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# THE CHURN PROJECT

Support in your community



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## THE CHURN PROJECT

Support in your community

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## ANNUAL REPORT 2024 | 2025

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# THE CHURN - A COMMUNITY HUB

FOUNDED IN 2001 | CELEBRATING 25 YEARS IN 2026

2026 marks the 25th anniversary of The Churn – a time to reflect on how far we have come and what it means to be part of a strong and committed voluntary sector in a rural community. We have grown from a small local initiative into a trusted community hub that understands local need because we are part of it.

The development of our services reflects the dedication of our team, volunteers, and partners who continually go above and beyond. We have adapted, found solutions, and made things happen – often with limited resources but a clear sense of purpose. While our work has expanded and diversified, our mission remains the same: **to connect people, reduce isolation, and improve wellbeing.**

This milestone also encourages us to look outward. After years of focusing on delivering services, we recognise the importance of sharing more widely what we do and the difference it makes. The Churn continues to do remarkable work despite our size, responding to growing demand and increasingly complex need, while working to secure the capacity and funding required for sustainable growth. The sense of community we have built together remains at the heart of everything we do, and it is that collective strength which will carry us into the next 25 years.

People's needs have changed over the decades;

- Growing mental health challenges across all ages
- An ageing population with increasingly diverse needs
- Families navigating complex challenges with reduced resources
- Increased financial hardship, poverty and crisis support
- Rising isolation loneliness and need for connection

But whether it was 2001 or 2026, our answer has always been the same: **we listen, we adapt, and we build services around the people who need them.**

**Our vision remains unchanged:** every individual should feel included, involved, and invested in their community.

**Our mission** is to address inequalities that contribute to social isolation and economic difficulties by offering services that promote purpose, belonging, and hope.

**Our aims** are to improve wellbeing and reduce isolation, particularly for those experiencing loneliness or facing challenges during life transitions, such as financial hardship or mental health difficulties.

As we look to the future, we remain committed to being that constant presence in our community – adapting to meet changing needs but staying true to the principles that have guided us since the beginning.



## REPORT FROM THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES

This year has brought challenge, change and continued growth for The Churn. Demand has risen while resources remain tight, yet through determination and compassion, the team has ensured our core services continue to adapt and strengthen. During 2024/25, **1,765** people accessed group and individual support, with **474** people receiving one-to-one help, over half of whom required ongoing support for complex issues. There were over **12,000** group and activity attendances.

Listening to the people we support remains central to everything we do. Our services have evolved to reflect community priorities – from mental health and family support to wellbeing and employability. More focused activities help build confidence and connection, while we continue to support those facing hardship with grants, practical help and emotional support.

Family work has expanded, particularly in primary schools, alongside growth in mental health support for young adults and men. For older people, we've introduced creative and therapeutic opportunities and smaller, more personalised sessions to help individuals engage in ways that feel comfortable and meaningful.

Partnerships have strengthened our work across digital inclusion, community health and employability, extending our reach and ensuring people can access the right support at the right time.

Volunteers remain at the heart of The Churn, giving their time and commitment across all areas. We're grateful for their dedication. The organisation was supported by **123** regular volunteers, with an additional **250** contributing to events and community activity.

Our staff continue to be exceptional, delivering high-quality, person-centred support and finding new ways to meet emerging need. This year we had a team of **18** staff (12 FTE).

We've welcomed new Trustees whose insight and experience will guide The Churn's next stage.

Although challenges remain, this year has shown the strength and resilience of our community. My sincere thanks go to everyone who places their trust in us. We will continue to make sure people can access the support they need.

**Rosemary Lynn**  
Chair of Trustees

## OUR TRUSTEES



Top row: Robert Towill, Fran Penny, Shirley Alexander, David Sutherland, Paul Styles  
Bottom row: David Bellamy, Cathey Groombridge, Marcus Scrivens, Simon Jones, Crispin Dawe



# HIGHLIGHTS OF THE YEAR



Sarah Bourne  
Chief Executive Officer

This year has been one of real progress and purpose. Looking back at the priorities we set twelve months ago, it's amazing how much we have achieved and how those plans have translated into practice. Each service has continued to evolve in response to local needs, strengthening our role as a community hub providing wide-ranging support and connection. What stands out is the breadth of what we deliver and the impact it brings. We've listened, adapted, and worked in partnership to improve the support available across our community.

## THE NEED FOR ONE-TO-ONE

**SUPPORT** has continued to grow, with more people coming to us for help as other services have reduced or disappeared. This has been especially relevant for families, where gaps in local support mean problems often become more complex before help is available.

## CASEY'S STORY

Casey, a single mother of three, was struggling to manage her eldest son's additional needs and the effect this had on the whole family. His behaviour had become physical towards her and his siblings, and the family rarely left the house. Casey withdrew from friends and professionals, her mental health declined, and none of the children were attending school. With routines lost and finances in difficulty, debt and poor living conditions added to the strain.

When social care became involved, the trust already built with Casey meant we could step in to help. We accessed funding to clear and furnish the home, creating a calmer space for the children, and supported the family to rebuild structure and stability. Casey responded to support.

*"I didn't know where to turn and felt embarrassed with everything so buried my head. I'm not like this and didn't want to live like it. I feel I can start to get things back how they need to be because you have given me the kick start I needed."*

Casey now has her children back in school, routines in place at home, and she is engaging with people again. Her support worker told her how proud she was of what she had achieved.

