



THE CHURN PROJECT

Support in your community



ANNUAL REPORT
2023 | 2024

www.churnproject.org.uk

THE CHURN PROJECT

OBJECTIVES, PURPOSE AND VISION



Founded in 2001, The Churn Project is a community charity based in Cirencester, dedicated to reducing isolation and enhancing the wellbeing of local residents. The charity operates right at the heart of the community and is often the only place people feel they can turn to for support.

The Churn Project provides a warm and welcoming environment where individuals can openly discuss their concerns and receive much-needed assistance. What sets The Churn Project apart is its comprehensive support, from pregnancy to old age, through three services: **FAMILY, COMMUNITY WELLBEING**, and **AGEING WELL**. With a focus on building community connections, we ensure that everyone feels valued and supported, helping to connect individuals with other relevant organisations when needed.

OBJECTIVES AND PURPOSE

The Churn Project's objectives, as outlined in its Memorandum & Articles of Association, are as follows:

- RELIEF OF FINANCIAL HARDSHIP
- RELIEF OF UNEMPLOYMENT
- CREATING TRAINING AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES
- PROVIDING ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES FOR OLDER INDIVIDUALS AND THOSE FACING CHALLENGES DUE TO FINANCIAL HARDSHIP OR SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC CIRCUMSTANCES
- PROMOTION OF GOOD HEALTH

Our aims are to improve wellbeing and reduce isolation, particularly for those experiencing loneliness or facing challenges during transitions in their lives, such as financial hardship or mental health difficulties. Our mission is to address inequalities that contribute to social isolation and economic difficulties by offering services that promote purpose, belonging, and hope. We are committed to ensuring that all residents feel included and valued in their community, supported in achieving their potential, and able to access opportunities for personal and professional growth.

VISION

Our vision is that every individual should feel included, involved, and invested in their community. We strive to change lives by reducing and preventing isolation, promoting wellbeing, creating opportunities to learn and achieve, supporting individuals through crises, and providing early help and interventions.

By encouraging personal responsibility and leveraging the best resources through thoughtful procurement and positive partnerships, we work towards a future where all members of the local community can thrive and contribute meaningfully.



REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

What a year it's been for The Churn Project! We're delighted by the progress we've made, particularly in expanding services to better support our community's wellbeing. By listening to those who rely on our services, we've been able to provide more targeted and impactful support for people facing mental health challenges, parenting concerns, and personal crises.

This year, we've supported 1550 people in total. 334 received individual support. 99 people accessed our employability services. 69 parents received family-focused support through our new programme in primary schools and 119 older people enjoyed our social trips and activities. There was an amazing total of 1411 memberships of all our groups. These numbers highlight the growth in both capacity and outreach, allowing us to meet a wider range of needs across the community.

Volunteers continue to be at the heart of our success. We've strengthened our volunteer programme, encouraging co-production and involving service users in leading groups. It's been rewarding to see former participants become volunteers, further embedding the community spirit that drives us.

In response to the increasing cost of living, we've provided practical support like warm packs, energy advice, and frozen meals. Our partnerships with local organisations have ensured people in need can access essential benefits and support to alleviate financial hardship.

We are fortunate to have a dedicated team of 17 employees (equating to around 12 FTE) and 114 regular volunteers with a further 200 supporting one off events whose experience and commitment inspire our success. Their hard work is reflected in everything we do, from hosting successful fundraising events to participating in community activities, making meaningful contributions that strengthen our impact. We take great pride in delivering excellent quality services with limited resources.

**THANK YOU TO EVERYONE INVOLVED FOR YOUR COMMITMENT.
HERE'S TO ANOTHER YEAR OF MAKING A DIFFERENCE.**

Rosemary Lynn
Chair of Trustees

OUR TRUSTEES



Left to right: Robert Towill, Fran Penny, Shirley Alexander, David Sutherland
David Bellamy, Cathey Groombridge, Billy Cobbett, Meg Blumsom

COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

- **TIME FOR YOU:** Women's wellbeing group.
- **COMMUNITY SHED:** Place to learn practical skills and make social connections. *South Cerney and Cirencester.*
- **MEN'S SHED:** Place to work on individual and community projects and improve wellbeing. *South Cerney and Cirencester.*
- **CHAT AND CONNECT:** Social wellbeing group to reduce isolation.
- **POSITIVE STRIDES:** A wellbeing walking group for men. *South Cerney and Cirencester.*
- **STITCH KNIT AND NATTER:** Social group enjoying sewing, knitting and general crafts.
- **WE WELCOME WELLNESS:** Wellbeing programme for those struggling with mental health.
- **WELLBEING SUPPORT:** One-to-one support for mental health issues.
- **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:** Help in crisis including hardship grants, practical help and wellbeing support.
- **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT:** ESHO (Employment and Skills Hub Outreach) in partnership with UK Prosperity Fund.
- **EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT:** Personalised support with access to training, work experience, volunteering and employment.
- **MATHS AND ENGLISH:** Level 1 & 2 courses run in partnership with Cirencester College.
- **GAMERS GROUP:** Social group to play D&D and other fantasy style games.
- **YOGA:** Evening wellbeing sessions.
- **MEDITATION:** Wellbeing group.
- **THERAPEUTIC ART GROUP:** Run by Artlift.
- **DIGIBUS:** Digital support drop in.



THE CHURN PROJECT



AGEING WELL SERVICE

- **SOCIABLE STROLL:** Companionable group for those who have good mobility. *South Cerney and Cirencester.*
- **LIVING WITH LOSS:** Bereavement support group.
- **FRIENDSHIP CAFÉ:** Social connection group with activities, advice and information.
- **FRIENDSHIP CAFÉ EVENTS:** Monthly community activities.
- **MEMORY CAFÉ:** Support group for people living with dementia.
- **CARERS CAFÉ:** Support group for carers of people living with dementia.
- **CARERS HUB:** Monthly support group for all carers.
- **SING 2 REMEMBER:** Singing group run in partnership with Mindsong to help memory loss and reduce isolation.
- **GOOD NEIGHBOURS:** Befriending service for older people who struggle to leave their home.
- **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:** One-to-one support to help people regain confidence and independence.
- **IT CAFÉ:** Drop in group for older people to get help with digital devices.
- **CREATIVE SOCIAL GROUPS:** Using creativity to socialise and access support.



