



ASTON VILLA
FOUNDATION

ANNUAL
COMMUNITY
REPORT

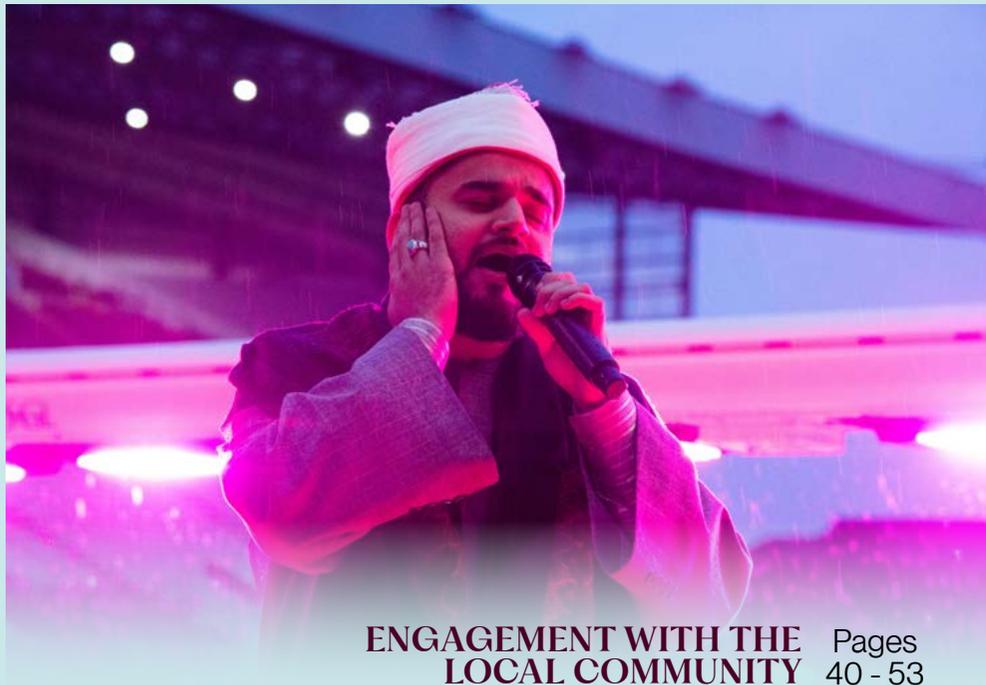
2022/23



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The Aston Villa Foundation: **WHAT DO WE DO?**

The Aston Villa Foundation and our partners provide support and opportunities in various areas across the city of Birmingham.

Thousands of fans and residents from varying backgrounds partake in over 500 sessions, workshops, and events on a weekly basis, with all 85+ staff and coaches committed to achieving our strategic priorities: Young People, Wellbeing, Education and Personal and Social Development, throughout the delivery of our programmes.

The Foundation are proud to be an enabler for our communities, working together with individuals and smaller organisations to offer them the guidance, and a voice to make a long-lasting legacy impact that communities will continue to benefit from for years to come.

Through the work we do in our community, we are committed to working towards our mission statement of

**“ Working Together
to Enrich Lives. ”**



30-YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY

In July 2023, the Aston Villa Foundation celebrates its 10-year anniversary of becoming a registered charity, whilst also commemorating over 30-years of crucial work within the community.

Previously known as “Villa in the Community” the club’s community arm began in February 1990, with Aston Villa legend Ron Wylie taking charge as Community Liaison Officer with staff members Nigel Macrow, Alan Thompson, and Warwick Adams, working closely with local schools, starting up the Football in the Community programme and running coaching and ticket offers as part of their ‘matchday specials’.



**Head of Foundation and Community,
Guy Rippon shared:**

“While this year we celebrate having been officially established as a charity for 10 years, we are utilising this milestone to commemorate over 30 years of positive impact within the community.

Staff at the Aston Villa Foundation work tirelessly to ensure the needs of our participants are met, catering for people from different walks of life through our programmes. Projects offer support with youth work, mental health, employability skills, education, disability awareness and so much more.

We hope to continue to be an enabler for smaller organisations in the community, and work together to enrich the lives of the people in the community surrounding Villa Park and the wider Aston Villa family.”





One of Our Own: **NIGEL MACROW**

Nigel has been working with the Foundation since April 1990, as the first Villa in the Community staff member alongside Community Liaison Officer and former Aston Villa captain Ron Wylie.



Starting off working with the Soccer Schools and Matchday Specials, he started the Foundation's Disability provision in the early 2000's, managing the teams for the PAN Ability Counts teams and Day Care Centres, to ensure football and sport is inclusive for all.

Nigel played a key role in the set-up of the Ability Counts League with the FA, sitting as chairman of the League until 2010.



Joanne O'Callaghan, Parent of Ability Counts Participant:

"It is about more than just football, it changes families' lives. My son is now confident socialising with other children, he's happy and outgoing and has an amazing group of friends within the Ability Counts team.

Thank you, Nigel, for all you do."



Nigel shared:

"I am very proud to be witness to all the great work the Foundation has achieved, with so many great developments made in the last 10-years alone. When I started back in 1990, there were just the four staff members. Now, we have over 85 employed staff.

When the Aston Villa's Disability Football Provision was set up in the year 2000, there were very little models to follow for the establishment of our own programme. I am proud to have been at the forefront of the establishment, and to see disability football to grow to what it is today."

OUR YEAR IN REVIEW

August 2022 - August 2023

Total Number of Participants Engaged

29,009

Number of attendances at events

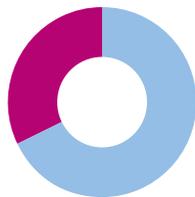
27,265

Gross amount raised – Charitable Income

£2,757,345

DEMOGRAPHICS

Gender split



68% Male 32% Female



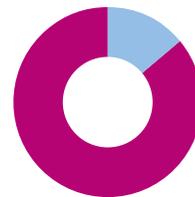
Disability / SEND



25%



Age



14% Adults 86% Young People



BME



58%



IMD



% of participants from our funded programmes who live in the top 10% most deprived IMD areas.