*"No one has ever said they are proud of me until now."*

**We see stories like this every day. This year, our family one-to-one support has helped 111 parents equalling 422 recorded hours.**

## OUR SUPPORT FOR OLDER PEOPLE

has focused on health and wellbeing through the new Supporting Wellness Programme, which introduced a range of groups and activities. These included mindful crafts, cooking, gentle exercise classes, chair yoga and reflexology. The sessions helped people stay active, build confidence and make social connections - 97 people have benefitted from this so far.

This programme enhanced our social and complex support for older people, increasing diversity, choice and weekly opportunities to connect.

Befriending continues to be an important part of our support for people isolated at home. This year, 63 individuals benefitted from regular contact and companionship. The programme has been refined to better identify those needing one-to-one support, and to match volunteers with people who will gain most from social contact ensuring the service remains responsive, personal and effective.

## BRIAN'S STORY

Brian, aged 86, is sight-impaired and cared for his wife, who lived with dementia, until her death earlier this year. During her illness, the Memory Café became a lifeline for them both – a place to talk, share experiences and feel less alone. When his wife's health declined, Brian devoted more time to caring for her, and after she passed away, he found the quiet at home hard to bear.

With encouragement, he began to rebuild his confidence and adjust to living alone. Through The Churn Befriending Service, he was matched with a volunteer. Their friendship has become an important part of his week.

Brian says he looks forward to the visits, where they chat, laugh and share stories. As his sight has deteriorated, he can no longer read or write easily, so having someone to talk to has been a lifeline.

*"It gives me something to look forward to, someone to talk to – it makes the day brighter."*

**MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT** is central to our work and continues to grow as we adapt our approach to meet people where they are. Alongside longer-term one-to-one support, we create opportunities that build connection, reduce anxiety and help people feel valued and understood.

This approach is reflected in the development of social wellbeing groups and accessible programmes that offer meaningful ways for people to connect. Our eight week wellbeing course sits alongside a growing range of activities including yoga, meditation, creative courses, wellbeing walks and the Sheds Project. These opportunities increase social connection, reduce isolation and help address mental health needs that are often overlooked.

Building on last year's plans, we introduced a young adults group, now an established part of our wellbeing work. It supports those who may be both neurodiverse and socially isolated, with members shaping ideas and activities to keep it relevant and engaging.

**Over the past year we provided 820 hours of individual support to 165 people. Access to mental health support in rural areas remains extremely limited, making our community-based provision vital.**

## MARK'S STORY

Mark is 22 and had a traumatic childhood, growing up in care before returning to his family home at 18. He has lived with the effects of childhood trauma and ongoing mental health difficulties, including depression and attachment issues. His family also face significant mental health challenges, including agoraphobia. These experiences have made it difficult for Mark to form and maintain healthy relationships, and he has often felt isolated and unsure where he fits in.

Over time, he has engaged in different areas of support around mental health, relationships, practical skills and education.

*"Although it's been hard, I feel like I can open up more now and I try to make the most of any help or opportunities I get. I've managed to finish my Maths and English through Cirencester College at The Churn, which I'm proud of, and I'd like to carry on learning if I can."*

*I really enjoyed the We Welcome Wellness programme, especially the creative stuff. I go to the Young Adults Group. I've got more confidence now. I also volunteer with The Churn, which makes me feel like I'm giving something back. The support has really helped me with my education and my confidence. The Churn has made a massive difference to my life."*

This year has brought significant organisational development and progress. We continue to take an active role in wider networks and strategic discussions, strengthening links across the voluntary sector and improving coordination of local support. This collaborative approach helps ensure community voices are heard, raises our profile and creates new opportunities to share learning and shape our work. Our three-year plan reflects this focus and sets out clear priorities for sustainability and growth.





## COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

- **TIME FOR YOU:** Women's wellbeing group, twice weekly.
- **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:** Weekly wellbeing walking for men and mixed sessions.
- **STITCH KNIT AND NATTER:** Social group enjoying sewing knitting and general crafts.
- **WE WELCOME WELLNESS PROGRAMME:** Wellbeing programme for those struggling with mental health.
- **MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT:** One-to-one support for mental health issues.
- **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:** One-to-one support for wellbeing, help in crisis, hardship grants and practical advice.
- **EMPLOYMENT SUPPORT:** Support with training, work experience and volunteering.
- **MATHS AND ENGLISH:** Level 1 and 2 courses run in partnership with Cirencester College.
- **DIGITAL SUPPORT:** Digi hub support as part of the Digital Inclusion Gloucestershire Initiative (DIGI).
- **YOUNG ADULTS GROUPS FOR 18-25 YEAR OLDS:** Supporting wellbeing through creativity and activities.
- **GAMERS GROUP:** Social group to play D&D and other fantasy style games.
- **YOGA, MEDITATION, CREATIVE ARTS SKILLS GROUPS:** Evening wellbeing sessions for all.



## AGEING WELL SERVICE

- **SOCIABLE STROLL:** Companionable walking groups. *South Cerney and Cirencester.*
- **BEREAVEMENT SUPPORT:** Living with Loss programme and monthly support group.
- **FRIENDSHIP CAFÉ:** Social connection group with activities, advice and information.
- **AGEING WELL EVENTS AND TRIPS:** Monthly community activities.
- **MEMORY CAFÉ:** Support group for people living with dementia and their carers.
- **CARERS CAFÉ:** Monthly support group for all carers.
- **SING 2 REMEMBER:** Singing group to help with memory loss and social isolation. Run in partnership with Mindsong.
- **CHURN 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.
- **MINDFUL CRAFTS:** Creative activities and mindful practices.
- **MOVE TOGETHER:** Gentle exercise classes for over 60s.
- **WINTER WARMER SESSIONS:** Creative and wellbeing sessions in winter months.
- **CHAIR YOGA:** Yoga for people with restricted mobility.
- **COOKING FOR ONE SESSIONS:** Creating tasty nutritional meals for one.



