



Funded by
UK Government



BCP Thriving Communities Fund – 25/26 - Impact report

This funding programme was delivered by Dorset Community Foundation on behalf of BCP Council, with funding awarded to successful groups in August 25. Grants were used to support capital grants for community buildings. All projects utilised grant funding by the end of March 2026.

- Total funding of **£74,718.71** has benefitted **21,298 local residents** who use the facilities
 - 6566 In Bournemouth
 - 3301 in Christchurch
 - 11,431 in Poole
- Projects have involved **191 volunteers**

Summary

Grant recipient	Area	Grant awarded	Project summary	Number of beneficiaries	Number of volunteers
AIMCommunity	Poole (Creekmoor)	£5000	Capital project to upgrade toilets and add a washing machine, enhancing hygiene, dignity, and life skills support for hub users	106	4
Beaufort Community Association	Bournemouth (Southbourne)	£5000	To carry out necessary works highlighted as essential by a recent Fire risk Assessment (FRA) carried out by BCP	0	0
Bournemouth Parks Foundation	Bournemouth (Redhill, Moordown, Winton, East Howe, Ensbury Park, Northbourne)	£5000	Re-decorate and improve the lighting, charity branding and furnishings in our Redhill Park community café	1900	10
Friends of Kinson Community Centre	Bournemouth (Kinson)	£4066	Redecorate and refurbish the Sharpe Room for the benefit of the Community, and all the children’s groups which use it	200	5
Godfirst Christchurch	Christchurch (Somerford)	£4998	Kitchen equipment to kickstart a new midweek Community Wellbeing Cafe at The Runway	2001	25
Hope Community Church	Bournemouth (Winton)	£3000	Drain repairs to solve recurrent blockages for the toilets used for the cafe and community activities	120	25

Merley Community Association	Poole (Merley)	£3454.71	Install an automated main entrance door system to the existing newly installed door at the Centre, improving accessibility, safety, and independence for users with mobility challenges	500	2
Mudford Wood Community Trust	Christchurch (Mudford)	£1500	Help towards our heating system including the upgrade of our boiler in order to reduce our expenditure in future	500	2
PCC St John with St Michael, Bournemouth	Bournemouth (Town Centre)	£5000	Installation of a new kitchen, enabling us to host community meals and support outreach programs to reduce isolation.	2246	30
Poole Communities Trust	Poole (Branksome)	£5000	Replace three external doors which are rotting; undertake remedial work to the guttering; replace some flashings to help prevent further leaks from the roof into the Branksome Centre	629	0
Poole Methodists Church	Poole (Town Centre)	£5000	To restore to an acceptable standard the publicly available, and widely used, toilets at The Spire.	10,000	45
Poole Waste Not Want Not	Poole (Town Centre)	£3340	Capital grant to replace our rotten kitchen door and damaged flooring in our prep area ensuring a safe hygienic environment for our food cooking workshops	181	8
Somerford youth & Community Centre	Christchurch (Somerford)	£5000	Kitchen refurbishment at Somerford Youth and Community Centre, enabling safe, hands-on cooking sessions	300	0
St. Lukes Church	Christchurch (Burton)	£5000	To bring kitchen facilities up to standard.	500	5
St. Thomas Church PCC	Bournemouth (Ensbury Park)	£4600	Kitchen Refresh. The kitchen in the Church Hall is ageing and the cooker in particular does not function reliably and needs replacing.	100	3
St Peter's Church Development Project	Bournemouth (Town Centre)	£5000	We are seeking capital funding to upgrade and improve our community café kitchen, making it safer and more efficient, and better equipped to serve vulnerable and isolated local residents.	2000	25
The Power House (Poole)	Poole (Hamworthy)	£4760	The Power House Hub accessible ramp to premises, The Snug counselling and therapeutic treatments room with bi-folding window to maximise seating capacity for live music events, and café shelving.	15	2
Total		£74,718.71		21,298 beneficiaries	191 volunteers