FAMILY SERVICE

- **READY STEADY BABY ANTENATAL GROUP:** Antenatal sessions and individual support.
- **MUM AND BABY GROUP:** Support group for mums and their babies offering play, advice and support.
- **NEW BABY NEW LIFE:** Informal drop in group for parents and their babies.
- **POSTNATAL PROGRAMME:** Topic based sessions for parents.
- **MINI TODDLER GROUP:** Group for parents of toddlers aged 1-2 years old for play, fun and meeting other parents.
- **FAMILIES MATTER GROUP:** Informal group for parents with children 2-4 years for fun, play and meeting other parents.
- **CATCH YOUR BREATH COFFEE MORNING:** Parent support group for parents with primary school aged children.
- **FAMILY SUPPORT:** One-to-one parenting support for parents with primary school aged children.
- **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:** One-to-one support covering mental health, wellbeing, domestic abuse, parenting and practical support.
- **FREEDOM PROGRAMME:** Domestic abuse support group.
- **SOLIHULL PARENTING PROGRAMME:** Parenting course.



COMBATING ISOLATION AND ACCESSING SUPPORT

Mary came to us seeking employment support in 2019, but her needs were much greater. She faced significant barriers, including extreme anxiety that made it difficult for her to function without support from familiar individuals. Living in a small flat with her mother, who worked in a care home, contributed to their challenges, especially during the pandemic.

Recognising the need for a better living situation, Mary and her mother were supported to apply to relocate to a rural area. Their application was approved, and they moved into a social housing bungalow in 2020. Support was also provided to help secure a grant for furnishings. Additionally, we assisted Mary in her application for Personal Independence Payment (PIP), providing her with a source of income while addressing her needs.

To build her confidence, Mary participated in various courses, including Confidence Building, Yoga, and Employability Training. She also volunteered at a local sculpture exhibition, gaining valuable experience while nurturing her passion for art. The Churn Project has become a safe space for Mary, allowing her to be herself and build independence and resilience.

At The Churn Project, we are often faced with these all-too-frequent situations, where a sudden life event throws someone into crisis. Our ability to respond quickly, provide practical help, and advocate for people ensures that they can access the services they need without falling through the cracks.

SUPPORTING A YOUNG MOTHER IN CRISIS

Sarah, a 17 year old expectant mother, had been receiving support throughout her pregnancy. After her baby was born, she faced a sudden relationship breakdown that led to a housing crisis. With limited finances, inadequate baby essentials, and no permanent home, Sarah was overwhelmed by the demands of new motherhood and the instability of her situation.

Relocating to temporary housing with her newborn, Sarah struggled to cope with the changes and isolation. The Churn Project provided vital support, including baby clothing, bedding, and other essentials, helping Sarah care for her baby during this challenging time. We also worked closely with Children's Social Care and Housing to secure more permanent accommodation and provided ongoing assistance with parenting support.

Through our help, Sarah was able to navigate the complex challenges of single motherhood and ultimately regain stability for both her and her child.



THE IMPORTANCE OF CONNECTION: MARGARET'S STORY

Margaret is one of our long-standing service users, having first registered in 2010. She is 87 years old and a valued member of The Friendship Café and Cirencester Sociable Stroll. Margaret's smile and infectious nature are always present at whichever group she attends.

For Margaret, The Churn Project is a wonderful place where she can feel safe and looked after. She shared that she had a "terrible, terrible" childhood, and coming to The Churn Project keeps her going because it fills her days with happy thoughts.

Being part of this community has been a lifeline for Margaret. She has found companionship and support through our services, and this regular contact has made a significant difference to her wellbeing. Margaret's experience highlights the importance of connection for those without support networks. It reminds us that even small moments of interaction can have a positive impact on mental health and overall happiness. At The Churn Project, we strive to provide opportunities for connection and support, helping individuals like Margaret navigate life's challenges with a sense of belonging.



HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Sarah Bourne
Chief Executive Officer

This year has been a truly rewarding one for The Churn Project, marked by growth, new initiatives, and our ongoing dedication to the community. We've seen rising demand across all areas, particularly in mental health services, and we've worked hard to meet that need despite increasing pressures on resources.

A BIG FOCUS THIS YEAR HAS BEEN RAISING OUR PROFILE WITHIN THE COMMUNITY AND STRENGTHENING PARTNERSHIPS WITH OTHER ORGANISATIONS.

By working collaboratively, we've been able to offer more joined-up support. For instance, our work with Citizens Advice on the Household Support Fund and with Barnwood Trust on individual grants has made a huge difference, particularly when people come to us in crisis. We're constantly adapting to fill gaps, especially for people facing long waits for support.

THIS YEAR WE HAVE INTRODUCED SEVERAL NEW INITIATIVES.

These include a wellbeing programme addressing mental and physical health. Also family support for parents with primary school aged children where we offer coffee mornings, after school activities and one to one support. For older adults we have provided smaller groups to better support those who find larger settings challenging. Each has seen significant participation and positive feedback.

A SIGNIFICANT MILESTONE THIS YEAR WAS THE OPENING OF THE CIRENCESTER COMMUNITY SHED, WHICH HAS BECOME A HUB OF ACTIVITY, PARTICULARLY FOR MEN.

It's been amazing to see the skills being developed and shared in the Shed, and its involvement in local community projects creating resources for the town has been a real highlight.

OUR EMPLOYABILITY SERVICES CONTINUE TO EVOLVE.

Now in its second year, the ESHO project (Employment Skills Hub Outreach) is making a positive impact not only in Cirencester but also across the North and South Cotswolds, helping individuals build skills, gain valuable work experience, increase their confidence and secure employment.

AS ALWAYS, LISTENING TO OUR SERVICE USERS AND RESPONDING TO THEIR NEEDS HAS BEEN CENTRAL TO OUR WORK.

