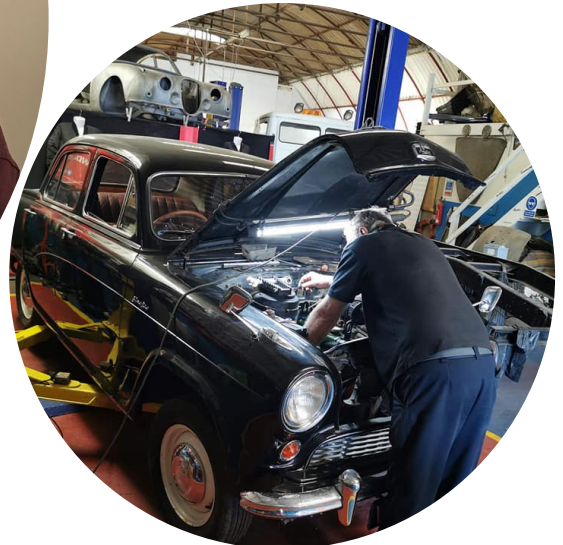




# The Somerset Fund

## Your impact report for 2020-21



Bringing passionate people  
together to change the world  
on their doorstep

# Thank you

The last year has tested each and every one of us but it has been a privilege to see how the small, local charities and community groups that we support have risen to the challenge and adapted the ways in which they support communities across Somerset.

We launched The Somerset Fund in late 2018 with the ambition of inspiring more local businesses and families to help us change the world on our doorstep. We are delighted that, to date, we have raised over £170,000 and this has made a significant difference to so many grassroots projects.

Through our grant making we have now supported 96 projects ranging from brand new sports fields to community shops, safer cycling schemes to community radio, and family care packages to arts projects. And as we look forward with hope and optimism I trust you will find this report inspiring.

Many of the groups we support find it difficult to secure funding, and are often led by volunteers working at a very local level. For these organisations, a small grant can make the world of difference and every penny goes a long way to helping them make Somerset a place where everyone has the opportunity to thrive.

Thank you for making The Somerset Fund and the work of the organisations that we support possible. Together, I hope we can continue to celebrate the unsung heroes across Somerset and shine a spotlight on the amazing work they do.

Best wishes.



