



# Community Empowerment Fund Impact Report March 2024- October 2024

## **Our Vision**

**A society where all people can live with dignity, lead fulfilled lives and realise their full potential.**

# Community Empowerment Fund Impact Report

At Local Solutions our mission is to empower individuals and support communities, so earlier this year we marked the start of our 50th Anniversary celebrations by launching our Community Empowerment Fund.

We aim to provide individuals and groups with opportunities to make a difference in their own communities through projects and activities that encourage empowerment and inclusivity.

Our network events then bring people together to celebrate success, share learning, make connections and create a community of support and encouragement.

The community projects are making a positive impact on hundreds of people across the region and helping us all put the local into Local Solutions.

In this, our first ever Community Empowerment Fund Impact Report, we are delighted to share some of the projects that we are supporting and the difference they are making.

**Tom Harrison**  
Chief Executive, Local Solutions

**£31,544.66**

in grants have been awarded  
since the Community  
Empowerment Fund  
was launched in March 2024

## Our journey so far



**113**

applications to date



**3**

Our funding panel have met on 3 occasions to review applications and award grants



**£31,544.66**

in grants have been awarded since the Fund was launched in March 2024



**27**

community projects have been supported



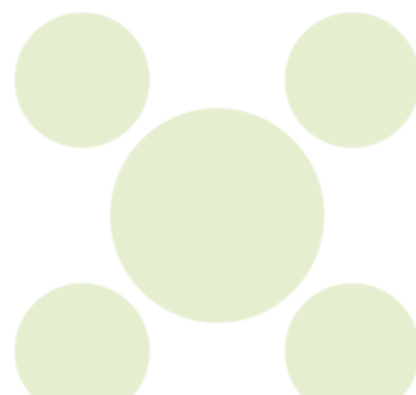
**16**

of the projects that we have supported have received a visit from one of our team so that we can see first-hand the impact of the grants



**£50,0000**

has been secured from strategic partners to extend the reach of the Fund beyond our original £50,000 investment

