



# SUSSEX CRISIS FUND IMPACT REPORT

Sussex  
Community  
Foundation

# INTRODUCTION

**On 16th March 2020 the world changed. As coronavirus started to spread rapidly across the country, we were told initially to work from home and then not leave home unless absolutely essential. A pandemic was declared and lockdown had started.**

In the years leading up to this point, it was often said that we were living in unprecedented times, but no one was prepared for the way our world would change and nobody could have predicted the way that governments, including our own, would respond.

Perhaps what we could have predicted was that in times of immediate crisis we see the very best of humanity. I believe this was the case in the last 18 months. While 'clap for carers' was an obvious show of mutual support and solidarity, it was only a symbol of the tremendous outpouring of empathy and action that we saw in every street and community across the UK.

Our local communities across Sussex mobilised quickly to provide practical and emotional support to everyone who needed it. Our local charities changed what they were doing overnight – organising together to make sure that affordable or free food could be distributed immediately to every corner of our towns and villages, changing to delivering support online or by phone rather than face to face, and finding new ways of working and delivering services remotely.

New community groups organised within days – the community WhatsApp group became legendary, and many of us got to know our neighbours better than ever before, even if we could only meet virtually.

At Sussex Community Foundation we have been privileged to play a key role in supporting this amazing community response from the very start. We launched the Sussex Crisis Fund on Friday 20th March because we knew charities would need a source of rapid and responsive funding. We had £100,000 to start with thanks to support from American Express and the Argus Appeal, but we didn't know how we would find the rest of the money – we just knew it would be needed.

Happily the response to our appeal was phenomenal. With great support from the National Emergencies Trust, East & West Sussex County Councils and many existing and new supporters, we have been able to raise and distribute over £4 million direct to local communities when they needed it most.

This report aims to tell the story of the Sussex Crisis Fund and more importantly, of all those amazing groups of people who responded immediately and compassionately to the changing world around us.

It is written with enormous gratitude to everyone who made this possible – those who donated money, our grants committee who met every Monday to get money out the door as quickly as possible, our staff who did whatever it took to respond to the emergency, and most of all those incredible people in our communities who helped make the most unprecedented year a bit more bearable for so many.



**KEVIN RICHMOND**  
CEO  
SUSSEX COMMUNITY FOUNDATION

**“We appreciated the straightforward application form and the speedy decision reached by the Foundation. This enabled us to quickly move with our plans to work from home.”**

DAWN,  
HASTINGS & ROTHER CREDIT UNION

**“I wanted to write to you to give my heartfelt thanks for your recent generous donation. It will go a long way to supporting the residents of Burgess Hill and surrounding areas to ensure no cupboard goes empty.”**

JOSEPH FOSTER,  
CHAIRMAN, BURGESS HILL PANTRY



...and over **1 million** beneficiaries

## Bevendean Community Pub

Bevendean Community Pub (The Bevy) received three grants from the Sussex Crisis Fund throughout the pandemic, to convert the community pub into a food delivery service. The Bevy Meals on Wheels ensured that shielding people, including those with dementia and mobility issues, received nutritious food and safe social contact.

▶ The Bevy won the best Meals on Wheels across the UK at the National Association of Care Catering awards!



