



# ANNUAL IMPACT REPORT 2023-2024

# INTRODUCTION

Over the past year, we've been busy with lots of projects, forming new partnerships, and welcoming new team members. There's been a big demand for our support services, and our volunteers have been making a real difference in their local community.



2,600

**VOLUNTEER HOURS**



10,000

**CONTACTS WITH THE  
COMMUNITY**



100

**REGULAR VOLUNTEERS**

In our Sustainability project, we added Caitlin Herman and Emma Jordan to our team in November. They're helping with the River Cam CAN project led by Cambridge Past Present and Future. Maria Carvalho has joined our Abbey Health and Employment Hub, working with Cambridge City Council and others, to help Abbey residents move toward work.

We've also been supporting people through our Helping Each Other program, and the Food Hub has been evolving, teaming up with Cambridge Sustainable Food and CoFarm to tackle food shortages while reducing waste.

Working in partnership with Cambridge Acorn Project, our Youth Clubs are now becoming more focused on helping young people deal with trauma. We've also been partnering with Jesus College, which has led to some exciting visits and events.

We've been improving our organisation behind the scenes, with new systems like Salesforce CRM, better volunteer management, and training for our team. We've also been working with Cambridge City Council on the Shaping Abbey project.

Financially, we've done well, securing long-term funding for key areas and forming new partnerships with Railpen and Cambridge Ahead. We've ended the year with strong reserves and funds ready to support our work in the future.



# UN SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (UN SDGs) are an international set of objectives to end poverty, protect the planet and ensure equality for all across the planet by 2030.

We work across a range of these objectives and align with the goals of our partners, funders and corporate partners.

Together with others, our work is helping to ensure Cambridge meets these goals by 2030.



## OUR STRATEGY

### VISION

Thriving people, vibrant community

### MISSION

Working together for an equal community

### VALUES

- Walk alongside people as neighbours
- Know people well
- Create opportunities for volunteering
- Enable community voices to be heard
- Work in partnership with other organisations

#### Vibrant community

Community events, facilities and engaging activities



#### Helping each other

Support activities and the Abbey Food Hub

#### Supporting the next generation

Youth and family projects and events



#### Sustainable environment

Community based greenspaces and conservation projects

# CORPORATE PARTNERS

## BUSINESSES INVESTING IN OUR WORK

We continue to thank our corporate partners for their support.

"Since partnering with Abbey People back in 2022 we've been fortunate enough to host a number of their Tuesday sessions of Girls Group at our studio, introducing girls aged 12-14 to the game development industry through activities such as storyboarding, as well as getting them involved in playing some video games.

This was a great link to our participation in the 10 for 10 initiative, supporting their Next Generation strategy. There is such breadth to the fantastic work Abbey People do within the community and being able to offer a "warm space" throughout the cost of living crisis, providing the local community with somewhere to connect, have a hot drink and a slice of cake, as well as taking part in their Christmas Hamper Appeal has been a real pleasure. We're pleased to be able to continue this partnership with Abbey People and look forward to another year of supporting our local community." - Ninja Theory

Corporate partnerships also give employers the opportunity to help their teams engage in volunteering activities with Abbey People. This year we were pleased to host work-days with AVEVA and a team building day for Railpen and JLL at the community centre, orchard and allotment.

"Thank you to Abbey People for organising a fantastic volunteering day for Railpen and JLL at East Barnwell Community Centre. The teams had a highly enjoyable and rewarding day digging, weeding, painting and helping to support Abbey People's important work within the Cambridge community. We are very much looking forward to our next volunteering day."

- Matt Howard, Railpen



# VIBRANT COMMUNITY

## CRUCIAL CONNECTIONS AND TACKLING LONELINESS

Our community activities are a way for people to make friends and tackle loneliness across the area.

The Abbey Voices choir continues to be a wonderful opportunity for local people to gather and sing, making friends locally and gaining all the wellbeing benefits of singing in a group.

Our Community Coffee Morning is a key place for new people to engage with our activities, and to help people develop friendships locally. We had 365 visits to the coffee morning across the year, with 176 volunteer hours for the project.

The Big Lunch is our annual event for the whole community, with more than 500 visitors and 20 partner organisations involved.



## COMMUNITY SPACES

Across the year we've had community bookings at both The Hub and Community Centre with new group bookings starting this year. We're looking forward to working with Cambridge City Council as the new community centre planned for Barnwell starts to take shape.

97%

of respondents to our annual survey said that community facilities in Abbey have been improved as a result of Abbey People's activities

# TENTH BIRTHDAY CELEBRATION

## CELEBRATING 10 YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY



We were pleased to host an event in September 2023 to thank the volunteers who have been part of the Abbey People Family over the years.

