

ANNUAL REVIEW

2014-2015



SUPPORTING
PEOPLE,
ACHIEVING
CHANGE

SHROPSHIRE RCC

ABOUT US

Shropshire RCC has been established since 1961 with the mission to make Shropshire a great place to live for everyone, no matter what challenges they face.

For many people, living in a rural area can be hard. Services like schools, shops and GP surgeries can be difficult to access, in many places, public transport is extremely limited and living in a remote rural area can often leave people feeling lonely and isolated.

We work with local people to develop and deliver practical solutions to rural problems, and build thriving communities. Our 26 employees and over 150 volunteers deliver our work through a variety of projects:

- We keep older, isolated members of the community in touch with others through community based activities, and by helping them get on-line. We support family carers with information, advice and the chance to meet others for a break from their caring role. Our volunteers support people with sensory impairment, including social groups for people with sight loss.
- We tackle fuel poverty by helping

people to understand where energy efficiency measures would help, and with funding to implement them. Our community buying scheme for heating oil enables people in “off-gas” areas to save money.

- We help people overcome transport barriers through Wheels 2 Work so people are not trapped in a cycle of “no transport, no work, no money, no transport”.
- We build capacity of other organisations to support vulnerable people in their community through training, advice and funding. Through our Volunteer Centre we promote volunteering as a route to employment, social engagement and personal well-being. We help communities to help themselves, with particular support to sustaining village halls.

We are a membership organisation with over 250 members including organisations. We actively seek to work in partnership with others and work closely with policy-makers to ensure that the people of Shropshire have a voice, and that the issues of rural living are understood.



SUPPORTING PEOPLE, ACHIEVING CHANGE

Chair's Annual Report 2014-15

Despite the difficult financial climate in which Shropshire RCC continues to operate, I am pleased to report that our charity has successfully maintained its strong commitment to supporting vulnerable people in our local community.

This Annual Report gives a very detailed account of the diversity of services which SRCC offers but I would like to highlight some of the particularly successful areas of our work in 2014-15. We have continued to innovate and develop new projects:

- We successfully piloted **Care and Share**, an initiative for carers of people with dementia to support each other and have some respite time.
- We launched **Mealshare**, a scheme for people to cook and share a meal with a neighbour who may be isolated and not eating a hot meal regularly.
- Our **oil buying scheme** became independent of the national network this year. This has enabled us to broker our own arrangements for buying heating oil locally, enabling us to give a more immediate response to our scheme members. Likewise, we have ventured into a new scheme to save LPG users money.

Partnerships with like-minded organisations, have brought added value to our work this year:

- We joined forces with **Red Cross** and **Carers Trust 4 All** to deliver support for carers coping unexpectedly with someone discharged from hospital.
- We commissioned the **University of Wolverhampton** to undertake formal evaluation of the impact of our work with carers
- We were delighted when the **Royal Bank of Scotland** chose us as their Charity of the Year.

However SRCC has also faced significant changes this year, as we continue to feel the effect of cuts to local and central government funding. In order to keep the financial position of SRCC resilient, the Trustees have faced the difficult decision to reduce staff numbers and hours significantly during this financial year. This has put tremendous pressure on the Chief Executive, Julia Baron, her workforce and volunteers who continue to use their imagination, diligence and persistence to maintain the quality of our services to the people of Shropshire.

During the last year, the Board of Trustees has also seen significant change as we have welcomed a number of new Trustees and some of our longer serving Directors will be retiring at the AGM.

As I have now moved out of Shropshire, I have also reluctantly resigned as Chair. I would like to thank Julia and her team, the Board of Trustees and, in particular, Alan Healey who once again stepped forward to Chair the Board in my absence, for their unstinting support.

Finally, I would like to thank our generous funders for their continuing strong investment in the charitable aims of Shropshire RCC, enabling us to continue in our commitment to delivering services to some of the most vulnerable people in Shropshire.

Dame Enid Bibby DBE

SUPPORTING INDIVIDUALS

Shropshire's population is an aging one. Currently the average age is 45 years and 21% of residents are over the age of 65 years. The number of 65+ year olds is expected to rise from 61,000 to 82,000 by 2020.

43% of people live in rural areas where social isolation and loneliness are particular issues. The lack of affordable or accessible transport prevents them from staying connected to their communities, which may be made worse by failing eyesight or hearing, nervousness about going out following a fall, or anxiety about crime and anti-social behaviour.

