

February 2024

# The Didcot Powerhouse Fund



# Impact Report on 2023 Grants

Fuelling Better Futures



“ I am immensely proud of everything the Didcot Powerhouse Fund has achieved in just two years. The charities and community groups in and around Didcot deserve our support, and this Impact Report shows how our donations make a real difference and can help change lives.

Our Patron, Lord Vaizey of Didcot

# 2023: two year update



**£310k** total amount raised with **£110k** for 2024 grants



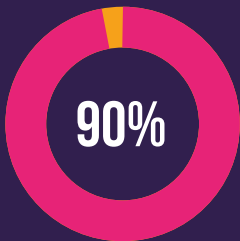
**35 grants** totalling **£175k**



**3,486** direct beneficiaries



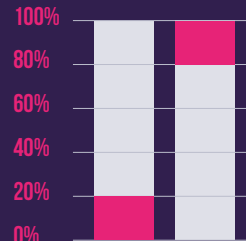
**241** volunteers helped deliver the impact



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



**27** corporate donors  
**84%** Corporate  
**16%** Community



Areas of Didcot are in both the **top and bottom 20%** of the national deprivation index

## 2022 Grants

- Abingdon DAMASCUS
- Quest for Learning
- Oxfordshire Foster Care Association
- Great Western Society
- Didcot Runners

- ARCh
- GWP Babies & Toddlers
- Ladybird Pre-School
- Harwell School Association

## 2023 Grants

- The Buck Project
- All Yours Period Box
- Life Education
- Clear Sky Children's Charity
- Riverside Counselling

- My Vision
- Harwell Hendred Youth Football Club
- Yellow Submarine
- Oxford Creators
- The Cornermen

## 2022 & 2023 Grants

- Didcot TRAIN
- Didcot Community Partnership

- Didcot Baby Mondays
- Be Free Young Carers

- 12th Didcot Scouts
- Home-Start Southern

- The Abingdon Bridge
- OXPIP

# Powerhouse two years on – what have we learnt?

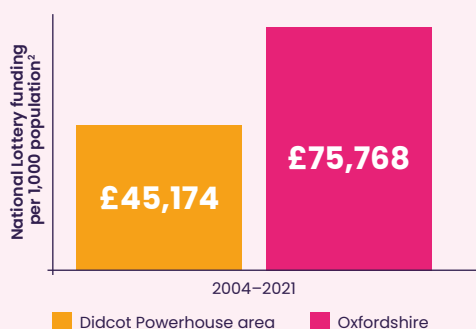
November 2023 was our second anniversary and a good moment to take stock. So here are four headlines of what we are learning:

**1. Powerhouse continues to be an area where international success neighbours pockets of real poverty and deprivation**

Shockingly we have on our doorstep neighbourhoods that are in the **10% most deprived** in England for three out of the seven measures of deprived neighbourhoods<sup>1</sup> – alongside successful multinational companies and internationally acclaimed science. Powerhouse was launched to make it easier to care for our neighbours.

**2. Our area is underfunded relative to Oxfordshire**

National Lottery funding<sup>2</sup> in the Powerhouse area per 1,000 of population 2004–2021 was £45,174 – that’s only 59% of the £75,768 average received across Oxfordshire. And we received only 13 National Lottery grants per 10,000 population, compared with an average of 30 across England. Powerhouse is needed not just to fill that gap, but to help strengthen local charities to be successful in their bids to national funding bodies.



Since Powerhouse launched in November 2021 we have made 35 grants to local charities totalling £175,000 – read this report to learn more about the local impact those grants have achieved.

**3. Despite hard times donors remain committed to their local communities**

Since our launch just over two years ago Powerhouse donors have raised over £310,000 for their local communities. From corporate donors repeating or even doubling their donations, to individuals running half-marathons, local people and businesses have shown that they do care about their neighbours.

**4. Real impact is achieved from supportive and sustained funding**

I hope, when you read this Impact Report, you will agree that our local charities and community groups have used your donations to change lives. Read on and celebrate their success.



**Elizabeth Paris DL,  
Chair**

<sup>1</sup> Local Insight Profile Jan 2024

<sup>2</sup> National Lottery, 360Giving, 2004 – 2021

# Powerhouse grants: providing support when it's needed most

## Preventing male suicide

Didcot charity **The Cornermen** uses boxing, the gym and other forms of exercise to create a relaxed environment where men can talk. Sustained by a Powerhouse grant they have provided 443 hours of support to 48 men from Didcot aged 19–57.

