

COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT TEAM

Annual Report 2024-25



Welcome to our 2024/25 Annual Report

So, another year has flown by, but not without some great outcomes for the projects the Community Involvement Team (CIT) have been working on over the last 12 months. This report selects some of the highlights and lets you know how the team and their projects have further benefited our local community and the services we provide.

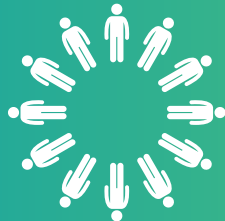
Thank you to all those who have volunteered their time to contribute to these achievements over the past year. The involvement and insight has been valuable and led to some great outcomes as you will see within the pages of this report.

The team are also very proud to receive, for the second year running, an Efficiency East Midlands (EEM) Award, for the Best Use of an EEM Charitable Donation. EEM provide Rykneld Homes (RH) with social value funding to invest within our local community, some of the projects you will read about within this report could not happen without this support.

Working in partnership with our communities and local organisations helps us to achieve so much more than we would do on our own. Over the past year we have aimed to achieve the following outcomes for our customers and communities:



**Improve people's health
(both physical & mental)**



**Bring people together &
reducing social isolation**



**Increase opportunities for
young people**



Enhance the environment



Tackle unemployment



**Encourage volunteering and getting
involved with Rykneld Homes**



**Reduce anti-social
behaviour**

The CIT works to make community ideas and suggestions into a reality, providing support and assistance to get their project up and running. The team works to increase involvement, build skills and confidence so, over time, local groups and projects can become independent and fly solo. There are of course also regular groups the team facilitate such as our Customer Board and Your Scrutiny Team (YST). You can read about what improvements these groups have influenced throughout the year within this report.

Looking forward to this forthcoming year, the team will be focusing on gaining more insight into what really matters to our customers and communities.

We know meetings and consultations are not everyone's cup of tea, so we are finding alternative ways of getting to know what is most important and where to prioritise even greater service improvement that will have the most impact for our customers.

This report will be shared with our involved customers and published on our website with the aim to promote how we improve welfare in our communities and encourage customers to get involved to aid the continuous improvement of our services.

Outcomes for Customers and Communities

All the projects contained within this report delivered on priorities and provided positive outcomes for those involved and the wider community.

Many of the areas where the CIT work are deprived in respect of economic wellbeing and access to opportunities that could further their skills, education and improve their overall health and environmental surroundings. These are the improvements to people's lives we feel are most important and what the projects within this report delivered.

Much of our project support is ongoing over several years, this has the benefit of building long lasting sustainable projects our communities can trust.

Quite often the CIT do not choose the areas in which they work, the areas and people choose them. We work with volunteers and groups who have ideas but need help and support to make them become reality.

We hope you enjoy reading and learning about what we have been up to over the past year and we look forward to the next exciting year ahead!



Get Involved - Get in Touch



www.rykneldhomes.org.uk



get.involved@rykneldhomes.org.uk



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Customer Board

A Customer Perspective

Our customers are key to us unlocking the ways in which our services should be delivered. Their lived experience provides us with vital insight during these meetings.

Our Customer Board is an integral element of our governance structure and enables RH to continuously improve services. Having our customers heavily involved in shaping our services means we can adapt and change with the needs of our tenants.

Our Focus this Year

This year the group have focused on a range of key areas and have helped RH departments across the organisation develop and instil a number of policies and working documents. These have included:

- Reporting on customer compliments
- Implementation of new Service Standards
- Reporting on performance information
- Complaints handling
- Tenant Satisfaction Measures analysis
- Review of our Terms of Reference
- Stock condition analysis
- Consulting on community involvement priorities
- Feedback on the look and functionality of RH's new website



Members of our Customer Board after a recent meeting

Responding to Feedback

This year RH was inspected by the Regulator of Social Housing as part of the new national inspection regime for all social landlords. The inspection found that as a landlord, RH offers 'a range of meaningful opportunities for tenants to hold it to account'.

The result of the inspection was to award RH a C2 Grade, which is one below the highest rating achievable. To make the highest rating, the inspector indicated that RH needs to gather more detailed information on our 'stock condition' i.e. what our homes are like to live in and what investment might be required in future to improve or maintain them.

