

Annual Review 2025



Who we are

Essex Community Foundation (ECF) is an independent charitable trust set up in 1996 by a local family inspired by a vision to create a permanent financial resource to support voluntary organisations in their home county. Their ambition continues to guide us today.

Over nearly three decades we have expanded our work with individuals, families, businesses, charitable trusts and public agencies, introducing them to local groups tackling issues in our communities. By investing the donations we receive and the funds we manage, we provide a sustainable source of funding that local organisations can access year after year.

We have become a trusted leader in the voluntary and community sector by carrying out due diligence on funding applications and matching the needs of charities and individuals with the priorities of our donors.

We award around £4 million in grants each year which reflects a genuine impact on organisations and the wider community.

This year's highlights

£3.8 million
paid out in grants

549 voluntary
organisations
and 167 individuals
supported

Total Income of
£8.5 million, including
£5.3 million into
endowment

21 new funds
established
in the year

Total value of
endowed funds
under management
£54.5 million

Charities requested
230 telephone
interviews with our
grants teams

Charities use our
Foundation Hub for a
total of 3,000 hours

Contents

- 3 Chair's message
- 4 A year of change and opportunity
- 6 Bringing people together
- 8 Local philanthropy in action
- 10 Creating a lasting impact
- 12 Helping businesses to give back
- 14 Thanking our supporters
- 16 Community spotlight
- 18 Helping people achieve their full potential
- 20 Our grantmaking 2024-25
- 22 Financial highlights
- 23 Our team
- 24 Join in and help us make a difference

Front cover images:

Women of Grace in Braintree works hard to raise awareness of and end the harmful practices of Female Genital Mutilation and Honour Based Violence.

From its base in Bradwell-on-Sea, **Cirdan Sailing Trust** provides young people with self-development, integration and learning opportunities through the challenge of life at sea.

Accuro provides a wide range of social and life skills based activities for almost 200 children, young people and adults with learning disabilities in West Essex.

From our Chair

Nick Alston CBE DL Chair of Trustees

It is a great pleasure to introduce our 2025 Annual Review. This is my seventh and final year as Chair of Trustees, and it has been an enormous privilege. I am so proud to have worked alongside such passionate trustees, talented staff, inspiring partners and committed supporters.

People have always been at the heart of Essex Community Foundation, those who give, who care, and who step forward time and again to help build a fairer, kinder and more connected county. On behalf of all trustees, thank you for your support, energy and belief in what we do.

Our year began with the launch of our bold 2030 Strategy, created with input from a wide range of partners. It has already brought fresh energy, growth and momentum, while challenging us to respond to the realities of a world increasingly shaped by economic uncertainty and growing inequalities.

We've been listening more closely than ever to the voices of local people and organisations. Through our Community Listening Projects and county-wide Symposia, we've gathered first-hand insight into the needs, priorities and aspirations of communities across Essex. This work has informed our research showing that the voluntary sector in our county contributes over £1 billion to the economy, employs 17,500 people and mobilises 95,000 volunteers.

As a result, a new strand of our work is to champion the voice of civil society. This year we brought together 15 countywide voluntary and community support

organisations as the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Roundtable. Together we issued a joint statement urging recognition of the sector's role in this process. We are proud that Community Foundations are increasingly recognised nationally as leaders in this space, with representatives, including our CEO, Caroline Taylor, joining the Prime Minister, civil society leaders and senior ministers at the launch of the new Civil Society Covenant in July.

At the same time, our core purpose remains unchanged: inspiring philanthropy and supporting grassroots organisations. Today we manage an endowment of £54.5 million, steward more than 200 charitable funds, and have awarded over £60 million in grants since we were founded in 1996. The use of our Foundation Hub at our premises in Chelmsford has increased by 200% providing groups we support with meeting or desk space free of charge.

As we look ahead to our 30th anniversary in 2026, we celebrate '30 Years of Generosity' – honouring those who built this Foundation, sharing stories of impact, and inviting new philanthropists and partners to join us.

I warmly welcome Atul Manek as our next Chair of Trustees. Atul joined ECF as a Trustee in 2022. I know the Foundation will continue to thrive with his leadership and generosity. Thank you to everyone who has supported our journey – our best years are still to come.

Nick Alston



Atul Manek

"I feel immensely proud to be elected chair during our 30th anniversary year and at the beginning of our six-year strategy.

"This an exciting time for the Foundation to step up and make a lasting impact on the community as a catalyst for change.

Working with ECF has helped me to understand how vital the voluntary sector is and how it is critical to the wellbeing of our society. As Chair, I am looking forward to continuing and expanding our support for the sector."



A year of change and opportunity for Essex

Shaping a positive future

This year has brought important discussions that will lead to major changes for Essex.

Three reforms will reshape the way local charities and voluntary organisations work in their communities:

- **Devolution** – the creation of a new Mayor for Essex and Combined Authority.
- **Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)** – the move to new unitary authorities.
- **Integrated Care Board (ICB) restructuring** – merger of 3 ICBs into one countywide that will focus on prevention, neighbourhood health, and community-led care.

This is a critical moment for Essex, where voluntary organisations are working within a challenging landscape. 96% are facing rising costs and 81% report falling income, forcing many to rethink how they can sustain vital services.

These reforms bring both opportunity and risk. With strong community involvement, they could deliver more local democracy and services that are shaped around people's lives. Without it, decision-making may become too centralised, weakening the networks that hold our county together.

Enterprise East offers individuals who face challenges or barriers to gaining employment, the opportunity to build confidence and self-belief through some exceptional learning experiences, through inclusive community projects.

These changes underline why our 2030 Strategy places such emphasis on becoming a bold, leading voice for the voluntary sector. By championing the collective insights and experience of local charities, we will ensure they are included as Essex takes important decisions about its future.

Caroline Taylor
Chief Executive



Strategic Ambition 2030

Be a bold independent voice for the voluntary sector, encouraging increased levels of collaboration and influence.

A. Amplifying voices: use our trusted independent local insight to champion and highlight the value of the voluntary sector to decision-makers in, and beyond Essex.

B. Advocacy and influence: Use our knowledge and connections to influence and improve how the public and private sectors collaborate with the voluntary sector.

C. Strong collaboration: Help unite and strengthen the voluntary sector in Essex through supporting infrastructure, convening, match-making, facilitated learning and information sharing.