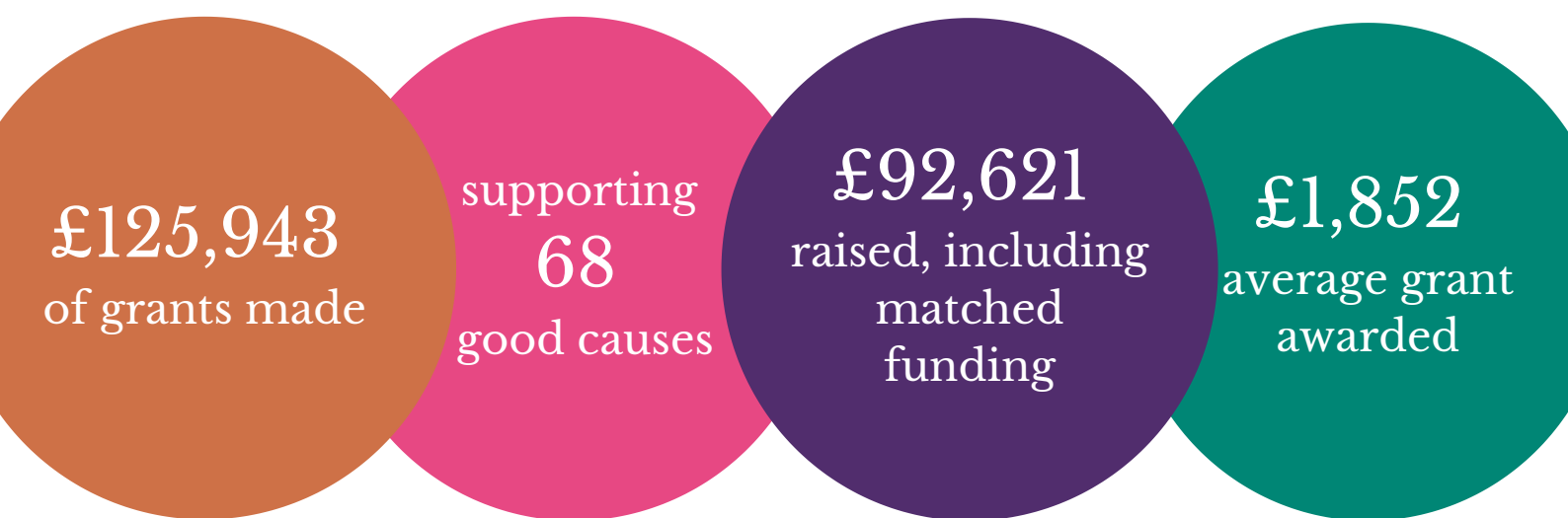
Justin Sargent  
Chief Executive



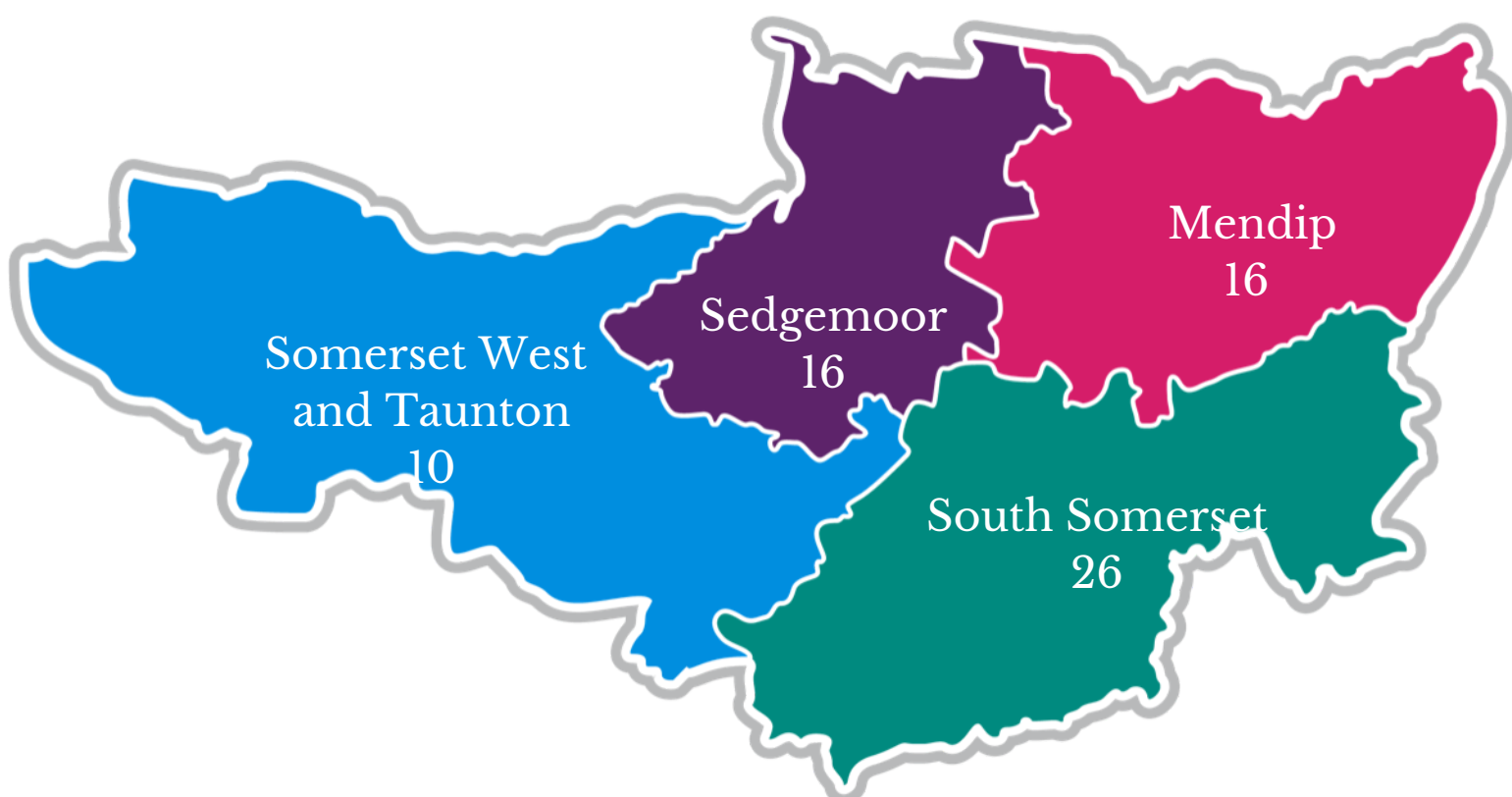
# The difference your donations have made this year