“ I had been going to the doctors since Feb 2022 for anxiety and problems sleeping. They put me on a low dosage of antidepressants. Other NHS services either had long waiting lists or they were too impersonal. I wanted to see someone face to face. Eventually I ended up having a breakdown in Sep 2022. After my first meeting with The Cornermen I cried with relief because it was the first time I felt there was help. I feel supported by them.

**John H**



“ Every man knows someone who's committed suicide.

**Rich, a client of The Cornermen**

## Case study: Displaced by conflict. Therapeutic support for local Afghan refugee families

Living locally are Afghan refugee families displaced by conflict. Funded by a Powerhouse grant **Clear Sky Children's Charity** supported seven refugee children and their parents with a therapeutic parenting programme. This included art therapy and psycho-education sessions, helping the children to develop coping strategies and recognise their strengths.

*Parents reported that their biggest concern for children was "The memories (of conflict)"*

*How can we support you as parents?  
"Teach us not to be shy"*

The project was developed as a pilot using UN recommended guidelines, and working in English, Dari and Pashto. Fathers as well as mothers attended the parent sessions, and reported noticeable differences in their children, such as sleeping better and becoming more patient.

**Organisational learning:** *"This grant enabled us to explore other areas of childhood and family trauma, and to deal proactively with new cultures and issues from a different angle."*

## Period poverty

Period poverty is a serious challenge, but **All Yours Period Box** used their Powerhouse grant to support more than 1,500 periods, by delivering 748 period boxes in Didcot. 25% went to girls under 18. Those receiving the period boxes were surveyed:

- **40%** said that they had to cut back on other essential expenses to afford period products and this led to difficult choices.
- **10%** of respondents told us that they improvise period products for their period when they do not have access to them.

“ Thank you, this bag is a massive help to myself, and my two teenage daughters. The expense of three people’s sanitary products wasn’t something we’d appreciated until they both started their periods.

**Mum of two, period box recipient**

## Mental health

Issues that people have presented with for support from **Riverside Counselling Services** included suicidal ideation; domestic abuse; coercive control; childhood sexual abuse; anxiety and depression; and financial worries, with many people bringing multiple issues to a session.

“ A huge thank you for your support. The deep anguish and distress that mental health issues can bring to an individual and their friends and family cannot be understated – as well as the potentially life-threatening consequences of this. It is our privilege to help people who have nowhere to turn, and it is your funding that enables this.

# Supporting young people

In 2023 **Abingdon Bridge** have worked with 64 young people from the Powerhouse area in 1:1 and group sessions.

They exceeded their grant KPIs:

- **79%** reported improved aspirations and more confident about their futures
- **83%** reported improving in emotional wellbeing
- **76%** reported increased resilience and less likely to join in risky behaviours

“ I want to thank Didcot Powerhouse for sponsoring me with my counselling support. I have had a really rough time over the last two years, I thought I was getting better but soon realised I’m suffering from PTSD due to my involvement in county lines and drug use. It’s still early days but the counselling is really helping me make sense of my overwhelming and crippling anxiety and low moods. I’m still finding it hard to leave the house but hoping to potentially get a job in the New Year. Having someone on my doorstep who is not judging me and can help challenge some of my thoughts has been amazing. Hopefully this time next year I can help other people not make the same mistakes.

**A young person aged 17 supported by The Abingdon Bridge, Didcot Project**



52 year 6 pupils from eight Didcot primary schools were supported to achieve a seamless transition to secondary school by **Didcot TRAIN** through 1:1 mentoring, group mentoring and a dedicated year 6 youth club. 73% of engaged young people reported experiencing enhanced well-being, and the programme built on the learning from the Powerhouse 2022 grant.