## FAMILY SERVICE

- **READY STEADY BABY ANTENATAL GROUP:** Antenatal sessions and individual support.
- **MUM AND BABY GROUP:** Postnatal support group for mums and their babies.
- **NEW BABY NEW LIFE:** Informal drop in hub for parents and their babies.
- **MINI TODDLER GROUP:** For parents and toddlers aged one to two years, twice weekly.
- **FAMILIES MATTER GROUP:** For parents with preschool children and older toddlers, twice weekly.
- **CATCH YOUR BREATH COFFEE MORNINGS:** Parent support group for parents with primary school aged children.
- **SHARED STEPS:** Monthly support group for parents with SEND children.
- **FAMILY SUPPORT:** One-to-one parenting support for parents with primary school aged children.
- **INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT:** Personalised support covering mental health, wellbeing, domestic abuse, parenting and practical help.
- **PEEP PROGRAMME:** Development programme for parents and children aged one to four years.
- **SOLIHULL PARENTING PROGRAMME:** Parenting with confidence course.
- **SOCIAL ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS:** Trips and activities during school breaks.

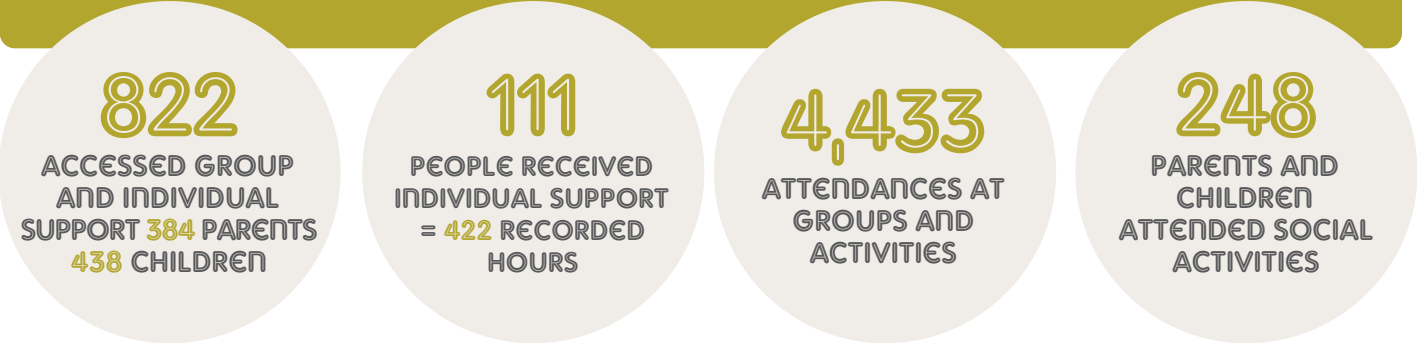




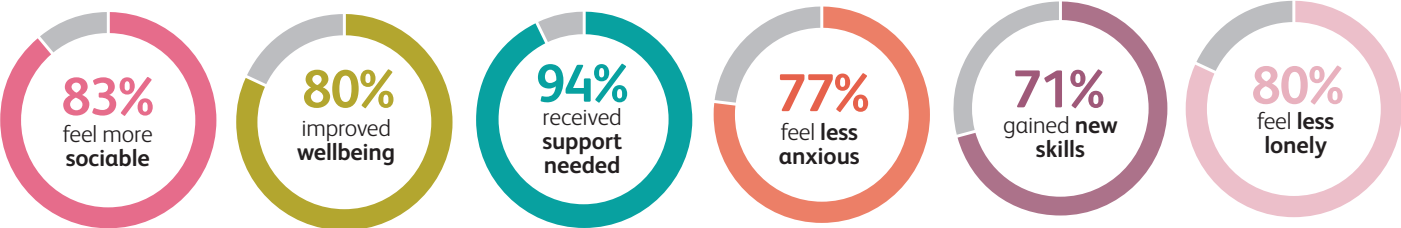
# FAMILY SERVICE

The Family Service offers practical, emotional and social support for families from pregnancy through to primary school years. The service provides one-to-one help, parenting programmes and group activities that support child development and family wellbeing.

The service provides antenatal and postnatal support, parent and baby groups and sessions for families with children aged one to four. For those with primary school aged children, we offer support groups, after-school activities and one-to-one family support. More intensive help is available for families facing complex situations, including mental health, domestic abuse and parenting challenges, and we also support those with children who have SEND.



Data from annual survey:



## WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY

*"The Churn's family support work - particularly the parent support groups held at several primary schools - has reached families most in need in our community, offering support and guidance. Through my collaboration with The Churn, I've seen first-hand the positive impact these weekly sessions have had."*  
**Community Builder**  
Cotswold District Council



*"The Churn has made significant changes for families we work with in Gloucestershire. Support has been relational and built on trust, with staff working alongside the parent to make real improvements. We had concerns about the home environment, lack of routine and school attendance. The Churn helped declutter the house and supported the parent to keep it maintained and provided guidance on positive parenting. The progress is clear and life has improved for the children and their mother."*  
**Social Worker**

*"New Baby New Life offers a welcoming space where new parents can get reliable support from knowledgeable and caring staff. The group provides practical guidance on early development, regular input from guest professionals and monthly access to the health visiting team for advice and baby weighing. I highly recommend this group to new parents."*  
**Health Visitor**



### SOLIHULL PARENTING WITH CONFIDENCE

Sky joined this parenting course while struggling with morning routines and her daughter's emotions. Her three and a half year old was often unsettled at nursery and Sky felt overwhelmed and guilty. Through the course she learnt to slow the mornings down, tune into her daughter's feelings, and explain what was happening. Mornings are now calmer, and both feel more secure.