Thanks to your support, we've been able to fund an array of small, local charities and community groups throughout a challenging year. We understand it can be difficult for them to find funding to keep doing great work in their communities, and this has been especially difficult for many during the coronavirus pandemic. For these grassroots organisations, a small amount of money can make a huge difference, so you can be sure that every pound you give goes a long way.

## 2020-21 at a glance\*



## Where your donations were spent



\*These financial results are subject to auditor and trustee approval as at May 2021



# Grants made in 2020-21

## Mendip

- **Butleigh Playing Fields Association - £2,080:** Playground improvements
- **Children's World - £2,500:** Supporting disadvantaged children in the Glastonbury area
- **Frome Falcons Powerchair Football Club - £2,494:** Venue hire and running costs for a Powerchair Football team in Frome
- **Gecko Community - £1,890:** Wellbeing support for young people in Frome
- **Globe Carnival Club - £2,500:** Equipment and resources for cart and costume making
- **Godney Playing Field Trust - £1,000:** Renovation of the playing field
- **Horrington Cricket Club - £1,000:** Running costs for a community sports club
- **Make the Sunshine CIC - £1,000:** Shepton Wanderland community festival
- **Nova Sports and Coaching - £2,472:** Website improvements and running costs
- **Prattens Bowls Club - £500:** Green maintenance and clubhouse heating costs
- **Shepton Mallet Men Shed - £2,434:** Unit lease cost
- **Shepton Mallet Ukulele Group - £682:** Equipment for community performances for vulnerable people
- **Wanstrow Allotment Group (WAG) - £2,500:** Shed to provide a social connection focus
- **Wells Community Shed - £1,000:** Equipment, first aid and skills courses
- **Wells Swimming Club - £2,500:** Pool hire
- **Whitstone School Eco Club - £2,500:** Horticultural activities for children in Shepton Mallet



Wells Swimming Club



# Mendip

## The Somerset Fund stories - Shepton Mallet Ukulele Group



SMUG has rapidly evolved from one ukulele enthusiast into a group that both plays to and exists for the community.

Chairman Ray Smith told us how important the group is for local people living with dementia and how the group has helped give members a sense of purpose.

“Shepton Mallet Ukulele Group - or SMUG, as we’re known - started in 2018. The ukulele is such a wonderful instrument, and I thought it would be a good idea to start up lessons with a small group of local people. So using the power of social media I advertised locally and people responded! We practised for about six months before we did our first performance at the Shepton Mallet Christmas Market and in 2019 we performed at 11 events, which is pretty good going. There are 19 of us now.

