



Strategic Partnerships Impact Report

June 2026

Foreword

I am pleased to introduce this report on the Strategic Partnership Grants programme and the remarkable progress it has enabled.



At a time of increasing demand, constrained resources and growing complexity across the social and environmental landscapes, the importance of flexible, long-term funding has never been clearer.

When examining the impact of the Strategic Partnership Grants programme, what stands out most powerfully is not only what our charitable partners have delivered to date, but how their work has laid the foundations for lasting impact in the years ahead. Through multi-year, unrestricted support, organisations have strengthened their foundations, built capacity, stability and resilience, and had the space to think, plan and act more strategically. This has allowed them to expand their reach, deepen their impact and, importantly, take informed risks to innovate and test new approaches.

From supporting older people to live with dignity, to empowering young people, strengthening the voice of carers, financing nature's recovery and protecting our landscapes and seascapes, each organisation has used this funding in ways that are both responsive and ambitious.

In many cases, the effects extend well beyond individual programmes, shaping policy, influencing wider sectors, and unlocking additional funding and collaboration.

We are particularly encouraged by the 'ripple effects' evident across the portfolio: stronger networks, shared learning, and a growing confidence among partners to lead change within their fields. These outcomes reinforce our belief that meaningful, lasting impact is achieved not only through what is funded, but how it is funded.

My sincere thanks go to our strategic partners for their dedication, insight and leadership, and to all those who support and contribute to this work.

Sir Ian Cheshire
Chair of Trustees





Context

King Charles III Charitable Fund was established by His Majesty in 1979 with a mission to transform lives and build sustainable communities through grant making and the incubation of charitable initiatives and projects.

In 2022, the Trustees undertook a strategic review of the Fund's grant making, resulting in the creation of a new Strategic Partnership Grants programme focused on delivering lasting environmental and social impact.

The programme was designed to support a small number of high-impact organisations with unrestricted funding, recognising the critical role of flexible finance in strengthening organisational resilience and effectiveness. Alongside funding, partners would benefit from a more engaged relationship with the Fund and from its convening power and profile. Together, these elements were intended to act as a catalyst – attracting wider support, amplifying impact, and showcasing exemplar work that could be replicated and scaled.

The Strategic Partnership Grants programme launched in 2023 with an initial £1.95 million commitment, supporting seven organisations focused on nature's recovery and support for people facing disadvantage. A second round in 2024 extended funding to four further organisations, with a particular emphasis

on regenerative approaches to protecting and restoring land and seascapes. A third round has now been announced, supporting six additional partners and bringing the Fund's total commitment through this grants programme to £4.4 million to date.

In addition to funding, the Strategic Partnership Grants offer partners a broader package of support and engagement, including knowledge-sharing events, profile-raising opportunities, and connections with Trustees and the Fund's close stakeholders.

This report explores the contribution of the Strategic Partnership Grants to organisational strength and impact, based on data from the first round of funding which has now concluded, together with interim findings from the second round of funding. Evidence from round one and two partners was independently reviewed and analysed by Bean Research.

Executive summary

In 2023, King Charles III Charitable Fund launched the Strategic Partnership Grants programme, offering three years of unrestricted funding to organisations working to create lasting social and environmental change, trusting them to direct resources where they were most needed.

This report captures the contribution of that investment, drawing on evidence from all eleven partners funded through the first and second rounds of this programme, independently reviewed and analysed by Bean Research.

The organisations supported over the last three years have operated in an increasingly uncertain and demanding context. Rising living costs have increased both the demand for services and the complexity of need, while philanthropic giving has slowed. For those working on environmental issues the challenge is sharper, with less than 2% of global philanthropic giving dedicated to climate change mitigation. Against this backdrop, multi-year unrestricted funding underpinning this grants programme remains uncommon across the sector.

What the fund enabled

Despite differences in size, sector and geography, a consistent pattern of how funding has contributed to impact has emerged across the Fund's strategic partner portfolio.

