

KINGSBROOK & CAULDWELL

BIG Local

YOUR FUND - YOUR SAY!

Over 100 grants awarded, supporting projects that bring communities together. Over 23,000 people actively engaged, with countless more benefiting.

In 2012 – an area of Kingsbrook and Cauldwell in Bedford was chosen as one of 150 areas to receive money from the Community Fund for a BIG Local programme run by the community for the community. BIG Local wanted to make this a great place to live and to grow up, one where local people cared for each other and their environment. The programme ends in March 2026.

Plan 1

BIG Local talked to the community and asked them what improvements they wanted to see in the area. They knocked on doors, attended events, sent out newsletters and had a picnic in the Jubilee Park. Ideas from the community consultation were brought together into our first BIG Local Plan in 2013.



From over 700 ideas and suggestions from the community, 6 priority areas were chosen: a proud community, a safer community, a happy and active community, a caring community, financial inclusion, investing in children and young people. The ideas became reality through a series of activities and projects which happened in the area.

Plan 2

In Spring 2018, BIG Local reviewed what had been achieved and talked to the residents about what they would like to see happen over the next 3-4 years. One priority was changed from financial inclusion to Training, Employment and Welfare. The new plan was published in July 2018.



Plan 3

In 2022 BIG Local started another community consultation to create the 3rd and final plan of the programme. We spoke with lots of residents within the community and then held a local assembly event at the Jubilation Community Centre to discuss all the feedback we had received.



From this we created a new community plan and combined the priorities into 3 main areas:

- Environment and Green Spaces and Parks
- Community
- Future Generations



Legacy Fund

In 2024 the remaining funds which had yet to be committed to a specific project were allocated towards a 'Big Local legacy' grants programme for community organisations working in the Big Local area. Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation (BLCF), who have significant experience in delivering grants in the area managed the grants programme. 14 awards were made, supporting more successful projects for the community.



Community



COVID 19



In March 2020 the nation was put into lockdown due to COVID-19. This affected everyone in the community. During this time BIG Local awarded several small grants. We funded a friendship bench in Lancaster Avenue, an online escape room experience for families, equipment for a resident to broadcast at home for a local community radio service (Tina's Toe Tappers) and toys for families in need at Christmas.

During COVID-19, Big Local quickly provided a grant to subsidise food purchases, meaning the All Nations Church could provide 50-55 food packages to families in need in our community every week. Special food packages were given out over the Christmas lockdown period.

Isolation became a big issue during COVID-19. BIG Local supported a local friendship group who met weekly in the community centre, to meet online. Many individuals were unfamiliar with IT technology, but with a lot of patience and quite a few laughs they were able to support each other to learn the skills needed. This was a lifeline for many of them.

“This has been a lifeline for me during this difficult time; I'm blown away by the thought someone still cares.” (Receiver of food parcels)



Community Champion

The role of Community Champion, a mix of social prescribing and community engagement, was funded from 2015 to 2017. Simon worked with the local GP surgery to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents through setting up local health-related support groups and bringing new activities to the area. He worked with people on a 1-2-1 basis, supporting them to access services they needed or simply going with them to try out new activities to reduce their isolation. A final report showed that there was a calculated saving/benefit of almost £40k to the health and social care sector as a result of not needing to access other services.

“It's amazing to be online” I missed everyone. I nearly cried when I saw everyone” (Coffee Pot member)



Events

Over the years there have been many events, both hosted and funded by BIG Local. Fun day, Halloween events, Eid Event and many more. A highlight was the free open-air cinema in summer 2019 with two family friendly screenings held at Moor Lane and Jubilee Park. Over 240 residents attended the two events with students from local schools picking the films and the local scouts helping to litter pick afterwards. BIG Local have also been pleased to be able to help fund local organisation iLearn with their two amazing International Women's Day events in 2022 and 2024. Both events were an outstanding success with over 350 individuals attending each time.



48 GRANTS AWARDED

Community Hub

Following a pilot HUB, BIG Local worked in partnership with Bedfordshire Rural Communities Charity (BRCC) to establish a community HUB in the Jubilation Centre. An average of 45 people attend each week with a variety of activities taking place and monthly activities including 'grow your own', fibromyalgia support group, local history talks and visits by organisations such as Woodgreen animal shelter and CAB. Participants have improved wellbeing and build stronger community connections.



