

Rural Infrastructure

- Villages Halls Advice
- Village Halls Conference
- Community Transport
- Affordable Housing

Connected Communities

- Healthy Villages
- Digital Inclusion
- Community Gardens

Community Development

- Consultancy
- Your Voice
- Infrastructure Support
- VCFSE Networks Consultancy

Fostering healthy sustainable, connected communities across rural Hertfordshire.

Dear Friends and Supporters,

It is with immense pride that I reflect on another year of impactful work by Community Development Action Hertfordshire. For almost 60 years, we have been dedicated to improving lives across our county, bringing together people and communities, championing the disadvantaged, and advocating for the needs of rural communities, farmers, and businesses.

Embracing our roots

This year Jodie Deards assumed the role of the Chair bringing with her a deep passion for tackling Health Inequalities. A lot of work has taken place to look at where we can make the largest difference requiring us to prune back activities to facilitate new growth.

Making a Difference

Our work touches lives in many ways, and I would like to shine a light on our '*Rural Digital Learners*' project, funded by Clarion Futures Digital and North Herts Council, which equips residents with confidence and skills to bridge into an ever more digital world.

The *Community Garden in St Albans*, continues, to be a vibrant space for cultivating community cohesion and wellbeing.

The *Village Hall Network*, ensuring every village has a sustainable hub at its heart and keeps us uniquely close to the villages around Hertfordshire.

Looking Ahead

We are pleased to share our new strategy which reinforces our unwavering dedication to rural Hertfordshire, we will continue with our strategic partners to champion the needs of our communities and create opportunities for all to flourish.

With gratitude, Chair, CDA Herts
Jodie Deards



Village Halls Advisory Service

Our Village Halls and Community Buildings Consortium continues to thrive and causes increased demands for support. We held two Consortium meeting with 31 and 25 participants respectively and had input on Energy Contracts from Utility Aid, Recruiting Volunteers from Communities First Volunteer Centers.



In total over the past 12 months, we received 313 requests for help from 92 different Halls involving requests for information about 45 different topic areas.

The most popular topics have been Committee, Trustee and Governance issues, Governing documents, Banks and banking, Energy and Climate Change, Fire regulations, H&S issues, Electrical, Safety & Inspections, Disaster and Resilience planning, Hiring, Flooring maintenance/repair and Defra Grants.

I have worked with CDA over the last 10 years, they have given support to our village hall in many ways eg fund writing advice, organising forum meetings and many questions answered or signposted to the appropriate team, if answer not known

Peter Lee
Sawbridge Memorial Hall



313
requests
for help



92
different
Halls



45
subjects

Village Halls Conference

In April we hosted the annual Village Halls Conference at Little Hadham. This was a chance for trustees to come together in person and online to hear from 15 exhibitors on subjects ranging from reducing their energy bills to how to increase revenue by upgrading screen and audio equipment.

The overall theme was engaging volunteers supported by presentations from DofE, GoVol and the Volunteer Centre.

The Conference was an excellent opportunity to interact with other trustees of village halls and to receive personal recommendations of specialist contractors.

Jane Lutman
Chair, Flamstead Village Hall
Management Committee



The event was well organised, providing the perfect environment to connect, share insights and showcase our work.

Kimberley Page
Utility Aid



51
Attendees



30
Village Hall
Trustees



15
Exhibitors
and presenters

Community Transport

Numbers of regular users increased slightly with more joining Minibus when special trips are arranged, for example to Garden Centres.

Working with the Steering Group which comprises Minibus Users we have slowly implemented measures to increase numbers and are benefitting from the involvement of Parish Councilors.

As the funding reaches its end, we are taking this opportunity to determine how we can grow the service in-line with the users needs, to make it a sustainable solution in the future.