Thanks to Dorset Community Foundation and BCP Council

“Thank you so much for your kind support of this project. It may seem like just a lick of paint and some new lighting, but it has transformed the space. We're incredibly grateful. The process was straightforward and Ellie was, as usual, incredibly prompt with her responses and clear and detailed in her replies. The only minor confusion was with regards to completing the 'How this grant was spent' section. I originally entered the figures given in our application, but was forced to fudge them as I was unable to submit this form until they added-up to the grant total; it meant the figures stated here are a little different to the budget and actual amounts (albeit by just a few hundred pounds).” **Bournemouth Parks Foundation**

“Thank you to (DCF Grants Manager) for being on the end of the email/phone, at all times! She has been very helpful and supportive, during the period of this grant, and we are so glad to report such success, with so much more still to come!” **Godfirst Church**

“Support from Ellie Maguire throughout the application and end process has been appreciated as sometimes "form filling" can be daunting!” **Merley Community Association**

“It is a privilege to be able to have an involvement with the Community Foundation. To the present all the help received from you has made a difference in our community and we have to thank you for all that.” **Mundeford Wood Community Trust**

“Sincere thanks for allowing us to switch the type of capital expenditure we could make to the Branksome Centre. This has been exceptionally helpful. It is getting harder and harder to find funding to support the fabric of the building.” **Poole Communities Trust**

“We are incredibly grateful for the support provided through this grant. It has allowed us to make essential improvements, deliver quality workshops, and create a space where our community feels safe, welcomed, and empowered. The funding also helped us build new relationships with local partners—such as B&Q, who offered generous discounts on materials—allowing the grant to stretch even further and strengthening our long-term sustainability. Most importantly, the grant has helped transform lives. Members tell us they feel less isolated, more confident, and better able to provide for their families. Seeing people grow from needing support to becoming volunteers themselves is a powerful reminder of the impact this funding has made.” **Poole Waste Not Want Not**

“The Grant was a huge help to us. We had long been concerned that our catering facilities would not meet modern health and safety demands. However we had not managed to find sufficient funds to address this. The grant made it possible to deliver improvements more quickly.” **St Luke's Church**

“Your care, attention to details and funds have been transformational in our being able to offer a safe space for those unlikely to be able to afford high street cafe prices plus enables those on their own to linger and talk and make new friends and have a chat .This is so missing from high streets with closure of places where especially older folk could meet and catch up in like banks and post offices. Here one can enjoy affordable food and drinks in a Grade 1 listed beautiful setting/ Concerts are free every Wednesday and every other Friday. Thanks to your funds we can provide more food and a better experience. Its been a brilliant partnership and we thank you so much!!” **St Peter's Church Development Project”**

AIMCommunity

Funded activities

The BCP Thriving Communities Fund was essential in contributing to the refurb of toilets and washing facilities at our Creekmoor Centre. The whole project had a total cost of £17,750 and included the removal of old toilets and cubicles and refit of new toilets, cisterns and cubicles, creation of shower and changing facilities, washer drier fitting and vent to comply with building controls.

Outcomes

Upgrading the toilet facilities at the Creekmoor Centre, alongside installing a shower and a washing machine, has created a meaningful and measurable improvement in the daily lives of the people who use the space, particularly individuals with learning disabilities, sensory needs, and ongoing hygiene challenges. What was once a very unwelcoming, and unsuitable environment has become a safe, accessible, and supportive environment that enables people to manage essential aspects of self-care with dignity.

For many of our regular users, maintaining personal hygiene is closely linked to physical health, emotional wellbeing, and confidence in social settings. The modernised, clean and safe toilet facilities provide a calmer, cleaner, and more private space, reducing anxiety for those who may need additional time or support. The addition of a shower has been especially impactful for individuals who struggle with routine hygiene at home or who may be experiencing instability in their living arrangements. Being able to wash at the Centre offers a sense of control and reassurance, and staff have observed increased comfort and participation among people who previously avoided activities due to concerns about their hygiene.