Co-production remains at the heart of our approach, and we're committed to offering opportunities for people to lead, volunteer, and develop confidence.

THIS YEAR HAS CERTAINLY PRESENTED ITS CHALLENGES, BUT WE'VE MADE SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS IN EXPANDING OUR REACH AND SUPPORTING OUR COMMUNITY.

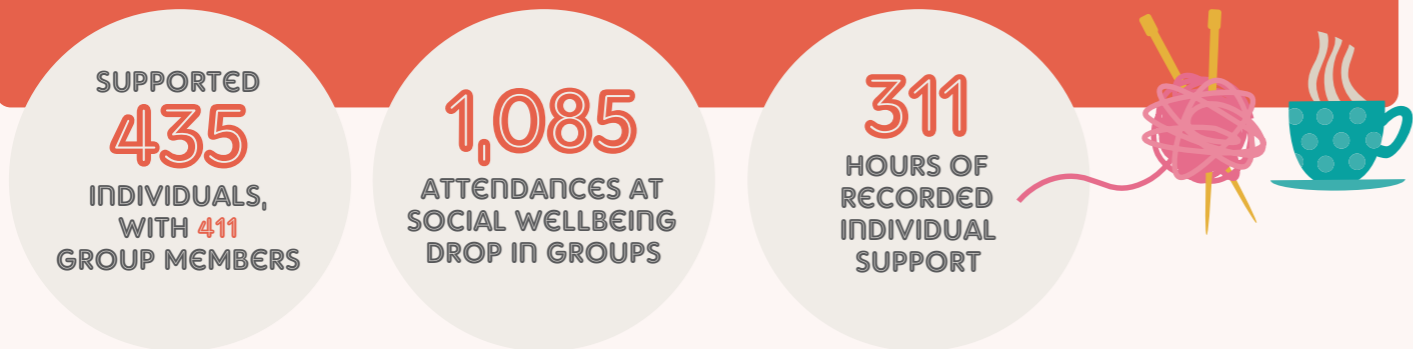
As we move forward, we remain focused on ensuring that The Churn Project continues to be a vital resource for all those in need, and we look forward to building on this progress in the year ahead.

COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

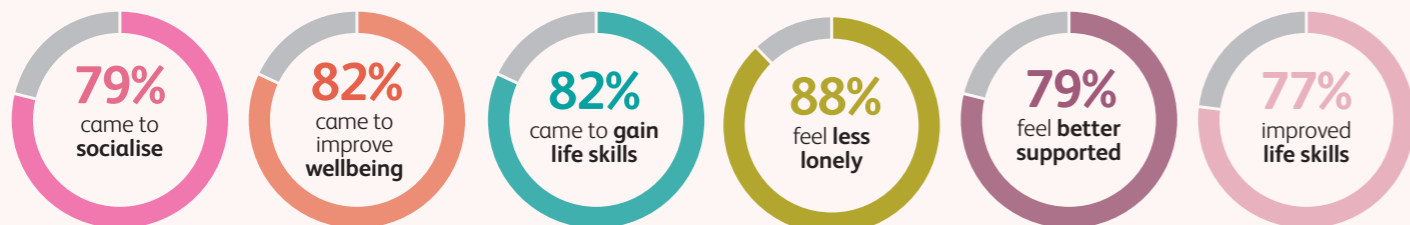
The Community Wellbeing Service provides **comprehensive support for adults**, encouraging social engagement and reducing isolation through a range of social groups and community projects.



It offers tailored wellbeing and mental health support, crisis assistance, and employability programmes that help individuals access education and training, particularly those who struggle to engage with mainstream resources. The service also includes volunteer-led initiatives, such as wellbeing walks, which promote community connection and improve overall wellbeing.



Data from annual survey:



"It is evident how much support The Churn Project has for the local community. They always come up with so many great initiatives which benefit many different age ranges. It is a real asset to the community."

Cirencester College

"Enormous thanks to all the team at Men's Shed. The children are thrilled with the brilliant new addition to the playground and it will bring a huge amount of joy to play time."

Stratton PTA

"I've thoroughly enjoyed working with The Churn Project to develop the Wellbeing Group. Together, we've created a programme centred on mindfulness and healthy lifestyle choices – sleep, diet, and physical wellbeing, proving to be both beneficial and informative for those attending."

Senior mental health nurse

"The Job Centre and The Churn Project have always worked closely together. We appreciate the support that is offered and signpost people for more support."

Employer Adviser Cirencester DWP

JOY'S STORY

Joy attended our Chat and Connect group when she was feeling low and isolated. She needed a place where she felt accepted and could relax and be supported. She says:

"The Churn Project welcomed me with open arms and made me feel safe and secure in a room full of strangers. I was in a very dark place and now with the help and support I have sunshine most days. I am enjoying each waking moment. I have grown from strength to strength. I have got a good job as a team leader in a local shop, I would like to sign myself off your books now as I am now confident and happy enough with my life and am looking forward to writing the next chapter."

DON'S STORY

Don was encouraged to come to Positive Strides, our wellbeing walking group for men. He told us:

"I was lucky enough to join the men's walking group at South Cerney. Each week we meet and enjoy a walk. The exercise is good but not arduous. Conversation ranges from the mundane to more complex aspects of life. In the main we no longer work for a variety of reasons. Jokes and experiences are shared, together with the peculiarities of retirement. Younger members bring their own perspective. The walk has become important to me, it provides a beginning to my week which I look forward to, I had not realised how much I missed company."

PIPPA'S STORY

"When I first came to The Churn Project, I was lost after 14 years of abuse. My mental health had hit rock bottom, and I didn't know how to cope. There were times when things got so bad that I ended up in the hospital. But being part of the group and having one-to-one support helped me through those dark times. Slowly, I found the strength to report the abuse and start rebuilding my life. Now, I'm beginning to see a future for me and my kids, and I don't feel so alone anymore."