Rural Affordable Housing

Building on the work we undertook with The Ashwell Community Land Trust in North Herts a Housing Needs Survey was undertaken by CDA Herts funded by the Parish Council who are looking to explore options for affordable housing. A response of 17% (143 respondents) was received, that has guided the completion of a comprehensive report to the Parish Council. In that Report there are details of the needs for a mix of twenty seven 1, 2 and 3 bedroom homes.

Year	Village
2024	Ashwell, North Herts
2023	Much Hadham, East Herts Flamstead, Dacorum
2022	Chipperfield, Dacorum
2021	Graveley, North Herts

We were successful in applying for funding through ACRE for the Defra National Rural Housing Enabler Programme. This has given us the opportunity to provide our Rural Affordable Housing Needs Surveys across the whole county..



“As an active parish councillor living in a small East Hertfordshire village, I am acutely aware of the need for affordable and social housing in rural communities....” **Green Party (East Hertfordshire)**

Community Garden



The small band of garden volunteers continue to make the one acre of garden accessible and open to all. The community groups are well established and have repeatedly told us that the space is a little gem in St Albans, is vital to health and wellbeing, and provides opportunities without constraints to work with people of diversity and with varied interests.

The interactions between the diverse community groups and the garden volunteers who provide weekly maintenance and support is a model of excellence for community cohesion. The garden beneficially impacts on health and wellbeing together with creating firm social friendships within the project and beyond.



Groups include:

- ✿ Older people including those who no longer have their own gardens (for example living in sheltered accommodation or care homes) but retain an interest in gardening providing an opportunity for them to get out and tackle social isolation
- ✿ People who report that their day to day activities are limited by their disability
- ✿ Minority ethnic groups including St Albans' significant Bangladeshi community
- ✿ Single parent families and single people
- ✿ Increasing referrals from health providers
- ✿ Creating new growing areas and access paths catering for users with a range of physical abilities
- ✿ Organising annual events to celebrate the achievements of existing users and the produce they have grown, and to promote the site to new users and the general public
- ✿ Facilitating evening sessions for various groups including Passport to Leisure/Daylight Club, Czechs & Slovaks, St Albans Woodcraft Folk, Woodcraft Group



Healthy Villages

Blood Pressure

The Project's emphasis was to promote people understanding their Blood Pressure numbers.

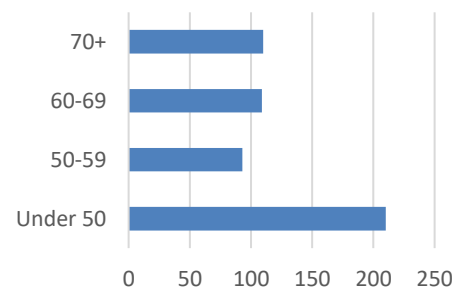
Working across 20 Villages, we undertook 522 Blood Pressure test and identified 112 individuals with high blood pressure 37 of whom, we recommended get further testing at a Pharmacy.

Trained 69 Volunteers, in how to correctly administer blood pressure tests, and left information on how to interpret the numbers.

A Blood Pressure unit is now available at every Digital Leavers



Age Spread



Digital Inclusion focused on NHS APP

As part of the project we ran some specific sessions on using the NHS App. We experimented with asking the Pharmacy in Hadams village to include a leaflet with every prescription, that attracted

Healthy Hubs

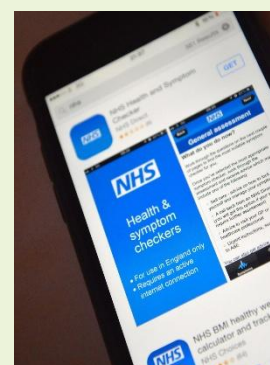
Our Healthy Hubs partnership also with East Herts Council supported 6 Village Halls in rural healthy hubs outreach. this enabled the district council to make use of 6 Village Halls to create access to health information in rural communities for those who could not or would not make use of the town based health Hubs.

Each Hall was provided with a banner and various leaflets and flyers. Healthy Hub partners such as Citizens advice were contacted and arrangements were made for them to drop in and offer a one to one service if required.