The washing machine has quickly become an essential resource. Some users face barriers to laundering clothes and towels—whether due to financial pressures, limited facilities, or difficulties with executive functioning. Having the option to wash items on-site allows people to address hygiene issues immediately and discreetly, preventing problems from escalating and reducing the stigma associated with wearing unclean or soiled clothing. The washing machine is integrated into the life skills programme for the users of the centre. As many will move on to supported living this piece of equipment is key to personal development and independent living. This has contributed to improved self-esteem, better engagement in group sessions, and a more positive social atmosphere within the Centre.

Story of change

A young person with learning disabilities attending the Creekmoor Centre was struggling with personal hygiene, often arriving in unwashed clothes and finding it difficult to participate confidently in activities. His challenges were linked to low self-esteem, challenges at home and gaps in basic life skills. With the new shower and washing machine in place, staff were able to support him discreetly and respectfully. He was given the opportunity to wash clothes on-site, and when some items couldn't be saved, we purchased new clothing to ensure he had clean, comfortable essentials. This practical help was offered in a way that protected his dignity and built trust. As he began to feel more comfortable, staff worked with him on simple routines and life skills around self-care. Over time, he is becoming more confident, more engaged in sessions, and more willing to interact with others. The change in his presentation and participation has been noticeable - not just cleaner clothes, but a lift in his confidence and sense of belonging. This small but significant intervention shows how the upgraded facilities enable us to respond immediately and compassionately to real needs.

Beaufort Community Association

The grant was used to replace the fire doors and equipment, with the total cost arriving at just over £6000, with the remaining balance contributed by reserves. Unfortunately, the Association Trustees have made the very difficult decision to close the charity permanently; announced on the 17th April. It is a great shame and the end of an illustrious 40 year history of serving our community. We are grateful for all of the support of DCF with the grants we have received in the past.

Bournemouth Parks Foundation

Funded activities

We redecorated the cafe's interior (including the toilets, ceilings, walls and meeting room) which necessitated the removal of tatty and marked wallpaper, we gave a coat of paint to the cafe's exterior, added new lampshades on the ceiling (plus fittings), deep-cleaned the floor, added charity branded signage & posters, a mirror and (soon to be added) nature & wildlife photos.

We were planning to use charity staff and volunteers to decorate the cafe, but specialised equipment & knowledge was required (ladders, plastering, replacement of light fittings). Instead, we paid slightly more than the initial quote in order to get a professional decorator. We saved a small amount of money for the floor cleaning - we only needed to hire a domestic floor cleaning machine, rather than an industrial one.

Outcomes

We now have a clean, inviting and more professional-looking cafe space, which radiates friendliness, calmness and somewhere that is loved. It is now somewhere that customers and cafe volunteers actually want to spend time in. And for community groups using the space for their own events (c.10 regular charities & welfare groups plus a further 10-15 ad-hoc groups) it now provides a tidy and inviting community space.

Customer feedback:

"Wow! This look amazing. What a difference."

"It feels really homely."

"I love the lights. Where did you get them from? I'd love some."

"It looks so beautifully clean and fresh. The new paintwork looks fabulous and green is such a lovely calm colour."

"What a transformation - it looks so different. I love it."

The new charity branding better explains our charity's work, shows that people are eating in a charity cafe, and explains that their custom is benefiting the local area thanks to profits being reinvested in local parks and green spaces. As a charity, we can now better promote our own (mainly free-to-attend) events and activities.

Cafe volunteers feel like the Charity really listened to them when they mentioned how tired the cafe looked, and are so happy to have a bright, clean space. We're all so proud of it and just want to keep showing it off to our customers and the charities and groups who use the space.



Friends of Kinson Community Centre

Funded activities

The Sharpe Room, which includes toilets and a Kitchenette has been completely re-Decorated with new curtains and blinds. Five of the Volunteers were involved in choosing the curtains and blinds and the colour of the walls.

Outcomes

The whole of the Centre has benefitted, and groups who have used the Sharpe room before, were thrilled at the changes. The yoga group love it, as now they can darken the Room as the curtains are thermal lined, so they keep the draughts out and the heat in, as the windows come under Heritage, they are old and draughty. The children's groups love it because it is so bright.

