging space that serves a wide variety of needs.

What impresses me most is the incredible breadth of activities and events that take place here. From the lively and well-loved community café, which provides a cheerful meeting space for residents, to the Social Supermarket providing those on low incomes with affordable food, cleaning and hygiene products. The centre is a hive of activity.

In addition to these, the lettings to various community and statutory groups offer a platform for creativity, education, and connection, highlighting the centre's role as a cornerstone of the local area. These activities not only adopt a strong sense of community but also bring people together, creating opportunities for collaboration, support, and shared experiences.

None of this would be possible without the incredible hard work and support of our staff, volunteers, and the wider community. I want to extend my heartfelt thanks to every individual who has contributed to HCA's success. From those who work tirelessly behind the scenes to ensure everything runs smoothly, to the volunteers who give their time and energy with such enthusiasm, and to the community members who continue to engage, participate, and support the centre's activities – your efforts are deeply appreciated. It is this collective commitment that has made HCA the thriving hub it is today, and I am truly grateful for all that you do.

Of course, all of this does not happen without significant effort and financial investment. The upkeep, ongoing improvements, and wide range of events require resources, planning, and funding. This report provides us with an update on how these challenges are being met and the strategies in place to ensure the centre continues to thrive in the months and years to come.



Chair Of Holbrooks Community Association



Overview of 2023-2024

In response to the ongoing cost of living crisis in the UK, Holbrooks Community Association (HCA) has actively engaged with the local community, listening to their concerns to understand and address key challenges. By connecting with residents, HCA has identified areas where support is needed and developed services to empower individuals, reduce dependency on aid, and build community resilience.

A major focus has been ensuring access to affordable essentials, especially tackling food insecurity. Through the Social Supermarket, HCA provides affordable food, cleaning and personal hygiene items, helping to reduce financial strain. With 127 members in 2023-2024, the supermarket distributed over 780 food bags to those in need, offering a lifeline to struggling households.

HCA has also prioritised building social connections, understanding the importance of community and companionship. The Community Café offers a welcoming space for residents to share experiences and build mutual support, while offering a hot meal on a pay as you feel basis. By combating isolation, the café supports mental well-being and strengthens bonds within the Holbrooks community.

Room bookings at HCA allow organisations and groups to host activities and services at the heart of Holbrooks. Among these is *Stay and Play*, a group for preschool children and their parents, providing a safe space for play, learning, and parent connection. Regular NHS Health Visitor sessions are also held, offering health check-ups and advice for young children in an accessible setting.

Diabetes Awareness sessions provide vital information for those managing or seeking to prevent diabetes, with insights on health management and lifestyle tips. HCA also hosts prayer and church groups, offering spiritual support and a welcoming space for reflection and community connection.

In addition to these specific groups, HCA offers space for a range of other activities, including fitness classes, arts and crafts, support groups, and skill-building workshops. These community-led activities provide residents with opportunities for learning, growth, and connection, while fostering social cohesion and personal development.

Through its initiatives and room booking services, HCA serves as a true community hub, providing residents access to essential services, enriching activities, and a supportive network. Each group and activity contributes to a vibrant and resilient Holbrooks community, supporting residents of all ages and backgrounds and empowering them to be more self-sufficient amid economic challenges.



Our People

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

Trustees

Joseph Clifford – Chair	Father Simon Oaks – Vice Chair
Katrina Price– Secretary	Debbie Jones – Treasurer
Kim Rawlings – Trustee	Mark Pemberton – Trustee
Louise Dixon – Trustee	

Staff at HCA during 2023/2024.

Rachel Lancaster – Strategic Manager – Part Time - Contractor
Daniel Sabin – Site Services – Part Time
Kristy Chan – Community Café Coordinator

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

Viru Kansara, Daniel Sabin, Susan Ryrie, Mick Duggan, Louise Dixon, Joseph Clifford, Pat Clifford, Meredith Womble-Lancaster, Lawrie Womble-Lancaster, David Womble, Ted Sutton, Sonja Dacre, Marcus Swinburn, Pat Healy, Patsy Doig, Jane Bailey and a special mention to Evans Cash and Carry for picking up and dropping off many things for the centre.

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



Partnerships

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

Coventry City Council

Holbrook's Ward Councillor Rachel Lancaster

Council Departments:

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

Community Partners

West Midlands Police, President Kennedy Secondary School, John Shelton Primary School, Holy Family School, Parkgate Primary School, Holbrooks Primary School, Holbrooks Community Care association, Coventry Food Network, Tesco – Arena, Morrisons – Holbrooks, Evan's for everyone, Henry Court, NHS, Pathways Family Hub, Xyla Diabetes Support, The Sabbath SDA Church, Apolistic Church International, Rehoboth Church, SLM Prayer Group, Smart learner, Family conferencing services.

