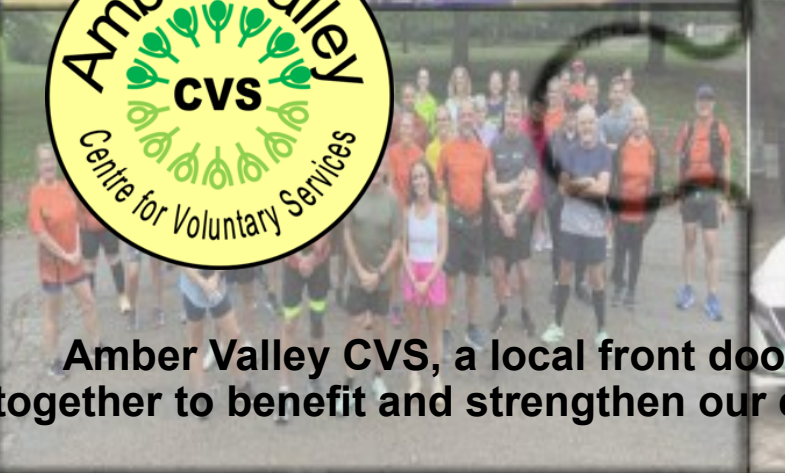


Community NEWS

From Amber Valley CVS

Newsletter & Annual Report 2024/2025



November 2025

Amber Valley CVS, a local front door, open since 1989 and working together to benefit and strengthen our community, groups and volunteers

Welcome

Another year in the life of Amber Valley CVS has passed—too quickly in some respects. We knew that this year would be tough and I would like to thank all the staff for their commitment through the year to carry on in their roles even with some uncertainty. I was heartened that local organisations such as Shacklocks/ Bowmer Kirkland trust, town councils of Ripley, Belper and Alfreton as well as Langley Mill Parish Council showed their support with grants in the year. This support from local government does need to increase to sustain the necessary but generally non—sexy work of a CVS. The basis of our activity is to build the groups and volunteering capacity in Amber Valley for all the interesting and dynamic work that happens on the ground in communities. I am able to see insight and data that shows how this happens and pleased to promote all the sector does in district and county meetings with statutory organisations and funders.

As a volunteer centre, we co-ordinate and support a team of volunteers offering weekly smiles and cheerful conversation to those who are lonely and isolated. Thank you for that commitment and for making it known that you see this as activity that needs to continue by your continued presence including at coffee mornings and events at Amber Valley CVS.

The bright spots of last year were linked to continuing our presence in Amber Valley with communications, information banners, newssheets and especially visits to you in your group or community setting. We had some questions for residents linked to barriers to moving more and what services over 50s had and needed. This has informed partners such as Active Partners, Public Health, Amber Valley Borough Council and Place. A continue challenge for us is to diversify the funding source we have, without that impinging on voluntary sector needs, to create sustainability of the organisation. Looking forward to a great next year.

Lynn Allison , Chief Executive

Report for the Chair

When I took over this role, I had no preconceived ideas of how it would all turn out.

I have been amazed by the friendly, extremely hard working staff led by Lynn who continue to provide critical services to our community. This is no mean feat given the difficulties that have been placed before them in 2025.

Through it all the strategy developed a few years ago has continued to be used as the way forward for our services, and whilst tactics have had to change as obstacles were placed in the way it is a tribute to their dedication and perseverance that things still continue to be addressed as they have been in the past, and indeed, better in many cases.

I am looking forward to working with everyone again this year and no matter what challenges are thrown in our way, I'm sure the team will rise to the occasion as often as is called for.

Please continue to support the staff in any way you can, anything you can do will help us as we adjust to new realities in the public sector.

Steve Lockwood



Miss Winnie our regular visitor, the office therapy dog, also volunteers in admin!

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Help at Home provides practical assistance to elderly people or those living with disabilities or long-term health conditions who live in the Amber Valley area. We currently operate with a workforce of 53 workers; 40 providing domestic and/or Bespoke Befriending assistance (cleaning, shopping, laundry, Bespoke Befriending) and 13 gardeners.

All workers are employed on a nil-hours contract to afford them flexibility in their working hours. Some work part-time and others every day, ranging from assisting one client to the current maximum of 18 clients per week, although this can vary greatly depending on the duration of each call required.

Some of our clients use multiple services, some have more than one call per week and others have just one call weekly, fortnightly or 4-weekly.

Amber Valley currently has a client base 333 active domestic clients and 170 active gardening clients. Annual paid-for hours over the period April 2024 – March 2025 amount to 15224 for Domestic Services and 3584 3/4 for gardening.

Help at Home in Erewash
Erewash has had a steady year, only blighted by two of the gardening team leaving, half way through the season. We are planning a robust recruitment campaign in January 2026, to ensure we have a full quota of gardeners, in readiness for the spring.