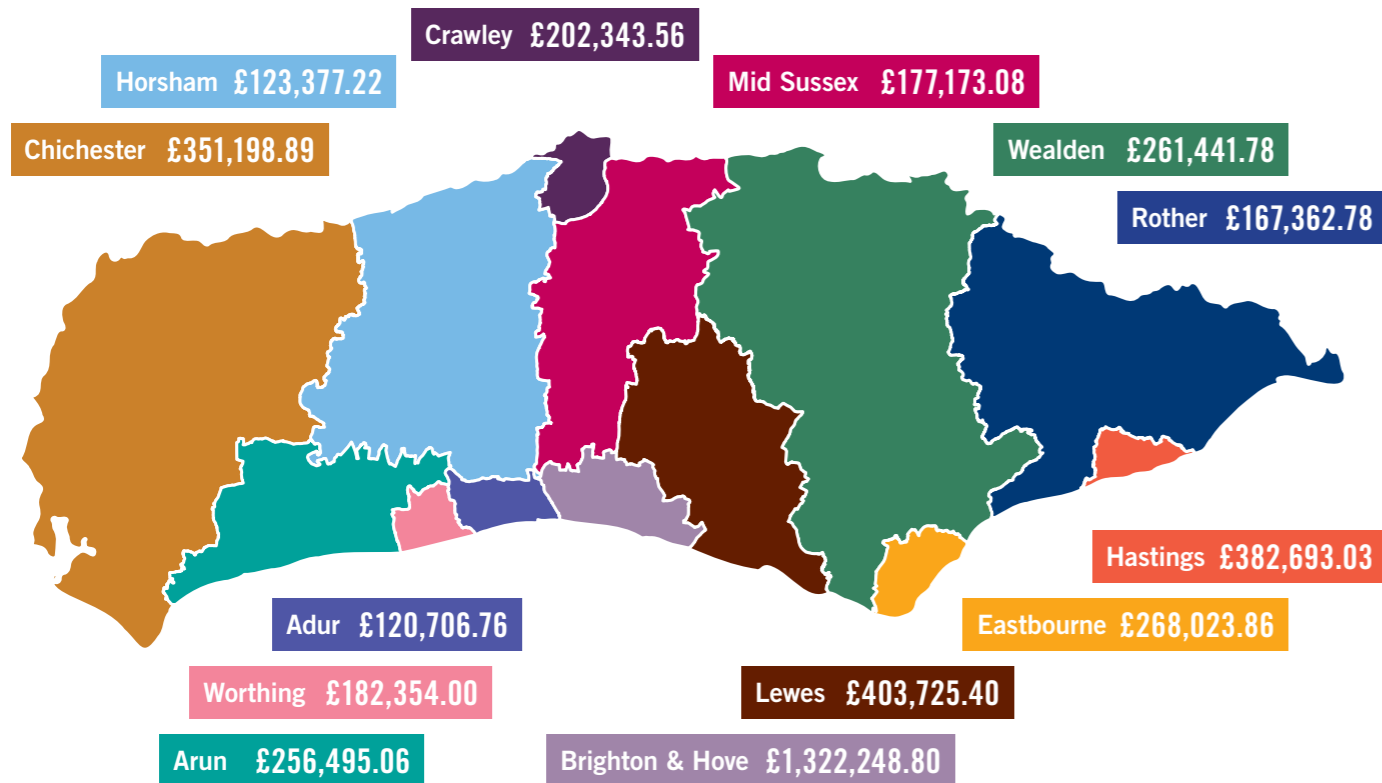
AMOUNT AWARDED  
**£20,000**

**“Covers decided to donate £25,000 to the Sussex Crisis Fund to help people and organisations in our main area where nine of our branches are located. As a long standing local independent business we saw supporting local need during the pandemic as our responsibility, The Sussex Crisis fund was a good way to ensure excellent causes got help quickly.”**

RUPERT GREEN,  
CHAIRMAN, COVERS

# GRANTS DISTRIBUTION

## Where the money went across Sussex



## Moulsecomb Bangladeshi Women's Group

Moulsecomb Bangladeshi Women's Group provides a safe space for women to come together and support each other to reduce social isolation in their community. A grant from the Sussex Crisis Fund enabled the group to pay for transport costs for collecting food and attending essential medical appointments during lockdown. They also purchased tablets and provided online art and cookery classes for members to stay connected.