The multi-year, unrestricted, trust-based funding supported partners to strengthen foundations in three distinct but related ways:

Increased capacity

40 new roles were created, bringing specialist expertise and dedicated strategic capacity through roles such as a Carer Involvement Manager, Head of Science, Land Advice Manager and Impact & Insights Lead.

Improved stability

Partners invested in sustainable infrastructure, including evidence hubs, activity portals, competency frameworks and impact measurement systems. Crucially, the funding also created headspace for strategic reflection and development.

Enhanced resilience

All of the partners reported an increased ability to absorb shocks, respond to increasing demand and navigate policy, funding and organisational changes. These stronger foundations did not remove external pressures, but left partners better placed to manage continuing uncertainty.

QUOTE

“It has been a privilege to work alongside our partners over the past three years and to see how this funding has helped drive innovation, inspired fresh thinking, and unlocked meaningful opportunities for lasting impact.”

Nikki Jeffery

Executive Director, King Charles III Charitable Fund

Impact of strategic partnership

These stronger foundations in turn enabled partners to extend and deepen their impact through:

Cross-sector influence

Partners were all able to share learning beyond individual programmes through building networks, contributing to emerging areas of practice through platforms, events and handbooks and informing policy, amplifying the reach of the Fund's investment across the wider sector.

Raised profile

Partners reported that association with the Charitable Fund enhanced their profile and credibility and helped them leverage additional funding.

Expanded programmes

Work grew in scale and depth, reaching more people including the elderly, unpaid carers, young people, farmers and communities on the climate frontline. Projects also expanded the land area being protected and regenerated.

Embedded lived experience

Funding contributed to systematically embedding the voices and lived experiences of the communities served. Partners built communities of practice, enlarged and formalised their advisory panels and feedback mechanisms, gaining deeper understanding and strengthening both their practice and credibility as advocates for their communities.

Innovation

The grant gave teams the confidence to take more risks, innovate, identify what worked and what didn't, which led to new approaches and new programmes.



Our strategic partners

The Strategic Partnership Grants programme has worked with 17 partners to date.







Age Scotland is the Scottish charity for older people. It provides older people, their families and their carers with high quality information and advice services, including a free Helpline, friendship programmes, support for older people's community groups and campaigns on issues to improve quality of life.

The Strategic Partnership Grant provided **stability and increased capacity** to the Helpline team. The team grew from 6 to 20 people across the three years. The guaranteed multi-year funding acted as a springboard to develop new projects or pilots, while links between the Helpline and other departments were strengthened.

As a result...

Age Scotland increased the number of older people they were able to support over the three years of the grant.

They developed and launched a new service called By Your Side (BYS) supporting callers with knowledge and access to relevant additional benefits or services they might be eligible for and provided practical help with the application processes.

Age Scotland were able to extend BYS, piloting an in-person service in two under-served areas of Glasgow, with one tailored to the higher proportion of residents from ethnic minority backgrounds. These in-person services have been an incredible success with high demand from the communities they serve.

In turn, creating...

The funding has supported processes for collecting and sharing Helpline data. For example, the insights on the needs of the Helpline callers feed directly into policy discussions between Age Scotland and the Scottish Government. This has helped to shape the design of new policy regarding older people, and creating a feedback loop on existing policy and proposed policy changes.

In 2024 and 2025, evidence from Helpline callers directly fed into Age Scotland's work with the Scottish and UK governments on the impact of proposed changes to Winter Fuel Payment. Age Scotland's Helpline was also signposted as the official support service for any older person impacted negatively by the changes.

Across the grant period:

15,822

Friendship team calls.

321,075

printed information guides

supporting older people were distributed.

The Helpline identified

£5,736,265

of social security financial gain for older people through 101,320 calls.

QUOTE

“The certainty of three years of funding has given us security. We’ve used it as a springboard to develop the service and seek other funding.”

Katherine Crawford
Chief Executive Officer



The
Wildlife
Trusts

The Royal Society of Wildlife Trusts is the central charity which supports the 46 individual Wildlife Trusts across the UK, the Isle of Man and Alderney, with a mission to bring people closer to nature and secure a thriving natural world for future generations.

