

1. Cambridge Fire & Rescue Service

About the applicant: Responsible for delivering a fire and rescue service to the 805,000 people of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

Grant awarded: £7,000

Category: Anti-Social Behaviour

Proposals for Grant Funding: To deliver at least two week-long 'Firebreak' courses within South Cambridgeshire to students in vulnerable areas as identified in partnership meetings.

What is Firebreak? Firebreak aims to promote a culture of safety and teamwork, reducing the risky choices made by young people and reduce Anti-Social Behaviour within communities. It aims to raise young people's awareness of the consequences of their actions, introducing the concept of citizenship by teaching a range of vital life skills whilst undertaking the various disciplines of the Fire Service.

The Firebreak programme concentrates on three core skills - Communication, Problem solving and Transferable skills. It delivers a different message daily, and through the week aims to promote a change in mindset and behaviour. Firebreak promotes self-worth and actively encourages the students to look at their future and fulfil their potential.

Status- Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Ran three courses (in Impington, Cottenham and Cambourne)
- Students taught three core skills - Communication, Problem solving and Transferable skills. Certificate provided to each attendee.
- Students actively encouraged to speak to other schools such as primary about safety within the home or community.
- Many of the students on the course will not be able to gain GCSE's in an educational environment. By the students gaining two qualifications, it builds confidence in their own abilities
- Students are fed well and have positive role models such as the Firefighters talking about nutrition and exercise. The course is also physically engaging.
- [Cambridge Fire & Rescue Service Press release](#) highlights the success of the course run at Impington Village College

Challenges: None recorded.

Moving forward: Firebreak does not currently meet the criteria for Police and Crime Commissioner funding although the Police and Crime Commissioner are looking at possible alternate provision for these courses. No other form of funding has been identified at present.

2. Orchard Park Community Council

About the applicant: Community Council for Orchard Park.

Grant awarded: £8,000

Category: Anti-Social Behaviour

Proposals for Grant Funding: The aim was to engage with the young people of Orchard Park, make them feel connected to their community and support them to make a difference.

- 1) Engage with young people at risk of entering the criminal justice system and those undertaking low level ASB in the community
- 2) To connect young people into the wider Orchard Park Community and developed positive social networks
- 3) To reduce feelings of isolation experienced by young people and improve overall mental health of the young people living in Orchard Park
- 4) To Motivate and empower Young People by providing a platform for them to collaborate with others in their community and give them a voice to shape their community

Status: Not on track. Project did not get under way until March 2022 and a further update will be provided verbally at GAC

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Two Romsey Mill youth workers engaged with Orchard Park's socially disadvantaged young people through detached work, gave them opportunities and activities that they would not otherwise have been able to enjoy.
- They have made connections and started to build relationships with around 10 young people to date.
- Through working with Orchard Park's young people during detached sessions and on trips out, a group of young women suggested the boxing project, to help boost self-confidence, personal safety, fitness.
- To date Romsey Mill have invoiced for £5,952.93 representing 42 detached sessions, 9 boxing sessions and 2 trips out.

Challenges:

- The organisation commissioned to carry out the engagement work with Orchard Park's young people are still completing the work and will be gathering feedback.
- There are quite a few objectives to fulfil in a relatively short space of time, and some overlap between them. It might be more achievable to focus on empowering young people to build self-confidence and resilience and developing opportunities to engage in positive activities. Developing social capacity could be a longer-term project.

3. Waterbeach and Landbeach Action for Youth (WAY) Youth Club

About the applicant: Support and educate young people aged 11-16 years through the provision of multiple weekly open access youth club sessions and outreach youth work. Aim to inspire and support their members so they may develop as individuals and valuable members of the community.