62%



Qualifications

361

Total weight loss (Healthy Goals)

130 KGS

Number engaged in social action

91 young people

900 hours of volunteering



SCHOOLS

Primary schools engaged

70+

Partner Schools

68

School children benefitting from targeted work

(in targeted interventions through our PLPS programme)

528

WHAT PARTICIPANTS THINK OF OUR SESSIONS:

Average rating of sessions (out of 10)

9.1

Likely to recommend sessions to a friend



97.5%

Participants that feel AVF sessions have helped to improve their physical health & wellbeing



97.5%

Participants that feel AVF sessions have helped to improve their mental health & wellbeing



89%

Feel confident to raise Equality, Diversity or Inclusion (EDI) concerns with the Foundation



95%

Feel confident to raise Safeguarding concerns with Aston Villa Foundation



93%

Chapter One:
**OUR STRATEGIC
PRIORITIES**





Our strategic plan outlines the ambitions we have as an organisation to be a leading community and social impact organisation in the city of Birmingham and become a model of best practice nationally in the community work of professional sports clubs.

Our strategic priorities underpin all that we do at the Aston Villa Foundation, helping us to outline the steps we will take to continue to grow and develop to meet the needs of the local community, making the Foundation an organisation that local people and supporters are proud of, and staff are proud to work for.

Our strategic priorities with our projects aligning alongside four key areas:

YOUNG PEOPLE

The engagement, development, and progression of any young person that participates in projects and pathways is a key focus for the work we do in the community. While football may be the draw for most, it is not always the focus, with events and sessions providing recreational opportunities, underpinned by opportunities to learn, develop, grow, and progress.

The Foundation's Youth and Community and disability activities work with our young people from the age of 8 and above, through programmes such as Premier League Kicks, PL Inspires, Changemakers, Ability Counts, SEND Youth Club and Day Care Centre programmes.

Premier League Kicks has established safe spaces in nine venues, engaging with over 1,500 young people from inner city areas across Birmingham.

Utilising football as the hook for many, staff hold pitch side workshops, teaching young people beneficial life skills, as well as working closely with external organisations such as West Midlands Police and the Prevent team to break down barriers and educate young people in community and personal safety matters that affect young people in some of the most high-need areas





The Football in the Community programme takes place in seven areas across Birmingham and West Midlands, providing boys and girls of all abilities the opportunity to learn new football skills, gain more confidence and create new friendships in a fun, safe and enjoyable environment.

This season alone, we have directly impacted over 2,200 young people across our Development Centres and Holiday Soccer Schools.



Click the play button to watch one of our FITC sessions.

Football in the Community: **SCARLETT AND SIENNA**

Sisters Scarlett & Sienna have been involved with the Foundation's Girls Development Centre's in Sutton Coldfield over the last 12 months.

Sienna's dad highlighted the positive impact Football in the Community Coaches have had on building her confidence when attending the session

Sienna's Sister, Scarlett, also attends the Skills Centre, where she was the only girl in the group Scarlett continued to attend our sessions and with the help of our coach she developed her football and interpersonal skills which helped her move up an age group to join her sister in the Girls Development Centre.

Both sisters also attend Ability Counts session on Friday nights, with their father has praising how well the Foundation can accommodate for their needs.



Sienna and Scarlett's father stated:

"Sienna has always played football at school, but Scarlett hasn't shown much interest until Sienna started to attend sessions with the Foundation, and now Scarlett is more confident and enjoys the occasional kick around at school and is very much enjoying the sessions with the Foundation too. They are catering for kids with Autism and ADHD, we gave that session a try and found this was much more suited for them both."



WELLBEING

Health and Wellbeing is fed into delivery across all sessions and events at the Foundation, showcasing our commitment to be an enabler for our local community. We have continued to make links with a variety of local and national organisations, to encourage the importance of continuing social interaction amongst our participants and looking after our physical and mental health and wellbeing, across the Foundation's golden thread of progression.

Our continuing work with Birmingham Mind has seen nine 2-day Mental Health First Aider training courses take place at Villa Park, providing qualifications for 92 new mental health first aiders in Birmingham. We strongly feel that the more people we can equip to discuss and advise on mental health and wellbeing in the city, the more support there is out there for those facing personal challenges.

We also firmly believe in supporting the training and development of our staff in this area. This benefits them as individuals in their own wellbeing, and our organisational ability to be in a position to support all of those we come into contact with, in line with Making Every Contact Count.





The Birmingham Suicide Prevention Advisory Group reports directly to the Creating a Mentally Healthy City Forum. It supports multi-agency work by organisations that provide help and guidance to people of all ages across Birmingham and Solihull to reduce the rate of suicide and self-harm.

The Foundation have sat on the forum since 2021, and play a key role in the creation and action of the Suicide Prevention Action Plan, with a focus on reducing the risk of suicide in key high-risk groups.

The Foundation's Villa TeamWork programmes sit under this plan, providing awareness of support available and work with and

through partners with specific focus on men's engagement to reduce the stigma among men to discuss mental health and suicidal thoughts. Participants also get to work on their physical wellbeing through the sessions, with opportunities to play football embedded in the session structure, alongside tournaments and visits to other football club mental health programmes.

Workshops are also regularly incorporated, with the Foundation providing a platform for external organisations such as Aquarius and Health Watch Birmingham to talk to the men about their experiences and what can be done to provide them further support in their everyday lives.

We also align our TeamWork programme with national awareness campaigns, such as World Mental Health Day, promoting the Premier League's 'Shout' campaign and the suicide prevention Baton of Hope's national relay in July 2023, with the Baton visiting Aston Park



Health and Wellbeing: **PAUL**

Our work with Living Well also sees young people referred through to our Wellbeing Practitioner, for low level mental health support, as part of our TeamWork Plus programme. We also work closely with the NHS through Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health NHS Foundation Trust, through TeamWork affiliated project, Kickstart your journey through Teamwork, Supporting lifestyle change through 5 weekly workshops to positively impact physical and mental health.



Scan QR to watch TeamWork participant Paul and Ian Taylor





Team Work Plus: **CASE STUDY**

Funded by the Premier League and the Professional Footballer's Association, and partnered with Living Well Birmingham, Teamwork Plus gives young people an opportunity to open up and speak to a mentor or wellbeing practitioner from the Foundation over 12 weekly sessions. Sessions offer low-level mental health support for young people, covering topics such as healthy and unhealthy coping strategies, self-esteem, communication, and goal setting.

The young person takes ownership of their sessions, deciding which environment is best for them, whether this be at Villa Park, their school or another external community environment, removing the stigma of a clinical setting.

At the start of the season, TeamWork Plus participant and fan Martina was surprised with meeting Aston Villa fullback Ashley Young, to discuss the impact of the programme on her mental health and wellbeing.