Since April 2024, 5 new staff have joined the domestic support team.

We're working closely with all the care co-ordinators in the Erewash area, and reaching out to voluntary clubs and services, to ensure that our services are reaching the people who need us most.

We receive referrals with Social Services, GP Surgeries, Care Coordinators, Social Prescribers, Care Agencies, Housing Associations and numerous agencies for domestic, shopping, gardening and bespoke befriending assistance. Referrals can, of course, also come directly from a prospective client or their family members.

The value of the service is often qualified by the number of compliments received about the service in general from clients themselves or from their relatives. We feel it is important that compliments are always passed on to the workers too!

"I'm so pleased with the work 'A' did in my garden yesterday. Please can I increase from a fortnightly call to a weekly

"J' is wonderful and has really turned things around for me"

"My mum is so delighted with the work of both the cleaner and the gardener and is so happy to have them. They are both so lovely and their person-centred skills are First Class!!"

"G' makes my week!"

" Compliments to 'K'. She breezes in, says hello and then just gets on with the cleaning and does a fabulous job"

"Thank you for the way 'A' conducted my recent assessment. I got on really well with her and she really put my mind at rest throughout the process"

"Since you have been coming, I now feel better about myself and am taking more pride in my appearance. I have also started going to more social things, which I would never have thought about doing in the past"



Annual Report—Funding

The year saw a new funding pot which CVS administered on behalf of Amber Valley Borough Council. The funding was a part of the Government Levelling Up initiative, the UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF)

Alongside the UKSPF, we also continued to administer the Amber Valley Partnership, Public Health Small Grants and the Community Connectedness Grant. These grants were the “go to” support for small community organisations in Amber Valley.

Over the year we were able to help fund many organisations with a wide range of community activities and services with grants totalling just £1 short of £89,000.

Public Health Small Grants,	£22,821
UKSPF	£39,330
Community Connections (£1,000)	£2,000
Police and Crime Commission	£4,866
Community Lottery, Awards for All	<u>£19,982</u>
	<u>£88,999</u>

For us, one of the big successes during 2024 was the help we were able to give to the Railway Carriage Youth Club in Ironville. The Carriage has been a feature of Ironville for over 25 years and also a feature in the lives of many young people in the village during that time.

Unfortunately, rising energy costs and the condition of the carriage were major concerns. Added to this, the governing committee, after many years of dedication, were looking to step aside. A new committee was formed, but money was needed.

We were able to put the Youth Club in touch with another Amber Valley community initiative, Make Shift. Make Shift helped with the introduction of an artist in residence, who worked with the young people to design and paint a mural on the exterior of the carriage. Then we were able to help find funding to meet bills, staff costs, improve the elderly electrical system and decorate the carriage interior to match to outside.

The funding gave the Club the breathing space to begin to raise its own money again to continue its service for the young people of the village.



Funding Success

Hi Lynn & Glynn,

17 October 2025

We started something new at the Carriage last night – **Darts!**

Playing darts provides physical, mental, and social benefits, such as improved hand-eye coordination and fine motor skills, enhanced concentration and strategic thinking, and increased confidence through competition and stress relief. It is a versatile activity that can be a relaxing solo pursuit or a way to build camaraderie with others. That is if you ARE applying for a grant - **IN OTHER WORDS EVERYONE HAD A GREAT SESSION THAT WAS ENJOYED BY ALL!**

However, my main reason for writing is to emphasise the importance of the small grants that you award. If it was not for your initial £3000 grant a couple or so years ago now, the club would not still be around to day. This smaller grant created the necessary breathing space & time to achieve the lottery and children in need grants to bring much needed stability to the club, which of course is now thriving. Keeping a much needed service in Ironville.

See photos below and attached. The person leading the session is an international darts coach – he is in Bahrain today!

