



Impact Review 2024

Making The Difference in our community.



**THE
CAMBRIDGE**
Building Society

175
YEARS

Hello!

Welcome to our Impact Review for 2024!

Reflecting on the different ways we've been **Making The Difference** throughout the year always brings me tremendous pride, but 2024 felt like a really special year here at The Cambridge.

We expanded and strengthened many of our initiatives, enabling us to further support our community. The year was full of highlights, which you can read about in this report, but there were a few that stood out for me.

In April, we welcomed our first member panellist to the Community Fund Panel. As a member of our building society, Jodie brings a new perspective and expertise to the panel who review grant applications and guide funding decisions to improve housing access and alleviate homelessness in our area. Having one of our members sit proudly on the panel is hugely valuable to us, and ticks off one of our ambitions for the fund moving forward.

Our **Rent to Home** initiative also expanded in line with our ambitions. We offer first time buyers the opportunity to rent a property for up to three years, and at the end of their tenancy we return up to 70% of their rent to use as a deposit on their first home.

Since 2019 we've seen 12 people rent our properties and three of them have already purchased their very own home. With the addition of three new properties last year, we're excited to help even more first time buyers onto the property ladder.

And finally, in 2024 we proudly launched **Community Partnerships** with Emmaus Cambridge, Jimmy's Cambridge and The Angels Foundation UK, who all do amazing work in our community. Each charity received a £5,000 donation, as well as volunteering hours from our team members.

So, as you can see, 2024 was a busy year for us. And it wouldn't be possible without your continued and valued support, so **thank you!** This year, we're celebrating our 175th anniversary. And to mark this, we've committed to donate £175,000 annually from our profits to good causes in our community. Keep your eyes peeled for even more developments throughout the year.

Yours,

Carole Charter
Chief Commercial Officer



To find out more about Making The Difference, visit our [website](#) or watch our [highlight video](#).

Making The Difference to help people have a home.

Having somewhere to call home should never feel like an impossible dream. That's why we're committed to our purpose: **to actively find ways to help people have a home, by supporting people who couldn't buy without our help and working with groups in our community who offer services for shelter and housing.**

We achieve our cause through a number of initiatives:

Rent to Home

Giving back up to 70% of rental payments to fund a deposit when buying a home with The Cambridge.

[Find out more](#)

Community Partnership

Having a deeply committed collaboration with life-changing charities and good causes that shares our focus for supporting vulnerable people in the local area.

[Find out more](#)

Community Fund

Awarding grants of up to £10,000 to charities and community groups to help with housing and shelter.

[Find out more](#)

Sponsorships and Outreach

We love supporting local events, organisations and groups who are making the difference in our local community.

[Find out more](#)

Learn more about our initiatives [here](#).

Our ambitions?

Over the coming years our focus is on:

- 1** **Creating more opportunities to increase our reach and impact by raising awareness of The Cambridge's community initiatives.**
- 2** **Using our expertise to create opportunities for charities and community groups in our local areas to support their growth and help them to thrive.**
- 3** **Continuing to expand our unique Rent to Home initiative, helping people who need that helping hand onto the housing ladder.**
- 4** **Increasing our commitment to grant giving through our Community Fund to deliver more grants and sustained funding with local charities and community groups to support their long-term sustainability.**



Our 2024 Highlights

122

team members, family and friends took part in **Bridge The Gap**, raising money for Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and Romsey Mill



37 different volunteering projects were completed



Our **first member** panellist, Jodie, joined our Community Fund Panel

£1,200 donated to our 2024 AGM charities

£117,401 donated in total to charities and good causes in 2024

2 new tenants moved into our Rent to Home property in Ely

2,330 people in our area have been supported through local charities by our Community Fund grants

£4,000 raised by team members for our Community Partners

131 of our team members volunteered in our local community

Our three Community Partners each received **£5,000**

£59,127 awarded in grants to six local charities through our Community Fund.

1,016 volunteering hours donated to charitable causes in our local area



3 new properties added to our Rent to Home portfolio.

Community Fund

Helping **2,330** people in our area through supporting local charities.

Supporting local charities with housing and shelter needs is a huge part of how we're Making The Difference. In 2024 we donated nearly £60,000 to help six amazing charities in our community combat homelessness.