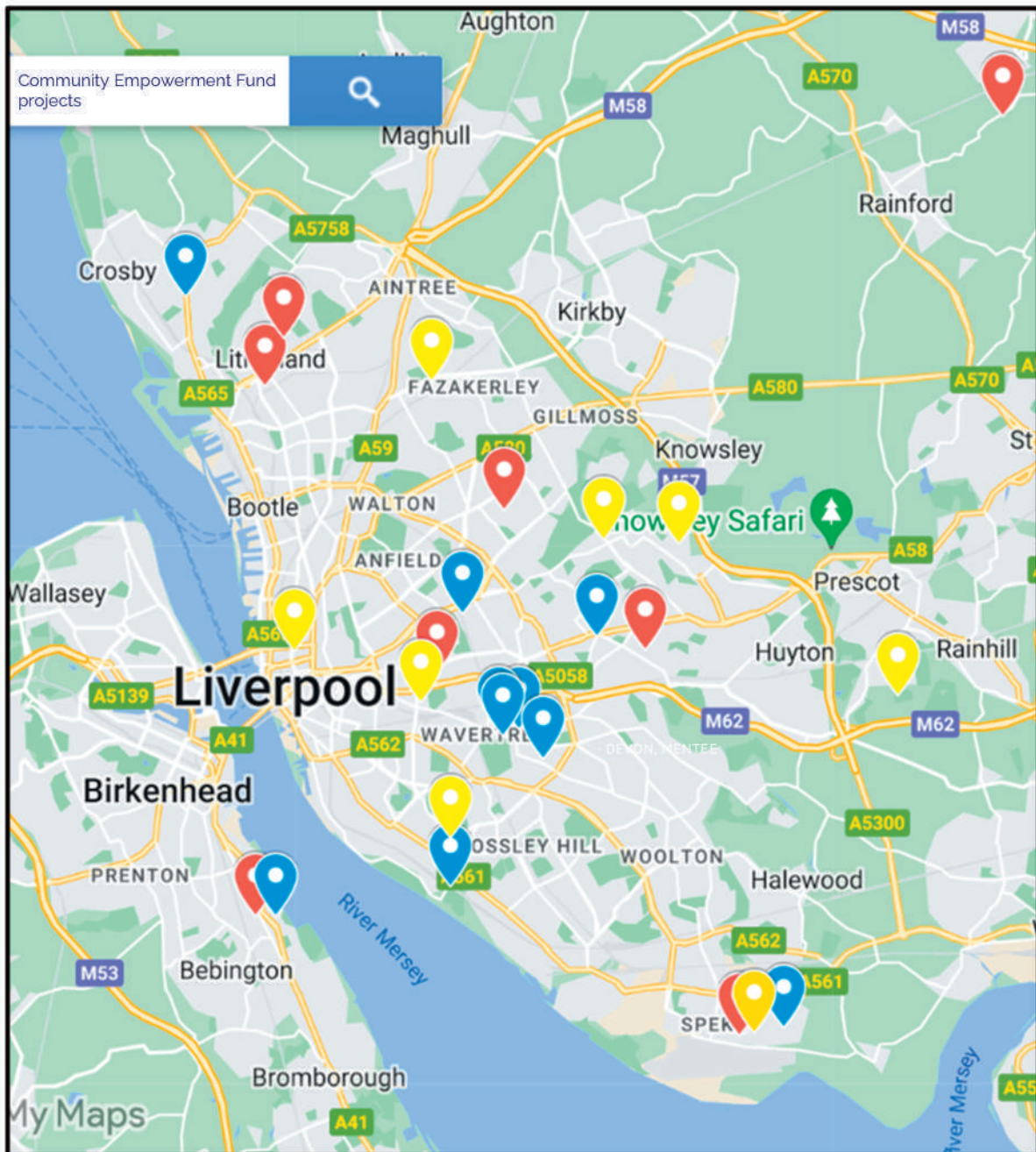


# Our reach

We are delighted to support projects from right across the region.

The pins on the map show the locations of the projects that we have funded in rounds 1-3.

As we prepare for round 4 of funding, we are working to raise awareness of the Community Empowerment Fund to ensure we reach as many people and communities as possible.





## GREENBANK GIANTS BOCCIA CLUB

Boccia (pronounced bot-cha) is the most inclusive sport you will find, and it is fastest growing disability sport in the world. It's easy to play, but harder to master.

It is a Paralympic target ball sport which tests both muscle control and accuracy. Athletes throw, kick or use a ramp to propel a ball onto the court with the aim of getting closest to a 'jack' ball. Greenbank Boccia Club run weekly free sessions in Greenbank Sports Academy every Wednesday that are open to anyone with a disability- visible or not.

The funding that the group have received will enable them to pay for the court fees for whole year so that they can continue to offer the sessions free of charge.

 **Greenbank, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£300

 **People supported**  
35

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Access to sports and fitness
2. Reduced social isolation
3. Improved mental health



## AUTISM ADVENTURE TRAINING

Autism Adventures Group was established, and is run by, Julie and her team of staff. When Julie's son was diagnosed with autism at the age of 3, she felt alone and did not know where to turn for advice or guidance. They spent a lot of time at home and lost touch with her friends and she felt socially isolated.

When Julie's son became too strong for her Mum to look after she was forced to give up her job so that she could care for him. Frustrated by the lack of support available for autistic children and their parents she became an activist committed to improving the services, activities and facilities available for autistic children across Liverpool.


Over the last 9 years she has forged relationships with MP's, Lord Mayor's and the Head of the Chamber of Commerce to establish autism friendly shopping environments, sports groups and CPD accredited training for parents.

The Community Empowerment Fund grant that Julie has received from Local Solutions, will enable her to run regular 4- week courses for parents to understand their child's diagnosis, help them to care for their child and keep them safe and advocate for their children in the education system and in employment.

 **Speke, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£1,900

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Reduced social isolation  
2. Improved mental health  
3. Pathways into training



## LISTER RESIDENTS ASSOCIATION

Tucked away in the heart of Kensington, over the last 20 years, the residents of the Lister Residents Association have cultivated a beautiful green space for all residents and their extended families to enjoy. It is maintained by a dedicated team of 3 volunteers, but all residents are invited to get involved so that they too can experience a sense of belonging and contribute to the space.


The area started as an overgrown green space but, over the years, it has been transformed; it now includes rockeries, a sensory garden, barbeque area, hospitality and memorial area. Over the course of the year around 200 people get to use the space with their own families and friends and through organised events at Halloween and in the Summer.

With the grant they have received from Local Solutions, they have been able to complete the final piece of the jigsaw and purchase a wooden outhouse that will mean that residents have a sheltered space that they can use all year round to run social activities.

