



Together  
We Thrive

# IMPACT REPORT



**FULL CIRCLE 2023/2024**



## Welcome from Tracy Rudling, CEO

We have great pleasure in presenting to you, our valued stakeholders, our annual Full Circle Impact Report 2023/24.

As is customary in our fast-moving organisation, it is important that we take the time to look back and reflect on the amazing work, achievements and contribution that the Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprises (VCSE) sector - and not just Community360 - have made to people's lives during the past year. We couldn't achieve these changes without such a collaborative approach and agile workforce, who pull out all the stops to support people in their health and wellbeing.

We have continued to see high volumes of engagement from our local residents and groups. The Community Development teams are as always out and about in our locality, closely aligned with Community Transport which continues to provide such a vital link to our most vulnerable and isolated residents. Last year Chelmsford was added to our geographic area of delivery.

The Social Prescribing team continue to facilitate high referral numbers, around mental health needs. None of this would be possible without the extraordinary generosity and commitment of our volunteers, supporters and the tireless work of our staff.

Looking ahead, we will continue to focus on the need to recruit more social car drivers, to ensure our older population don't become more isolated. We will be reviewing how infrastructure support can modernise in this digital world and ensuring that we connect and partner with businesses far more than we have.

The sector is beginning to see services retrench inwards and funding become harder to find, so a collaborative and early intervention model, based on true Asset Based Community Development, is going to be required more than ever. The year ahead will be challenging, but nothing that the VCSE sector, with an already proven track record of managing well with limited resources, can't overcome.

Tracy Rudling

CEO

# Supporting Community Organisations (Colchester)

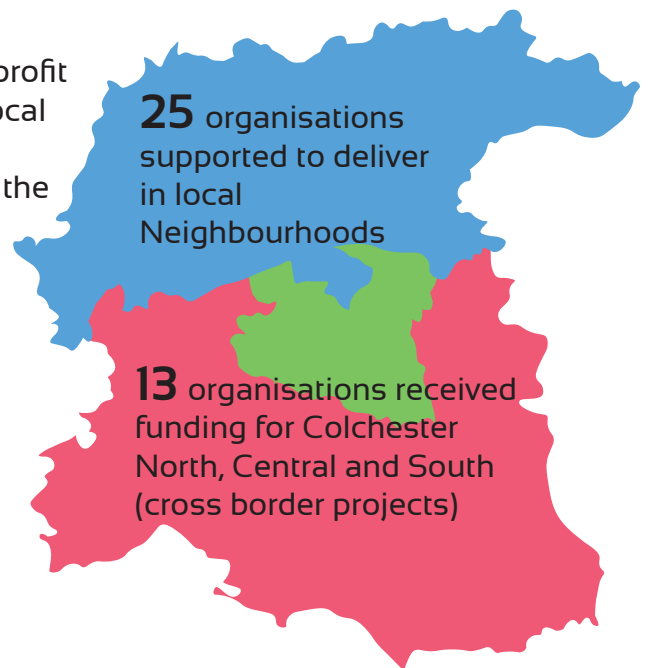
We support the community to develop sustainable futures and to grow, helping groups of all sizes at every point through their journey, from start-ups to well established organisations.



Helped facilitate access to **£796,020** in additional funding to organisations and **£55,601** to support vulnerable or at-risk households supported by VCSE-led activities, bursaries or resources.

## Hyperlocal Funding Colchester

The North East Essex Hyperlocal Fund supports non-profit groups based in local communities to build resilient local neighbourhoods that help to improve health and wellbeing for residents. Community360 administered the fund for the city of Colchester for One Colchester



**£252,018**  
matched with  
**£19,845.50**  
from the Age Well domain  
and  
**£10,994.45**  
from the Feel Well domain

40% of organisations had not applied for funding before. The Fund encouraged new and grassroots community organisations to get in touch.



# One Colchester Community Hub



We welcomed  
**18,576**  
 visitors to the One Colchester  
 Community Hub, as well as  
**1,915**  
 Invasion Colchester  
 visitors!



**25**  
 groups meet weekly  
 including friendship  
 groups, Coffee with a Cop,  
 Rough Sleeper Support,  
 Dementia Drop-In and Tec  
 Mates IT support.

## Winter Resilience

Colchester's Strategic Response

Thanks to partnership working, funding and community spirit, this project continues to provide advice and support through the One Colchester initiative.