As part of our commitment to the policy and advocacy work of our 2030 Strategy, this year we have embraced our role as a leading voice in our community, taking on the responsibility of amplifying the voices of local charities and advocating on their behalf across Essex.

To support this, we created the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Roundtable, made up of county wide support organisations. Together we have published joint statements that demonstrate the impact of the sector in shaping future policy, and we have asked for five core principles:

1. **Local governance that reflects real communities**
2. **A formal role for the VCS in governance and transition**
3. **Long-term investment in place-based support**
4. **Simplified, collaborative commissioning**
5. **Integration with health, care and public service reform**

These principles are rooted in the experience of community organisations across Essex and align with the ambitions set out in the Civil Society Covenant, the Caring Communities Commission, and the NHS 10-Year Health Plan.

This important work has been positively received and widely cited in council briefings, local board meetings and by national bodies.

Working with public sector partners

Collaboration has extended beyond our sector. The Caring Communities Commission, created to respond to growing pressures on social and care services, has set out an ambitious vision for the future of Essex. We have been able to highlight the importance of delivering its recommendations, which recognise the voluntary sector's vital role in prevention and resilience.

Our work has ensured that voluntary voices are at the table in ongoing discussions with Essex County Council, other local authorities, health partners and MPs, strengthening the case for community-led solutions.



Andy Payne Worpole speaks at The Caring Communities Commission event in Chelmsford.

Bringing people together

Attendees in discussion at our Charity Symposium.

During the year, we held our second Charity Symposium, welcoming over 150 leaders and philanthropists from across the voluntary, private and public sectors. The event explored themes of community voice, digital inclusion, and new models of collaboration.

Keynote speakers, including Immy Kaur (Civic Square) and Sebastian Rocca (Micro Rainbow), inspired debate on the power of imagination, innovation, and investing for the future, helping today's generosity lay the foundations for tomorrow. These conversations challenged participants to consider how philanthropy can be bold, rooted in place, and designed for lasting impact.



Our voice has also been heard nationally

Our CEO, Caroline Taylor, joined the launch of the Civil Society Covenant in Westminster, alongside the Prime Minister, Cabinet Ministers and 200 civil society leaders.

For Essex, this recognition affirms the sector's role as an equal partner in shaping change and offers new opportunities to push for the

Covenant's implementation going forward. Ensuring fairer funding, long-term investment, and stronger local democracy.

Preparing for the Future

The foundations laid this year will position the sector to play a central role in shaping the new Mayor's priorities, the design of unitary authorities, and the reorganisation of health and care.



This has been about connection and conversation, placing the Foundation at the heart of change and building trust, visibility and partnerships that will help communities in Essex thrive for the long-term.

Caroline Taylor, Chief Executive



Caroline Taylor, (far right) with other community foundation CEOs at the national launch of the Civil Society Covenant.

A call to action: speaking with one voice



Now is the time for us to position ourselves within the narrative of change. As a voluntary sector leader, we share a collective responsibility to serve as a rallying point, inviting others to join us in shaping a thriving, connected, and community-led Essex. If we don't take our place in this narrative, we risk being written out of it.

Andy Payne-Worpole
Director of Policy and Programmes

The voluntary and community sector is at a turning point. The decisions made today on health, care, and local government will shape our county for a generation. This is not a time to stand back; it is a time to lead.

In the coming year, we will work with strategic partners to run events that not only respond to today's challenges but also lay the



A meeting of the members of the Devolution and Local Government Reorganisation Roundtable.



Our role is to bring people together. To create the space, evidence and confidence for Essex's voluntary sector to lead meaningful, lasting change.

Nick Alston CBE DL
Chair of ECF

groundwork for the future. We will be convening a working group to support the delivery of policy and advocacy.

Our call to action is simple but urgent: we must turn this collective strength into influence. By coordinating voice, evidence and purpose, we can ensure reorganisation becomes renewal.

If you would like to be part of this work, we invite you to contact us at policy@essecf.org.uk.



Andy Payne Worpole,
Director of Policy and Programmes.

Local philanthropy in action

Supporting our voluntary
sector 2024-25

BOSP (Brighter Opportunities for Special People)



Thank you to everyone who has helped us to be able to pay an incredible **£3.8 million** in grants this year to **549** organisations and **167** individuals, a **12%** increase on last year.

Our funding supports a wide range of voluntary and community groups across Essex helping them respond to rising demand, strengthen resilience, and continue vital community work.

We know that receiving funding over multiple years enables organisations to plan and build capacity and this year we

significantly increased the amount we awarded to £815,738. These grants now account for 22% of our overall grantmaking, providing stability for organisations facing unpredictable costs and growing demand.

Core funding also remained a priority, with 34% of our grantmaking supporting group's operational costs including staffing, rent, and utilities, helping charities retain staff, maintain services, and plan ahead.

We actively promote the availability of grants, so that groups we have not funded before can find out about us. This year, first-time applicants received grants totalling £280,669. Smaller charities remain a focus with 14% of grants awarded to organisations with incomes under £25,000.

Age Concern Southend-on-Sea provides a hub and outreach services for older people. It is a lifeline in the community, helping to reduce isolation, encourage physical activities, improve mental and emotional wellbeing as well as offering a meeting place which is brimming with activities and support.

Funding to organisations working with marginalised or underrepresented groups totalled £446,312 across 42 grants, including support for refugees, ethnic minorities, LGBTQ+ people, and those affected by addiction, domestic abuse, or the criminal justice system. This included delivery of the **Homes for Ukraine Community Grants Programme**, in partnership with Essex County Council.

Our message to groups is always to get in touch. Tell us about your work and what you need. We are here to help.

Get in touch

Call our grants team on
01245 355947

Book a call with a grants officer
through our website

Use our **CHAT NOW** message
box on our website

E-mail grants@essexcf.org.uk

Charities can also book space
in our Foundation Hub in
Chelmsford, free of charge.
Opening Hours: Monday –
Friday 9.00am to 4.30pm.

To book please email
hub@essexcf.org.uk



Supporting transformative change

Grant Fact:

This year, we gave **£596,163** or **16%** of our grants to support capital projects.

A new client gets the keys to their new accommodation at Turning Point.



