

Service Support Grants to the Voluntary Sector 2023-2026 Q1 & Q2 update

Name of organisation: Citizens Advice

Location of organisation: Cambridge, North Hertfordshire, West Suffolk and Uttlesford

Amount of funding awarded: £100,000 per annum

Theme: Advice Services

Parishes supported: All of district

Key Aims: To develop, publicise and deliver advice services to South Cambridgeshire residents in a manner which takes account of the rural nature of the district, with delivery via outreach wherever possible.

Key Deliverables:

1. To provide an accessible advice service to South Cambridgeshire residents which is free at the point of use.
2. To offer (a) named contact person/s for the Council for questions relating to the deliverables in this agreement, and general enquiries.

Specific Measures:

- To deliver general information, advice and advocacy on rights and responsibilities in all enquiry areas including debt, benefits, employment, housing, legal, and relationship and family matters.
- To provide specialist advice and advocacy to those who are disabled, have caring responsibilities, to families with disabled children and those who would otherwise be unable to live independently.
- To deliver advice by telephone, email, video and in person from main offices and at outreach locations (including, but not limited to Royston, Melbourn, and Bar Hill)
- To rebuild and / or establish face to face services at outreach locations (including Community Hubs and foodbanks), to include the following (and / or others by mutual agreement with the Council):
 - Longstanton
 - Willingham
 - Cambourne
 - Bassingbourn
 - Orchard Park
 - Sawston
 - Linton
- To log outcomes from the advice given, recording the value of income gained (from successful benefit claims and appeals, and debt management), problems resolved, and homelessness prevented.
- To measure and record client satisfaction with the services provided and record customer complaints.
- To monitor, on a monthly basis, the quality of advice given, to ensure the advice consistently meets the criteria set out by the Citizens Advice's Quality of Advice Assessment.
- In each funded year, to submit reports for Quarters 1 and 2 by the end of October, and annual reports by the end of April. These reports are to include the following information for South Cambridgeshire residents accessing Citizens Advice Services in the reporting period:
 - Breakdown showing the number of clients dealt with in the organisations in the consortium
 - Number of clients
 - Number of advice issues
 - Number of sessions
 - Total income gains for clients
 - Number of cases where homelessness prevented
 - Number of practical problems resolved
 - Number of clients with improved mental health

- Issues dealt with by:
 - category
 - channel (in person (office-based)/ in person (outreach)/ phone/ email)
 - age of client
 - gender of client
 - health status of client
 - ethnicity of client
- Category of issue data for age groups:
 - under 25s
 - 25-64
 - 65+
- Map indicating relative concentrations of Citizens Advice clients by ward
- Map showing index of multiple deprivation (IMD) by ward
- Financial outcomes
- Client case studies
- Selection of client feedback

Update for Q1 and Q2:

Summary:

- Number of SCDC people helped - **2,910** (2,575 last half year)
- Amount of work generated by clients - times seen (most need more than one session to get to point of resolution) - **5,341** (4,682 last Half year)
- Questions answered/ advice issues - **6,002** (5,597 last half year) Of those questions asked the top topic areas:
 - Welfare rights - **2,192**
 - Debt and money advice - **937**
 - Housing - **648**
- Total income gains and debts written off for clients: **£3,311,987** (£2,662,467 for the whole year)

North Herts:

- Have recruited a new Specialist Adviser for South Cambridgeshire who carries out generalist advice work at the Melbourn Hub every Wednesday, and debt and benefits specialist advice for all South Cambridgeshire residents.
- Current Service is face to face on a Wednesday at Melbourn Hub and on Mondays and Wednesday at their Royston outreach. Appointments can be carried out face to face at these locations, by telephone, or by video call.