Increasingly, in a digital age, people are being excluded if they are unable or unwilling to get on-line. Poor broadband access in rural areas makes the problem worse. Young people find themselves disadvantaged by not being able to get a job without transport, and fuel poverty is a growing problem across all ages with people needing to make stark choices about whether to "heat or eat".

Our work seeks to help people stay well, healthy and living independently in their own homes, and help young people to stay in their community with transport on loan while they build up experience to get a better job, or save to buy their own transport.



Thank you Shropshire RCC for giving me this grant. I cannot describe how helpful this has been for me. I was not aware that the fund existed and to discover that others have donated their own winter fuel payment to help people like me was very humbling. I am extremely grateful for their generosity. Thank you again for giving me the opportunity to be warmer this winter.

Mrs H, Ludlow
Winter Warmth Fund grant recipient

We have just got back from attending the Effective Hearing Programme in Market Drayton. I would just like to say how good the whole thing was.

Hubby and I have had hearing aids for almost 20 years and yet today, we learned so much about aids and hearing loss and how to deal with different situations, it was unbelievable. The team were so friendly, down to earth, and approachable – they were fantastic. I also think it helped having just a few people instead of a large group.

Our grateful thanks to all who organized it, with an extra special thanks to those who actually ran it.

John and Jacqui

CASE STUDY



Shropshire RCC is part of a national pilot project funded by the Dept of Health to develop volunteering in Care Homes. Working with the National Council for Voluntary Organisations (NCVO) and four other organisations in England, we recruit volunteers to work with residents to enjoy a range of activities, like reading, knitting, board games, family history, other common interests or just companionship.

As part of our project, we recruited volunteers from the Shropshire Cat Rescue to bring some of their cats in to both the Uplands at Oxon and Crowmoor House for Cat Therapy Sessions.

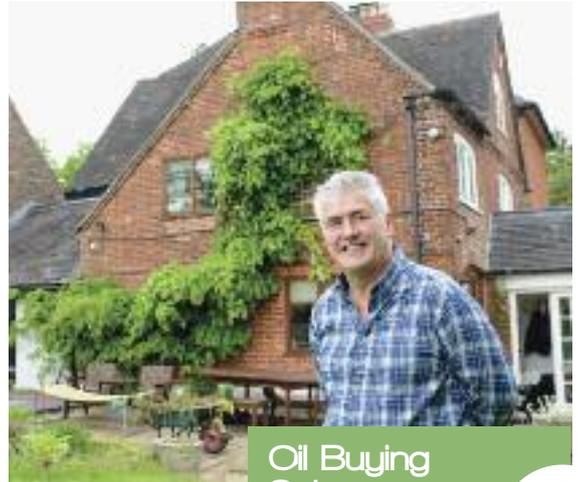
Handling pets is known to bring about therapeutic effects for older people including calming, soothing and lowering blood pressure. This can be particularly beneficial for Care Home residents who have been separated from their pets after bereavement or relocation.

Volunteers bring “the outside in” which greatly enhances residents’ lives, and on these occasions, everyone has a “purrfect” afternoon.”



KEY STATS

- 1,236,220 litres of oil ordered for our 692 oil buying members, saving Shropshire residents an estimated £37,086. Membership renewal rate 89%.
- Gusto launched and 27 members recruited
- £1,670 of Winter Fuel payments donated and 6 grants awarded
- 243 people assisted with a moped, bicycle, travel plan or other transport opportunity through Wheels 2 Work.
- 20 volunteers recruited to work with 70 residents in 2 care homes
- 26 SRDS volunteers actively visiting hearing impaired people at home
- Membership of Association Shropshire Exercise teachers increased to 28 members
- 11 community safety events, information days and diabetes awareness events attended by 384 people



Oil Buying Scheme



Actor and TV Presenter, Nick Hancock, endorses our Community Oil buying scheme, having been a member for almost 3 years, saying that it has made significant savings on his heating bills.

Nick, who lives in Gravenhunger Hall near Market Drayton says “Our house is quite old, heating costs are high and we have to fill our tank between four and five times a year. I get regular emails to remind me to check the tank so that we don’t run out, and that saves me money because I am not buying last minute and paying premium prices for emergency delivery. I would happily recommend the scheme to anyone considering joining.”