We’ve played at community events such as Collett Park Day, Shepton Lantern Festival and Christmas markets, and village, school and church fetes, as well as day care centres, residential homes and doctor's surgeries. A group called Music Connect also got in touch with us – they organise local get togethers for people living with dementia, as it’s well known that people with dementia respond positively to music. I think it’s really important to help people in need in your community, especially the elderly, if you can; it’s a simple thing to be able to enhance their lives. We’re looking forward to doing a lot more of that after the pandemic situation is resolved.

The problem we had was that the ukulele is an acoustic instrument and at a lot of the open air community events where we were performing, the sound was being carried on the wind. Our grant from The Somerset Fund was for an amplifier and a couple of microphones, stands and cables so that we could improve our sound levels at these events.

We’re an adult group but we’re fully inclusive. We play to the community and the group exists for the community to get involved - if they want to. When we first started up a local chap joined us who had recently lost his wife. He told us how much he loved attending the group on a weekly basis, and how the group gave him a sense of purpose.

Our plan, once we’re able to, is to grow the group and continue to offer lessons so that more people can join. We still meet via Zoom at the moment, but it’ll be great when we can meet in person once more. We’re hoping we’ll be able to by the summer – fingers crossed!

As a group we’re self-funded with annual membership and group fees. Without The Somerset Fund grant we wouldn’t be able to improve our offer to the community. We’re extremely grateful for the grant – it’s just been invaluable to us.”

### The Somerset Fund stories - Friends of the Blue Association Trust



In association with the Blue School, Wells, the PTA (The Friends of the Blue Association Trust) raises funds that contribute to the school and its pupils' enrichment.

Lorraine Millington told us how a recent grant from the Somerset Fund for £1,500 will help them improve their conservation area, which will enhance the students' experience at the school both now and for future generations to come.

"Earlier in the year, before the pandemic, we asked the pupils what they felt was the most pressing current need of the time - and conservation was number one. This passion was shared by both the pupils and the staff at the school. There has been little in the way of enrichment activities off-site and outside of the school since lockdown, so we were delighted that the funding gave us the opportunity to work together and help us to redesign and refurbish the conservation area at the school.

It was important to the pupils that we made sure the area is accessible to all. Our projects also include increasing biodiversity by planting bee-friendly plants, climbers, more trees in the orchard fields, bird feeders, an installation of a clay pond, raised beds, and the refurbishment of the polytunnel, which has seen better days. The fruit from the existing fruit trees is often made into apple juice for the local care home for the elderly and the community centre for the homeless.

Following lockdowns, it has been good for the pupils' mental health to be outdoors, and to take part in activities and projects where the emphasis is less academic.

All of these improvements and activities make an enormous difference to the children's opportunities. The enrichment programme is open to all students, offering a broader experience and much-needed support, especially for the more vulnerable individuals.

Due to the pandemic we've seen a significant loss in our usual fundraising this year, so we're very grateful for the grant from The Somerset Fund.

There are so many good things that will come out of this funding. It really has been the icing on the cake for us."



# Grants made in 2020-21

## Sedgemoor

- Axbridge Active Living - £750: Running costs for a social club for older people
- Boxing Martial Arts CIC - £2,500: Running costs
- Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign (BACC) - £1,500: Equipment to run feasibility studies and a cycling campaign
- Cheddar Valley Rugby Club - £500: Training for coaches and equipment
- Chedzoy Playing Field Association - £2,500: Improvements and safety measures for play area
- East Huntspill Cricket Club - £1,750: Developing youth involvement in cricket
- Middlezoy Community Project - £2,000: Kitchen improvements
- Moorlinch Church Hall Committee - £2,500: Reopening a rural community building
- Rusty Road 2 Recovery CIC - £2,500: Running costs for a social enterprise providing vehicle restoration and repair skills to vulnerable people
- Shapwick and Polden Cricket Club - £2,180: Coaching costs to support the junior teams
- Stowey Green Spaces Group - £500: Maintenance work and planting
- The Hub at Bridgwater - £2,500: Outreach programme for people with additional needs and disabilities needing support in the community
- The Somerset Project CIC - £2,500: Postal wellbeing support packs for disadvantaged children and young people
- Theale Village Hall Committee - £1,157: Table tennis tables
- Toppers Carnival Club - £2,500: Shed repairs
- Wembdon Cricket Club - £1,745: Developing youth cricket teams



Bridgwater Area Cycling Campaign



## The Somerset Fund stories - Cheddar Village Hall



Cheddar Village Hall is an important central hub, used by the whole community for a wide range of activities and clubs.