AMOUNT AWARDED  
**£4,250**

## Springboard

Springboard supports disabled children, young people and their families by delivering fun, supportive and inclusive short breaks. The sessions focus on improving wellbeing, increasing life skills and independence and building friendships. The charity received two grants from the Sussex Crisis Fund to keep the centre's garden, sensory room and bathrooms facilities open to vulnerable families without access to private outdoor space during lockdown. They also provided bespoke, intensive one-to-one transitional support for children and young people with disabilities who required additional provision, including those too anxious to attend school.

AMOUNT AWARDED  
**£9,884**

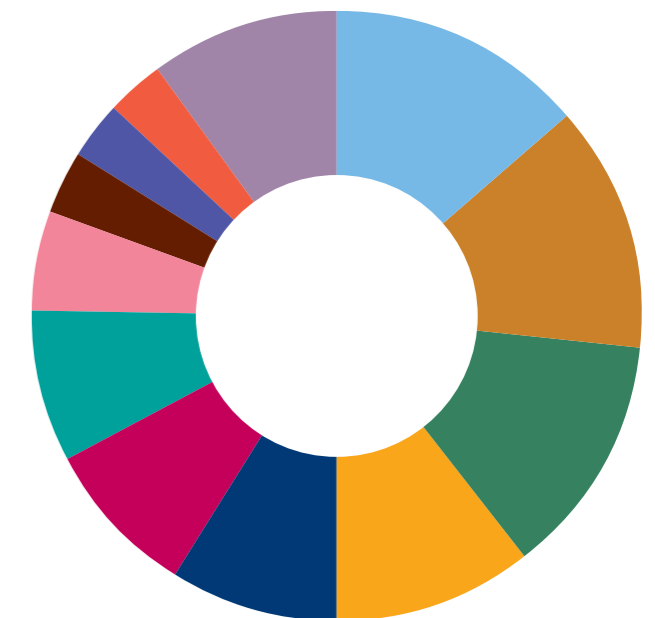


▲ Springboard zoom sessions with the Crawley 6-12 group, for disabled children aged six to 12 years.

“The difference the grant has made is unbelievable. The first lockdown with the severe restrictions in what families were able to do, made the safe and secure use of the garden play space a life saver for many.”

## Who the primary beneficiaries were

People in poverty	£578,287.57
Children and Young People	£556,091.53
Local residents	£541,347.13
Black, Asian, and ethnically diverse people	£445,188.66
People with mental health issues	£366,437.86
Families including lone parents	£360,397.22
Older people	£333,516.11
People with multiple disabilities	£230,216.00
Homeless people	£130,397.00
People with learning difficulties	£130,111.00
Women	£129,671.66
Other	£141,462.00



# TIMELINE 2020-21

2020

**11 MARCH**

WHO declares COVID-19 a Pandemic

**23 MARCH**

National UK lockdown imposed – ‘stay at home’ issued

**1 APRIL**

Gatwick closes terminal as passenger numbers fall by two-thirds

**5 APRIL**

Queen addresses the nation

**24 JULY**

Face masks became mandatory inside

**5 NOVEMBER**

2nd national lockdown

**14 SEPTEMBER**

Rule of 6 introduced

**8 DECEMBER**

Start of the vaccine roll-out

**4 JANUARY**

3rd national lockdown

“SCF provided a vital service during the pandemic. The Sussex Crisis Fund allowed East Sussex County Council to rapidly and efficiently get funds to local voluntary organisations and community groups who were having to make significant changes to how they operated in order to support those residents most impacted by Covid-19”

COUNCILLOR MAYNARD,  
LEAD MEMBER FOR ADULT SOCIAL CARE AND HEALTH,  
EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL

**19 JULY**

End of national restrictions in the UK

**8 MARCH**

Schools and colleges reopen

JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP OCT NOV DEC JAN FEB MAR APR MAY JUN JUL AUG SEP

**20 MARCH**

Sussex Crisis Fund launched

**29 MAY**

£1million given from the fund

**25 AUGUST**

£2million awarded in grants

**30 MARCH**

First grants awarded from the Sussex Crisis Fund

**3 AUGUST**

£800,000 raised in local donations

**16 OCTOBER**

500 grants awarded from the fund

2021

**1 FEBRUARY**

Focus groups held on funding needs of community groups

**26 APRIL**

Support and Recovery phase of the Sussex Crisis Fund

**16 SEPTEMBER**

£4.21 million awarded in 908 grants

“The Covid pandemic was a cause of great anxiety and uncertainty for all those who were vulnerable and for the many voluntary organisations who supported them. During that extraordinary year, I was privileged to observe countless examples of altruism and kindness. Behind much of this great collective effort was the Sussex Community Foundation which enabled hundreds of charities and voluntary groups to continue their essential work throughout these most challenging of times.”

DR TIM FOOKS, HIGH SHERIFF OF WEST SUSSEX 2020-21



# SUPPORT AND RECOVERY

**At the start of 2021 it became clear the pandemic and lockdowns were going to last longer than anyone predicted. Therefore, the Foundation consulted with the voluntary sector and heard that organisations were continuing to face immense pressure with huge challenges in responding to the gaps in state sector provision across a range of service areas.**

Staff and volunteers were exhausted, working long hours to provide services whilst facing growing capacity issues as more people reached a tipping point with their finances. People who had previously managed on savings and credit were now facing increasing and unmanageable debts, choosing between heating their homes and buying food. These are not choices anyone should have to make.

The challenges across Sussex were broad and intersectional. For ethnic minority communities, on top of pre-existing inequalities, we heard the pandemic brought further economic hardship, reduced employment opportunities, especially for young people, and increasing instances of mental health issues due to isolation. This was on top of the disproportionate health impacts of Covid-19.

There has been unmanageable pressure on families trying to homeschool their children, often with inadequate digital technology, inappropriate learning environments and limited time to 'teach' due to work and other commitments. It was also extremely worrying that many vulnerable children were not seen by support services at this time, leading to increasing safeguarding concerns. Referrals for support with mental health challenges were also on the increase but the waiting times were and continue to be particularly long. This is especially difficult for young people who often struggle the most to come forward for help.

The particular challenges for women in our communities have been well documented. Women were more likely to face job losses or a reduction in hours and were less well supported through the furlough scheme due to how income was assessed – with maternity leave and part time hours being factors. Women were also more likely to be responsible for homeschooling their children and

we heard of increasing instances of family breakdown and domestic abuse, exacerbated by the lockdown situation.

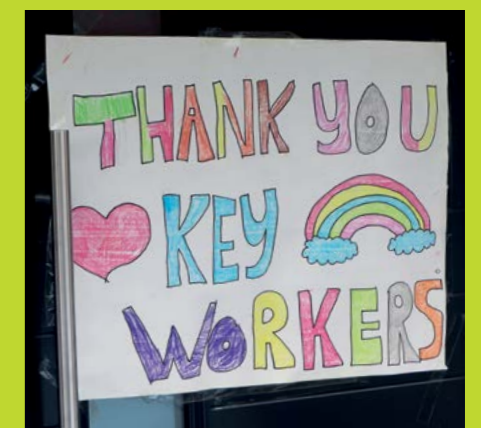
There was increasing concern about the funding landscape. Community buildings were at risk as income levels dropped and yet rent and bills still needed to be paid. These buildings are now needed more than ever as restrictions have lifted and face-to-face services have resumed. The voluntary sector has been incredibly innovative in moving to online services, but this still left a huge gap in provision – and people are still catching up.

There is no doubt that the voluntary sector response was incredible over this period. However, it is clear this is not sustainable without further and longer term funding. Organisations said what they most needed going forward was access to core, unrestricted funding so that they can continue their work, plan for the future and resource accordingly.

The Support and Recovery phase of the Sussex Crisis Fund was opened to provide support to the voluntary sector in response to these clear ongoing challenges. This funding was vital to meet the growing and complex needs coming out of the pandemic and is where we will continue to help these communities for years to come.

