



**Dragons' Den – June 2025**  
**The project reports so far....**

**April 2026**

**RAZOM**

**£500 for activities in Faringdon & Witney for Ukrainian families and British supporting families**

**Report of activities to 15<sup>th</sup> December**

The grant was received alongside a grant of £1,210 from West Oxfordshire District Council.

“On behalf of our entire team and the Ukrainian community we support, please accept our sincere gratitude to Faringdon & District Rotary for this generous grant. Your contribution has had a meaningful and positive impact on our work.

“We are pleased to share that we have received extremely positive feedback from the activities and events delivered as part of this project. The support provided has made a real difference to the beneficiaries, and it has been encouraging to see such strong engagement and appreciation from the community.”

With warm regards and sincere appreciation,  
Razom CIC Team





“A series of family clubs were organised and held in Witney and Faringdon between September and 15 December. The total number of events held was 12 sessions, of which 11 were held in Witney and 1 session in Faringdon. As of 15 December, £789 of grant aid had been spent.

“Each session was attended by up to 20 people, mainly families with children of all ages. The events were regular and held in a safe, friendly and supportive environment.

“The main aim of the family clubs was:

- social integration of Ukrainian families into the local community;
- reduction of stress and emotional tension among parents and children;
- creating a space for communication, mutual support and informal recreation;
- supporting the psycho-emotional well-being of displaced persons.

“During each session, the following activities were held:

1. Creative workshops for children aimed at developing fine motor skills, imagination and emotional self-expression.
2. Sports classes for families that promoted physical activity and team interaction.
3. Psychotherapeutic and psycho-educational support aimed at processing emotional experiences, adapting to new living conditions and strengthening psychological resilience.
4. Tea and coffee for parents, which created an informal atmosphere for communication, exchange of experiences and mutual support.

“By March 2026, it is planned to hold 6 more sessions in Faringdon and 9 in Witney. The family clubs held had a positive impact on the participants. Parents and children were actively involved in the events, demonstrated a high level of interest and regular attendance. Participants noted an improvement in their emotional state, the opportunity to socialize, and a sense of community. The implementation of this initiative confirmed the importance of family clubs as an effective form of support for Ukrainian immigrants in the UK and the feasibility of continuing such events in the future.”

## **Root & Branch**

**£840 for gym equipment**

**Report September 2025**

“An early report for you from Root & Branch, following the 2025 Dragon's Den funding for which we are most grateful.

“We have been shopping for Gym equipment, and our small 'Straw Bale' building now has an amazing gym vibe. Due to changes with some of the Participants that we are

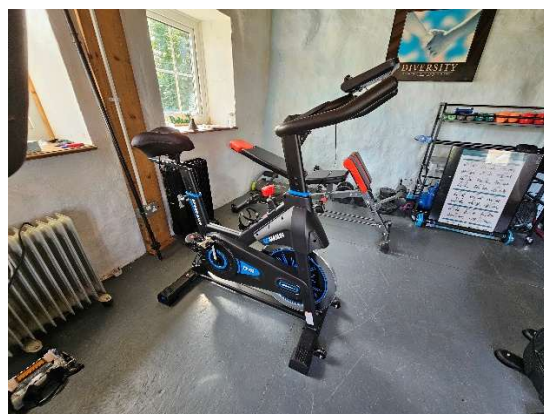
currently supporting, we did make a few tweaks to the items and the spec of items that we finally decided to purchase, to ensure that we were meeting the needs of our current cohort while also ensuring that we were going to make the maximum use of the equipment purchased immediately.

“So, we now have a Free-Standing Pull-Up Station and Gym Bench which some of our younger male participants are already making regular use of, and purchased a Weights Storage Trolley for the weights to along with these, and a Punch Bag. We also purchased an Exercise Bike, and floor mats, which are ready for some Yoga and Pilates classes that we have received other funding to run. So, we did utilise the entire funds awarded, and by changing the specs made the funds go further.

“We are also now going to retain the original exercise bike, after one of our Participant expressed that it would be an ideal place for their one-to-one meetings with staff. For some of our participants these meetings can be quite challenging, and sitting facing each other is not always the best seating structure for a participant to fully open up to staff. So, we plan to see if we can give the old bike a little TLC and utilise it for the staff member in this situation to cycle alongside the participant (or just sit on if we can't fix it), to facilitate them to feel more comfortable discussing their goals and challenges.