Heather Scourse tells us how the funding is helping to sustain this important community space.

"The whole village benefits from our hall and in normal times we have 28 groups who regularly use it. We have things going on here for all ages and interests, including a lunch club for isolated older people, lots of different exercise classes, children's ballet classes, several badminton groups, and line dancing, which is a great way to raise funds across the year. Normally we have two theatre groups and a pantomime every winter, a local brass band and occasional concerts - it's a real hub of activity and widely used by the community.

We've done a huge amount of work to renovate and improve the hall over recent years, thanks to lots of fundraising by the hall committee and the community. We've raised over £120,000 in total to put in a new roof, improve the drainage, wiring, and flooring and it's been decorated by volunteers with materials which have all been donated by members of the community.

The grant from The Somerset Fund has helped to repoint our west-facing wall, originally built in 1893, which is considered iconic within our local conservation area. The wall had been poorly repointed in the 1930s and needs essential specialist attention to ensure it is completely sound and preserved for the future. So thanks to this grant we have our builder lined up to do the job, we've got our volunteers to support him and it should all be complete by the end of the summer 2021.

The Somerset Fund is great because the funding is flexible. Very few funders want to support what we call 'maintenance', which is why we're particularly thankful for this grant.

We know our hall keeps a lot of people going. It's what many people are missing during these times of lockdown. Lots of people stop us and ask when we're opening again because people are so keen to get back to the social aspects and the support and friendship the activities at the hall offer.

Ultimately, we have big plans for the future. We want to further improve the facilities, making the hall more accessible, and build a large new kitchen and new toilets. We want the hall to be affordable, accessible, safe and inclusive; the hub of our community. We'll have a lot more funds to raise in the future, but every small step takes us closer to our vision."

## The Somerset Fund stories - Rusty Road 2 Recovery



The Bridgwater-based community group RR2R offers a number of recovery services for people of all ages who suffer from mental ill health, including working with iconic British classic vehicles to restore them to their former glory, assistance with vehicle maintenance for financially disadvantaged people in the area, and art therapy sessions.

Director Vince Davis and his team at Rusty Road 2 Recovery, tell us how funding from The Somerset Fund can be life-saving.

"We inspire and motivate individuals to invest in themselves. We prioritise stabilising mental health, followed by teaching new skills, good work ethic, qualifications and employment, with the aim of maximising the opportunities within the local economy and creating brighter futures. With many intangible impacts arising from this pandemic, the increased need for mental health support is clear. We provide disadvantaged people with new skills in a supportive environment, along with social connection, improving mental health and recovery.

Limited and expensive rural public transport can result in significant barriers to services, work and learning opportunities here in Somerset, especially for young people. Our reduced-cost garage and 'Donated Cars - Made Road Worthy Project' can help transform lives by opening up opportunities and reducing isolation.

Our project's legacy is to ensure people 'reach their full potential – whatever this may be' and our focus is to improve health and wellbeing through creative therapy and employability skills. With our lived-experienced staff, people feel a sense of belonging, accessing long-term support to stabilise mental health, leading to increased confidence and self-esteem.

Working together, people will overcome challenges, identify their aspirations and gain valuable employability skills, whilst also helping to improve the local economy.

With depression one of the main causes of death, our priority is to help reduce Somerset's high suicide rate. If we can save just one person from taking their own life, we have achieved our objective.

Thanks to The Somerset Fund grant, we're helping to reduce the devastating impact of suicide on our community."