All the Groups are very happy because it is so bright and sunny. And they now use the kitchenette as that is also bright, and has a blind at the window and a small fridge, so now a really self-contained space. We are all now more confident selling the Room as it now sells itself.

This has been a really good project which everyone has enjoyed seeing the transformation.



Godfirst Christchurch

Funded activities

This funding has been hugely instrumental in helping turn a long-held vision into reality. Because of your generosity, a Community Wellbeing Café, called "Gate 15", is now open and people from the local community are already beginning to gather, connect and find a mid-week welcoming space to find friendship and access support. With the help of this grant, we have:

- Trained more than 20 volunteers, who are generously giving their time to help run the Café, enabling strong community ownership from the beginning. All volunteers have learnt new skills and completed food hygiene training, barista training and café operations training.
- Developed a clear identity and welcoming atmosphere, including the creation of branding and signage to help create a professional and inviting space.
- Purchased and installed essential kitchen and café equipment
- Successfully opened the café to the public, with a soft launch to test processes and systems (4 Dec 25), followed by a public opening (8 Dec 25).
- Achieved a Level 5 Food Hygiene Rating, the highest possible standard.
- Started to host community-building activities including "Knit and Natter", providing a much-needed space for social connection and friendship to combat loneliness and isolation within the community.

Since opening, the café has been running three days per week (this will grow in due course), currently staffed by four volunteers per shift. Community engagement has already begun to grow, with 79 drinks served in December, 180 in January, 165 in February and 177 in March.

Outcomes

All the feedback received by the café users and volunteers has been positive.

"This is my first time here and I think the hot chocolate is probably one of the best I have ever tasted. It was so beautifully presented. I also love the décor, the friendliness of the place and the whole atmosphere. It's great to see a Church opening its doors to all, in the week. Thank you"

This funding has been a tremendous enabler in helping launch to create a welcoming community café into the community and grow our support to some of the most vulnerable living nearby. The café is already beginning to fulfil this role. People are coming in throughout the week simply to sit, talk and enjoy the atmosphere. Many have commented on how welcoming and peaceful the space feels. We will continue to target and appeal to those who are most affected by local levels of socio-economic deprivation. It is encouraging to see new connections forming and community life beginning to grow around the café.

We have many community-based future activities planned, including a "Suspended Coffee" scheme for those unable to pay, meaning we intentionally reach those at risk – and Delivering 'Cooking on a Budget' courses. We have secured grants totaling £79,895 to support our plans in the community café.



Hope Community Church

Funded activities

Drain repairs to the drains that link to our food support cafe and cafe toilets.

Outcomes

The funding of the drain repairs has enabled us to stay open which benefits many volunteers and users. The hub provides food support and a warm space to clients who rely on us to reduce their loneliness and access freshly cooked food either free or at very low costs, especially over 65s. It is a safe space where people of all cultures, faiths, genders, ages and ability can receive a warm welcome , make friends & reduce loneliness . Our manager knows all our customers individually and helps them to access other support according to their circumstances.

One regular volunteer has declined in health to the point where they were not safe working in the cafe, but we knew we were a vital part of their week and how much they looked forward to getting out of their home and helping. We created a new volunteer role of meet & greet so that this volunteer could continue with their shifts and enjoy chatting with other customers and volunteers, otherwise they would have been very isolated.

Merley Community Association

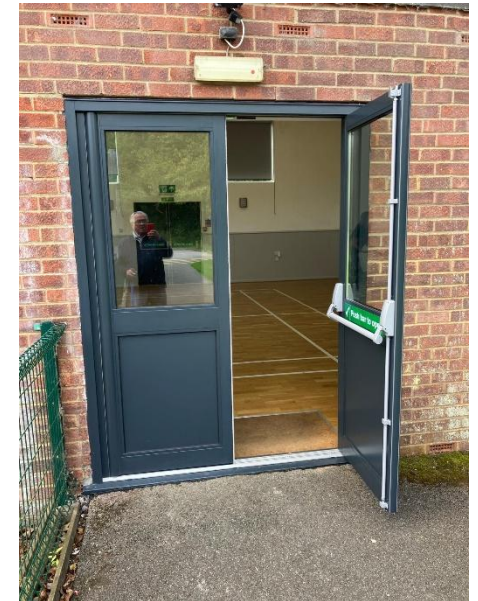
Funded activities

The supply and installation of 11 off, manual, hold open external door devices.

