

February 2023

The Didcot Powerhouse Fund



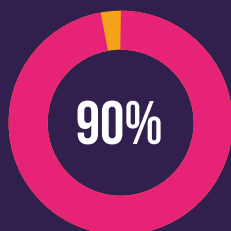
Impact Report 2022

Fuelling Better Futures

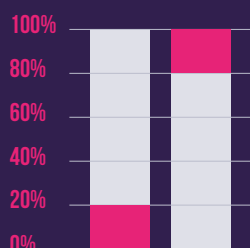
2022 overview



100% of grant funded projects underway



At least 90% of recipients live in Didcot Garden Town area of influence



2023 theme 'Supporting mental health and wellbeing in these times of hardship'



“Many years ago I went on an arctic trek to raise money for charities in Didcot, so when the Didcot Powerhouse started I was keen to help. There are so many great charities in and around Didcot that need and deserve our support, and that make a real difference to the community. I ended up running a marathon, and many people kindly donated as a result. This Impact Report shows the real difference that all the money raised so far has made, and I hope Powerhouse continues to thrive.”

Our Patron, Lord Vaizey of Didcot

The Didcot Powerhouse Fund – what makes it different?

A year ago we set out to bring more businesses and communities together, and that partnership is the power behind The Didcot Powerhouse Fund. We bring together the sincere commitment of companies to local Corporate Social Responsibility, with the energy and strength of our local charities, to address some pressing issues of local need.

So many successful companies in Didcot, Milton Park, Harwell and Culham are deeply committed to supporting the local community. However, sorting through funding requests, undertaking due diligence, and chasing up how the funds are spent is time consuming. Powerhouse donors know that with the local expertise of the Grants Panel, and the due diligence of Oxfordshire Community Foundation, their donations will have the maximum impact.

And as Powerhouse has become embedded in the local community we are proud that our donations have also come from local fundraising, community activities and individuals – every donation has made a difference.

In 2022, thanks to all our donors, we were able to make grants totalling over £95,000 to 17 different local charities and community groups – you can read all about the impact those grants have already achieved in this report.

Powerhouse is different from many other grant givers:

- **Our focus is truly local.** At least 90% of the beneficiaries of every grant live within Didcot and the surrounding villages.
- **Small isn't excluded.** We have some fabulous well run charities locally, but Powerhouse is equally open to the small volunteer-run groups that also do amazing work. For some of our 2022 grant recipients this was the first grant they had ever received.
- **We cut down the paperwork.** Completing lengthy application forms is hard, especially for small charities. Our two-stage application process minimises the workload.
- **Organisational learning matters.** We understand that impact isn't just numbers.

But what matters most is helping the local people who need our support. The theme for our 2022 grants was *"Supporting families, children and young people as we emerge from a pandemic"* – so please read on to hear the amazing stories that our grants have enabled.



Thank you

**Elizabeth Paris DL,
Chair**

Oversubscribed

When Powerhouse opened for applications in Spring 2022 we received applications from 31 local organisations, seeking £232,000 in funding — so 2.5 times oversubscribed. With the local knowledge and professionalism of the Grants Panel, 17 applications were successfully selected for funding.

COVID-19 exacerbated feelings of anxiety and isolation among young people. Four projects focused on preventative well-being and mental health initiatives through workshops and 1:1 counselling.

The Abingdon Bridge

This project supported 211 young people and 12 parents through 10 workshops; over 200 counselling sessions; five parent workshops; 100 wellbeing packs; 76% reported they have reduced levels of self-harm; 89% feel better able to cope when things go wrong; 72% are enjoying and feel better motivated by their work or study.

Be Free Young Carers

18 vulnerable young carers from Didcot and surrounding villages were matched with a trained befriender. Additionally, a new school assembly video and school toolkit were created to help identify young carers in schools.

DAMASCUS Youth Project

76 children in year 6 from the villages of Appleford, Milton, Sutton Courtney and Steventon were supported in their transition from village primary, to town secondary schools with workshops, activities over the Summer and 1:1 support, meeting children off the school bus in the Autumn term. Children reported increased confidence, and trusting their youth worker as someone to discuss bullying or concerns over friendships or social media.



“ I had almost given up hope, after leaving school last September. I've only ever left my house twice, I really struggle to go out. It's been a bad year for me, my father left us very suddenly back in January. I spent six months on the waiting list for CAMHS and just when I was giving up hope I spoke to the Abingdon Bridge. I was very nervous to begin with, I didn't really want to go.