# Grants made in 2020-21

## South Somerset

- [Accelerate Trampoline Club - £1,014](#): Equipment for a new trampoline club
- [BearCat Collective - £2,277](#): Accessible, hands-on family education, resources and live entertainment
- [Chard Evolution Majorettes - £2,000](#): Running costs
- [Clapton & Wayford Village Hall - £2,500](#): Heating system upgrade
- [Combe Critters Baby and Toddler Group - £2,434](#): Outdoor play space for toddler group and the community
- [Combe St Nicholas Football Club - £1,000](#): Pitch maintenance and clubhouse improvements
- [Crewkerne Rangers Football Club - £1,621](#): Portable floodlights
- [Crewkerne Rugby Football Club - £490](#): Return to rugby events following lockdown
- [EAQ Manor Farm CIC - £1,000](#): Running costs and resources
- [East Coker Cockerels FC - £1,000](#): Running costs
- [Henhayes Centre - £2,500](#): Providing social connection, health and wellbeing support for vulnerable people
- [Ilminster Youth Football Club - £1,200](#): New equipment
- [Ilton Cricket Club - £2,000](#): Bowling machines and equipment for junior cricketers
- [Landmark Langport - £900](#): Staff costs for a charity that manages community settings
- [Langport and Huish Episcopi Youth Group - £2,500](#): Graffiti art project
- [Langport Dementia Action Alliance - £2,280](#): Volunteer training, resources and hot meal provision
- [Matt's Respite Retreats - £2,500](#): Site fees and caravan maintenance
- [Motiv8 Productions - £1,000](#): Show production and running costs
- [North Perrott Cricket Club - £1,000](#): All weather training facility
- [Running For Time - £1,045](#): Running sessions in Yeovil
- [South Cadbury Village Hall Committee - £2,500](#): Tables and chairs for a community space
- [Sparkford Cricket Club - £2,000](#): Youth team practice nets
- [Sutton Bingham & District Canoe Club - £2,272](#): Paddle boards
- [The Bryan Young Community Field - £1,675](#): Maintenance and running costs of a community sports venue
- [Wassail Theatre Company - £2,500](#): Youth theatre sessions
- [Yeovil Youth Theatre - £1,000](#): Production Costs



## South Somerset

### The Somerset Fund stories - Stoke sub Hamdon Community Shop



Stoke sub Hamdon Community Village Shop has become so much more than a convenience store to the villagers of the South Somerset village.

Lyn Foley tells us how the community pulled together to prevent the loss of their village shop and how, shortly after they opened, it became an essential part of so many people's lives.

“When the previous shop owners announced in late 2019 that they planned to retire, some local residents got together and surveyed every household in the village. The results told us that a high proportion of the community wanted to keep the shop open, so we ran with it, creating a committee and a business plan.

We wanted the shop to be a place that not only enhanced our community, but would reduce isolation and improve health and wellbeing. We wanted to build better community cohesion, encouraging younger people to work with older people, and also inspire a greater sense of pride within our community.

What needed to happen next was a lot of fundraising. We did cream teas, crowdfunding and all sorts of other things to raise funds. We managed to build up enough money through our fundraising and grants to take ownership of the shop, becoming a limited company. The community donated to become members of the shop, and we recruited more than 50 volunteers.

We opened the shop in early March 2020, just before the first national lockdown. Keeping the shop stocked became really challenging and a huge learning curve, as some of our volunteers had to shield due to their age or vulnerability. Some of our remaining volunteers ended up working more than full-time hours just to keep things going.

We've teamed up with the local coffee shop and run various events like VE Day celebrations or charity fundraising days. It has really cemented community support for the shop because we became so essential to so many people's daily lives - none of us really realised the impact the shop would have and how important it would become to the community.