JOHN'S STORY

"When I lost my job because of a serious health issue, it felt like my whole world had changed. My mental health took a big hit, and I fell into a deep depression. I struggled to leave the house and felt completely isolated. I applied for several jobs but kept getting rejected, which really knocked my confidence.

That's when I turned to The Churn Project. Joining the Men's Shed was a game-changer for me. I met people who understood what I was going through, and it felt great to share my experiences. Plus, the employment support they offered was really helpful. They guided me in updating my CV and helped me prepare for interviews.

Eventually, I landed a volunteer position at a local charity shop and with The Churn's help, I got offered a job as a delivery driver for a local pharmacy. I finally feel like I'm getting my life back on track!"

PEOPLE TELL US:

"It has helped me to put my worries and concerns into perspective I can always come and ask for advice if I need it."

"One to one support when my family deserted me."

"Since going to The Churn, I have received some great advice and support and have been able to talk more to others. I always feel welcomed and do feel much better when I go to group."

"The Men Shed has made me feel part of the community. Also making new friends and learning new skills."

"Made me feel better in myself. Helped with employment support and wellbeing."

"It was an invaluable source of support at a very difficult time. I could not have found this quality of support anywhere else locally."

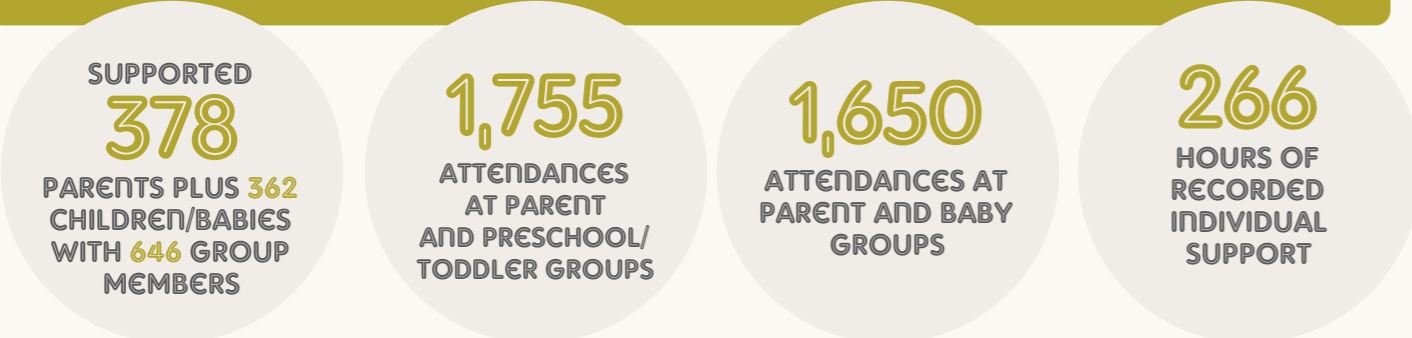


FAMILY SERVICE

The Family Service supports families through various activities and programmes designed to enhance parenting skills, promote connections, and provide essential resources.



The service offers guidance for parents, including antenatal and postnatal support, as well as assistance for those experiencing domestic abuse or facing complex issues. It also aims to support child development by providing activities that encourage learning and growth. By creating a safe and welcoming environment, the Family Service builds community connections and provides tailored support during times of crisis, empowering families to navigate challenges and improve their overall wellbeing.



Data from annual survey:



"I've worked with The Churn Project for over ten years, providing antenatal support, and I've seen the positive impact on the local community. There's been a decline in accessible, antenatal education from the NHS, leaving many women anxious and unprepared.

As a community midwife, I see how the Ready, Steady, Baby group fills this gap, offering crucial antenatal support. It also helps women and their families connect with various postnatal and family groups."

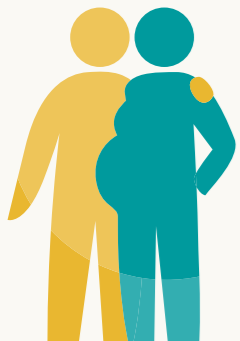
Community Midwife

"I've been working with The Churn for a year now. Parents and carers can't praise them enough. They provide a valuable space for socialising, support, and learning key skills. I've seen how this benefits mental health, combats loneliness, and boosts confidence. In the health visiting team, we regularly signpost parents and carers to their groups."

Community Nursery Nurse with health visiting team

"I'd like to extend a huge thank you for supporting our school with a parent support group. The impact on those who have attended has been significant. Yesterday, a parent shared how she typically goes home to sleep but instead engaged with others. She talked about managing bedtime with her two kids. This inspiring conversation encouraged other parents to share their experiences. None of this would have happened without The Churn Project's support and their strong relationships with these families. The parent left feeling happy, valued, and proud of her parenting, which has undoubtedly boosted her mental wellbeing and confidence. This is why this work is so vital. Thank you, and may it continue."

Chesterton Primary School Pastoral Support



JENNY'S JOURNEY

"When I first attended the postnatal group with my nine week old baby, I was so anxious. I worried about breastfeeding in public and was concerned about my baby's health because of a tongue tie. I was getting help from the perinatal team as my mental health was poor, it all felt overwhelming. Thankfully, the group was really welcoming, and I was signposted to breastfeeding support, which made a big difference.

I stayed active in the WhatsApp chat for the group, which helped me feel connected even outside of our meetings. After the group ended, I joined the 'New Baby New Life' group. I accessed additional services like baby weighing and even had monthly sessions with a perinatal physiotherapist. It was a relief to have that ongoing support, and it really helped me feel more confident as a new mum. I'm so grateful for all the help I received; it made a huge difference in my journey."

THE BROWN FAMILY'S STORY

Sharon: "When I first attended the Catch Your Breath coffee morning, I felt completely overwhelmed. I wasn't communicating well with the school and thought they were handling my youngest's behaviour unfairly. I was terrified of him being permanently excluded, and it was a tough time for our family.

The support we received from The Churn Project has been invaluable. With home visits, we built trust and worked through the Outcome Star to identify our strengths and what we needed help with. Dave and I started to see where we could improve.