Getting Healthy

BIG Local supported people to get fit and stay healthy. It funded a range of inclusive healthy lifestyle activities over the years of the programme. These included 'Just Turn Up' exercise classes, gentle walks, diabetes support group, keep-fit, gentle exercise and food workshops. These were free or low cost and enabled residents to start on a road to a healthier future.



"This HUB is my respite. Love meeting new friends" (Community HUB)



CCTV

Community safety was identified as a priority by local residents. As a result in 2019 BIG Local purchased a mobile CCTV camera for use in the area. Working in Partnership with Bedford Borough Council Community Safety and the local Community Police, as well as the Ward Councillors, we moved the CCTV to places where issues had been raised by the residents, and a CCTV camera could help. There were successful outcomes on anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping problems. As the programme ends, the CCTV camera remains in use in the area, with ownership being shared between the Kingsbrook and Cauldwell Ward Councillors.



Future Generations

Summer 2021

Following a period of lockdown, we ran a summer of free outdoor activities in Partnership with XPG events. Ran by Des (also known as the 'Circus Man') there was lots of fun including circus skills, football skills and target challenge, agent hunter escape games and family Olympicks. Over 700 young people and their families took part across several green spaces across the area, bringing the community together delivering benefits to physical and mental wellbeing. The Agent Hunter experience was a fantastic opportunity for the family to come together and enjoy themselves.

“
This has been amazing fun: I want to join a circus now
(XPG events)
”



Halloween Events



BIG Local held several Halloween events for families and young people. Events were always popular with apple bobbing, pumpkin carving, crafts and lots of fun. Volunteers and attendees dressed up, bring the community together, forging new friendships and increasing wellbeing.



Senditots

Funding was awarded to FACES to run monthly sessions to provide an accessible and inclusive support group for parents/carers with children under 5 whose children have a diagnosis or potential diagnosis of ADHD, Autism or any other Special Educational Need or Disability. These have enabled parents to feel less isolated and listened to. Children had opportunities to socialise and engage in play, which met their sensory needs as well as developing their gross and fine motor skills. 100% of parents that attended said they would recommend the group to others.



Skate Park

In response to the priority need for activities for young people, one of the biggest projects BIG Local funded, was a new Skate Park at Moor Lane. Working in Partnership with Bedford Borough Council and with potential users of the park, the new skate park was officially opened on Saturday 22nd April 2017 providing a much-loved community facility for fun, exercise and bringing people together. The Skate Park is still widely used.



Young People's Activities

Throughout the programme BIG Local has funded a variety of activities for young people. These included a range of school holiday activities for young people and their families and a Youth HUB which ran for 1 year. Young people learnt valuable life skills such as confidence, resilience, and communication.

“
My kids absolutely loved your club (Young Peoples activities - Pacesetter)
”



Small Grants

Several small grants for young people's projects were awarded. In 2017, BIG Local contributed towards buying equipment for the Junior Parkrun which is held every Sunday at 9am in Jubilee Park. Junior Parkrun is continuing for anyone aged 4 to 14, providing a safe and inclusive space for kids to get active.

Environment, Green Spaces & Parks

Clean Ups



www.bedford.gov.uk/bins-and-recycling/household-bins-and-recycling/bulky-waste

BIG Local funded regular bulky waste clean-up events across the community from 2015 to 2019. Large household waste, electrical equipment, sofas, chairs etc were collected by the fantastic Bedford Borough Council waste management team. Over the years the area saw a significant decrease in fly tipping and unsightly items being left around the area. In 2023 a last round of clean-up events was held resulting in many tonnes of waste being removed from the area.

It was always lovely to see neighbours (and sometimes strangers) help each other to clear items from front and back gardens, bringing them in cars, on foot and even on wheelbarrows! There was a real sense of community and lots of laughs were had along the way.



Grow



From an overgrown unused plot behind the John Bunyan sports centre, BIG Local partnered with The Conservation Volunteers (TCV) to create a thriving community allotment. A group of local volunteers came together each week in a supportive and inclusive space, to build a productive and environmentally friendly hub. Produce was shared amongst the volunteers and with The Old School Kitchen who provide cookery classes at the Bunyan Centre and who provided home cooked goodies for the volunteers! Individuals made friends and were able to learn new practical skills. There is even an allotment scarecrow named Nigel! The Community Allotment won a commended award from the living countryside awards 2025.