The project has ended and is in the process of being evaluated.

Individuals Assisted in use of the NHS APP

28



522

BP Reading
112 410

Referred
37

More than 2 Years
250 165 85

Digital Inclusion

We continue to be very proud of our engagement, support and encouragement of local Digital Volunteers, which was key in ensuring that the project developed further and became more sustainable via continued grant funding support from Clarion Futures Digital, North Herts and Hertfordshire & West Essex ICB.

Weekly Digital Learners' Drop-In sessions are held at Little Hadham, Ickleford, Aston Village, & Datchworth Village Halls and also at Tewin Memorial Hall every other week.

The informal drop-in format combined with tea and cake make them more accessible, reducing any confidence issues people may have when seeking some IT support & help in using their digital devices.

100% of 'Digital Learners'...

Would recommend the Digital Drop-In Sessions to friends



Rated the support as excellent or good



Now feel more confident in the use of IT and digital technology



Said the set up at the Village Hall was excellent



Our impact between 2022 - 2025

354

Two-hour digital 'drop-in' sessions delivered across 6 rural venues

5,152

hours of individual digital support & advice provided

£510,720

of social impact generated through the delivery of the 'drop-in' sessions

£5.02

of social impact generated for every £1 invested in delivering the 'drop-in' sessions - £7.84 including the impact generated through volunteering opportunities

7,264



hours of volunteer time utilised to support new digital learners



480

new digital learners supported

88

locally recruited 'digital volunteers'

£285,912



of social impact generated through regular volunteering opportunities

"As a person of senior age living on my own and with no family members living nearby, I find the weekly support sessions invaluable in helping me keep afloat and connected within the ever changing digital world."

Improving lives through the internet in rural Hertfordshire

Generating social impact

By helping people to access, and make effective use of, the internet, the digital 'drop-in' sessions generate a range of outcomes and additional value that can be measured in pounds and pence.

£23,750

of project funding



£77,894

of 'in kind' volunteer time

Total investment of:
£101,644

Resulted in a total of:

£510,720

This means that every £1 invested in the digital 'drop-in' sessions generated £5.02 in social impact.

£1

£5.02

As a comparison, an evaluation of the NHS Widening Digital Participation programme estimates a return on investment of £6.40 for every £1 spent by the NHS on digital inclusion support.

worth of social impact being generated - that can be broken down as:

£115,200 related to improved confidence

£121,440 related to reduced isolation

£139,200 related to time saving

£21,120 related to more time spent on hobbies

£83,040 related to financial savings

£30,720 related to improved job seeking skills



Improving lives through the internet in rural Hertfordshire

Digital Inclusion (cont.)



165

'Drop-in' Digital Inclusion 2-hour sessions, based at 5 rural village halls



2,078 hours

of Digital support, advice & guidance provided



195

unique Digital Learners have been supported



1092

Digital Learner attendances in total over the year



2,954

Digital Volunteer hours given 'in kind'

With thanks

CDA Herts would like to say a BIG 'thank you' to everyone who has supported our work over the past year.

Community Garden

Garden Volunteers
Highfield Park Trust
HCC Ward Councillors

Rural Projects

ACRE
Defra
East Herts Council
Hertfordshire County Council
Utility Aid
Dacorum Borough Council
English Rural Housing Association
Eastern Community Homes
HASTOE
North Herts Council
settle Housing Association
Clarion Futures
Hertfordshire Community Foundation
Rural Digital Inclusion

Healthy Villages

ICB Hertfordshire and West Essex

eBulletin Sponsors

Allied Westminster (Insurance Services) Ltd
Norris & Fisher (Insurance Services) Ltd

Membership

Parish and Town Councils
Village Halls
Community Buildings
Community Groups
Individuals



CLARION
FUTURES



Rural Voice

We have continued advocacy with public agencies to include rural proofing within their services no matter how difficult the logistics are to manage due to geography and time taken to deliver services compared to service delivery in urban areas where the reach is higher and easier to logistically deliver.