Grant awarded: £5,722

Category: Diet

Proposals for Grant Funding: To provide a 'Creative Cooking' programme to teach young people how to be creative with ingredients and to cook nutritious, cost-effective meals whilst reducing food waste and how to be confident and safe in the kitchen. This is intended to help young people's mental health by teaching them new skills including self-sufficiency, allowing them to talk freely about anything that is bothering them whilst they are engaged in a relaxing activity.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Provided two cooking sessions per week with an average of 5 members per session in the kitchen who provided the food and snacks for approx. 15 - 30 members.
- Stopped selling unhealthy tuck shop food as were able to get the members to cook their own healthy meals and snacks.
- Members have become a lot more confident in the kitchen, this also helped their mental health.
- Young people came up with the idea of opening a youth cafe with the skills they had learnt. They helped to organise this, and the cafe has now been running for 5 weeks.
- Young people planned the meals and things to cook. They also helped do the shopping lists and were responsible for recording food temperatures and to be aware of food hygiene.
- Young people developed cooking skills so they can cook cheaper versions of take away or readymade meals.
- Made use of Fare Shares food from Tesco which would otherwise have been wasted. Have also invested in a new fridge freezer for additional food items from Fare Shares.
- Youth workers reported that the members were opening up and becoming a lot more trusting of the youth workers due to the time they spent in the kitchen.
- Through cooking their own meals and snacks, they became more independent and they also built confidence when they saw other members eating and enjoying their food.
- One of the older members has been so brilliant at leading the others in the kitchen that they plan to put her on an apprenticeship after her GCSEs.

Challenges: None reported.

4. Let's Cook CIC

About the applicant: Promotes the health and wellbeing benefits of cooking from scratch for Children, Young People and Families. Uses the train the trainer model to disseminate the tips, tricks and techniques needed to deliver practical and participatory cookery sessions. By upskilling representatives from a range of community facing organisations such as schools, youth clubs, scouts and guides etc,

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they ensure that the training is embedded into the organisations they work with and provide the foundation for long term initiatives beyond the initial funding period.

Grant awarded: £7,568.33

Category: Diet

Proposals for Grant Funding: Let's Cook Project activities directed to children and young people who reside in areas that sit higher on the indices of childhood deprivation where evaluation shows access to nutritious food may be more limited and levels of childhood obesity tend to be higher. Recruitment of participant organisations and the delivery of a two day train the trainer session (March 2022). Individual settings were then expected to deliver their own sessions between April 2022 and November 2022.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- As part of the promotion of the project / recruitment drive for participating settings Let's Cook 'sat in' for an hour on the BBC radio Cambridgeshire mid-morning show which was focusing on the importance of reducing food waste, making food go further and supporting families who may be experiencing challenges in accessing healthy food.
- Initial training day delivered 19 May with enthusiastic response from attendees.
- £2,100 of allocated SCDC grant funding at £350 per setting was released 20 May 2022.
- Delivered a total of 24 cooking sessions, all of which included practical cookery and the dissemination of supporting healthy eating messaging.
- Sessions took place at Cambourne child and family centre, Sawston child and family centre, Melbourn Child and Family Centre and Waterbeach child and family centre and Meridian Primary School, Comberton
- Sessions were inclusive and age appropriate through consultation with participants and provision of alternative activities / creche when required.
- Sessions reached 123 beneficiaries through the work delivered by 12 'Projecteers'. Approximately 150 Projecteer hours were contributed to the project.
- Children are always excited at the end of a session to be able to take their cooking home to share with their families.
- Cooperation and communication were found to improve throughout the sessions.
- Students have been encouraged to taste new foods and foods they didn't think they liked.

Challenges:

- Delays in announcement of funding impacted on our ability to recruit settings to participate. Settings had factored in activities etc for the period in which the funding applied so uptake was lower than anticipated
- Recruitment was challenging, for two reasons. The delay in the announcement of our successful bid for funding meant that recruitment and training was taking

place when many settings had already calendarized any extracurricular activities. The greatest barrier to recruitment was constraints on time and budget in educational settings. Pragmatically, staff released to attend training had to be covered and, in an environment still impacted by Covid absenteeism, this created an additional challenge on capacity as much as budgets.

5. Orwell Eco Youth Council

About the applicant: The Creation of an ECO Youth Council to support parish council's Environmental Group and build on interest for more environmental projects to participate in by existing members of Orwell Youth Club.

Grant awarded: £4,860

Category: Environmental

Proposals for Grant Funding:

- Provide a sessional worker to mentor Young People; develop their skills and abilities to propose and deliver their environmental projects such as tree planting, create eco-friendly products and an eco-friendly youth club, contribute to parish debates and activities as part of Orwell Parish councils environmental group, create environmental strategies, and run community consultations as part of parish environmental activities.
- Enable young people to continue creating a community food bank and living food bank
- Consult and develop environmental initiatives on plans for new recreation ground

Status: behind schedule (estimated completion date is July 2023). Despite the delay they have achieved their main objectives.