The Premier League recently spoke to two recipients about the impact of the programme; Chloe, a member of our Ability Count's Adult's team who is mentored by Wellbeing Practitioner Olivia, and another participant who wishes to remain anonymous, mentored by Interventions Mentor Ousmaan Broomfield.

[Click Here for the Premier League article](#)



Click play button to watch Ashley Young meet Team Work Plus participant Martina



"It made me feel like there was a way out to be honest - I see life differently. Basically, I'm looking to get my coaching badge to start coaching, hopefully for Aston Villa but just in general with any team."

Ousmann added: "He has spent time shadowing other coaches, working on mental health sessions. He's impressed pretty much all the coaches he's been with and the rest was him getting experience and building his confidence."



Focusing on **ENGAGING NEW AUDIENCES**

BID SERVICES:

Our work with the Birmingham Institute for the Deaf (**BID**) began in September 2022, where we host a monthly dance and fitness session for users of the service, many of whom are profoundly deaf. The aim of the sessions is to increase physical levels of fitness and increase confidence.



ACTIVE THROUGH FOOTBALL: WOMEN'S COMMUNITY SESSIONS IN ALUM ROCK

Working closely with Go-Woman! Alliance Community Interest Company (GOAL), we have engaged with 145 Muslim Women over the last 12 months in the community of Alum Rock, working with around 30 women from a southeast Asian background on a weekly basis.

Alum Rock is a community in Birmingham which is a new focal area of work for us this season. Staff have spent time working and listening to the local community, building relationships with residents and community groups to help understand how the sessions should look. Sessions were designed to remove any

Many of the women had not taken part in sport before, we had to start introducing fundamental skills such as co-ordination, balance and agility. We have been working with some of the participants for up to 8 months and they have said they feel better within themselves and find they do not feel as stiff or get out of breath as fast. Some have also attended their first ever swimming session at Castle Pool.



COMMUNITY CHRISTMAS DINNER

During Christmas 2022, staff from our health and wellbeing department held a community Christmas dinner at Villa Park, for over 80 elder residents from Ladywood, Erdington and Perry Bar, with club caterers Levy UK providing the food and refreshments. Participants from the Foundation's Dementia Cafe were invited, alongside other groups from local charities including Saathi House, Migrant Help and Age UK.





EDUCATION

Learning is something that will never stop within our lives, no matter our age or experience.

The Aston Villa Foundation provides an educational pathway and continuing professional development for children and teachers across Primary and Secondary Schools, through our Premier League Primary Stars curriculum, physical education support, and STEM - related subjects, as well as Alternative Curriculum targeted Interventions and our Post -16 Football and Education BTEC and A Level Courses





Partner School, Hodge Hill Primary School, shared:

“The work the Aston Villa Foundation’s schools team do for our pupils is a great asset to our curriculum, and the sustainability workshops have been informative for the children. They have enjoyed the lessons, particularly when looking at the impact they can make in their local communities.”



Our Primary School Sport and Education programme supports teachers and inspires children by using the power of football to unlock learning potential in unique ways.

Across the 2022/23 season, the programme has supported over 8,500 pupils in a variety of education activities across our school’s programme, with 1,113 of these taking part in our funded flagship Premier League Primary Stars programme.

For our Educational Post-16 courses, the start of the 2022/23 academic year saw the introduction of a Foundation Degree added to our education pathway, delivered in conjunction with Birmingham City University. Ten students were enrolled as part of the first cohort, which has seen a successful progression into their second year of study. The new course has significantly increased in popularity, with 32 students currently enrolled in the 2023/24 academic year.

The Primary School and Sport’s team also delivered sustainability workshops across ten schools in Birmingham, reaching over 500 pupils and teachers. The workshops focused on Aston Villa’s environmental sustainability commitment, which highlights the short and long-term actions Aston Villa are taking to reduce our carbon footprint.

The work the Foundation do around promoting sustainability in the pupil’s everyday lives is actively built into the Foundation’s teaching delivery. Pupils take part in the creation of social action projects across the academic year, focusing on tackling environmental issues in their local areas, grasping a better understanding of the cause, and what changes they can make to lessen their own environmental impact, leading the way for their peers.



Alex Owens, Schools Co-ordinator for the Aston Villa Foundation shared:

“The link to Green Football week brings the social action project to life, showcasing what pupils have learnt and linking into the club’s own sustainability commitment. It is great to see the children’s decisions in tackling climate change and how themselves, the school and families can be more sustainable.”



Click the play button to watch a Green Football Weekend Video

Primary Schools and Sport: **THE ‘HOOK FOR LEARNING’ DEMONSTRATED**

Pupil A is a Year 1 pupil who took part in our Phonics sessions during the Premier League Primary Stars 10-week programme.

Pupil A’s teacher wanted to see an improvement in her ability, as Pupil A not only struggled with her academic ability, but also found her concentration and behaviour a challenge.

Pupil A quickly realised that these sessions were not like Phonics within the classroom and the active nature of them allowed her to channel her energy and enthusiasm into fun and engaging tasks. Through the motion of play, Pupil A was able to gain confidence in a subject she initially found difficult to understand. The more Pupil A enjoyed the active games the more it allowed her to have a greater focus towards the outcomes of the session and completing challenges effectively and with confidence.

Towards the latter stages of the programme, Pupil A became one of the more confident and one of the most improved pupils across the group. Pupil A was able to recognise 15 more sounds from the start to the end of the programme. Pupil A made similar progress to other pupils within the group, however it was her attitude and behaviour within the subject that was of highlight.

Pupil A’s teacher Miss Gately was impressed with the development she was making with her Phonics but more noticeably with her behaviour and outlook on Phonics, with the programme leading to Pupil A wanting to do Phonics on the other days of the week.



“

**Miss Gately – Class Teacher
at Guardian Angels Primary
School**

“I really enjoyed how Chris delivered the session - I never thought about delivering phonics in such an active way”

”



POST-16 EDUCATION

For our Educational Post-16 courses, the start of the 2022/23 academic year saw the introduction of a Foundation Degree added to our education pathway, delivered in conjunction with Birmingham City University.

Ten students were enrolled as part of the first cohort, which has seen a successful progression into their second year of study. The new course has significantly increased in popularity, with 32 students currently enrolled in the 2023/24 academic year.



Click the play button to watch Post-16 Induction Video



Click the play button to watch our Schools Phonics session.