Significant progress was made in raising awareness of rural need with Herts County Council's Cost of Living Response Group which has led to a Rural Task & Finish Group to be set up and an Information Project delivered in partnership with Village Halls through Citizens Advice services in North and East Hertfordshire.



Community Energy & Sustainability

Our Partnership Project with East Herts Council and Utility Aid to deliver Free Remote Energy Efficiency Surveys to Village Halls in one district.

21 expressions of interest.

12 Surveys were undertaken and a Report completed;

9 did not proceed to a Survey due to technical issues around poor internet.

We are now supporting these Halls to find suitable suppliers for retrofit energy and carbon saving measures. East Herts Council have reported that the project could lead to a saving of 260 tons of Carbon per year from rural areas. We delivered a presentation along with our two partners in a nationwide Webinar hosted by NCVO highlighting a collaborative partnership between the voluntary, private and public sectors attended by over 300 participants.

CDA has been instrumental in the important dialogue between rural interests and political bodies that act as gate keepers to Hertfordshire's countryside. Not only for the preservation of the countryside but for the many key assets it contains.

Greg Rogers
Chairman, Aldenham War
Memorial Hall Trust

Keep in touch!

See what we are up to throughout the year by following us on social media. Or check out our website.

 [@HertsCDA](https://www.facebook.com/HertsCDA)

 [@cdaherts](https://twitter.com/cdaherts)

 [@cda.herts](https://www.instagram.com/cda.herts)

 cdaherts.org.uk

Rural Support Networks

Local volunteer-led networks that support each other, looking out for each other, supporting vulnerable, older, and isolated residents in our villages and hamlets.