 Kensington, Liverpool

 **Amount awarded**  
£2,000

 **People supported**  
100

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Improved community space
2. Reduced social isolation
3. Improved mental health





## FIR TREE COMMUNITY FARM

Fir Tree Community Farm was established in 2009 as a Social Enterprise project to provide volunteer horticultural sessions to members of the local community to reduce social isolation.

Set over 5 acres of woodland, volunteers can take part in a range of activities including planting, vegetable picking, scything, traditional country crafts and apple pressing.

The funding that they have received from a Community Empowerment Fund grant will enable them to purchase an industrial apple press to grind the apples that they grow in their orchard into apple juice.


Profits made from the sale of the apple juice and vegetables grown on the farm will be invested back into the farm to enable them to continue to offer the project to volunteers. The purchase of the apple press will also enable them to promote apple pressing experiences to the general public and generate more income to reinvest back into the project and the upkeep of the farm.

The volunteering opportunity available at Fir Tree Farm fosters a sense of community and belonging that provides volunteers with opportunities to connect, share experiences, and build meaningful relationships, which reduces social isolation.

 King's Moss, St Helens

 **Amount awarded**  
£800

 **People supported**  
15

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Improved community space
2. Reduced social isolation
3. Improved mental health



## SAD AWARENESS PROJECT

Sylvia Kalungi runs a group for black migrant women and women of colour across Merseyside. The group of approximately 30 women meet monthly to discuss issues that are affecting them and provide peer support and guidance.

When we visited the group, the topic of discussion was the perimenopause, menopause and post menopause; subjects that, in a similar way to menstruation and conception, are taboo in the cultures that they are part of and never discussed with partners or family members.


Through sharing personal experiences, the group are able to take steps to demystify and destigmatise the topic. The discussion provides information on the physical and emotional symptoms to expect the support available from a GP and Employer and hints and tips about what activities can be done to relieve the physical and mental impact of what can be a daunting and lonely time of life.

The funding that the group have received from Local Solutions has enabled them to create on-line resources so that more black migrant women can gain access to support and advice about issues that are affecting them.

 **Speke, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£700

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Improved mental health  
2. Reduced social isolation



## LIVERPOOL BASKETBALL CLUB

Liverpool Basketball Club, based in Fazakerley, is a vibrant hub of activity with over 150 members, providing a vital space for young people aged 6-14 to develop their basketball skills, build friendships, and enjoy the benefits of team sports. The club is more than just a place to play basketball; it's a nurturing environment where young members grow in confidence, discipline, and teamwork, guided by experienced volunteers who give their time to help the club thrive.

Thanks to the Community Empowerment Fund, Liverpool Basketball Club will be able to invest in the future of its young players by covering the cost for an existing member to undertake a coaching qualification. This will not only strengthen the club's leadership team but also ensure that the values and skills learned by one generation can be passed down to the next.

The club relies heavily on volunteers and this funding opens the door for young members to step into coaching roles themselves. The qualification will equip them with the tools and confidence to lead sessions and mentor younger children, sharing their own experiences and fostering the same passion for basketball in others. It's an exciting development for the club, creating opportunities for personal growth and leadership within its community.

By supporting young members to become qualified coaches, the Fund will help Liverpool Basketball Club maintain its ethos of inclusion, leadership, and growth. This ensures that the club remains a cornerstone of the community, offering positive, structured activities for children and young people while empowering the next generation to lead.

 **Fazakerly, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£495

 **People supported**  
150

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Access to sports and fitness
2. Improved mental health
3. Reduced social isolation



## TRINITY WELLNESS

The mission of Trinity Wellness is to support and empower women in Merseyside to improve their mental, physical and emotional health. Founders, Lauren, Amy and Angela, are passionate about empowering women by instilling self-belief, confidence & balance because they know, from experience, that developing empowering and healthy habits can lead to improved physical, mental and emotional health.

Trinity Wellness sessions offer a safe, non-judgmental space for Mums to take part in holistic activity sessions that include life coaching, self-care and resilience, mindfulness, meditation and physical exercise. And if you're a Mum with a baby or child not yet in school then they are welcome as well. Distractions are the norm and there is no need to feel embarrassed or anxious at all.