West Suffolk:

- Have secured funding to help male Probationers on Community Orders, Suspended Sentence Orders, Supervision Orders, Licence and Post-Sentence Supervision with the Bury St Edmunds Probation Office. Support will include opening and manging back accounts, budgeting, managing debts, maximising income, and applying for benefits.
- Have secured funding to continue delivering advice and casework to families affected by Multiple Sclerosis in South Cambridgeshire. In the first six months of 2023/24 they have assisted 7 people with applications for Personal Independence Payments.
- On 19th September their operations Manager, gave a talk about Citizens Advice to the Love Abington group at the new community hub. She talked about how to access their service and the projects available to clients. The organiser was particularly interested in the MS Project as there was someone affected by MS in the village she thought could benefit from their work.

Cambridge:

- Continues to offer outreach to clients in Cambourne, Bar Hill and Northstowe. They work with the food bank, and they are looking to extend their social supermarket offer.
- Have extended their online services to localised webchat and also provided an add on to their website that has an app to make it accessible to people with disabilities and language issues.

Case Studies:

- **Client A** had moved house and needed help to check their entitlement to benefits. An appointment was made for face-to-face advice as Client A is partially sighted and did not feel able to access information independently. A benefits check was completed which indicated that the Client A was entitled to claim Housing Benefit and Council Tax Support. Client A was supported to make the claims, and these were successful. Client A's income was increased by £121.60 per week.
- **Client B** was self-employed running his own business with his wife. He was finding it increasingly difficult to work due to his Multiple Sclerosis, sleep apnoea, diabetes, anxiety, and depression. He needed help to complete the medical assessment form for Employment and Support Allowance. He was already in receipt of both the Daily Living and Mobility components of Personal Independence Payments. He was helped to complete the form and he is now in receipt of the benefit.
- **Client C** is in her 50s and is a single mother with two teenage children. She suffers from long term physical and mental health problems. As a result, the family finances had become extremely precarious, and she was heavily in debt. She was initially referred to Cambridge Citizens Advice by the Cambridgeshire Family Safeguarding Project as she needed help with pursuing her appeal against the decision not to award her an increase in Personal Independence Payment (PIP) to reflect her poor health. **Client C** also needed support with challenging the reductions made in her Universal Credit (UC) monthly payments in relation to an overpayment that she believed was based on an incorrect assessment of her recent earnings. In addition, she was seeking help with pursuing unpaid child maintenance by her former partner.

The adviser began working with **Client C** to build up an accurate picture of her financial situation. As a result, it became clear that she was £500 in deficit at the end of each month, taking into account debt repayments she was making to her brother, her credit card company and the council. The adviser suggested that once she had received specialist debt advice, she could look at prioritising certain repayments, as this financial burden was clearly unsustainable. He offered her initial help in the form of applying for a Tesco voucher via Cambridge Aid. He also showed her ways to reduce her broadband charges. **Client C** explained that she was aware that she was spending too heavily on alcohol and tobacco, but her consumption has been exacerbated by her ongoing health issues and money-related stress.

The adviser continued to help her prepare her application for Mandatory Consideration of the DWP's decision not to award her additional elements of Personal Independence Payment (PIP). If her appeal proved successful, this would lead to a significant increase in her monthly income. He ensured that she had submitted all the necessary paperwork and filled the forms in correctly. On looking into the issue of **Client C**'s UC overpayment, he was able to discover that she had not earned as much as the DWP had calculated and the overpayment was therefore much less than the DWP had told her that she must repay. The advisor suggested she contact her work coach at the DWP to draw their attention to this error so it could be swiftly rectified.

Following the PIP Mandatory Consideration hearing, **Client C** was much relieved to be able to report to the adviser that her appeal had been successful. She had been awarded enhanced rate for both daily living and mobility elements, totalling almost £9,000 a year and would also receive £3,000 as a back payment. After working with **Client C** over a period of

two months, the advisor was finally able to send her a revised budget sheet confirming that this new PIP award would turn her monthly deficit of £500 into £470 available income after her main spend. He explained that she could now afford to keep up the level of debt repayments she was making. There was good news also on the UC overpayment. Having re-contacted the DWP to report the findings as to her true level of earnings, her current debt had been reduced to £240.

As a result of the specialist help and support **Client C** has received, her overall finances have been transformed from a crisis point into a positive state. Having played a key role in helping her take action to reduce her anxieties over money, the adviser assured her that she could re-contact the helpline at any point for further support with her pursuit of the missing child maintenance payments.