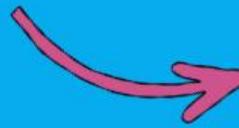
Green Gyms

BIG Local funded green gyms at Moor Lane and in Jubilee Park. These are available for exercise everyday and are still being used today. Outdoor gym equipment provides a free accessible and enjoyable fitness opportunity in a natural environment.



Eastcotts Road

In partnership with the local Kingsbrook Ward Councillors, BIG Local replaced the mud slope with proper access steps at the end of Eastcotts Road to reach the green space used frequently for dog walking. There is also now a friendship bench to sit and have a chat and a bin for disposing of those poo bags!



Friends of Jubilee Park

Friends of Jubilee Park brought local people together to take pride in their local park. Working closely with Bedford Borough Council, the group arranged regular wellbeing walks in the park and had monthly activities including litter picking, planting and pruning. The group is still running and is planning a sensory garden in the park which should be complete in early 2026.



Community Spaces

Big Local contributed to improvements for a range of community spaces both indoors and out. Floors, kitchens, painting and planting; BIG Local responded to requests to make the community spaces in our area a better place.



OVER 5,500 PEOPLE ENGAGED



COMMUNITY Local Trust | Big Local



Our Mags

THIS IS MY LAND.
 THE KINGSBROOK IS AN AMAZING PLACE
 FOR KIDS, FOR ADULTS AND OUR PETS.
 WE HAVE NICE PARKS, THE RIVERSIDES,
 THERE WE CAN SPEND OUR FAMILY TIME.
 ALL GAMES TO PLAY AND KITES TO FLY,
 WE JUST LOOKING AT THE SKY.
 WE MEET WITH FRIENDS, WE PLANT GREEN TREES,
 WE ROW OUR BOAT TO CAUDWELL PLACE.

Margaret, known by us all as Mags, joined BIG Local in June 2014. Mags has lived in Bedford all her life bringing up her family in our BIG Local area. Mags had always been part of her community including being on various PTA groups as her children were growing up and being a volunteer with the Food Bank.

Mags was an active member of the BIG Local partnership for over 7 years. During this time, she was a familiar face at events, often found chatting with people in the community or with her sleeves rolled up behind the counter serving up the tea and cake. She was a familiar face dressed in her witches hat for Halloween events.

Mags ran a local community drop-in group, supported by BIG Local. Bringing together people who felt isolated, often struggling with mental and physical health issues, Coffee Pot was a safe space to have a cuppa and make friends. When COVID-19 hit, Mags was the first person to say, 'you'll never get me on Zoom.' However, never one to let something beat her, she knew how much the members of her group would be struggling with isolation and overcame her fears and mastered the art of online zoom groups. She supported and encouraged the coffee pot group to join her online each week providing a lifeline to combat the loneliness and mental health struggles which so many experienced throughout the lockdown restrictions.

Mags loves being part of the community and helping others. She said 'I've always done something in the community since the kids started schools. Community is very important.'

In 2022 during national poetry week, BIG Local asked local children to write a poem about the area they lived in. Our winner was Ketrin with this wonderful verse.



Goodbye & Thank You

BIG Local would not have been possible without the passion, enthusiasm and efforts of all our volunteers who have worked tirelessly over the years. Whether on the partnership committee, helping at events or groups, litter picking or taking part in our consultations, we have been endlessly supported.

BIG Local would like to say a HUGE THANK YOU to everyone who has helped over the years including our ward councillors, partner organisations and most importantly the members of our community. Some of these special individuals are no longer with us and we mourned their passing whilst remembering the wonderful people they were and how much they contributed to our community.

As the BIG Local programme comes to an end, we are delighted to see so many groups and activities happening in the area. Thank you Kingsbrook and Cauldwell, we will miss you.



THANK YOU TO THE COMMUNITY FUND, LOCAL TRUST AND CVS FOR FUNDING
 AND SUPPORTING THIS AMAZING PROGRAMME