## Charities working together

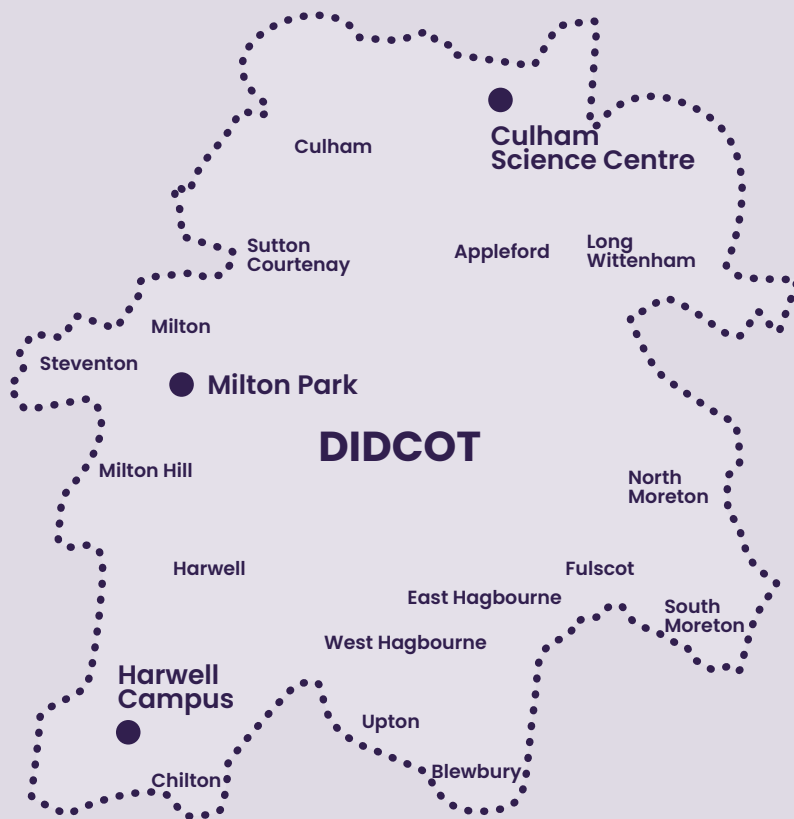
The Powerhouse grant to Abingdon Bridge for parent workshops is now also involving Didcot TRAIN and SOFEA.

“ The Powerhouse Fund has enabled us to strengthen community connection through proactive collaborations with like-minded charities.

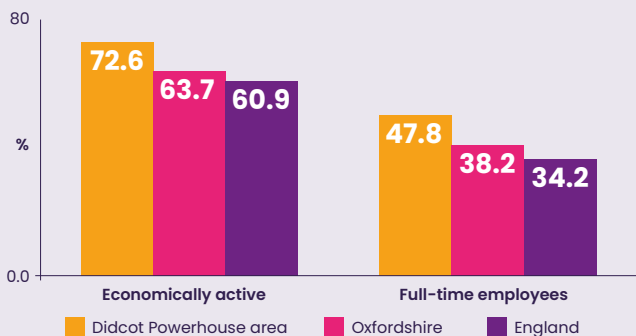
**Gary Hibbins, CEO The Abingdon Bridge**

The Didcot Powerhouse Fund area has a population of over 46,000 covering Didcot, villages from Culham to Blewbury, and the hotspots of business and science at Milton Park, Harwell and Culham.

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

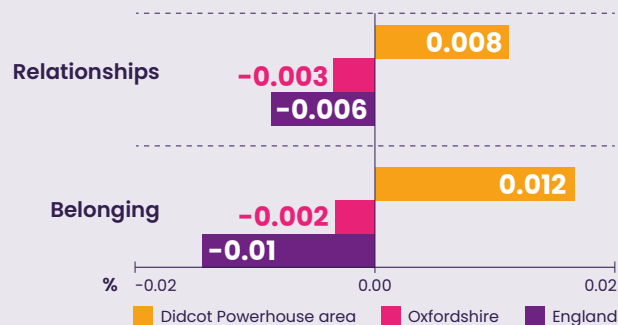


### Employment is strong:<sup>3</sup>



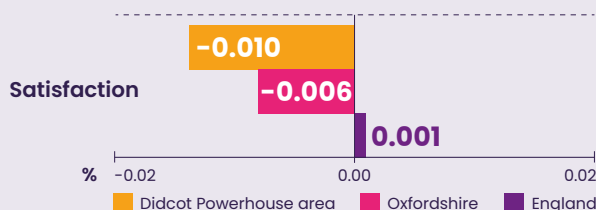
A higher proportion of people aged 16–74 are both economically active, and in full-time employment, in the Powerhouse area than in Oxfordshire or across England.

### A sense of belonging is strong:<sup>4</sup>



In the Powerhouse area local social relationships, and a sense of belonging, are strong.