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- The establishment of a youth group
- Publication of environment statement
- Engagement with all the green initiatives in the village: building insect homes for the community allotment and animal homes for Chapel Orchard and the churchyard, development of a foraging hedge at the new recreation ground area
- Designing rainwater harvesting systems for the allotment.
- Creating plans for growing, collecting, and sorting vegetable seeds as part of the Living Food Bank Project
- Creating a network of young people
- Development of cooking skills and discussions about vegetarianism, veganism and farming and the environment
- Training of volunteers (in partnership with WAY)
- Creation of leaflets and newsletters by young people for young people around the village
- The contribution of young people to village environment public meetings
- Disseminating results of actions at community markets
- Developing project management and practical skills

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- Active engagement of young people who are normally not associated with positive action within the village
- Contributed to support of Duke of Edinburgh participants who have been involved promoting and creating practical projects
- Positive response from community members as people are seeing young people making a positive contribution to each environmental project
- Ongoing support and dialogue with parents about social issues and behaviour problems, including finding ways for conflict resolutions between young people or tackling the young people's own perceptions of 'always being blamed'
- Project resulted in two volunteers, one of whom continuing youth work in the village (a second volunteer got a new job and moved away from the area)

Challenges:

- Three-month delay before recruitment of a youth worker started as the Parish Council discussed ways forward. This was also compounded by no one coming forward to take the role on once it was advertised. Therefore, the project could not properly start until June 2022.
- There was an issue with lack of engagement in discussions in meetings, but the group are now more active.

6. Cambridge Joint Play schemes

About the applicant: Enabling children/young people aged 8-19 with moderate to severe learning disabilities to access community-based activities and holiday Playschemes. To support young people to access activities and resources with high levels of adult support and to provide fun activities and promote inclusion within the local community. Offering much needed respite facilities for parents and carers.

Grant awarded: £5,000

Category: Learning Disabilities

Proposals for Grant Funding: To provide Saturday Clubs and Half Term activities for Children/Young people

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Currently supporting over 30 families and 10 new referrals.
- Community based activities included trips to the Cambridge Arts Theatre for the Pantomime, Indoor Crazy Golf, Bowling, Shepreth Wildlife Park, Nene Valley Railway
- Activities have included visits from local community-based providers e.g., Cambridge United's disability football coach, local dance teachers, local visiting farms and puppeteers
- By providing activity groups and holiday playschemes the children/young people had opportunities to develop out of school friendships, access external resources within the community and this allowed parents to benefit from much needed respite.

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- The children/young people that returned during the period of Covid uncertainty showed obvious delight in re-establishing relationships with their peers and the staff team.
- Provided additional half term playscheme dates and some online activities, (e.g., singing groups and scavenger hunts) as due to Covid-19 many of the children/young people had missed out on opportunities and attendance at school, as well as interaction with their peers.
- Increased new referrals from families and social work teams for places on Saturday Clubs and holiday playschemes therefore will grow and develop the service to more families in the future.
- Undertook a recruitment programme to resolve staffing shortages
- Noted by staff and from positive feedback from families that the children/young people supported are gaining in confidence in social situations.
- Promoted services to local 6th form colleges, universities and establishments offering Duke of Edinburgh Award schemes to become actively involved to support for the children/young people, either as volunteers or members of the staff team

Challenges:

- **The Covid-19** pandemic had a huge impact on the services provided during 2021 and 2022 community-based facilities were closed, social distancing was mandatory and even when these restrictions were relaxed, many families were reluctant to send their child as they have compromised immune systems.
- Significant staffing challenges, therefore unable to fulfil planned programme of Saturday Activity Clubs. Due to approximately 50% of staff team working as teaching assistants in special schools and as relief cover for many of their colleagues on sick leave. Staff exhausted and not available for Saturday Activity Clubs. Remainder of staff team study away at universities and are not in the Cambridge area during term time.

7. Kite Trust

About the applicant: Supports the wellbeing and creativity of LGBTQ+ young people in Cambridgeshire, Peterborough and surrounding areas through information, support and groups. Build inclusive communities to tackle inequalities through consultancy, training and education.