Trinity Wellness have already begun to deliver sessions in Kirkby and, with funding from the Local Solutions Community Empowerment Fund, they will soon be able to support 15 women in the Litherland and Netherton area through 16 sessions over an eight week-period.

Equally as important as the sessions are the friendships and support networks that the groups facilitate. Group members will stay after sessions to have a drink and chat and a What's App group keeps the group members connected outside of sessions. Feelings of isolation, loneliness and vulnerability are very common and peer to peer support is a huge comfort whether you are a first time Mum or an experienced Mum.

Society, and even well-meaning friends, and relatives, can put an unrealistic pressure on a Mum to be 'perfect', even though no such thing exists.

Founders Lauren, Amy and Angela strongly believe that Mums who are supported are better equipped to serve as positive role models, both their children and to other women in the community.

 **Litherland, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£2,000

 **People supported**  
15

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Improved mental health
2. Access to sports and fitness
3. Reduced social isolation



## DOCKSIDE RUNNERS

Dockside Runners is a thriving, volunteer-led running group based in the heart of the city, attracting 100-150 regular participants from all walks of life. Open to anyone aged 16 and over, the group welcomes runners of all abilities, making it a truly inclusive space where the emphasis is on community and fitness rather than competition.

Through the Community Empowerment Fund, Dockside Runners will be able to take a significant step forward by training 8 individuals as Leaders in Running Fitness (LIRF) with England Athletics. This training will help expand the group's leadership capacity, ensuring more members receive support, guidance, and encouragement during sessions. Having certified leaders will also allow the group to cater better to different ability levels, offering more tailored support to beginners and seasoned runners alike.

In addition to growing its leadership team, the funding will be pivotal in helping Dockside Runners reach underrepresented and marginalised groups. By collaborating with local community organisations, groups, and charities, the club aims to break down barriers and promote the physical and mental health benefits of running to a wider audience. The focus will be on ensuring that everyone, regardless of background or circumstance, feels welcome and empowered to join in.

This grant will allow Dockside Runners to build a more diverse and inclusive running community, reflecting the city's vibrant and varied population while promoting a sense of belonging and wellbeing through fitness.

 **Liverpool City Centre**

 **Amount awarded**  
£800

 **People supported**  
75

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Access to sports and fitness
2. Reduced social isolation
3. Improved mental health



## 445th ST PAUL'S RAINBOWS

445th St Paul's Rainbows is a lively and welcoming group that meets weekly in West Derby, Liverpool. As part of the Girlguiding organisation, Rainbows offer girls aged 4-7 a supportive environment where they can laugh, learn and have fun while developing valuable skills in a creative and engaging space.

The Community Empowerment Fund that the group have received will play a key role in helping the Rainbows work towards their latest badge, Have Fun & Take Action. As part of earning this badge, the young girls will participate in litter picking within their local community, learning how they can contribute to recycling efforts and take responsibility for protecting the environment. This hands-on activity not only teaches environmental awareness but also fosters a sense of pride and ownership in their surroundings.


The Fund will cover essential resources for the group, including the purchase of litter pickers, craft supplies and badge books. These materials will enable the Rainbows to fully engage with the programme, exploring the themes of creativity, teamwork and environmental stewardship. Beyond earning a badge, the experience will provide the girls with an early understanding of how small actions can make a positive difference.

By supporting these young girls in their quest to learn and contribute, the Community Empowerment fund helps the 445th St Paul's Rainbows continue to deliver valuable, fun-filled activities that nurture both personal development and social responsibility.

 **West Derby, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£500

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Improved mental health  
2. Reduced social isolation



## ONE DAY AT A TIME GUYS

One Day at a Time Guys is an art project that forms part of a weekly activity schedule for the residents of Damien John Kelly House.


The house is a temporary home for men recovering from drug and alcohol addiction and all residents take part in a schedule of 20 activities that are displayed on a board in the common room. Activities start at 8am and finish at around 7pm in the evening. The list includes time on an allotment, cold water swimming, a pool competition and trips to the theatre. The activities are compulsory, and residents are not allowed to stay in their rooms unless they are ill; isolation feeds addiction and activities reduce isolation. Or, in the words of one of the men, 'The board opens the world up'.

The funding that they have received has paid for 5 digital cameras and other art supplies including potter's wheels, paints and canvases. The art projects are an opportunity for the men to explore and express their feelings- vehicles to connect with others and share experiences. Or, as the session leader describes it, 'an opportunity to use recovery values of open mindedness, willingness and honesty in a creative setting'.