Uttlesford Case studies:

- **Client D** was aged over 80. He had multiple physical and sensory disabilities and did not know how to use a computer. He was referred by the council for benefits advice as their rent had recently increased, and he and his wife were finding it hard to meet their expenses.
Our adviser carried out a benefits check, exploring eligibility for Attendance Allowance, Pension Credit and Housing Benefit. It was identified that they would be entitled to both Housing Benefit and Council tax Support and were each helped to make an application. **Client D** and his wife were also referred to the Warm Homes team for advice on reducing their utility bills. Finally, the disability benefits team helped **Client D** claim Attendance Allowance. He was awarded the higher rate - £101.75 a week. This additional income has enabled them to afford some help in the home and means they can afford to attend some social events, so they do not feel so isolated.
- **Client E** was concerned about the future care of her adult son, who has learning difficulties and wanted to explore the options open to them. The Son currently lives with his parents. He could not work but was not claiming any benefits. A benefits check was undertaken and identified that the son would be able to claim Universal Credit. They were then supported to help make the claim.
The Son was referred to the Disability Benefits Team for help to make a claim for Personal Independence Payment. They believed that Mark would be entitled to the Higher Rate, which would increase his income by 101.75 a week.
The adviser also discussed legal issues - including lasting power of attorney and provided a list of local Solicitors who were willing to provide a free initial appointment.
- Uttlesford Frontline referred **Client F** to a number of support services locally. She was very pleased to have been able to explore her options and felt comforted that she had a better understanding of her next steps. **Client F** was assured that she could return for further advice should she need it in the future.

Quotes:

- On behalf of Love Abington and everyone who came to the Autumn Hub yesterday, I would like to thank you very much for your inspiring presentation about the work of the Citizens Advice Bureau and for answering our questions and meeting people over tea. I personally was very pleased to meet you. You are an excellent speaker and held your audience in the palm of your hand. I was struck by your passion and enthusiasm for the charity's work, and I am certain there will be more donations, as well as enquiries I am afraid, coming your way.
- I am going to visit and hand out some of your leaflets to people who would benefit from your services but were unable to come yesterday. Several of our villagers are housebound but they want to stay connected and they will be grateful to know that there is help out there.

Officer Comments: **On track.**

With regards to 'outreach', the agreement provided suggestions for 7 locations where this might be best placed – to be negotiated if they could propose alternatives. Through discussions with their CEO, we have been informed that they are already operating remotely in some places (Melbourn and Bar Hill use our funding; Orchard Park uses our funding for our residents but is based from the Meadows Centre in City). They are also delivering advice in other locations, but this is either funded by another organisation or is limited to foodbank users and not the wider community.

We have agreed that they will work with us to devise a plan for outreach in the 6 locations below (with Sawston continuing, funded by the John Huntingdon's Charity), by way of either in person sessions or online (with a person on a screen). Citizens Advice have access to hardware/software that allows someone to see their advisor, who can take control of the screen and guide them through the online session. But these 'computers' (different from their old kiosks) will need to be located in places that have staff / volunteers who are willing to support access, and in locations where confidentiality can be assured. This might be a library, community hub, or another suitable community facility where there is a side room.

- **Bar Hill** - in person
- **Melbourn** - in person
- **Northstowe** - possibly using the temporary facility to host a device for remote sessions or in person as an extension to the foodbank, for ALL residents
- **Cambourne** – possibly based at the Hub and to be hosted / supported by Hope CIC, again, with users broader than foodbank
- **Orchard Park** – an extension to the Meadows, potentially from the Hub once a month
- **Linton** - to be set up when the Community Hub starts, location to be confirmed such as the library

Another meeting will be organised for mid Jan 2024 to monitor progress.