Bike Recycling Scheme



This year we started a new bike recycling scheme in partnership with Brookside-based Telford Bike Recycling and Sales. Bikes donated by members of the public who no longer need them are given an overhaul to ensure they are in perfect working order for our Wheels 2 Work clients.

The scheme provides good value bikes and safety equipment to people who cannot afford their own transport. Bikes are supplied with good quality lights, a high viz jacket, lock and puncture repair kit. Wheels 2 Work clients pay £20 up front and £20 after their first salary, which goes towards the cost of safety equipment and parts.

During the year, over 20 bikes were donated, reconditioned and transformed into vital transport to help people in rural Shropshire get to work.

A family carer provides unpaid care and support to a family member, partner, relative or friend, who couldn't manage without their help. Carers give vital assistance with everyday tasks such as dressing, bathing, and eating.

We are contracted by Shropshire Council to deliver a support service for carers, in partnership with the Mayfair Centre in Church Stretton. We organised a number of events for Carers – particularly in Carers Week in June when we held a Vintage Tea Party for over 100 people at the County Showground. We have continued to support Carers groups around the county, and our newsletter reaches over 3,700 carers three times a year.

Funding is uncertain going forward, pending a re-tendering of the service by Shropshire Council. Our current contract has been extended to the end of January 2016.

Additional, new funding was secured from other sources, and in partnership with the Red Cross and Carers Trust for All, we have been delivering practical and respite care support to vulnerable carers who had a high score on a carers strain Index.

Thank you so much for a lovely day today I enjoyed it so much and having a day for myself was lovely. I would like to thank everybody involved in organising the trip. With thanks and best wishes

Jayne, Carer

Thank you for organising the weekend, we both enjoyed it very much. We both arrived home exhausted but happy. John has really enjoyed learning to fly fish; it has had a very relaxing effect on him and has taken his mind off the unpleasant things that are happening to him at the moment.

Nicki, Carer

Learning together



Caring for someone can be very emotionally and physically demanding and for new carers, learning how to do things differently can be quite an adjustment. Helping with personal care and mobility can

put great strain on backs and joints, particularly for older carers, those in ill-health themselves, or carers who are significantly smaller than the person they are caring for. Carers are often concerned about administering medication, ensuring the person they care for has sufficient nutrition and hydration, and managing their own feelings of helplessness or resentment.

Shropshire RCC Carers Team has responded to this by developing a series of workshops in partnership with professional nutritionists, pharmacists and the Admiral Nurses. These run across Telford & Wrekin, as well as Shropshire, and give carers the chance to meet other carers and share useful tips and ideas, as well as feeling more supported and confident in their role.



CASE STUDY



Jenny was the primary carer for her 46-year-old husband Oliver who suffered severe sepsis, resulting in permanent kidney damage, after he was bitten by a dog in 2013. While in hospital, Oliver had a number of seizures and a stroke which led to significant brain damage, a rare neurological disorder, and dyspraxia.

Jenny contacted the Shropshire RCC Carers Support Service and our Carers Support Worker visited her at home. During an assessment using the Carers Strain Index it became clear that money was one of her main worries, as welfare

benefits for Oliver had not been sorted out.

Working with Jenny, a support plan was developed, including help from Oliver's parents to give Jenny a break. A benefits check was organised and a successful application to the DWP for Personal Independence Payment gave the family an additional £552.20 per month. This was backdated and the further payment of £3,313 enabled Oliver to fund a Motability car for the family. When the support worker repeated the Carers Strain Index two months later, Jenny's score had decreased by 50%.

KEY STATS



Self-referrals from carers increased by 28% from 122 (2014) to 163

Calls to the Carers Information Line increased from 412 (2014) to 811

Calls made to carers increased from 1,410 (2014) to 1,841

156 carers were assessed using the Carers Strain index

464 carers attended our carers support groups across the county

444 carers participated in outings and leisure activities

89 carers attended training workshops and skills based training

The Carers Appeal was chosen as charity of the year for Jigsaw Choir who raised £3,449

I-Care Card



Our I-Care Card scheme helps carers save money through a range of discounts or "2 for 1" deals. Over 50 businesses across the County are now part of the scheme and this year, an idyllic retreat in rural South Shropshire joined, offering discounted respite accommodation to family carers.

Tickwood Care Farm is a thriving Community Interest

Company situated in the grounds of Tickwood Hall near Much Wenlock. I-Care Card members are offered the chance to stay at a reduced rate in a purpose-built log cabin, set in woodlands. This offers a fantastic respite opportunity – fully self-contained and in a beautiful setting, yet close to the amenities of Ironbridge and Much Wenlock.