Now, our communication with the school has gotten so much better. We learned the behaviour strategies they use for both our boys, and we've started doing the same things at home.

I've gained more control over our routines, which has helped improve school attendance. Mornings used to be a battle. The school has noticed a positive change and that feels great.

It's a journey, but I feel hopeful for our family's future."

FREYA'S STORY

Freya's Mum: "Freya is the youngest of six children, and our home can be a bit chaotic. Freya's brother is autistic and I worry that he gets most of my time. She's been attending the groups for three years now. It is nice for her to have something for her and she gets time with me. At first, Freya was shy and used gestures to communicate. But over time, I've seen such a wonderful change in her. I have realised that a lot can come out of play, and it has really helped Freya come out of her shell.

She always looks forward to coming. Freya has just started school this September, and I can honestly say she's well-prepared. I'm so grateful for the support she received in those groups; it's made a huge difference for her."

PEOPLE TELL US:

"Knowing there is somewhere confidential to go when things aren't going to plan."

"I think by coming to the group it's helped prevent me from getting PND a third time. I'm much more confident this time round and I am making good friendships."

"I don't think I'd be the parent I am without your support."

"The Project has really helped me to feel less isolated. I was new to the area, as well as having a new baby."

"They have helped me break down things to deal with them one at a time. Also giving me ideas for activities with the kids and advice on behaviours of my children. They have supported me and my family in every way."

"The Churn has really helped me with my mental health."



AGEING WELL SERVICE

The Ageing Well Service provides support to improve the health and wellbeing of older adults, particularly those experiencing loneliness and isolation. Recognising the unique challenges faced by older people, the service offers tailored support to address their specific needs, including those living with dementia. Through various activities and programmes, the service encourages social connections and promotes community involvement. It also includes a dedicated Carers Hub, providing essential resources and support for individuals caring for others.



Additionally, the service offers bereavement support and a befriending scheme aimed at individuals who may struggle to leave their homes. By focusing on building resilience and promoting independence, the Ageing Well Service ensures that older adults can access the support they need to maintain their health, wellbeing, and a sense of belonging within the community.

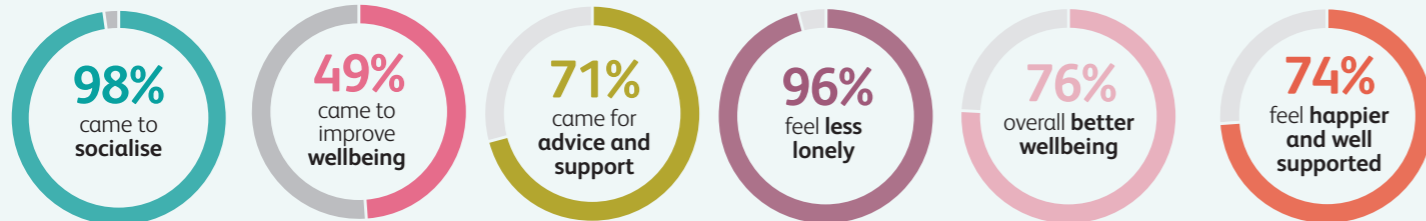
SUPPORTED
375
INDIVIDUALS,
WITH 354
GROUP MEMBERS

1,777
ATTENDANCES
AT THE
FRIENDSHIP CAFÉ

293
ATTENDANCES
AT THE
MEMORY CAFÉ

119
PEOPLE ENJOYED
SOCIAL TRIPS

Data from annual survey:



"The Churn Project offers such a unique and full coverage of support for Cirencester's ageing community. At Mindsong we have worked in collaboration with The Churn Project for many years and their joined up care and concern for the wellbeing of the older people is such a positive presence in the town and its surrounding areas. They are quick to respond, they really know their service users, they are great collaborators and both their staff and volunteers are fully committed and a real pleasure to work with. It is a privilege to work with staff and volunteers from The Churn Project and it makes what we do at Mindsong better."

Mindsong Director of Volunteer led Services

"I think the groups that The Churn offer for older adults is imperative to the community. It connects them with others, it has a positive impact on their general wellbeing but most importantly their mental health. It gives them a place to be with similar people, get fantastic support and have fun in a safe, welcoming environment. They are very well attended which shows there is a demand."

Community Support Officer Cotswold District Council

"The Churn Project offers a range of activities for older people that are inclusive and supportive. I am particularly impressed with the friendly and welcoming atmosphere at the groups; they are keen to do their best and develop services to suit everyone. They are mindful of the needs of people living with dementia, their family and carers. I can see befriending as an excellent way to help people to practically engage with the activities on offer; so many become isolated due to becoming unable to access services independently. Companionship of other people and social stimulation this affords is key to ageing well. Excellent work."

Senior Community Dementia Nurse

DEBORAH'S STORY

Hillary, a volunteer befriender, was introduced to Deborah to offer companionship and support during a difficult time. Deborah, a 77 year old woman, had spent months confined to her home, experiencing profound loneliness and isolation. She shared with Hillary that she rarely saw anyone and felt disconnected from the world around her.

"From our very first meeting, Hillary's warmth and cheerful nature made me feel comfortable and at ease. We quickly discovered we had shared interests and even mutual friends, which sparked some lovely conversations and a sense of familiarity. Hillary's visits became a regular highlight of my week; it was so nice to have someone to talk to and share stories with, easing the loneliness I had been feeling.

Earlier this year, we had an outing to the Cotswold Water Park for coffee. It was a simple trip, but it gave me a refreshing break from my usual routine and reminded me of the joy of getting out and about."

EXPERIENCE OF THE MEMORY CAFE

"I began attending the Memory Café with my mother, who is 92 and in the early stages of Alzheimer's. Although she enjoys gardening and crafts, she increasingly needs help with everyday tasks. As her main carer, I manage her finances and daily needs, and I was seeking both support for myself and a regular activity for her.

On our first visit, I received helpful advice on home care services and resources I hadn't known about before.

The café quickly became a valuable resource. Experts from Gloucestershire Carers Hub and Managing Memory Together provided essential information on managing dementia and available services. These sessions offered me useful insights and made me feel more equipped to face the challenges ahead.