CHES Homeless Turning Point accommodation.



Occasionally, we can give a substantive grant to a project that will bring lasting, transformative change to local communities. This year, one such opportunity came when CHES Homeless, a Chelmsford-based charity, set out to create a new modular housing development for people experiencing homelessness and vulnerability.

The vision to create this, became a reality thanks to a grant of £427,418 from the **William and Gladys Pudney Memorial Fund**. The Fund, established in 2017, supports vulnerable people and housing related projects in Chelmsford and Writtle. This significant gift provided the cornerstone funding needed for CHES Homeless to unlock

additional support from the Government's Single Homeless Accommodation Programme (SHAP), ensuring the project could move forward.

The new site, named Turning Point, was officially unveiled in April at a special event attended by Jennifer Tolhurst, Lord Lieutenant of Essex and Patron of ECF, alongside the Mayor of Chelmsford, the High Sheriff of Essex Julie Fosh, and representatives from Essex County and Chelmsford City Councils.

Purpose-built and modular in design, Turning Point will provide safe and supportive accommodation for 24 individuals. More than shelter, it offers a vital foundation for people to rebuild their lives. Residents will have access to

It's been a long journey, but to see this vision come to life is overwhelming. The support we've had, especially from the Pudney Fund, is genuinely life-changing. This is more than a housing site, it's a second chance for so many.

**For Rob Saggs,
Founder of CHES Homeless**

counselling and mental health services, skills-based workshops, employment coaching, and healthcare, with a dedicated volunteer wellbeing team permanently based at the site.

Claire Read, Partner at Knights plc Solicitors and executor of the Pudneys' estate said, "William and Gladys Pudney cared deeply about helping vulnerable people. It is wonderful to see their charitable wishes being fulfilled through their legacy and Fund with ECF."



Being able to respond to needs in our local community is what makes a Community Foundation such an asset. The Pudney Fund has laid the groundwork, literally and figuratively, for a place that will change lives.

Andy Payne Worpole, Director of Policy and Programmes

Every act of giving creates a lasting impact

More people than ever are discovering new and meaningful ways to give back and support their communities through our Foundation. In our financial year ending 30 June 2025 we established 21 new funds each one reflecting the unique reasons for its formation, the causes and areas its founders care about, and the ambitions that drive their giving. Thank you to everyone who contributed to the £5.3 million we received into our endowed funds including new funds established and donations into existing funds.

New Funds this year

There are different ways you can start giving through us.

The stories behind our funds are as different as the donors themselves. This year, we have set up funds on behalf of families, businesses, public agencies and received several trust transfers. We have also welcomed people who are giving regularly to grow their charitable funds over time under our Fundbuilder scheme.



The Wacey family.

The Wacey Family Fund

Essex has been at the heart of Chris and Michele Wacey's lives for over 60 years. It's where they began their married life, raised their daughters Nicola and Claire, and built several successful businesses. Following the sale of their business interests, the Wacey family began exploring how they could give back to the community.

After being introduced to us by a friend, Chris and Michelle felt that our approach, values and objectives mirrored their own. By working with us, they could support local charities helping people to move their lives forward in a positive way, throughout Essex, Southend and Thurrock.

Pavitt Family Charitable Fund

After building a successful career in tech, Phil Pavitt and his family are now using that success to support others. Through their Fund, they will support small and medium-sized charities across Essex that work with vulnerable and



Phil and Tracey Pavitt.

disadvantaged communities, especially children. Their giving reflects a deep commitment to making a meaningful and lasting difference close to home.

Ystwyth Fund

A former trustee, Owen Richards had a strong understanding of the value of community foundations in supporting local communities.

Born in Aberystwyth, his love of the performing arts was nurtured from an early age. Living, studying and working in Wales gave Owen rich cultural experiences, and his move to Essex opened further opportunities to explore London's galleries, concert halls and theatres. Over time, his interests expanded into the visual arts.

Much of Owen's career was in NHS management, where he saw the positive role of the arts in therapeutic settings. His Fund now supports individuals and organisations engaged in the performing or visual arts, whether pursuing a career, using the arts in therapy, or strengthening communities through creativity.



Owen Richards.

“Local philanthropy is not one-size-fits-all. It can begin with a simple gift, a family's decision to create a lasting legacy, a corporate investment or a fundraising event. It can involve donating money, but also time, resources and expertise, or simply a commitment to giving over time. What unites all our donors and fundholders is a shared commitment to making Essex stronger, fairer and better connected.”

Atul Manek, Incoming Chair of Trustees and Fundholder



For many of our donors, establishing a family fund is about more than giving. It's about passing on values, engaging the next generation and creating a legacy together. Creating a family fund allows you to tailor your legacy to target causes that matter most to you and your family.

Perry Norton,
Head of Development

Michael and Gillian Foulkes Fund

Michael Foulkes has launched his new charitable fund to support causes across Essex. Driven by a passion for local impact, the fund aims to empower projects that uplifts these communities and creates lasting change.

Adrian West Fund

After their son Adrian tragically took his own life, Linda and John West established a fund in his memory to support young people struggling with their mental health but who may not have the financial means to access help. The Fund will provide access to recognised programmes that show people they can overcome mental health challenges, can take control of their lives, and can truly thrive.



Adrian West.

Investing in safer communities

The Wilderness Foundation UK receives the High Sheriff's Shield recognising their work helping young people reconnect to society and themselves through outdoor adventure and mentoring.



Safer communities are important to all of us. This year we awarded £203,436 to 34 charities and voluntary groups for work and projects that contribute to community safety in Essex. This included £30,000 presented by the High Sheriff of Essex, Mr David Hurst DL.

The Essex Police Proceeds of Crime Matched Funding Scheme, established by Essex Police in 2014, enables us to match fund eligible donations and establish funds to support charities and voluntary groups whose work is contributing to safer communities.

Funds set up with matched funding this year include:

Anderson Family Fund

Denis Anderson was introduced to us by a friend and supporter of ECF. He wanted to set up a fund in the name of his family and by utilising matched funding from the Proceeds of Crime Scheme, it is helping his fund to grow more quickly.



Essex Agricultural Society Community Fund

For over 150 years the Essex Agricultural Society has supported the rural community in Essex. Establishing their fund will ensure they can keep providing support to rural based charities and community projects, with an emphasis on educating the next generation around rural safety, as well as highlighting where food originates from.