Outcomes

The beneficiaries of this project are all the Centre users. Not only has it been evidenced first hand, witnessing hirers arriving and exiting the Centre with greater physical ease and safety, feedback and comments have been received with regard to the enhancements. The Merley Community Association trustees recently held a User Group meeting and all feedback was very positive from a diverse range of hirers.

The suggestion and introduction of manual, door hold open mechanisms for all eleven external doors as opposed to the proposed one off automated door opening system has proved to be a complete success. Although the cost of the installation exceeded the amount of funding awarded, it was considered money well spent.



Story of change

For a hirer who has mobility issues and requires the use of a wheelchair, accessing the Centre via the recently introduced mobility ramp has become far less of a challenge with the extra wide door being held open wide while entering and exiting the building. This has resulted in the hirer being less dependent upon others giving them far more independence, improving their self-esteem.

Mudeford Wood Community Trust

Funded activities

All the necessary work was done for the boiler upgrade - the total cost was £4850.00 so the grant was were spend towards the costs.

Outcomes

As the costs to run the Community Centre reduced, Mudeford wood Community Trust was able to negotiate a more reasonable deal for the hire of facilities for regular activities and maintain the prices for the people of the community that use the Centre.

The next step is to acquire Solar panels to reduce carbon emission and running costs in order to carry on providing a good service to the community.

PCC St John with St Michael, Bournemouth

Funded activities

We were unable to spend the grant money as we had hoped (kitchen refurb) as it proved impossible to organise the works to be completed in the timeframe necessary. However, by completing other works, as approved by DCF, we are freeing up other resources to be able to spend on the refurb in the next period. We have used the money received to ensure that the buildings (Parish Centre and Hall - both community spaces available to hire) have been able to undergo vital repairs. These repairs included: Roof repairs (£3687), Gutter repairs (£180), a new ramp for access (£120), drain unblocking (£428), window repair (£185), repair of a leaking overflow (£387), and servicing a water boiler (£316).

Outcomes

This grant has enabled this space to continue running and has enabled some small improvements that mean we are in a better position to serve our community and users. In particular, money put towards roofing, gutters and drains has meant that we've been able to keep the space watertight. We have found in recent years that our gutters in particular have been insufficient to deal with the increase in rainfall we have experienced. A member of their Citizens Advice Financial Inclusion team member is now able to enter the building under her own steam during Foodbank sessions thanks to the new ramp.

The space is also used by Faithworks - on a Weds & Friday it is open for those who are sleeping on the streets and hoping to be open on Mondays in the future. It is also open for a Thursday Club for those who have got off the streets and now have accommodation. The project sees on average 25 people per week.

"There is something about knowing that the people here are volunteers... they're not just ticking a box. They are here because they care. It is the first time in my life I have felt like someone cares for me, like I am worth something. I know I have to make changes, and it is hard sometimes, but coming here gives me the confidence and support holds me to account."

Story of change

'Tom' lost his soul mate and wandered the south coast seeking a safe home. Living off the land, he reached BCP searching for hope and direction. After his camps were destroyed, he went to Half-time (St Mike' Church) where he could shower, rest, and feel cared for. He received a brief Safesleep (Local Hotel) stay before being referred to an Emmaus community. He is now safe, housed, and hopeful.

"I'm so thankful for Half-time and Safesleep; you've changed my life."

Poole Communities Trust

Funded activities

With your agreement we funded the replacement fire alarm system at the Branksome Community Centre. This is vital to the continued safe operation of the Brankosme Centre.