Connecting with other carers has been incredibly beneficial. Sharing experiences and advice with those who truly understand the situation has created a supportive network for me.

In a rural area with limited support for dementia care, the Memory Café in Cirencester has been a lifeline. The café has significantly impacted our lives, helping me navigate the challenges of caring for her."

JENNY'S STORY

"I'm 79 years old. I was referred to the Ageing Well Service and started attending the Friendship Café. I've always enjoyed being sociable and involved in my community, but over the past few years, my health has declined, and I found it harder to get out.

When I first went to the café, I was a bit unsure, but I quickly became part of the group. I've made some wonderful friends there, and I even encouraged a few of my friends to join me. The Ageing Well Service has truly been my lifeline; without it, I would just be sitting at home alone, watching television.

I was invited to join the Mindful Crafts sessions, and although I was reluctant at first, I found that I really enjoyed it. I loved the camaraderie, learning new skills, and trying things I hadn't done before. Even though my physical health affects my daily life, I always try to keep a smile on my face. I feel grateful for the support and friendships I've found through this service."

PEOPLE TELL US:

"Non-judgemental support, accepting me as I am."

"First in giving my husband (who suffered dementia) and myself (as a carer) support and advice. Enabling us to meet with others experiencing similar challenges. The help with improving my limited IT skills. Thank you to a wonderful charity in Cirencester, we are extremely lucky to have you."

"It has helped me get out and somewhere to go since my husband passed away."

"You can go to someone in times of need."

"Because I can't see very well and therefore can't read or watch TV etc, I enjoy the extra company when my befriender visits."

"The Churn is absolutely fantastic. Without this support I do not feel I would be around!"



FINANCIAL REPORT 2023/2024

Overview

The past year has been one of adaptation and growth shaped by the changing political landscape and the challenges facing the voluntary sector. In an increasingly competitive funding environment and with rising community needs, **we've worked hard to maintain trust in our services and keep them relevant.** As we continue to develop, we've also made significant investments in **strengthening our internal infrastructure** to ensure we can meet the growing demand.

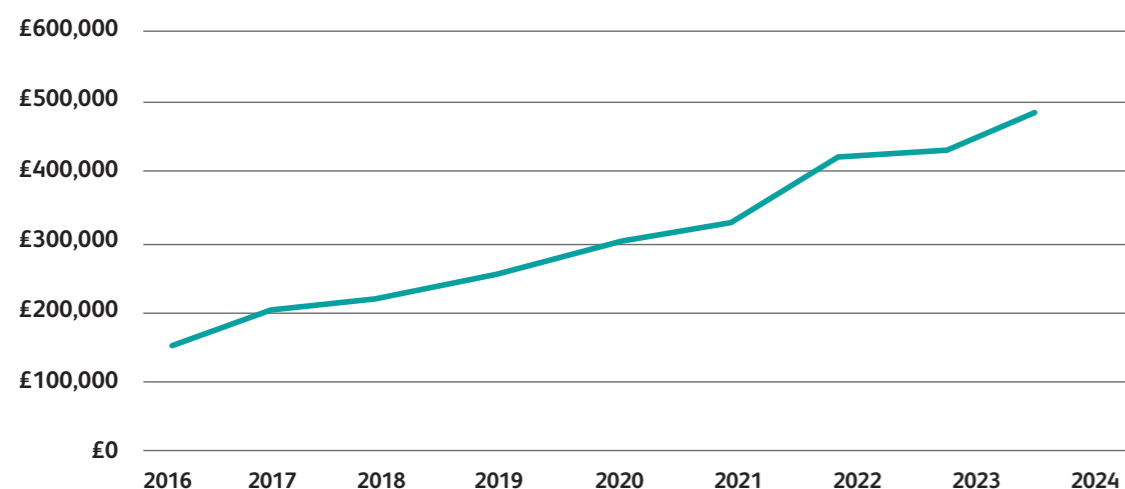
A key area of investment has been improving our HR support by outsourcing to a recognised consultancy, which has provided professional guidance for our team. We've also increased staff hours, with most of our team now working 30 hours or more – a better reflection of their workload and the current capacity required to deliver our services.

To support our growth, we restructured our team, creating new roles such as the Volunteer and Communications Coordinator, and expanded the Finance Manager role to include operations, reflecting the increasing complexity of our core services and administration. With the CEO now full-time, we've been able to focus more on strategic development, ensuring our services remain sustainable and impactful.

We are also in the second year of our ESHO project, funded through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund. We have also been able to pilot family support work with funding from Cotswold District Council. Both have had an impact on our ability to deliver and expand our services.

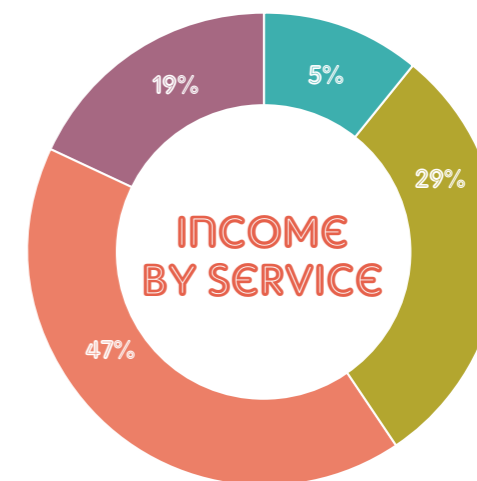
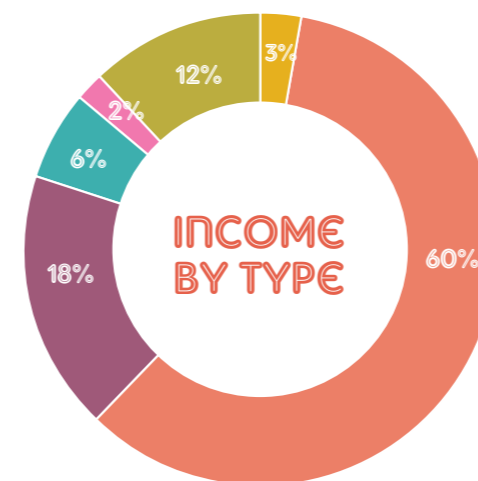
In 2023/24, our income was **£461,738**, a decrease of **£21,079**. Expenditure increased by **£65,267**, bringing the total to **£494,745**. We had very high reserves last year which has enabled us to increase our supply of services by **£65K** in the current year, but still carry forward **£180k. £96k** of which is unrestricted reserves.