Our Customer Board have been integral to the response to this, with one of our key members being directly involved in a task group, set up to address this feedback. Lynda Parkin, an involved customer on the Customer Board has been key to this process and she said "Knowing our stock condition is all about ensuring we know where the problems are in properties so that we can address this through targeted improvements over the coming years. It's been great being a part of this process and I feel I've been able to offer an insight that can only be gained by living in a Rykneld Homes property."

We hope that this work will contribute to RH gaining a the highest possible grade of C1.



Your Scrutiny Team enjoying our recent involvement conference

Your Scrutiny Team

The Your Scrutiny Team (YST) is made up of customer volunteers who come together regularly to investigate how RH is performing in specific areas of the business. They conduct detailed research and write up a report with recommendations for service improvements. This report is then considered by the RH Board, who provide feedback on the recommendations and ensure those that are accepted are enacted.

Work Plan 2024/25

Website Review

Objective: Ensure the new RH website meets required standards and is user-friendly.

Findings:

- **Website Traffic:** The Choice Move section receives the highest number of website visitors, with other sections receiving less traffic.
- **Digital Transition:** The website replaced the customer handbook, which is convenient for digitally proficient customers but challenging for those less computer literate.
- **Platform Testing:** The website was tested on laptops, smartphones, and tablets to ensure compatibility.
- **Navigation:** User-friendly navigation facilitates easy access to various sections.
- **Accessibility Features:** Includes options to modify contrast, adjust font size, and select language preferences.
- **Search Engine Ranking:** The website consistently ranks at the top in search results.

Recommendations and Responses:

- **Enhanced Search Function:** A more prominent search bar at the top of each page is suggested. RH partially accepts this, noting financial and design constraints but is exploring options.
- **Live Chat Support:** Recommended for immediate assistance, convenience, cost-effectiveness, detailed records, and enhanced engagement. RH partially accepts, citing IT implications and ongoing development.
- **Website Shortcut:** Suggests adding functionality to save the website as a tile on smartphones. RH accepts and will provide instructions for users.
- **Feedback Mechanism:** Recommends adding a feedback section at the bottom of the website. RH accepts and plans to implement this.
- **Website Promotion:** Suggests enhancing promotion through social media and detailed articles. RH accepts and will develop a campaign.
- **Customer Induction Training:** Proposes optional training for new customers via the website. RH accepts and will adapt the 'Get Tenancy Ready' section.
- **Text to Speech Function:** Recommends adding this feature. RH partially accepts, noting past low usage and exploring current options.

Your Scrutiny Team

Repairs Communication

Objective: Support the implementation of a new repairs booking system to improve the repairs experience for customers and RH employees.

Activities:

- **Policy Review:** Meticulously reviewed the new Repairs Policy to align processes with best practices.
- **Staff Interviews:** Conducted interviews with RH staff at all levels, from Directors to administrators, to gather diverse insights and perspectives.
- **Complaint Analysis:** Analysed customer complaints to identify recurring issues and areas for improvement.
- **Performance Data Review:** Examined key performance data to understand current system efficiencies and shortcomings.
- **Customer Feedback:** Compiling a survey to be distributed to customers who have received repair services in the last six months to capture their experiences and suggestions for improvement

Project Timeline and Implementation:

- The YST aims to complete this project within the next few months. Once the recommendations are finalised, they will be presented to the RH Board for approval. Approved recommendations will then be implemented by the service manager.
- To ensure continuous improvement, the service manager will review the implemented recommendations after six months to assess their impact on the system and make further adjustments as needed.

These projects and modifications aim to enhance service delivery, improve customer engagement, and ensure that customer feedback is effectively integrated into RH' operations. By following a structured approach and incorporating diverse insights, the YST is committed to driving meaningful improvements within the organisation.

Review and Modification of YST Terms of Reference

Objective: Align YST Terms of Reference with the evolving customer engagement structure.

Modifications:

- **Project Idea Generation:** The YST now receives project ideas directly from the Customer Board. This change ensures that the projects undertaken by the YST are aligned with the strategic priorities and operational needs of the organisation.
- **Reporting Process:** Upon completion of a scrutiny project, the YST delivers its findings and recommendations to the Customer Board. This step allows for initial review and feedback before the report is forwarded to the Senior Management Team (SMT).
- **SMT Response:** The SMT reviews the YST report and produces a formal response to the recommendations. This response, along with the YST report, is then delivered to the Board for final consideration and action.

