



# Impact report 2023

Working together to end social isolation



# Welcome from our CEO

2023 has been another busy and innovative year for Christchurch Community Partnership (CCP). We extended our support to reach more members of our community and introduced new projects and collaborations, as we continue to refocus our activities in line with our vision to end social isolation in Christchurch. The expansion of our support has been largely as a result of funding from the The National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund and other local funders, which has enabled us to reach many more isolated residents.

**Since our launch as a charity in 2011, CCP has helped thousands of local people, including many older residents and others struggling with social isolation. In 2023, we had over 3,000 interactions with residents in our community.**

Our transport services expanded in 2023 with the appointment of a new part-time Dial a Bus driver, allowing us to extend our lunch club support, and our volunteer Neighbour Cars drivers took isolated residents to social activities such as Chat Cafes, Men's Sheds and Memory Lane groups. Our Christchurch Angels volunteers continued to offer vital one-to-one support where it is needed and we launched a new initiative, Coffee Connections, which brings together residents in sheltered housing accommodation to enjoy time together.

We were able to hold our annual Christmas Day Community Lunch in 2022 and will be repeating this in 2023, as well as adding an Easter Sunday Lunch alongside our new Sunday Roast project. Our collaboration with Bournemouth University and BCP Council in the Hidden Hunger project confirmed to us that food insecurity is a major issue for many older residents and our new projects are a direct response to that, offering people an opportunity to socialise and enjoy a hot drink, snack or a meal.

A particular highlight of the year for me was the second Christchurch Conversation, which we hosted in October 2023. Almost 100 representatives from the statutory, voluntary and community sectors joined us at the event, to discuss how we can build a community in Christchurch that is even more connected. Additionally, in January we were officially presented with the Queen's Award for Volunteering by Angus Campbell Esq, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Dorset at a wonderful event attended by 70 stakeholders and numerous volunteers and clients.

Social isolation can have a profound impact on people in our community but by working together, we can reduce loneliness, improve quality of life, and help local people to make vital connections.

**Rev Sandra Prudom, Chief Executive**



Rev Sandra Prudom, Chief Executive





## About our charity

CCP is a small charity with a big vision: **to end social isolation in Christchurch, Dorset.**

We provide a unique combination of integrated services that can be tailored to individual needs. These include two transport services, Dial a Bus and Neighbour Cars, and three Community Connections services, Christchurch Angels, Helpful Neighbours and Coffee Connections.

Thanks to our incredible staff and volunteers, we provide essential help to those who might otherwise struggle to access services and connect to their community. We also work in close partnership with other organisations that offer community support, to coordinate vital support and avoid duplicating provision.

# Making a difference in 2023

## Our Community Connections services

**Our Community Connections services offer short-term emotional and practical support when it is needed most. During 2023, we expanded these services to introduce a new initiative, Coffee Connections, and our volunteers supported clients to attend a wide range of events.**

**Christchurch Angels:** The Christchurch Angels scheme offers short-term enabling support to people who don't have a network of family or friends available to help them build a social network in times of crisis or illness. In 2023, a fantastic team of 14 Christchurch Angels volunteers joined clients at events such as lunch clubs and coffee mornings, as well as offering one-to-one support where needed to encourage people to reconnect with their local community.

**Helpful neighbours:** Our Helpful Neighbours service provides a volunteer to do one-off practical tasks, from changing a light bulb to helping with form filling. These small acts can make a big difference, and help clients to live independently for as long as they can. Our volunteers visited 66 people in their homes during 2023 to lend a helping hand.

**Coffee Connections:** Our newest project was created in response to an identified need to build community within some of our sheltered social housing projects. Working with three of our local housing associations – SNG (formerly Sovereign), Christchurch Housing Society and Aster Homes – we now provide monthly social gatherings for residents which are facilitated by both CCP and resident volunteers, thanks to grants from Dorset Community Foundation and SNG. The longer-term aim is also to bring other non-residents along to these, as well as to connect residents with external opportunities. We regularly have around 70 coffee morning guests attend each month.



## Our transport services

CCP provides a range of transport services that enable people to socialise, take part in activities and in many cases, receive a hot drink, snack or meal. In 2023, we provided transport to passengers on a total of 2,358 journeys, with the support of 25 fantastic volunteers. Our drivers and Bus Buddy volunteers not only provide practical help, but can also identify and raise concerns about individuals that can then be followed up, to ensure people receive the support they need, either from CCP or other organisations.