Head Lecturer Gary McLean shared:

“The introduction of the Foundation degree provides an exciting extension to the existing educational pathway provided by the ‘Aston Villa Foundation for students in Birmingham.

The course is designed to ensure graduates develop the pedagogical practice required to coach participants across a range of ages and abilities, as well as the delivery across all Aston Villa Foundation areas in both School and Community settings.”



Student turned Coach: **HARRY DUNN CASE STUDY**

Harry is a first-year student on the Foundation's degree course, awarded through Birmingham City University, who has recently been onboarded as a coach within our Football in the Community department. Harry had been out of education for three years prior to starting the course and wanted to utilise passion for sports and coaching within his chosen career path. Through his study and work, he is able to work closely with a variety of Foundation staff across three different departments, to learn and adapt to various styles of coaching.

The degree course itself has allowed Harry to also explore how personality traits such as confidence and enthusiasm can help influence the children he is coaching, encouraging them to reflect these behaviours in their own growth. One of Harry's favourite aspects of the course is getting to work closely with the Primary Schools and Sports team, to host and run PE lessons and Community Tournaments, to learn how to adapt their teaching and coaching style to suit the different needs of children.

He was encouraged to apply for the role as Football in the Community Coach by Course Lecturer Gary, and he has found the experience so far to be enjoyable and rewarding:



Harry said:

"[The Foundation Degree] has really brought out my confidence and leadership skills in terms of being able to coach a class of five to 20 children on [soccer] camps. If I can portray myself as being confident, it allows the children to empower their own confidence. If [the children] can see that their coach is being enthusiastic and energetic, they bring that in their own performance."



Click play button for
Harry Dunn Foundation
Degree Video



Football and Education: **LAWRENCE**

Lawrence is a current student on the Aston Villa Foundation's Post-16 Football and Education course. He discovered the Foundation through his grassroots football team, Continental Stars, when coaches delivered Premier League Kicks workshops with his team.

Lawrence became a regular attendee at the Villa Park Kicks venue and when he turned 16, he was introduced to the post-16 educational pathways. Lawrence has had a successful journey, completing his BTEC in Sports and Coaching at partner school Ormiston Shelfield Community Academy. As well as being given the opportunity to play and captain his team, representing Aston Villa in the EFL Community & Education Football Alliance League, students are encouraged to explore other avenues of employment, such as coaching and engineering.

Lawrence is moving on to complete an apprenticeship in Primary School PE Coaching, with an aim to become a role model to others much like his sports teachers and coaches were to him.



Click play button for Lawrence's case study video

In September 2022, the Post -16 Football and Education programme saw the introduction of the Aston Manor Girls team. The programme mirrors the current boy's programme, offering girls the opportunity to gain qualifications whilst representing Aston Villa in competitive EFL CEFA fixtures.



Lawrence said:

"The Coaches at the Aston Villa Foundation are not just here for the football; they are here to develop you as a person."

My upbringing was not the best, and the people I looked up to most were my sports teachers and coaches, they understood me.

All the coaches I worked with at the Foundation believed in me and taught me to believe in myself."



PERSONAL AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

PREMIER LEAGUE INSPIRES

The Foundation's Premier League Inspires programme, created, and funded by the Premier League, creates life-changing opportunities for young people who have been identified by their schools as needing extra support to engage with activities, utilising the power of football through a series of face-to-face mentoring sessions, workshops, and social-action projects.

Our Heartlands Academy Inspires provision were successful in being selected to represent 26 Chapter One: Our Strategic Priorities the club for this season's Premier League Inspires Challenge, with young people from 44 other football

club community programmes tasked with considering what environmental sustainability challenges football clubs might face.

The team came up with a concept of a Cycle Scheme known as "Don't Villa Park it, just Ride It." for employees of the Aston Villa and the Foundation to take part in for their commute to work.



Click play button to watch the Premier League Inspires Video



PL Inspires: NILASHA CASE STUDY

Nilasha has been a part of the Premier League Inspires programme at Aston Villa Foundation from October 2022. She is a Year 9 pupil at St John Wall Catholic School, an inner-city school in Handsworth, Birmingham. Nilasha was referred to the programme for her poor mental health and low school attainment.

From the first meeting, it was apparent that Nilasha shy and withdrawn, sometimes not engaging in the sessions at all. Through continuing 1:1 discussion and a consistent approach, over time she has become an integral part of the sessions, contributing her voice and opinions on a regular basis. Nilasha has achieved a 100% attendance on her time with the Premier League Inspires programme and is always willing to make the most of her time in the sessions.

One of the social action projects we have been working on through PL Inspires has been exploring ways young people can voice their views and their ideas on how they can help or change things that have a particular meaning to them. Nilasha chose to focus her project on mental health as this was something she feels very passionate about and would like to help pupils in her school have more understanding of it.

Nilasha came up with ideas of how she can better educate people into the effects and impact of mental health. These ideas included delivering assemblies to her peers at school around mental health, as well as having an in-school council that is run by students, where youth voice will lead the way on getting better support and access to mental health support, ensuring the needs of young people are met.



Nilasha said:

"I wanted to show people what mental health looks like to different people, and how they can help by not looking at it in a negative way, but listening and helping each other instead."



ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION

Over the course of the academic year, the Foundation have worked with 48 secondary school pupils across three separate groups as part of the Alternative Provisions programme. The programme creates opportunities for students who are at risk of mainstream exclusion to still be involved in an educational pathway through positive engagement, enrichment and a bespoke approach that is specific to the individual learner.

In just this year alone as a result of their involvement in our Alternative Education settings, three pupils were recorded as having attended school for a full academic year for the first time, with one pupil recorded having gone one full academic year without an exclusion for the first time in their academic life



Alternative Education: **DREW**

Drew joined the Alternative Provisions programme at the start of the 2022/23 academic year, where she was at risk of exclusion from mainstream school and not completing her GCSEs at the end of the summer term. Through her involvement in the programme, she has now completed her GCSE's, was nominated as head student for the programme, and is now moving on to start an apprenticeship scheme in engineering.



Drew said:

Since joining Aston Villa's Alternative Provisions programme, I have maintained good behaviour and routines in school. It has made me appreciate my school time more, and I am more focused in lessons.

I love this programme, as we get to play football in the afternoon after we have completed our sports leading work, or other work we are given. My tutors and coaches at the Foundation are always there to help and support me with anything and are always there if I need to talk about anything.

They make me feel valued when they praise me for my progress and when they visit me at my Alternative Provision. Staff at school have said I have made an exceptionally good improvement this year and I have made a real turnaround in my behaviour and attitude.

