



 **Dorset Community Foundation**

Newsletter

Summer 2025

Welcome

I hope you've all been enjoying the fantastic weather these last few weeks, as I write there seems no end to it but have I just jinxed it by saying that? We have embarked on training for a switch-over to our new customer relationship system. It's a hefty piece of work that challenges our staff to think a little differently about the way they work and gives us the opportunity to streamline some of our processes. We are aided by the excellent preparation work of our Grants and Operations Officer Alice Cable but it's a real team effort. I'd like to welcome to three additions to our happy band, new trustees Neil Lewis and Michelle Howard and Finance & Administration Assistant Liana Mace. I'm sure they'll all make fantastic contributions to our ever expanding work. Enjoy the sun everyone. **Grant Robson, Chief Executive**

Actress leaves us an enduring legacy

German film actress, model, photographer and DJ Renate Morley has left us a legacy to support our work. Renate, of Bournemouth, died in 2021, aged 85. She fled East Germany in the late 1960s by swimming across a river. She became a film and theatre actress and toured Switzerland with a theatre company. She later met journalist John Morley and moved to his home town. Friend Walter Hell-Höflinger said: "She was a very kind person. She wanted to give to people, to empower people helping themselves." We're keen to talk to anyone about leaving a legacy to us a lasting memorial, contact us at via the details at the foot of page 3.



[READ MORE HERE](#)



Impact report is out

The first impact report from our Community Wellbeing and Mental Health Fund has been published. The fund supports groups with projects that prevent worsening mental health and wellbeing to alleviate pressure on NHS services. The first funding round has benefitted 641 local people.



[READ THE FULL REPORT HERE](#)



New trustees adding experience

Two new trustees have joined our board. Michelle Howard, right, has experience of law and the health and social care sector. She has been paralysed from the chest down since she was 16 so she will bring another perspective too. "I hope that my experience of health and social care in particular, and my knowledge of the charitable sector can help the foundation grow," she said. "I can't wait to get stuck in." Neil Lewis, left, joins with a long career in the financial industry as a private banker. He also has rare lived experience because his son Ben



has the neurodevelopmental disorder ADNP syndrome. He said: "I believe the experience I've gained caring for Ben alongside my wife Vicky and understanding the challenges that a lot of people have is really going to help."



MEET MICHELLE [HERE](#) AND NEIL [HERE](#)



Food and Energy fund helps 27,000

We have published our impact report on the winter round of our BCP Food and Energy Support Fund, which distributes money allocated to BCP Council from the Government's Household Support Fund. This round awarded £312,200 to 46 groups, supporting 26,968 people and empowering 1006 volunteers. As ever, we are grateful for the faith in us shown by BCP Council to get this money to the people who need it most. Applications for our current round close on September 8. See our website for details.

READ THE FULL REPORT [HERE](#)



EDC project celebration hears how groups have made progress

We recently celebrated a year of our Ethnically Diverse Communities project with our partners Community Action Network, Dorset Race Equality Council and BCP Council. The project is using funding from The National Lottery Community Fund to support ethnically diverse groups to make help them become more resilient. Grants Manager Ellie Maguire spent an uplifting evening listening to groups who have been awarded funds talk about the difference they are making to their structure. Many of them have been funded for the first time in their existence. The aim of the project is to help them build bridges with the voluntary community and other funders.

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Environment Fund supports 15 Dorset sustainability projects

Our latest Wessex Water Environment Fund panel has awarded £18,250 to 15 groups delivering projects that will have a positive impact on the local environment. The projects supported included Citizens Science (river testing), rainwater harvesting for community gardens, promoting biodiversity for pollinators, tree and wildflower planting, community composting and enhancing community owned woodlands.

School's educational heritage is preserved with new DCF fund

The educational legacy of an independent school in Poole forced to close six years ago has been preserved through a new fund with us. Money donated by the Buckholme Towers Trust will help young people from struggling families follow their career dreams through vocational college courses. Buckholme Towers School, which opened in 1939, was badly damaged by a fire in 2013 and although it was rebuilt and re-opened, it went into administration in 2019 and closed. The school building is owned by a charitable trust and rented to a nursery. Trustees wanted to use the rental income to help young people with their education. Treasurer Beth Barker said: "Community foundations are a great concept and they make it that much easier and smoother to give money. It gives us peace of mind that we can rely on them to use the money well."



Buckholme Towers Trust Treasurer Beth Barker and Chair of Trustees John Gunton, right, with Philanthropy Manager Gareth Owens

[READ MORE HERE](#)



Catching up with groups helps us to stay informed



Visiting People First Dorset, above, The Vale Pantry, above right, and Home-Start Wessex, below



Going out to visit the groups we fund not only gives us the chance to find out more about the work, it also gives us a chance to catch up on the challenges they are facing.

Over the last few months we've visited People First Dorset, The Vale Pantry, Home-Start, Wessex, Dorchester Youth & Community Centre and Poole Communities Trust.

Thanks to all of them for making time for us.



Grants Manager Ellie Maguire with Laura Barnes at Dorchester Youth & Community Centre



Visiting Poole Communities Trust

 **Stay in touch**

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