The Strategic Partnership Grant allowed The Wildlife Trusts to explore new ways to generate financial return from land while prioritising sustainability and wildlife protection. This was enabled through **building expertise in green finance and land advice** through two new roles, funded for three years.

As a result...

The Green Finance Manager investigated new ways to generate nature-based sustainable income from protected land and contributed to an innovative approach to philanthropic loans, increasing the Trusts' long-term ability to acquire and protect more land.

Work resulted in a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)* Handbook, the first

of its kind, now being used across The Wildlife Trusts' federation; the development of a BNG demand forecasting model, helping The Wildlife Trusts decide where best to create habitat to generate income; and the identification of market demand and large buyers for The Wildlife Trust BNG units.

The Land Advice Service Manager created a thriving community of Land Advisors across The Wildlife Trusts. Key outputs were shareable frameworks, including a Land Advice Ladder, that helps Wildlife Trusts of any size to scale up their Land Advice offer, and a competency framework for advisors, showing the skills and knowledge needed for up-to-date sustainable Land Advice. This support enables advisors to give farmers effective, tailored advice that promotes environmental sustainability whilst also enabling business success.

Both roles are now fully embedded in The Wildlife Trusts' staffing structure, with sustainable funding enabling long-term planning.

In turn, creating...

The Green Finance Manager's work helped shape a new pooled funding approach for the sector, securing involvement from other funders and making it easier for all Wildlife Trusts to access funding to acquire and protect land. The Land Advice Manager fed into the development of government policy on sustainable agriculture, sharing the needs of farmers, and how to best support them.

* BNG means development leaves nature in a better state than before, with developers funding habitat creation or restoration.

Across the grant period:

10 *registered BNG habitat bank sites*

across The Wildlife Trusts & 70+ in development.

40

Wildlife Trusts received one-to-one land advice.

Nearly
300

land advisers working across the network.

3,838

hectares of land acquired through the philanthropic loan scheme.

QUOTE

“For me, relative to spend, this is one of the most impactful strategic programmes I’ve ever run.”

Rob Stoneman
Director of Landscape Recovery



BIGKID Foundation is a youth-led London charity tackling youth violence and social exclusion through community engagement, mentoring and leadership programmes, focused on creating safe spaces and positive pathways for young people.

The grant came at a time of transition, with the organisation having grown from 6 to 14 people.

With the grant, BIGKID were able to make the time and space to **shape the organisation’s strategy and direction** and **hire new roles**, including a Head of Operations, to strengthen core programmes and increase the number of young people they were supporting.

As a result...

Greater capacity in the team provided more time to build strong relationships with their local community and other local organisations and partners. This was crucial to increase their programme reach, with word-of-mouth being the primary way young people hear about the programme.

BIGKID’s programmes increased their reach, with attendance rising year on year and those attending the programme reporting increased wellbeing.

With more internal stability and capacity, senior staff could focus on diversifying income streams, developing earned income from service delivery and growing the partners and funders they work with, nationally and internationally. This built financial security and sustainability for BIGKID.

In turn, creating...

At a time when many local charities have had to close or reduce services, BIGKID were able to increase the number of young people they supported and the ways in which young people could engage with their programmes.

As a result, BIGKID are seen as a trusted voice for young people in the local area and have been able to join Local Authority Consortiums and Partnerships with other community organisations and schools, shaping youth provision around Brixton, London.

Across the grant period:

3,178
young people directly supported.

2,610
local residents and community members engaged through events, activities and hub use.

85%
of young people participating in BIGKID reported improved wellbeing, and 82% felt less isolated.

QUOTE

“Having the core support from KCCF allowed us to focus on the bigger picture and make crucial decisions like expanding our staff and developing new programmes.”

Kathy Silenga
Head of Development



Plantlife

Plantlife protects and restores wild plants and fungi in the UK and worldwide – working with land managers, governments, partners and communities to conserve species and habitats, and helping people reconnect with nature to boost wellbeing and inspire action.

Plantlife used the funding to strengthen its approach to data collection and research, creating a **new Science and Impact Team**, with four new science and learning roles including an overall Head of Science. This department brought together, coordinated and extended all research-related activities to support and **enhance Plantlife’s conservation efforts**.