*"Doing the parenting course has made a massive difference to us as a family. I now understand how to help regulate my children's feelings and go at their pace."*



### MUM AND BABY GROUP AND ONE TO ONE SUPPORT

Maureen came to us while dealing with domestic abuse, ongoing conflict with her ex-partner, court proceedings, and social care involvement. She was managing debt, a complicated custody situation, and the impact of her ex-partner's mental health issues. She felt overwhelmed with no support. We offered regular one-to-one support, a safe space to talk, and help to plan a way forward. She gained peer friendship through the baby group, and we signposted her to relevant services.

*"I found the service fantastic and helpful. The baby group in particular has been a good support for myself and my son whilst I have been going through a difficult time. I have also found my interactions with the family support very supportive, the knowledge, understanding and care is something that is needed within the community."*



### FAMILIES MATTER GROUP

Louise is a single parent with two children. Her youngest who is two was having frequent meltdowns. She felt judged when out in public, had become anxious, and was rarely going out with him. With encouragement she attended Families Matter where she learnt simple ways to help him communicate and understand his feelings. This has strengthened his speech and language development and helped her feel more confident when they are out together.

*"When I started coming here, I didn't know what to do when Tom had meltdowns. I have learnt what works with him to help him manage his feelings. It's so nice to see him play alongside others, I am now confident to go anywhere with him and enjoy ourselves."*

### FAMILY ONE TO ONE SUPPORT OUR PRIMARY SCHOOL PROGRAMME

Gemma was struggling with her mental health due to childhood trauma and the ongoing stress of parental conflict and custody proceedings. She was also managing the high needs of her seven-year-old son, who is neurodiverse. His challenging behaviour, part-time school attendance, and difficulty with boundaries left her feeling overwhelmed. We provided consistent one-to-one support to help stabilise the situation and prevent escalation. Working closely with the school, we focused on understanding her son's needs, supporting routines at home, and helping Gemma build confidence in setting boundaries. This strengthened her ability to manage his behaviour and eased the pressure on her own mental health.

*"Support has helped me cope with daily challenges; it is tough but I am not alone."*



# COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

The Community Wellbeing Service offers practical, emotional and social support to improve wellbeing and reduce isolation. The service provides one-to-one help and group activities that build confidence, connection and purpose, with a focus on mental health and wellbeing.

The service includes weekly groups, a mental health programme, employability support, and work with young adults. Individual support is available for both crisis situations and longer-term mental health needs. Community social groups, such as the Sheds project, sit alongside our volunteering opportunities, digital support, and the practical help we offer during times of hardship.

463

ACCESSED GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

165

PEOPLE RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT = 820 RECORDED HOURS

4,352

ATTENDANCES AT GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

214

PEOPLE ENGAGED WITH SOCIAL WELLBEING GROUPS

Data from annual survey:

94%

feel more sociable

98%

improved wellbeing

94%

received support needed

81%

feel less anxious

79%

gained new skills

89%

feel less lonely

## WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY

*"The Churn is valuable to the community. The support they give and the groups and courses they run make a massive difference to people, who otherwise would struggle, many of whom are alone and isolated and don't know where to turn. To have this for people to access so easily is a huge help to people and professionals alike."*

Mental Health Navigator

*"The Churn Project joining the DIGI Partnership has made a real difference in local communities. It has strengthened our partnership and widened our reach. Their long-standing relationships and trust within the community have helped the work take hold and grow in the places where it is needed most."*

Digital Project Manager  
Forest Voluntary Action Forum



## WE WELCOME WELLNESS MENTAL HEALTH PROGRAMME

Mary lives with mental health challenges, linked to childhood abuse, neglect, and domestic abuse as a young adult. She struggled to talk about it and had tried to get help through her GP. She was anxious about joining the programme but the activities gave her new ways to look after herself and helped her focus on the present.

*"It was exactly what I needed. I finally felt heard and understood, and I've learned things that help me every day."*



## MENTAL HEALTH SUPPORT

Don was referred by his GP experiencing depression, anxiety, and difficulties around alcohol. Through regular sessions he began to find ways forward and identify positive steps to improve his wellbeing. With support he engaged in rehab and later returned to take part in the Meditation Group. He now attends regularly and finds the routine helps him stay steady.

*"It's the highlight of my week and enables me to stay focused and on track."*



## MENS SHEDS STORIES

After a stroke, David was struggling with confidence and reduced mobility. At the Cirencester Shed he found practical tasks that he could manage. Working alongside Peter, who also has health limitations, they recently organised the Shed's recycling area. The routine and shared activity have helped David regain confidence and feel connected again.

*"I haven't felt this useful in years. We help each other and it feels good to be part of something."*

John has been attending our South Cerney Shed for over a year. He lives with Parkinson's. With support from other Shed members, he has gradually built his skills and is now producing high-quality craft items.

*"I felt like I was going mad trapped in my four walls. This has meant the world to me and given me a purpose to get up and out."*

## EMPLOYABILITY SUPPORT

Daryl, 16, faced several barriers after leaving school. He didn't have the grades to access college and he began to feel anxious and unsure about his future.