After a few sessions things started to click in place for me and I realised how much anger and sadness I had within me. My counsellor helps me realise that I'm just stuck and I'm trying to protect myself. With further counselling I slowly built up my confidence and I started to expand my safe zone to various other places and I tried to do new things.

I left school with three A-levels but never had the confidence to do anything with them. I went to my first job interview two weeks ago, and they've offered me an apprenticeship!

Matt, Abingdon Bridge



Didcot Train

Workshops over six weeks in three primary schools focused on 23 young people referred for behavioural issues, or facing trauma and challenges at home. Results included improvements in self-confidence, team work and communication, and 67% reported improved mental health on the Warwick-Edinburgh scale.

100% of Powerhouse projects are underway

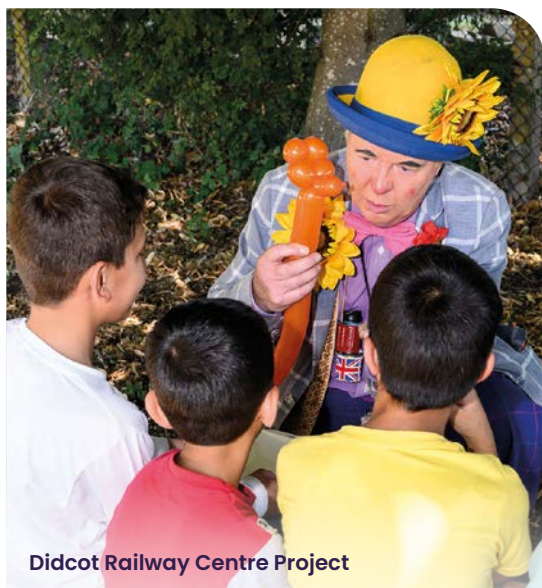
The 17 successful organisations received a total of £95,000 in funding in grants ranging from £400 to £13,000. Funding was to launch new initiatives to support families, children and young people in Didcot and the surrounding villages. All 17 projects are successfully underway.

Didcot Railway Centre Project

Local refugee groups and low-income families have been coming together for entertainment, hot meals and living history at Didcot Railway Centre. Powerhouse funded four events and 271 people have attended the first three, with the fourth in the Spring. As well as refugee groups and families on benefits, additional needs declared included autism, deafness, ADHD, PTSD, anxiety, and learning needs. 76 volunteers, and 1st Hagbourne Scouts provided train rides, craft and sport activities, history tours and a two-course hot meal including Halal options.

“ My children and I had a wonderful time and I'm so grateful for the free lunch. To be honest, as a single mum of three on benefits, the school holidays were really getting me down, and I have been crying for nearly a week now.... until today, when I realized that people do care!

Guest at Didcot Railway Centre event



Didcot Railway Centre Project

“ Amazing day, they all came home buzzing. The children had a wonderful time.

Afghan Community Support Worker

Home schooling resulted in some children falling behind, and two Powerhouse projects are providing catch-up support in primary schools.

Quest for Learning – maths catch-up support

48 children facing endemic or pandemic-related disadvantage, who struggle at school, are taking part in the Num-Skills programme at the primary schools St Blaise, Milton Heights and Stephen Freeman, Didcot.

Assessment from the first completed cohort shows 40% of children are expected to achieve higher formal assessment results; 90% reported feeling confident or super confident after taking part.

Family drop-in sessions are planned to enable 116 parents and siblings access to shared maths support resources.

“ The children attending ARCh really value their sessions with J and look forward to seeing her each week. J brings a variety of reading books and activities to capture the children's attention and imagination whilst also extending their use of vocabulary.

