

Community Chest

a partnership initiative

10

Year Ten Report 2016 – 2017





Above: *Working Together*, 17th March 2017 – group photo of Community Chest grant recipients @The Gateway
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Front Cover: (clockwise from top left) Chilterns MS Centre (Walk the MS Mile), Buckland and Aston Clinton Cricket Club, Grants Panel Chairman at Stoke Hammond Village Show, 3rd Aylesbury Scout Group, Stoke Hammond Community Association, Winslow Big Society Group, Puzzle Centre

Photographs in this report are either provided by the projects themselves, taken by Grants Panel members or by MJD Photography unless otherwise acknowledged. www.mjdphoto.biz

£4.7 million distributed through the Community Chest over the past ten years has enabled voluntary and community organisations to invest more than £38.2 million in services, activities and facilities for people living and working in or visiting Aylesbury Vale

More than 2,600 volunteers supported the 99 projects which were funded by the Community Chest in 2016-17, giving over 200,000 hours of their time

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Grants Panel Membership 2016-17

Aylesbury Vale District Council

Cllr Janet Blake, Member for Stewkley

Cllr Paul Irwin, Member for Waddesdon

Cllr Tim Mills, Member for Buckingham North

Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust

Kate Ayala, Stakeholder Engagement Manager

Barry Dale, Finance

Masaud Subedar, Head of Community Services



Cllr Janet Blake



**Masaud Subedar &
Cllr Paul Irwin**



**Kate Ayala &
Barry Dale**



Cllr Tim Mills

What was the Community Chest?

In 2006, **Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC)** transferred its housing stock to the **Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust (The Trust)**. The Community Chest was set up as part of the stock transfer agreement. Each partner contributed equally to the agreed budget of £500,000 per year (including administration costs), jointly managing this partnership fund for local community projects. This ten year fund ended in March 2017.

Applications were received from charities, voluntary and community groups, parish councils and social enterprises, for projects taking place in Aylesbury Vale which contribute to one or more of the five priority areas, listed above right.

The final year budget benefited from a balancing figure to make the fund up to the total of £5m over the ten years, to compensate for partial-year funding distributed in 2007-8.

During 2016-17, ninety nine grants totalling £598,419 were awarded. Between 2007 and 2017, 780 grants awarded, and a total of £4,690,991 has been distributed to benefit people in Aylesbury Vale.

A full list of 2016-17 grants can be found on pages 16-17. Funding was awarded through three grant streams:

- **Microgrants up to £1,000 were assessed and awarded monthly using a scoring system.** Fifty five organisations received microgrants in year ten, with an average value of £847.
- **Project Grants up to £25,000 were reviewed three times a year by a Grants Panel (see below), which consisted of three AVDC councillors and three representatives from the Trust.** Thirty two project grants averaging £12,276 were approved in 2016-17.
- **Three Year Revenue Grants (3YR) – up to £20,000 pa.** Twelve grants averaging £13,222 per year were awarded by the Panel in November 2013 for the funding period 2014-17.

Report from the Grants Panel Chairman

All good things must come to an end, as the old saying goes and, sadly, that's now true for the Community Chest. A ten-year grant-giving scheme set up by AVDC and the Trust with a £5m spend, it had a wide ranging criteria to distribute funding to causes in the Vale. It's helped literally hundreds of thousands of people, brought benefit to their communities and enriched lives along the way.



I was delighted to be the first year's Chairman of the Panel on its inception. As an elected Member of AVDC, I didn't know how long my tenure would be (a week's a long time in politics!) but I've remained on the Panel the whole of the ten years and am proud to be its last Chairman this year.

To all fellow colleagues who've been involved over that time, our officers Sarah Rothwell and Jan Roffe, and on behalf of everyone who's benefited from the Community Chest, THANK YOU SO MUCH!! Cllr Janet Blake, AVDC



First project grants awarded in July 2007



Photos from 2015-16 microgrant recipients - Elmhurst Youth Club, Ashendon Village Bench, Aylesbury Advanced Motorists, IQRA, Bierton Tennis Club

Microgrants

£456,178 has been awarded through 536 microgrants over the past ten years. Some of these have been a few hundred pounds for small projects such as portable goal posts for a rural village green or a training course for volunteers. Other microgrants, up to the £1,000 limit, have helped demonstrate local support for a project, enabling groups to bring in much larger grants from other sources, giving communities the confidence to progress with their projects and encouraging local fundraising to complete long awaited improvements to community facilities.

Assessed every month and turned round within a few weeks, these grants have contributed to more than £2.5m of local investment, benefiting nearly 460,000 people locally. Microgrants have helped groups buy kit and equipment, pay for training and coaches, facility improvements and maintenance, craft materials, venue hire and a range of other running costs, contributing to improved wellbeing for people in the Vale by enabling them to participate in a wide range of cultural, sporting and social activities, as well as supporting and equipping vital services for those most in need.



2016-17: Swanbourne Community Association, Nigerian Community Association Aylesbury, Drayton Parslow Cricket Club, Marsworth Village Sign

Project Grants

214 project grants totalling £2,765,813 have been awarded across thirty funding rounds considered by our grants panel, contributing to more than £23m investment in these projects through fundraising, other grants and income generated. Volunteer time and skills add value far in excess of this amount.

In the final year alone, the types of project supported are wide-ranging, from village halls, sports facilities and play equipment to investment in volunteer support for vulnerable families, young carers, and prison leavers. Services run by the voluntary and community sector employing paid workers have also been supported, a children's hospice at home service, short-term respite care provision for families of children with complex medical needs, extended opening hours for a recovery café for people addressing addiction and substance misuse issues.

Cuddington Parish Council, CHAT, Rennie Grove Hospice Care, Lindengate, Stewkley Recreation Ground, Young Carers Bucks



Reflecting the Vale's role as the original home of the modern paralympic movement, a seed funding grant was made to the National Paralympic Heritage Trust (more info on page 12), for the development of a permanent museum and exhibition space at Stoke Mandeville, which has gone on to secure significant funding from the Lottery and other grant making bodies, so we look forward to seeing how this develops in the future.