New Process Flow:

- **Project Ideas:** Project ideas are generated by the Customer Board and submitted to the YST.
- **Scrutiny Project:** The YST undertakes the scrutiny project, conducting thorough reviews, analysis, and consultations as needed.
- **Initial Review:** The completed project report is delivered to the Customer Board for initial review and feedback.
- **SMT Review:** The report, along with any Customer Board feedback, is sent to the SMT. The SMT reviews the report and prepares a formal response to the recommendations.
- **Board Submission:** The YST report and the SMT response are submitted to the Board for final consideration and implementation.

Joint Involvement Conference

This year our CIT organised an event unlike any we have delivered before. The team collaborated with Chesterfield Borough Council and Bolsover District Council to organise an event centred around tenant participation.

The aim of the event was to bring tenants from the three organisations together in a bid to share best practice and learn from one another. We also wanted to discuss some of the current local and national issues affecting social housing and help our involved customers build on and share their knowledge.

TPAS (Tenant Participation Advisory Service) delivered an informative keynote speech and leaders from the three organisations gave a snapshot of how each landlord approaches tenant participation.

There were three workshops on the day, focusing on diverse subjects, including mystery shopping, excellence in engagement and ways of improving communication between landlords and tenants.

A buffet lunch and refreshments were provided and during lunch, participants had the opportunity to chat with local organisations, such as the Derbyshire Law Centre and Public Health. In the afternoon the attendees got the chance to engage in a 'Who Wants to be a Millionaire' style housing related quiz, as well as a prize raffle.

The day was a huge success, with over 100 attendees across the three landlords. The feedback was fantastic, so much so that we plan on building on the success and delivering a similar event in 2025/26.





Stonebroom's Santa Run in full swing

Supporting Communities

The CIT works year round across North East Derbyshire to support communities in a wide variety of ways. Here are just some of the projects we've delivered this year.

Ready, Sleddy, Snow!

The Stonebroom Santa Run, a festive event delivered by the Stonebroom HAF group and supported and funded by the CIT, brought holiday cheer to the Stonebroom estate in the lead-up to Christmas.

With permission to close a section of road, young people and their families participated in a fun run dressed in Santa hats. The run was made even more magical by the presence of three huskies pulling an elf on a wheeled sleigh!

The event featured various stall holders, offering festive food and crafts. Children enjoyed a fun fair ride, adding to the excitement of the day. A local church choir group serenaded attendees with Christmas songs, enhancing the festive spirit.

The partnerships the CIT have formed are instrumental in making events like these a success.

The Stonebroom Santa Run was well attended, with over 100 people turning out on the day, young and old.

Winter Warmth

This year, the CIT were signposted to a group who were struggling with various issues, which put the well-established group at risk of closure. The group helps to reduce social isolation by providing a warm, safe space plus a healthy lunch for members of the community. The team have worked with the group, who are based in Coal Aston, to achieve the following outcomes:

- A successful campaign to attract new members and volunteers via a new flyer and marketing. There are now enough volunteers to secure the groups future.
- Supported to write an application to gain funding from the COVID-19 Community Fund for a new boiler, which was essential for the group to continue, plus benefits other groups using the venue. The group have recently received a Food Hygiene Inspection and now fully comply.
- Introduced the group to indoor kurling and boccia, which the group really enjoy. The introduction of this physical activity has helped improve the physical health of attendees. The team have also brought other new activities to the sessions such as crafting.



Monday Munch club volunteers enjoying their new boiler!

Tackling Anti-Social Behaviour

The CIT work on many projects to help reduce Anti-social Behaviour (ASB) and fear of ASB in communities.

During ASB Awareness week, we collaborated with wider RH teams and partner agencies including the Community Safety Partnership and Police to deliver a range of impactful activities.

After consulting with the partners, a plan was developed which included designing and printing stickers for wheelie bins. The stickers had key messages to raise awareness of and reduce vehicle speeding and littering.

Two areas were chosen to focus on, Dronfield and Holmewood. The team organised drop-in sessions, where residents could discuss concerns and receive support related to ASB and other housing matters. These sessions provided valuable opportunities for community engagement and fostered a sense of safety and support.

In addition to the drop-ins, the team conducted litter picks in targeted areas. These efforts not only helped to clean up the neighbourhoods but also promoted community pride and responsibility.