The Winter Resilience Steering Group, chaired by Community360, who co-delivers the project, brings together representatives from the public and voluntary sector to facilitate more action over the coming winter months.

We were delighted to be working once again with key partners.

**£15,000** Winter  
 Resilience Bursary  
 scheme administered,  
 supporting  
**7** organisations



**150**  
 winter packs  
 distributed



**36**  
 partners  
 engaged in  
 delivery



**11,064** people  
 supported by the  
 Winter Resilience  
 Programme

**100** warm coats  
 from our free  
 coat rack

**400**  
 dehumidifiers and  
 mould prevention  
 information  
 distributed

**18** large boxes of  
 blankets, clothes  
 and toys donated  
 by Knit for Peace  
 disseminated

The bursary enabled the YMCA Colchester to buy 44 electric blankets for each of their residents. The residents at the housing project are vulnerable young people aged between 16-25. The blankets meant that all residents could be warm even if they couldn't afford to put room heaters on and by spending less on heating they would have more money for food thus balancing the heat or eat issue.

*"It's the best  
 thing I  
 have ever been  
 given"*

*"It's so warm  
 and helps me with  
 budgeting for electric"*

# Community Accounts Service

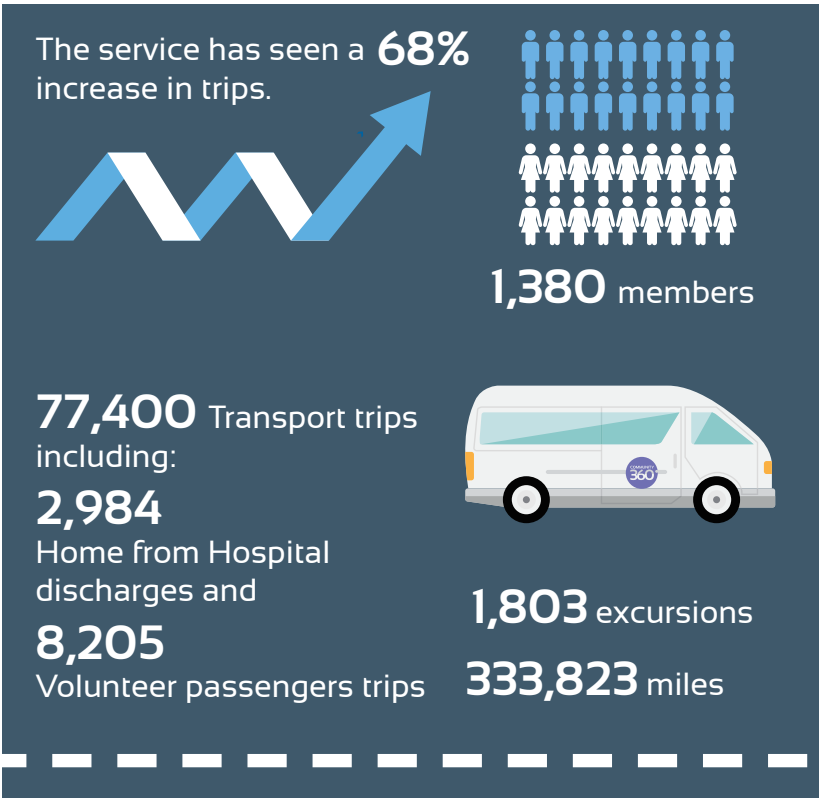
Our specialist accountancy service has been supporting CIO's, CIC's, charities and non-profit organisations and small businesses since 1996, offering information, individually tailored support and advice from fully qualified professionals. Between April 2023 and March 2024 they supported:



## Community Transport

We have seen an increase in people wanting to access the service, especially to get to clinical appointments. Without the provision of transport, it can mean citizens are late or end up missing appointments. It can put a real financial strain on people who need to attend regular appointments at a hospital for long-term conditions, such as chemotherapy treatment for cancer. Community Transport is supporting citizens to get to these appointments on time, with accessible, door to door transport, improving accessibility to services important to their health and wellbeing.

Community360 Transport provides transportation from hospital, 7 days a week, freeing up resources for East of England Ambulance Service and patient transport to focus on patients with complex needs.







We continue to support the Essential Living Fund by delivering furniture and white goods to people in need. Covering Tendring, Uttlesford, Colchester, Braintree and Maldon districts, the goods are delivered to people's homes and installed ready for use. The fund helps people facing exceptional hardship, many through unexpected events such as escaping domestic violence, breakdown of relationships or deterioration in disabilities. The scheme also delivers goods arranged through the Bed Poverty Fund from referrals by our Community360 Social Prescribing® team.