With the Vale's population of 195,000 people, and nearly 2.7m beneficiaries already reported by recipients of the 780 Community Chest grants, each resident of the Vale will have had around 14 chances to benefit from a project funded by the Community Chest over the past ten years. This will increase, as local community facilities created or improved with the help of Community Chest funding will continue to benefit local people for many years.

3YR Grants

In 2013, sixteen organisations applied for three-year revenue funding. With a two-phase application process, twelve organisations were put forward from the initial expression of interest phase I for a full second phase application. Phase II applications totalled £216,000 per year. Funding of up to £160,000 pa was allocated between the twelve projects. Over the past three years, £476,000 has been awarded.

At the end of our third and final round of three-year funding, it seems appropriate to give you a fuller picture of the twelve organisations who have received this last tranche of vital funding, as it is hard to sum up these services in just a sentence or single photo.



Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale - After an initial struggle to achieve the grant requirements in the first year this project has gone on to achieve some excellent results. We said that over the three years, we would recruit and train 15 young people considered to be NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) or at risk of becoming NEET. We have trained 14 young people in total over the three years. 8 of them have gone on to paid employment, 4 have gone on to further education and 2 are still volunteering with us.

We are very proud of the leg up that we have given these young people and it has given us a new volunteer resource. SK was one of our first recruits and here's what she had to say about the project. *'I had recently finished my college course and was struggling to find a job in the law so I volunteered with Citizens Advice to get some skills. I trained as a Gateway Assessor then as an Advisor and I then got a paid job as an Outreach Caseworker with Citizens Advice. I am now working for a law firm in London and am completing my training to become a solicitor. I wouldn't have been able to do any of this if it wasn't for my time at Aylesbury CA.'*



Aylesbury Homeless Action Group – During this time we have recruited a full time case worker, which has enabled us to increase the number of support hours offered and are able to respond more quickly and efficiently to a person in a housing crisis.

Staff have used client feedback to develop our 'prevention strategy' to identify and support clients who are at risk of becoming homeless.

AHAG has developed its ongoing tenancy support, including a buddy system, offering ongoing practical support and advice to more complex clients, run by an experienced volunteer. We have set up Financial Capability courses in partnership with Citizens Advice to give clients the skills and confidence to budget more effectively.

We have supported clients with looking for employment and updating their CVs, and worked with Adult Education to support clients improving their knowledge and skills. We have identified appropriate volunteer opportunities for clients, giving them valuable experience.

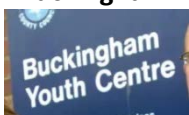
Over the past three years, accessing appropriate, affordable private rentals has become increasingly challenging. We have developed an 'early bird' sign up scheme with private landlords, so we are aware of any available accommodation. We have also set up a notice board at the Hub, which gives details of any relevant properties as well as job opportunities. This has allowed clients to easily access appropriate information.

AHAG is part of a Complex Needs group alongside AVDC and other agencies, developing further partnership working to ensure that we can best support our clients.

AHAG's policy is to encourage both staff and volunteers to attend training to develop their skills. This has enabled AHAG to progress the service that we offer to clients. In particular, staff and volunteers have received mental health training, which has permitted us to more effectively support clients with mental health issues. Staff have also been on training to support clients experiencing domestic abuse and personality disorders.

AHAG seeks to continue to progress and improve the services it offers. We are undertaking a Stakeholder Consultation, to ensure that the needs of the local community are best met.

Buckingham Youth Clubs Ltd – Young people of Buckingham and surrounding area have few social outlets that they can access at affordable prices and are short of places to go and things to do.



Our four youth club sessions each week provide them with a safe place to meet and socialise with their friends and provide them with a range of social activities (pool, table football, air hockey, game stations, computers/internet and music) and sports activities (table tennis, badminton, 5-a-side football,



basketball, dodgeball) as well as cooking and craft activities.

We also offer specialist sessions for groups such as Winslow Young Carers, Clearly Speaking and Disability Sports. We consult regularly with our members to find out their needs, encouraging participation in club activities such as the annual Swimathon, assisting with running tuckshops or helping with a club junior to their own.

Junior volunteers are running a competition to design a logo.

This grant covered some of our core staff costs, we have been able to use other funds to purchase equipment such as new table tennis tables and new badminton equipment and also to subsidise trips and other activities, making them accessible to many who could not otherwise afford them, including an Urban Art workshop.



Buckinghamshire Mind - After a brief closure in 2015 the counselling service is now running at full capacity. The number of referrals has increased and we hold a waiting list for on-going counselling sessions to start. Bucks Mind appointed a business & development manager and a new CEO in 2015. We have produced a three-year strategic plan with these priorities: Supporting & developing people, diversifying our income, promoting engagement and embedding sustainability.

We have already made steps to engage with other services to look at how we can support each other and work together. The fee structure that is now in place is generating an income that will help sustain the service, as will the funding applied for and received to date. We are currently running a pilot scheme for a young people's counselling service, that will be based on the successful model of the adult counselling service.

As the service grows, we want to be able to expand into the community and offer sessions from other venues. We hope to build on the counselling we have provided for the PCC (Police & Crime Commissioner) and apply to be one of the providers for the PCC counselling hub, for victims of crime.

Feedback received from clients: *'I feel that counselling sessions have been hugely beneficial during a particularly difficult time in my life. I have been given coping skills that are continuing to benefit me.'* *'I am very grateful for the time that has been given. It has helped me when I was going through difficulties and reminded me that life isn't all doom and gloom.'* *'Felt safe as soon as I walked in.'* *'I can't thank my counsellor enough for all her help.'*



BucksVision - The grant has part-funded a Community Engagement Coordinator whose role is to support visually impaired (VI) people living in Aylesbury Vale to access the community and mainstream social activities and interact with their peers, through a team of volunteers, with the long term aim of increasing their confidence, independence, participation and social networks, which decreases social isolation and improves emotional health and wellbeing. The Co-ordinator has achieved the following:

- Arranged new and exciting activities, including some held in the evenings and at weekends, which has increased participation.
- Engaged more VI members in Aylesbury Vale to continue to strengthen the community peer support network through BucksVision's Aylesbury based Working Age Group.
- Recruited VI volunteers who are successfully in place to assist BucksVision with various volunteer roles, including social media, Braille Teaching services and Online Today technology support.
- Increased access to and maintained interaction with local mainstream community groups.
- Overcome transport issues (a big issue for the VI community) by funding transport costs for activities.