We also gave Long Service awards to four of our volunteers who've been involved for 10 years, Tracy, Lorna, Charley and Matilde.



## 10TH BIRTHDAY GALA

On the 11th of November 2023 we hosted our 10th Birthday gala at Jesus College Cambridge. It was a great success! The Master of Jesus College, Sonita Alleyne spoke about the partnership between Jesus College and Abbey People, and many of our partners, volunteers, trustees and supporters were able to celebrate with us. The event raised over £6,000, which is much needed funds and will go towards the many projects and events we carry out throughout the year.

We'd like to thank Railpen for their support which made these events possible, and to Cookie Cut Production for the film celebrating our work.



# LITTLE FREE LIBRARIES

Little Free Library is an international project with the aim to help build communities, inspire readers, and expand book access for all through a global network of volunteer-led Little Free Library book-exchange boxes. At present there are 175,000 libraries, in 121 countries, with over 400 million books shared.



In 2020, Abbey People was approached by Catherine Galloway, a local resident and book enthusiast, who had the idea of introducing the Little Free Libraries to the area. There are currently four Little Free Libraries in Abbey, in Beche and Wadloes Roads, The Hub and The Food Hub, but there are big plans for more.

Earlier this year we were happy to host a visit from Sonita Alleyene, the Master of Jesus College, who has been helping and supporting Abbey People as one of the College's partner charities since 2021.

As part of the project, and in partnership with Amazon, we've been able to give new books to every child who receives a Christmas Hamper from us. We've supported the Spring into Reading programme once again and we've helped lots of people access books close to home.



"Being involved with the Little Free Library was like throwing our community a reading lifeline!! The positive feedback I get about the Little Free Library is so rewarding! So many people use it & love it, children run up to it excited to pick a book, it's totally heart warming!!" - Sharon Secker, Little Free Library Steward and Trustee of Abbey People

# CHRISTMAS HAMPERS

**Vision for project:** To support those in the community who are in financial need or experiencing isolation.

**Who we helped:** Families, single adults, seniors. Every child in each household we delivered to received an age-appropriate book alongside a gift, in addition to the hampers donated.

**Funding:** We had additional funding and support from Amazon and from Pennington Manches Cooper.

**Statistics:** We delivered a total of 88 hampers to households which comprised 258 people.

48 individuals or companies donated hampers, which they made up for families, with other donations through Cambridge City Council, Cambridge Charity Fund Raisers, Cambridge United Lottery and 200 books for children from Amazon.

## FEEDBACK

"I appreciated the hamper very much and made my Christmas special."

"It was very much appreciated and it helped contribute to the other food."





# HELPING EACH OTHER

## HELPING PEOPLE TO MEET THEIR BASIC NEEDS

We have provided twice-weekly drop-ins to support people in need throughout the year, with a worker who supports adults and families with more complex needs to be signposted to appropriate partner organisations.

97

**PEOPLE**  
attended drop-in sessions

101

**SESSIONS**  
of support drop-ins and  
coffee mornings

73

**REFERRALS**  
to partner organisations

## PARTNER FEEDBACK

"It's been an absolute pleasure working with the staff, volunteers and service users at Abbey People. Cambridgeshire Skills have attended their Friday Coffee Mornings and numerous other events and it's been inspiring to see the differences that can be made to people's lives with their support. Their communication and collaboration with services like ours continuously encourages, motivates and supports people into positive outcomes." - Sophie Norman, IAG Careers and Progression Officer, Cambridgeshire Skills, Cambridgeshire County Council

85%

of respondents to our annual survey told us that their mental health has improved after being involved in Abbey People activities

# FOOD HUB

## TRANSITIONING TOWARDS AN AFFORDABLE MODEL

The Food Hub is open three days a week and continues to be depended upon by many in the community, with 75% of households surveyed in February 2024 saying they couldn't afford to feed their families without it. After experiencing an increase in demand due to the ongoing cost of living crisis and less food being donated, the Food Hub has had to adapt accordingly. This year saw the beginning of transitioning it away from an emergency response to food insecurity, towards a 'Social Supermarket': a sustainable, reliable, and affordable source of food for everyone in the community.

In November, we trialled 'The Pantry', an area where people can contribute £3 or £5 towards a small or big basket of tinned food, toiletries or household items. The trial was such a success, that we extended it, and it continues to be part of the Food Hub offering.



**6,749**

### TOTAL VISITS

to the Food Hub over 140  
sessions

**631**

### BASKETS

accessed through  
The Pantry in Nov-March

**2,353**

### VOLUNTEER HOURS

supporting the Food Hub

# FOOD HUB

## OUR AMAZING VOLUNTEERS

As always, the Food Hub would not be here without our incredible team of committed volunteers. From collecting supermarket food donations at unsociable hours, to being the friendly face for the community when they walk through the door, every person's contribution is invaluable.