Outcomes

Although we had intended to proceed with high priorities (replacement doors and guttering repairs) with this grant, we had not anticipated the failure of key elements off the Fire Alarm system. Unfortunately they were not repairable and we are grateful to DCF for allowing us to switch funding for a replacement system. This reprioritisation has enabled us to continue with the safe operation of the centre and continue to maintain the fire safety of all local residents , staff and volunteers using the building.

The replacement fire alarm system will enable the Branksome Centre to continue to offer a safe community facility.

The pilates teacher at the Branksome Centre said:

“Over the past year our pilates participants have shared how the classes have positively affected their health and well being. One regular attendee has seen a noticeable improvement in mobility and balance, allowing her to return to hobbies she thought she would have to give up. Many have commented that the group provides not only physical benefits , but also a sense of community , helping them be more connected and less isolated.”

Poole Methodists Church

Funded activities

The toilets on our premises were repaired and refurbished. These provide a vital local amenity as they are open to the public and there is very little other provision in the town centre. They have experienced a huge amount of use since they were installed and, as a result, have had to be put out of use while repairs have been carried out. This has caused many problems for users of the community cafe and other facilities at The Spire, as well for as the many members of the public who use the toilets.

Outcomes

People in the town centre have safe, clean, reliable, accessible and freely available toilets. These have proved vitally important for a wide range of people, including families, older people and people with disabilities or specific medical conditions. Physical and mental wellbeing can be put under great pressure when such basic needs as access to toilets are not properly met. Whilst needing a toilet when out in public is a universal experience to which everyone can relate, not everyone can relate to the needs of, for example, a severely disabled woman who comes with a carer, who now has a place to meet her needs, or the elderly man with prostate cancer who has experienced far too many embarrassing incidents because of the lack of a toilet.

Mr ‘G’, who is a motorised wheelchair-user who visits The Spire most days, is pleased to have a spacious, reliable and accessible toilet available.

People have been sent to us by the jobcentre or other agencies because we have the only freely available toilets in the centre of town.

Poole Waste Not Want Not

Funded activities

A key activity supported by the funding was the continuation and expansion of our weekly cooking workshops. These sessions focus on teaching members how to cook nutritious meals on a budget, plan menus, reduce food waste, and build confidence in the kitchen. The replacement of our rotten back door and the installation of new, non-slip, hard-wearing flooring created a safe and hygienic environment where our prep and washing up can be done safely. This has been essential for both safeguarding and the wellbeing of our volunteers and members.

Outcomes

The upgraded space is easier to clean, more secure, and far more suitable for regular food preparation.

A pizza oven was donated, which meant we could redirect part of the grant towards other essential workshop equipment. The addition of new shelving, tables, and essential equipment—such as the Ninja Air Fryer, Food processor, and other demonstration tools—has allowed us to run more engaging, hands-on sessions. Members can now gather comfortably around the prep area, watch demonstrations clearly, and take part in practical cooking activities. These improvements have made the workshops more interactive and enjoyable, especially for families with children. Parents frequently tell us how much their children now enjoy helping at home, with some proudly sharing that their children are chopping vegetables, trying new foods, and talking about cooking as something fun rather than intimidating.

The grant has made a significant and measurable difference to the wellbeing, confidence, and daily lives of our members. By creating a safer, more functional space and enabling us to run high-quality cooking workshops, the funding has directly improved how people access food, learn new skills, and connect with others in our community. People feel supported, empowered, and no longer alone in managing the challenges of rising costs and limited budgets. Our recent feedback shows the scale of this impact:

- 100% of members told us they feel less isolated since joining our sessions
- 95% of members reported learning new skills, particularly around cooking, budgeting, and food preparation
- 100% said they are now less likely to use a food bank, because they can buy food at a price that fits their budget through our social supermarket

Story of change

"I have to say, the people at Waste Not Want Not are truly beautiful people who give so much inspiration to me and to others... I was someone who fell into financial difficulties after the suicide of my husband, suddenly becoming a single mother to two children aged 7 and 5. My company closed down because I was grieving, and starting again from what felt like the very beginning was incredibly hard. But having the support of Waste Not Want Not made such a difference. They weren't just there with food—they helped with financial struggles, offered friendship, and were simply someone to talk to. They gave my children a Christmas they hadn't had for the last two years, one we will never forget. Erika helped me with energy-efficient appliances when mine had broken, and even provided special days out, like tickets to the pantomime. I'm honestly speechless. I call them my angels from above. Thank you, Waste Not Want Not, for helping me through the hardest time of my life and putting smiles back on my children's faces—and mine too.