Feedback from a behind the scenes theatre experience: *'I cannot remember when I last went to a theatre. The touch tour, the headphones and in particular meeting the cast and their précis of the play beforehand made it possible for me to follow which otherwise I most certainly would not have been able to do. Well done' '..really enjoyed it, we are very grateful for the opportunity' '..it was amazing seeing the scenery up close and how different it seems to viewing it from where we sat. I wanted to say a big THANK YOU to everyone from Bucks Vision and all the theatre staff who helped us all during our visit.'*





Calibre Audio Library – provides audio books to 18,000 members across the UK, Republic of Ireland and other EU Countries, with members from age 5 – 105.

With the closure of our cassette library, our grant was used to fund our volunteer co-ordinator and volunteer training, to help us manage a period of significant change. Over 3 years, of our existing volunteers who had only worked on cassettes, 18 have been retrained to work with CDs and another 23 now work on the memory stick service.



We have recruited 37 new volunteers who work across both CDs and memory sticks as required.

In addition we have provided community placements for in excess of 20 students who attend schools in Aylesbury, which has given them valuable work experience and in a number of cases has helped them achieve their Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

We have held focus groups with our volunteers to keep them informed and involved in the changes to our service. We have 84 volunteers at our HQ in Weston Turville. Over the past 12 months they contributed roughly 10,700 hours of their time.

Since April 2016 we have welcomed 22 new library members who live in Aylesbury Vale. In total 160 print disabled people from the area have received our talking books over the past 12 months. 71% of these members are over the age of 70 and 88% have a visual impairment.

For an elderly person with deteriorating sight, audio books replace not only reading but also many other activities they can no longer see to do. Our books provide company, comfort and vital mental stimulation and they help to relieve the isolation and depression that sadly affect many older people with sight loss. For visually-impaired children, reading Braille or large print can be quite hard work but audio makes books easy and fun, which encourages them to explore more books. For young people with dyslexia, audio books enable them to enjoy the same books their friends are reading, so they don't feel excluded by their disability. Listening to an audio book while following a printed copy can also improve their reading skills and vocabulary, leading to better exam grades and job prospects.

One of our Aylesbury Vale members made the following comment: *"Calibre has made a big difference to my life. I have enjoyed the books I've been sent. I've come to depend on them. I'd like to say a big 'thank you' to the volunteers and all who work at Calibre. I really appreciate everything they do."*



Chilterns MS Centre - The past three years have been a challenging period of considerable growth and change, as we have responded to a significant increase in patient numbers. In October 2013, we were treating 260 people with Multiple Sclerosis every week and seeing 4 or 5 new patients a month. By the end of 2016, we were providing weekly physiotherapy to 367 people and referrals had risen to 16 a month.

This is due to increased awareness of our centre, thanks partly to a number of high profile community fund raising events and partly to a closer relationship with NHS services across the four counties we cover. Since the end of 2015, our physiotherapists have been part of the NHS Multi-Disciplinary Team for MS in Buckinghamshire, which meets every three months at our Centre to discuss joint treatment plans for patients. As a result, NHS staff are now more aware of our services and are making more referrals.

We have been managing increased demand by encouraging patients with lower needs to move from one-to-one physiotherapy sessions into larger support groups run by our occupational therapists. These include new special interest activities such as gardening and art, which boost mental health by encouraging relaxation and creativity, as well as providing peer support.

During 2016, our team of 16 full and part-time therapists have:

- delivered 9,322 one-to-one physiotherapy treatments
- supported up to 252 people in weekly group physiotherapy classes
- provided 461 hydrotherapy sessions
- delivered 298 one-to-one occupational therapy sessions
- supported 724 attendances at social group activities

Our service users all have multiple sclerosis - a degenerative neurological condition that can lead to high levels of disability and impaired quality of



life. Many of the people attending our centre have difficulty walking and carrying out daily tasks, and some are wheelchair users. Regular physiotherapy is hugely beneficial in reducing the severity of their symptoms. It increases independence and mobility, enables people to stay in work for longer, and maintains their ability to take part in family life and social activities - but long term physiotherapy is not available on the NHS. We fill the gap in provision by providing free expert treatment for as long as people need it in a friendly, supportive environment that is led and inspired by people with MS.

Without our Centre, hundreds of local people would be left struggling to cope with their illness alone.

Juliet is 37 and lives in Oakley. She started coming to our Centre in 2013, not long after her diagnosis of MS, and she also volunteers as an admin assistant to our Occupational Therapy team. She said: *'Going to the MS Centre has been such a positive experience for me, not only the amazing physio that got me back on my feet after a big relapse, but I have tried so many treatments that have helped including oxygen therapy, reflexology, occupational therapy and mindfulness sessions.'*

Barry lives in Buckingham and has relied on our charity for many years. He said: *'In 1996 I was diagnosed with MS and I had little information about MS at the time but then I discovered the Chilterns MS Centre and it changed everything. Every step of the way I received help and advice from the most amazing team of physios and their support team. They make each visit for treatment fun and informative, and just talking to other people who are going through the same experience is a great help.'*

In last year's service user survey, 97% of respondents were 'likely' or 'extremely likely' (93%) to recommend the Centre. Comments received: *'The centre has been an absolute lifeline to me, I could not have coped with my diagnosis without the support I have had. Weekly oxygen therapy and physio have enabled me to be as good as I can be physically too. I would tell anyone to join such a fantastic place.'* *'Friendly, sympathetic professional advice and care. Good to be in a place where everyone has an understanding of MS.'* *'The team are so kind and supportive. They give me hope.'*



ENRYCH - Tailored volunteer support to help adults with physical or sensory disabilities participate in leisure and learning activities. *"I love getting out and being busy" "we get on like a house on fire" "it is brilliant to have more social contact".*

Enrych Bucks – what our members like to do



We have a very simple and effective way of working that maximises the benefit of our funding and resources. We take referrals from a range of sources (Prevention Matters, Rayners Hedge, Head Injury Service, self referral and others), we cover the whole span of disabilities: from arthritis to brain injury, motor neurone disease, stroke or visual impairment.

