

## Outdoor Education

### Alternative Provision

Oxenwood Outdoor Education Centre and Linkenholt Countryside Adventure Centre provide a valuable learning experience for vulnerable children and young people. Our Centres can support young people who may struggle to access mainstream education, including those who face social and academic exclusion. Under the leadership of our trained and experienced Outdoor Education Instructors, we foster a nurturing and positive environment where young people feel safe, heard and valued.

Our Centres offer a place to unwind, connect with nature and experience the many positive benefits of adventure and outdoor education.

More information: <https://www.oxenwood.org.uk/alternative-provision/>

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## Support for Affordable Housing in Rural Communities

Community First and Wiltshire Community Land Trust are working together to deliver the Rural Housing Enabler project, which is funded by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) with support from Action with Communities in Rural England (ACRE). The project aims to support rural parishes who are interested in developing new, small-scale affordable housing schemes for their area.

Rural Housing Enablers offer independent support and advice to help rural communities deliver small-scale affordable housing schemes. Rural Housing Enablers are specialists who help rural communities consider the local need for affordable housing, connecting them with landowners, housebuilders and planners to create suitable schemes.

Some of the ways Rural Housing Enablers support the delivery of new affordable housing schemes and raise awareness of the need for suitable housing in local communities include:

- Raising awareness of the importance of the lack of affordable homes in rural communities.
- Supporting communities to undertake Housing Needs Surveys to identify local housing need.
- Providing opportunities for communities to discuss and consider how the need for homes can be met, including the identification of sites and the viability of a proposed scheme.
- Brokering relationships between key stakeholders e.g. parish councils, local authorities, housing associations, planning and development officers, landowners etc and providing impartial advice.
- Unlocking barriers as they arise to ensure local schemes progress to build and completion.
- Monitoring and evaluating rural housing delivery and sharing best practice and examples to inspire other rural communities.

Our Rural Housing Enablers offer free advice to support the development of affordable home for local people. They work with parishes and groups to offer practical guidance and support to deliver new high-quality affordable housing schemes.

Wiltshire Rural Housing Enablers Trevor and Steve are already working with parishes and groups across the county to help identify and find solutions for affordable homes.

**Funding is for a limited period up to the end of March 2025. If you would like to be involved or find out more, please do so as soon as possible: [info@wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk](mailto:info@wiltshirecommunityledhousing.org.uk)**

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## Specialist Insurance for Community Organisations

Community First has a unique understanding of the needs of village halls, community buildings, local councils and playing field associations.

We have worked with Zurich to offer tailored, specialist insurance for village halls, community centres and other community buildings for almost 20 years. We also offer Zurich policies for small town and parish councils and playing field associations.

In recent years, also offering cover for community link schemes.

Whilst Community First (Community Insurance) is based in Wiltshire, we work with community organisations and local councils throughout England to offer comprehensive and flexible insurance cover.

Free no obligation quotes can be provided by completing the online proposal forms through the website: <https://communityinsurance.co.uk>

Income generated from Community Insurance is reinvested back into communities including support for village halls, community buildings, local councils and other community development programmes.

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## Is your Council considering any public engagement projects?

Wiltshire Association of Local Councils (WALC) Local County Advisor Ian Nockolds has over 20 years of experience in the market research industry, having managed research and consultations projects in the public, private and voluntary sector.

Ian has retained his status as a Certified member of the Market Research Society, as well as membership of the Local Area Research and Intelligence Association.

WALC recently hosted a 'Survey Surgery' webinar session, which started with a presentation on how to conduct a play park consultation, followed by a Q&A. The session opened up to general questions on research practice, including the consultation requirements for Neighbourhood Plans.

Following positive feedback, the next surgery has been arranged for April 10th.

To view the webinar, visit: <https://www.wiltshire-alc.org.uk/news/2025/01/walc-survey-surgery>

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## Voice It, Hear It

Please join us in welcoming Nalini Deane and Emma Young to the Voice It, Hear It team. The team is currently working on a project relating to community equipment which is provided by Medequip to enable residents to live as independently as possible.

Over the last 12 months, Voice It, Hear It has worked on a range of voice and engagement projects including the Wiltshire Council accommodation and prevention strategies, learning disability and life expectancy, experiences of home care services and a report for the CQC adult social care inspection.

Over the next few weeks, we will begin sharing the Voice It, Hear It reports which have been created for each of the projects commissioned by Wiltshire Council. It is important that groups and individuals who have kindly shared their experience are able to see the positive impact their feedback has had on support and services locally. For each of the projects carried out by Voice It, Hear It, reports will be shared publicly on the Community First website. Wiltshire Council will provide updates six months after publication with a summary of 'you said, we did' to demonstrate how the feedback has been actioned.

Please keep an eye on our Voice It, Hear It page for the project reports. These will also be shared on social media and in the briefings we send to Area Boards.

[www.communityfirst.org.uk/voice](http://www.communityfirst.org.uk/voice)

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## Neighbourhood Collaborative

Our Community Organising team have been working on a Neighbourhood Collaborative project. This is a community outreach and engagement initiative which aims to support improved health outcomes. Over the last few months, work has been focused on the farming community in Wiltshire and looking at ways to prevent Hypertension in the areas of Chippenham, Corsham and Box.