Through support, he built a CV and identified his enthusiasm for practical outdoor work. He was supported to secure a six-week placement with funding for travel with Cirencester Town Council's Outdoor Recreation Team.

The placement helped Daryl grow in confidence and recognise his abilities. He has since taken on part-time work at a local pub and continues to look for opportunities in outdoor work.

*"I really enjoyed working with the team. It showed me what I want for the future, and they've said they'll give me a reference for future jobs."*

## TIME FOR YOU WOMEN'S WELLBEING GROUP

Grace was referred to the group by her GP to help manage anxiety and depression to avoid increasing her medication. She hadn't left her house for weeks, simply walking through the door was a major step.

*"It's not always easy, but I know I'm not alone anymore. This group has given me the strength to keep going."*

## SOCIAL WELLBEING GROUPS

Hannah, a young woman, experienced severe anxiety and poor mental health, to the point where she rarely left her home. She struggled with panic attacks and felt confused and insecure about her own identity.

Through contact, encouragement and support from staff, her mental health significantly improved. She began to make social connections and now has a consistent group of friends she feels safe and secure with.

*"I got the support I needed to thrive as a person."*



# AGEING WELL SERVICE

The Ageing Well Service offers practical, emotional and social support to improve the health and wellbeing of older adults. The service provides one-to-one help, group activities, a befriending scheme that reduce loneliness and isolation and dedicated support for those living with dementia and their carers.

The service helps older people stay connected and active in their community. It builds resilience and supports health, and wellbeing through a wide range of activities shaped by the interests of older people. These include gentle exercise, creative and wellbeing sessions, social connection, and volunteering opportunities.

432

ACCESSED GROUP AND INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT

198

PEOPLE RECEIVED INDIVIDUAL SUPPORT = 226 RECORDED HOURS

3,433

ATTENDANCES AT GROUPS AND ACTIVITIES

168

PEOPLE ATTENDED SOCIAL EVENTS

Data from annual survey:

86%

feel more sociable

90%

improved wellbeing

93%

received support needed

87%

more satisfied with life

60%

gained new skills

90%

feel less lonely

## WHAT OUR PARTNERS SAY

*"The monthly carers group provides meaningful respite by offering a safe activity for the person being cared for while carers spend time together for conversation, support and a short break. Carers have said they want more opportunities like this, and this group is clearly meeting that need."*

*I have attended sessions and have been consistently impressed by the warmth, respect and empathy shown. Carers speak openly about how much they value having time out from their role and feeling genuinely cared for themselves."*

Gloucestershire Carers Hub

*"Having signposted a number of clients/patients to the Ageing Well Service and listened to the feedback that followed, it gives people a place to connect, make friends and feel less isolated. Whether it's through activities and groups or just someone taking the time to listen, the service helps people feel less alone, a lifeline for many in the community and makes a huge difference to many people."*

Care Coordinator and Social Prescribing Team Lead

## PHYSICAL ACTIVITY GROUPS

Fiona, aged 81, attends Move Together and Chair Yoga and says she feels better both emotionally and physically. She has started practising at home using what she learns each week and has noticed real improvements in her mobility.

*"Health and keeping fit are important to me. There is a responsibility to look after yourself, I get a lot of support and companionship from The Churn which I am grateful for."*

Diana, aged 81, attends the Sociable Stroll and enjoys the gentle exercise and routine it gives her. After her husband died, the group also helped her stay connected when life felt difficult.

She later joined Move Together and has found the exercises particularly helpful for everyday movements such as reaching, bending and climbing the stairs. She says she now feels more supple and healthier, and that keeping active has made a real difference to her confidence and independence.

*"Socialising, exercise and getting out of the home are so important. I use my body and brain on the Sociable Stroll each week."*

## MEMORY AND CARERS CAFÉ

Helen, aged 76, cares for her husband Robert, who has dementia. Before coming to the Memory and Carers Café, she often felt alone and unsure where to turn. The Café helped her understand what support she could access as a carer, including financial help and safe care options for Robert. It also gives her a short break while he takes part in specialist activities. She said she would not have known where to start without this support and that it has eased the pressure of managing on her own.

*"It has been helpful to have someone to chat to who is understanding to my needs."*



## COOKING FOR ONE

William, aged 84, who lives alone, joined Cooking for One to feel more confident cooking for himself. He said he learned how to make simple ingredients stretch, how to use herbs and spices and how to adapt recipes. The course has increased his confidence in the kitchen and helped him feel more self-sufficient.

*"The classes have encouraged me to cook and experiment with spices, I have recreated some of the recipes at home."*

## FRIENDSHIP CAFÉ

Sue, aged 76, cared for her husband through Motor Neurone Disease and was left feeling completely lost and alone after he died. When she came to the Friendship Café she needed time and support to settle, but being around others who understood made a real difference. Over time she has regained confidence, reconnected with people she knew and found new friendships. She says she now feels more comfortable and has a place where she genuinely belongs again.

*"Social contact is important to me. I lost my husband so the friends I have made through The Churn mean everything. Otherwise I would be on my own."*

## SOCIAL GROUPS AND TRIPS

Many people tell us that having activities and occasional trips to look forward to makes a real difference to their wellbeing.

Margaret, aged 93, enjoys meeting up with other people. Regular activities have become important now she no longer drives. These groups have led to close friendships helping to break up the long stretches she spends on her own.