Maybe you know a community group or charity that's in need of support from our **Community Fund**? If so, please click [here](#) to find out how they can apply for a grant.



Citizens Advice West Suffolk received **£9,999** for providing a dedicated housing caseworker for six months. With this grant, they're able to offer vital support to individuals and families who are facing housing challenges in the Newmarket and Bury St Edmunds areas.



Cambridge Re-Use received **£10,000** to support their mission of providing essential furniture to individuals who are living in poverty or are at risk of homelessness. The grant has enabled the charity to fund van drivers to collect and deliver donated furniture to those in need.



Allia Ltd was awarded **£10,000** to help fund its 'Future Homes team' for one year. The funding enables the project to continue their work in creating affordable and sustainable housing, while expanding their reach to help even more communities in the Cambridge area.



It Takes a City was awarded **£9,490** to support the set up of a street storage scheme to provide a safe place for people who are rough sleeping in Cambridge to store their belongings. This sense of security helps them to focus on rebuild their lives.



Papworth Trust received **£9,638** to renovate a two-bedroom bungalow, making it accessible for disabled individuals. This project has allowed residents to live independently, enhancing their quality of life and fostering independence.



Citizens Advice Rural was awarded **£10,000** to fund a specialist housing adviser for one day a week. This role is crucial in providing housing-related advice through phone, email, and face-to-face appointments, supporting approximately 100 vulnerable individuals.

Welcoming a new panel member

At our AGM in April, we were delighted to welcome Jodie as our first ever member panellist. Jodie plays a crucial role on our panel in evaluating grant applications and helping guide funding decisions to improve housing access and alleviate homelessness. Jodie is a transport planner in Cambridge, and brings valuable expertise and passion to this role.

Find out more about our how our **Community Fund** works and how to apply [here](#).

£59,127

total amount awarded in grants during 2024.

6

charities received donations in 2024 to help with housing and homelessness.



"We are thrilled to enhance our Community Fund with additional funding, which will further our work to support charities dedicated to housing and homelessness."

Dan Haynes

IT Manager and Community Fund panellist

Community Impact

How our **Community Fund** has made an impact a year on.

In 2023, Concrete Rose received £9,978 to extend its supported lodgings scheme beyond the city of Cambridge to take in Ely and St Ives.

Concrete Rose provide a 'Room to Spare' scheme that encourages individuals and families in the local community to provide semi-independent accommodation placements to vulnerable young people to give them the stability and nurture to create positive futures.

Suitable housing options for young people are limited, with waiting lists for council housing remaining long, and hostels often posing risk. This leaves many young people with unsuitable accommodation or, at worst, homeless.

Our Community Fund grant has made a real difference to the charity – helping to fund a proportion of the work of an Operations Lead, as well as training costs and DBS checks for accommodation hosts and allied costs associated with marketing the scheme. The charity has been able to increase their number of host families from two to seven, and have recruited and approved a further seven host families to support vulnerable young people across Cambridgeshire.

Although the numbers may not be huge, the difference these supported lodgings make to the life of a young person is invaluable, providing them with a safe space to stay.



Case study

Growing up Paula* had always been on the radar of social care and spent a degree of time during her childhood living out of the family home with extended family due to physical abuse and neglect associated with her mum's drug and alcohol addictions.

On New Years Eve 2022/23 Paula, then aged 17, was removed from home by the police having been physically assaulted by her mum. This resulted in a period of homelessness predominately involving staying with friends. Given the turbulence and disruption to her life Paula stopped attending college despite being half-way through her A-levels and hoping to go to university.

Paula was referred to Concrete Rose through her school and moved in with hosts in March 2023. This stability allowed her to re-engage with college, but she had fallen seriously behind. Concrete Rose therefore organised some additional catch-up sessions with a local tutor in both English and History, alongside regular weekly youth work support.

Paula managed to get back on top of her studies including not only sitting her A-levels in the summer of 2023 but also getting the required grades to get into her degree and university of choice. In September 2023, Paula started a psychology degree at Lancaster University. Paula continues to access remote support through Concrete Rose including youth work support and online therapy sessions but is well on the way to pursuing her dream of becoming a Forensic Psychologist.