....but satisfaction with the local area as a place to live is weak:<sup>4</sup>



<sup>3</sup> Local Insight Report Jan 2024: source Census 2021

<sup>4</sup> Local Insight Report Jan 2024: source Community Dynamics: Community Life Survey & Understanding Society Survey

# Why does the Powerhouse area need funding? A story of contrasts

## Deprived neighbourhoods

In the Index of Multiple Deprivation there are seven deprivation domains: the Powerhouse area contains neighbourhoods **in the top 10% most deprived in England for three of those seven domains.**<sup>5</sup>

Sadly this includes vulnerable children: in the Powerhouse area **1,176 children live in relative low income families** and **834 children in absolute low income families.**<sup>6</sup>

## Looking at skills highlights the contrasts<sup>5</sup>

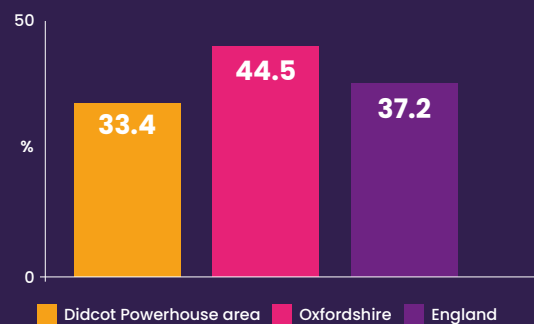
**41.3% of working age people have education level 4+ – degree and above.** That's almost as high as the average for Oxfordshire and **higher than the 33.9% average for England.**

But **4,651 people in the area have absolutely no qualification at all** – O'level, GCSE or NVQ, and in Didcot South the percentage with no qualifications is higher than the average for all of England.

## Education and skills is a particular challenge for the Powerhouse area

In the Powerhouse area **7,679 people are in the 20% most deprived in England** in the Education Domain.<sup>7</sup>

### Participation in higher education



The proportion of young people entering higher education by age 19 is well below the average for Oxfordshire and even lower than the average for England<sup>8</sup>

<sup>5</sup> Local Insight Profile Jan 2024; (Indices of Deprivation 2019): Education; Barriers to Housing and Services; Living Environment

<sup>6</sup> OCSI 2023; children are dependent individuals aged under 16; or aged 16-19 in full-time non-advanced education

<sup>7</sup> Local Insight Profile Jan 2024; (Indices of Deprivation 2019)

<sup>8</sup> OCSI 2023; Source: Office for Students (OFS)

# A focus on early years

The Powerhouse area has a rapidly expanding population, and many are parents of young children recently moved into the area who may feel isolated. So Powerhouse grants in both 2022 and 2023 have had a focus on those important early years.

In 2023 Powerhouse continued to be the funder of First Babies Group run every Tuesday by **Home-Start Southern**.



Carers reported that since attending the group:

- **57%** enjoyed better mental health
- **71%** felt better able to meet their child's social and development needs
- **100%** felt their child enjoyed attending the group



**Didcot Baby Mondays** has used the Powerhouse grant to continue to expand their support for new parents including launching an antenatal group "Bump Club"

and sessions including mum and baby relaxation, postnatal physical recovery, and breastfeeding grief.

A new Padlet website of information has been launched already visited by 910 users, and a volunteer receiving Infant Sleep training leading to a qualification.

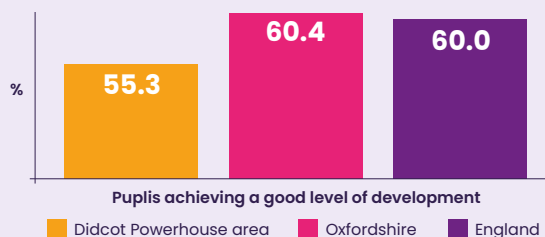
**OXPIP** delivers Parent-Infant therapy in Didcot and surrounding villages with the Powerhouse grant supporting sessions for referred families with access difficulties, including mental health. So far in 2023 150 Parent-Infant Therapy sessions have been offered. Sessions are still ongoing, but of those who have completed 100% reported improvement in parent-infant relationship<sup>9</sup>, while 87% reported reduced anxiety and 72% in symptoms of depression.<sup>10</sup>



The **Didcot Community Partnership** has provided free training for 134 people in both paediatric and mental health first aid.

## Your funding is vital

Across the Powerhouse area, when young children are assessed against 17 Early Learning Goals<sup>11</sup>, historically the Didcot Powerhouse area has underperformed both the Oxfordshire and England averages.