James Doman, Years 1, 2, 3 Leader and Year 2 teacher, Willowcroft Primary

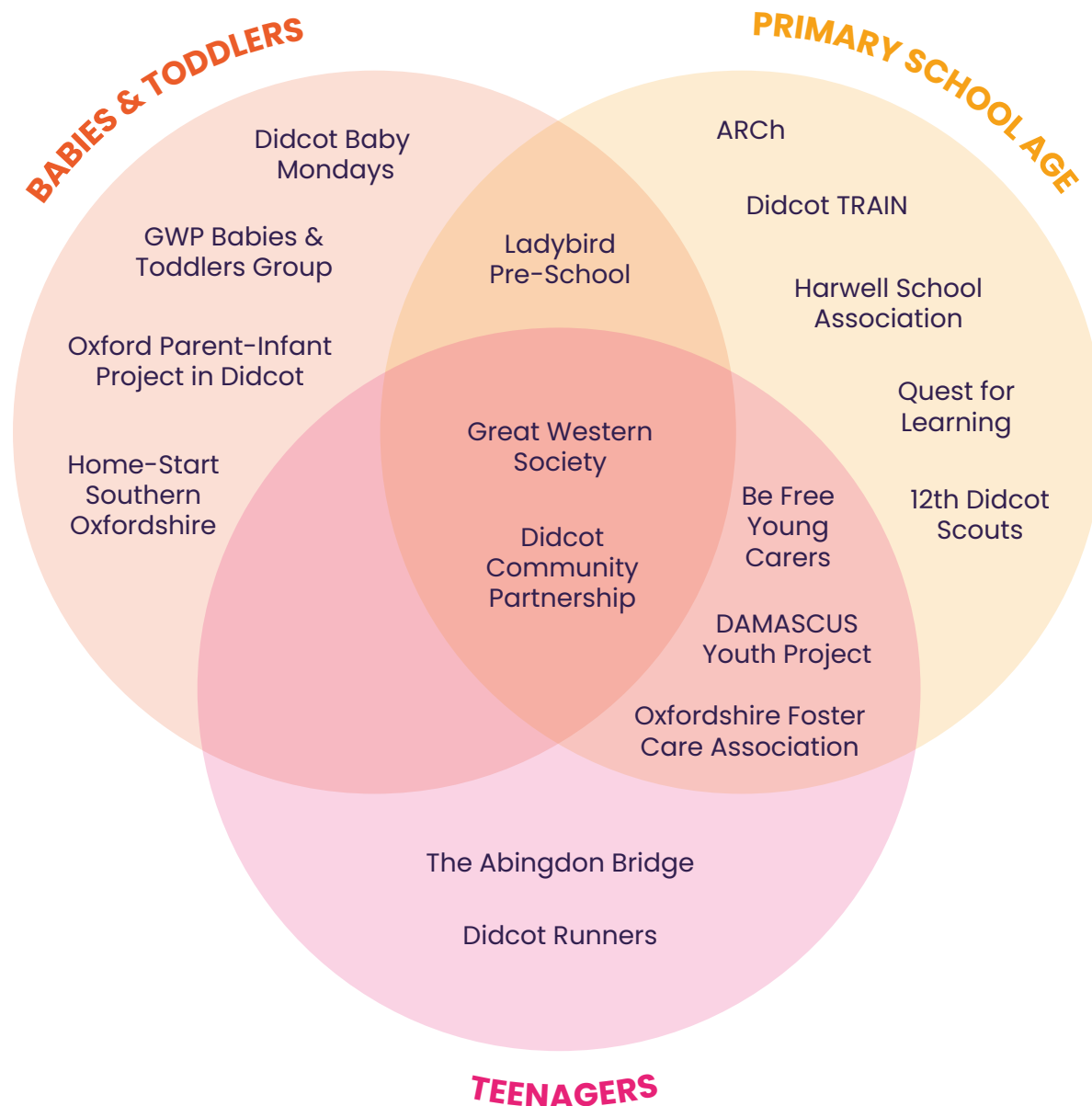
ARCh – reading catch-up support

Four new reading support volunteers have been recruited, vetted and trained and are working for a year in Willowcroft and Aureus Schools. Recruitment for the fifth volunteer is underway, and support will also be offered to All Saints Primary School.

Nine children have already been receiving support and by July 2023 15 children will have developed a life enhancing love of reading (for pleasure and purpose) and view themselves as reader/learners with raised educational aspirations.

From newborns to teenagers

Beneficiaries of the 17 projects selected cover all ages of babies, children and teenagers and their families.



Partnership working between organisations leads to the sharing of best practice and can amplify the impact for beneficiaries.

Led by Abingdon Bridge, the Powerhouse recipients have come together as the **Powerhouse Charities Forum** with plans to exchange services such as counselling sessions and venues.

Improving community cohesion is the project of the **Didcot Community Partnership** where the funding of a support worker has resulted in five networking meetings and the creation of Warm Space Plus.

“ The Powerhouse funded events gave us a great opportunity to work closely with Didcot Community Partnership, SOHA, Didcot Library, Homestart, Didcot Baby Monday and SOFEA at the summer events, with Sustainable Didcot in October and with Didcot Rotary Club at the Christmas Party.