Our amazing team of Session Lead volunteers has been another major success. The extra responsibility that these volunteers take on, has meant that all Saturday sessions this year were entirely run by volunteers. So, when we say the Food Hub wouldn't operate without our volunteers, we really mean it!

It's thanks to all of our volunteers for creating the welcoming, non-judgemental and calm environment every session, which means those who use the Food Hub value it so highly.



"I love the food hub and all who work there. Released pressure off our family and really gave me a chance to speak to someone."

"Made it so I can at least have something to eat daily. Social with people I usually wouldn't meet."

"I know that I am not on my own and if I am really desperate there are people that want to help me"

93%

of respondents to our annual survey told us that being involved with the Food Hub has improved their mental wellbeing

# SUPPORTING THE NEXT GENERATION-YOUTH WORK

**Vision:** To help young people gain confidence and provide a supportive community based environment throughout their development, through partnership working with organisations and schools.

979

Visits to our youth activities in the year

## AIMS

To continue and expand flexible youth provision based on young people's emerging needs. This includes open-access youth clubs, detached youth work, one-off projects, and closed group sessions, providing leisure time, creative and wellbeing activities for young people ages 8 – 19 based in the Abbey Ward of Cambridge.

To improve joined-up thinking and partnership working between partner organisations within the Abbey Ward of Cambridge.

To enable young people aged 16 - 19 who are not currently in education or training to gain work experience and develop new skills. They will develop professional barista skills, as well as other skills such as food safety training and experience in customer service. To develop work readiness and support with moving onto next steps, whether work, training or education.

75%

of young people surveyed agreed with 'My mental health is better because of attending group'

83%

of young people surveyed agreed with 'My physical health is better because of attending group'

92%

of young people surveyed said they would recommend the group to a friend





# COFFEE TRUCK PROJECT

**Vision for project:** To help young people develop confidence and self-belief through training and volunteering on a mobile coffee cart.



## OVERVIEW

The Coffee Truck project has continued to provide young people the opportunity to learn new skills, gain a Food Hygiene qualification and get experience of work in a supportive environment. Young people learn what is expected of them in the world of work, and are supported to transition to their next steps - whether that's employment, training or further education.

Training and volunteer opportunities take place outside The Hub at our Community Coffee Morning, at Cambridge United home matches, and at local events. This gives the young people a range of experience, and opportunities to engage with many different members of the community.

This Coffee Truck aspect of this project is winding down and we are working on a new model of the project for the future with Cambridge Sustainable Food, that will reach a wider audience.

"It has been very fun and enjoyable, everyone is always inviting and understanding. Everyone has made it easy to learn, even if it gets confusing or complicated. I have gained more confidence and am learning new skills. I am getting more confident with dealing with the public." - Molly, 18





# ABBEY TOGETHER

## Vision for project:

For a strong, resilient community on the eastern edge of Cambridge that supports families to raise confident and healthy children who are able to take all the opportunities available to them within Cambridge and the wider world.



## OVERVIEW

Working in partnership with the Kings Hedges Family Support Project we aim to:

- Continue to help local residents access support and advice.
- Improve networking links and partnerships.
- Increase support for families with children of all ages.
- Create stronger partnership links with other organisations.
- Offer family activities during school holidays.
- Provide transition support for children and young people.
- Provide pregnancy and birthing classes.
- Promote and assist education, volunteering, and new work.
- Help reduce isolation.

99%

of parents said that they had gone away from sessions with new ideas for activities to do with their children

"Abbey Together have been a big part of my life for a couple of years and have helped support me and my son who has ADHD. They have helped me with my mental health and have given me lots support especially when I was diagnosed with bowel cancer. My son has benefited from attending events especially forest school." - Parent

# FEEDBACK

99%

of parents said they had seen an increase in their own wellbeing having had support from the staff of the Abbey Together Project

80%

of parents felt confidence their own parenting had been improved through event activities



"Working with Abbey People has been the highlight of our 2023-24 programme. Both the staff and the families have been brilliant. Our DNA Curiosity Club in Autumn was a new format for us and Angie and the team supported throughout with boundless energy, wise advice, and such a deep care for the children who attended. The children took the club really in their stride and I was deeply proud on the last day to hear them be so excited about science.

