



Cottsway Community Fund

Annual Report
2025-2026

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

Yellow Submarine

The Yellow Submarine Charity run a workplace training scheme for learning disabled young adults. Through a range of projects, they provide experiences and opportunities for their members to develop friendships, confidence, independent living and employment skills in a safe and supportive environment.

The Yellow Submarine's main public-facing presence in Witney is the café at the Windrush Leisure Centre. A popular venue for local people, welcoming on average 800 customers per week. Their work includes social clubs, residential respite breaks, day trips and activities for 11-18s as well as for adults.

This year they applied to the community fund for their latest project 'Life Changing Bakes'. They received a grant for £2,500 enabling them to equip their new premises in Witney, expanding their traineeship by six places and increasing the volume of bakes they can produce - allowing them to sell beyond their cafes and grow the income for the charity as a whole.



Lorna and Rachel from the Communities team attended Yellow Submarine's official opening, with special guest Prue Leith in September 2025.

Witney Vikings Girls U10 Wasps

Witney Vikings Under 10 Wasps is a relatively new female football team, formed in 2024. The girls were training wearing either their team shirts or their own PE kits - but these were getting dirty quickly and they struggled to have kit ready for matches or sports at school.

The Witney Vikings Girls U10 Wasps successfully applied for a grant of £275 to purchase new training shirts. This allowed the girls to wear dedicated shirts for their weekly training sessions with pride, while also reducing the pressure on families to quickly wash sports kit and keep team shirts ready for matches.

Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton

Home-Start Banbury, Bicester and Chipping Norton applied to the community fund for a grant of £1,920 for their weekly 1:1 family support they provide in Chipping Norton.

Home-Start volunteers work alongside parents as they realise their strengths and worth, build solid relationships with their children and widen their links with the local community - giving families the opportunity to reach their full potential - because childhood can't wait.



Talking about their Home-Start advisor, a customer said: "She's just amazing, she's supported me so much, it's such a relief to know she's coming. I just can't believe how much she's helped. She gently pushes me as well, sends follow up messages and reminds me to do tasks"

What we achieved

From April 2025 to December 2025, we invested almost £30,000 in funding 15 great projects across our communities.

As we approached year end, £200 remained in the community fund, and we wanted to allocate it to one of our 2025-26 grant recipients - with the final choice made by our customers. We asked community fund recipients to email us with brief outline of how they'd spend the extra funds if selected. We then shared these submissions in a vote within our closed customer Facebook group.

Yellow Submarine won the vote – successfully securing funding for **additional** bakery equipment for their new premises. This will help them continue producing their amazing bakes while supporting trainees to measure ingredients independently and accurately.

Towards the end of this financial year, Cottsway celebrated its 25th anniversary. To mark the occasion, we're delighted to increase funding for the coming year by £25,000, bringing the total community fund pot to £55,000 for April 2026 to March 2027.

Here's the complete list of successful applicants from 2025 - 2026:

Applicants	Reason for applying	Amount awarded
Home-Start Banbury, Bicester & Chipping Norton	Home-Start weekly 1:1 family support in Chipping Norton	£1,660
Oxfordshire Play Association (OPA)	West Oxfordshire Play and Activity Days 2025	£2,400
Bampton Bush Club	Transport for members for next term	£2,420
Yellow Submarine	Life Changing Bakes	£2,500
Apollos	Save School Uniform	£2,188
CSEF	Money Wise	£1,860
Freeland District Guiding	Freeland District Guiding adventurous activities	£2,275
Cirencester Community Development Trust Ltd	Phoenix Festival Cirencester	£1,620
Tackley Village Memorial Hall	Insulation and energy efficiency upgrades	£1,875
Clanfield 85 Football Club Under 18's	Clanfield 85 Football Club Under 18's	£2,050
Witney Vikings Girls U10 Wasps	Training Shirt for U10 Witney Girls Football team	£275
Home-Start Oxford	Well-being parent & toddler groups	£2,500
Aspire	funding of a youth worker	£2,375
Thomas Gifford Trust (Charlbury Committee Centre)	Charlbury Youth Programme 2025-2026	£2,000
Witney Baby Bank	Voucher Scheme project	£1,800
Yellow Submarine	Additional £200 voted by customers: bakery equipment	£200
TOTAL		£29,998

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 2025-2026, 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 890000** or email us at communities@cottsway.co.uk



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