Grant awarded: £6,500

Category: LGBTQ Mental Health

Proposals for Grant Funding:

Funding a youth worker's salary and travel expenses for 1 day per week for 1 year to support 50 LGBTQ+ children and young people in South Cambs. Plus £500 Young People's Travel Bursary.

LGBTQ+ young people and their families will be set personal goals and supported to work towards these with 1:1 support. Youth worker will also shape the programme

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and activities of group programmes taking place in the district - developing confidence and skills for use at school and in other community groups. These group activities will be supported by volunteers who receive training and opportunities to develop their skills and knowledge that can be applied more widely in their communities

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Delayed spending the funding until the 1 April 2022 to align with financial year.
- Provided safe spaces for LGBTQ+ youth to take part in activities structured around the five ways to wellbeing in an inclusive environment and countered some of the social barriers they face due to LGBTQ+ phobia and discrimination.
- Between January and December 2022 85 LGBTQ+ young people living in South Cambs were supported – exceeding the objective by 70%
- 40 young people were new and took part in an initial meeting with a youth worker during the year to receive an induction, find out more about the services on offer and discuss their concerns and goals for participation with The Kite Trust. 45 young people had already been inducted to The Kite Trust before 2022 and continued to engage during the year.
- 7 young people received a total of 27 sessions of individual support where they had one-to-one meetings with a youth worker to build self-confidence and resilience and work towards personal goals related to their gender or sexuality e.g., coming out to family or exploring new labels.
- 8 young people participated in residential events during 2022 where they had opportunities to shape their own programme of activities including outdoor activities, taking part in cooking activities, and spending time outdoors. This programme in particular contributed to building self-confidence, resilience, and was beneficial to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 24 young people attended the weekly youth group provision in Cambridge and 4 young people attended the school holiday activity sessions.
- 9 young people took part in swimming sessions for LGBTQ+ youth – providing an inclusive space to participate in this activity which is beneficial to their physical and mental health and wellbeing.
- 5 young people participated in the online group for transgender, non-binary and gender diverse young people, and 4 young people participated in the online group for disabled and neurodiverse LGBTQ+ young people.
- 2 young people joined the steering group for the action research project into LGBTQ+ young people's mental health and 1 young person has joined the young people's panel for planning their own events and initiatives.
- Annual survey in 2022: 96% of young people said they feel safe at The Kite Trust, 93% that they feel a sense of belonging and 93% that they feel valued when accessing their services. 73% of young people said their confidence and self-esteem have increased compared to when they first accessed the services.

Challenges: None documented.

8. Blue Smile

About the applicant: Mental health charity working in schools across Cambridgeshire providing specialist counselling and arts-based therapy to pupils.

Grant awarded: £5,422

Category: Mental Health

Proposals for Grant Funding: To improve the mental wellness of pupils at Histon and Impington Brook Primary School (HIBPS) through a weekly 'Blue Smile Day'.

- Providing a term of Partner School support to address the mental health needs of around 20 children experiencing poor mental health. Will use 1:1 arts therapy for as long as it is needed, enabling the children to develop a trusting relationship with their therapist; effecting long-term change in the child's mental health; supporting improvement in their school attainment and their long-term life prospects.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- In the academic year 2021/2022 individual therapy was provided for **21** children (57% boys and 43% girls and the average age at start of therapy was **9** years old). A total of **384** sessions were provided over the year.
- **9** children finished therapy in 2021/2022, having received an average of **42** sessions each. Support to the remaining **12** children has continued in the academic year of 2022/2023.
- In the referrals, **24%** of cases at HIBPS were recorded as having more than one problem ("complex").
- As a result of therapeutic support, **100%** of the parents and teachers said that their child's individual problems identified at referral had improved, with **50%** having made significant progress (by more than 30%) by the end of therapy.
- Delivered a 'Blue Smile Day' every week in school helped normalise the discussion and focus on good mental health for the whole school community.
- Alongside the 1:1 support programme to 21 children, Blue Smile provided support calls to parents and carers over the school year as part of our remote service offering and as part of their whole school wellbeing approach. Also offered in person support to school staff, providing both parents and carers with support strategies to build up their own resilience.
- **52%** of children had their attendance improved following therapy, demonstrating how Blue Smile's services lead to better school engagement and attendance, which benefits both the classroom dynamics and the school as a whole.
- Although the school contribute approximately a third of the cost of running the service, Blue smile will continue to fundraise to ensure this long-standing partnership is able to be sustained. Will seek to cover the shortfall through a combination of grant funding from their pool of Trusts, Foundations and other grant givers, as well as utilising unrestricted funds through corporate, community and individual donations.