“With best wishes, and grateful thanks once again.”

Rachel Brockie, Fundraising Officer



## **Faringdon Community College**

**£1,289 for a piano**

**Report July 2025**

“I thought you would like to know that our new piano has arrived in the music department! I thought you'd enjoy seeing a picture of a student using it - she was happy for me to send it to you. Thank you ever so much again for the rotary club's generous amount of money to support the purchase of the piano.”

Felicity Woolnough, Head of Music



## **Clanfield Primary School**

**£700 for outdoor play equipment**

**Report February 2026**

“We are incredibly grateful for the grant we received, which has had a truly positive impact on our school community and, most importantly, on our children's learning and development.

“Thanks to this funding, we were able to purchase much-needed equipment for our outdoor learning environment. The children have enthusiastically embraced the new resources, particularly enjoying designing their own obstacle courses and developing their balance and coordination skills through active play.

“The addition of the outdoor chalkboard has been especially valuable, enabling children to continue writing, mark-making, and practicing fine motor skills beyond the classroom setting. This has supported creativity, independence, and a seamless extension of learning into the outdoor environment.

“Our multipurpose playhouse has quickly become a hub for imaginative play — transforming into everything from a zoo and dolls' house to a space centre. The versatility of this resource has encouraged collaboration, storytelling, and creative exploration, with endless possibilities emerging each day.

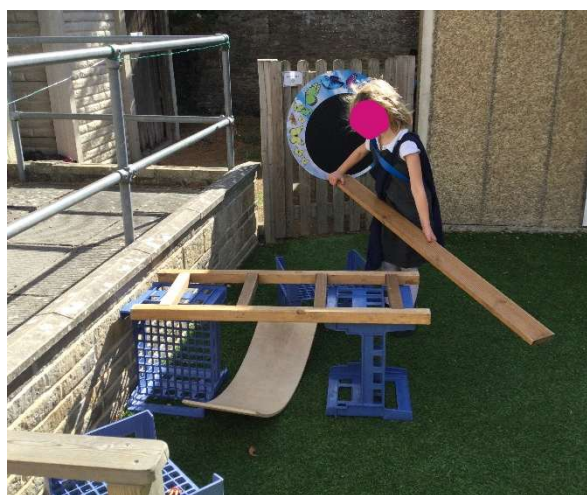


“Furthermore, the new spinning top has provided children with important sensory feedback, supporting emotional regulation and wellbeing. It has become a meaningful tool in helping children manage their emotions and engage positively in play and learning.

“We are extremely thankful for this generous support, which has enriched our provision and created lasting benefits for the children’s physical development, creativity, and emotional wellbeing.”



Mrs Amy Benfield  
Assistant Headteacher & Year 1 / 2 Teacher



## **Faringdon Darts Academy**

**£700 for equipment**  
**Report February 2026**

“Faringdon Darts Academy would like to extend a sincere thank you to the Faringdon & District Rotary - Dragons’ Den team for their generous award of £700.

“This funding has made a significant impact on our academy. With the donation, we were able to purchase official Faringdon Darts Academy shirts for every member. Providing a full team kit has strengthened our sense of unity and pride, while also ensuring we can represent Faringdon professionally at tournaments across the country.

“In addition, the funding has enabled us to purchase tablets for each dartboard. This has enhanced our coaching provision by allowing us to use dedicated software for scoring and to introduce a wider range of online games and formats beyond traditional 501. The technology is already improving player engagement and development.

“We are extremely grateful for Rotary’s support and belief in our project. The contribution has directly benefited all of our young players and will continue to support their progress both on and off the oche.

“Rotary members are always very welcome to visit the academy to see first-hand how their funding is helping our young people develop their skills, confidence and teamwork.  
Thank you once again for your generosity.”

Joe Wheeler, Director, Faringdon Darts Academy



## **Faringdon Folly Trust**

### **£750 for new trees**

### **Report February 2026**

Extracts from the report:

The total cost of the planting project was £2,141

“Over the last 2 years we have had to fell eight large deciduous trees within the Folly woodland after safety surveys had identified them as unsafe. This has left the woodland looking worryingly sparse in certain areas. In 2024 we started work to fill these gaps in the forest and took delivery of 200 small trees (whips) from the Woodland Trust. These were planted out through a Faringdon community planting day and by classes from Elms Primary School.