**Dial a Bus:** During 2023 we employed a new part-time driver, allowing us to support three lunch clubs a week, as well as other activities including cream teas and special meals. Our two minibuses transported an average of 37 passengers a week during 2023, and operate every week of the year. The imminent arrival of our new bus, thanks to a Crowdfunding appeal, will give us even more opportunities to help people reconnect and develop our new Sunday Roast project in 2024.

**Neighbour Cars:** Our Neighbour Cars provide assistance with journeys in the same way as Dial a Bus, but the service is offered through private vehicles. In 2023, our Neighbour Cars went out on 429 trips, taking isolated residents to social activities such as Chat Cafes and Men's Sheds, as well as supporting activities like Memory Lane groups. We have also collaborated with SEDCAT, another local charity, to take residents on medical and hospital trips, so we can focus on our vision to eradicate social isolation.



We recruited a new part-time bus driver during 2023 and our transport services made over 2,300 journeys, enabling people to socialise, take part in activities and in many cases, enjoy a hot drink, snack or meal.



# The year in numbers

## Supporting local people



Approximately  
**2,100**  
volunteering hours  
and **70** volunteers

**300**  
clients  
and over **3,000**  
interactions



**45**  
local organisations joined the  
Christchurch Conversation

## Community Connections

**66**  
visits  
by our volunteer  
Helpful Neighbours

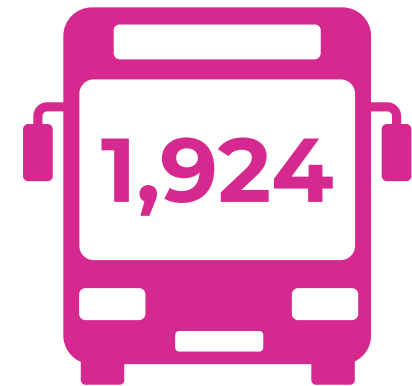


Over  
**700**  
cups of tea and coffee served  
at Coffee Connections

**14**  
Christchurch  
Angels

## Transport

**8,326**  
miles travelled  
by Dial-a-Bus and Neighbour Cars



Dial a Bus trips

Over  
**2,300**  
journeys



# Our incredible volunteers

During 2023, 70 fantastic volunteers gave their time to support CCP in different roles. Some drove clients to events, others accompanied clients on bus journeys. Some visited clients in their homes, others joined clients at clubs and events, or provided vital support in our office.

Every single one of them made a difference this year, and we are enormously grateful for their support. During 2024, we hope to develop opportunities for more people to volunteer outside the working week, and continue to offer our volunteers more opportunities for friendship, training and development

"This year all the volunteering I have done has had a huge impact on me. The people I meet, the fun I have, it's all been truly life-changing."

**Anne Arnold, Bus Buddy volunteer**



A few of our fantastic CCP volunteers

## Pat's story

"If you can make someone happy that's the best thing in life"

Pat is 84 and moved to Christchurch two years ago. After relocating, she struggled to connect with others, so CCP stepped in to help. The charity provided Pat with transport to social events, and practical support that allowed her to make friends and build up her independence again.

"When I first came down here, I missed my friends so much – I went to my doctor because I was so depressed, I didn't want to live," she recalls.

"Next minute, Christchurch Angels turned up! They take me along to lunch clubs and I love it – we have such a giggle on the coach. The volunteers are fantastic – and if you can make someone happy, that's the best thing in life."



# Event highlights in 2023

## It's good to talk: Christchurch Conversation

In October 2023, CCP hosted the second Christchurch Conversation, following the first in 2018 before the COVID-19 pandemic. The event saw 97 representatives from 45 organisations gather together at the excellent GodFirst venue in Christchurch, to discuss 'how we continue to build a connected community in Christchurch'.

Through both panel and table discussions, a number of common themes were identified, including the need for a community hub in the town (as mentioned in both the 2018 and 2023 Christchurch Conversations), sustainable and longer term funding, support for young people, and better communication and collaboration, both between organisations and about what's available in the community. The event was also a great opportunity for networking and relationship building, which will hopefully lead to more partnership working across Christchurch.



## A new look for our new ambitions

The CCP brand underwent an exciting refresh in 2023, as part of a new marketing strategy to support our future aims.