 Wavertree, Liverpool

 **Amount awarded**  
£2,000

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Reduced social isolation  
2. Improved mental health



## MERSEY MARAUDERS FC

Mersey Marauders FC is Merseyside's LGBT+ Football Club, providing a welcoming space for LGBT+ individuals across the region to play football in a supportive and inclusive environment. The club promotes diversity, unity, and a shared love of the sport, aiming to break down barriers and foster a sense of community among players from all walks of life.

With support from the Community Empowerment Fund, Mersey Marauders will expand their outreach to recruit new players with a special emphasis on those who face additional disadvantages. The recruitment drive will focus on individuals from low-income backgrounds, people from ethnic minority communities, and trans and non-binary players, ensuring that the club remains accessible and inclusive for all.

The funding will also allow Mersey Marauders to provide for an expanded squad, using the grant to purchase essential equipment and to offer subsidies for players who may need financial support. This assistance will enable everyone, regardless of their financial situation, to join and thrive in a welcoming football community that celebrates diversity and promotes inclusivity at every level.

 **Aigburth, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£1,000

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Reduced social isolation
2. Improved mental health
3. Access to sports and fitness





## EMPOWERING MINDS WIRRAL

Empowering Minds Wirral is a vital drop-in session and support network created for families connected to Rock Ferry Primary School and the surrounding area, providing a safe and welcoming space to discuss wellbeing and mental health. Recognising the importance of accessible mental health support, Empowering Minds aims to offer immediate resources and peer support for those in need.


The group meets every Thursday during term time from 1-3 pm at the New Ferry Community Centre, where attendees can openly discuss topics related to mental health and personal wellbeing in a supportive, non-judgmental setting. Empowering Minds Wirral was established in response to the significant demand for mental health support, as the current NHS waiting list for specialist services is approximately 40 weeks.

Thanks to the Community Empowerment Fund, the group will receive essential equipment and resources to operate for 39 weeks. This funding ensures that families can access crucial support and resources in their local area, without the barrier of long wait times. Empowering Minds Wirral is dedicated to fostering resilience, providing tools for mental wellness, and strengthening the community through understanding and shared experience.

 **New Ferry, Wirral**

 **Amount awarded**  
£1,990

 **People supported**  
15

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Improved mental health  
2. Reduced social isolation



## TWELFTH COLLECTIVE

Twelfth Collective is a vibrant group of talented creatives aged 16+ who are passionate about sharing their skills and experiences with the Liverpool community. Their aim is to inspire others and foster a supportive environment where creative expression can flourish.


With funding from the Community Empowerment Fund, Twelfth Collective will be able to run a free workshop tailored for young people aged 16 and above. This workshop will offer participants hands-on experience and skill-building in key areas such as camera work, sound engineering and vocal training.

Through this opportunity, young people will not only learn new technical skills but also gain insights into the creative industry from experienced mentors. This initiative by Twelfth Collective aims to empower and equip Liverpool's next generation of creatives, encouraging them to explore their potential and build confidence in a welcoming and collaborative setting.

 **Frodsham, Halton**

 **Amount awarded**  
£2,000

 **People supported**  
30

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Improved mental health
2. Reduced social isolation
3. Enhanced skills
4. Pathways into work



## FIRST SPEKE RAINBOWS

First Speke Rainbows is a weekly group held at Noah's Ark Speke Baptist Church in Liverpool, where young girls aged 4-7 can come together to laugh, learn and enjoy creative activities in a safe, nurturing environment. As part of the Girl Guiding family, Rainbows aims to inspire and engage young girls, helping them build confidence, develop new skills and create lasting friendships in a welcoming and inclusive space.


First Speke Rainbows will use this funding to purchase much needed arts, crafts and sports equipment, enhancing their sessions and enabling the girls to work towards earning badges in various areas of learning and play.

The funding will also allow them to provide uniforms for both children and volunteers who might not otherwise be able to afford them, ensuring everyone feels fully included and able to participate proudly in their activities. This support not only boosts the group's resources but also strengthens its commitment to inclusivity and accessibility for all members.

 **Speke, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£500

 **People supported**  
25

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. Improved mental health  
2. Reduced social isolation



## TUEBROOK COMMUNITY ARTS

Tom is a local resident of Tuebrook, and an artist who strongly believes in the power of making arts accessible as possible to everyone.