Challenges: None recorded.

9. Cambridge Acorn Jazz

About the applicant:

- The Cambridge Acorn Project offers therapeutic work with children and families connected to trauma, abuse, and financial hardship
- Cambridge Modern Jazz is one of the longest-established and most successful jazz promoting organisations in the UK.

Grant awarded: £5,000

Category: Mental Health

Proposals for Grant Funding:

The Cambridge Acorn Project will be partnering with Cambridge Modern Jazz to create an opportunity for young people experiencing inequality to experience music making and improvisation through three music workshops in three key locations in South Cambridgeshire. The project name is: “Let It Shine” and the workshops will engage with young people who are excluded from, or unable to access, mainstream activities, whether from social or financial exclusion.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Most of the young people were registered with CAMH Centre for Addiction and Mental Health and all had experienced mental health/emotional/trauma/post-Covid issues.
- Workshop participants were selected by the leaders of North Cambridge Academy (NCA) Special Educational Needs Department from years 8, 9,10. The young people were considered interested in music and likely to benefit from an experiential music project.
- The workshops were conducted on three consecutive Tuesdays, February 21,28 and March 7 2023. Cambridge Modern Jazz used ‘Tomorrow’s Warriors’ (a music development collective with over three decades of experience in nurturing the nascent talent of aspiring young musicians to achieve their creative ambitions) to develop and deliver the content.
- A video-recorded community concert for participants friends and families was held after the final workshop sessions on March 7 2023.
- The end-of-project community concert provided an opportunity for local members of the community to come together (NCA staff, friends and family) to share an upbeat concert presented by the young participants and some of the UK’s leading professional jazz musicians.
- Are keen to work with NCA to maintain the legacy of the project to ensure it is not just a one-off but has a secured legacy.
- Throughout the workshop schedule, numerous examples were noted, where the young participants ‘broke out of their shell’ after minimal encouragement from the leaders. many were able to make up their own versions, then gain confidence to solo and ultimately to perform in front of an audience

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- Achieved performances well beyond normal class expectations. Having the professional musicians play alongside them enhanced confidence and thus improved their ability to make music.
- Participants gained a new awareness of the importance of listening to each other.
- Children learnt to improvise freely without the fear of making a mistake. In so doing, they can develop creative skill sets that challenge them to find solutions, new modes of expression and feel successful.
- The two NCA music teachers participated fully in the workshops and concert. They mentioned that they had gained some new ideas and material for extending the concepts around improvisation for use in subsequent classes. In this respect, the workshop succeeded in providing a CPD (Continuing Professional Development) opportunity for staff.
- Comprehensive post-programme impact assessments for the young people participating were conducted by NCA staff. This information is to be used to ensure that benefits are used to best advantage in their ongoing education.

Challenges: None reported.

10. Friends of Histon & Impington Community (HI Friends)

About the applicant: A village charity that aims to help support wellbeing, mobility, sport and recreation for the local community.

Grant awarded: £4,190

Category: Mental Health

Proposals for Grant Funding: To help young people and their peers develop a healthier lifestyle and make their voice heard around wellbeing issues. This will be achieved by providing a team of trained young people within Impington Village College that will act, alongside a team of adults, as mental health champions. This team will be recognised as individuals that:

- Students can approach with mental health matters, for themselves or if they are concerned about someone else.
- Will be visible to their peers at break and lunchtimes and will initiate conversations about mental wellbeing with their peers during these times.
- Conduct wellbeing workshops (supported by an appropriate adult but led by the young person) to share information, tools and techniques as well as opening up conversations around mental wellbeing and breaking down stigma
- Undertake 'outreach' work within local youth groups, uniformed services as well as the local junior football club and other sports groups.
- Will advocate on behalf of their peers regarding what they feel is important to improve young people's mental wellbeing and they will be encouraged to make suggestions and supported in implementing initiatives.