<sup>9</sup> PIRGAS score: Parent-Infant Relationship Global Assessment  
<sup>10</sup> Of those who completed the Anxiety and Depression Assessment: PHQ9 and GADS7

<sup>11</sup> Measuring children's progress in terms of Personal, Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication, Language and Literacy (CLL); Local insight Profile Jan 2024



# Our donors

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

## Quantum

£10,000 per year or more

Didcot First • MEPC Milton Park • SOHA • Sarah & James Wilding

## Dynamo

Between £5,000 and £10,000 per year

Evotec • Hachette UK Distribution • Harwell Campus • Infineum Ipsen Biopharm Ltd • Orchard Centre Didcot • Total Projects (UK) Ltd

## Joule

Between £1,000 and £5,000 per year

Cannon Packing & Logistics • Croft Associates • CTS Feltham Construction • Get Fit be Strong • Kinglerlee Holdings Milton Park Fundraising Community • Oxford Half Marathon Runners Reef Estates • Thames Travel • The Roundton Trust

## Turbine

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

Air Products • Amica Marketing • Carbon Colour • Nando's Pallas Financial Planning • Perpetual Childcare The Grey Square Studio • Valerian Court

With thanks to A&F Haulage; Adaptimmune; Ansys; Derek West Transport; Didcot Plant Hire; Forterra; Greenfields Countryside; Nationwide Didcot; Radioactive Waste Management; S. Gigg Haulage; Simon Hegele Logistics; Thales Alenia Space UK.

## Hachette UK Distribution

**Matt Wright, CEO**

“The Powerhouse Fund does an amazing job of ensuring the contributions go to deserving, local causes. It is run extremely professionally, and provides brilliant communication back to donors. In our case I am able to share this with all of our staff who help to raise the funds. Seeing the local impact is incredibly motivating for everyone in our business.

# Powerhouse Pathways

The aspiration for Powerhouse is to create more links between business and the community than just funding. One such example is Powerhouse Pathways.

The Powerhouse Pathway seeks to provide a solution to areas of labour shortage in the greater Didcot area, especially for entry level roles for 16+ young people in areas such as catering, cleaning, office administration and warehousing, by supporting:

- Local **employers** -  
To find and retain the right staff
- Local **young people** -  
To gain meaningful employment

Working in partnership with **SOFEA** the Powerhouse Pathway enables employers to recruit suitable young people aged 16+ into vacant roles and receive support to retain and progress those new employees.



## Recruitment

SOFEA works with the employer to identify a young person matching the role requirements.

The young person is engaged for a paid part-time one-year fixed contract in line with the employer's usual recruitment practices.

## Employment

The young person works three days a week at the employer, with SOFEA supporting the employer should any issues arise.

The remaining two days are spent at SOFEA with a bespoke learning programme of employability skills, including retaking GCSEs if required.

## Progression

The young person, employer and SOFEA work towards a positive progression at the end of the contract, such as a permanent contract or apprenticeship.

## One company taking part in the Powerhouse Pathways pilot is Nando's

“ Nando's has been such a fantastic partner for our Powerhouse Pathways programme. From their central employability team to the individual restaurant managers and staff, everyone is fully invested in working with us and giving our disadvantaged young people the opportunity to develop their employability skills and, more crucially, build their confidence.

**Ria Poliquin-Floyd, Pre-apprenticeship Programme Manager at SOFEA**



Pre-apprentice Jo at Nando's

**Employment support** was also provided by a Powerhouse grant to The Buck Project for 26 local people.

“ I love the CV, I have never had a CV before.

**Edward**

# Powerhouse can also fuel challenge, fulfilment and fun

Over three days in Blewbury and Hagbourne Primary Schools, **Life Education** offered workshops to help children make healthy lifestyle choices, with a year's subscription to online educational resources.



Visually impaired Didcot residents enjoyed a regular opportunity to focus on their well-being, socialise and take part in fun, creative activities with **My Vision**.



**12th Didcot Scouts** received funding for bursaries for Cub and Beaver Camps.

Girls' football: a new under 9s football team has been formed by **Harwell & Hendred YFC** with help from Powerhouse.



Individual Wellbeing Books created by **Oxford Creators**



The Didcot Youth Group of Yellow Submarine

Mindfulness Movement sessions were Powerhouse funded for young carers at four Didcot primary schools by **Be Free Young Carers**, providing young carers with the knowledge and tools to look after their own well-being and cope with their caring challenges.

# Donors



To find out more about The Didcot Powerhouse Fund, or to become a donor, please visit [didcotpowerhousefund.co.uk](https://didcotpowerhousefund.co.uk)



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

didcotpowerhousefund the-didcot-powerhouse-fund