We carry out careful profiling of each new member and aim to set up a leisure, learning or sport activity to suit their needs and wants. We achieve this by matching a volunteer with the member, or by facilitating their participation in an existing social or activity group.

We support the partnership or participation for as long as it is needed – generally between six months and two years – and then record the outcome compared with the original aims. Our support is tailored, each new member is different, and some cases require much more time and effort than others to establish a successful partnership. During 2016-17 we have been sustained by around 70 volunteers in the Vale of Aylesbury and we estimate their contribution – using the National Living Wage – at £50,000, rather more than our total budget and five times our grant from the Community Chest.

Jane from Aylesbury has severe arthritis and mobility constraints, she joined in March 2016 wanting to increase her social circle and take part in a craft activity. Jane was paired with Victoria in April 2016, they have met regularly and attended the Enrych pub lunches and evenings. Jane says: *"I get on great with my volunteer. She is such a good laugh. She is staying over to help me when I come out of hospital. We do craft, genealogy and sewing together. I see her once or twice a week and we communicate by email in between. It is brilliant to have more social contact - really amazing. I am going out so much more now, my volunteer is so nice I can't fault her. I'm so happy I met her, she's brilliant."*

Pamela joined Enrych in July 2015, lives in Buckingham, and has limited mobility due to osteoporosis and scoliosis. Partnered with volunteer Anna in November 2015, they enjoy regular outings together. *'It was great to get out of the house as I hadn't really been out for the previous 12 months. We get on really well together. Anna's been very kind.'* *'A red letter day for me as it was the first outing without taking my*



wheel chair! We hired a mobility buggy and Anna kindly drove me around the fabulous grounds. Thank you Enrych, you've made my day!

Trustees, members and volunteers from Enrych would like to express our appreciation for the support from the Aylesbury Vale Community Chest during the last three years. It has made a big difference to our capability and so enabled us to make a big difference in the lives of so many people with disabilities. Thank you.



Home-Start Aylesbury Vale - the Community Chest has provided a significant contribution to our service enabling us to provide a network of twenty two home visiting volunteers throughout Aylesbury Vale, who offer emotional and practical support to around forty five families with young children each year.

Volunteers provide regular weekly visits to families, offering emotional and practical support to parents who are struggling to cope with a wide range of difficult life events, including issues such as post natal depression, disability, terminal illness, bereavement, autism, isolation, domestic violence, stress and lack of support. Two brief examples:

'Mum had severe post-natal depression, she was unable to go out, her marriage was under strain, the two young children hadn't been out of the house for over six months. With our support, Mum got help with her depression, started going swimming and to an art class; children started going to park and play groups; Dad felt happier and better able to cope.'

'Mum was assaulted at work (police woman). Dad recently came out of the forces. Family was new to the area. Lots of arguing, new baby, not coping, no support network. With our support, they got to know other parents, developed a support network and gained in confidence, improving their relationship and parenting skills.'

100% of the parents supported by Home-Start Aylesbury Vale have stated that their emotional health and wellbeing has significantly improved; families accessing community activities and facilities, and building networks of support, demonstrates the significant benefits derived from our model of support.

Over the past three years, Home-Start Aylesbury Vale has been able to consolidate its service and establish an effective funding committee and strategy to ensure, as best we can, that we are no longer in a 'close to the edge' existence that we had been in previously.

Support from the Community Chest gave us security, leverage and the ability to plan ahead.

Through our experience of monitoring and reporting to the Community Chest, we have become far more confident and effective in the process of providing a variety of information to funders, which in turn has better informed us as staff and Trustees.

During this period we have run at full capacity providing an equitable and reliable service. We have ensured that we have been accessible to families throughout Aylesbury Vale whether town or village we have been able to respond quickly. There are a lot of families through out the Vale that have become stronger, happier, stayed together and are better able to cope as a result of the Community Chests support - Thank you.



Horses Helping People - The last three years has been a very important period in the development of Horses Helping People. During this time, we moved forward from the initial settling in and building phase at Sunrise Farm, and started to look to the future.

The Community Chest funding was crucial in helping to establish a secure future for Horses Helping People in the following ways:-

It enabled us to establish long term partnerships with Pebblebrook School and Young Carers Bucks, who both want to keep sending young people to us in the future. The craft sessions we developed for the Young Carers have given us a new way of keeping sessions going through bad weather, making us more sustainable.

Our comprehensive volunteer training programme has enabled us to develop a more highly skilled volunteer workforce, with a more professional approach.

The greatest and most influential success of the three years is the Mindfulness project. We will forever be grateful to the Community Chest for supporting this unusual idea. Over the three years a team of two staff and two volunteers has worked together to create a whole new product, which we plan will eventually account for 40% of sessions, making a substantial contribution to our sustainability.

We have developed varied workshops for a range of participants. We have



made some excellent contacts, including teachers from the world renowned Oxford Mindfulness Centre, who have given us encouraging feedback and help when creating the courses. The Mindfulness project was also the first time Horses Helping People had worked with a sessional worker. We now have three sessional workers employed on various projects, which has helped enormously with the smooth running of the organisation. You could call this the perfect project - as well as clients benefiting, we now have staff, volunteers and horses who regularly take part in Mindfulness sessions, contributing to the wellbeing of all!

"Such a wonderful experience, thank you so much, it has made a real difference to my life"

Client with anxiety and depression.

"As manager of a mental health support organisation I have no doubt about the therapeutic benefits of mindfulness with horses." Mindfulness workshop participant

The last year of the Community Chest funding period has been the perfect time to take advantage of the New Futures business advice package, which has helped us to create a robust strategy and business plan.

"Horses Helping People is an important part of our school life. Our students go to Horse Therapy, as we call it, when they are in Year 8 (aged 12-13). The younger students all aspire to be able to go and the older students remember it fondly as an enjoyable experience."