Status: Delayed until after training provided in May 2023

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

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- HI Friends mental wellbeing worker started discussions on project implementation with Impington Village College (IVC) in March 2022. This person is also a counsellor and provides 4 hours counselling a week for young people and runs a weekly wellbeing course as part of the school's non curriculum activity programme. The support to date has taken the form of liaising and working with the school staff and pupils, liaising, learning and working the trainer(s) and coordinating the project.
- Around 30 young people come forward to receive project training thereby making a personal commitment to mental wellbeing and to helping others as Mental Wellbeing Champions. The knowledge obtained could perhaps be life changing and provide a thirst to develop their understanding of mental wellbeing
- 14 young people attended the training in February 2023 to become part of the mental wellbeing champions team. The feedback was excellent with 4 scoring 'good' when rating the training and 10 scoring 'very good'. When asked how able they felt to undertake the MHC role and support their peers following the training, the average score was 8/10. The group are excited about becoming a team within school and the wider community that can break down stigma, educate and support others with their mental well-being.'
- A further 14 young people are scheduled to receive training in May 2023.
- Those who attended the first session have now asked for further practical champion training which should be viewed as a positive and demonstrates the positive impact the programme has had on them.
- The Charity Trustees will be meeting at the end of March and will be asked to make a funding commitment for the MWC project in the school academic year September 2023 to July 2024

Challenges:

- Mental Wellbeing Champion training-original training provider withdrew in July 2022 which was a significant project setback.
- Since the beginning of the Autumn term 2022 the HI Friends Mental wellbeing Worker has been working closely with the Assistant Vice Principal at Impington Village College
- A replacement trainer was sourced and confirmed in October after visiting the school. A group of around 30 young people in Years 9-12 was identified/volunteered to receive the training and the HI Friends Mental wellbeing Worker has worked with them in preparation for the training. An original date for training at the end of January was agreed but had to be postponed and this took place on Tuesday 28th February. The next training session will be in May 2023.

Amount of money spent to date: £2,210 (*Amount unspent* £1,980)

Hi Friends have requested that the remaining grant monies are made available to meet a number of identified priorities:

- The feedback from the first training session was that the students would like some additional practical training on how to be a mental health champion. This

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will be beneficial in ensuring they are and feel capable of supporting their peers safely and effectively in this role.

- Tutor group or assembly presentations on what the MHC programme is and on mental health awareness
- Regular group supervision to occur monthly for the Champions as well as an opportunity for young people being able to speak with HI Friends Mental wellbeing Worker outside of this time if needed
- A forum in the next month with those that attended the training to provide feedback on what they think is needed and how the programme might look in practice from their perspective

11. Romsey Mill

About the applicant: A charity committed to overcoming disadvantage, challenging injustice and promoting social inclusion with young people, children and families. Each year, they work with over 2,000 individuals and families, from Cambridge city and across areas of Cambridgeshire and Peterborough, including:

- Young mothers and fathers
- Young people on the margins of society who may be involved in risky or anti-social behaviour
- Young people struggling to engage fully with education
- Families with pre-school children
- Young people with an autistic spectrum condition.

Grant awarded: £4,158

Category: Mental health

Proposals for Grant Funding: Cambourne Youth Autism Programme (Aspire) to support young people with autism, and their families, in Cambourne through weekly youth groups which provide life and social skills, and promote mental and emotional wellbeing:

- To increase young people with autism's sense of belonging, confidence and social skills by providing a social space where they can be themselves.
- Providing practical support for some of the issues faced by young people with autism such as bullying, low self-esteem, independent living and developing friendships.
- Providing support for families of young people with autism by providing respite.

Status: Achieved objectives.

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- 2 x weekly youth clubs for autistic young people, attended by 26 young people in total.
- Weekly youth groups-several young people expressing that coming to the group is the highlight of their week.