Other Partnerships

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

Funding Partners

Heart of England Community foundation, National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund, Awards for All, National Lottery Heritage Fund, Coventry City Council Resilience Fund, Good things Foundation, Coventry City Council Device Bank, National Data Bank, Severn Trent Community Fund.



Activity Report

Social Supermarket

Holbrooks Social Supermarket continued to offer the community approximately £20 of grocery items per week for just £5 per visit.

As part of their supermarket experience, all members are provided with a hot meal and unlimited hot drinks during their visit to the community café. The service has since expanded to offer more tailored packages, as need was identified through feedback, including not only a food package, but a personal hygiene package, and a cleaning product package, also at £5 each per visit.

The organisation also became a member of the Coventry Food Network, which brings together various Food Hubs from across the city to coordinate efforts in tackling food insecurity.

The referral system was established in partnership with GP surgeries, social care services, and local schools to ensure that those in need could register as members. It has also provided low-cost Christmas hampers to members over the festive period, taking away the anxiety brought on by the increasing costs of groceries, especially those used to make the traditional Christmas dinner. **62** families received a Christmas hamper in 2023

The Social Supermarket has supported **127** individuals and has provided **554** grocery bags since it opened in September 2022. Including family members, the initiative has helped feed **374** individual people in total.

Community Café

The community café operates every Monday from 12:00 to 14:00. The café provides a home-cooked hot meal consisting of dishes like curry, chilli, Bolognese, cottage pie, baked potatoes, dessert, and unlimited hot drinks on a pay as you feel basis.

The café was established in response to growing concerns about the rising cost of energy and food. Many community members reported that they were forgoing hot meals to save on expenses. By providing affordable meals, the café helps ensure people get at least one hot meal a week and serves as a social hub where isolated individuals can form meaningful connections. We were successful in sourcing funding from the Severn Trent Community Fund, which started in January 2024, to enable us to offer this service. **76** individuals accessed the Community Café distributing **324** hot meals to the community.

Household Support Fund Food Distribution

In April 2023, the organisation began distributing emergency food parcels at Holbrooks Community Centre in partnership with Coventry City Council, supported by the government's Household Support Fund. The partnership with Coventry City Council is set to continue throughout the lifespan of the Household Support Fund, ensuring that emergency food support is available for those who need it most.

Since its inception, the initiative has **174** food parcels to **97** individuals, feeding a total of **272** people, including family members through Holbrooks Community Centre.

Stay and Play

Based on feedback from community consultations, there was a clear demand for parent and toddler support groups. While the centre already hosted baby clinics in partnership with the NHS, there was a need for a space where parents and young children could meet and play. The Stay and Play sessions began on Tuesday mornings during term time in collaboration with the Pathway Family Hub.

"Stay and Play" at Holbrooks Community Centre in Coventry is a welcoming and inclusive playgroup designed for children from infancy to preschool age, accompanied by their parents, grandparents, or caregivers. It provides a fun, supportive environment where children can explore, play, and learn in a structured setting. Activities are thoughtfully planned to stimulate young minds, promote motor skills, and nurture creativity and social development.

The group provides fun activities for children while offering parents a chance to form supportive friendships. **164** Children and their parents have accessed the Stay and Play over **734** visits.

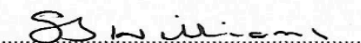
Community Events

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

- Baby Sales provided a fantastic opportunity for parents to buy and sell gently used baby items, from clothes and toys to strollers and furniture. These sales not only offer a chance to find great deals but also create a space for parents to connect with others in the local area.
- Rummage Sales are a well-loved event in the community where people can find preloved goods at affordable prices. From household items to clothing, these sales encourage sustainable shopping and provide a great way for residents to support the services offered by the centre while finding bargains.
- Halloween Parties have been hosted that are packed with fun and frights for all ages. With spooky decorations, costumes, games, pumpkin carving and treats, these parties provide a safe and enjoyable environment for children and families to celebrate Halloween together.
- The Community Marketplace was an event where local vendors, crafters and community members came together to showcase their products. It provided an opportunity to support local enterprise and allows residents to shop for unique goods, handmade items, and fresh produce at affordable prices. .
- The Uniform Bank is an initiative that supplies gently used school uniforms to families in need, ensuring that every child has access to necessary school wear. This resource helps to reduce the financial burden of back-to-school shopping and supports families across the community.