Sustainability

We are planning to expand our reach throughout 2026. We are actively exploring options for larger premises, which would allow us to offer more drop-in services, run daily workshops, and support even more families on their journey from reliance to resilience.



Somerford youth & Community Centre

Funded activities

Refurbishment of our kitchen

Outcomes

We have a kitchen that meets modern standards and does not look like it is falling apart. It has created a modern kitchen which is practical to run cooking sessions and where we can cook food and different meals for youth club activities and community events.

We are grateful for the support from the DCF to have been given the opportunity to refurbish our kitchen for the first time in over 15 years.

St. Lukes Church

Funded activities

We reconfigured the kitchen layout to create a more effective, and safer workspace. The old, outdated, units were replaced by modern wipe clean cupboards, worktops and splash backs. Removal of the old twin sink units and replacement with a single sink drainer enabled us to install a dedicated handwash sink to meet hygiene requirements. The old gas and electric cooker was replaced by a modern electric oven, hob, and extractor hood. Also we made space for an under counter fridge in the coffee serving area away from the kitchen door.

Outcomes

Users of the kitchen can be assured that they are using safer, cleaner, more hygienic facilities. Visitors can be more certain that food and drink provided has been prepared in a way that meets modern health and safety requirements. This has enabled us to review the possibilities of extending events involving catering in the future.

We have had very positive feedback from all our hall users. In particular local Guide and Brownie Groups have welcomed the changes as they like to offer kitchen activities at some of their meetings. Additional cupboard space has allowed different hall users to store items separately.

Volunteers we have found it a safer and cleaner environment in which to prepare food and drink. For example we recently held a coffee morning with bacon butties. In the past the kitchen drainer had to be used as workspace and work took place in a tight corner between the fridge/freezer, dishwasher and oven. Now we have sufficient worktop either side of the cooker to safely prepare food. For the first time we also have proper hand washing facilities.

Sustainability

We are looking at ways to maximise the facilities that we can offer across the local community.

before and after!



St. Thomas Church PCC

Funded activities

The majority of the funding was used for the purchase and installation of a Commercial Electric Cooker. The remainder of the funding was used for the purchase and installation of a Water Boiler and the purchase of a kettle, a knife sharpener and a first aid kit.

The estimate for the total refresh of the Kitchen came in at over £30,000. This included changes to the access to the kitchen so that it can be used by people in wheelchairs. So far, donations of £15,000 have been received towards the Kitchen Refresh. A request for funding for the remaining money has been made through our local councillors to BCP Council.

Outcomes

The cooker has only just been installed. The plan is that at tomorrow's Welcome Spaces, a fruit crumble will be cooked to make sure that the cooker and thermostat are working correctly.

St Peter's Church Development Project

Funded activities

We carried out installations of two new cameras for the café area. Installed emergency lighting points at the two main doorways fed from the local socket supply. Tested the installed emergency lighting system and replaced 8 lights that failed the drain down test, in order to bring the system into safe working parameters. We also bought a Liquid Line coffee machine that dispenses 150 cups per day on an average run of teas, hot chocolates and decaf/regular coffee.

Outcomes

The work now means that we can safely install our new community cafe. We had to ensure that lighting and circuits were safe for the installation of such a large new cafe and safe for all those who come to the church and use it, whether it be to attend our free concerts or to just come to the cafe to work or just to relax and escape the bustle outside. The amount of drinks we can now dispense means that we offer much better quality drinks and for large events at a speed that makes the experience better.

Story of change

We have had a new volunteer come to us who is transitioning from a half way house after a breakdown due to alcohol misuse. They were a very dynamic business person before but need a way to get back into social and work life post a terrible event. They have applied for the job of running our cafe which will mean it is open 6 days a week. This will provide a means of providing dignity and security. A life changing opportunity.