As a result...

The Science and Impact Team was able to implement a range of internal systems including:

- A research and evidence hub, offering staff resources and tools related to evidence creation and research capacity.

- An activity portal that tracks project funding and delivery, allowing this data to inform new project decisions, building organisational resilience and reducing organisational risk.

The enhanced quality of evidence has strengthened Plantlife’s reporting, demonstrating higher standards of conservation impact.

The roles within the Science and Impact Team have now transitioned into permanent positions and are built into project budgets, securing longer term impact.

Plantlife also built valuable connections with science departments in other charities and numerous academic institutions. These partnerships have supported collaborative research on topics such as AI in conservation and species genetic diversity.

In turn, creating...

Plantlife co-founded a UK environmental NGO science network with RSPB for sharing knowledge and supporting science-driven conservation efforts in the sector. They also contributed to international discussions on plant conservation at COP16 and co-authored research papers, furthering global advocacy for biodiversity.

Across the grant period:

19

collaborative research projects with academic institutions.

8

journal articles with a Plantlife member of staff as a co-author.

QUOTE

“KCCF has made a huge difference to us as an organisation. It has touched on so many areas of our work internally and has really endorsed us externally.”

Sarah Williams
Head of Partnerships

14 Members
of a new environmental NGO science network.



CARERS TRUST

Carers Trust is the only organisation in the UK that brings together local services for carers, providing practical, emotional and financial support to more than one million carers – from all ages and backgrounds. Through its model of enabling carers to access support close to home, Carers Trust makes it possible for carers to live a full life alongside their caring role.

The grant was used to amplify the voice of lived experience across the organisation and network. The grant supported the **recruitment of dedicated roles**, including a Carer Involvement Manager and Youth Involvement Officer, alongside additional coordination capacity. Together, these roles enabled a shift towards a more structured and systematic approach to **embedding carer voices** across the organisation and its wider network.

As a result...

The network of carers able to feed into the organisation’s work was built up, ensuring the carers involved truly reflected the wider carer community, including younger carers and carers from ethnic minority backgrounds.

Across the grant period:

100

carers were involved in consultations related to design and evaluation.

The Carer Involvement Manager also built a ‘self-serve’ infrastructure supporting all departments and network partners to integrate the views of those with lived experience into their work.

The development of organisation-wide carer involvement enabled Carers Trust to adapt support to the needs of different types of carers and strengthen its authority to represent and speak on issues that affect carers. The grant also gave the team time and flexibility to see what works best in capturing and embedding lived experience, experimenting with the timing, structure and format of user groups. This learning was then shared with other charities in the sector.

Introduction of the formal involvement of a carer representative on the organisation’s Board of Trustees.

In turn, creating...

Carers Trust has been able to galvanise its strengthened community of carers to feed into policy development. For example, during proposed changes to Personal Independence Payments (PIP), Carers Trust facilitated direct discussions between carers in their network, MPs and ministers ensuring carers’ real-life experiences were heard. This engagement played a crucial role in securing a U-turn on the PIP cuts.

The Youth Advisory Panel was established, growing to

70+ members

QUOTE

“The grant has really helped us to be in a position where we can take risks and innovate, and it’s enabled us to have confidence to show new funders that we are responding to real needs with carer-led solutions.”

Holly Swinckels, Carer Involvement Manager



Practical ACTION

Practical Action works alongside smallholder farmers and other communities across Africa, Asia and Latin America to build sustainable livelihoods, adapt to change, prepare for shocks and influence the systems that shape their lives.

The grant enabled Practical Action to look beyond immediate delivery and invest time in strategic reflection. This led to a new 2030 strategy moving from a focus on regenerative agriculture to a **broader systemic view of climate resilience and livelihood adaptation.**

As a result...

The Regenerative Agriculture Planning and Implementation Diagnostic (RAPID) Tool was developed and piloted as part of a collaborative action research project in Zimbabwe. The RAPID Tool helped local stakeholders to understand regenerative agriculture and identify where potential lay for change. The

farmers, trained in regenerative agriculture, saw improved crop yields, reduced input costs, and they are pooling savings to buy inputs, reducing reliance on grants.