'When speaking to Staff it used to be for negative reasons but now it is always positive. Since joining the Villa, it has made me really focused and driven to what I would like to do when I leave school. It has given me a sense of direction and I have now been offered an apprenticeship in engineering to start in September.



Chapter Two:
**OUR WORK WITH
COMMERCIAL
PARTNERS**





CAZOO

supporting
OUR OWN

Club principal partner for the 2022/2023 season
Cazoo generously donated their corporate box
numerous times for matchdays across the season.
The donations were utilised to invite members of the
Villa family who have fallen upon difficult times, to give
them a VIP experience to remember, as part of our
'Supporting Our Own' initiative

Tony Stokes was recipient of a Match Day box
experience: "I want to thank Cazoo and staff at the
Aston Villa Foundation for such a fantastic night. I could
not thank you all enough that made this happen from
bottom of my heart."

Cazoo have also funded the donations of Mascot
places as part of the initiative. One such recipient was
5-year-old Esme was our mascot for the game, for
raising over £4000.00 for Nerve Tumors UK. Esme lives
with Neurofibromatosis Type 1, a progressive condition
that can affect the nerves all over the body. Another
recipient, Avah, was elated by the experience, getting to
walk out onto the pitch with Goalkeeper Robin Olsen.





Avah's father Ian had terminal cancer and received hospice care at John Taylor Hospice, with Ian also given the opportunity to visit Bodymoor Heath, to have a tour of the training ground and meet with players.



In December, over 60 presents were donated to 4 local hubs in Birmingham via the Foundation's Christmas Toy Drive, with 60 Aston Villa shirts donated by Cazoo to distribute to Villa fans in the community.



Click play button to watch our Toy Drive





Aston Villa's energy drink sponsor Monster Energy have also been integral in their involvement with the Aston Villa Foundation.

Seven of our regular TeamWork mental health project participants were invited to Bodymoor Heath, for an unforgettable fan experience, provided by Monster Energy. Participants were able to train and engage with Aston Villa Men's and Women's first team players.





The sponsor was also in support of our fundraising efforts, providing a donation of energy drinks for players taking part in our 24-hour Football Match in February. The event raised over £4,500, with three teams of 17 players taking part in the event.



Villa Vision is an award winning project funded by the Premier League and PFA, strategically supported and funded by Aston University and EssilorLuxottica's charitable Foundation OneSight. Designed and delivered by the Aston Villa Foundation's dedicated eyecare team, Villa Vision helps to raise awareness on the importance of eye health for both children and adults within the local communities of Birmingham.

Villa Vision facilitates the placement of volunteer optometry students from Aston University's School of Optometry during the project's programme delivery within local schools. Students are provided with an opportunity to support classroom workshops and vision screening sessions, in turn enabling them to develop and enhance both their communication skills and eye examination techniques with children, as well as understanding the potential of this and other future career pathways within the profession.





2023 saw Villa Vision hit 10,000 individual young people benefit from the programme in 60 schools across Birmingham. Pupils took part in an educational workshop, had a vision or colour vision screening test, with some being given a full eye examination in our mobile eye testing van. 280 pairs of free glasses were distributed to children during the course of the season who didn't have glasses but required them, which will ultimately assist them with their learning in the classroom and future development



Click play button for the Premier League Communities Video

GYM COFFEE

Gym + Coffee, official partner for Aston Villa Women's, invited 6 of our female participants to be part of the 'Be the Inspiration' campaign, a call to action for supporters everywhere to join Aston Villa on our journey of continuing the development of the women's game. The girls are ambassadors for the younger generation of football, shining a light on their connection with football and inspiring more to join in.

Since the launch of the campaign, Gym + Coffee have continued to create opportunities for our female participants, such as donating tickets for our participants to attend Aston Villa Women's games, with some becoming flag bearers at the game and having the chance to meet players.

Female participants were invited over to the women's Training Ground at Bodymoor Health to watch and join in with a training session, learning new tips and techniques from the players and coaches. To end the season, over 70 girls were invited to attend a 'Train Like a Pro' session at Bodymoor Heath, donated by Gym + Coffee. These experiences have helped grow our female participant's and develop their confidence and skills, both on and off the pitch.





Chapter Three:
**ENGAGEMENT
WITH THE LOCAL
COMMUNITY**





Knowing our Local Community: **CELEBRATING RAMADAN**

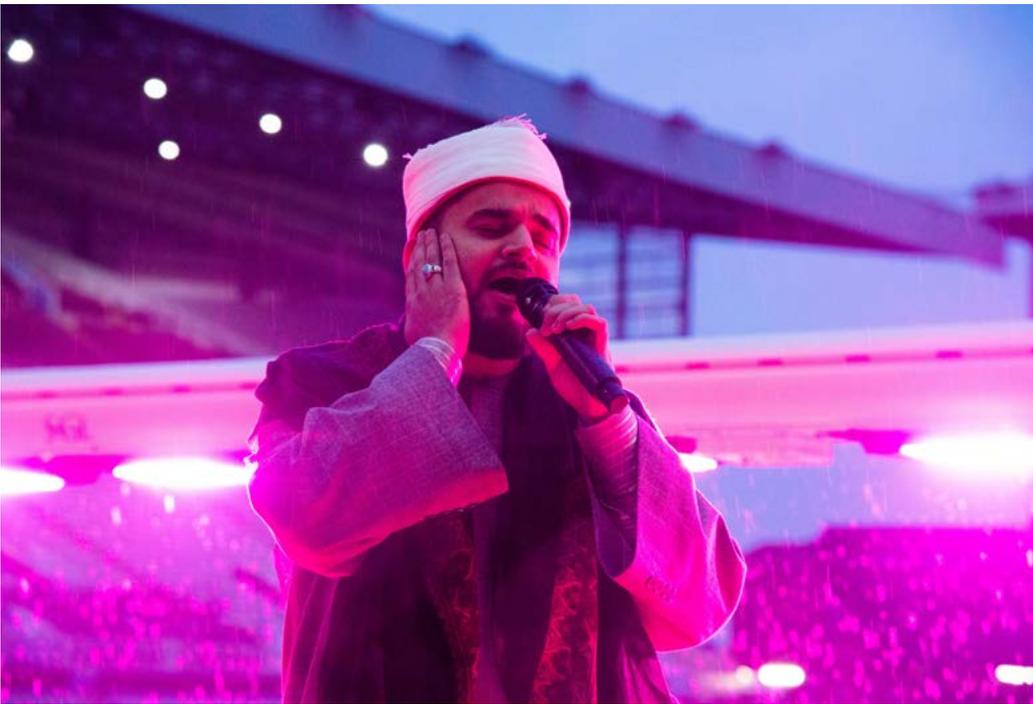
We have a very diverse community the areas and neighbourhoods that surround Villa Park. This year, the Foundation made a conscious effort to highlight and celebrate cultural and religious events that connect with our immediate neighbours and members of our staff . Ahmed Ali, Interventions Coordinator at the Foundation supported on the organisation of an Open Iftar event in partnership with the Ramadan Tent Project. In addition, the Foundation organised male and female Ramadan football tournaments, held after sunset, to allow our participants to continue to take part in sport.