The funding that Tom received has enabled him to run free art events and workshops over the summer in the Newsham Park area of Tuebrook, Liverpool.

The long-term aim of the project is to create a public art programme led by people in Tuebrook which consists of workshops, skill sharing and exhibitions and public displays.


The introductory sessions, funded by the Community Empowerment Fund, aimed to introduce people to different methods of art practice as well as bringing people together to build a sense of community and sustainability.

Tom is confident that art can have a real positive impact in terms of confidence, a sense of belonging and contribute to an overall positive world view in both how we communicate and share with the people around us but also how we view our own life and role within the community.

 **Tuebrook, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£700

 **People supported**  
50

 **Project Outcomes**  
1. **Reduced social isolation**  
2. **Improved community space**  
3. **Improved mental health**



## WIRRAL WISE GUYS

Wirral Wise Guys is an innovative Football Therapy initiative designed to support men from across the Wirral who are navigating mental, emotional or physical health challenges. Recognising the therapeutic value of community and physical activity, the group creates a welcoming and non-judgmental environment where men of all ages, abilities and fitness levels can come together to benefit from the camaraderie of a team.

Meeting regularly at Solar Campus in Leasowe, Wirral Wise Guys focuses on building both physical and mental resilience through structured football sessions. Participants are encouraged to move at their own pace, promoting physical health and fostering friendships in a supportive, peer-driven space.

The Community Empowerment Fund will provide critical support covering pitch hire for 12 months. This funding ensures the group can continue offering these essential sessions at no cost to participants, helping remove financial barriers to involvement. This continuity is vital as it allows members to attend regularly and build lasting, positive routines around physical activity and social engagement.

 **Leasowe, Wirral**

 **Amount awarded**  
£1,000

 **People supported**  
80

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Access to sports and fitness
2. Improved mental health
3. Reduced social isolation



## WALTON AMATEUR BOXING CLUB

Established in 2018, Walton Amateur Boxing Club is a thriving hub of young people aged 8 and upwards who love to box.

Around 80 young people attend the club every week, some who box for fun and some with a goal to compete in friendlies, regional and national title fights.

With the vests of club members who have gone on to represent their county and country, proudly on display around the gym, inspiration is never far away.

The club are passionate about making the facilities accessible for all and so the funding that the club received will enable them to keep the costs of subs to only £1 per session. They will also be able to invest in new gloves, helmets and to cover the costs to train coaches to England Level 1 and accreditation levels.

 **Walton, Liverpool**

 **Amount awarded**  
£2,000

 **People supported**  
80

 **Project Outcomes**

1. Access to sports and fitness
2. Improved mental health
3. Improved community space
4. Reduced social isolation



## Who can apply for a Community Empowerment Fund Grant?

- Individuals and groups living within the Liverpool City Region.
- Individuals and groups that have an idea for a project that will empower their community and have a positive impact on local people.
- Applicants over 18-year-olds.

## What do we look for in applications?

Projects that aligns with our vision of *'a society where all people can live with dignity, lead fulfilled lives and realise their full potential'*.

Projects that will have a positive impact on individuals and groups in our communities.

Projects and activities that encourage empowerment and inclusivity.

## What can you apply for?

The maximum amount that you can apply for is £2,000. There is no minimum amount.

Alongside funding you can ask for help and support with developing or delivering your idea if needed.

## What we do not fund

- Groups, clubs, societies, communities and charities with an annual income of over £20,000.
- Activities that are illegal - debts, gambling, political etc.
- Applications for projects we have previously funded.

## How to apply

You can apply on our website, on paper, on the phone or in person.

Website: [www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund](http://www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund)

Telephone: 07773 395429

We will ask you tell us about your idea and how it will impact the community that you live in.

Our grants panel meet every 8 weeks, and they will discuss and score each application considering the need, impact and reach.

You will be contacted and told if you have been successful.





**The continued impact of the Community Empowerment Fund has been made possible with the support of The Rimmer Trust and the Geoffrey & Pauline Martin Trust.**

**If you, or the organisation that you work for, would like to support people and groups to make an impact in their own communities then we would love to hear from you.**

**Together we can make a real difference.**

**Contact:**

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**[www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund](http://www.localsolutions.org.uk/community-empowerment-fund)**



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