Bea and Denis Anderson.

Helping businesses to give back

(L-R) Sean Stutterford, Fiona Ashworth and Ann Coutts from Thompson Smith and Puxon present Perry Norton from ECF with a cheque to establish their Fund.

Businesses increasingly play a role in developing strong communities. Not only through financial contributions, but also by sharing expertise, resources, and people power.

By embedding a culture of giving that reaches beyond the boardroom and engages their employees, they strengthen their local reputation and communities receive meaningful support.

This year we were pleased to welcome Colchester based law firm **Thompson Smith and Puxon (TSP)** as a new fundholder.

TSP is a longstanding supporter of ECF and has introduced many clients who have set up funds or left us a legacy in their will. We are delighted that they have established their own fund to support charities working in Colchester and Clacton where the firm has offices.



The Thompson Smith and Puxon Foundation is an extension of our charitable giving. Over the years, we've aimed to give back to local communities and celebrate local heroes. Our Fund allows us to continue this work on a long-term basis and establish a legacy in its own right.

Fiona Ashworth, Director at TSP

Essex New Beginnings Fund

This year, Chelmsford Crown Court established a Fund to support charities and voluntary groups working within the jurisdiction of the Court with a preference of funding those whose work is providing education, training and diversionary activities for young people and those supporting people affected by homelessness.

Money is added to the Fund from cases heard by the Court and where assets are acquired under

the Misuse of Drugs Act or from forfeiture orders where money or other property is seized because it is suspected to be related to criminal activity.

Did you know?

If you set up an endowed fund, you can also make donations that are available to spend during the year. We call this a Hybrid Fund and it allows you to make grants while your invested fund is growing.

Transferring a Trust to us

We are always pleased to help trustees of existing trusts if they are struggling to find beneficiaries, unable to find new trustees, their objectives are outdated or they just feel the time is right to hand over the administration. Trustees can remain involved with the grantmaking if this is what they want.

This year, we welcomed several trusts, ensuring their original charitable intentions live on with renewed impact.

Rob George Foundation

After more than a decade of supporting young people across the UK, the Rob George Foundation (RGF) secured its long-term future by transferring its operations to us.

RGF was founded by Philip and Lorraine George in January 2014 in memory of their son, Rob, an accomplished sportsman and Colchester Royal Grammar School student who died aged just 21 after facing acute myeloid leukaemia with remarkable courage and resilience. Since then, the Trust has provided over £1 million in grants and supported more than 1,700 young people facing life-threatening illnesses or pursuing excellence in sport and the performing arts.



Rob with parents Philip and Lorraine.

Philip George, Rob's dad said, "We knew that the time had come for us to think about succession and sustainability. Partnering with ECF allows us to preserve the spirit and purpose of the Foundation, while placing it in experienced and trusted hands. We're excited about the future and comforted by the knowledge that the fund created in Rob's name is now safeguarded for generations to come.



Rob would've been proud of everything we've achieved, and proud that we've found a way to ensure the work carries on.



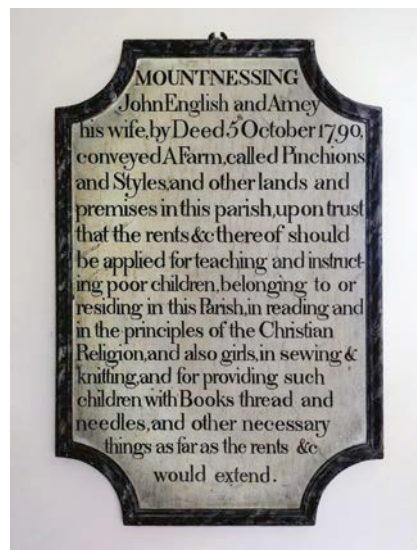
In years gone by, it was not unusual for Trusts to be set up within parishes or the local Church to give support to "poorer members of the community". Over time, the Trusts have diminished in value or their objectives had become quite restrictive.

This year, we were pleased to work with the Trustees of the '**Roxwell Charities for the Poor**' and the '**Writtle Relief in Need**' charities to transfer the trusts to our management and set up charitable funds to ensure their future and continue to support voluntary groups and individuals in these communities.

John & Amy English Charity

The John & Amy English Charity's origins date back to 1764. When the trustees of the Charity contacted us about taking on the trust, we were pleased to have a conversation. The Trust is dedicated to supporting children and young people in Mountnessing and surrounding areas. It provides grants to local charities, voluntary groups, and individuals working to improve young lives.

The original founder, Richard Bayley, envisioned a school for disadvantaged children. His daughter Amy, with her husband John English, fulfilled that wish by using farm profits to fund education. Transferring the long-established trust to us ensures it will continue to support young people as Richard, John and Amy had always intended.



Plaque detailing the John and Amy English Charity in St Giles Church, Mountnessing.

Trustee of an existing Trust?

If you are a trustee of an existing Trust and would like to have a conversation about transferring it to us, please contact Perry Norton on **01245 355947** or email **perry@essexcf.org.uk**

Thanking our supporters

Charlie's Champions.

We are extremely grateful to our Members, those who give regularly to us or the funds we manage, and to those who have established new funds during the year.

As well as making donations, we know that many of our fundholders enjoy organising and participating in fun or challenging events to raise money for their funds with us. Here are just some of the things they have been doing:

Rickard Luckin's team has gone the extra mile, with their "10k Your Way" initiative, raising thousands of pounds for the **Rickard Luckin Community Fund**.



Michael Breame, Director at Rickard Luckin, raised money by climbing Ben Nevis.



Charlie's Champions have been busy raising money for the **Charlie Watkins Foundation** and tackling the stigma surrounding young people's mental health. Events included a three peaks challenge, Italia Cycle Ride, charity golf day, and a Walk & Talk event.

Aron Priest.



Aron Priest put on his running shoes for the London Marathon to raise money for the **Priest Foundation**. The fund helps young adults in Southend and Rochford by removing financial barriers to education, employment, and mental health treatment.



Gary Marshall (front and centre), Captain of **Rayleigh Golf Club** and the Members, were also active raising money for the **Essex Heart Fund**.