Hosted in collaboration with the Birmingham Football Association, the men and women's Midnight Ramadan football tournaments brought 100's of players to the Academy Building at Villa Park, to take part in the event.

Estone Ladies FC took home the trophy from the women's tournament, while Classon Grass won the trophy for the men's tournament. Both were presented their trophies at the Open Iftar event.

This was the first year the Aston Villa Foundation has held a women's tournament for Ramadan, with the men's tournament succeeding the tournament held last year.





Villa Park was also host to the first Open Iftar event in Birmingham, held in conjunction with the Ramadan Tent Project.

Over 500 people attended, with 70 volunteers from the Ramadan Tent Project and Aston Villa staff helping to organise the event. The call to prayer was delivered over the Villa Park PA system, to not only be heard by those in the Holte Suite, but also those in the vicinity of the stadium.

Open Iftar is the Ramadan Tent Project's flagship initiative, increasing community harmony, belonging, and turning strangers into friends while breaking fast.



Click play button to watch a video from our Open Iftar.

VILLA KITCHEN

The Foundation's Villa Kitchen initiative was set up in 2019 to help provide hot food to those in need in Birmingham and the surrounding areas, supporting a range of organisations such as homeless outreach groups, migrant centres, women's refugees, housing associations and schools.

One such organisation is Birmingham Support Group, who run a weekly distribution site in Dale End, Birmingham every Wednesday, and ran completely by volunteers. Since 2020, the project has provided around 30,000 meals, and is funded from donations through ticket round ups, and money raised from the Foundation's annual Big Villa Sleep Out.

This year's sleep out raised over £16,000 for the initiative, and saw First Team Captain John McGinn, U21's Josh Feeney, and Aston Villa Women's Maz Pacheco and Simone Magill attending the event.



Click play to watch the Villa Kitchen Birmingham Support Group



Community Collaborations: **CHILDREN'S BOOK PROJECT**

In March, the Aston Villa Foundation, on behalf of the Children's Book Project, invited fans and members of the community to donate pre-loved books, as part of a book drive to gift 2,000 books to children across Birmingham.

Over 3,000 books were donated to the book drive, with 880 books donated to Lozells Junior and Infant School through a gifting event, where children were able to pick and choose a book to take home with them and keep.

This is the first major event for Children's Book Project in taking place in Birmingham, with a dedicated hub now being set up to gift the books to children all year round.



Founder of the Children's Book Project, Liberty Venn shared:

"Books support children's emotional development, prompt shared family time and inspire children to view themselves as a reader."

We're so grateful to the Aston Villa Foundation and their community for this opportunity to gift 2,000 books into schools in the areas around the club."



COMMUNITY CHAMPIONS OF 2023

The Foundation once again saw nominations entered for our Community Champion 2023 awards, offering fans and local people the chance to nominate individuals who make a positive contribution to their local community and inspire others. Five individuals were recognised for their achievements, including:



RAJAB NOOR

Rajab Noor has been nominated for the Community Champions Award for his dedication to creating safe spaces across Birmingham and the West Midlands, for young people to take part in sports and physical activity. He has also committed himself to developing employable skills in young people, creating volunteering and apprenticeship opportunities through the Sporting Your Futures project, and mentoring young people through safeguarding and leadership qualifications.



LEON BLAKE

Leon Blake was nominated for his work in an inner-city school in Sparkhill. Leon is described as an “inspiring and positive man”, who has worked hard to allow children to reach their full potential in sports and promote the positives of living an active lifestyle. Through Leon’s workshops within schools, he has organised for professional footballers and coaches to visit the school, and shown the children that football is an inclusive sport for everyone.

Community Captain: **OUSMAAN BROOMFIELD**

To celebrate 30 years of the Premier League, the league wanted to recognise the contribution of community leaders at who have been instrumental in the growing community work of clubs in the last few years. The Premier League trophy toured various clubs across the country and made a stop at Villa Park in September. As part of the celebrations, Ousmaan Broomfield, Youth and Community Mentor, was named Aston Villa's Community Captain, for his 15-year commitment to the Foundation, dedicating himself to supporting young people in providing sporting opportunities, but also valuable mentoring, support and guidance to help steer them in to making positive life choices and progressing themselves.



Click play button to watch
the Premier League
Communities Video

OUR ENGAGEMENT WITH THE FANS



Fans get involved in the Fundraising:

Many fans over the season have given up their time to take part in a variety of Foundation fundraising events, with events specifically fundraising to support a variety of Foundation projects and initiatives.