# My Social Prescription®

Community360 social prescribers® continue to link residents of Colchester and Braintree with local services in order to provide ongoing support in all areas of their lives. Alongside community referrals, they are working with multiple teams across Colchester General Hospital to help patients settle back into life at home when they leave hospital. The service helps those who are living on their own and could be facing social isolation or are without support mechanisms.

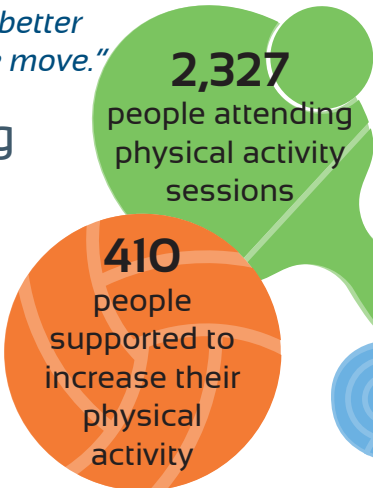
-  - Improved experience of care
-  - Timelier discharge from hospital
-  - Improved access to support
-  - Seamless transition back to the community

*"A patient was being discharged into a temporary supported living home whilst he completed his recovery. Michael from Community360 really helped to ease this transition.*

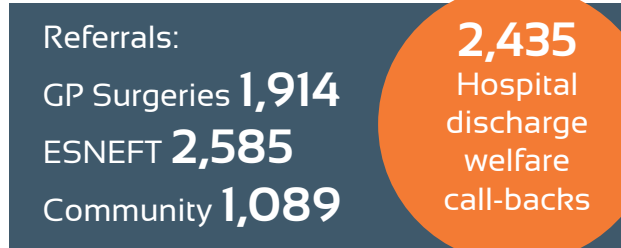
*The patient had no clothes and no food and was very anxious about moving on from hospital.*

*Community360 organised and got clothes for him within two hours of the Transfer of Care coming through and supplied him with a food parcel giving him time to settle into his new placement easily. Not only was Community360 quick and effective, Michael also spent some time on the ward with the patient helping him to feel better and less anxious about the move."*

## Green Prescribing



*"When I arrived at Longmead today to visit my wife Jean, it was my pleasure to be involved in a community singalong (online walk) run by Jo Bryant and Sarah-Jayne Kelly of the Longmead staff. For me the most important thing was that Jean was so much enjoying taking part. This is a very significant contribution to the health care here."*



## Stepping Stones

In the last year we embarked on a new project in collaboration with Essex County Council, ESNEFT, Colchester Borough Homes and Peabody Housing called Stepping Stones.

The project helps patients who are ready to leave hospital but are unable to go home as their residence is not suitable for them to return to. Stepping Stones provides temporary accommodation, alongside our wrap around support, to ensure they are fully ready to live independently once they are home.

This pilot has been so successful that the work has been expanded for next year to include additional properties and C360 will be supporting residents of Braintree District.



# Volunteering

Jane is a volunteer with the My Weight Matters group that we hold in Witham. She has had an incredible weight loss journey herself and wanted to give back to the group, supporting them at the My Weight Matters sessions. She said



*"I wanted to help others who were in the same situation as me because I know how that person is feeling when they are trying to lose weight plus managing other health conditions. At first I felt daunted but the friendly and supportive environment and atmosphere really helped me. Volunteering has impacted 100% on my life. It has given me my life back.*

*Not only has it helped me with my weight loss journey but it has given me my self confidence back, good self esteem. I feel like I have a purpose and feel part of the community."*

The dedication and kindness of our volunteers play such a key role in supporting our communities when they need it most.

Over the last year they have given over **11,000** volunteer hours.



*Community360 Volunteer Connor working on the Abbey Field Community Garden. Abbey Field Community Garden is a great example of community working.*



**287** volunteers



**65** New volunteers

**40** volunteer drivers



**5,101** Volunteer driver hours

In August our wonderful volunteer Jane McCausland received The Mayor John Jowers Award for Outstanding Citizen of the Year.

Jane was nominated for her amazing

commitment to Community360 Community Transport. She has volunteered her time with the scheme for more than 11 years and organises weekly excursions and events. This varied diary of excursions is a lifeline for many people, and her proactive positive attitude really makes her stand out.