Finance

The organisation has worked hard to source external funding to enable service delivery and activities for local residents and this is evidenced in Statement of financial accounts below. Since the its closure due to the Pandemic and virtually no income for two years , the centre had to rely solely on external funding opportunities. With the success of external funding giving extra security and enabling the organisation to recruit staff, the organisation has been able to focus resources and better manage finance on a long term footing.

<u>Holbrooks Community Association</u>		
<u>Receipts and Payments Account 1st April 2023 to 31st March 2024</u>		
<u>RECEIPTS</u>		
Room Hire, etc	25,041.06	
Grants and Funding	79,520.46	
Restricted Funds	<u>5,375.30</u>	
		109,936.82
<u>PAYMENTS</u>		
Rent, Rates & Services	149.94	
Repairs, Renewals, etc	484.66	
Wages (inc. Management Fees, Casual, etc)	15,211.36	
IT Costs	1,483.13	
Insurance	3,936.51	
Telephone & Broadband	-	
Accountancy	350.00	
Bank Commission & Charges	-	
Utilities	7,084.00	
Misc. (inc. Cleaning, stationery, training, travel, etc.)	3,455.09	
Restricted Funds	<u>39,034.25</u>	
		71,188.94
<u>EXCESS OF RECEIPTS / (PAYMENTS)</u>		<u>38,747.88</u>
<u>Holbrooks Community Association</u>		
<u>Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2024</u>		
<u>ACCUMULATED FUND</u>		
Brought Forward	30,790.68	
Excess of Receipts / (Payments)	<u>38,747.88</u>	
		<u>69,538.56</u>
Represented by:-		
<u>CURRENT ASSETS</u>		
Cash at Bank		69,506.60
Cash in Hand		<u>31.96</u>
		<u>69,538.56</u>
Prepared from the books, records, and information supplied and certified to be in accordance therewith.		
Note Please note Cash at Bank of £69,506.60, £50,835.00 is Restricted Funds		
45 Baginton Road Styvechale Coventry CV3 6JX		
June 2024		
 P J WILLIAMS & CO		

Future Plans for Holbrooks Community Association (HCA)

Looking to the future, Holbrooks Community Association (HCA) is committed to strengthening its role as a vital resource for the Holbrooks community, expanding existing services and ensuring a sustainable model that meets the evolving needs of residents. To achieve these goals, HCA has outlined several strategic plans that focus on securing funding, enhancing community offerings, and maximising the potential of its facilities.

A key priority for HCA is to secure funding for a dedicated Community Centre Coordinator. This role will be essential in driving the development and delivery of services, managing day-to-day operations, and coordinating the various community groups and activities that take place within the centre. With a Community Centre Coordinator in place, HCA will be able to operate more efficiently, respond more effectively to community needs, and build stronger partnerships with local organisations. This dedicated position will also enhance HCA's ability to apply for grants, manage projects, and promote the centre's offerings, ultimately increasing its impact within Holbrooks.

Building on the success of the Social Supermarket, HCA plans to expand this essential service to support even more residents. With the rising cost of living, food insecurity remains a significant issue, and HCA recognises the importance of making affordable food available to those who need it. Future plans include broadening the range of products offered, and increasing the supermarket's capacity to serve more members. By improving access to affordable food, HCA aims to reduce financial strain on households and provide a stable resource that community members can rely on.

Similarly, HCA envisions expanding the Community Café, which has already become a valuable social space within Holbrooks. In the coming year, the café will be developed to accommodate more visitors and offer a wider variety of affordable meals and refreshments. This expansion will create further opportunities for social connection and mutual support, reducing isolation and promoting mental well-being. The café could also host regular themed events, such as family-friendly gatherings or cultural celebrations, encouraging community members to engage more deeply with one another.

Another central aspect of HCA's future plans is to maximise the room booking potential of the centre. By promoting HCA's versatile spaces to a wider audience and ensuring they are used to their full potential, the centre can generate additional income and support a broader range of activities. Expanding room bookings will allow HCA to welcome more community groups, social enterprises, and service providers, creating a hub of activity that meets diverse needs. The association aims to attract organisations that offer services aligned with community priorities, such as health and wellness sessions, skill-building workshops, and youth activities. By ensuring that the centre's spaces are well-utilised, HCA will offer a vibrant, multi-functional environment that serves as a true community anchor.

Finally, HCA is committed to working closely with the Holbrooks community to ensure that all future developments align with their needs. Regular feedback will be sought from residents, and HCA will continue to adapt its offerings based on community input. This collaborative approach will ensure that HCA remains responsive and inclusive, providing services and activities that have a meaningful, positive impact.

Photos