The grant from The Somerset Fund enabled us to buy our brand new till system which has been invaluable - prior to that the systems were pretty archaic. We also installed air conditioning as we discovered that during the summer the chocolate in the shop was melting and we were losing valuable stock.

It's made a big difference to how people locally feel about the community. It's also encouraged the development of the village, which is now thriving.

The Somerset Fund gives small groups like ours those smaller amounts of money that make such a difference. It's amounts of money that may not seem like a lot, but that we might struggle to raise ourselves. It means that without The Somerset Fund those projects just wouldn't happen.”

## South Somerset

### The Somerset Fund stories - Langport Dementia Action Alliance



Langport Dementia Action Alliance supports people living with dementia and their carers in the Langport area.

Julia Gadd tells us how the funding from The Somerset Fund can help to make such difference.

“Our aim is to make it a more friendly place for those living with dementia and their carers by supporting them and raising awareness in the community.

It's mostly those who are living at home with their carers, but we also work with some of the local care homes, whose residents also come along to some of our events when they can. We involve the community and deliver dementia awareness training sessions in local schools and shops. We have a logo and put stickers up showing which shops are Dementia Friendly.

We normally hold weekly sessions: Monday Music in the village hall is where children from the local schools come along, talk to the people living with dementia, then we all have a sing-a-long followed by coffee and cakes afterwards. The music triggers something in people living with dementia, it really gets them going and it's clear it brings them joy. And to see that brings the carers joy, too.

We also have Monday Meandering walking sessions, where the carers can all get together and walk and talk with another who understands.

We normally do quite a few intergenerational activities, starting with toddlers up. The last year has been very different, of course. We're always working to make new connections with people who are living with dementia in their homes; we advertise locally and have a Facebook page, and the local vicar is involved - she quite often signposts us to people we can reach out to, as it's been quite difficult to find people during the lockdown.

The Somerset Fund grant helped to fund our Christmas hampers and our weekly hot meal deliveries, which have been really important in helping us stay in touch with people. When we drop off the food we'll have a little chat, just to make sure they're OK.

Langport has a strong community. People value this place where we all live, they know your face and everyone looks out for one another. Although the community gets involved, we couldn't do all the things we do without support from funding such as The Somerset Fund. It's the small things that are valued the most sometimes, and that would be impossible without your support.”



# Grants made in 2020-21

## Somerset West and Taunton

- [aKa Dance Theatre Company](#) - £2,500: Inclusive workshops and performance opportunities for people in Somerset
- [Apple FM](#) - £2,500: Running costs for a community radio station
- [CLOWNS](#) - £2,500: Care packages for vulnerable families in west Somerset
- [Huish Tigers RFC](#) - £2,500: Pitch maintenance equipment
- [Limelight Theatre](#) - £2,500: Staff and venue costs
- [Lydford Sports Club](#) - £2,500: Running costs for a sports club
- [New Horizons Somerset CIC](#) - £2,201: Advocacy, empowerment and upskilling for ethnic minority women in Wellington
- [Wiveliscombe Community Centre](#) - £2,500: Improvements and increasing storage space
- [Wiveliscombe Town Band](#) - £900: New instruments
- [Wivey Cares](#) - £2,500: Database and co-ordinator costs



[aKa Dance Theatre Company](#)



# Somerset West and Taunton

## The Somerset Fund stories - CLOWNS



**CLOWNS (Creating Learning Opportunities In WesterN Somerset)** provide support by delivering opportunities and activities, encouraging families to learn, have fun and be happy.

**Manager Sue Shaw told us how a recent grant from The Somerset Fund is helping them create and deliver bespoke Family Caring Packages to vulnerable families.**

"Our idea was to make life a little bit better for families; we looked at the support they were getting and we thought: where's the 'You're special' bit? It's essential for your emotional wellbeing. So, we came up with the Family Caring Package which we call *U and Yours*. We did a pilot run and we listened to the community. As a result we were able to deliver what they actually wanted, not just what we thought they'd like.