OUR
WORK
WITH
CARERS

SUPPORTING COMMUNITY GROUPS

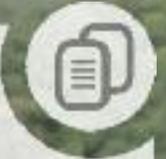
Shropshire RCC provides support to help organisations and groups to build communities, particularly in rural areas, where access to facilities are scarce.

Support begins by encouraging members of the community to volunteer their time. We hold drop-in sessions to recruit new volunteers, using different locations across Southern and Central Shropshire.

We continue to receive a high volume of enquiries for social enterprise support during the year, including existing organisations keen to develop further, and new entrepreneurs seeking to establish a business that trades for social purpose.

Funding for small scale project work is extremely valuable but increasingly hard for groups to find. We distribute funds on behalf of other bodies for whom the cost of administering small targeted grants would be prohibitive. Unsuccessful applicants are signposted to our funding advice service and assisted to find funding from other sources. Our community buildings advisory service provides advice, support, training and assistance to all community run facilities.

CASE STUDY



A Shropshire “mumpreneur”, Katie Millard, launched a café with a difference in Oswestry, thanks help provided by Shropshire RCC Social Enterprise Outreach Coach Nicky Kent.

Katie realised the potential for a café which catered specifically for young families, after giving birth to her first child. It was apparent how important social interaction with other new parents was and yet how difficult it was to even get a buggy into previous favourite meeting-places. “Once I managed to actually get in somewhere, I’d often end up feeling guilty if my little one started to cause a scene whilst other customers were trying to quietly enjoy some leisure time.”

Katie’s vision was a family focused café, and play space serving up locally sourced food with an informal environment for parents to relax with young children.

With Nicky’s advice and assistance, Katie was able to turn her idea into reality, preparing a business plan and two-year cash flow forecast which enabled her to apply for a start-up loan, and The Baby Bird Café was born!





KEY STATS

- 17 Boccia demonstrations to groups around the County.
- 39 groups now active with 26 competing in the second annual tournament.
- 35 students trained as referees.
- 58 pre-start social enterprises supported
- 6 new social enterprise businesses started creating 6 new jobs
- 15 community led plan groups have received support.
- 10 community led plan groups have purchased consultancy services from Shropshire RCC

“My Ludlow team and I attended the Fuel Poverty session and found it very useful. We have used the switching technique in a few instances for our customers, throughout the south west. Thank you also for all your with Fuel Poverty and Volunteering advice.”

Peter Jones
South Shropshire Housing Association

“We are completing the Official Custodian on-line form tonight and will let the holding Trustees know that the process has begun. Your advice and support has been invaluable. We are most grateful.”

Chair, Doddington Village Hall



Advisory Service



Funding our Community Buildings Advisory Service remains challenging and we are very grateful to our highly experienced volunteer (formerly a Community Buildings Adviser at another RCC) who provides a vital level of service on our behalf one day a week. During the year we dealt with 74 enquiries from 58 buildings covering issues of governance, HR and funding.

Our support includes

- Monthly e-bulletins about changes to legislation, funding opportunities and governance issues
- Tackling complex issues such as constitutional changes, and resolving issues between trustees
- Advice about taking on an asset within their community for the first time.



Boccia



Boccia bowls is a Shropshire success story. Since the RCC began promoting the all-inclusive sport in 2010 we have helped to set up over 40 Boccia clubs and an annual county cup tournament. Up and down the county people play the indoor sport in village halls and community centres.