**“Adults with ADHD already have a significantly increased risk and incidence of mental health issues, employment challenges, relationship problems and abuse. SCF’s ongoing belief in what we are trying to do and how relevant our services are during the current crisis has been evident from the start. As a group of volunteers giving our time and energy it means a great deal. Thank you!”**

KATIE, ADHD AWARE



**In March 2020 normal life stopped and full lockdown brought empty streets, people working from home, the two-metre rule and the start of mass homeschooling. Yet charities and community groups across Sussex adapted to help those in need and made sure that nobody got left behind.**

## Wayfinder Woman

The Wayfinder Woman Trust is a female-run organisation that supports women in building self-confidence and skills to overcome barriers, through providing free workshops, coaching and support.

The charity received a grant to set up an online chat facility on their website. They later received funding from the Support and Recovery phase to provide face to face digital workshops to help women stay safe online, learn new skills and raise awareness of digital services.



AMOUNT AWARDED  
**£8,279**



## Chichester Information Shop for Young People

Chichester Information Shop for Young People offers a free counselling service and drop-in advice to 13-25 year olds. They work with young people with mental health problems, bullying, substance misuse, homelessness and debt. The charity received a Sussex Crisis Fund grant in 2020 to move to new premises which allowed them to operate social distancing measures. They later received a grant from the Support and Recovery phase to restructure with new and expanded staff roles and to offer extended service hours.

AMOUNT AWARDED  
**£14,722**



## THANK YOU

We would like to thank the many hundreds of individuals, families, local businesses, charitable trusts and our community of fund-holders who have given so generously to the Sussex Crisis Fund.

Those donations enabled us to support groups helping the hungry, the homeless, the lonely, those struggling with their mental health, those in fear of physical harm and those worried about providing for their families.

We would particularly like to acknowledge the support of the following:

EAST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL WEST SUSSEX COUNTY COUNCIL ESHCON PONT STREET CAPITAL  
THE DEPARTMENT FOR DIGITAL, CULTURE, MEDIA & SPORT CO-OP UK COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS  
THE FOLKINGTON TRUST THE FANGORN FUND ALEX AND WILLIAM DE WINTON TRUST FUND SGN  
AMERICAN EXPRESS THE FAIRFIELD FUND SOUTHERN WATER THE CHILTERN CHARITABLE TRUST  
THE LAWSON TRUST THE HOMITY TRUST THE BOLTINI TRUST THE NATIONAL EMERGENCIES TRUST  
OUR COMMUNITY OF FUND-HOLDERS THE DUKE OF RICHMOND & GORDON THE GOODWOOD GROUP  
THE ALBERT VAN DEN BERGH CHARITABLE TRUST UK POWER NETWORKS THE ALDAMA FOUNDATION  
COVERS THE CONSUELO AND ANTHONY BROOKE CHARITABLE TRUST RAMPION OFFSHORE WIND

We regret we simply do not have the space to thank every single donor!

## WHAT NEXT?

We know the economic fallout from the pandemic will continue for some time to come. Inequality has widened substantially but we have also seen how other issues have been brought into sharper focus. This includes challenges associated with loneliness and isolation, with mental health, with opportunities for children and young people and the disparity in health and wealth outcomes experienced by many from minority communities. At the same time climate change, even in Sussex, represents a threat to all our futures.

Yet we hope this report has also demonstrated the positive impact on people's lives made by inspiring voluntary sector groups in Sussex.

Fuelled by a passion for their cause, these grassroots community groups and charities have the expertise to help those who need it most in the months and years to come.

We intend to support them in this amazing work. We can help you do so too.

To find out more contact:

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▲ Exeter Street Community Hall.

Darren Cool

# Sussex Community Foundation

INSPIRING LOCAL GIVING • MEETING LOCAL NEEDS

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