Best wishes,



Annual Report—Social Prescribing



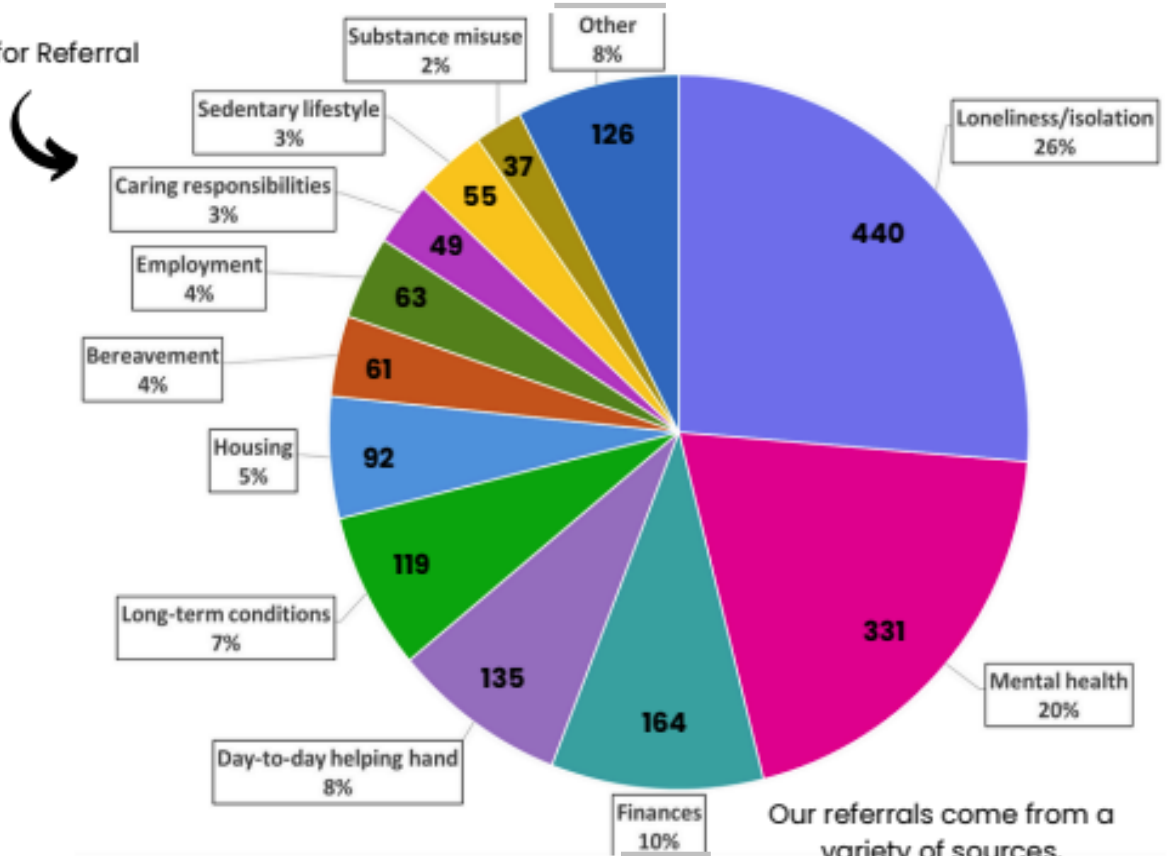
Social Prescribing in ARCH PCN



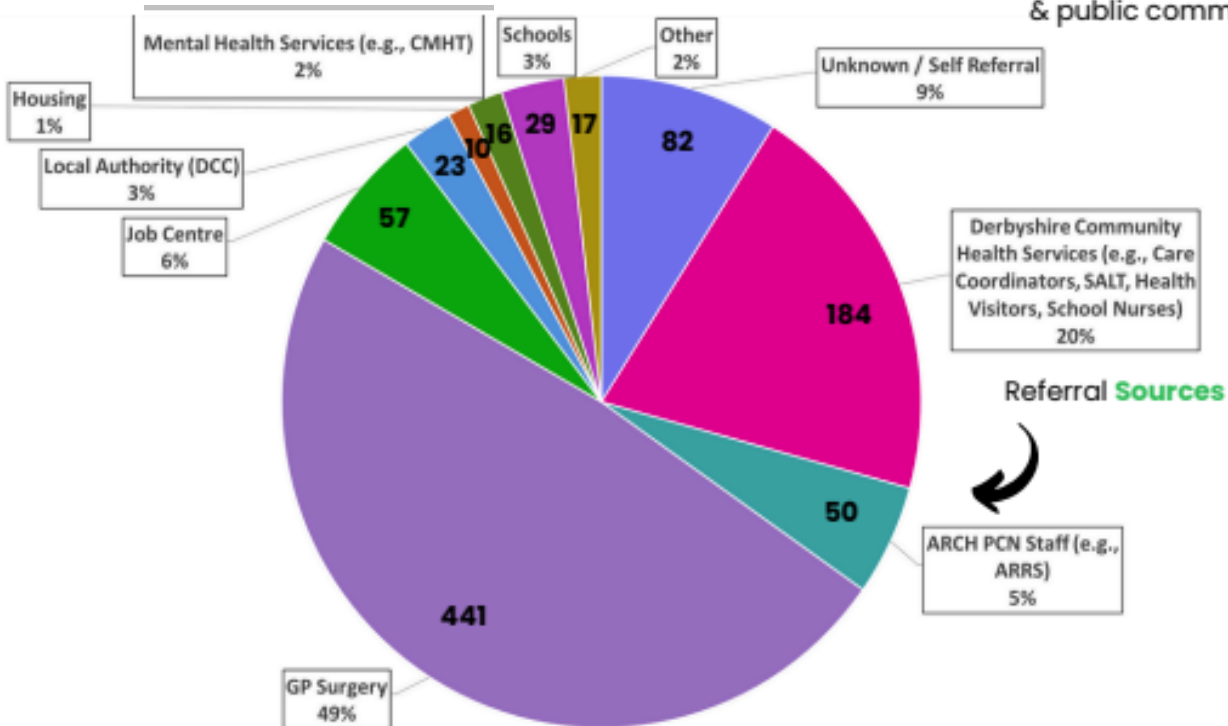
1st April 2024 - 1st April 2025

During the year from 1st April 2024 to 1st April 2025, we received **909** referrals.