Get started with our Fundbuilder Scheme

Our Fundbuilder scheme makes it possible for individuals, families, and businesses to grow a fund over time. By making regular donations, you can gradually build a permanent legacy that reflects your priorities and passions.

While the funds are growing, the donations from all fundbuilder donors are pooled into a collective fund. We award grants annually from this fund enabling donors to see their contributions making an immediate impact, while their individual funds continue to grow for future long-term giving. Once individual donations reach £25,000 these can be moved to set up a standalone fund if the donor wishes.

This year, we welcomed three new donors who are growing their charitable funds under our fundbuilder scheme - the **Newenham Family Fund**, the **Johnson Family Fund** and the **Saffron Fund**.

The Wright Fund also became our first standalone fund to be established. Having spent most of their lives in Essex, Jane and Edward Wright recently retired in Wivenhoe. Though they knew they wouldn't have vast funds at their disposal, they always wanted to make a meaningful difference in their lifetime. Fundbuilder enabled them to grow their fund at a pace that worked for them.

3Food4U based in Waltham Abbey received a grant of £5,000, including £1,352 from our **Fundbuilder Fund**, enabling them to provide emergency food, essential toiletries and household items to people in need.

Leave a Legacy

Leaving a legacy in your will is straightforward and one of the most powerful ways to make a lasting impact. You can ensure that your values live on and your generosity continues to benefit the causes and communities you care about.

Our Founders, Ian and Angela Marks, established ECF in 1996 after selling their family business, Trebor, to create a permanent source of support for Essex's voluntary sector.

As we celebrate our 30th anniversary, why not consider leaving a legacy to make a lasting difference in Essex. You can do this through your financial adviser, or we can easily provide you with some appropriate wording to include in your will.

Acorn Fund

Our Acorn Fund was created to give everyone the chance to support local causes. With no minimum donation or fixed timescale, it offers a simple way to be part of a growing community resource that delivers meaningful grants to charities across Essex.

Since 1996, our Acorn Fund has grown steadily thanks to the

generosity of many donors, and has awarded over £1.4 million to charities and community groups, proving how small seeds of giving can grow into lasting impact.

Make a donation here.



Community spotlight – poverty and disadvantage

This year, we saw an increase in the number of grants paid to charities helping people who are struggling to manage in everyday life.

These grants totalled £666,452 and include projects that offer a support to those who are in difficult

circumstances, including families who are juggling rent arrears and food insecurity, older people who have fallen into debt and temporary accommodation and advocacy for those who are homeless.

FACTS

- Deprivation is most acute in coastal towns: **31% of residents in Clacton and Harwich** (44,000 people) and **23% in Southend** (40,800 people).
- In Tendring, Harlow and Basildon, nearly **1 in 3** children are eligible for Free School Meals
- **55%** of households in Tendring District have a discretionary income of less than £125 per month.

Families under pressure

Without an appropriate school uniform, children can often experience feelings of isolation and bullying. **Dynamic New Anglian Networks** based in Colchester run

projects aimed at helping anyone who is in need through hardship or circumstance. We supported their Free School Uniform project which provides low-income families in Colchester with recycled school uniforms and sportswear, ensuring that children can be confident when they attend school.



DNA Networks Free School Uniform project in Colchester.



The team at DIAL South Essex.



Welfare advice

Since 1985, the dedicated staff and volunteers at **DIAL South Essex** have been providing support, advice, guidance and advocacy to people with disabilities, helping them on a range of topics including benefits, signposting, referrals, leisure and access. We supported the core costs of this vital organisation with a grant of £10,000.



Dial South Essex.



Deprivation is not just about money, it's also about isolation, poor housing, limited transport, and a lack of community infrastructure. Local charities combine practical help with emotional support, ensuring people feel less isolated, know where to turn and are treated with dignity.

Andy Payne-Worpole,
Director of Policy and Programmes



Anna Appleyard, Operations Manager at Maldon CVS checking stock for their emergency response service.

Giving practical Support

A grant of £4,950 to **Maldon & District Community Voluntary Services** enabled them to continue running their emergency response service for disadvantaged people across Maldon district, including those on low incomes, with mental health conditions or those facing housing instability.

This service provides one-off emergency support such as food, childcare items, cooking equipment and supermarket vouchers.

Supporting Health and Wellbeing

Volunteers are key to delivering the **Food Cycle** project in Clacton organising food collections, preparing and cooking food and hosting a lunch. Every week they provide a nutritious three-course meal and create a welcoming environment for local people, including those who are vulnerable, living on low incomes, have long-term physical or mental health conditions, are homeless or are isolated and lonely. In 2024, the project also saved a massive 14,145kg of surplus food from going to waste.

I had fled a domestically abusive relationship with just my baby and nothing else... I hadn't had a proper meal in days. The food parcel and microwave [from Maldon & District CVS] meant I could finally eat and start to think straight again. It was a lifeline.

MDCVS Client

Food Cycle project in Clacton providing nutritious meals for people in need.



Amazing charity that gets me thinking of different foods to cook. They help my mum with her disabilities. The whole team are amazing.

Food Cycle client

You can read more about the charities we support on the community spotlight section of our website.



Helping people achieve their full potential

We manage a small number of charitable funds that support individuals who face barriers to reaching their full potential or who need assistance in overcoming personal challenges.

Where possible, we collaborate with charities, schools, and community organisations to identify those who would most benefit from our support. In the past year, we awarded 167 grants totalling £204,649.

These grants have contributed towards education and training in science, technology, engineering and mathematics (STEM) subjects, the arts, and sports. They have also created opportunities to develop new skills and provided essential support for people facing financial pressures, as well as physical or mental health difficulties.

Sports

Sisters **Jasmine (16) and Skye (17) Carter**, from Basildon, are making waves on the international stage as members of the Junior GB Swimming Team.

In 2023, Skye travelled to the Commonwealth Youth Games in Trinidad and Tobago, where she won gold in the 50m freestyle. Jasmine is also building her career as a rising star, with both sisters balancing school, training, and competitions at the highest level.

The family has been supported by the **Essex and Southend Sports Charitable Fund** and the **Chrysalis Fund**, which helped cover the significant costs of training and qualifying competitions.



Jasmine and Skye Carter at the Commonwealth Youth Games.

Education

The rising cost of education continues to place real pressure on students and their families. Recent research shows that the average

student now graduates with debts of over £45,000, creating barriers to opportunity.