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- There is a strong sense of belonging in the group, with young people sharing how much they care about the friendships they have developed.
- Social skills have been improved with young people voicing how much they have missed friends if they or their friends have been absent from a session, and how they have shown care towards one another. One parent fed back: "My son cannot attend mainstream activities due to his needs. Going to youth club has given him a sense of belonging. He is always excited to go and comes out at the end of the session with a big smile. He is slowly interacting with his peers at youth club and feels he will interact more in time. Youth club has definitely made him more confident and is improving his mental health."
- One young person who was experiencing bullying has since made a friend at school and is feeling happier.
- An increase in self-esteem has been observed-one young person would cry at the group each week if anything was difficult to handle, however, this has now stopped and they expressed they feel more confident in being at the group, and in being assertive in asking what they would like, for instance in taking turns.
- Some of the young people are now meeting each other outside of the group, inviting each other to birthday parties, and developing their friendships.
- By providing practical support for independent living, a young person arrived on public transport for the first time.
- Families of autistic young people were supported through receiving respite every week during term time for one and a half hours, while the group was running. A recent survey showed that most young people fed back that the group helps them manage their family relationships.
- Young people have started to take their own initiative in starting games without prompts or help from youth workers. This has been excellent to see, as many of the young people had not attended another social group before Aspire, and it has been encouraging to see how they have become comfortable over time in this safe space.
- One young person was assisted in finding a work experience placement in Cambridge, where he gained valuable skills and experience. The long-term effect of such placements is hoped to help keep young people in education, employment or training.
- Young people felt they were able to talk about issues they were facing and build friendships, which led to an increase in confidence.
- Youth workers say that the young people all leave the group happy each week, no matter how they felt when they arrived.
- Through the group an increase in confidence has been found.
- Resilience has also been seen in the young people, for example, through managing to take turns in playing games, whereas previously this may have caused a lot of anxiety and stress. One parent fed back: "H feels like he has somewhere where he belongs and that the staff understand what drives his

behaviour is often anxiety. He feels safe there knowing he is understood and that if he has a bad week with the kids in his class at school there are other people he can hang out with every Wednesday. He's aware he is excluded or not invited to other social events by his peers, so he loves being part of a club for people 'like him'."

- Two volunteers over the last year were young people. One is a sixth form college student, and the other young person was volunteering as part of the Duke of Edinburgh Award. Despite this being the initial reason for volunteering, she loved being part of the group so much that she continued to volunteer beyond the requirement for DofE.

Challenges: None reported.

12. Cambridge Rare Disease Network

About the applicant: A charity building a regional community to address the unmet needs of those living with rare conditions, their families, and the professionals who work with them

Grant awarded: £7,500

Category: Mental Health

Proposals for Grant Funding: Unique Feet: To build a supportive community for children and families affected by rare diseases to help reduce isolation, build resilience and help improve their physical and mental well-being.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- The children, young people and their families involved in Unique Feet were the inspiration behind the development of the group's activities and initiatives.
- Regular opportunities provided for families to share their feedback, ideas and wishes through accessible and age/ability appropriate Google Form surveys, focus groups and detailed interviews.
- Parents are also building really positive relationships and are communicating with each other to offer support and share experiences via a WhatsApp group. Several of the parents are helping in activity leader roles, have offered to do some community fundraising in the future and many are putting forward ideas for activities for the group for the future.
- Each activity had a community member lead person and the older members of the group also helped with leadership roles within the activities to allow them a chance to develop their independence skills in a caring supportive environment.
- Younger children and those new to the group were buddied with older more experienced members so that they can develop trust and confidence.
- Older members of the group developed their own self confidence by being given opportunities to support other less confident members and being offered a chance to volunteer within the group and the charities broader activities as a Unique Feet ambassador.