This year we had a student who finds concentrating in lessons extremely difficult and is always 'on the go' Take him to Horse Therapy and he is focussed, quiet, listening with great concentration to every instruction.

It is a different experience for each individual child, they all get something out of it, whether it is a therapeutic experience, a real affinity with the horses or just an escape from school for an afternoon."

Jo Greaves, Family Liaison, Pebblebrook School



Puzzle Centre – from our premises in Middle Claydon, we deliver specialist nursery education, therapy and support to young children with autism and other communication difficulties.

Parents and early years practitioners have also attended the Centre to receive information and training to build their knowledge and skills in meeting the needs of children with autism. Parents have received practical and emotional support from Puzzle Centre staff at the Centre, as well as used the designated "Parents Area" to share experiences and support each other. Additionally, at the Centre, charity staff have worked with a number of volunteers and work experience students.

The Community Chest contribution towards our vital core costs has also given us the financial security to further develop the charity's Puzzle Assessment and Support Service (PASS) for children and families at home, as well as external training for practitioners. It has also enabled us to focus on Puzzle Centre's long-term plans and ambitions to become a Centre of Excellence in Early Years Autism.



Reach: In April 2014, Puzzle Centre was working with around thirty children each year. We're now reaching and benefiting more than sixty children who have autism or other communication difficulty. In addition, the number of parents, carers and professionals we reach and benefit has increased. Community Chest support enabled us to maintain our core provision of specialist nursery education whilst developing and expanding our outreach services; enabling us to increase our reach and impact.

Quality: Puzzle Centre has maintained its rating of *Outstanding* from Ofsted; illustrative of the high standards we achieve. Community Chest support has enabled us to maintain and develop our excellent multidisciplinary team, our facilities, our expertise and our approach; helping ensure that we continue to develop and deliver best practice early intervention for children with autism.

Evidence of impact: In recent years, we have improved the way we monitor, record and evaluate the difference we are making to the lives of our beneficiaries. We are working with external advisors and volunteers to carry out detailed analysis of the wealth of data we hold, so that we can provide further evidence of the benefits of early intervention for children with autism, and share our learning with others.

Profile: Since April 2014, Puzzle Centre has strengthened its reputation as a leading authority and exemplar of

best practice in early years autism education and support. Our contribution to the development and launch of the Autism Education Trust (AET) national standards and guidelines for early years in autism is a key example. Our role as delivery partner in the AET's South East Region Early Years Training Hub, as well as recruitment of other Hubs, highlights the value of our unique expertise. More recently, we've delivered training courses across the UK from Newcastle-upon-Tyne to Bromley in Kent; indicative of our far-reaching reputation and impact.

Sustainability: Over the three-year funding period, we have been able to develop our outreach services. As these services are fee-based, this has enabled us to diversify our income streams and strengthen our longer-term financial sustainability. We now have a solid base upon which to further expand and implement our plans to become a Centre of Excellence in Early Years Autism.



Thomley has seen visitor numbers grow year on year to over 1,000 in 2016-17. Thomley has become more focused in being an activity centre, in the sense that we have broadened the range of indoor and outdoor activities made available to our visitors. The staff employed are pro-active in engaging visitors and their parents/carers in these activities. Thomley used the Community Chest funding towards staff costs and was therefore able to guarantee staff time to consistently deliver a range of leisure and play activities for disabled children and young people. This led to an increased number of visitors and freed up resources to start a number of new after school clubs.

'Thomley is a place where anyone can go and feel refreshed, relaxed and able to continue with the daily life of a special need person.' *'The biggest thing for us is the way Thomley provides a safe environment which allows our son to play confidently under less direct supervision than he might need in another environment. He loves the freedom this allows him.'*

'Staff are fab at encouraging the kids to try new things in their own time and with support.' *'My son is always able to come out of his shell at Thomley and it's a pleasure to see him enjoying all the activities.'* *'It has been a good place to come and meet with other parents who are experiencing similar things. Somewhere that people understand that sometimes you just have to laugh about how awful things are or cry and there is no judgement.'*

'There are no other places that we can go to as a family where we can relax because we know that the challenging behaviour of our child with special needs will be accepted and we will not feel uncomfortable about it.' *'All the staff are friendly, helpful, knowledgeable and welcoming.'*

'Thomley provides a day out for the family that everyone enjoys. The children have lots of fun with all the interesting activities indoors and outdoor. The parents have a relaxed day because the children are very happy and because it is a tolerant and inclusive place.'



Feedback from Grant Recipients

'Initially we found the application difficult, and our first application was turned down. Through the persistence of our application team alongside the assistance and advice we received from the Grants Panel in respect of our initial bid we gained the necessary knowledge to complete a successful application. We would not change the process, we found the process of application helpful in understanding our own organisation and our aims going forward.'

'Excellently simple and straightforward'

'We are very grateful for our award. The Grants Officer was helpful and supportive throughout the entire process. Having applied for other grants, the process was more streamlined than many!'

'The process has been succinct and very easy to follow. I would also like to thank the Grants Officer for her guidance and advice.'

'The Staff involved in the process were amazing to deal with. So supportive and always quick to respond following any queries.'

'Thank you for the time, patience and help you have given me over the last few months. It has made life significantly easier for me when completing the documentation for our application.'

'Very clear and straight forward process with good support throughout. Many thanks.'

'The Community Chest has been a lifeline for many people in the Vale and will be greatly missed, and I'd like to thank you and your team for all the work you've done. Best wishes, Cllr. Sue Renshell'

Working Together 2017

Cllr Janet Blake summarised her ten years on the Community Chest Grants Panel, including three terms as panel chairman, speaking of the diverse range of projects the fund has supported over that time.

Alex Stanyer, Principal of the **Puzzle Centre**, spoke at the very first Working Together event back in 2008, when a microgrant towards a laptop and projector had enabled them to embark on a training programme for parents and early-years professionals, sharing their expertise in working with young children with Autism. Now, the Centre has an international reputation, staff have contributed to national standards for Autism Education, and their outreach service and training courses give this small village preschool a reach far beyond the local area.