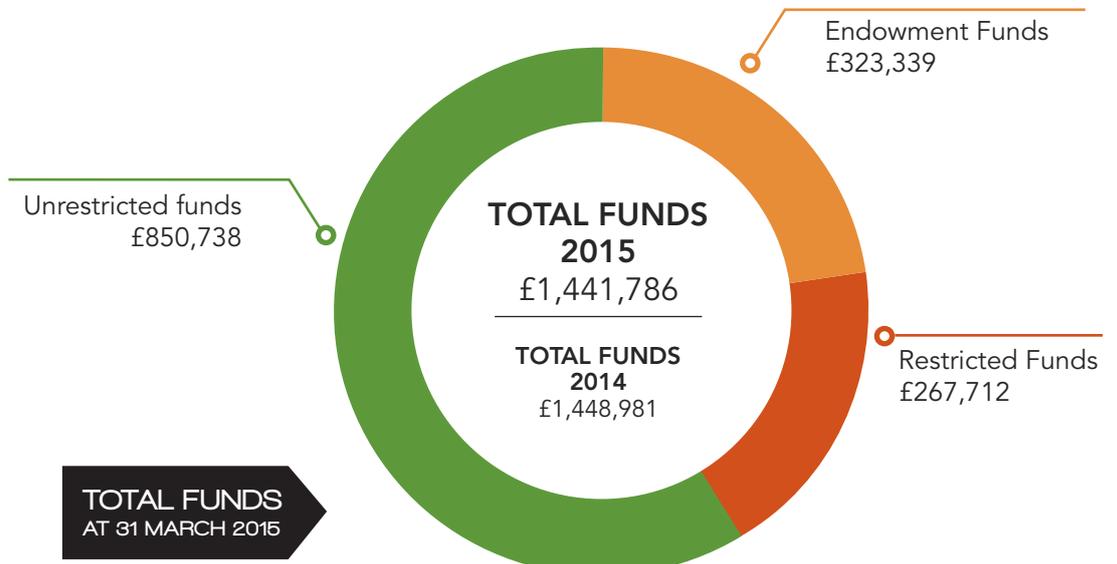
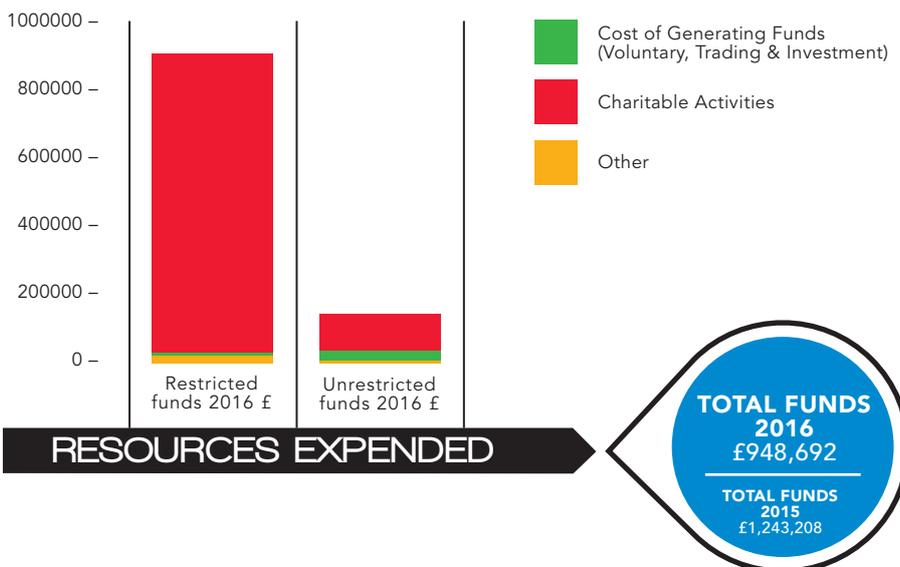
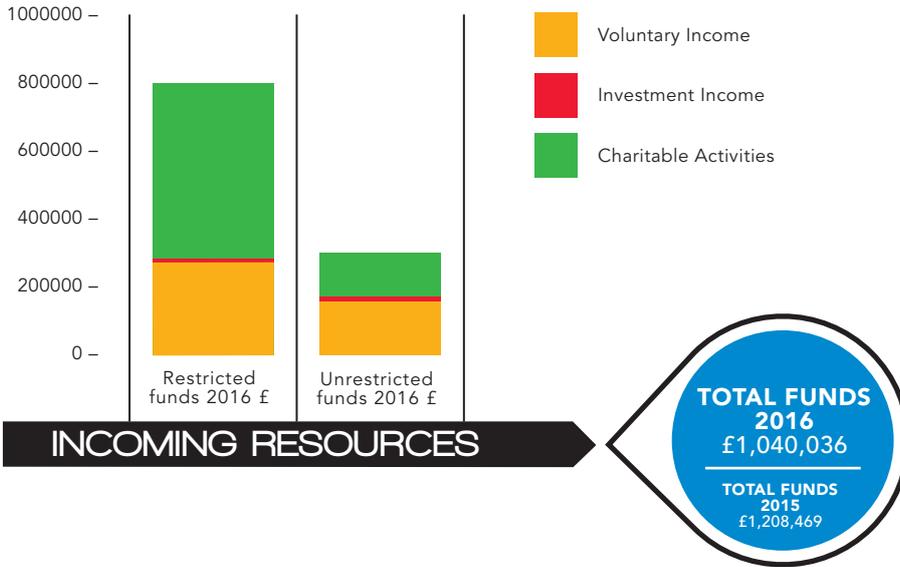
Boccia (similar to the French game of boules, but played seated) is an official Paralympic sport that can be played by people of all ages and physical abilities.