“Sadly fewer than 10% of our saplings survived this initial planting as the Folly hill is quite a hostile environment for young plants being very exposed and built of sand. The sand is a problem as the rain drains away quickly in the summer, leaving our saplings struggling to survive. Last year’s dry summer was especially challenging for the young trees.

“In 2025 we decided to alter our planting strategy, changing to:

- Buying fewer, but taller, saplings that would have an immediate impact on their surroundings, providing some much needed foliage.
- Having a smaller number of larger trees means that our volunteers will be able to focus on these trees and ensure that they are watered every week over the summer months. We believe we will need to do this for the first 2 years.
- We also decided to focus on planting ‘drought tolerant’ tree species. Species were selected based on their proven drought tolerance, root stability, and ability to adapt to the soil and microclimate of the planting area. This selection process ensured that each tree would not only survive but flourish with minimal irrigation, reducing long-term maintenance demands. We eventually settled on a mix of silver birch, small leaf limes, oak and sweet chestnut trees.

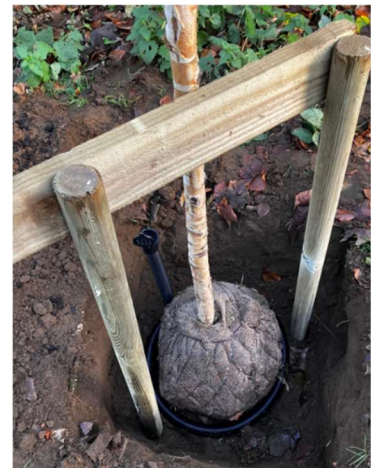
- We also decided to commit additional funds to fencing off the saplings, to prevent accidental damage, and planted trees with mulch mats and irrigation piping to enable us to get water to the tree roots.

“In two planting sessions running from November 2025 to January 2026, a small team of 7 woodland volunteers planted out 12 trees being a mix of: 4 Silver Birch, 3 Small Leaf Lime Trees, 2 Oak trees and 3 Sweet Chestnut trees.

The trees were planted with their own micro-drip irrigation piping, mulch mats, tree supports and fencing as planned.



“The team will need to carefully monitor the health of the trees and water them over the next 2 years. The irrigation systems planted with the trees features a perforated pipe that will enable us to get water directly to the tree root balls. Woodland volunteers will still need to transport water up to the Folly and we have purchased 2 Aqua Rolls to enable us to do this.



“The Folly Woodland is one of the few green spaces open to Faringdon’s residents and it is a much cherished location. The very generous donation provided by the Rotary Club has gone a long way to enabling to deliver this planting project, supporting the development of the Folly woodland and helping to ensure that it will remain a special place for our community to enjoy leisure activities.”

Paul Peel, Faringdon Folly Trust



**Faringdon Day Centre**  
**£500 for publicity materials**  
**Report March 2026**

“Our objective was to enhance the publicity about the Day Centre in order to improve awareness of the Day Centre and the services we offer, especially among people caring for the elderly. In turn we hoped to attract new clients who needed the services of a Day Centre.

“We have spent the grant as follows:

- Design and manufacture of a notice board to be fixed permanently to the railings outside Faringdon Baptist Chapel.
- Purchase of an A-Frame notice board to be displayed outside when the Day Centre is meeting.
- Design and printing of two A2 posters for use in the A-frame.

“We think that these, together with regular advertising in The Advertiser, posters around Faringdon and beyond have helped to get a stream, small but steady, of new clients. This is essential as many of our clients have early stage dementia and so there is a gradual loss of clients as they leave to move into full-time care.



“We have been most grateful for Rotary support over the past few years, but our main requirement now is for help with running costs rather than projects. Help in 2026/27 towards the cost of hiring the hall at the Baptist Chapel would be very welcome.”

Keith Thrower  
Treasurer, Faringdon Day Centre



## **Friends of Shellingford School**

**£525 for a sensory room**

**Report February 2026**

“On behalf of Friends of Shellingford School, I would like to extend our thanks for your generous funding to transform one of our rooms - Anne's Room - into a dedicated SEN sensory space.