Christopher Williams, Conservation and Education Director for **BBOWT** in Buckinghamshire, spoke about a number of local projects which have received Community Chest support over the past ten years: their award winning visitor centre at College Lake, which hosted the 2010 Working Together event; the purchase of Leaches Farm, part of the Upper Ray Meadows, floodplains of the River Ray, an important habitat for wading birds such as curlew and lapwing; and interpretation boards at reserves in Bernwood Forest and Bacombe Hill, which enable visitors to understand more about the landscape, plants, insects, birds and animals to be found in each reserve. BBOWT manage 88 reserves across three counties, with more than 1,400 volunteers, 51,000 members and many more visitors each year.

Andrea McCubbin, Chief Executive of **Buckinghamshire Mind**, told us about the counselling service offered from their base in Aylesbury, for children, young people and adults. A core team of paid staff support more than 200 dedicated volunteers to offer their services, including 8 volunteer counsellors. Andrea shared Mind's national vision, *'We won't give up until everyone experiencing a mental health problem gets both support and respect.'* Adult counselling sessions are subsidised according to people's ability to pay, supporting people who can't afford



private therapy, who don't meet criteria for NHS services or choose not to access NHS services due to restricted service or extended waiting times. Mental health improved for 91% of clients. Community Chest funding was crucial in supporting the redevelopment of the Aylesbury counselling service. The service is going from strength to strength – increasing number of clients, volunteers, building the staff team, looking at external delivery sites to meet demand, with a revised business model that is sustainable and a bright future – support from the Community Chest has helped the service to get to where they are today.

Vicky Hope-Walker, project manager for the **National Paralympic Heritage Trust**, gave an informative presentation about the plans for a Paralympic Heritage Centre based at Stoke Mandeville Stadium. For the first time there will be a permanent museum, which will include materials and exhibits going right back to the rehabilitation treatments offered by Dr Guttman, and the very first Stoke Mandeville Games held in 1948, alongside the London Olympics. The Trust will also develop mobile exhibitions which can be displayed at venues across the UK. Information is being added regularly to the Trust's website, www.paralymphicheritage.org.uk

J's Joyful Divas are a small, fun choir, who perform at unusual venues and community events across the local area, singing together for the past five years; from armed forces day to older people's groups and garden centres. A Community Chest microgrant towards a mobile PA system has enabled them to be heard more easily, and the ladies brought three songs to add to the celebration event, including 'Thank you for the Music'.



Year 10 Awards

As part of the final Working Together event, in recognition of the contribution and achievements of local voluntary and community groups, the Grants Panel selected a number of grant recipients to receive awards. There could have been many winners from the hundreds of projects funded over the years, however, Grants Panel Members narrowed it down to six categories, with the award certificates kindly presented by the High Sheriff of Buckinghamshire, Mrs CR Soames DL.

People Who Make A Difference – winner Ron Leon, volunteer counsellor at **Buckinghamshire Mind**. His nomination read: 'Ron is a volunteer counsellor for Bucks Mind and has given his time generously over many years. Ron has been a loyal and dedicated volunteer. Regardless of the challenges the service has faced, Ron has never lost sight of our core purpose, which is to support people with their mental health. The clients always come first for Ron, he goes beyond what is expected of him in his voluntary role eg offers to see extra clients when the waiting list grows. He is passionate about mental health and has genuine compassion for each and every one of his clients without losing his professionalism. I think what his clients say about him speaks volumes: incredible; totally non-judgemental; life changing. It's volunteers like Ron that make a real difference to the mental health and wellbeing of the people we support in the counselling service, without the Rons of this world we would not have a service.'

Each three-year revenue grant recipient was invited to nominate a volunteer for this award. The Grants Panel could not decide between the two **runners up**, Graham Sanderson from **Calibre Audio Library** and Jim Whatmore of **Buckingham Youth Clubs**.

Volunteer Development Award – winner Calibre Audio Library – their volunteer development journey is described on page 7.

Runner up Young Enterprise, working with local business people to develop entrepreneurial, workplace skills and understanding in students at primary and secondary schools, such as team building and community responsibility.

Partnership Development Award – winner Aylesbury Homeless Action Group – AHAG's twice weekly drop-ins at Walton Hall offer a venue for a range of support services to meet with homeless people (Oasis, SMART, Connexions, Connection Support, Job Centre Plus, Citizens Advice, debt and housing advisors, healthcare staff, Adult Learning....). At their Rickfords Hill office, AHAG can flexibly arrange meetings and 1:1 support at other times. They provide street homeless people with a postal address enabling them to register with a medical practice and other services. AHAG have a good track record of working effectively with multiple agencies to support clients into secure and sustained tenancies.



Runner up the Barn Owl Project (**Bucks Owl & Raptor Group**) – partnerships with local landowners to host and monitor boxes, working with the local prison to build the boxes and with Vale Countryside Volunteers.

Most Entrepreneurial Organisation – winner Stewkley Enterprise Agency, training local people to deliver grounds maintenance and gardening work, giving work opportunities to NEETS (Not in Employment, Education or Training) in rural areas, selling gardening services to householders and other landowners and delivering verge maintenance and green spaces services for parish councils.

Runner up Lindengate, – a social and therapeutic horticulture project, working with a range of agencies such as Talkback, Active Vale and others, making good use of the space and facilities at their site next to World's End Garden Centre, Wendover, bringing back to life a former allotment site which had fallen into neglect and disuse. They are building a good relationship with their landlord. They rejuvenate plants that the garden centre would otherwise throw away, using them on site or selling to their supporters.

Legacy Award – winner Chilterns MS Centre - At our first Working Together event in 2008, Sue Barber brought plans for the new **Chilterns MS Centre**. In 2009, a ground breaking ceremony was held, and the move to the new, purpose-built therapy centre took place in 2012. More than 330 people receive treatment each week, with over 500 people with MS now registered at the Centre.

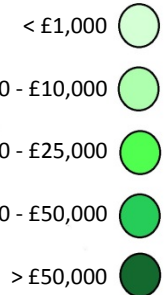
Runner up Puzzle Centre, whose development story is told on pages 10-11.