*"Companionship and support is really what I need. Being able to have social contact prevents me from feeling isolated."*

Joan, aged 87, lives on her own in a one-bedroom flat and says that getting out with others is essential. She cannot walk very well and often needs transport from friends or family. The groups give her social contact that she would otherwise miss.

*"Meeting people and having company means everything. Without this I would be very lonely."*



# FINANCIAL REPORT 2024/2025

## Overview

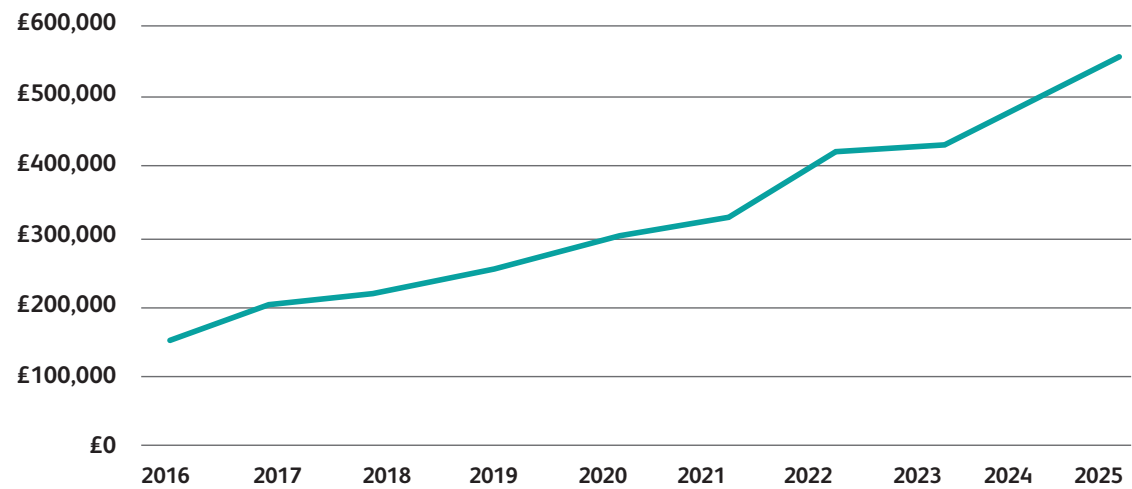
The past year has been one of steady adaptation and organisational growth. Against a backdrop of rising costs and increasing demand, we have strengthened our financial resilience through targeted fundraising, new partnerships, and sound management. Continued investment in our internal systems and staffing has ensured that we remain well placed to deliver services efficiently and maintain the trust and confidence of our funders and community. This period of consolidation has provided a strong foundation for the year ahead, as we balance sustainability with the continued development of our work and the increasing needs of those we support.

The organisation continues to identify and secure new funding opportunities that support long-term stability and service expansion. Collaboration with other voluntary sector organisations has resulted in joint funding projects and a stronger, more connected local network. Our work with statutory partners, including Cotswold District Council, has been vital in delivering targeted projects that meet local needs and recognise the positive difference we make. Developing partnerships with health services through the Integrated Care Board has enabled us to expand community health activities and mental health programmes.

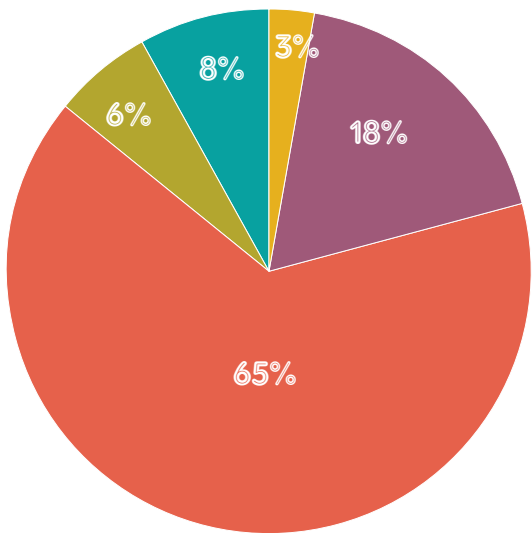
Staffing has also developed this year, with additions to administrative and finance support, and increased capacity for work with young people and families. The higher income reflects the team’s hard work in securing funding and delivering services, as well as the new challenges of sustaining growth and the increasing need for additional space.

In 2024/25, our income was £579,108, an increase of £117,370. Expenditure increased by £62,021, bringing the total to £556,766. As of 31st July 2025, our funds stand at £203,215, an increase of £22,342 compared to the previous year. Our target reserves for the year were between £63k and £106k. Our actual unrestricted reserves were £110,841.