Reasons for Referral



Our referrals come from a variety of sources, demonstrating our widening reach to both our professional & public communities.



Referral Sources

Annual Report—Social Prescribing



Social Prescribing

in ARCH PCN

1st April 2024 - 1st April 2025



The majority of our clients receive a home based assessment to co-produce a personalised support plan, and tailored support for as long as is needed to meet their goals to the best of their ability.

Average Time supporting Each Client

(referral to discharge):
52 days

Average Contacts Per Client:

8 contacts

Total Contacts Made:

7012

- In-person appointments: 2128
- Telephone calls: 2786



Proactive Social Prescribing - Our Current Projects:

Our Social Prescribers also link to...

- ✓ **GP surgeries** - our Digital Drop-In Project resulted in 252 patients learning to use the NHS App for repeat prescriptions, and had the wider benefit of updating surgeries with patient details for their records.
- ✓ **Community** - our team attend Wellbeing Drop-Ins organised by ARCH PCN at Places Leisure Centres and local community venues. As a result, we had contact with 319 residents, resulting in 30 direct referrals to Social Prescribing.
- ✓ The team actively identify gaps in community provision. As a result of this work, we have set-up the following new groups...
 - Bereavement Support Group at the Croft (Ripley) fortnightly on a Monday at 10-11:30am.
 - Living Well with Pain workshops starting from October 2025; empowering individuals experiencing chronic pain to work through the 10 Footsteps to Living Well with Pain.
- ✓ We have also linked in with projects and initiatives to share the voice of local residents and network with external organisations...
 - Derbyshire Walk Consortium
 - Move More Amber Valley
 - Physical Activity Collaborative
 - Connected Amber Valley
 - Amber Valley Health & Wellbeing Partnership
 - Living Well Collaborative
 - Frontline Professional Network via AVCVS
 - Derbyshire Children's Healthy Weight Network



Trustees Statement on Financial Information

Reserves Policy and Going Concern

At 31 March 2025 the charity had total reserves of £476,270 (2024 - £572,648). Of these reserves £185,004 (2024 - £274,786) was held in restricted funds, with the balance remaining of £291,266 (2024 - £297,862) being held in unrestricted funds.

The charity has designated some of its unrestricted funds for particular purposes. At 31 March 2025 the designated funds of the charity are :

Training Fund	5,000
Contingency Fund	40,000
Building Fund	30,000
Help At Home Fund	55,000
	<hr/>
	£130,000
	<hr/> <hr/>

The Training Fund is to ensure the organisation has sufficient funds for staff development that would not be met by other project costs and to pump prime training initiatives that support development of the sector.

The Contingency Fund is set aside to cover any organisation costs or debts not covered by project costs. It is also in case of long term incapacity or absence of a senior manager that requires costs for interim support of another professional.

The Building Fund is in line with our aspiration to refurbish the 'Cottage'. We are designating funds which could then be used as match funding in any future bids and to maintain the fabric of the building in the meantime.

The Help at Home Fund is to ensure that in the event of any difficult circumstances or disaster we are able to continue Help at Home activity to our clients by replacing essential equipment, personnel and work space immediately or meeting other liabilities.

Unrestricted general reserves (excluding tangible fixed assets of £6,348 (2024 - £4,609)), freely available for use by the charity amount to £154,918 (2024 - £118,253).

The Trustees' policy is to hold unrestricted free reserves equivalent to 4-8 months directorate expenditure, which is currently running at the rate of £150,000 per annum. At the year end free reserves amounted to £154,918 (2024 - £118,253) which is considered prudent as there are indications that grant funding will decrease in 2025/26.

In addition to directorate expenditure, unrestricted funds are designated to ensure resources are available for expenditure which would relate to changes to Help at Home, either for closure or continuation in another charitable format.

Principal funding sources

Our principal funding sources remain Derbyshire Joined Up Care and Derbyshire County Council along with earned income from activity as a counter signatory for DBS and customer charges to Help at Home clients.

Investment Policy

The Executive Committee are responsible for setting the investment policy of the charity.