Community Champions Award – winner Westbury Village Hall – over a number of years, the team consulted with the local community, developed plans and raised funds to replace a dilapidated changing block with a new, purpose built village hall, shop, café and changing rooms. A dedicated and committed team drove and delivered this fabulous new community facility for everyone in the area, with a café and shop to welcome those passing through.

Runner up Citizens Advice Aylesbury Vale providing free, expert, impartial support, information and advice to anyone who needs their service.



AI – by Aylesbury Vale District Ward Areas



£

N = North area

140,417

E = East area

277,902

W = West area

100,800

Vale-wide Services

79,300

£ 598,419

Facts and Figures

Tables B1-B3 Single-year breakdown for year 10, 2016-17

B1. figures for the three grant streams in year 10, 2016-17	Applications Received	Grants Awarded	% success rate	£ Total Funding Awarded	Total Cost of Funded Projects £	£ Investment for every £1 granted
Microgrants	56	55	98	46,589	246,661	5.29
Project Grants	45	32	71	392,830	4,662,597	11.87
Three-Year Revenue Grants	16	12	75	159,000	794,659	5.00
Total	117	99	85	£598,419	£5,690,063	£9.51

In tables B2 and B3, some applications contributed in more than one area. All applications must meet at least one of the grants criteria priorities.

Thriving Economy priorities include projects delivering services within areas of relative deprivation according to the National Indices of Deprivation, and projects which support families and vulnerable people.

Grants criteria are taken from priorities in the *Sustainable Community Strategy for Aylesbury Vale*.

Some organisations or projects have a specific focus on one particular beneficiary group.

Every applicant must have an up-to-date Equality Policy and demonstrate that they understand how to implement their policy to give equality of access to facilities, activities, services, volunteering and employment opportunities and membership of their management committee or trustee board.

B2. Grants Criteria – one or more priority areas met under the following headings	Number of Grants
Cohesive and Strong Communities	99
Safer Communities	55
Thriving Economy	76
Sustainable Environment	44
Health and Wellbeing	97
Total Number of Grants Awarded	99

B3. Equality Focus (2016-17 grants)	Number of grants
Disability	31
Older People	8
Women	6
Ethnic Origin/Culture/Language	2
Children	37
Young People	30
Non-specific wider community involvement	76
Total number of grants awarded	99

B4. Total Community Chest grants awarded to local projects over the past ten years, 2007-17

Grant Stream	Applications Received	Grants Awarded	£ Total Funding Awarded	Total Cost of Funded Projects £	£ Investment for every £1 granted	Number of Beneficiaries
Microgrants	560	536	456,178	2,544,562	5.58	459,441
Project Grants	280	214	2,765,813	23,461,887	8.48	1,123,920
3YR Grants*	55	30	1,469,000	12,269,242	8.35	1,099,615
Total	895	780	£4,690,991	£38,275,691	£8.16	2,682,976

*3YR figures include funding awarded for all three rounds, 2008-11, 2011-14 and 2014-17

List of Grants Awarded, April 2016 – March 2017

Name of Organisation	£	Purpose
Aylesbury & District Citizens Advice	5,000	Combatting worklessness through volunteering – NEET training placements
Aylesbury Homeless Action Group	20,000	The Hub drop in sessions for homeless adults
Buckingham Youth Clubs Ltd	10,000	Core costs to run four evening youth clubs each week for 50 weeks per year
Bucks Mind	10,000	Adult counselling service
Bucks Vision	5,000	Co-ordinating volunteer support for blind and visually impaired people
Calibre Audio Library	10,000	Supporting volunteers in changing times - volunteer co-ordinator
Chilterns MS Centre	16,000	Physiotherapy provision for people with MS
ENRYCH	10,000	Volunteer support for adults with disabilities in leisure and learning activities
Home-Start Aylesbury	13,000	Supporting young families through specially trained volunteers
Horses Helping People	20,000	Client sponsorship, volunteer training, winter running costs
Puzzle Centre	20,000	Core service - specialist pre-school for children with autistic spectrum disorders
Thomley	20,000	Activity centre for children and young people with physical and learning disabilities
3YR Grants (year 3 payments)		£159,000
	£	
1st Stewkley Scout Group	15,000	New scout hut
Action 4 Youth	10,000	Inspiring young people in Aylesbury Vale
Buckingham Town Cricket Club	5,000	New outdoor cricket nets
Bucks Play Association	10,000	'All Play Together' and 'Let's Play Together'
Carers Bucks	21,950	Young Carers in Secondary Schools Award
CHAT (Children, Health & Therapy)	2,500	Short-term respite care
Chearsley Village Hall	15,000	Village Hall rebuild
Community Impact Bucks	6,000	Handy Helpers
Cublington Cricket Club	10,000	Improvements to practice facilities
Cuddington Parish Council	6,500	Playground refurbishment
Dagnall Recreation Room	8,000	Improving facilities for the community - Village Hall
Edgcott Parish Council	5,000	Village Hall refurbishment
Great Horwood Cricket Club	17,687	Ground improvement works
Halton Tennis Centre	20,000	Multi-use games area (MUGA)
Hardwick Parish Council	6,000	Play equipment on the village green
Home Start Aylesbury Vale	10,000	Volunteer support for families with children under 5
Horses Helping People	12,000	Powering the future - new building and solar power
Lindengate	25,000	Expansion of ongoing project to increase beneficiary numbers
Little Horwood Recreation Ground Trust	7,500	Marquee purchase
Mentmore Parish Council	10,000	Village Hall improvements
Moretonville Junior Football Club	25,000	New changing rooms
National Paralympic Heritage Trust	5,000	NPHT - Heritage Centre, Aylesbury
New Leaf	3,500	Volunteer mentoring support service for prison leavers
North Marston Parish Council	18,000	Renovation of the Village Hall roof
Northall Village Hall	17,193	Kitchen extension and refurbishment
Oasis Partnership	7,500	Recovery café
Quainton Sports Club - Tennis Section	10,000	Refurbishment of tennis courts and facilities
Rennie Grove Hospice Care	6,500	Hospice at home nursing care for children in Aylesbury Vale
Stewkley Recreation Ground Association	22,000	Pavilion refurbishment
Sunrise Nature Works CIC	10,000	Back to nature – horticultural and outdoor therapy sessions
Wendover Community Pool CIO	25,000	Refurbishment of pool changing rooms
Wing Tennis Club	20,000	Court improvement and sustainability project (floodlights)
Project Grants		£392,830
12th Aylesbury Scouts/1st Buckingham Park	900	Camping equipment
1st Ivinghoe & Pitstone Scouts	1,000	Activity and camping equipment
3rd Aylesbury Scout Group	1,000	Additional camping equipment
3rd Buckingham Scouts	900	Furnishing new Scout HQ