During the litter picks, residents were given merchandise and bin stickers to promote positive behaviours within the community.



Tackling litter and speeding in Holmewood

Community Fun Days

The CIT support a wide range of fun days and galas across the District. One of the events the team was involved with this year was Wingerworth Fun Day. The CIT support the committee to organise the event.

Wingerworth community came together to promote local groups and have lots of fun. Around 2000 people attended - a fabulous turnout considering it was not the best weather.

There were a huge number of activities for people to try, including a circus skills workshop, inflatables, forest school, a dog show, performances from local singing and dancing groups, fencing, football, you could even have a go at fixing water pipes with Severn Trent Water.

The CIT delivered a rock painting activity, following the environment theme. It really was a brilliant day and there has been a massive amount of positive feedback from attendees, stall holders and local groups.



Get into the festival spirit in Wingerworth



Environmental Projects

One of the key aims in our Community Involvement Strategy is to enhance the environment within the communities we serve. We work with groups and partner organisations across the District to deliver this goal.

Cleaning Up Estates

Each year the CIT organises a number of community clean ups and litter picks across the District. We advertise the events locally and encourage involvement from the community.

Working with our contractor SBS, during a programme of roof replacements in Barlow, we delivered a community clean up day.

We supported people to clear out unwanted waste from their gardens.

During the building of new properties in North Wingfield, a team of 13 helpers spent a morning cleaning up the Whiteleas Estate. The group was made up of the RH CIT and Estate Caretakers, North East Derbyshire District Council, Chesterfield Litter Picking Group, Rapid Relief Team and Vistry.

Around 15 large bags of rubbish were collected, plus larger items including a chainsaw, mattress and broken furniture. As a result of the event, the CIT have been contacted by a local scouting group that wish to continue this good work by organising their own litter picks in the village.

The CIT delivered similar events in Heath, Holmewood and Clay Cross. These events make a big difference to the look and feel of the local environment and help to encourage communities to take pride in the area they live in.



The Green Team planting spring bulbs in North Wingfield

Brightening Communities

The CIT worked with Vistry, RH's contractor who built over 70 homes on Whiteleas Avenue in North Wingfield, alongside children from Tupton Primary Academy to plant a wildflower patch in the village. The patch was unused and at risk of becoming an eyesore and magnet for litter and fly tipping.

We invited the school, who have a 'Green Team', a dedicated group of children who are committed to enhancing the local environment to come and sow wildflower seeds on the patch, with the hope of both brightening the area, and enhancing the habitat for wildlife, including birds and pollinating insects.

The CIT also helped coordinate a successful tree planting event in Mickley. This initiative was made possible through the combined efforts of RH, who secured funding from the Travis Perkins Legacy Pot to provide essential tools, and Stonebroom and Higham Parish Council.

The event was delivered by the Stonebroom and Higham Parish Council, with enthusiastic support from local residents and RH. Volunteers of all ages came together, demonstrating their commitment to enhancing the local environment.

On the day of the event, participants planted a variety of trees across designated areas in Mickley. The new trees are expected to provide numerous environmental benefits, including improved air quality, increased biodiversity, and enhanced aesthetic appeal.



Helping our DofE participants to get kitted up

Children & Young People

Duke of Edinburgh

The CIT utilised EEM funding to develop a bespoke Duke of Edinburgh (DofE) award, specifically targeting young people who wouldn't be able to access the award through other means. This initiative provided these young individuals with the opportunity to participate in the Bronze Award, fostering personal growth and development.

The group collaborated with a local forest school to deliver the project, holding regular sessions to develop their skills and confidence. The award consists of four sections:

Voluntary Section: Participants engaged in community service activities, learning the value of giving back and making a positive impact. **Physical Section:** The group took part in physical activities to improve their fitness and well-being. **Skills Section:** Sessions focused on developing new skills, enhancing their abilities and boosting their confidence. **Expedition Section:** This adventure helped them build resilience, teamwork, and the necessary skills required to travel and camp unaided, including navigation and cooking dinner and breakfast on a camping stove.

The CIT continues to work with the group and this ongoing commitment ensures that the young people receive the guidance and encouragement they need to succeed. The individuals would not have had the opportunity to engage with a project like this, due to their complex needs, including autism, vision impairment and lack of confidence.