Ahnaf Ahmed lives in Thurrock with his family and is studying to become a lawyer. The requirements of his degree course at the University of Law in London makes it difficult for him to get a part-time job. A grant from the **Essex Education Fund** of £2,700 helped him to buy a new laptop and contribute to his travel costs.



Ahnaf Ahmed



William Mwengi Selamaj (second on the left).

Music

William Mwengi Selamaj (18) from Clacton is a talented musician, playing both the saxophone and the guitar. He performs with the Essex Jazz Orchestra and is developing a strong reputation as a versatile young artist.

William received £500 from the **Essex Young Musician's Trust** to help cover the costs of joining the Essex Youth Orchestra Summer Tour in Germany. The experience gave him the chance to perform internationally, learn from peers, and grow as a musician.



Ameile Gruar (right).

Arts

Ameile Gruar (14) from Loughton has always had a passion for Ballroom and Latin dancing. Living with her mother and older brother, she has already won multiple Championship competitions and proudly represented Team GB.

To help her continue competing at national level, Ameile received £2,000 from the **Belinda Starling Memorial Fund** and the **Annabel and Gerald Malton Fund**. This support covered the significant costs of lessons, dresses and shoes, ensuring Ameile can focus on dancing and reach her potential.

Her teacher said:

From a professional point of view, Ameile is one of the most talented children in our dance world at the moment. She is an incredibly hard worker, and has the drive to get to the top.



Tom Rayner.

Health

Tom Rayner (14) lives in Chelmsford with his mum. Tom has Down's syndrome and is awaiting an assessment for Autism and ADHD. Despite these challenges, he loves being active, especially running, though he is unable to run for long periods on his own.

Thanks to a £4,446 grant from the **Moody Fund**, Tom's family were able to buy an all-terrain three-wheel buggy, giving him the freedom to enjoy running outdoors with the right support.

If you know someone who needs help to achieve their full potential, please email hello@essexcf.org.uk or call us on **01245 355947**.

Our grantmaking 2024-25

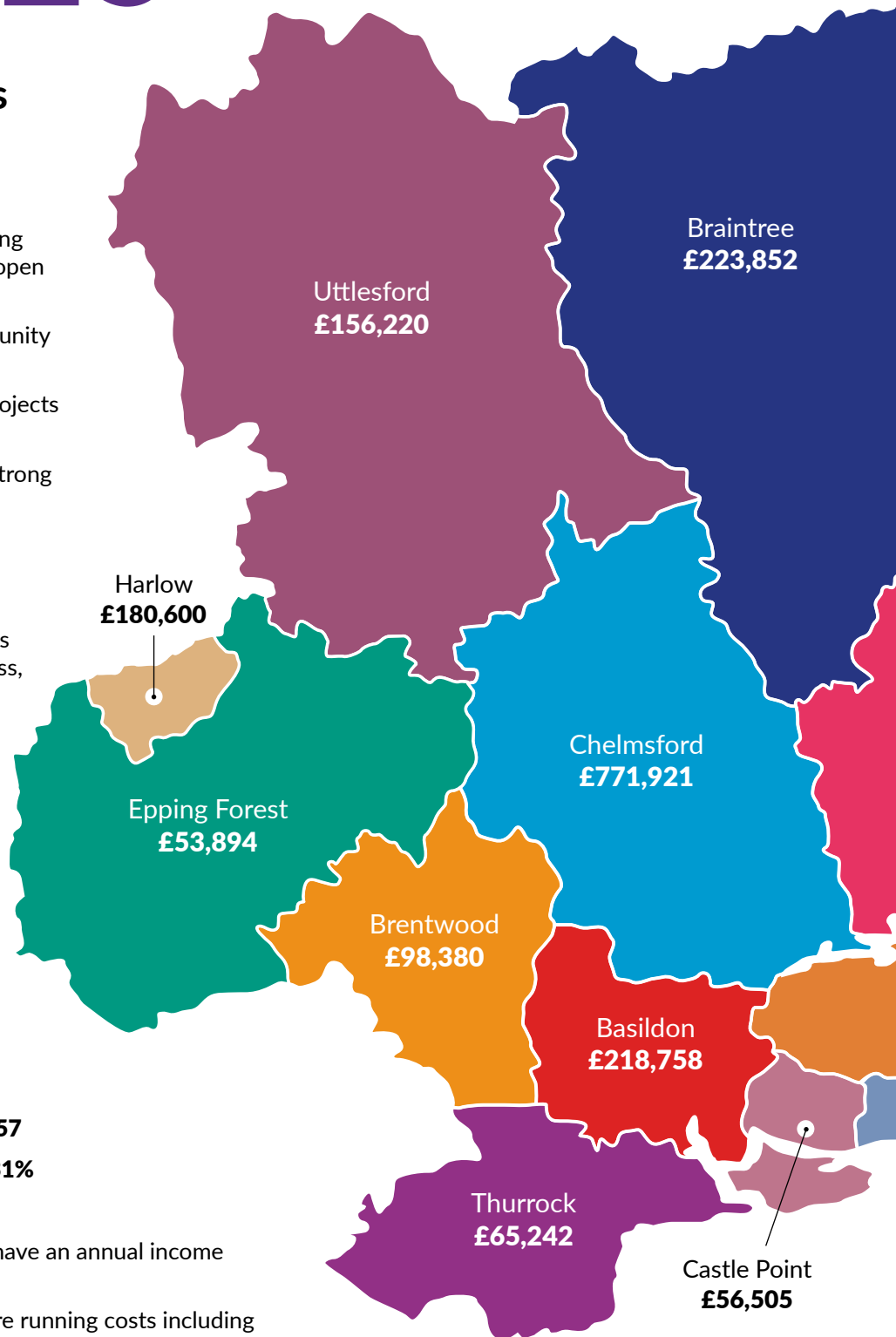
Our year in numbers

- **£3.8 million** in grants paid to **549** voluntary organisations and **167** individuals
- **164** grants given for core or running cost support helping groups stay open and responsive
- **Over £500,000** invested in community spaces, transport, and equipment
- **50 grants** supported long-term projects through multi-year funding
- **9% rise** in applications, showing strong demand and sector resilience

Grants ranged from under £1,000 to more than £400,000. This included a major capital award to CHES Homeless to build 24 modular homes for people experiencing homelessness, read more on page 9. A powerful example of how philanthropy can unlock lasting, local change.