EXPENDITURE OVER TIME 2016-2024

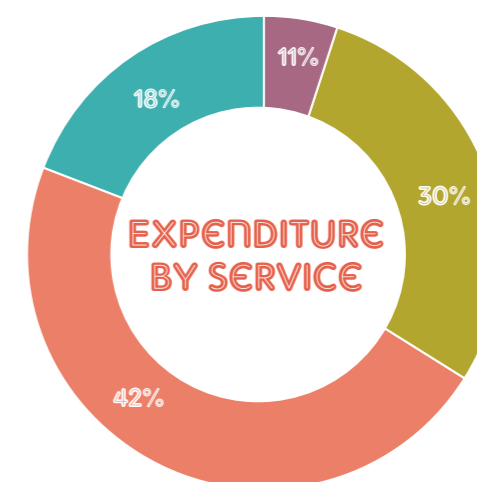
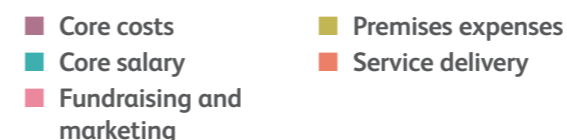
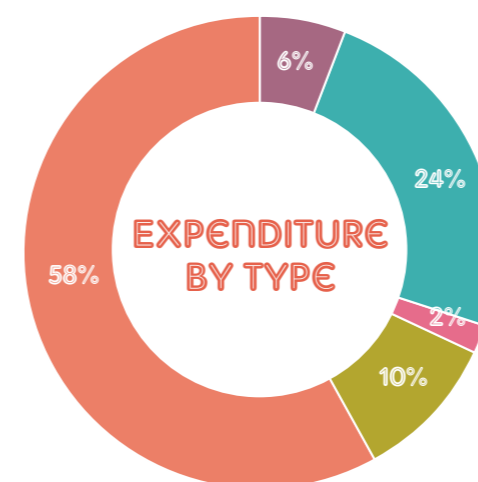


Sustaining Our Services Through Multi-Year Grants

Securing multi-year grants has been crucial in sustaining our services and demonstrates the faith our funders have in our work. We are grateful for the strong relationships we've built with funders such as the *Peter Lang Trust*, *The National Lottery*, *Henry Smith Charity*, and *Barnwood Trust*, all of whom provide vital support for our services.



We are also fortunate to receive regular financial support from various trusts and organisations, including *Primrose Trust*, *St. James's Place Foundation*, *National Benevolent Charity*, *Garfield Weston Foundation*, *Summerfield Trust*, *Gloucestershire Community Foundation*, *Winstone Trust*, and the *Integrated Care Board (NHS)*. Their ongoing grants, along with one-off funding, are crucial to sustaining our work and enabling us to meet the needs of our community.



VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are at the heart of The Churn Project, playing a vital role in helping us deliver our services and making a positive impact on people's lives. Through their support, we can **reduce isolation, improve wellbeing, and reach more individuals in need**. Volunteers also act as ambassadors, raising awareness about our services and ways for people to get involved.

We are also fortunate to receive help from companies who volunteer their time and resources. For example, **Hercules Site Services** made a significant difference by decorating our building, while **St. James's Place** provided a choir and a Christmas lunch for 90 older people. **Charles Russell Speechlys** organised an afternoon tea for our Ageing Well Service, and **IC Groundworks** contributed essential labour to help complete the groundwork for our Community Shed. These contributions from corporate volunteers are invaluable, enabling us to expand our reach and improve our services.

Whether it's Churn Champions supporting events or befriending volunteers visiting older people in their homes, the dedication of all our volunteers helps create a stronger, more connected community.

BENEFITS OF VOLUNTEERING WITH THE CHURN PROJECT

Volunteering offers numerous personal rewards, including:

- **CONNECTION AND BELONGING:**
Volunteers become valued members of The Churn Project team, forming friendships and connections with others who share similar values.
- **SENSE OF FULFILLMENT:**
Many volunteers find great satisfaction in giving back and positively impacting the lives of those we serve.
- **SKILL DEVELOPMENT:**
Volunteering provides opportunities to develop new skills and gain valuable experience, which can enhance future employability.
- **IMPROVED WELLBEING:**
Engaging in volunteer activities contributes to better mental health by providing a sense of purpose and community involvement.

114
ACTIVE
VOLUNTEERS

200
VOLUNTEERS
CONTRIBUTED
TO EVENTS AND
PROJECTS

Our Annual Survey reported 90% of volunteers said their reason for volunteering was to give something back to the community while 88% said they wanted a sense of connection and purpose.

NEW DEVELOPMENTS FOR VOLUNTEERS

This year, we were excited to introduce several initiatives to enhance the volunteer experience:

- **New Volunteer Coordinator:**
We have appointed a Volunteer Coordinator to focus on improving support, induction, training, and recruitment of volunteers. This role will ensure that all volunteers feel valued and equipped in their roles.
- **Lived Experience Volunteering Opportunities:**
We are developing more pathways for service users to volunteer. This initiative will provide them with opportunities to build confidence and experience while contributing to our services.

"Volunteering at The Churn Project and supporting other people has really helped me to manage my own serious mental health issue."
Quote from service user volunteer

"Through volunteering I feel part of a community and more confident in myself. I'm so grateful to The Churn Project for giving me the opportunity to volunteer."
Quote from service user volunteer

"Knowing that I have skills and knowledge that can really help others is the best feeling. I used to have whole days of feeling down, now it's more like half days, and The Churn Project are supporting me all the way."
Quote from Volunteer

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND EVENTS



Engaging with the community is important to us, as it allows us to **connect with local people** and raise awareness of our services while **showing support for fantastic local initiatives**. Our dedicated volunteers and team have made a significant impact by helping to organise and participate in various activities, from concerts to community events.