The project was awarded the 'Best Use of Charitable Donation' award at the 2025 EEM Awards, recognising the positive impact and effective use of funding to support young people.



Guiding our DofE participants on their expedition training

Children & Young People

Stonebroom & Mickley

The CIT has been instrumental in supporting the Stonebroom and Mickley groups to deliver the Holiday Activities and Food (HAF) programme in their areas. This initiative aimed to keep young people physically active and engaged during the summer holidays and Christmas periods, while also providing valuable nutritional support to families.

Activities and Engagement

Over the Easter, Summer and Christmas holidays, a wide range of diverse physical and enrichment activities were offered to young people. These activities included sports, arts and crafts, games, and educational workshops, ensuring that participants remained active and stimulated throughout the holidays.

Nutritional Support

To complement the activities, food hampers were provided to families during each session. These hampers included healthy meals and recipes, enabling families to prepare nutritious meals at home. The recipes were designed to be affordable and easy to follow, teaching families how to cook healthy meals that they could use repeatedly.

Volunteer Contributions

The success of the HAF program was largely due to the dedication of fantastic volunteers who generously gave their time to support and deliver the sessions. These volunteers also participated in the required training to ensure the sessions were safe and effective.

Impact

The sessions were highly successful, with over 100 young people and families participating in the two sessions delivered over Easter, 11 sessions delivered over the summer and two Christmas sessions. The programme not only kept young people active and engaged but also provided essential nutritional support, fostering healthier lifestyles and stronger community bonds.

Overall, the collaboration between CIT and the Stonebroom and Mickley HAF groups has made a significant positive impact on the community, demonstrating the power of volunteerism and targeted support in enhancing the well-being of young people and their families.



Stonebroom HAF project
in full bounce!



Children & Young People

Summer of Fun

The CIT is part of a committee, made up predominantly of local volunteers, which organise a range of community projects in the Grassmoor and Hasland area. This year, the group successfully applied for over £10,000 of funding from the HAF to deliver healthy activities and food provision over the school summer holidays. 420 individual children attended a session, with most of these children attending multiple sessions. There were 16 sessions in total, with no cost to attendees, making it accessible for the whole community. Every child was provided a healthy lunch, this was a great help, relieving financial pressure during the school holidays.

From local consultations, it was evident that many families struggled to afford holidays or day trips out. The sessions were planned to help to keep the children active and entertained. Almost 1,000 lunches and a four-week, fun-packed timetable meant that the local children enjoyed a fabulous summer.

The focus of every session was sports, we also provided arts and crafts, a small petting zoo, forest school, Madame Zucchini vegetable show, circus skills and

bird box making. Feedback was overwhelmingly positive with one attendee taking the time to write to the Derbyshire Times to thank the group for organising the project.

Community Events and Fun Days

At the end of the summer, the CIT supported a newly formed community group to organise 'Grassmoor by the Sea' through the provision of funding from our Neighbourhood Improvement Budget and advice on delivering a community event. It was a huge success, which encouraged the group to plan further events for the whole community. The CIT will continue to support this new group. The CIT are also part of the committee for Grassmoor Fun Day and help to plan this annual event, which brings the community together and promotes local groups.

Volunteer Opportunities

The CIT worked with the local Let's Connect project and local groups to provide and recruit volunteers to sustain local groups and committees. Volunteering benefits both the individuals and the local community, building resilience and quality of life.



Soaking up the sun at Grassmoor By the Sea

Grassmoor & Hasland Youth and Children's support group presents

Sessions 11AM-3PM

SUMMER ACTIVITIES
AND PICNIC LUNCH

FOR CHILDREN 4-15 YEARS OLD
ALL CHILDREN NEED TO BE ACCOMPANIED BY AN ADULT
STARTS 29TH JULY UNTIL 22ND AUGUST

WHAT'S ON?
Multi-Sports Pop down and join in the activities which will be led by Sambo Sports. The sessions are for children and young people aged 4+. Activities will include football, cricket, tennis, rounders, badminton, tag rugby, basketball, dodgeball and much more.

Mondays & Wednesdays at Eastwood Park-Hasland
Tuesdays and Thursdays at Barnes Park-Grassmoor

Let's Connect
Rykneild
TESCO
All About Me!