The financial statements were approved by the Trustees on 25/09/2025



S Lockwood
Trustee

Company registration number 04763194

Annual Report—Befriending

Referrals from April 2024 – April 2025

	Male	Female	Total
0-55	2	0	2
56-60	1	0	1
61-65	3	1	4
66-70	1	0	1
71-75	2	3	5
76-80	5	3	8
81-85	2	3	5
86-90	4	13	17
91-95	3	6	9
96-100	0	4	4
	23	33	56

This year 70 Volunteers have supported the services with 124 clients receiving the Support.

Befriending is all about making a new friend and sharing company with someone who might be feeling a bit lonely or isolated. It usually means spending time chatting, doing a jigsaw (the picture below is a completed puzzle that a volunteer and client did together), or just being there regularly to brighten someone's day.



How the Person Being Befriended Benefits:

- They feel less lonely and more cared for.
- Having someone to talk to can lift their mood and ease worries.
- It helps them feel more confident and connected to the world.
- Everyday life feels a little happier and more meaningful.

How the Volunteer Benefits

- Making a real difference brings a great sense of joy and satisfaction.
- You get to meet new people and hear stories you might never have known.
- It's a chance to grow your listening and communication skills.
- Being part of someone's life like this gives a wonderful feeling of purpose.

At the heart of it, befriending is simply about kindness and connection, and it can be a win-win for both parties. It's like planting a little seed of friendship that grows over time.



If you'd like to know more, you could pop along to our weekly coffee morning 10am – 12 noon, every Tuesday at "The Salvation Army", Heath Road, Ripley Or Contact Clare Salmons 01773 512076 – claresalmons@avcvs.org

Annual Report—Volunteering

Volunteering continues to be a cornerstone that supports community resilience across Amber Valley. Many local organisations not only support but actively deliver essential services that complement and extend beyond the offer from statutory provision.

With NHS services stretched to capacity, voluntary groups often step in to provide critical support in areas such as mental health, homelessness, addiction recovery, and financial hardship.

Charitable initiatives such as food banks and pantries offer emergency relief, while community centres provide warm spaces and opportunities for social connection — a simple cuppa and chat can make a world of difference. Luncheon clubs offer hot meals and companionship, helping to reduce isolation among older residents.

Taking Heanor and Langley Mill as an example — youth provision is thriving. Clubs such as Blend, St Andrew's Church in Heanor, Infinite Wellbeing, Coat Hangers Youth Club at St Lawrence's, and the newly opened Aldercar and Langley Mill Friends Community Centre at the Acorn Centre are providing safe, engaging spaces for young people. These are complemented by organisations such as Salcare, Dwelling Place, Wilmot Community Centre, Gladstone Community Centre, and the William Gregg VC Leisure Centre — all contributing to the wellbeing of our communities.



Thank you Volunteers

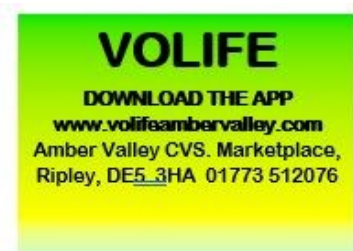
What unites these diverse services is their reliance on volunteers. From sports coaches on local fields to community centre coordinators and class facilitators, volunteers are the driving force behind countless initiatives. Many bring a wide range of skills and experiences, and go on to become leading figures within the organisations they support.

Amber Valley CVS plays a key role in enabling this ecosystem through **Volifeambervalley.com**, our dedicated volunteering platform.

Between April 2024 and March 2025:

- **153 volunteers applied**, with
- **103 applications via Volifeambervalley.com**, demonstrating its reach and effectiveness
- **29 direct referrals from Jobcentre Plus**, reflecting a strong partnership with DWP
- **21 walk-ins** at our office
- **36 individuals began volunteering**, contributing their time and skills to local causes
- We attended **4 joint events** with Jobcentre Plus to promote volunteering opportunities

To further support organisations, we host **two Frontline Network meetings annually**, bringing together representatives from across the sector to share insights, build connections, and strengthen collaboration. In addition, we conducted **81 face-to-face meetings** with multiple organisations, offering tailored advice and guidance to help them develop effective volunteer pathways and operational strategies. These figures and activities reflect the ongoing demand for volunteers and the importance of maintaining strong referral pathways, organisational support, and community engagement.



Annual Report Get Out Get Active Amber Valley



Amber Valley CVS Physical Activity Update: A Year of Growth and Impact

It's been an incredibly rewarding year for physical activity initiatives across Amber Valley!

The Get Out Get Active (GOGA) programme has continued to go from strength to strength, surpassing all KPI's for the year. We've proudly partnered with ARCH Primary Care Network to deliver Wellbeing Drop-In sessions across Somercotes, Ripley, Heanor, Crich, and Alfreton. These sessions have helped us create new local sessions—including chair-based exercise classes, tai chi, and community boxing—all inspired by resident feedback.