*Name changed to protect their identity

Find out more about **Concrete Rose** and the amazing work they do [here](#).

Rent to Home

Saving for a deposit is often the biggest obstacle for first time buyers.

Rent to Home provides a helping hand to first time buyers by returning up to 70% of rental payments to use as a deposit on a mortgage for their first home with us.

In 2024, we expanded our Rent to Home initiative by investing in a two-storey flat in Ely as well as two family-sized houses in Woolpit, close to our Bury St Edmunds store. This brings our portfolio to a total of seven properties with further additions planned for the future.

Our Ely property features an open kitchen diner with integrated appliances, a spacious living area with stained glass windows, two bedrooms and a ground floor cloakroom.

The two semi-detached properties in the village of Woolpit were built in 2021 and are extremely energy efficient. They both have an open kitchen diner and integrated appliances, three well-appointed bedrooms including master en-suite, ground floor cloakroom, utility room and a generous rear garden and off-road parking.

Visit [our website](#) for the latest **Rent to Home** updates or [email us](#) to register your interest to be one of the first to hear about our next property.

“We’re very excited to help our lucky Ely tenants get on the housing ladder, and to buy their first home. We take our commitment to the community very seriously and we know that without our help many local people, like our previous winners, would struggle to have a home to call their own.

Saving for a deposit of thousands of pounds is by no means easy, and for that reason, we see it as our duty as a community driven organisation to make it easier for people who are in a position, and eager, to take that first step on the property ladder.”

Carole Charter
Chief Commercial Officer

Up to
70%
of the tenants rent
is returned to use
towards a deposit

3
new properties
added to our portfolio
in Ely and Woolpit.



Rent to Home

“Rent to Home has restored my faith in humanity.”

Meet Caroline and Cezary – our new tenants of our Rent to Home property in Ely. They were randomly selected at our ballot in March by Carole Charter, our Chief Commercial Officer, and have now moved into their new home in Ely. The ballot uses an exact replica of the ballot box we used back in 1850 when helping local people have a home.

Caroline and Cezary will rent our Ely property for a maximum of three years and receive up to £30,240 of their rent back to use as a deposit on their own property, as well as a mortgage through The Cambridge.



Watch Caroline and Cezary's story [here](#) to find out more.

“When the Rent to Home initiative launched in Great Shelford, I applied but was unsuccessful. I applied again this time on a whim, thinking it would never happen. It was a total surprise to find out that we’d won the Ely ballot.

Like most people stuck in the rental cycle, we had come to terms with the fact that homeownership was probably out of reach for us.

We’re thrilled that this will be our last rental property, and having a landlord like The Cambridge is an absolute pleasure.

Their thoughtful touches to make us feel welcome have been lovely, and everyone we’ve met at the building society genuinely cares and is excited to be on this journey with us.

This initiative has been life-changing for us and Rent to Home has restored my faith in humanity.”

Caroline
Ely Rent to Home tenant

Community Partnerships

Our Community Partners see a future where everyone has a safe place to call home. And so do we.

Last year we partnered with Emmaus Cambridge, Jimmy's Cambridge and The Angels Foundation UK – three amazing local charities who help those who need it most with homes and housing needs.

Each of the three partners received a donation of £5,000 and our team members signed up and volunteered their time to help support activities and projects for each charity.

£5,000

has been donated to each of our Community Partners

3

amazing charities who support with homes and housing needs were selected



Emmaus Cambridge

Emmaus Cambridge works to combat homelessness in the local community, by providing shelter, meaningful work opportunities, and support to people experiencing homelessness. Their residents, known as companions, all live and gain skills at the community located in Landbeach, where they accept and sell pre-loved goods ranging from furniture, clothing, homewares, and electricals.

“The funds we received from The Cambridge have been greatly appreciated and have supported the people we house with a wide range of services including travel costs, accommodation, move on support and much more. In addition to the significant financial contribution made, the volunteering hours from team members have had a huge impact. Thank you! We are so grateful to you for selecting us as a partner.”

Donna Talbot
Chief Executive at Emmaus

Find out more about **Emmaus Cambridge** and the support they provide [here](#).