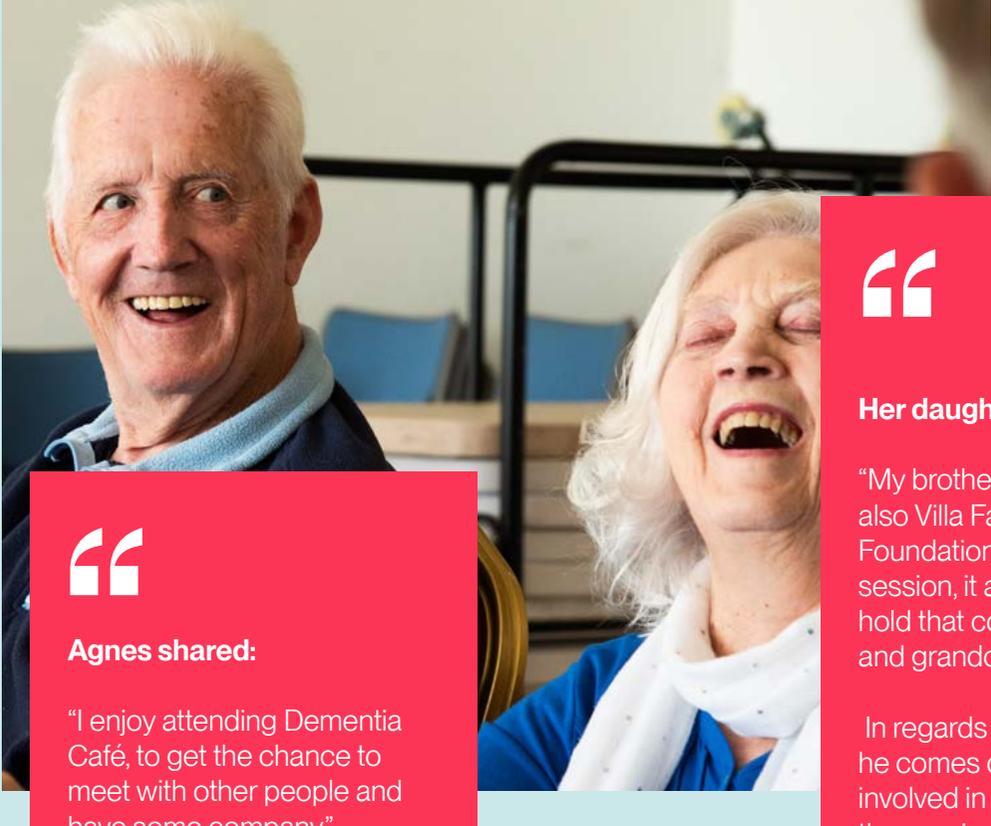
Lifelong Villa fan Simon Osborne successfully completed a 'Sitathon' in September 2022, sitting in the over 42,000 seats in Villa Park, and raising over £1,000 for the Foundation's Dementia Café. The money raised for the group allowed them to take part in two day trips:

Health and Wellbeing: DEMENTIA CAFÉ

Held every Monday at Villa Park, the Foundation's Dementia Café offers people living with dementia an opportunity to get involved in activities, whilst offering respite for carers and family members.

The programme has proven popular and continued to grow in numbers. Weekly activities are held at Villa Park, which include low-level physical activity, alongside looking at old Aston Villa memorabilia and visits from club history enthusiasts, youth team players and former players. Several trips have been arranged for the group to visit places such as Cadbury World, providing days out helping to reduce isolation and offer a network of support.

Agnes, her daughter Sue and Sue's husband Paul are regular attendee of the Café. Both Agnes and Paul live with the condition, and travel from Hednesford to attend sessions.



“

Agnes shared:

“I enjoy attending Dementia Café, to get the chance to meet with other people and have some company.”

”



“

Her daughter Sue shared:

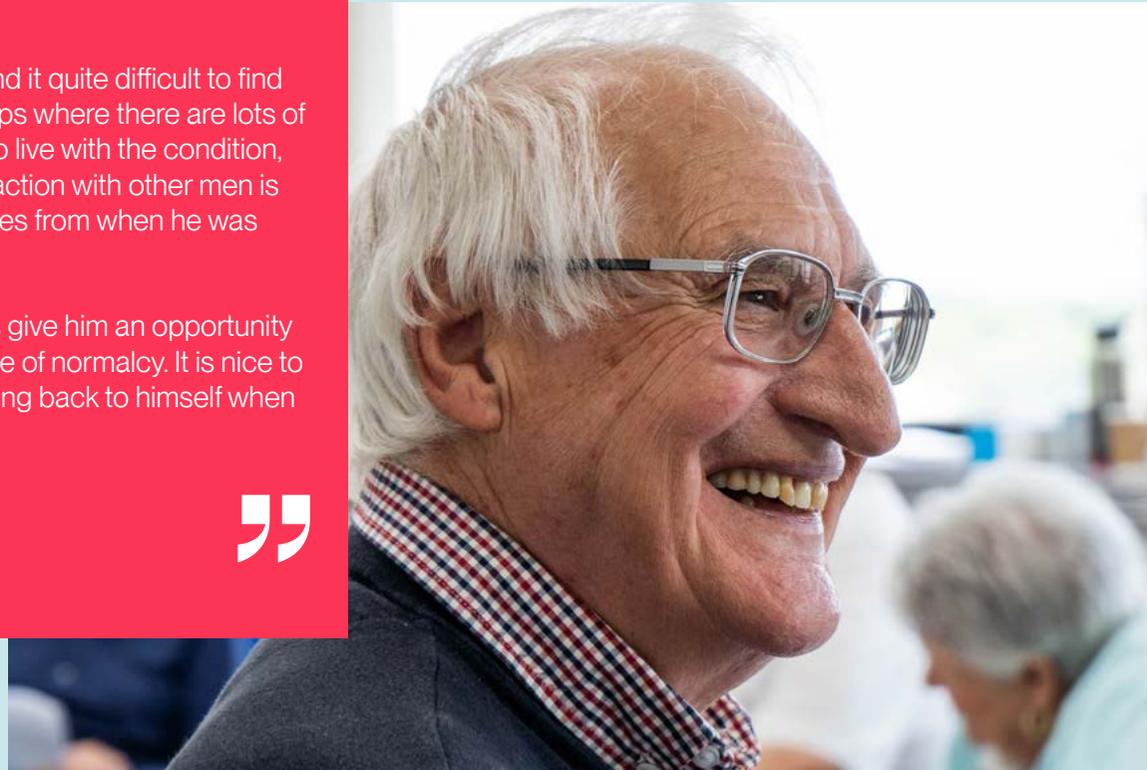
“My brother and his children are also Villa Fans, so for the Aston Villa Foundation to run a dementia-based session, it allows for my mother to still hold that connection with her children and grandchildren.”

In regards to my husband Paul, he comes out of his shell and gets involved in activities when he attends the sessions.

We have found it quite difficult to find support groups where there are lots of men who also live with the condition, and the interaction with other men is what he misses from when he was working.

The sessions give him an opportunity to feel a sense of normalcy. It is nice to see him coming back to himself when he is there.”

”



GREAT BIRMINGHAM RUN

Fundraisers who took part in the Great Birmingham Run raised over £5,000 to support the delivery of various Foundation projects, including Teamwork. Starting at Centenary Square, runners of both the 10k and Half Marathon took to the streets of Birmingham, taking in iconic landmarks and sites of the city.

Our runners included Foundation Ambassador Katharine Merry, who took on the 10k in a time of 59 minutes 12 seconds and mother and daughter duo, Teresa and Ellen who took on the challenge as their first ever 10k event.