EXPENDITURE OVER TIME 2016-2025

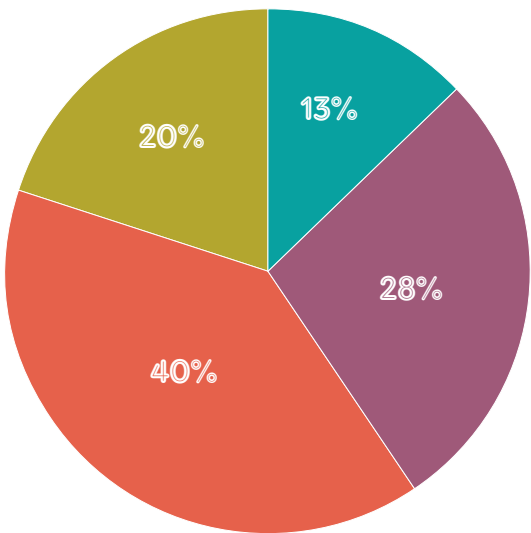


## Financial Breakdown



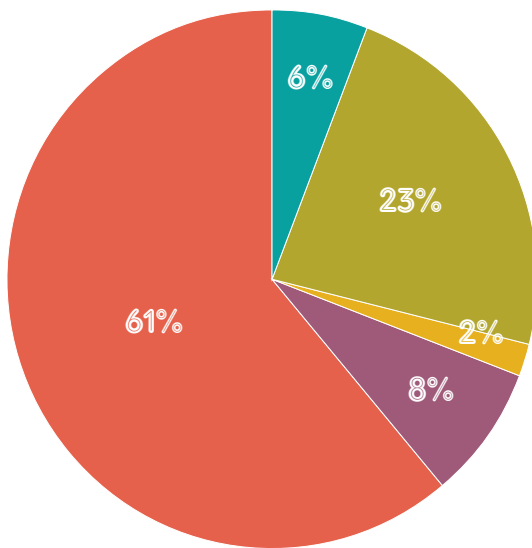
## INCOME BY TYPE

- Trading Income
- Donations
- Government Grants
- Government Contract
- Grants



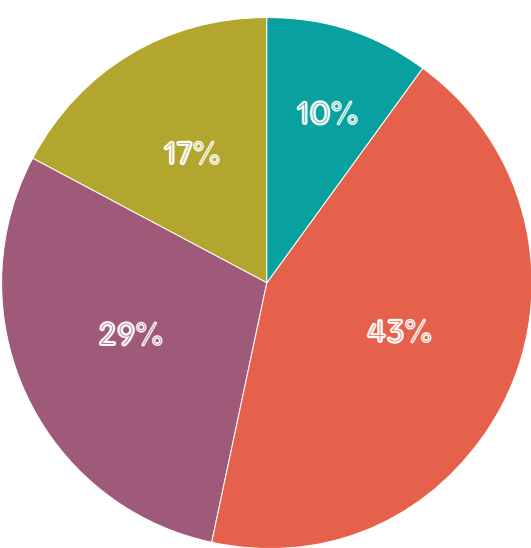
## INCOME BY SERVICE

- Core
- Community Wellbeing
- Families
- Ageing Well



## EXPENDITURE BY TYPE

- Service Delivery
- Core Salary
- Fundraising and Marketing
- Premises Expenses
- Core Costs



## EXPENDITURE BY SERVICE

- Core
- Community Wellbeing
- Families
- Ageing Well



# VOLUNTEERS

Our volunteers are the backbone of The Churn, helping us deliver our services and making a genuine difference to people’s lives. Last year we had **123 active volunteers in twenty six volunteer roles**. With an additional **250 volunteers contributing their time to one-off events and projects**.

Volunteer roles range from supporting our weekly groups, helping with employability and digital support, supporting our Sheds, to being a Good Neighbour Befriender or a Churn Champion fundraiser. Our volunteers also promote our work to the wider community and encourage others to get involved. We were so pleased that some of our volunteers were recognised at this year’s Cirencester Community Awards. **We couldn’t do our work without them.**

## STRENGTHENING VOLUNTEERING LINKS

We have strengthened our volunteering links in Cirencester and across the county and are actively working with other organisations to help create best practice in volunteer recruitment and retention.

## ROLLING OUT OUR LIVED EXPERIENCE VOLUNTEERING PROGRAMME

We have introduced a range of volunteering roles specifically designed for people with lived experience of our services. This gives them the chance to grow their skills and employability, increasing their confidence and giving back to the community.

## COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Last year, more than **250 volunteers** contributed their time and effort to support us at events. From community events to concerts, quiz nights, family fun days and our very own Santa Fun Run. All these, and more, help us raise awareness and funding for the work we do. **We are so grateful for their time and effort.**



7,100  
VOLUNTEER  
HOURS

3.6  
FTE STAFF  
MONEY  
EQUIVALENT

### JIM’S STORY

**Jim** first came to The Churn seeking support with his mental health. He had struggled with depression and anxiety, feeling withdrawn and lacking confidence. He rarely left the house and avoided social situations, deepening his sense of isolation.

Through regular one-to-one sessions with our Mental Health Engagement Worker, Jim gradually began exploring what gave him purpose. His long-standing interest in IT became a positive route back into employment. With our guidance, he successfully applied for benefits and we secured him funding for new IT equipment through the Barnwood Trust.

Jim is now a regular Digital Support volunteer at The Churn supporting older people with digital skills and reconnecting with the community. *“The opportunity has been really great and I have found it challenging in a good way. It has helped me secure paid work after years of unemployment and made me feel more confident about what I can achieve.”*



# WITH THANKS TO OUR FUNDERS AND PARTNERS

Our work depends on the support we receive from a wide range of funders, each contributing to the strength and stability of our organisation. Longer-term commitments give us the foundations needed to plan and grow, new investment helps us develop and smaller grants provide essential contributions to both new projects and existing provision, helping us keep our work flexible and responsive. It is this combination that sustains our established work, allows us to expand capacity and guides how we respond to local need. We remain deeply grateful to all those who make this possible.