Didcot Railway Centre

Our donors

The power behind the fund, and we are hugely grateful for their sustained support

Quantum

£10,000 per year or more, over two years

Didcot First • MEPC Milton Park • SOHA

Dynamo

Between £5,000 and £10,000 per year over two years

Evotec • Harwell Campus • Infineum • Ipsen Biopharm Ltd
Orchard Centre Didcot

Joule

Between £1,000 and £5,000 per year over two years

ASDA • CTS • Hachette UK Distribution • Reef Estates Ltd • Thames Travel

Turbine

Donations of up to £1,000 or business that give significant 'in kind' support

Carbon Colour • Nuclear Waste Services • Syndicut • Thales Alenia Space UK
The Grey Square Studio



During the year community engagement and fundraising has been increasing, with a **"Pound for Powerhouse"** week planned for 2023. All donations, of any size, are very much appreciated.

Milton Park

Philip Campbell, Commercial Director at MEPC Milton Park



We're really grateful to all those who've helped support the Powerhouse Fund throughout its first year.

We're reassured that the money we've given to the Fund is helping those most in need across a range of deserving causes in Didcot and the surrounding area. This is thanks to the hard work by the experienced Grants Panel, made up of local people who understand local needs, and Oxfordshire Community Foundation undertaking the necessary due diligence.

It's been a pleasure to see the connections forged between the community and local businesses as a result of the Fund, the positive impact of which has been nothing short of inspirational.

Ipsen

John Chaddock, VP, Head of REED Operations & Site Head, Milton Park Research and Development



Ipsen were proud to engage last year with the Didcot Powerhouse Fund as a Dynamo donor and were pleased to see that, through our collective contributions, local organisations have enabled over £95,000 to 17 grant recipients. The theme of 2022, "Supporting children, young people and families as we emerge from the pandemic", was important to our company and our employees, and the new focus for 2023 will give vital help to those that need it within our local community.

Investing in families

The closure of all three Children's Centres in Didcot, plus the isolation of COVID-19, significantly increased pressure on new parents. Five projects focused on parenting skills and support.

Parent-infant therapy has been provided for an additional day a week in Didcot by the **OxPIP Didcot Project**, extending outreach with home visits. The programme of six sessions has already been completed, with 10 families showing a 93% improvement in anxiety and depression, and 100% in their parent-infant relationship (as measured via HADs and PIRGAS scores).

Powerhouse funding is enabling **Home-Start** to keep open Didcot's weekly First Babies Group to support new parents of babies under 15 months.

Funding for **GWP Babies and Toddlers** to run through the summer holidays resulted in them engaging 90 under 5s in creative play and 60 adults in conversation with like-minded parents and carers.



GWP Babies and Toddlers

Ladybird Pre-School has run the first of three Family Links nurturing programmes.

Didcot Baby Mondays has used the funding for volunteer training and to run six additional skills sessions. A focus on improving access to a diversity of families is yielding a positive response.



Didcot Baby Mondays

“ I have post-natal depression so having a reason to leave the house was very helpful in the dark days. I did struggle a bit with interacting with the other babies when I didn't want to interact with my own baby.

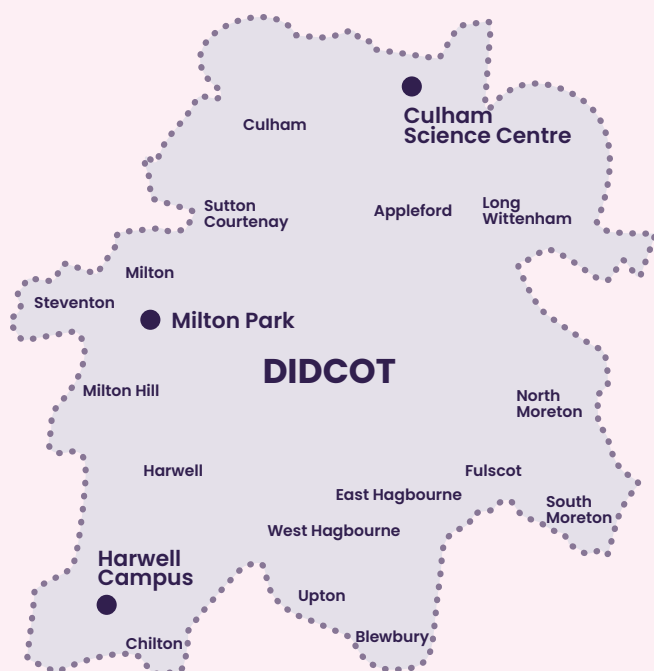
It helped to have other mums to chat to. To know that other people struggled with feeding and sleeping. Made me feel less alone.