Name of organisation: **Home-Start Royston, Buntingford & South Cambridgeshire Home-Start Cambridgeshire**

Location of organisation: Meldreth

Amount of funding awarded: £13,711 per annum

Theme: Mental Health and Wellbeing

Parishes supported: All

Key Aims: To provide early-intervention, volunteer-led home visiting support and specialised family support groups for vulnerable at-risk families struggling with diverse and often complex issues

Key Deliverables:

- To deliver a project to improve the mental wellbeing of 10 families in South Cambridgeshire by:
 - Reducing pressure that leads to stress & poor mental health
 - Reducing parental isolation by facilitating involvement in local groups/services
 - Improving children's physical, social & emotional development
 - Improving self-esteem to enable more positive relationships
 - Improving children's behaviour, due to more consistent parenting.
- To report on the outcomes of the programme using case studies (anonymised) wherever possible to demonstrate the impact of the support given and methodology used.

Specific Measures:

- Weekly meetings (for approximately nine months) between each family and a highly trained volunteer.
- At each visit, the volunteer will ask each family to complete a form, using a five-point scale to identify how well they feel they are coping.

- To monitor the progress of the services provided at The Initial Visit, The Review Visit(s) and The Exit Visit.
- Monitoring of the success of the project using Exit Forms
- To deliver a volunteer training event

Update for Q1 and Q2:

- Since April 2023 volunteers have accessed safeguarding refresher training, a peer support session for home visiting volunteers, perinatal & infant mental health training and happy healthy homes training (eating, finance and sleeping for families). Training is also planned for Spring 2024.
- Have started to provide support to 10 families. The focus of the support has been to address the issues as per the key deliverables above. This has been done by matching each family with a well-trained volunteer, who has made weekly visits to the family in their own home. The visits have been planned to meet the needs identified by each family themselves, focusing on the five outcomes listed above.
- One family referred were living in a safehouse, but they could not be matched with a volunteer until a fuller understanding of their situation was provided and a robust risk assessment undertaken which included liaising with other professionals. A co-ordinator provided some interim support for this family until they were matched with a volunteer.
- Of the 10 families, three had complex needs, including two with Early Help Assessments in place and one with a Child Protection Plan in place. This has required additional time from the co-ordinators who have liaised with other professionals more frequently, attended multi professional meetings and where applicable provide written reports.
- Families have been referred by a variety of different professionals including Family Worker, Early Help Hub, SEND specialist practitioner, peri-natal mental health practitioner, CBT and EMDR Therapist, Preschool, Health Visitor and three families referred themselves.
- Families referred into the project live in postcode areas including SG8, CB23, CB24 and CB25
- At six months into this project support has been completed for four families, is ongoing for another five and one family has received an initial visit from a member of staff and is waiting to be matched with a volunteer.

The table below summarises the challenges that the families supported through this project have been experiencing when they have been referred to Home-Start. It also lists the actions undertaken by volunteers to support the families to start managing some of these challenges:

Presenting problems	Actions carried out by volunteer
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mental Health for parents including anxiety, depression, eating disorder • Mental health for children • Isolation • Low self-esteem Domestic abuse • Loneliness • Family relations between adults at home Lack of time/connection between parents and children • Lack of routines around mealtimes • Lack of meal planning Lack of routines around bedtime • Arriving late to preschool • Not enrolled in preschool • Children’s speech and language • Inappropriate housing • Bereavement 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Listening and allowing parents to offload • Emotional support Playing with children – bringing toys and activities • Reading and singing with children • Signposting to other services for more specialist MH support • Finding out about local groups and attending together • Finding out about other local services – parks, libraries and attending together • Adapting Park visits for a child with a disability so they can access some play equipment safely • Support to carry out physio exercises and build into routine of day • Practicing behaviour management strategies outside of the home

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financial challenges • Lack of confidence to do school run • No time for parental self-care • No time to do important physiotherapy exercises • Visiting parks and being outside • Ideas to help play and development at home • Local groups • Difficulty accessing online Mental Health therapy | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supporting letters around potential house move • Finding out about and visiting local preschools • Positive encouragement highlighting things that are going well • Planning meals and cooking together • Eating together • Helping to set up regular bedtime routines Time with child so Mum can bathe, make calls, access online support • Support to clear and tidy garden • Support to access foodbank and other support services • Volunteer engaging with child enabling parent to access online therapy sessions |
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A list of the outcomes seen for the families who are receiving support:

Outcomes for parents

- Improved self confidence
- Better mental health
- Stronger relationships between care givers in the family home
- Strengthened relationships between children and parents
- More established support networks both peer support and through support from other organisations and agencies
- More confidence to know where to go and how to ask for additional help
- More confidence to engage with other professionals
- More consistent and regular routines for eating
- Developed skills in meal planning and eating together
- Ability to independently access other groups or activities/parks and play spaces
- Better management of household tasks so more time to focus on the children
Improved morning routines

Outcomes for children

- Improved speech
- Better ability to articulate needs and emotions
- More ready to start at a preschool setting
- Arriving at school on time and in a better position to learn
- Stronger attachment, more confidence to engage with other adults
- More able to engage and play with other children
- Improved relationships with main care givers
- More opportunities to play outside and at the park, improving physical health
Improved fine motor skills
- Less tired
- Happier to try new foods and access to a healthier more regular diet

Quotes:

- *“You have made it possible to do my counselling and get the MH support I need”*
- *“[My child] enjoyed playing games and loves her coming to visit”*
- *“Had a great morning with my volunteer), I will really miss her as she has become someone I look forward to seeing every week to have a chat. She has been a fantastic help and a good friend to listen or socialise with and to push me even on days when I don't want to”*
- *“(Volunteer) respects me a lot which builds my confidence and self-esteem”*
- *“I look forward to it, she makes me feel normal, like she can relate to me and understands what I say”*
- *“I trust her (volunteer) literally so much, immensely helpful”*

- *“Through Home-Start’s support I feel I am finally returning to who I used to be. It’s been such a long time of not feeling like myself I hardly knew who I was any more but now I recognize myself and I am regaining parts of myself I thought I had lost”*
- *“Having someone who believes in me has given me confidence and I’ve seen how this has benefited my children”*

Officer Comments: On track

Name of organisation: The Cambridge Council For Voluntary Service (CCVS)

Location of organisation: Cambridge

Amount of funding awarded: £11,400 per annum

Theme: Support for the voluntary and community sector

Parishes supported: All

Key Aims: To provide independent support services to community and voluntary groups in South Cambridgeshire; to support and advice parish councils on community related projects and advice on non-statutory governance matters; to provide representation on the behalf of the Voluntary and Community Sector in South Cambridgeshire.

Key Deliverables:

- Support for the voluntary and community sector by providing practical support and training to build knowledge and confidence of those involved with community groups and charities.
- Evidence of all specific measures to be provided as part of monitoring reports to the Council. Details to include numbers of groups supported and the outcomes achieved through that support.
- Support for the voluntary and community sector by encouraging individuals and groups working in and across communities to collaborate and build relationships
- Support for the voluntary and community sector by amplifying the voices of communities and champion the work of the groups working in them
- Support for the voluntary and community sector by ensuring Communication methods are fit for purpose and meet the needs of South Cambridgeshire members, the wider Voluntary and Community Sector and other stakeholders.

Specific Measures:

- Provide advice on all aspects of setting up, running, and funding groups
 - 1-2-1 support by video, email, on the phone or in person
 - The updating and maintenance of existing good practice guides and website pages
 - To support emerging topics and share best practice that will impact how organisations should be managed or operate
 - Help with identifying funding and 1-2-1 assisted funding searches
 - Help with developing funding/fundraising strategies and targeting funding as well as support for all aspects of financial management to small community and voluntary organisations to ensure they meet their legal requirements
 - A critical friend service to analyse and strengthen groups’ funding bids
 - Help with all aspects of setting up a new group, including support with Governance, quality assurance and business/strategic planning
 - Dispute resolution to help groups overcome issues they are facing
 - Ensure groups are aware of their responsibilities, their legal requirements and good practice.
- Provide high quality training and events to give the people working and volunteering in groups the skills and knowledge they need. This will include:
 - Four webinars or training workshops. Each will also include extensive handouts and notes and will be linked to a blog or video guide
 - The offer of bespoke training and consultancy to groups (at a reduced cost) to help them identify and resolve specific issues.
- Run two South Cambridgeshire specific networking sessions (and monitor the format of the delivery of these sessions going forwards- either online, in person, or as a hybrid of the two)