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- All children and young people were given the opportunity to take part in a range of fully accessible activities which enabled them to be increasingly active, learn new skills and be increasingly proud of themselves and their achievements.
- Families interviewed stated that being part of Unique Feet has considerably boosted their child's confidence. In particular, "being able to get comfortable with other children" and showing excitement at joining in with activities were highlighted as key achievements. The children are keen to celebrate their achievements within the group and talk about them outside the group, such as within school projects.
- Overall, interviewees agree that Unique Feet has given their children a space to participate in activities they can be proud of. For many children in the group, Unique Feet has provided an opportunity to try out new hobbies. Some of these include skiing, horse riding and climbing. Most said that Unique Feet allowed them to participate in activities that would otherwise be inaccessible due to their different needs and abilities.
- Young people and community members were given an equal voice within the group and be offered opportunities to take on responsibilities and roles. This allowed them to feel a valued part of the community, encouraging them to play an active role in developing ideas and delivering these. By allowing the group to take ownership the group has grown and flourishes.
- Members are keen to share with others the benefits they have gained from being part of the community and their personal invitations to others to get involved continues to be the main source of organic new memberships. A willingness to engage in social media activity to help share their experiences is also bringing in new members.
- Families affected by rare conditions have said that they feel isolated, misunderstood, mentally fatigued and unsupported. Unique Feet provided a range of physical activities which were accessible whatever the child's physical or learning needs. They also wanted to be outdoors in nature, with animals and trying new things they feel excluded from at the moment. In response outdoor activities were provided in local gardens, assisted horse riding, 'You Can Bike Too', climbing and snow sports, tennis, dance and activity days at outdoor pursuits centres. In addition, the community will have the opportunity to do some growing and gardening activities, cooking, arts and crafts and take part in social gatherings.
- They are also learning the huge impact that being a sibling of a child with a rare condition can have – endless trips to hospitals and clinics, maybe having to take second place to their siblings more pressing medical needs. These siblings are young carers and we are learning that they need support equally. The community group welcomes siblings to all activities too and they are really benefitting from having some opportunities to be with their sibling and do an activity together while also building friendships with other siblings like themselves who face similar challenges, they visibly relax and uncoil and are themselves, children, for a while

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- The group developed a performance which they showcased on stage at the Guildhall to a standing ovation at our RAREfest event in December 2022 to showcase to a public audience and help raise awareness about rare diseases.

Challenges: None recorded.

13. Shelford and Stapleford Youth Initiative (SSYI)

About the applicant: To promote the physical, mental, educational, social and spiritual welfare of young people in the villages of Great Shelford, Little Shelford and Stapleford, and other neighbouring villages in South Cambridgeshire, fully supporting equality, diversity and inclusion, by the provision and delivery of youth services and community facilities and the promotion of community projects, in accordance with Christian principles.

Grant awarded: £7,000

Category: Non-specific

Proposals for Grant Funding: Expanding the work of the SSYI amongst young people resident in Sawston. To provide a safe space for social interaction; with direct support to hard-to-reach vulnerable young people (11-18 years old) to build trust, confidence and overcome behavioural issues.

Planning of specific activities will be done jointly with the young people. Young leaders can take on more responsible roles with the support of the professional youth workers.

Status: Achieved objectives

Outputs/outcomes of funding:

- Activity planning was done with the young people as intended. Some of them took on tasks e.g., helping lead specific activities like the outdoor sports sessions
- The core of their work is to build self-confidence and social skills amongst young people. This has been achieved by group activities (sports, games, cooking, trips...) as well as more focused 1:1 (with 7 young people) and mentoring work (4 referred by the village college)
- The work in Sawston has acted as a magnet for young people to investigate and enquire. Many have subsequently joined in SSYI's existing provision. Also, older community members joined as volunteers to help out.
- Visited the local primary schools to share the opportunities to join in the project and engage with them in that difficult transition time between primary and secondary school.
- Weekly informal open access evening. Indoor and outdoor (Thursdays) Over 100 young people, resident in Sawston, participate in these activities. This number is growing every week and has led to an increase in other SSYI activities as the Sawston young people want to get more involved. As well as more 1:1 sessions for those needing more in-depth support.
- As well as the weekly "open-access" sessions, the project included:
 - Weekly outdoor after school sports on the recreation ground

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- Weekly session with activities & cooking food targeted at boys.

Young people also encouraged to take part in the wider community activities e.g., village “feasts”, “weekends”, helping with the SSYI presence and interacting with the wider public, and the annual Sawston fun run.

- A significant proportion of the young people are from disadvantaged family backgrounds and face significant challenges in their lives. These challenges combined with the inherent difficulties of transitioning from a child to adult and natural teenage anxieties can result in particular vulnerabilities and risk-taking behaviour. Activities, particularly the 1:1 support, mentoring, and targeted groups addressed these areas, and skilled youth workers are trained to identify and support young people through these issues.
- Are part of the referrals network with social services, counselling / mental health provision etc when more specific help is needed
- The Parish council are actively engaging with SSYI to plan investments and facilities for the young people at the recreation grounds

Challenges: None recorded.