Martyn Green, one of Community360's transport drivers, volunteered in his own time to support a group of asylum seekers residing at a Home Office asylum contingency hotel in Colchester. Martyn co-organised a table tennis tournament to help pass the time and lift the spirits of the men as they continue to deal with the challenges of displacement, social isolation, and

uncertainty around their future. Martyn used his sporting connections to obtain the group sport equipment and prizes for the tournament from the sport's governing body, Table Tennis England.



# Colchester Dementia Friendly Communities

At the end of December 2023, the Alzheimer’s Society stepped away from running the Dementia Action Alliance (DAA) programme. Community360 has taken the lead in developing a new network to replace the former Colchester DAA. We are spearheading the Colchester Dementia Friendly Community (DFC) to drive awareness of dementia in the city and encourage organisations to take action to become more accessible to people with dementia living in the community.



*“These sessions are a chance to interact with like-minded people without fear of judgement for those with dementia. I don’t have to explain anything to other carers because they understand. Without groups such as these, I would be isolated and have no social life, because there is such a lack of understanding about dementia among family and friends. Your efforts to keep things fresh, engaging and entertaining are so appreciated. Thank you so much.”*

Supporting **5** dementia cafés with over **100** attendees each month. The dementia cafés and regular dementia groups are popular and provide a safe space for people with dementia and their carers to relax, socialise and make friends.

## Diverse Communities Action Plan

Over **750** people attended the DCAP cultural days celebrating:  
 Indonesia Day  
 Nigeria and South Africa Day  
 Hong Kong Day  
 India Day  
 Black History Month  
 Windrush Day



Community360 scooped three awards at the Lawrence Walker Awards Ceremony in October. Two for our CEO Tracy Rudling and the other for our work on the Diverse Communities Action Project, in bringing Colchester’s diverse communities together.

The late Lawrence Walker was the chair of the Black History Month charity and these awards were held in his honour for his great contribution to the Colchester community, especially in equality, diversity and inclusion.

We are very proud of the work we do and it is a real privilege to make a difference in our communities.

The categories won:

- Tracy Rudling - Community Leadership
- Community360 - Partnership in driving engagement for communities to thrive
- Godwin Daudu - Community Builder



# Engagement and Insight

Community360 is committed to a continued programme of insight and intelligence gathering about our local sector. We achieve this by supporting and conducting research.

In October the Age Well report was published as companion to the North East Essex Community Assets Map. This report, commissioned by the North East Essex Health and Wellbeing Alliance, was put together by Community360, Community Voluntary Services Tendring and Healthwatch Essex who worked closely with residents, local groups and representatives from the Alliance. The report highlights the varied nature of provision and the importance of the work to people in specific communities, including the role of unpaid carers and volunteers in the community.

We are working with Essex University as part of the Knowledge Transfer Partnership (KTP) to improve our societal impact by applying leading-edge management strategy and process innovation knowledge. The KTP will focus on improving asset mapping tools, designing a shared framework for impact evaluation and a long-term strategic plan for sustainable growth. In addition, it will support the co-production of a voluntary and community sector archive for Colchester.

## Garden Community and Heart of Greenstead



We were delighted to be working with partners on two projects, one with the Tendring Colchester Borders Garden Community, or The Garden Community, and the other continuing work with the Town Deal on the Heart of Greenstead programme. Community360 has been leading on this engagement work for the Colchester City, engaging with communities to hear their views, providing information and feeding priorities to the development teams.

### Garden Community

Interactions with over **739** people through drop-ins, focus groups, questionnaires, surveys and outreach

Over **1,500** website views

Facilitated **27** Focus events and public consultations and **2** webinars

**204** feedback forms completed

### Heart of Greenstead

Conversations with over **700** people through drop-ins, focus groups, questionnaires, surveys, and outreach.

Within the last year we increased the taskforce from **43** resident ambassadors to over **100** to inform decision making.

Worked with ICS and University of Essex to support awards worth **£120,000** into community-led research projects.



Completed a user needs surveying of 30 organisations to help shape the development of a Multi-Use Community Hub

# Braintree

Braintree is one of Essex County Council's six priority areas in its Levelling Up strategy. Residents in the area can face more difficulties accessing jobs, services and social opportunities compared with more densely populated parts of the county. With funding from the UK government through the UK Shared Prosperity Fund we have been able to set up the Braintree Mobile Hub project which goes on a road trip to support the rural communities.