Claire

Powerhouse meets local needs

At least 90% of beneficiaries of grants live within Didcot and the surrounding villages – the dotted area on the map below.

Grants were selected to be evenly distributed between Didcot Town and surrounding villages and rural areas.



This area includes science and technology of international renown, juxtaposed with pockets of significant and multiple need, including neighbourhoods amongst the 20% most deprived in England.

Child and youth deprivation exists within the Powerhouse area

- There are four areas of Didcot in which the proportion of children living in poverty is above the national average. One area shows a rate of **27% of children living in poverty**¹.
- Education and skills deprivation for children and young people is even more striking. Five LSOAs² are in the **10% most deprived nationally** in this domain³. A further three are in the **30% most deprived** and another four in the **40% most deprived**.
- Looking specifically at the Powerhouse area, two LSOAs² are in the **bottom 10% in England** for at least one measure of deprivation, and an additional two are in the **bottom 20%**. Of the 12 LSOAs representing the Powerhouse area only two are in the **top 50%** for all measures.
- The Didcot Emergency Foodbank issued food for **6,779 adults and children during 2022 – up 57% from 4,330 during 2021**. Half of the year's total was incurred during the final four months of the year. 2022 usage represents an **increase of over 300% since 2019**⁴.
- The **prevalence of depression** recorded by each of the three GP practices in Didcot was well above the Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group and England averages⁵.

1. Income Deprivation Affecting Children Index (IDACI), Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government
2. LSOAs are Lower Layer Super Output Areas or small neighbourhoods of around 1,500 residents
3. Indices of Multiple Deprivation, Children and Young People Sub-domain
4. Didcot Emergency Foodbank
5. JSNA Oxfordshire: Didcot Community profile of health and wellbeing evidence September 2021

Organisational learning

Impact is not just on the beneficiaries: there can also be valuable learning for the organisations funded. We understand that projects sometimes meet unanticipated challenges, and often flexibility is needed to find new ways to meet the original objectives.

Half of the projects funded by Powerhouse are run by volunteer-led organisations, and those charities with paid employees are heavily dependent on trained volunteers as befrienders or reading supporters. The issue most frequently quoted as organisational learning concerned volunteers – finding and recruiting volunteers and understanding the constraints they have.

“ Faced with a lack of volunteers to take leadership roles in the group, we took a break in April and May. But your funding of our summer activities has helped establish a new pool of volunteers.

GWP Babies & Toddlers

At least 170 volunteers have been involved in helping the Powerhouse projects succeed, and 35 volunteers have received funding for training.

Involvement can also provide fulfilment and enjoyment for the volunteer.



ARCh

“ I have always been a keen reader and ARCh has given me a great opportunity to share this with the younger generation. The children are adorable and I love looking for books and activities that might interest them. One of my favourite things was writing a limerick for them!

ARCh volunteer reader

“ Volunteer recruitment has not been easy. The cost-of-living crisis has been a factor – we have found some prospective volunteers have been forced to withdraw due to seeking work or taking on additional hours.

ARCh

Keeping active is essential for children and young people, and three projects, **12th Didcot Scouts**, **Harwell School Climbing Wall** and **Didcot Junior Runners**, focused on offering children mental stimulation, physical activity and a chance for adventure.



12th Didcot Scouts

Selecting the 2023 theme

We asked local charities and volunteer organisations to identify the greatest challenges they saw in our local area:



Based on their responses and input from key stakeholders we selected as our theme for grants in 2023:



“Mental health and wellbeing in these times of hardship”

Makaton Communication Project

Learning Makaton signing enables non- and limited-verbal children to communicate and improve their lives. Through this project 30 people have already learnt Makaton to stages 1&2 and will continue on to Level 4. Two Brownie groups have also learnt Makaton.

Oxfordshire Foster Care Association

“ Enabling our child to communicate with all members of the family, especially his siblings, makes him happy and improves his sense of belonging and overall wellbeing. The siblings are also learning Makaton because of The Powerhouse Fund, so thank you.

Sam, Didcot

Donors



To find out more about The Didcot Powerhouse Fund, or to become a donor, please visit didcotpowerhousefund.co.uk

The Didcot Powerhouse Fund is hosted by Didcot First and administered by Oxfordshire Community Foundation.