Aylesbury Multicultural Community Centre	900	Energy efficient LED lighting
Aylesbury Opera Group	900	Performance of Donizetti's 'The Daughter of the Regiment'
Aylesbury Town Cricket Club	900	Pitch maintenance equipment
British Lung Foundation	900	Breathe Easy Aylesbury Vale – group running costs
Buckingham & District Mencap	900	Social group running costs for young adults with disabilities
Buckingham and Stowe Running Club	640	Equipment for the inaugural Buckingham Half-Marathon
Buckingham Canal Society	900	Software for design and development of restored heritage assets
Buckingham Edible Woodland	800	Expansion of edible woodland - planting, and training/education
Buckingham, Winslow & District Citizens Advice	1,000	New printer and office furniture
Buckland and Aston Clinton Cricket Club	750	Junior equipment for new mixed U11s training squad (Colts)
Bucks County Museum Trust	1,000	'Roald Dahl in Bucks' Arts Award Project
Carter's Charity (Brill Allotments)	900	Demolish and rebuild old stable - storage and shop
Cublington Cricket Club	850	Equipment for girls cricket team
Dinton with Ford and Upton Parish Council	1,000	Replacement toddler swings at Dinton playground
Drayton Parslow Cricket Club	1,000	Pitch roller
FC Buckingham	900	Running costs and new training equipment
Friends of Buckingham Library	225	Mobile information and advice point
Haddenham Cricket Club	900	Replacement sight screens
Haddenham Youth & Community Centre	1,000	Hearing loop and new chairs
Ickford Pre-School	700	Access path enhancements
Ivinghoe Parish Council	1,000	Improvements to Ivinghoe play area
J's Joyful Divas	350	Battery powered portable PA system
Maids Moreton Conservation Group	700	Booklet about houses of historical significance in the village
Marsworth Millennium Hall	1,000	New seating
Marsworth Village Sign Group	1,000	Village history sign
MASKS - Vale Federation	800	New equipment for holiday and after school clubs
MK Dons Sport & Education Trust - Winslow Dons	800	Floodlight and training kit for Winslow Disability Football Group
Moretonville Junior Football Club	1,000	Upgrading goal posts
Nigerian Community Association Aylesbury	440	End of year event
North Marston History Club	935	Chairs and Tables for North Marston Heritage Centre
North Marston Parish Council	880	Village Hall room refurbishment
Padbury Parish Council	700	Refurbishment of MUGA kick board
Padbury Pre School	700	Busy Fingers baby and toddler group
Padbury Village FC	850	Equipment for junior football and mini kickers club
Quainton Memorial Hall	1,000	Match-funding for installation of acoustic insulation panels
Red Kite Radio	900	Not-for-profit radio service for Haddenham and surrounding villages
SeeAbility	1,000	Building a home to remember in Aylesbury
Stoke Hammond Village Show	900	Marquee, flooring and table hire
Stoke Mandeville Wheelchair Rugby	800	Venue hire for weekly training sessions
Swanbourne Community Association	1,000	Improvements to the memorial gardens
The Wing Singers	189	Choir folders
Thornborough and Nash Pre-School	900	Outdoor Environmental Centre - Forest School training
Treehouse Pre-School	700	Pre-School venue hire costs
Turn End Trust	1,000	Development of website and printing of promotional material
Ubiquitous Touring Theatre Company	850	'A Christmas Carol' community production
Waddesdon Cricket Club	900	Replacement mower and gang mower
Waddesdon Parish Council	900	Equipment for Waddesdon Youth Café
Wing Hall Trust	1,000	Replacement window, boiler and loft insulation
Wingrave Bowls Club	640	Repairs to green and pathways, and creation of a spectator area
Winslow Big Society Group	900	Gentle exercise classes for older people
Young Enterprise	990	CV and interview skills workshops in secondary schools

Microgrants £46,589

£598,419 Total Community Chest grants awarded 2016-17



Community Chest Launch, March 2007



Final *Working Together* celebration and networking event, March 2017

Milly Soames and Matthew Applegate cut the celebration cake

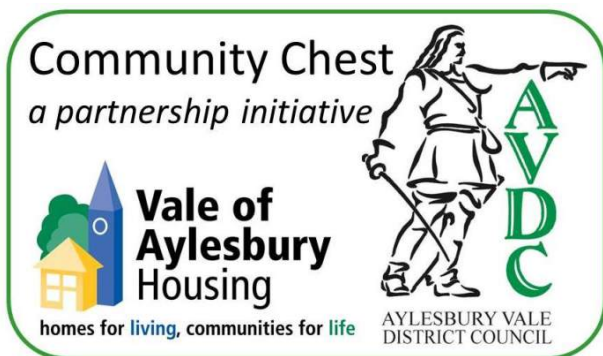
'It is great that we've had the opportunity to support organisations in delivering such a diverse range of projects and to see so many Vale residents benefiting from these grants is truly wonderful.'

I would like to thank everyone who has been involved in delivering the programme over the last 10 years; I know the Grants Panel didn't have an easy job, but they managed to work conscientiously through each application to ensure the funds were allocated fairly.

I've had the great pleasure of visiting some of the grant recipients and have been amazed at what they have achieved and the long lasting effects the projects will have on them and their local communities.

They have created a legacy of which we can all be proud. Well done to all involved!'

Matthew Applegate, Chief Executive, Vale of Aylesbury Housing Trust



www.aylesburyvaledc.gov.uk

www.vaht.co.uk

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