We created a new logo that emphasises our focus on people, with vibrant colours that represent different elements of our fantastic local area - sea, beach, sunsets and greenery.

We also launched a brand-new website in October 2023. The site provides clear information about key areas of our work, as well as helpful information for people considering volunteering and others interested in our work.



## Tea for 150: International Day of Older Persons cream tea events

On Sunday 1 October, CCP simultaneously hosted three separate cream tea events to mark the UN's International Day of Older Persons.

The events brought together over 150 people, including residents of three sheltered housing developments, clients of the three lunch clubs that CCP supports, as well as clients and former clients of the charity's other services. It also involved many volunteers who can't ordinarily volunteer during the working week – and some of them brought along their families, to make it a truly intergenerational event, something we are very keen to develop! The triple cream tea was served at three different venues in the town – Trafalgar Court, Bure House and Homelands, home of our new Coffee Connections project.

"The cream tea events were a wonderful opportunity to celebrate our older residents and make them feel valued. They all enjoyed interacting and sharing with the younger people and families who volunteered at the events."

**Sandra Prudom, CCP Chief Executive**





## Malcolm's story

**Malcolm tripped at home several years ago and ended up in Poole Hospital with a broken hip. After returning home, he struggled to see others regularly, and although friends visited from time to time, they weren't nearby.**

"Then one Friday afternoon, I received a phone call from a lady from Christchurch Angels," Malcolm recalls. "The first call lasted a few minutes, but after a few weeks the calls lasted up to half an hour, and she even visited on a few occasions. I gradually got to know more about Christchurch Angels and thought what a fantastic job they do – but people don't know a lot about them. I got more involved, asking questions, and the next thing I knew they asked me if I'd volunteer!"

"The more involved I got, the more interesting it became. I enjoy meeting people and I've always enjoyed getting out and about, so I take one or two ladies to chat clubs and other events. It's taken a long time for the NHS and others to understand what loneliness really is, and how people need help. The support we provide gives people something to think about when they get home – and the more people go to these events, the more they open up and find things to talk about."

## Responding to changing needs: Our next steps

As a small charity, CCP has the ability to be agile and adapt to the changing needs of our community. We have learnt a lot by working collaboratively with other organisations on projects like the Hidden Hunger research and currently on the Access to Health research. Our vision of eradicating social isolation in Christchurch can only be achieved by an even greater level of collaborative working, and this is a key priority for us. Our strategic goals over the next three to five years are to:

- Continue to build and develop relationships with key stakeholders to work collaboratively with other VCS, business and statutory partners
- Build a volunteer infrastructure which both maintains and expands the Christchurch Angels service and continues to develop and integrate our transport services to reach many more socially isolated residents
- Enable the development of additional services which focus on alleviating social isolation and food insecurity, by expanding our lunch club support and continuing to develop monthly social events in supported housing complexes
- Become financially sustainable with a range of income sources
- Work with others towards the provision of a community hub in the town centre as identified in the 2018 Christchurch Conversation.

## Social isolation in Christchurch

Social isolation can kill. Loneliness acts as a fertiliser for medical conditions and ill health. It can increase the risk of mortality by 26%.

Social isolation can often lead to loneliness, when an individual wants and needs more connections but can't access them. This might be due to a lack of transport, financial restrictions, or physical impairments. It is a disheartening position to be in, with very real consequences for physical health.

Our ageing population means that social isolation is a particular problem in Christchurch. The town has a population of just over 50,000 (2017 data) and the highest proportion of people aged 65-95 in Dorset. Older people may face reduced mobility issues and long-term physical impairments or illness that can restrict their ability to get out and see others.

The 2018 Hidden Dorset report also identified carers as a group who experience social isolation. To help tackle this, CCP was involved in a project to improve the identification of and support for carers through the Christchurch Health & Wellbeing Locality Group.

## Food insecurity in Christchurch

The Hidden Dorset report identifies food insecurity as a major issue for older people, and others in our community also face challenges with food insecurity in certain areas. Despite a generally high standard of living, Christchurch has two areas in the top 20% most deprived in England (East and West Somerford), where some residents live hand to mouth.





[www.christchurchcommunitypartnership.org.uk](http://www.christchurchcommunitypartnership.org.uk)



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**Community**  
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