In Shropshire the sport has been developed through the efforts of our Wise & Well Team who help new clubs start up, support local leagues, train referees and organise the annual County Cup.

There is little opportunity for older people to play competitive sport but Boccia has proved extremely popular. As well as enjoying the competition, the sport has helped new friendships to form and has enabled older people to stay actively engaged and having fun in their communities.



Statement of Financial Activities (including an income and expenditure account for the year ended 31 March 2015)





Consolidated balance sheet as at 31 March 2015 (The Community Council of Shropshire and Healthwatch Shropshire)

	2015		2014	
	£	£	£	£
FIXED ASSETS				
Tangible Assets		706,123		752,637
Investments		656,963		624,005
		1,363,086		1,376,642
CURRENT ASSETS				
Debtors	56,936		69,845	
Cash at bank and in hand	415,923		454,522	
	472,859		524,367	
CREDITORS:				
amounts falling due within one year	(96,672)		(143,057)	
NET CURRENT ASSETS		376,187		381,310
TOTAL ASSETS				
LESS CURRENT LIABILITIES		1,739,273		1,757,952
CREDITORS:				
amounts falling due after more than one year		(297,487)		(308,971)
NET ASSETS		1,441,786		1,448,981
CHARITY FUNDS				
Endowment funds		323,339		314,130
Restricted funds		267,712		228,613
Unrestricted funds		850,735		906,238
TOTAL FUNDS		1,441,786		1,448,981

The financial statements have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to small companies within Part 15 of the Companies Act 2006 and in accordance with the Financial Reporting Standard for Smaller Entities (effective April 2008).

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 23rd October 2015 and signed on their behalf by
Mr W A Healey

The Community Council of Shropshire is a company limited by guarantee. Registration number 4652487.

SUPPORTING PEOPLE ACHIEVING CHANGE

We would like to thank the following whose grants, donations, fundraising, sponsorship and "gifts-in-kind" have financed our work this year:

7 video

ACRE (Action for Communities in Rural England)

AICO Ltd

Alveley Memorial Hall

Aon Limited

Audiology Services, Shrewsbury & Telford
Hospital NHS Trust

Balfours LLP

Bomere Health Parish Council

Bromford Housing Group

Brompton Cookery School

Churches Together Around Ludlow

Department for Environment, Food and
Rural Affairs

Department for Transport – Local Sustainable
Transport Fund

Department of Energy & Climate Change

European Regional Development Fund

Hazles Farm Child Care

Healthwatch Shropshire

Jigsaw Sound Choral Group

Lanyon Bowdler LLP

Lloyds Bank Community Fund

Lord Leverhulme's Charitable Trust

Marches Care

Meadowbrae Technical Services

Millichope Foundation

National Association of Citizens Advice Bureaux

National Council for Voluntary Organisations

Pooks

Rotary Church Stretton

Sainsbury's

Salop Leisure

Sevenside Housing

Shropshire Clinical Commissioning Group

Shropshire Community Fund

Shropshire Council

Shropshire County Agricultural Show

Shropshire Housing Group

Shropshire Lions

Shropshire Masonic Charitable Association

Shropshire Towns & Rural Housing Association

Sight Loss Shropshire

Stop Coffee Shop

Telford & Wrekin Council

Tents & Marquees Ltd

Tinder Foundation

The Triangle Trust

Tinder Foundation

Trefonen Jubilee Club

Un Ltd

Waitrose Community Matters

Westcroft Trust

We would like to say a special thank you to those individuals who have donated or raised funds for our Shropshire Grassroots Endowment Fund, Shropshire RCC Carers Appeal and Shropshire Hearing Support Service.

We would also like to thank those individuals who donated their winter fuel payments to our "Winter Warmth" grant fund for individuals in fuel poverty.

We are grateful for the continuing support of our members, community groups, parish and town councils, village hall committees and other individuals and groups.



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