“We have carefully selected a calming colour scheme and the walls have now been freshly painted, completely transforming the feel of the room. The new colours create a soothing and welcoming environment, which will be vital in supporting our pupils who benefit from a quieter, more regulated space.

“We are currently in the process of purchasing specialist sensory equipment to fully equip the room. This includes sensory lighting, interactive resources, music equipment, and tactile elements designed to promote self-regulation, focus, and emotional wellbeing.

“This new SEN sensory room will provide a safe, nurturing environment where children can regulate their emotions, develop sensory processing skills, and build confidence in their learning. It will be used daily and will have a lasting impact on many pupils for years to come.

“We look forward to welcoming members of the Rotary Club to visit the completed room and see firsthand the difference your funding has made.”

Zoe, FoSS Treasurer

## **Shrivenham Primary School**

**£800 for markings in school playground**

**Report February 2026**

“Following our very successful bid to the Rotary Club and their generous grant, the children of Year 6 then spent the summer term raising money. They sold ice pops and held a whole day fundraising event and managed to add a further £1300. We were fortunate to receive a further donation of £250 from our local Co-Op, so were able to chose our markings. These were ordered before the summer holidays. Unfortunately, due to problems with the company there have been a number of delays ... they finally were completed on Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February.

“The children are loving using the markings and everyone agrees they have made a huge difference to playtimes.



“Thank you to the Rotary Club for your wonderful contribution towards this brilliant project. It has made a brilliant addition to the children’s playtimes as they are developing imaginative games and team work.”

Nicky Coleman, Shrivenham Primary School

## **The Place**

**£1,500 for a visit to the Cotswold Wildlife Park**

**Report February 2026**

48 families took part in the visit to the Cotswold Wildlife Park. The grant paid for coach hire and for entrance tickets. Some families were able to provide their own transport and some others were able to pay for their entrance tickets.

The feedback from the families included:

“My little girl M had a great day that wouldn’t have been possible without transport as I don’t drive , Lucy, Sarah and the others were amazing at getting everyone involved and feeling welcome. It was amazing to spend time with other mums and have a good natter. We are very lucky to have the opportunity to go today.”

“Such an incredible experience for me and my young family. We would not have been able to enjoy a day out like this without The place and its amazing staff! Thank you for allowing me and my children to make some fantastic memories together. N”

“Thank you so much for putting this day on. Summer holidays become so expensive for many families. This was lovely to have the option to make a donation toward the day and ensure more families could come along. It truly was a wonderful day out. Thank you to all that made it happen.”

“Money is tight while on maternity leave so it was lovely to be able to create memories with my 2 boys and meet up with other families during the day to help ease the stress of being on your own with a toddler and a baby!”

“My little girl and I were so grateful for the opportunity to have such a special day out with lots of mum friends and their little ones. The sense of community exploring with local families was so lovely and we had a day to form memories to cherish. My little girl came home so excited to tell daddy about her fun day with her friends and it was such a treat to be able to take her round somewhere that we wouldn’t generally be able to go to on our own. Thank you so much! These outings give us so very much, and we are so blessed and grateful to have been able to go.”

“We would like to once again send our sincere thanks to the Rotary Club for the opportunity to give families and their children a wonderful day out, which otherwise they would not be able to afford. A wonderful day was had by all, some of the families both Parents and Children had never been to a zoo before, to see the excitement on their faces was magical.”

Lucy Redwood-Hanson, Manager, The Place

**Watchfield Primary School**  
**£700 for science equipment**  
**Report March 2026**

Thanks to your kind and very generous donation, we have been able to purchase some new electricity equipment for the school. The funds have been put towards updating and expanding our electricity teaching resources.

The kit purchased has enabled our pupils to enjoy experimenting with electrical circuits. They have learnt about what a circuit is and how they work. Problem solved how to make a light bulb glow or a buzzer sound. Experimented with switches in circuits by building and testing their own switch creations and lastly, then applying their new electricity knowledge to problem solving by finding errors in given circuit diagrams by building and testing the circuits to find the problem.

Below are some pictures of the circuits they built, some of the switches they made and tested, along with the circuit problem solving challenges.

Many thanks again for helping us to make the science we teach much more exciting and hands on.

Nicky Barnett

Class Teacher and Science Coordinator.