We involved the local people and businesses, who helped by donating vouchers and gifts for the boxes, which were branded, and felt just a little bit luxurious.

We saw a regression in the children after the first lockdown. West Somerset is already isolated and now we had Covid isolation on top of that – it was like a double whammy. Children learn from their peers and that had suddenly stopped.

The lockdown had a huge emotional impact not only on the children but also the adults: if you're having a rough day it's important to be able to share that with someone; it can help put things into context. We're here to support mental health and wellbeing, and during lockdown what people miss is the fun part of life. So, we're giving people a small lift. It's not life changing, but to know someone is thinking about you is really valuable.

We're very grateful for the grant and also to the businesses and individual donors who support The Somerset Fund through Somerset Community Foundation. It's helped us to buy the boxes and contents, and has helped us generally with the delivery of the whole project. And we've worked very closely with Home-Start West Somerset who've helped us identify local families in need.

We delivered 60 boxes to families in December 2020, and at the end of the 6 months we're aiming to have distributed 200 packages.

We want to give people more than just the food essentials that they can get from the food banks; people are already able to access that. Our care packages are the next step, like the hierarchy of needs. And they're bespoke in most cases too; there's a lot of extra thought that goes into creating them, making sure they're the right fit for the family. We want our care packages to make people feel truly cared for."

## Somerset West and Taunton

### The Somerset Fund stories - Huish Tigers RFC



Huish Tigers RFC is a brand new community rugby club, established in late 2019, right in the heart of Taunton.

Richard Manning tells us how a £2,500 grant from The Somerset Fund has supported the club to help them continue building their vision.

“Our objective is to provide rugby activities for all: men and women, juniors and seniors. Due to the current pandemic, we’ve been unable to play any games this season, however, we have a very enthusiastic group of senior members committed to playing and training.

We’re here to promote rugby within the wider community and we plan to start a Huish Tigers Rugby Cubs for 5 - 7 year olds, an Under 18s, and a Women’s Team. Our site was formerly six acres of MOD (Ministry of Defence) meadowland, and we’ve levelled, grassed and cut two acres of it to create a matching playing league pitch. This took many months of voluntary work, creating pathways, a parking area, clearing scrubland and more besides. It’s anticipated that once playing resumes, we’ll have 200 people a week playing on our field. We let the summer schools use it free of charge.

We’re very lucky that we’ve developed links with Bristol Bears RFC Bristol Bears (a professional Premiership Rugby club), who provide coaches and can signpost young talent in the future.

Our club has many members who’ve experienced difficulties in their young lives. Our head coach has mentored and helped them over time, and through sport has improved their self esteem and confidence. Our ethos is to be inclusive, helping to give people drive and confidence. We offer somewhere that is warm, friendly and safe.

Everyone is welcome to come down to the pitch to watch the games and spend time here, and we’ve plans to clear the remaining four acres of land for other activities, such as softball cricket and football.

We’re an ‘open doors’ club – open for all members and all sports. As you can imagine, it’s taken a lot of hard work to turn this land into our rugby playing and training pitches. But we got there with thanks to The Somerset Fund grant, and we’ve two acres for young people and everyone in the community to use and enjoy, with more yet to come.”



## Our wonderful supporters

We're particularly grateful to Somerset County Council who partner with us and provide 50% matched funding for every donation received for The Somerset Fund.



This generous gift means our supporters make an even bigger impact in our communities.

- Church House Investment Management
- Host Somerset
- Medlock Charitable Trust
- Mr and Mrs Virgin
- North Curry Community Shop
- Somerset County Council
- Summerfield Developments and Taunfield Ltd
- Venetia Hoare and Hamish Leng

We're also hugely grateful to our other individual donors who wish to remain anonymous.

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*Thank you for changing lives in Somerset*

**We hope you will consider continuing your support of The Somerset Fund.**

**You can also help us to make an even bigger difference by spreading the word and encouraging others to support our work.**

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