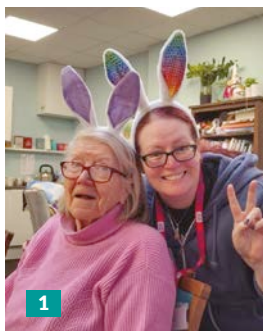
Facts and figures

- The success rate for applicants applying to us for funding **47%**
- Number of first-time applicants **357**
- First time applicant success rate **31%**
- The average grant size **£5,748**
- **33%** of organisations we funded have an annual income of under £100,000
- **39%** of our funding supported core running costs including rent, salaries and utilities
- On average we receive **94 requests** for funding each month
- Our grants team delivered **1:1 advice** and guidance sessions to **230** potential applicants



Within the total amount awarded £437,221 was awarded to organisations working across two or more districts.

In addition, £161,553 was awarded to organisations working outside the county.



1. Age Concern Southend

Age Concern Southend offers friendship, wellbeing activities, and support for older residents through their centre at The Haven. The team provides a trusted, local space where older people can build connections and feel less isolated.

2. Keep It 100 Essex

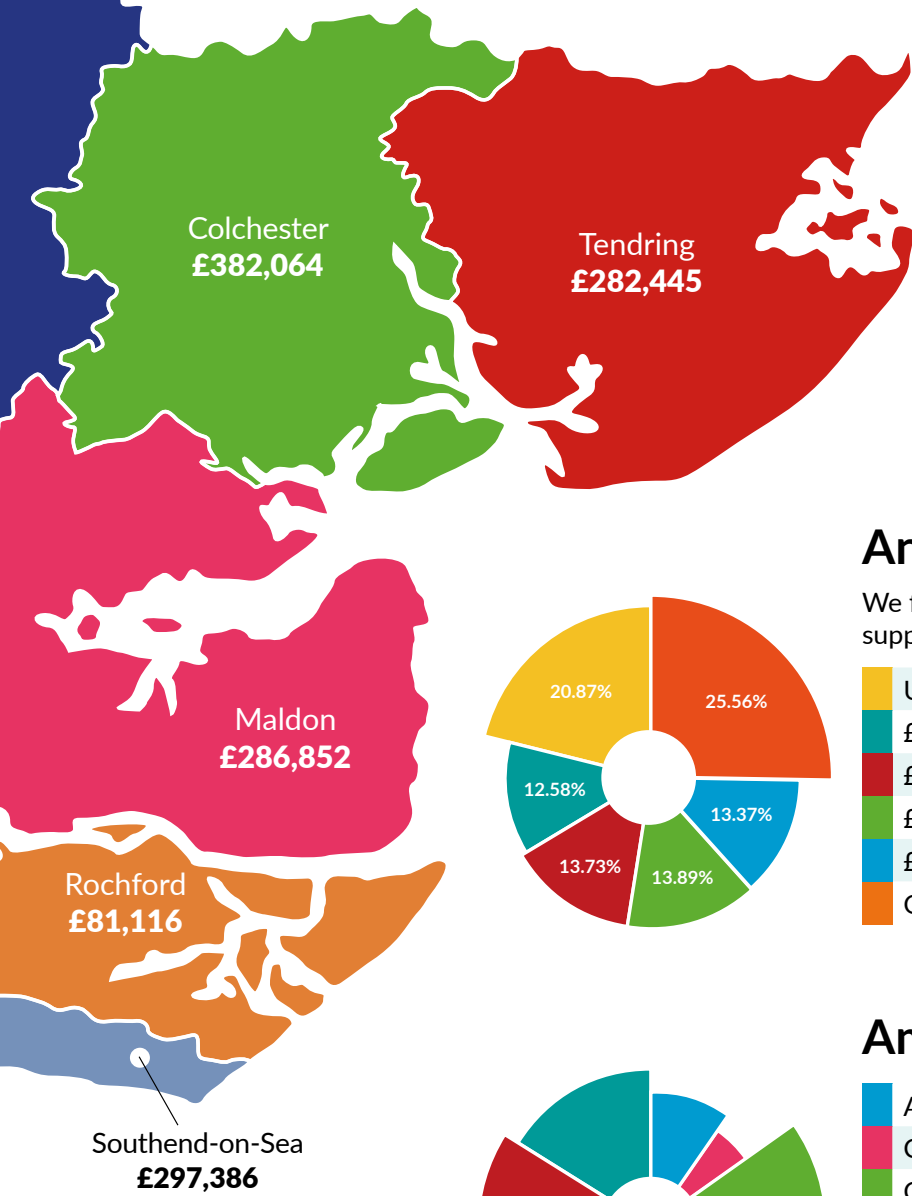
Keep It 100 supports young people across Essex through music, mentoring and creative workshops that build confidence and explore alternatives to violence.

3. Women of Grace

Based in Braintree, Women of Grace aims to end Female Genital Mutilation (FGM), Honour Based Violence (HBV), and other forms of gender-based abuse.

4. Gateway Community Media

Gateway 97.8 is a volunteer-led community radio station serving Basildon and East Thurrock. It supports people of all ages, especially those facing barriers to education or employment building confidence.



Annual Income

We fund organisations of all sizes, but typically support groups with a smaller annual income.

Under 50k	£674,546	20.87%
£50k - £100k	£406,526	12.58%
£100k - 250k	£443,615	13.73%
£250k - £500k	£449,016	13.89%
£500k - £1 million	£431,941	13.37%
Over £1 million	£825,922	25.56%

Amount by Primary Issue

Advice, advocacy and mentoring	£374,044
Community safety	£204,148
Community support and wellbeing	£761,574
Education, learning and training	£469,193
Health, wellbeing and serious illness	£353,406
Mental health	£323,588
Poverty and disadvantage	£666,452
Social inclusion and fairness	£603,144

Financial highlights

taken from our financial statements

	2024/2025	2023/2024
Total income:	8,477,899	4,875,495
Endowment Funds:	54,515,147	51,045,173
Donations to Endowed Funds:	5,339,028	1,485,844
Donations to Restricted Funds and Grants:	1,778,396	2,035,188
Other Income (including investment income):	1,360,475	1,354,463
The total cost of running the organisation:	1,061,308	1,176,194
Total unrestricted reserves:	1,327,010	1,373,486
Value of grants awarded from Flow-through donations:	1,723,973	1,194,915
Value of grants awarded from Endowment donations:	2,380,725	2,146,870
Total grants awarded in the year:	4,104,698	3,341,785
Total funds under management	£56,787,799	53,624,177



This Girl's Ability was set up in 2022 to empower girls and young women with disabilities through sports and creative opportunities. In doing so, they tackle loneliness by encouraging meaningful relationships with peers, helping with the prevention and management of poor mental health, and enhancing physical well-being. We gave them £4,000 jointly from the **Diana Tinson Fund** and **Essex & Southend Sports Charitable Trust**.