- Continue to invite South Cambridgeshire groups to other networking events.
- Work with groups of organisations who want to develop new networks and act as advisor and provide banking support as needed.
- Attend SCDC meetings as the representative of the community sector to promote the work of organisations and ensure the sector is considered in policy and project development
- Use CCVS communications to share the successes of the sector and to enable the sector to share its own stories and achievements.
- Promote the sector via traditional and social medias
- Signpost those looking for sector input and stories to groups with the skills, understanding, and knowledge to best represent the sector/ specialism
- Develop a process for collecting and sharing the sector's issues and views
- Work with staff at SCDC to identify appropriate meetings that require a VCS input, with attendance at up to six South Cambridgeshire District Council events/forums if requested by South Cambridgeshire District Council to provide advice, information and support to local community and voluntary organisations (and/or parish councils if relevant to the work of CCVS)
- Provide appropriate sector analytics and data. This will include:
 - An annual survey
 - Dissemination of national findings.
- Electronic newsletters sent to all contacts. These are currently produced monthly but we will continue to monitor if this is what groups want
- Four electronic newsletters to local councillors and the clerks of parish councils to promote CCVS and the work of the sector
- A website that is regularly updated with news, information and good practice guides
- A blog that allows us to share information and opinion from CCVS and others with an interest in the work of the sector
- Social media updates and promotion
- Work with traditional press to promote the sector
- Work with other publications to promote the sector
- Work with communications teams from local and national partners to help share their messages and news.

Update for Q1 and Q2:

Provide advice on all aspects of setting up, running, and funding groups:

- Since the start of April, CCVS have supported over 189 organisations, providing at least 416 hours of support via video, phone, or in-person on all element of running a small charity.
- Provided tailored 1-2-1 support on at least 49 occasions, on setting up a group and provided support on fundraising at least 46 times.
- Continued to act as a critical friend when working on grant applications and help groups to consider ways to diversify income.
- Supported groups to utilise Support Cambridgeshire 4 Community to find funds that may support their work and sharing these opportunities directly via email when appropriate, through the Fundraisers Network Slack group and via their communications channels.
- Provided and created resources that small community groups can refer to. This includes on-demand training, as previously mentioned, as well as blogs, that help to summary key information and best practice. All training and events are accompanied by a slide pack, that acts as a resource as well as additional sources of information.
- The on-demand training that is being shared under Support Cambridgeshire is created to support the set-up of new groups. With topics covering:
 - First steps in setting up your community group.
 - Is your group a charity?
 - What structure will you choose?

- Writing and amending your governing document
- Insurance for community groups
- Opening a bank account and setting up financial controls
- Business planning
- What do trustees have to do?

These sessions have had 158 viewing to date. CCVS believe there is potential to share these further to ensure more groups are aware of them and are looking to do this over the next six months, whilst also adding some new recordings on topics such as the roles within a committee.

Training and events:

Delivered:

- 28 June. Successful Fundraising for Voluntary Groups (SCDC). 18 bookings.
- 22 Sept. Introduction to Safeguarding. 18 bookings. Average star rating for overall quality of course, 5 out of 5.

Scheduled:

- 9th Nov. Health & Safety live online training.
- 20th Feb 2024. Data Protection live online training.

- All training sessions are accompanied by supportive resources and further support.
- In addition to these training sessions, CCVS have delivered 10 further training sessions or webinars that have also been available to South Cambridgeshire groups. In total-380 bookings were made for these sessions.
- Responses have been collected from those attending training by sending out a survey after the event. The return rate is low but from those received CCVS received an average score of 4.45 out of 5 for the overall quality of the course.
- Continue to offer bespoke training and consultancy to groups.
- Continue to invite South Cambridgeshire groups to their Volunteer Managers Network, Fundraisers Network and the 3C'S meeting (Communications Network). During this time frame they have delivered 8 online network events, with a total of 150 bookings. The network events continue to be well attended, including guest speakers as well as opportunities for attendees to share learning and get peer support for their roles.
- In addition to these networks, South Cambridgeshire groups are also invited to additional events delivered through CCVS' partnership with Hunts Forum and Support Cambridgeshire.