Throughout the year, we have taken part in a variety of local events, including the Cirencester Advent Market, Big Lunch, Wellbeing Fair, Phoenix Festival, Cirencester Pride, Family Fun Days, and the Holiday Activities and Food Programme. This year has been particularly special, as we ran our first ever Charity Ball and a Santa Fun Run!

Our Churn Champions have been busy raising money through events like the Good Afternoon Choir and Cirencester Choral Society. It's been a rewarding year filled with community involvement and support.

TRIPS AND ACTIVITIES

Every year, if funding allows, we organise a range of trips and extra activities for our service users, which help create happy memories, encourage social interaction, and allow individuals to step outside their comfort zones. These opportunities raise awareness of what's available and introduce people to new and interesting places they might not typically visit. We aim to provide enjoyable trips and activities tailored to each service, giving everyone something to look forward to while building confidence and providing the opportunity to socialise and get out – experiences that can often be out of reach for many.

We are grateful for the generous contributions from our supporters and the discounts we receive from various providers, which enhance our programmes. A heartfelt thank you to all who have contributed – too many to mention – your support truly makes a difference in improving accessibility and enriching lives.

Thanks to additional funding we have been able to offer:

COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

- Sculpture Park Visit
- Highgrove Park Afternoon Tea
- Day out in Bath
- SIX Theatre Trip
- Stroud Art Gallery

FAMILY SERVICE

- Weymouth Family Beach Trip
- Roves Farm Christmas Visit with Santa
- Easter Egg Hunt
- Picnic in the Park

AGEING WELL SERVICE

- Bowling Club
- Charles Russell Speechly Afternoon Tea
- Bingham Gallery Exhibition
- Corinium Cinema
- Sing To Remember Winter Get Together and Summer Picnic
- St James's Place Christmas Lunch and Singing and Sherry Celebration
- Rotary Club Afternoon Tea
- Highgrove Warm and Well Music Concerts
- Willow Trust Boat Trip
- Open Air Sculpture Park



FUTURE PLANS

We recognise that our plans must adapt to changing circumstances and ongoing assessments. The information we have gathered from service users and partners informs these priorities, which will be our focus for the upcoming year.



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| <p>1. Expand volunteer provision to increase capacity, with a strong focus on lived experience to provide meaningful engagement opportunities, develop skills and confidence, and allow individuals to progress in their journeys.</p> | <p>2. Continue to develop mental health support by securing further funding for the Wellness Programme, introducing additional weeks, and linking with follow-on community social groups with a wellbeing emphasis.</p> |
| <p>3. Widen the scope of social and engagement groups by listening to service users and expanding to evening sessions, linking with partners to offer more resources accessible in our building.</p> | <p>4. Increase support for young people's well-being groups, including one-to-one support and advice on employment and training assistance.</p> |
| <p>5. Increase engagement capacity at the Community Sheds to enhance participation and work with partners on development.</p> | <p>6. Further develop family support in partnership with schools, including whole family activities and parenting programmes.</p> |
| <p>7. Enhance mental health support for parents through links with the perinatal team and other partners.</p> | <p>8. Focus on individual support for older people, reevaluating the befriending scheme to better address more complex needs.</p> |
| <p>9. Develop smaller creative wellbeing groups for older people to encourage connection and engagement.</p> | <p>10. Focus on physical health and nutrition through our service delivery.</p> |
| <p>11. Continue focus on our fundraising strategy to diversify and secure funding sources for future projects.</p> | <p>12. Develop a communication strategy to improve our outreach and engagement with the community and stakeholders.</p> |
| <p>13. Collaborate with partner organisations to strengthen the district's voluntary sector and enhance service provision.</p> | <p>14. Continue to improve our evaluations, impact assessments, and data reporting by further developing the use of our CRM and monitoring tools.</p> |
| <p>15. Develop a longer-term strategy to meet growing demand and capacity, with a focus on sustainability and financial security.</p> | <p>16. Strengthen administration support, to enhance efficiency, enabling our core team to effectively manage growing service demands and support organisational development.</p> |

THANK YOU

A Heartfelt Thank You.

We want to extend a massive thank you to everyone who has supported us throughout this year. From trusts and foundations to our incredible volunteers, local businesses, partners in the voluntary and statutory sectors and our committed supporters – your contributions have made a real difference.

To our amazing staff team and trustees, who work tirelessly to keep everything running smoothly, we truly appreciate all your hard work. Every form of support – whether funding, time, expertise, or simply spreading the word - has been invaluable. We are excited about what we can achieve together in the year ahead.

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|------------------------------|---|---|
| Barnwood Trust | Gloucestershire Employment and Skills Hub | Integrated Care Board NHS Gloucestershire |
| Bromford Housing | Gloucestershire Community Foundation | Peter Lang Children's Trust |
| Charles Russell Speechlys | Gloucestershire Rural Community Council | St James's Place |
| Cirencester Foodbank | Garfield Weston Foundation | St James's Place Charitable Foundation |
| Cirencester Town Council | Hercules Site Services | Tanners Solicitors |
| Cirencester District Council | The Henry Smith Charity | Tesco's Community Fund |
| Cirencester Signpost | IC Groundworks | The Summerfield Charitable Trust |
| Cotswold Primrose Trust | Kier Construction | Travis Perkins |
| Cook Cirencester | National Benevolent Charity | UK Prosperity Fund |
| Dorothy Minus Trust | National Lottery Reaching Communities | Winstone Charitable Trust |
| Cirencester Soroptimists | Mothers Union | Wickes |
| Ermin Fosse | | |
| Freemasons Cirencester | | |
| Gardiner Haskins | | |

Thank you to everyone who has generously donated, whether named or anonymous – every contribution truly counts and makes a difference.

Find out More:
www.churnproject.org.uk

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