Sustainability

We are in the process of getting the quotes for the new kitchen. We expect work to start in the next three months and cafe to be completed by Autumn.

The Power House (Poole)

Funded activities

Our first focus was the accessible ramp so more community members could access the support and connections they need. Once a survey had been completed, our architect advised us that the original design of the ramp coming would not be compliant due to the limited space. BCP Council's Senior Highways Enforcement Officer gave a solution with a larger decking scheme and Planning was granted in February 2026, and then a pavement licence in March.

Three shelves were installed in our kitchen hub by a volunteer in Autumn 2025, providing much needed storage space and clearer work tops. Scaffolding planks brought a saving of £141.

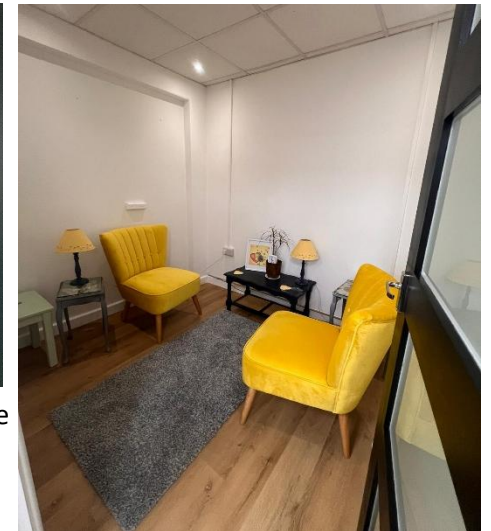
The Snug Counselling and Treatment room construction involved the removal of platform and plumbing for wash basins to create level access, installation of acoustic soundproofed stud wall, 2 power points & 4 dimmable spot lighting to create a relaxing atmosphere, and decorating.

Snug Hatch: As the studio is the best place for music events (there is little disturbance to our neighbours upstairs), losing the space the Snug has been installed in, means less seating capacity. Music events are a way of raising money as well as delivering our creative arts and wellbeing programme. Therefore maximising space is key. A hatch was a cheaper option to folding doors and included acoustic soundproofing.

Outcomes

The hub is now accessible to both parents/carers with young children in buggies. Since the installation of the ramp only a month ago, we have had a few mums with buggies dropping into the hub when this never happened previously. One single-mum has also been able to access Community Haircuts sessions. Older and less able bodied people are now able to come into the hub with no struggle. Wheelchairs can now access the hub with no need for our team including volunteers to struggle with a heavy temporary ramp that was impossible for one person to lift. We have established a connection with Hamworthy's local care home, Dorset House. Our "Grand Opening" event in a few weeks time will coincide with a flyer drop in the local vicinity, including the Sheltered Housing at Hinchliffe Close and Old Rope Walk to invite community members in.

Since it was installed, the Snug has held 2 LiveWell Dorset Health Check-Up sessions with 11 clients. Rachel Huggett has started holding low-cost counselling with 1 client. This has been pivotal for her as she continues her professional development to offer her skills to those who are struggling with their mental health and wellbeing. We have been in planning conversations with Mim Good Sports Therapist to create a workable framework for low-cost therapeutic massage which we will start advertising next week. (We have a donated massage table.)



The decking has full sunshine all day, making it an ideal spot to sit with friends, for a meeting, or to watch the Hamworthy world go by. It is also part of making the Hub look more inviting to come into. All of this ultimately is so we can open the doors to more local residents and wider community members so they can attend activities that support their wellbeing or grow their community connections and social networks.

Story of change

A regular volunteer who was particularly struggling with the clutter told us how necessary the shelves were: *"It was very difficult to work in such a crowded worktop and keep clean when there were so many items (jars/containers etc). I found it stressful and frustrating to give a good service to people attending the group."* Having paused her volunteering for a while due to personal circumstances, she looks forward to coming back and working in the new space. She will also love seeing the ramp installed as she was often navigating the challenges of helping hub visitors with reduced mobility access the hub.