



Cottsway Community Fund

Annual Report 2023-2024

As a way to give back to the communities we work in, Cottsway makes money available to fund various projects every year. This report highlights some of the great causes that we have supported. It also gives you an idea of how the funding works and how you can apply.

Some of the projects we have supported

FarmAbility

FarmAbility is a small Oxfordshire-based charity which supports local adults with learning disabilities to become co-farmers on four working farms across the county.

They received a grant from the Cottsway Community Fund to support their participation in the Willowbrook Farm Festival in August 2023. The grant enabled them to provide three stalls of activities, which included an egg packing challenge, Hapa-Zome and wooden disc craft activities. They also had a stall selling ceramics, woodwork and jams that their co-farmers had made, all to fundraise.

The grant also met volunteer costs for the day, as well as providing a fully accessible disabled toilet for the site. Over 15 of their local co-farmers attended and enjoyed the day despite the wet weather.



West Oxon Boxing and Fitness Club

This Community Club is going from strength to strength. After receiving a donation from Cottsway through the Community Fund, they were able to purchase all of the equipment needed to start an outreach programme.

They have now started working in a primary school and three secondary schools. Plus, they are supporting a local foundation working with families to lead a healthy lifestyle and have coaches who specialise in therapeutic work with children.

A Headmaster at a local secondary school has praised the effect that the involvement of West Oxon Boxing and Fitness Club has had on the Year 11 students at the school, with several students improving their outlook over the course of the academic year citing boxing as their motivation for change. Classes have helped students with emotional regulation and to build their confidence and resilience.

Burford Town Council Playground Committee - Playground Project on Burford Recreation Ground

Burford Town Council Playground Committee was formed just over a year ago with a view to improving play facilities in the town. As a committee, local parents and town councillors decided a new playground that was inclusive for children with specific needs, as well as appealing across the ages, was a priority.

Having identified the equipment needed to meet those needs the Committee reached out to several local charities and Cottsway for grant funding and received just over £2,000 from our Community Fund.

With a grand opening at the end of March 2024, the park has equipment for toddlers to teenagers, and includes some callisthenic exercise bars which are suitable for anyone aged 14 and upward. An access path has also been built, so that pushchairs and wheelchairs can access the park more easily. It is hoped that the park area will benefit the local community for many years to come.



What we achieved

April 2023 to March 2024 saw us spend almost £30,000 on funding **17** amazing projects across our communities with two Cottsway customers receiving individual grants for education and training. Because of the popularity of the Community Fund, we are pleased to announce that funding for the coming year (April 2024 to March 2025) will be £30,000.

Here's the complete list of successful applicants from 2023 - 2024:

Group applicants	Reason for applying	Amount awarded
Joss Searchlight	Witney Community Arts Festival	£1,150
Yellow Submarine	Witney social enterprise cafe	£1,970
West Oxon Boxing and Fitness Club	Expansion of services and groups offered	£2,120
Individual grant	Individual application for course -British College of Canine Studies	£195
Got 2B	Support for youth work and Fundraising Activities	£2,300
Farmability	FarmAbility at the Willowbrook Festival 2023	£1,665
Oxfordshire Play Association	OPA Play and Activity Days 2023 (West Oxfordshire)	£1,720
Homestart Oxford	Family Well-Being Groups in Witney	£2,500
Leaffield Preschool	Leaffield Preschool Community Cabin	£2,000
Burford Town Council Playground Committee	Playground project on Burford Recreation Ground	£2,035
Carterton Carnival	Carterton Carnival	£1,400
Dogs for Good	Family Dog	£2,275
Individual grant	Individual application - Support for ADHD whilst studying	£250
Oxfordshire Youth	Young Leaders Programme	£2,450
Transition Chipping Norton - Learn2sustain	Youth4Future	£2,500
Oxford Christmas Lunch	Volunteer Group – Christmas Day Lunch	£1597.37
Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton	Home-Start weekly 1:1 family support in Chipping Norton	£1,690

How the Community Fund works

There are four different levels of funding to suit everyone's needs - from individuals and local groups to larger committees and organisations.

In 2023-2024, applications were reviewed and voted on by members of our customer-only closed Facebook group. If you live in a Cottsway home and would like to join the Facebook group and vote on Community Fund applications, simply search **Communities@Cottsway** on Facebook and request to join.

Grant	Eligible projects	Examples
£250	For individual Cottsway customers to support individual learning and skills development, especially where this will increase employment prospects.	Training courses, qualifications and the materials and equipment needed to support learning.
£500	Small projects and community events which benefit your neighbourhood and directly affects other residents of Cottsway properties.	Events, activities and trips that involve the neighbourhood and bring the community closer together.
£2,500	Group projects that benefit the community and are accessible to Cottsway residents.	One-off and ongoing projects; social, environmental and educational. Including training to improve services, equipment, printing and publicity.
£5,000	Environmental projects that directly benefit Cottsway's customers.	Community clear-ups, improvements, and conservation projects on land owned by Cottsway.

How can I apply?

You can find more information and download an application form at: www.cottsway.co.uk/fund

You can also call us on **01993 890 000** or email us at communities@cottsway.co.uk



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