Topics covered:

- Volunteer Managers Network have discussed the Vision for Volunteering, sharing outcome of the Time Well Spent research, and improving EDI in recruitment.
- Fundraisers Network have discussion corporate fundraising, donor retention, options for databases and grant funding.
- 3 C's have discussed, accessible communications, well-being, and social media.

Work with groups of organisations who want to develop new networks and act as advisor and provide banking support as needed:

- CCVS continue to offer this support as needed and have provided banking support to the Northstowe Community Partnership as it closed, and then passed on funds to the Northstowe Community Hub to be used in accordance with the original grants.

Attend SCDC meetings as the representative of the community sector to promote the work of organisations and ensure the sector is considered in policy and project development:

- Have continued to attend the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) and associated meetings.

- Have attended a communications and community team meeting to promote CCVS' work.
- Presented at Zero Carbon Communities Grant webinar on 26 April and attended the Zero Carbon Communities Green Connect on 27 Sept.
- Have continued to attend place-based groups around Northstowe where they can add value and where there are links with volunteering work. Also fed into the conversations on the design of the new community facility.
- Are happy to attend other meetings and events as requested
- There has been no call to run two South Cambridgeshire specific networking sessions given the increased networking sessions delivered by SCDC but are still able to provide this, if required.

Use CCVS communications to share the successes of the sector and to enable the sector to share its own stories and achievements:

- Have continued to improve and adapt their delivery to ensure they are meeting the needs of our local voluntary organisations, and the communities in which they live and serve, as well as being mindful of the need to share important national VCSE updates.
- The monthly full newsletters are their main, and most important way to share news and reach and they continue to achieve open rates beyond average. ([Campaign monitor](#) latest report states that the 2022 rate for non-profits was 26.6%. CCVS has achieved for 35.5% for this 6-month period).
- CCVS' subject specific newsflash bulletins continue to be very well received, with an open rate well above average of 44.2%.
- To date they have sent 1 councillor email, with 199 subscribers and open rate of 37.4%.
- They have also sent 1 parish clerk email, with 107 subscribers and an open rate of 30.8%.
- The CCVS website remains an important place to share information and resources. They recognise that their current website is no longer fit for purpose, therefore during this 6-month period they have undertaken steps to appoint a new website developer and begin the process of obtaining a new website. Their aim is to have a much more up to date, easy to navigate, fully accessible site, which will have features to help streamline our work.
- The whole team is involved in writing and producing blogs, especially to follow training or workshops to reinforce what was shared, or about particular areas of interest. These are published on our blog site, and shared on their website, newsletter, and on social media. 9 blogs have been published in this 6-month period.
- Have continued to deliver social media through LinkedIn, Twitter, Facebook and Instagram. The total CCVS audience for **all platforms is 6085**. This is an **increase of 244** since the last 6-month period.
- Have continued to keep contact with local radio and press and will be utilising these contacts to promote their volunteer fair, as the audience for this will be the general public.
- The CCVS Communications Officer attends NAVCA network meetings for Communications Workers to develop understanding and news that is relevant to the sector.
- Have published the latest, State of the Sector 2023 report and will collecting new data in January 2024. Their annual State of the Sector Survey aims to capture a snapshot of the voluntary and community sector in Cambridgeshire, along with the views of the people on the frontline, delivering services to local communities. This was conducted in February and March 2023 when we were in the heart of the cost-of-living crisis. This new crisis replaced the crisis of the pandemic, and they have continued to see the sector needing to be there for local communities and how the sector has become the essential safety net for many. They have looked at:
 - Section 1 - Issues and barriers facing groups.