C360 and partners reached out to **14** villages across the district



**893** engagements working with partner organisations

Community events across **19** locations



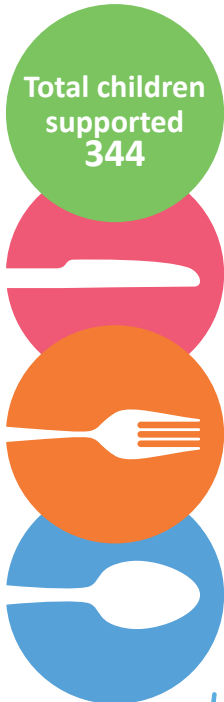
Slipper exchange events

Community Marketplaces



## Holiday Activities 2023/24

Community360 has worked with Active Essex in supporting their holiday camps which were held by Braintree Museum, Witham Boys Brigade and the Salvation Army. The providers ensured that children got the choice of a hot meal for lunch. Braintree Museum went a step further and provided hot breakfast too. For the first time this year, Community360 joined with the Salvation Army to facilitate a Christmas party with gifts given by Father Christmas for 110 children.



## New Friends

Braintree team's Philip Rawlinson has brought together children from Beckers Green School and residents from Great Bradfords House care home who meet to enjoy activities together. The children have great fun and spending time with the children gives the residents a new lease of life. Both generations gain a lot from the experience, forming lovely relationships and the children like seeing their "new friends". The children especially have grown in confidence through the visits.

## Winter Warmth Support

As a result of the ongoing cost of living crisis, a key element has been distributing winter warmth bags, alongside our partner organisations. Coop and Tesco have been supportive of the winter work for many years and this year's donations have been gratefully received. Alongside partners such as the Foodbank and First Stop, support has been provided to many members of the community.



**84** people supported through Warmer Homes project

**3** bursaries issued to organisations

**60** winter packs issued

**48** grants issued to individuals from the Household Support





26  
walks per  
month

Average  
180  
walkers

56,160  
hours of  
walking in  
a year!

439  
joined the  
Active  
Motivation  
sessions

### Finding Your Feet® Walks

Community360 hosts a series of walks every week in the Braintree district. The walk sessions are accessible for people of all abilities. These have expanded to include weekly Online Walks/Active Motivation sessions and Active Motivation sessions in care homes.

### My Weight Matters

- 75% of attendees lost weight each week
- 62 clients signposted to walks
- 53 signposted to Fusion Gym
- 11 helped with cost of living support
- 3 befriending referrals
- 3 to Provide health checks
- 4 supported to access support for dementia
- 7 signposted to volunteer opportunities



### BBC Make A Difference Awards 2023

Community360 Walk Motivator Jo Bryant and the Finding Your Feet® walks had the honour of being named as one of the four finalists in the BBC Essex Make a Difference Awards 2023. The Together Award is awarded to an individual or group of people who have created a real change by breaking down barriers and bringing people together from different walks of life for a common cause. By offering supported walks, Jo has been able to encourage people to be more active who, through health issues, may have previously felt less motivated or lacked confidence to join groups.

### The Mayor of Witham’s Civic Service and Community Awards

In October Jo Bryant represented our Braintree team at the Mayor of Witham’s Civic Service and Community Awards. Community360 had been nominated for the amazing difference the team have made with projects including Community360’s Finding Your Feet® walks, the My Weight Matters programme, IT Support, falls prevention work and holiday camps for schools. The awards ceremony was a celebration of the great community work that happens in Witham. We were honoured to receive the Runners Up award.



### Support to Community Organisations (Braintree)

168

organisations  
assisted with  
funding

34

organisations  
supported to  
improve skills

30

non-constituted  
groups  
supported

21

organisations  
supported with  
governance

£16,639

external  
funding raised  
for groups in  
Braintree

# Support to the Voluntary Sector

## Helping us to Support the Sector

We have once again been incredibly grateful to receive new funding on top of our core and contracts funding. New awards include:



OUR COLCHESTER  
*A BID to make new history*



Essex Association  
of Local Councils



CLARION  
HOUSING



LATIMER  
*by Clarion Housing Group*



SCAN ME

If you are interested in joining our team or supporting us, please get in touch. You can find out more here;

[careers.community360.org.uk/](https://careers.community360.org.uk/)



SCAN ME

[community360.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-for-c360/](https://community360.org.uk/get-involved/volunteer-for-c360/)

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