### AGEING WELL SERVICE

- Henry Smith Foundation
- Gloucestershire County Council – Thriving Communities
- Cotswold District Council – Strengthening Communities
- Summerfield Charitable Trust
- St James’s Place

### FAMILY SERVICE

- Peter Lang Trust
- St James’s Place Foundation
- National Benevolent Fund
- Primrose Trust
- National Lottery – Awards for All
- Cirencester District Council
- Cirencester Foodbank
- Early Years Service (GCC)
- Bellamy Family Trust

### COMMUNITY WELLBEING SERVICE

- National Lottery Community Fund
- Integrated Care Board
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund (Cotswold District Council)
- Gloucestershire Community Foundation (including High Sheriff Grant and Freemasons)
- IC Groundworks
- Cirencester Town Council
- Ernest Cook Trust
- FVAF – Digi hub provision
- Rotary Club
- The Arts Society Corinium

### UNRESTRICTED AND ORGANISATIONAL SUPPORT

- Garfield Weston Foundation
- Barnwood Trust
- Local councillors – community development funds
- Winstone Trust

### ADDITIONAL ACTIVITIES AND PRACTICAL SUPPORT

- Julia Rausing Trust
- Waitrose
- Tesco Community Fund
- Mother’s Union
- Westonbirt Arboretum
- Cook Cirencester
- The Cornish Bakery

### CORPORATE AND COMMUNITY

- Drapers Charitable Trust
- Hercules PLC
- Powell’s School
- Stagecoach Performing Arts
- Cirencester Friendly Society
- Tanners Solicitors
- Harrison Clark Rickerbys
- Coventry Building Society
- Charles Russell Speechlys
- Cirencester Chamber of Commerce
- Cirencester Temperance Fund
- Peyton Principles
- Good Afternoon Choir
- Gardiner Haskins
- Coln St Aldwyns PCC
- Bathurst Estate
- Cotswold Lakes Brew Co.



# FUTURE PLANS

We recognise that our plans must continue to adapt to changing circumstances and ongoing evaluation. Informed by feedback from service users, staff, and partners, these priorities reflect our focus for the year ahead and align with our three-year strategic plan.

<b>STRENGTHEN FINANCIAL SUSTAINABILITY</b> by reviewing our funding strategy, diversifying income, and developing longer-term, unrestricted funding opportunities.	<b>INVEST IN OUR PEOPLE</b> , continuing to build staff capacity, wellbeing, and professional development, while expanding volunteer opportunities and lived experience roles.
<b>PROGRESS WORK ON PREMISES</b> , exploring options for expanded or additional delivery space to meet increasing operational needs.	<b>MAINTAIN STRONG PARTNERSHIPS</b> with statutory, health, and voluntary sector organisations, developing joint projects that maximise local impact and avoid duplication.
<b>SUSTAIN CORE DELIVERY</b> across Family, Community Wellbeing, and Ageing Well services, ensuring consistency, quality, and responsiveness to community needs.	<b>EXTEND FAMILY SUPPORT IN SCHOOLS</b> , increasing one-to-one and group work, parenting sessions, and SEND-focused provision.
<b>DEVELOP YOUNG ADULT WELLBEING AND EMPLOYABILITY ACTIVITIES</b> , strengthening one-to-one mental health support and creative group sessions.	<b>GROW THE COMMUNITY SHEDS PROGRAMME</b> , expanding to additional sites and developing new volunteer-led and skills-based activities.
<b>ENHANCE THE SUPPORTING WELLNESS PROGRAMME</b> within Ageing Well, increasing physical health, nutrition, and smaller therapeutic wellbeing groups.	<b>REFINE THE BEFRIENDING SERVICE</b> , focusing on individuals with complex needs and encouraging participation in wider group and social activities.
<b>EMBED MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING SUPPORT</b> across all services to ensure emotional wellbeing remains central to delivery.	<b>STRENGTHEN COMMUNICATION AND VISIBILITY</b> , improving digital presence, storytelling, and engagement with funders, partners, and the public.
<b>ENHANCE EVALUATION AND IMPACT REPORTING</b> , embedding 'Listening to You' feedback and developing the CRM system to improve data consistency.	<b>ADVANCE DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT AND INNOVATION</b> , trialling new tools and responsible use of AI to streamline administration, improve efficiency, and strengthen communication.

# LOOKING BACK, MOVING FORWARD

1999, a small group of concerned local people came together to investigate the needs of two wards in Cirencester – Watermoor and Beeches – identified as experiencing significant disadvantage. What began as conversations about how to help has grown into something far greater: a charity deeply embedded in the heart of our community.

Twenty-five years on, our mission remains constant: to listen, to respond, and to support people through every stage of life.

From those early days supporting two wards, we've grown into a community hub at the heart of Cirencester and the surrounding villages. Working in partnership has remained central to our approach, grounded in the same principles that guided us from the start – building community capacity, co-production and collaboration shaped by local voices. Because we listen, The Churn has become a trusted place where people find support, understanding and connection.

## The Next 25 Years

As we look ahead, we do so with optimism. The foundation we have built together is strong, and the opportunities before us are significant. We look forward to continuing this journey with you, building on the legacy of the first 25 years and strengthening our impact for the future.

For those who remember that tiny room in Dyer Street, it is remarkable to see how far we have come, and exciting to imagine where we are heading next.

## Our Deepest Thanks

- To everyone who uses our services and takes part in our activities, events, and programmes:** Thank you. You are the reason we exist. Your honesty and courage help shape and improve our work.
- To our staff team:** You are the driving force of this organisation. Your commitment, and compassion shine through everything you do.
- To our volunteers and trustees:** You give your time, and energy with such generosity. Your guidance and hands-on support are part of every achievement. We are deeply grateful for your dedication.
- To the businesses, schools, organisations, and individuals across our community:** Your support - in all its forms - is invaluable. Whether through partnerships, donations, fundraising, raising awareness, or everyday acts of kindness, you help make our work possible.