The strategy and evidenced-based impact has allowed Practical Action to position itself as the expert on systemic climate-change-induced livelihood adaptations to leverage additional funding.

Practical Action’s increased resilience was demonstrated in response to USAID funding cuts to food and water security projects in Sudan. Flexible grant funding enabled critical work to continue, whilst replacement income was sought, providing communities with confidence and preventing the loss of in-country staff, knowledge and expertise.

In turn, creating...

The RAPID tool is adaptable to different contexts and is now being used in Zimbabwe, Kenya and Peru, with plans to expand its use to other countries. Funding supported Practical Action’s attendance at COP16 on Biological Diversity, COP28 and the Africa Food Systems Summit, elevating the organisation’s work and sharing its strategies on a wider global stage.

Across the grant period:

70%

increase in banana, coffee and bean yields.

80%

increase in maize yields.

6,500

farmers involved in a unique action research project in Zimbabwe.

QUOTE

“Without funding like this, we wouldn’t have had the opportunity or space to bring our global experts together to really evaluate our strategy and make it more future focused.”

Simon Hotchkin
 Director of Impact,
 Influence and Innovation



 **omega...**

ENDING ISOLATION | ENDING LONELINESS

Omega aims to reduce social isolation and loneliness through befriending services, including the Chatterbox telephone befriending service, and the Letterbox pen pal befriending service.

The grant provided Omega with **financial stability**, and the ability to conduct a **strategic review process** and create a three-year business plan. The grant also enabled critical hires, including a Programme Coordinator, Grant Fundraiser and Communications Officer, all vital for the charity to **expand its services**, manage increased client numbers, and ensure sustainability and growth.

As a result...

Increased staff capacity enabled the growth of their two core programmes, with both programmes increasing their reach year on year, and clients reporting improved wellbeing and confidence.

The team also introduced a new approach to recruiting additional volunteers, opening up volunteering to university psychology students who would benefit from the experience of working with individuals with complex needs.

The grant enabled Omega to run small innovative pilots exploring new ways of supporting their clients. For example Pupil Pals, in which primary school children create artwork for elderly clients including those in care homes, has been a huge success. A second pilot, of an in-person support programme, showed that the appetite for in-person support was lower than anticipated and as a result the team are now focusing exclusively on expanding remote befriending.

The increased capacity of the team also allowed Omega to invest

in strengthening and formalising safeguarding practices across their service, ensuring that the charity can safely scale its work, especially when interacting with more vulnerable people, including children, elderly clients, and those with mental health conditions.

In turn, creating...

Funding supported the continuation of signposting to services covering mental health, nutrition, and accommodation. Early intervention to swiftly address client issues can improve mental and physical health outcomes and reduce demand on other services. This collaborative approach integrates their care with social prescribing and NHS services as part of a comprehensive model of care.

Across the grant period:

110%

increase in volunteer befrienders.

77%

increase in number of befriending clients.

2,293

cards sent to clients through the new Pupil Pals programme, engaging 30 schools.

82% *of all clients*

report improved wellbeing & 80% report increased confidence.

QUOTE

“The grant delivered financial stability and a really good base to plan all of our other activities from. So, it’s enabled and strengthened everything we’ve done over the last three years.”

Linton Waters
Chair of Trustees

Round 2 partners

The second round of strategic grants, awarded in July 2024 to four charities, is demonstrating clear outcomes at the halfway point of the funding period.

Already, organisations have increased capacity through new hires, strengthened internal systems, expanded programmes, improved policy and advocacy work and actively shared learning across their sectors. It is clear that the funding has created space for reflection, enabling a more purposeful and strategic approach to their work, and the ability to leverage additional funding.

BirdLife International is a global conservation partnership of 124 organisations working across 119 countries to protect birds, their habitats and wider biodiversity, alongside the people connected to them.