- Section 2 - What services groups want.
- Section 3 – About the groups responding.
- As well as the survey we have analysed data from the charity commission and 360 Giving for organisations in Cambridgeshire (this work was carried out by David Kane <https://dkane.net>)
- Section 4 – Analysis of the sector from open data sources.

This work helps C CVS to understand the local sector and the issues it is facing and gives vital information about the type of support that is most needed, to identify how they are doing and how they can improve their offer and services.

The survey results show that there is uncertainty about the future and that people are less optimistic than in the previous year. Yet we can see groups continuing to deliver and looking at how they adapt and develop in order keep delivering.

C CVS and Hunts Forum shared the outcome of this research through newsflashes to their mailing lists and through publishing news articles, blogs and sharing via our social media platforms. It has also informed their planning for 2024-25.

- Are continuing to share national research through C CVS networks and communications channels.

Feedback on events and training:

- *“An excellent session, would really recommend and will be recommending to the rest of our trustees.”*
- *“Much better understanding of what the various terms mean and how to use them. Learning about the various models was very useful as was discussion about how we could use these to clarify our strategy. I feel more confident about how we might go about demonstrating value for money to funders.”*
- *“I’ve learnt lots that will help me as I continue to recruit volunteers, and lots to help me encourage them to remain content in their roles.”*
- *“It was the perfect balance of engagement, facilitator talk. I learnt a lot”*
- *“It was really great with lots of helpful ideas and links.”*
- *“Meeting was interesting and useful”*
- *“A brilliant session!”*

Feedback on development support provided:

- *“I asked a question about funding available for CIC vs CIOs and XX not only did some research for me but also provided me with lots of additional information. I have now met one of the bilingual schools for whom this is of interest (they need to choose a framework) and they were very happy with what I could pass on.”*
- *“Thank you so much for this detailed reply, and all the help as we navigate the process of formalising our group. The videos on your site are particularly helpful.”*
- *“Trust me you are a fantastic bunch, and you help charities to achieve big things all the time. I personally would be lost without your guidance, knowledge and patience. Thank you for your unwavering support. You always seek to improve and look to tailor your provision of services to charities. We think you are great.”*
- *“It was so useful to chat through the situation with you ...we needed your experience to help us make the right decision”*

Feedback on C CVS communications:

- *“That was a fab read – personally, I love C CVS communications, and it was fascinating finding out more about the personalities in your team! I always learn something and there is usually something very useful to share with our team.”*

Case Study:

C CVS supported the trustees from Northstowe Hub with the process of refining its charitable purpose, developing a business plan, and ultimately registering as a Foundation Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO).

In October 2022 CCVS met with a group of Northstowe residents who had been involved in managing a community space that has been repurposed and was not longer accessible for general use. The group wanted to create a charity to ensure the community has access to a long-term facility to help the new community thrive.

The CCVS team, met with the committee to support them with the development of their vision and define the charitable purpose of the new organisation. The CCVS team helped the committee review appropriate sample objects from Charity Commission resources. And put the group in touch with other groups who had been addressing similar issues.

To aid the group with their registration and to support their mission, CCVS helped the group develop a business plan by offering guidance, help sheets and acting as a critical friend. CCVS also provided guidance on key policies.

In April 2023 the group committee submitted their application to the Charity Commission. The Commission responded in June with some queries which the committee discussed with CCVS before replying and successfully achieving their registration as a foundation Charitable Incorporated Company.

Northstowe Hub will now use its charitable status to help represent the requirements of the local community on a management board of a temporary community building owned by SCDC.

Comments from Northstowe Trustees on their experience of CCVS support:

“CCVS provided us with the advice, knowledge and support we needed to take our ideas and vision and put them together to form the framework of our charity. Thank you so much for all your time and words of wisdom! Now to actually get on with the tasks in hand. Your help (CCVS) has been invaluable”

Approved by Northstowe Hub 21st Aug 2023

Officer Comments: **On track.** With regards to the running SCDC specific networking sessions, we will explore options and work with CCVS in Q3 and Q4 so these can be delivered.

Organisations' reports are available on request