### Farming

Following our efforts at Salisbury Livestock Market, we now aim to create a "Staying Well" pack for farmers. In 2024, we began exploring what farmers might need or value in these packs through discussions with them. The goal is to reflect the insights and lessons learned from those conversations at the market. The focus of the pack is on promoting wellness. For example, it could include items like a water bottle with information about the importance of hydration in preventing urinary tract infections, a hat to help prevent sunstroke, and sunscreen to reduce the risk of skin cancer. This initiative is centred on supporting farmers in maintaining good health.

In addition, we have received further funding to focus on helping health and care services to better connect with women in farming communities in Wiltshire. It aims to understand how these women access information about health, social support and wellbeing. This insight will be used to improve communication and develop services that meet their needs. We would like to focus on perimenopausal and menopausal women and women with young children.

### CCB (Chippenham, Corsham & Box)

This project is part of a prevention programme focusing on patient centred, non-medical interventions and looks at ways to prevent developing high blood pressure 'Hypertension' with a certain cohort. Various different engagement methods are currently being tried and tested.

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## Employability Programmes

The Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon programmes work with young people and adults in Wiltshire and Swindon to help them overcome their barriers to employment and education. Building Bridges Support Worker Martina has been working with a participant who wanted to move towards the world of work. This individual had been out of work for some time after having children. They were experiencing a lack of confidence and some challenges around their mental health.

The participant is now employed and feeling positive about the future. This is what they had to say about their experience on the Building Bridges programme:

*"Thanks to Building Bridges and the Tools 4 Success course, my life has been turned around. I was quite depressed about where I'd got to, my confidence about even trying to get back into work was disappearing fast. I'd lost my direction after having kids and wasn't sure how I could move forwards again. Since doing the Tools 4 Success course with Meg Batch, I have found my ability to cope with life in general was better."*

*As I was coping better, I then had the headspace to work with Martina on my CV, cover letter, and actually looking for a job. Martina was with me every step of the way. I shall be forever thankful to her and the team as I am now employed part-time in a job that I love, using my skills and training. Without this course and the support when seeking and applying for a job, I would still be relying on Universal Credit and struggling financially and mentally.*

*Now I can look forwards and plan a future and not just waiting for the next Universal Credit payment and hoping it would cover the bills.”*

This is a fantastic example of the positive outcomes our team is achieving through Building Bridges and Inspire Swindon. We offer a holistic support service which helps people build confidence, resilience and skills. Well done to Martina and the team for all of their hard work.

Building Bridges Swindon is currently accepting referrals. Building Bridges Wiltshire and Inspire Swindon referrals are currently paused.

For more information, visit: [www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk](http://www.buildingbridgessw.org.uk) or call 01380 732821

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## Carers Together Wiltshire

Carers Together Wiltshire partnership offers support to the thousands of individuals in Wiltshire identified as an unpaid carer, including parent carers. Please see below for a list of upcoming parent carer face-to-face and virtual support groups.

**Wednesday 5th March** - Support group (10:30am-12pm), Condado Lounge, Devizes, Market Place, SN10 1JQ, drop in. Speaker TBC

**Thursday 20th March** - Virtual evening group (7-8pm).

For the online sessions, please email Parent Carer Lead Jo Hiller-Culley for the link: [jo.hiller-culley@carerstogethertwiltshire.org.uk](mailto:jo.hiller-culley@carerstogethertwiltshire.org.uk). For the face-to-face support group sessions, just drop in. We hope to see you there.

All upcoming parent carer support group sessions for 2025 will be posted on our Facebook page which you can find here: [www.facebook.com/communityfirstwiltshire/events](https://www.facebook.com/communityfirstwiltshire/events)

### You can now sign up for Carers Together Wiltshire's new quarterly newsletter!

Follow the link on the homepage of the Carers Together Wiltshire website to enter your details and be added to the mailing list for the first issue of the Carers Newsletter which will be coming soon. Each newsletter will be packed with advice, details of community events and resources to help unpaid Carers <https://carerstogethertwiltshire.org.uk>

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## Bradenstoke Solar Park Community Benefit Fund

The Bradenstoke Solar Park Community Benefit Fund is a local grant fund that is available to the Parishes of Lyneham & Bradenstoke, Hilmarton, Christian Malford, Bremhill, Dauntsey, Clyffe Pypard and Tockenham.

Any community group within these Parishes is eligible to apply for a grant and the fund is renewed every year via an index linked payment of approximately £70,000 that is secured via the lease between the Defence Infrastructure Organisation and the private owners of the park for the lifetime of the solar park.

The grants criteria are as follows:

- Alleviating fuel poverty
- Developing community scale & micro renewable energy schemes
- Reducing greenhouse gas emissions
- Advancing efficiency in the use of natural resources
- Protecting or enhancing the natural environment
- Protecting or enhancing biodiversity
- Promoting environmental sustainability
- Other purpose in the interest of the community

If you are part of or know of a local community group that would qualify, in the first instance contact Community First Grants Manager Mary Hardwidge: [mhardwidge@communityfirst.org.uk](mailto:mhardwidge@communityfirst.org.uk).

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**Briefing prepared by:**

Ellie Ewing

Marketing and Communications Manager (Community First)

[eeving@communityfirst.org.uk](mailto:eeving@communityfirst.org.uk)