Children & Young People

Killamarsh Halloween Party

The CIT successfully delivered a Halloween party targeted at parents and toddlers in Killamarsh. Killamarsh Parish Council requested our support to organise a community event within their recently refurbished community venue. This spooky event was a collaborative effort with Sustainable Building Services (SBS), our contractor delivering External Wall Insulation to RH properties in the area.

SBS donated their time and provided a spooky, yet nutritional buffet, adding to the atmosphere and ensuring everyone was well fed.

The party featured a variety of craft activities, allowing toddlers and their parents to get creative and make Halloween-themed decorations and crafts. An interactive disco with games was a major highlight, engaging the young participants with music, dancing, and fun games.

Attendance and Impact

The Halloween party was well-attended, with around 40 people joining in the spooky fun. The event provided a safe and enjoyable environment for parents and toddlers to celebrate Halloween, fostering community spirit and creating lasting memories.

The party was a resounding success, thanks to the collaborative efforts of the CIT, the Parish Council, and SBS. The event brought joy and excitement to the community, highlighting the positive impact of community involvement and partnership.



Spooky crafting at the Killamarsh Halloween Party



Beetle drive at Marx Court

Tackling Social Isolation

One of the CIT's key priorities as a team is to reduce isolation amongst older people in North East Derbyshire.

The CIT work with a wide range of partners and community groups to implement projects that get people out and about, doing fun and educational activities with other local people. Below are just a selection of the projects worked on this year.

Kurling Fever

Once again, the CIT worked with North East Derbyshire District Council to deliver a kurling tournament. This year's event was held at Killamarsh Leisure Centre.

Over 80 people took part, made up of 12 teams from across the District. The tournament gives more competitive players something to work towards and provides everyone with a fun, social event which is always well received.

At the event, some groups swapped contacts and have organised 'friendlies'.

Marx Court Socials

We have continued to work with a group of older people at Marx Court, Clay Cross in their community room. The CIT deliver one session per month, and with support and encouragement, the residents have now taken the initiative to deliver an additional monthly session themselves. The sessions feature a variety of themed activities designed to cater to different interests and promote well-being. These include:

- Crafts: Encouraging creativity and providing a relaxing outlet.
- Chair-Based Exercise: Promoting physical health in a gentle and accessible manner.
- Boccia: Offering a fun and inclusive physical activity.
- Healthy Eating: Educating residents on nutritious food choices and healthy lifestyles.
- Trips: To provide the group with something to look forward to, a special event.

Trip to Denby Pottery: This year, the group chose to go to Denby Pottery. It was a delightful outing that provided an opportunity for social interaction and learning.

Christmas Dinner: A festive gathering that brought the community together to celebrate Christmas. Many of the group live alone so social eating really benefits their mental health.

Over the year, the group has grown significantly, with a regular attendance of 12 or more participants. The sessions are enjoyed by all who attend, fostering a sense of community and belonging. The collaboration between CIT and the residents of Marx Court has created a vibrant and supportive community, demonstrating the positive impact of regular engagement and themed activities.

Tackling Social Isolation

Improving Facilities

The CIT successfully accessed funding from the Travis Perkins Legacy Funding pot to provide St Giles Church in Renishaw with a much needed new kitchen. The church building, which is frequently used by various community groups, had a kitchen that was in a poor state of repair.

The Reverend at St Giles Church approached CIT for assistance in upgrading the kitchen facilities. Recognising the importance of the church as a community hub, CIT sought funding to support this vital project.



Enjoying the new kitchen at St Matthews

Funding and Implementation

Through the Travis Perkins Legacy Funding pot, CIT secured the necessary funds to renovate the kitchen. The project involved a complete overhaul of the existing facilities, ensuring that the new kitchen met modern standards and could adequately serve the needs of the community groups using the space.

Community Impact

The new kitchen has been very well received by the community. It has significantly improved the functionality and appeal of the church's facilities, making it a more welcoming and practical space for events and gatherings. The community has expressed their happiness and appreciation for the upgraded kitchen, highlighting its positive impact on their activities and overall experience.

This project exemplifies the CIT's commitment to enhancing community spaces and supporting local initiatives. The successful collaboration with St Giles Church and the effective use of the Travis Perkins Legacy Funding pot have resulted in a valuable improvement that benefits the entire community.