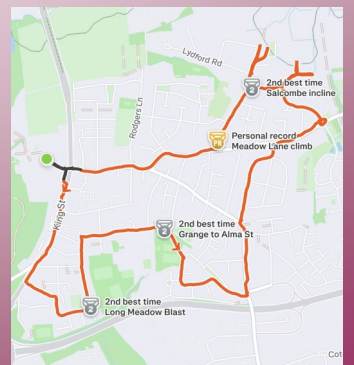
From the Wellbeing Drop-Ins our walking groups have welcomed new faces, and many residents have been signposted to local physical activity opportunities, helping build healthier, more connected communities.

Throughout the year GOGA has also hosted men's yoga, Yoga for cancer care, chair-based strength and conditioning, inclusive dance sessions, community tennis sessions and a deaf women's sofa to 3K running

The Walk Derbyshire programme continues to thrive in Amber Valley. We've trained new walk leaders from a diverse range of organisations, including New Horizon Church Group, Friends of Bennerley Viaduct, Deaf-initely Women, Amber Valley Ambles and SEN Fit.

Additional leaders from Duffield, Crich, and Heanor have also been trained, strengthening our walking network and ensuring sustainability.

In December, Alfreton Jog Club run leaders became certified Walk Leaders, enabling them to host their popular 'Reindeer Run' as a community walk around Alfreton. The event drew over 70 enthusiastic participants—a festive and fun way to get moving.



We have continued to be an integral part of the Walk Derbyshire Community Engagement Pilot work, focusing our engagement in the Somercotes, Riddings and Ironville area of Amber Valley.

During this year I completed my British Nordic Walking instructor training, paving the way for taster sessions to be offered across Amber Valley. These will be part of our Community Model of Health Referral, launching in late 2025.

Our unique Couch to 5X motivational support programme has continued to progress over this year, and we have supported a further 70 clients with referrals from various healthcare organisations. One standout story involves a gentleman recovering from a fall. His initial goal was a short walk near home—now, after weeks of support, he confidently walks to his local bus stop and explores Amber Valley and beyond. His journey is a testament to the power of movement and motivational support.

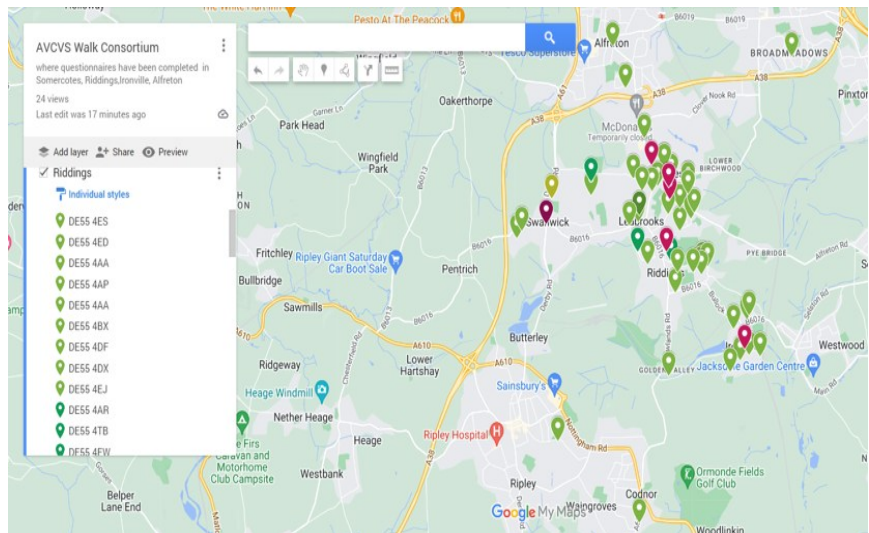
Annual Report—Work with Partners

Walk Consortium

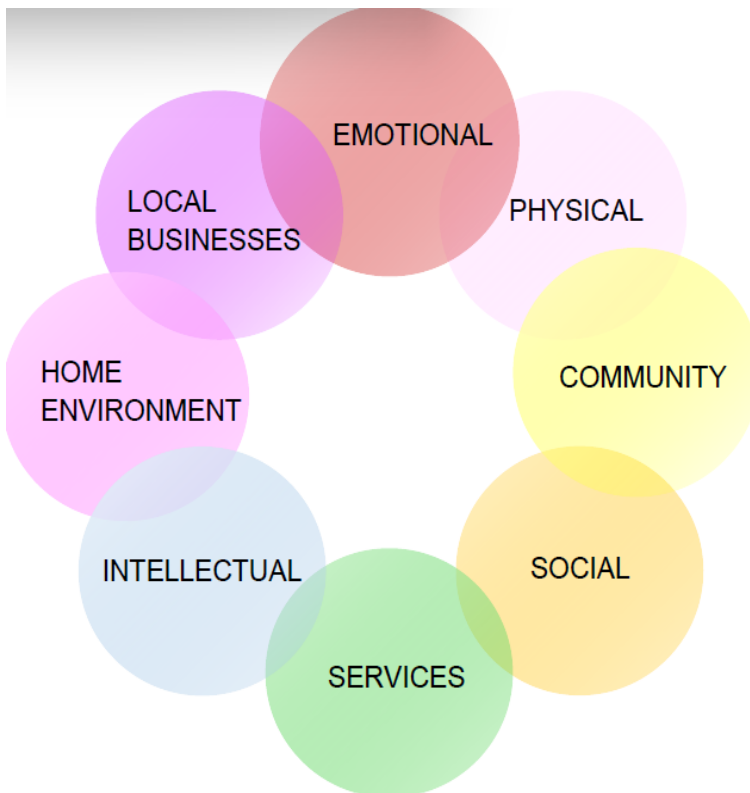
Were you in Somercotes, Ironville or Riddings when we asked what would make you move more?