The recent sea-themed family day was another triumph from Angie, Caitlin and the other brilliant supporters. They didn't just go the extra mile, but an extra marathon to make the event fun – including building and painting a cardboard submarine to go with our event!! The children loved it. I am always buzzing after visiting Abbey People, and I can't wait for our next projects, and to bring more of my colleagues to share the excitement." - Jack Monaghan, Wellcome Connecting Science



# SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENSPACES

## BUILDING CONNECTIONS WHILE LOOKING AFTER OUR ENVIRONMENT



We successfully achieved funding from the National Lottery Community Fund to create our new Sustainability Team as part of The River Cam CAN (Climate Action through Nature) project. Caitlin and Emma have been working to grow and develop the greenspaces and sustainability projects in Abbey, supporting the community to connect with their local environment and better understand how they can tackle climate change.

## GREENSPACES



The **Barnwell Verge: Seeds of Hope** project continued with consultation on the garden design and it's clear the community want greater biodiversity in the local area. Baseline biodiversity surveys were carried out in February with volunteers and support from Jonathan Shanklin, a scientist who discovered the hole in the ozone layer.

Conservation work on **Coldham's Brook** continued working to protect the rare chalk stream right here on our doorstep. We aim to get the brook to "good ecological potential" status by 2027. This involved conservation days in partnership with the City Council and raising awareness through volunteer days, public events and installing 3 new information boards along the brook. Thanks to the Pebble Fund and Flourishing Environment grant, our regular volunteer conservation days helped to:



- Install 4 log flow deflectors
- Plant aquatic plants to provide food and habitats for wildlife
- Help the in-channel flow
- Add gravel to create more habitats for invertebrates and breeding fish



# SUSTAINABILITY AND GREENSPACES

## CLIMATE ACTION

In March 2024, we hosted our first **Climate Café** – a welcoming space to talk about all things environment, climate change and nature. Members of the community came together to share their thoughts and feelings over a cup of tea and crafts. Together we created our community climate bunting that you can spot at our different sustainability events.

This year we celebrated Earth Day in April 2024 with our second **Repair Café** working together with Cambridge Carbon Footprint. East Barnwell Community Centre was transformed into a buzzing Repair Café with over 55 items coming through the door.

26

**volunteers sharing their passion for repair, skills and time**

46

**items fixed by volunteer repairers**

170 kg

**waste prevented from landfill by fixing items**



"I managed to get a walk-in spot to have a zip replaced on my coat. The lady fixed my coat and did a really nice repair. It is my only waterproof coat so is very good for me to have it functioning again. The lady was very nice and did a really good job. Very happy and have more things I would like to bring to the next repair café. Thanks everyone."

Our **litter picks** have become increasingly popular, with local residents getting involved in clearing litter to protect the environment and wildlife. With support from RiverCare and Keep Britain Tidy, in 2024 so far we have run 3 litter picks and collected 17 bags of litter in Abbey.



# VOLUNTEERS

Volunteering is a key part of all the work we do. Volunteers are involved in all of our activities, such as gardening, providing support at Youth Clubs, helping or leading Food Hub sessions, delivering food parcels and Christmas Hampers, and helping at our Coffee Mornings. The Trustees and staff team cannot thank them enough; they are integral to everything we do.

"I have really enjoyed helping the local environment and I find the volunteering at the youth club very rewarding. I have been struggling to find a job over the past few months, and volunteering at Abbey People has felt like its given me a bit of a purpose in this tough time."



"I got involved in the Food Hub during Covid. I work during the week so can't volunteer regularly. I don't have set hours where I volunteer but do try to lead the Saturday sessions as often as I can and fill in at the last minute if needed. I don't think you have to have any specific skills to volunteer; we are a very friendly and helpful bunch of people from all different walks of life with our own troubles and stories to tell. My circumstances have changed, so no longer need the food hub, but I realise that there are so many people that still need help, be that getting food, having a chat or just somewhere to go where they can talk and see other people. Everyone needs help now and again and need to realise that getting help is easier than people think. It's a great feeling knowing that by just smiling and listening to people may be all that person needs to help them through the day." - Jayne

# OUR FRIENDS

We are dependent on the support we receive from generous individuals and companies, which means we can better plan our work. Without this support we wouldn't be able to help as many people as we do.

## CAN YOU COMMIT TO A MONTHLY DONATION?



£5 a month covers the cost of a large basket of food in the Pantry for a family in need

£10 a month provides a coffee morning to build connections between people



£20 a month helps provide youth clubs and out-of-school activities for young people in Abbey

£50 a month contributes to running drop-in sessions



Or if you prefer, you can give a one-off donation

SIGN UP AT: [WWW.ABBEYPEOPLE.ORG.UK/DONATE-TO-US](http://WWW.ABBEYPEOPLE.ORG.UK/DONATE-TO-US)

# THANK YOU

## TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS







# **ABBEEY PEOPLE** WORKING TOGETHER FOR A BETTER COMMUNITY

Registered in England – Charity Number: 118056

Registered Office: 15 Barnwell Road, Cambridge, CB5 8RG

\*This report is available in larger print, please ring 01223 211945



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