

UK Community Foundations: The power of connection



UKCF has shifted towards more permanent home working, with a staff team that is spread around the UK. While maintaining a head office base the team will meet periodically in different places, being hosted by member community foundations. This novel approach suits staff and connects the organisation with the field. Rosemary Macdonald, CEO, UK Community Foundations, writes about the experience and how it has the potential to strengthen connections.

Rosemary Macdonald, CEO, UKCF

At the end of July, the UK Community Foundations team had the privilege of meeting in person after months of working together online. During this period, we've fully embraced remote working, recruiting colleagues from across the UK and better reflecting our role as a national membership organisation. This has strengthened our connections with our community foundation members and the communities they serve.

As lockdown restrictions ease, our new model will enable each team member to work from home, from the office of their local community foundation, or combine these two options to suit their personal circumstances. Gaining greater insight into our members' projects and priorities by working alongside them will build stronger connections across our network and help us develop as an organisation that truly meets their needs.

We plan to complement our virtual collaboration with opportunities to meet in person around the UK. Visiting our members and some of the projects they fund. For our first in-person gathering, we were based in the historic city of Salisbury, where the community had already experienced significant challenges before the arrival of the pandemic. Our colleagues at [Wiltshire Community Foundation](#) generously shared their time and expertise, introducing us to three projects they have recently supported. Each provided a different insight into the powerful community connections created by local organisations:

River Bourne Community Farm enables young people to connect with animals and the environment and runs a successful education programme, as well as being a popular meeting place for the local community.

RISE:61 aims to create positive opportunities where young people can tell a different story with their lives and to build a creative hub where they can grow and flourish



Stronger Families on the Friary builds connections across the community and has recently supported the creation of Salisbury Pantry, a community supermarket in the City Centre that will give people access to donated food alongside information, advice and support.

Visiting the historic city of Salisbury, with its magnificent cathedral, prompted us to ponder on the vision of architects and stone masons who embarked on a building project which would take 250 years to complete. Our community foundation model doesn't simply look at short-term strategies but also prioritises investing for the future, building endowments that will deliver funding for community projects for generations to come. Connecting as a team helps strengthen our purpose to serve our members so that they can support community connections both now and over the long term.