Clare met 93 lovely people with stories of their activity and mobility in the area— even stopping to talk at garden fences on days when the sun was out.

What we learned was that some people walked a lot ;



One lady at 93 yrs young walked every day and felt this kept her off medications. A gentleman talked about plans to climb mountains in Wales. Others wished they could walk and described the barriers that prevented them. Working in the area renewed connections we had and created new connections. We were able to signpost people with information to eg Cinammon trust, One Health, volunteering, Couch to 5X. We were told that health conditions, time commitments, not wishing to walk alone and other things like pavement condition, weather, nowhere to pause on a walk were barriers. Changes since then have seen a bench erected to help Amber Ambles strolls in the park, more moving activity in Somercotes Parish Hall and intense neighbourhood scans to identify environment issues to improve in the near future.



Ageing Well

In partnership with AGE UK Derby & Derbyshire, we have spoken with people over 50 in Alfretton, Somercotes & Riddings to understand what services there are for that age group and also think about this in relation to a Healthy Ageing Framework.

We will be analysing what we have heard and putting forward a plan that provides for sustainable solutions to gaps.

Linked with this, we have been identifying what is available for Dementia support and whether those who have or care for dementia suffers are aware of and getting access to services either form a voluntary or statutory organisation. The aim is to have a “Dementia Friendly” Amber Valley and we already believe there is a lot to do to meet that aim.

Thanks to those on the steering groups who have input to this and especial thanks to Maple Mews Care Home and the Loved Ones Support group.

Annual Report—Partners News

Social Connections

Isolation and loneliness can happen at anytime and local organisations have met together to share information connecting activity in Amber Valley and also to think about what they have identified as creating loneliness for different people.

Staff from public health, social prescribers, social care, Derbyshire Carers, Deaf-Initely Women, CAMEO Methodist Churches, Get Out get Active, AGE UK and others have contributed to conversations on how to reach out and reduce loneliness.

Anyone can now access up to date information on the Connected Amber Valley—reducing isolation google map. This shows a wide range of social activity is available for those who can get out.

Aldercar and Langley Mill Meet Ups were really successful and have progressed to the set up a Community Hub in Langley Mill.

A new bereavement support group is being facilitated by Social Prescribers in Ripley whilst Social Prescribers in Belper facilitate Managing Pain sessions.

Working in partnership gave the opportunity to gain insight into those who are housebound and those with mobility difficulties in Somercotes, Riddings and Ironville led by Active Partners.

Communities across the borough identified how they could improve connectedness by applying for public health grants which supported Sawmills Book Share, Ironville Young People, Summer events in Ironville, Fun days at Belper North Mill, Shipley Park Community event and Alfreton Warm Space continuation.

What next to connect people ? A new focus for 2025 –26 with further grants available.

Check www.avcvs.org or with Glynn Wilton for criteria; glynnwilton@avcvs.org



Social Prescribing Service



Connecting you to local services to improve your physical and mental wellbeing



ARE YOU A SEPARATED PARENT?



Are you experiencing problems sorting out child contact?

Why do separated families use contact centres?

- To separate children from conflict
- To build, maintain and start relationships
- As a first step towards collaborative parenting
- Because parents are unable to agree on the arrangements for their children
- Because contact hasn't happened for a long time
- Because parents can't or don't want to see each other

We take referrals from parents themselves or professionals. You also don't have to live in Belper to use our centre.

Belper Child Contact Centre can help

We offer a safe, friendly, neutral space where children of separated families can spend time with a parent and sometimes other family members. We are a child centred environment and we put the needs of the children first.

Scan the QR code for more information



CELEBRATING OUR VALUES: why we are proud of what we do.

May we invite you to join us on **22nd November** to Celebrate the good work that people and groups in and around Belper do?

You will get the chance to tell people about your project or organisation and then share the values that motivate you.