Active in 84 Village and Hamlets

KEY STATISTICS



2,052
people
supported
each month



2,020
volunteers
involved
over time



1,376
active
volunteers
right now



2,030
volunteer
hours
each month

What support looks like



Shopping
& essentials



Medical &
prescriptions



Wellbeing
& loneliness



Transport



Telephone
check-ins



Still active



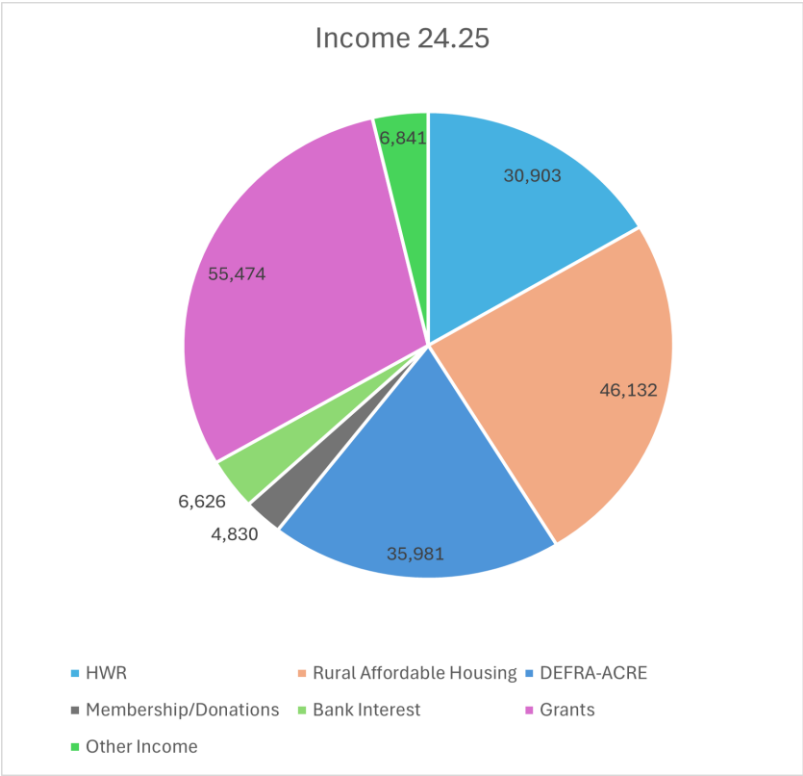
Capacity
to continue

Income and expenditure 2024-25

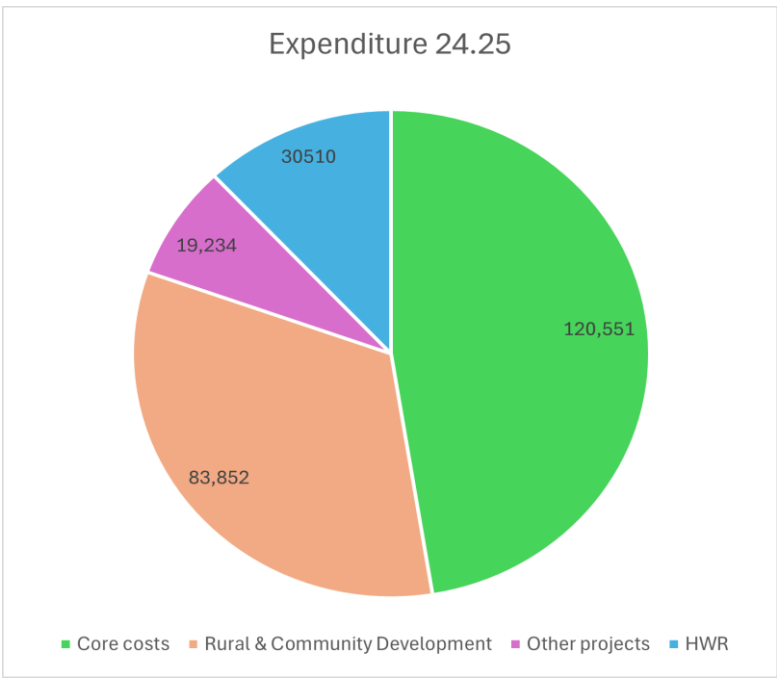
Due to restructuring and funding ending on some major projects we recorded a significant loss, which reduced our reserves. The following charts provide a breakdown of where our income has come from and what it has been spent on over the past year.

For a full copy of CDA Herts' audited accounts for 2024-25, please see our website www.cdaherts.org.uk

Our Income totalled £186,787 and came from:



Our expenditure totalled £254,147 and was spent on:



Who's Who

Vice Presidents

Harry Bott DL Anthony Edwards
Jean Pooley
Brain Rowley Robin Guenier
Christine Nairn

Board of Trustees:

Jodie Deards (Chair)
Sharon Anjee (Vice Chair)
John Dawson (Treasurer)
Peter Aziah (from Jan 2025)
Retired:
Alison Alexander (Sept 2024)
Susannah Fenton (Oct 2024)

Staff:

Chief Executive Officer
Kevin Poulton

Finance & Communications Officer
Yvonne Saxton

Rural Services Manager
Tim Hayward-Smith

Rural Housing Enabler
Rushna Miah

Rural Digital Inclusion Officer
Stuart Izzard

Volunteer "Digi Champions"

Little Hadham - Jan Williamson
Ickleford - Sharon Gamble
Aston - Stephen Sypula
Datchworth - Julia Florence
Tewin - Kristina Lawson

Volunteer Gardeners

Eva Adamkova, Phill Coates, Sue Coates, Hilary Dempsey, Debbie Hallcole, Imke Hoffman, Lauren McQuillan, Kirtida Mehta, Ken Moorton, Val Moorton, Sue Watt, Anne Wingate, Farhat Zia.



**Community Development Action
Hertfordshire**
Unit 2, Mead Lane Industrial Estate
Merchant Drive
Hertford, SG13 7BH

(01992) 289060
office@cdaherts.org.uk

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Keep in touch!

See what we are up to throughout the year by following us on social media. Or check out our website.



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