

## Connecting Three Rivers Fund 2024-25

### 1. Funding allocation

Organisation	Funds Awarded (£)	Case Study
9 Lives	1,250	Attached
Electric Umbrella	1,500	Attached
SWH Community Transport T/A Roundabout	1,000	Attached
Anti Social Behaviour and Youth Violence	853.77	Delivery of Crucial Crew in July 2025
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,603.77</b>	

### 2. 9 Lives

2.1 To support furniture repair training and volunteer opportunities. To enable 9 Lives to continue to operate our services and delivery the training. We are constantly up against cost increases in energy, utilities, waste collection and staff costs. We want to provide more training courses as we have a waiting list of people in need but cannot do this without additional funding.

2.2 Results: We started an extra upcycling workroom course for 4 individuals with minor health and learning issues just over 6 weeks ago. It is a real mixed bunch with one of the students with server learning issues who attends with a full-time carer and two students who have server anxiety

These students have learnt to sand furniture, paint, repair, stencil and upholster items. They have worked on chalk boards, tables, wicker chairs and plant stands. They have two more weeks of the course left so will do other aspects of upcycling during that time.

We have given each student a chalk board that they painted but all other items they have upcycles have gone on to our shop floor for sale, they quality is outstanding.

What I can say about this group of students is how wonderful they have been. Without doubt these individuals have been the most engaging, enthusiastic and friendly group we have had. Our tutor has never enjoyed running a class as much as he is enjoying this one. They are wonderful and have not only developed a practical skill, but they have also learnt to engage with each other and the rest of the team here at 9 Lives Furniture. The confidence growth we have seen from each of these four students is remarkable.

This extra course has been a wonderful success story, and we can't thank you enough for the support you have given which allowed this course to happen.

"This course and work only happened thanks to the generosity of the grant supplied"



### 3. Electric Umbrella

- 3.1. As part of our Shine a Light programme, Electric Umbrella delivered inclusive Music Machine visits to four Three Rivers schools across the spring term.
- 3.2. This project brought together two mainstream primary schools and two SEND schools for a powerful, creative collaboration rooted in music, representation and connection. These were:
  - 3.2.1. Divine Saviour Primary School (mainstream)
  - 3.2.2. Breakspeare School (SEND)
  - 3.2.3. Colnebrook School (SEND)
  - 3.2.4. Sarratt C of E School (mainstream)

- 3.3. This project was designed to break down barriers between mainstream and SEND schools. The relationships were central to the project's impact of fostering understanding, empathy and friendship between pupils through shared musical experiences.

In addition to in-person visits, all participating schools joined online music sessions, further enriching the collaboration as well as embedding the music and further developing relationship with Electric Umbrella. We also provided access to our inclusive singing resources and ready to use lesson plans, enabling teachers to embed the project's music and ethos into their classrooms across the term.

The visits form part of a longer term journey culminating in our "Shine a Light" mass singing event at St Albans Cathedral in June 2025. All four schools will come together with many others to celebrate inclusion and connection.

This has been a deeply enriching experience for all involved. It has

- 3.3.1 Offered learning disabled adults meaningful leadership roles
- 3.3.2 Promoted understanding and friendship between SEND and mainstream pupils
- 3.3.3 Supported inclusive practice in schools
- 3.3.4 Strengthened Electric Umbrella's partnerships with local schools in Three Rivers District.

"We are incredibly grateful to the Connecting Three Rivers Fund for enabling this work, which has not only delivered immediate benefits but also laid strong foundations for deeper collaboration and inclusion in the future.



#### 4. SWH Community Transport T/A Roundabout Transport

- 4.1. Our transport manager of 20 years has retired and to employ a new one means adverts and some specific training. MIDAS training is required. Our charity has 11 disabled accessible minibuses that serve the community. The new transport manager is responsible for making sure the buses run smoothly and comply with all legislation. They also do all the training for any new volunteer driver who comes on board.
- 4.2. We advertised in all local publications for the position of a new Transport Manager. It took a while to find the right person and we had to advertise for over 3 months. We did find a fantastic new member of the Roundabout Team and as we thought, they didn't have the necessary qualification for the roll. That is where the 2<sup>nd</sup> part of the funding came in. The person went on the required courses during their first two weeks of employment and passed with flying colours.
- This has meant that we now have a Transport Manager who can train our members and other community members to drive the minibuses. This training includes full instruction in the disabled accessible equipment that our buses are adapted to, together with a short driving orientation and familiarisation of our safety procedures. These are requirements of our insurance company and are best practice in the charity sector.
- "We are so grateful for the "Connecting Three Rivers" grant. It has been invaluable in our endeavour to find the right member to join our small charity".