The Angels Foundation UK

The Angels Foundation UK is a local charity that supports families who have fled domestic abuse. Through its 'Back to Life' project it provides those affected and in need with furniture, flooring, home comforts and social introductions.

In 2023, the charity received a £10,000 grant from our Community Fund, which facilitated their ambitious plans to support more people fleeing domestic abuse.

On receiving the grant The Angels Foundation UK found the confidence to progress from being a Community Interest Company to a registered charity, which has given them further funding and referral opportunities.

With our community partnership donation, the charity has been able to set up a therapy centre to provide face to face counselling services and group therapy for a whole year.

“The donation from The Cambridge Building Society has enabled our counselling and therapy services to expand from video-based services only to include 1:1 face to face services. Mental health support after domestic abuse is vital for the recovery and well-being of survivors and their families.

We are delighted to be able to not only offer practical help via our Back to Life Support with furniture and flooring, but also a dedicated safe and therapeutic counselling space for survivors. Our aim is to ensure we break the cycle of abuse, removing the barriers that force families to return to their perpetrators through lack of support and practical resources.

The Cambridge Building Society share our passion and values in supporting victims of domestic abuse and have been instrumental in helping us grow as a charity.”

Caroline Deeprise

Founder and CEO of The Angels Foundation UK



Find out more about **The Angels Foundation UK** [here](#).



Jimmy's Cambridge

Jimmy's is a community-based charity, the first all-year-round night shelter in Cambridge, provides support and housing to people rough sleeping. Their ethos is to place people at the heart of the support they provide, valuing and respecting everyone who needs their services. The Jimmy's team work with each person to provide options, tools, and skills to support them on their journey by developing a tailored pathway to independence.

With the help of our funding, Jimmy's has been able to fund one of their innovative modular homes for four months. On average it costs the charity £1,250 per month to sustain a modular home for one of their residents. These costs include the day to day running, as well as the bespoke support costs for the resident.

Providing this accommodation, enables someone to continue their semi-independent life which is key to the success of Jimmy's. In addition, knowing they have funding allows the organisation, and the resident, an element of security whilst they are readying themselves to move on to more independent accommodation.

Case study

Edward*, is an example of the success Jimmy's has had with their modular homes project this year.

When Edward came to Jimmy's, he had a significant drug misuse issue. He was also dealing with severe mental health issues including untreated paranoid schizophrenia and severe PTSD. In 2022, Edward moved into a modular home and we started working very closely with him, looking at support around his mental health and regular visits to the GP.

We also worked closely with our partners to stabilise and reduce Edward's drug use. In September 2024, he moved into his own tenancy in Cambridge. Edward continues to go from strength to strength and when you speak to other professionals about him, they still can't believe how well he has done.

*Name changed to protect their identity

Find out more about **Jimmy's Cambridge** [here](#).

"We're delighted to partner with The Cambridge as one of its community partners, and to continue the great work we've been doing to combat homelessness in Cambridge. Having the backing from such an iconic Cambridge business means so much to us and to the work we do helping people out of homelessness.

Knowing we share common interests of investing in and supporting communities in Cambridge is incredibly important as we can be confident the impact of this partnership will be even further reaching than the fundraising alone."

Cat Strawbridge

Communications Manager at Jimmy's



The power of community hours

Every year, we give each team member a day to devote to a charitable cause.

Whether that's fundraising for our Community Partners or helping a local cause of their own choice. Find out what our team members got up to, and read about their experiences:

Emmaus Cambridge

In the summer, our team members volunteered to conduct a customer survey on behalf of Emmaus Cambridge. The feedback was then shared with team at Emmaus and has been used to make the necessary changes so they can continue to grow and give the best customer experience possible.



Find out more and read the results [here](#).

"I really enjoyed volunteering at Emmaus Cambridge. The work they do is beyond amazing, they have built an outstanding community, and it is truly heartwarming to see!

Speaking with some of the companions and the customers whilst conducting the surveys has been a great experience and truly inspiring.

Donna Talbot, CEO at Emmaus Cambridge, gave us a tour of what goes on behind the scenes and it was eye-opening to see how much Emmaus is helping others - starting from all the things they sell in their shop through to recycling and removing the copper from old cables to generate additional income."