Building Sustainable Communities

Working Up North

The CIT have continued to work in the Eckington area, building on the work that started during the pandemic. The project has continued to evolve, responding to local need, in consultation with residents. The team are part of a small committee made up of Eckington Business Centre, Eckington Parish Council, Live and Local and community volunteers. Some of the initiatives the team have delivered this year include:

- The CIT attended a local market to promote RH services and talk to customers about any housing issues they may have.
- The CIT provided 50 free food hampers at Christmas for people in financial hardship.
- The CIT provided activities for older children, who are harder to engage with and have less opportunities to positively engage in their local communities. This included a cookery workshop, graffiti arts and Christmas tree decoration workshop. One parent emailed after an event, *"we wanted to say a big thanks for the time and effort put into these cookery classes. Both my boys loved it this year and the pizza one last summer. I've attached some pics of my youngest, who has autism, and how he insisted we practiced in the kitchen at home immediately after leaving your session."* The cookery sessions not only promote healthy eating and trying new foods, they help to build independence and confidence.
- The introduction of a holiday hunger project which ran for five weeks over the school summer holidays. 'Spud and a Pud' provided around 30 people each week with a homecooked two course lunch in an isolated community.
- During 2023, the group provided weekly free breakfast bags from Marsh Lane, for families who were struggling financially. Due to feedback from families that struggled with transport, Renishaw was added to the weekly offer in the summer of 2024. This project supported some of the most vulnerable families to provide food for their children over the school holidays when they would usually receive a free meal.





Showing off their hard work

North of the District (continued)

Eckington Community Pantry consultation

In autumn, the CIT undertook a consultation exercise with 25 service users. The feedback gathered was overwhelmingly positive and also provided some small suggestions for improvement. The feedback has been used for future funding applications and various pots of money have been achieved during the year to keep the pantry running.

Renishaw Mega fun day – around 200 people attended this fun packed event which included lots of crafts and sports. This year football coaching was added to the programme, which engaged with a lot more older children.

Eckington By the Sea – 300 people attended this event, despite the wind and rain (British seaside). It was a very special day with fairground rides, Shetland ponies, 'sea' sand, magic, giant bubbles, ice-cream, a giant deckchair and much more. A parents feedback that it was amazing for her to not have to say no to the children, because everything was included, which meant she wasn't stressed, and the children were not disappointed.

Olympics in a Day – around 200 people attended this Olympics themed event which included lots of sports and Olympic themed crafts, wonder woman, as well as an opening ceremony parade with handmade torches. Snakes and tarantulas were a non-sporty themed hit! These special events, provided families that couldn't afford a holiday or day trips to take part in something memorable. Some local groups, such as cricket, attended and children were signposted to local groups and activities.

In February half term, the group organised a musical extravaganza in Eckington. The event, which was funded by a £1000 DVA health and wellbeing grant, allowed 80 members of the local community to enjoy a hot, two course meal, plus take part in three different workshops - drumming, handbells and 'boom whackers' and making a tambourine to take home.



The volunteer team together in Eckington

Funding Community Projects

The CIT administers the Neighbourhood Improvement Budget (NIB), a community funding pot that groups in North East Derbyshire can access for projects or events that benefit those living in the District.

This year we funded 21 groups and between them they received £10,000 worth of funding.

We also funded £3,000 worth of environmental projects through our new 'Green Grants' funding pot.

Green Grants

In October 2024, RH launched its 'Green Grants' funding pot. This pot was funded through the CIT and offered both community groups and individuals to approach our CIT with their ideas on how to enhance green spaces and biodiversity within North East Derbyshire.

The grant was advertised through our website and social media platforms and offered up to £1,000 for each project. We received some fantastic applications and rewarded three projects with the full amount asked for. The projects included:

- Planting spring bulbs, trees and adding raised planting beds in Stonebroom. The trees and bulbs were planted on an open green space in the heart of the village. The raised beds helped enhance a community allotment and woodland space, used for educational activities and events for children and families.
- Coal Aston Cricket Club wanted to plant a patch of flowers to commemorate their 150th birthday! They will also add benches closer to the club's car park, to enable people with disabilities to more easily enjoy watching their local team.
- North Wingfield Community Allotment required a new shed, renewed raised planting beds and general improvements to the space. These improvements would enable more volunteers and participants to make use of this fantastic community facility, particularly those with mobility issues and disabilities.

This project has had a fantastic impact, both in terms of enhancing the look and feel of our District, but also in terms of helping people get closer to nature. We hope to be able to continue with the fund in the coming financial year.