We are an informal network of community focused groups in and around the Belper area. Our main objective is to connect local people and organisations, creating robust collaborative networks which will strengthen individual and collective efforts towards a fairer, more equal, just and sustainable community.

We facilitate community gatherings, forums, and events to share ideas, promote initiatives, and discuss practical actions.

The Gathering is from **11.00 - 2.00** at Belper Strutts Community Centre and is free.



GET IN TOUCH

contact@belpercommunitycottage.co.uk
01773 880364

Belper Community Cottage
16, Chapel Street
Belper, Derbyshire, DE56 1AR



Part of Belper Lights switch on event

FREE DROP-IN DONATIONS WELCOME

Winter FESTIVAL

Sunday 16th November, 2025
12pm - 4pm
Co-create space, inside Belper Coop, Strutt Street

12pm/2pm+ DJ Martin Ross-Butler ~ feel-good tunes	throughout Emma Parkins Willow stars & communal sculpture	throughout Fleet Arts Leafy lights & Live Art	1pm Rough Truffles Community Choir ~ festive songs
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Dance..Craft..Sing..Look..Make..Snack!
with Belper Shed & THRIVE youth arts club exhibitions

www.fleet-arts.org

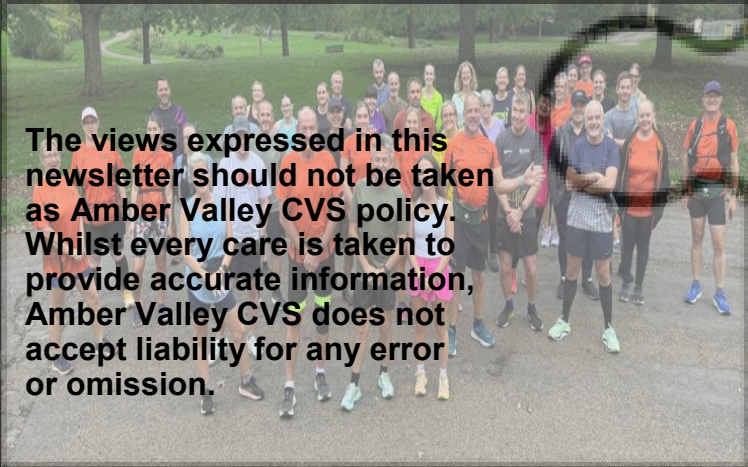
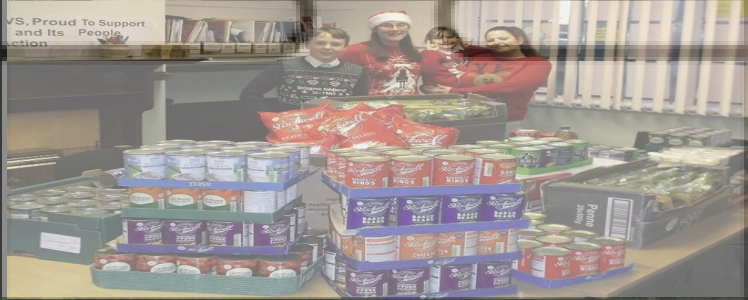
Established in Derbyshire 1983

UPCOMING WINTER HAPPENINGS

Registered Charity No. 516342

<p>NOV 11 & DEC 09 free</p> <p>Bish Bash Nosh Creative sessions: Belper Baptist Church 12pm - 1.30pm All ages and with a hot, fresh cooked meal</p>	<p>NOV 14 & DEC 12</p> <p>Bloomin Marvellous Eco art: Alder Centre, Alder Road, Belper 10.30am - 12.30pm Adult well-being, register: info@fleet-arts.org</p>
<p>central COOP membership</p> <p>NOV 16</p> <p>Winter Festival Christmas Lights Switch on DJ..Choir..Arts..Willow..Snacks..Exhibitions Co-create space, Strutt Street, Belper 12pm - 4pm All welcome!</p>	<p>DEC 05</p> <p>Diwali celebration/concert 'Roshni' Indian classical music, vocals and dance No.28, Market Place, Belper 7pm - 9pm (tickets: www.surtalarts.co.uk/our-events)</p>
<p>DEC 08</p> <p>Festive Fleet Calling all friends of Fleet Arts! Join us for our team/trustee festive gathering The Railway Pub, King Street, Belper 9pm - 11pm</p>	<p>EARLY 2026</p> <p>Lots of exciting plans are underway including: ~ Tap dance in Amber Valley care homes ~ 'Revolutions' workshops in Derbyshire Dales ~ Belper 250/UNESCO 25 birthday events ~ Co-create Welcome space...and more the</p>

www.fleet-arts.org



The views expressed in this newsletter should not be taken as Amber Valley CVS policy. Whilst every care is taken to provide accurate information, Amber Valley CVS does not accept liability for any error or omission.