The Strategic Partnership Grant is providing critical core funding for BirdLife's Forest Programme during a period of growth and transition. It has enabled BirdLife to expand the programme and its team, with the recruitment of three new staff members including a dedicated Impact and Insights Lead. Through the Forest Impact Accelerator, BirdLife is supporting 10 civil society Partners to develop sustainable forest finance mechanisms targeting conservation and restoration of over 1.4 million hectares of tropical forest landscapes. BirdLife has also leveraged an additional £8m+ funding for Forests conservation, while strengthening learning and practice across its global network.

The Community of Arran Seabed Trust (COAST)

is a community-led marine conservation organisation working to restore and protect the seas around Arran and the Clyde through research, community engagement and policy influence.

The grant is supporting new roles across research, community science and communications which enables expanded stakeholder engagement across 200+ researchers and 140 organisations and policymakers.

So far, community participation and skills have increased with over 95 COAST volunteers contributing nearly 5,000 hours in 2024. COAST has further developed the Coastal Communities Network, co-founded with Fauna & Flora, which became a registered charity in 2025. This supports organisations to share learning and strengthen collective influence on marine conservation policy and practice.

Marine Conservation Society (MCS) is a leading UK environmental charity dedicated to protecting the ocean. For more than 40 years it has defended marine habitats, regenerated ecosystems and inspired volunteers to tackle the nature and climate emergency.

The Strategic Partnership Grant has helped MCS invest with confidence in vital programmes, particularly policy and advocacy on water quality, marine litter, marine spatial planning and sustainable seafood. During the partnership, MCS' advocacy has contributed to significant policy progress including approval of Deposit Return Scheme regulations in England, a ban on single-use disposable vapes, and inclusion of MCS' definition of PFAS (persistent chemicals) and recognition of the ocean in UK Government's February 2026 PFAS Plan. Volunteering through the Great British Beach Clean also grew, with 6,482 volunteers across 472 events by September 2025.

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The Soil Association is a charity working to transform the way we eat, farm and care for the natural world, supporting the transition to sustainable and nature-friendly farming practices.

The partnership with the Fund enabled the continued development and expansion of the Innovative Farmers programme, which supports farmer-led research. Over the last three years, the programme has supported 170+ farmers across 35 on-farm trials, and the Innovative Farmers newsletter now reaches over 6,000 subscribers.

The outcomes from the Innovative Farmers programme also contributed to the development of DEFRA's new ADOPT fund for farmer-led research.





Future plans

King Charles III Charitable Fund is pleased to announce a third round of Strategic Partnership Grants. The Fund will be working with the following partners from 2026 – 2029:

Project Seagrass is dedicated to halting and reversing the decline of seagrass meadows – biodiversity hotspots essential for fisheries, climate regulation, water quality and coastal protection.

Zoological Society of London, supporting ZSL's marine protection and restoration efforts – protecting and restoring mangroves in Mozambique, and Transforming the Thames in the UK, re-establishing the estuary as a thriving coastal wetland for wildlife and local communities.

Real Farming Trust is transforming our food system from the grassroots up through connecting practitioners, sharing knowledge and inspiring wide audiences.

Nature-Friendly Farming Network is the UK's largest farmer-led movement advocating for sustainable farming approaches.

Jamie's Farm is helping young people facing significant challenges to rediscover confidence, build healthier relationships and develop positive habits to improve their wellbeing and build a hopeful sense of purpose through spending time on farms.

KHULA Education is supporting young people in the remote KwaZulu-Natal region of South Africa through early childhood development, primary and secondary education, teacher training and post-school pathways.

Thank you

The findings from this analysis and report will support both the Fund and chosen strategic partners to maximise the impact of this grant programme in the future.

At a challenging time for the charity sector, we are proud to be working alongside our 17 strategic partners. Enormous thanks goes to each of you for your dedication, insight, and commitment to driving positive change. We are also grateful to Bean Research for their valuable contribution to this work.

We extend our sincere thanks to Waitrose for their continued support to the Fund through the Duchy Organic brand. This valued partnership reflects His Majesty The King's longstanding commitment to creating a better future for people and the planet, including through the Strategic Partnership Grants Programme.



KING CHARLES III
CHARITABLE FUND

Charity number - 1127255 Company number - 06777589