Newly planted cherry trees in Stonebroom



Coal Aston Cricket Club's 150th birthday flowers in full bloom

Funding Community Projects

Neighbourhood Improvement Budget

Ridgeway Sports & Social

Contributed £500 towards a £4,850 project to enhance lighting in a community building. This improvement will increase access and security while saving money through environmentally friendly and energy-efficient technology.

Alma Fishing Club (North Wingfield)

Provided £500 to purchase hardcore for repairing access to fishing ponds. The group collaborated with a local farmer and also applied to the Travis Perkins Legacy fund for additional stone needed to complete the project.

Stonebroom Community Volunteer Group

Granted £500 for a community fun day, covering the cost of a bouncy castle package. This event aimed to bring the community together and provide entertainment for all ages.

Tupton Pride

Awarded £350 to support the Tupton Pride event, promoting community inclusion and LGBTQIA+ visibility. The event featured food, music, and various activities, showcasing Tupton as an innovative and safe place for all residents.

Grassmoor Community Group

Received £300 for the "Summer by the Sea" event, bringing seaside fun to Grassmoor with sand pits, paddling pools, and fairground rides. This event aimed to create a joyful and engaging experience for the community.

Eckington Development Company

Granted £500 towards their summer festival, offering family activities and community enjoyment. The festival included various attractions and activities, making it a memorable day for all attendees.



**Alma Fishing Club tackling
access to the ponds**

Rainbow Kite Project (Eckington)

Awarded £345 to support a community allotment for people with physical and mental disabilities. The project uses the therapeutic power of nature to support those in need.

The Killamarsh Wombles

Provided £500 for heavy-duty equipment to clear canal path access. This group has been instrumental in maintaining clean and accessible public spaces through regular litter-picking and community clean-up efforts.

Marsh Lane TARA

Funded £500 for the "Spud and Pud" project, providing warm meals to families during the summer holidays. This initiative aimed to address holiday hunger and support families in need.

Life Dronfield

Provided £500 for a coffee machine to enhance their weekly free events attended by 30-50 people. This addition aimed to create a welcoming and hospitable environment for attendees.

Marsh Lane Old People's Group

Granted £500 for a D-Day celebration event for the local community. This event aimed to honour and remember the contributions of veterans and provide a space for community gathering.

Killamarsh Over 60's Group

Supported with £500 for a day trip to Bridlington, including a beach walk and refreshments. This trip provided an opportunity for social interaction and enjoyment for the elderly members of the community.

Funding Community Projects

Neighbourhood Improvement Budget (continued)

Dronfield Woodhouse Community Support Group

Funded £500 for new chairs and refreshments for their meetings. This support aimed to improve the comfort and experience of group members during their gatherings.

Shirland and Higham Parish Council

Contributed £500 towards installing three DEFIB units for the Ward. These units are vital for emergency medical situations and enhance community safety.

Wingerworth Festival Group

Provided £500 to support the annual Wingerworth Summer Festival, a popular community event attended by hundreds. This festival aimed to create a vibrant and inclusive community celebration.

The Great Dronfield Get2gether

Granted £500 to support the 2gether events, showcasing community groups and activities. These events aimed to foster community spirit and awareness of local resources and opportunities. The CIT were also on the committee and helped organise the event, providing support with printing and raffle prize of an air fryer. The team attended on the day and held a stall promoting RH's services.

St Barnabus Centre, Danesmoor

Funded £500 to replace old toys and games for their parent and toddler group. This support aimed to enhance the experience and engagement of young children and their parents.

Grassmoor and Hasland Senior Group

Awarded £240 for two bleed kits to assist older residents until emergency services arrive. These kits are crucial for providing immediate aid in medical emergencies.

African and Caribbean Community Association

Awarded £500 for a cultural craft workshop to bring the community together. This workshop aimed to celebrate cultural diversity and foster community connections.

St Giles Warm Space

Provided £500 to continue their warm spaces project, offering a warm place and refreshments for the community. This initiative aimed to combat social isolation and provide a safe space for community members.

Grassmoor Allotment Group

Granted £500 for a Santa's Grotto event, including donated selection boxes for children. This event aimed to bring festive cheer and joy to the local community.



Local residents arriving for the Great Dronfield Get 2Gether