Our audited Annual Report and Financial Statements for 2024/2025 incorporating the auditors' report, will be available to download from our website after our Annual General Meeting on 13 November 2025.

To request a hard copy please contact Catherine Burton, Director of Finance & Resources, on **01245 355947** or by e-mail to **hello@essexcf.org.uk**.

Auditors

Haysmacintyre LLP

Bankers

Handelsbanken plc

Investments

Jupiter Investment Management Group Limited (formerly CCLA)

Rathbones (Incorporating Investec Wealth & Investment;

Cazenove Capital

Payroll

Streets Whittles

Solicitors

Knights plc

Our team

STAFF

Caroline Taylor

Chief Executive

Zoe Brampton

Grants Manager

Catherine Burton

Director of Finance & Resources

Dee Davies

Executive Assistant

Adeola Dosunmu

Grants Officer

Julia Esse

Policy & Communications Manager

Jesse Farrer

Marketing Manager

Lisa Green

Grants Officer

Tracy Hardy

Finance Manager

Gemma Healy

Grants & Stewardship Administrator

Maria Kravchuk

Grants & Operations Administrator

Jo Macaulay

Head of Stewardship

Niamh Murphy

Fund Development
Administration Officer

Steven Mackenzie

Head of Operations

Perry Norton

Head of Development

Matthew Page

Finance Administrator

Andy Payne Worpole

Director of Policy & Programmes

Frankie Webb-Huseyin

Grants Officer

VOLUNTEERS

Lorraine Brooks

Andrew Clarke

Anne Fitzgerald

Barbara Garside

TRUSTEE BOARD

as at 30 June 2025

Nicholas Alston CBE DL	Chair Former senior civil servant; High Sheriff of Essex 2022/23 Vice-chair of Governors, Anglia Ruskin University
Charles Bishop DL	Chair, Finance and Investment Committee Former Partner and Chief Administrative Officer, Cazenove; High Sheriff of Essex 2023/24
Gemma Cartwright	Chair, Governance and Compliance Committee; Head of Investment Practice & Partnership, Association of Charitable Foundations
Graham Chapman KC	Barrister, 4 New Square
Gail Cunningham	Consultant - charity investment governance and impact investment
Maggie Desmond	Former strategy consultant with McKinsey & Company
Tim Field	Company Secretary Partner, Knights plc
David Guest	Former Director European Operations, Crisil Greenwich Coalition; Chair, Daws Hall Trust; Governor, East Suffolk and North Essex NHS Foundation Trust
Simon Hall MBE DL	Chair, Grants and Programmes Committee Former Partner, Freshfields Bruckhaus Deringer LLP; High Sheriff of Essex 2017/18
Sandra Hollis	Chair, Fund Development Committee Former Global Accounts Manager, Reuters Ltd; Former Pro Vice-Chancellor, Anglia Ruskin University
Dorine Johnson	VP & Head of Corporate Communications, Franklin Templeton
Soumya Krishna Kumar	Quantitative Trader, Susquehanna International Group, LLP (SIG)
Atul Manek	Chair of Audit & Risk Committee Former CFO and COO, Insight Investment
Ben Minter	Portfolio Director – Charities, Cazenove Capital
Stewart Sanderson	CEO, Irwin Mitchell Asset Management Ltd

Patron

Jennifer Tolhurst	The Lord-Lieutenant of Essex
-------------------	------------------------------

PRESIDENT

Lord Petre JP KCVO

VICE PRESIDENTS

Dame Kate Barker CBE	Non-Exec Director, Man Group plc; Trustee Chair, Universities Superannuation Scheme
Jason Bartella	Managing Director, Heritage Leisure Group
Dr Jerome Booth	Economist; Chairman of New Sparta Asset Management
David Boyle JP DL	High Sheriff of Essex 2002/03
Charles Clark OBE QPM DL	Chairman, Essex Police Museum Trust;
Giles Coode-Adams OBE DL	High Sheriff of Essex 2000/01; President of RHS 2006-08
George Courtauld OBE DL	President, Rural Community Council of Essex; President of EWAG; President of SSAFA (Essex)
Robert Erith TD DL	President, Dedham Vale Society, High Sheriff of Essex 1997/98
The Right Rev Dr Guli Francis-Dehqani	Bishop of Chelmsford
Ben-Julian Harrington QPM	Chief Constable, Essex Police
Rupert Marks DL	Chairman of Pioneer Sailing Trust
Jonathan Minter FRCGP DL	ECF Chairman 2013-2018
John Spence CBE DL	Councillor & Cabinet Member ECC; Member of Anglia Ruskin University Philanthropic Foundation; Member Chelmsford Cathedral Council; Chairman Spicer Haart Group
David Starling	ECF Fundholder

Join in and help us make a difference

Give now:



The Tiptree Community Hub is a lifeline for local people, helping to prevent food waste through their community fridge and offering a warm and welcoming space where people can meet in their café. They also provide a school uniform service and organise a wide range of activities and events.



Essex Community Foundation
3 Hoffmanns Way, Chelmsford, Essex CM1 1GU
Tel: 01245 355947
Email: hello@essexcf.org.uk
essexcommunityfoundation.org.uk


UK COMMUNITY FOUNDATIONS
Essex Community Foundation is a Quality Accredited member of UK Community Foundations.



Company limited by guarantee
Registered in England
Company Number 3062567
Registered Charity Number 1052061

Designed by: Trait Design Limited
Printed in Essex on paper
with FSC certification