Plamena Rafailova
Customer Engagement Adviser

The Angels Foundation UK

In October, Rose Gauge, Customer Engagement Adviser, joined The Angel Foundation UK's Walk and Talk. Each month, The Angels host a friendly and supportive walk to support women, giving them a chance to connect and share their experiences.



"It was an honour to take part in this session and to walk alongside so many inspiring women who have faced significant challenges. While it was a great opportunity to hear their stories of courage and determination, I think we all took comfort in being able to talk about everyday things in a safe space."

Rose Gauge
Customer Engagement Adviser

Jimmy's Cambridge

In May, team members rolled their sleeves up to help Jimmy's Cambridge refresh the area around their modular homes in Cambridge.

Barry Griffiths, Community Engagement Officer at Jimmy's, said: **"We were joined by some wonderful and enthusiastic volunteers from The Cambridge Building Society at one of our modular homes sites.**

They brought the sunshine with them and were amazing during the rejuvenation and refreshing of some pretty extensive boundary fences and associated woodwork.

They toiled admirably in the sun to put two coats on all the surfaces which is providing a refreshed look for our residents and properties.

Without such support from the Cambridge community and local icons such as The Cambridge Building Society, Jimmy's wouldn't be as homely as it strives to be. Thanks to all involved for their kindness and magnificent efforts on a very warm day."



"Volunteering with Jimmy's Cambridge was a fantastic opportunity filled with laughter and togetherness. When we arrived, their team made us feel so welcome that it felt like reconnecting with old friends.

It was a truly rewarding day. I would recommend lending a helping hand to Jimmy's if you're looking to make a difference."

Debra Isaacson
Conduct Risk and Compliance Manager,

Papworth Trust

In July, a team of volunteers visited the Papworth Trust's Chesterton Road location to paint two rooms and brighten up the space for their employees and daily guests.



"I really enjoyed painting at Papworth Trust. The day was well organised but also truly inspiring to see the work this local trust does for the local community. The atmosphere was welcoming, and it was wonderful to see our team members come together for a great cause. A truly memorable experience which will have a lasting impact on the community."

Kobir Rezaul
Senior Business Analyst

Sponsorship and outreach

20 years of the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

We were delighted to be headline sponsor of the Cambridgeshire Community Foundation's 20th anniversary celebrations.

We partner with the foundation, whose expertise in fund management and supporting our local communities ensures our grant application operates seamlessly. Our Community Fund is instrumental in our goals to support local charities and community groups dedicated to addressing home and housing needs.



Charity ball raises over £20,000 for domestic abuse survivors

As headline sponsor, we played a key role in an unforgettable night at Wyboston Lakes, raising vital funds and shining a spotlight on the crucial work done by The Angels Foundation UK. From providing furniture and flooring to emotional support and counselling, the funds raised will help survivors restart their lives after fleeing domestic abuse.

A special 'thank you' to our team of volunteers, who helped the charity pull off such a fantastic evening with their tireless efforts.



Save the date

Bridge the Gap will return on **Sunday 14th September 2025**. To find out more [click here](#).

"We are immensely grateful to The Cambridge Building Society for supporting our 20th anniversary celebrations where we were able to celebrate and reflect on our impact throughout the year. Through three special events, we brought together our supporters and grantees.

We appreciate the crucial role of The Cambridge Building Society in helping us expand our support for projects helping with housing and homelessness issues, as well as partnering with us to provide a rapid response to the cost of living crisis in 2022.

A heartfelt thank you to everyone for their enduring support. We look forward to strengthening our partnership to achieve even more positive change in our community."

Michael O'Toole
CEO at Cambridgeshire Community Foundation

Find out more about the **Cambridgeshire Community Foundation** [here](#).

Bridge The Gap is a fundraising success

We were proud to be the headline sponsor for the Bridge The Gap walk for a 16th year. In total, 122 members of our team and their family members helped to raise more than £33,000 for Arthur Rank Hospice Charity and Romsey Mill.

We were among more than 1,900 participants who walked through the streets and colleges of Cambridge starting at Parker's Piece.

A huge thank you to all our team members who volunteered, marshalled along the route and took part in the walk itself – it was an incredible day!

Making The Difference in our community

2024 Summary