TICKET ROUND UPS HIT £20,000

Since the inception of the initiative in 2021, the Foundation's ticket round ups scheme, which gives fans the option to either donate or round up their purchase to the nearest pound when purchasing tickets online, has hit £20,000 in donations.

One of the projects supported by the round ups scheme is the SEND Youth Club, which sits within our disability provision.

The Youth Club offers free weekly sessions for young people with special educational needs and disabilities to get involved in a range of multi-sport activities.



“The SEND Youth Club ran by the Aston Villa Foundation provides children with the opportunity to engage in a wide range of sports such as football and tennis, to activities that support children's motor function.

“The sessions give children a voice and choice in what they want to take part in. The sessions are vital to my children, and I thank the Foundation for all the support they offer.



Our Participants: : **LUCY AND LAURA**

15-year-old Lucy wrote a letter to the club about her passion for football, with her dream being to walk out onto the pitch at Villa Park.

Tyrone Mings, one of Lucy's favourite players, helped make that dream come true when he visited her house to surprise her with a mascot place for Villa's game against Tottenham Hotspur.

Lucy is profoundly deaf and wears cochlear implants, also has autism and a right-sided weakness. She does not let her disabilities stop her, thinking of them as her superpower.



Click play button to watch
Lucy's special day to
remember





14-year-old Laura also had her dream come true, by having the opportunity to spend the morning at Bodymoor Heath with the Aston Villa Women's team.

Laura, who lives with ADHD and severe anxiety, has always dreamed of becoming a professional footballer, currently playing for Foundation's Ability Counts Under-16s as goalkeeper and striker.

After enjoying a meet and greet breakfast, Laura experienced training first hand, observing goalkeepers Hannah Hampton and Anna Leat, before joining the rest of the team to watch the remainder of the session.

Chapter Four:
**ASPIRATIONS
FOR THE FUTURE**





YOUTH ENDOWMENT FUND

The Aston Villa Foundation have been successful in its bid to become the Lead Coordinator for the Youth Endowment Fund's (YEF) Neighbourhood Fund in Lozells and Newtown.

The YEF's Neighbourhood Fund was set up to learn how empowering local people to make decisions about their own local neighbourhoods can prevent children from becoming involved in violent crime and anti-social behaviour.

Five areas in England and Wales have been selected to receive funding: Cardiff, Bradford, Norfolk, Manchester and Birmingham. Each location will receive £1 million to put their community's plan to protect children from crime and violence into action.

The Lead Coordinator's role is to enable the project's steering group to deliver a community-led action plan. The plan focuses on empowering individuals to work collaboratively, supporting them to deliver programmes and services that respond to the needs of the community and positively impact the lives of those living there. 80% of the YEF funding will be invested in to local community groups and charities to help them increase their own delivery to impact on this important agenda.



Chair of the Community Steering Group, Michelle Kelly shared:

“I have lived in Lozells most of my life, and I feel proud to be part of this community initiative.

“We need to become better at listening to the community and I'd like to think we have heard what has been said at our soft launch event.

“We strongly encourage other community members that live or work in Lozells or Newtown, to connect with our steering group and become part of the change, to help us build Equity for our community. I feel it opens up the possibilities for co-design to be the way forward.

“I'm really excited to be a part of this YEF initiative, and I am happy that the Aston Villa Foundation want to be supporting our community to build stronger links.”

BROOKVALE ACADEMY

The new purpose -built Brookvale Inner City Academy opened at the end of July 2023, with several Foundation projects utilising the space for continuing work in the community, providing an inspirational venue for local people. The site will be the new base for many Football in the Community, Disability, Youth and Community, Schools and Health and Wellbeing sessions, alongside housing the club's new inner city Academy training facility, to identify upcoming male and female talent within the local area of Aston and surrounding areas . The central location of the site and transport links will make the site more accessible to the local community, bringing world -class facilities to our local neighbourhood





THE ACADEMY



THE ACADEMY

BRITISH SOUTH ASIAN FOOTBALL PROGRAMME

Delivered in partnership with the Birmingham Football Association (FA) “Everybody’s Game” is the banner used by the Foundation to promote football as a sport for all, providing a safe and secure environment for everyone from different backgrounds to take part in sport.

Moving into the 2023/24 season, the Foundation are working towards implementing a new project under the “Everybody’s Game” banner, bringing more inclusive opportunities for local British South Asian communities to get involved across mainstream football, either as players, volunteers, or coaches.

The focus of the project will be on capacity building and both supporting and creating a network of grassroots -level British South Asian -led clubs and community groups who are well -governed, confident, and ready to increase the number of opportunities for their communities

to take part in football. Those benefitting include children, young people and adults of Indian, Pakistani, and Bangladeshi background who form a large part of our local communities. The project will work with both men and women who have had some experience with sport and football, as well as those who have no prior experience of sport due to additional cultural, financial, or personal barriers. The project will incorporate direct coaching, volunteer mentoring, coach education and organisational infrastructure support led by two full-time Football Development Officers, one of whom will specifically focus on women & girls’ participation





DIGBETH DINING CLUB: FOOD TRUCK

The Aston Villa Foundation have been working closely with Digbeth Dining Club 'Community Interest Company' (CIC) for the Foundation's Villa Catering Club. The catering club was designed to help address the challenges the catering and hospitality industry had faced, losing vast swathes of its workforce to other sectors, while also helping to address the local challenges around unemployment.

The participants who attend the programme are out of work or education; or looking for a change of career. While on the programme they gain nationally recognised qualifications in catering and hospitality, and industry specific certification in areas such as food hygiene. They also get support in employability skills and workshops from industry experts. The programme culminates in work experience at one of the club or foundation hospitality partners.

The project will involve the purchase of what was previously a crime scene investigation van, which will be converted into a state-of-the-art street food catering and education facility.

The van will work at various Digbeth Dining Club Events, Aston Villa Match Days and we have had commitment from several other Club and Foundation partners around supporting their events, including Aston University and Sandwell and West Birmingham NHS Trust.

The van will be utilised for work experience, through referrals from the existing catering club programme and other Foundation projects, and educational purposes, taking the van into the community, to visit schools, community, and faith-based centres where the team will deliver food education workshops, while also doing practical cooking demonstrations and lessons.

The project will look to engage with over 600 individuals per year, to see at least 30% of those involved with work experience going onto employment within the sector, working to support some key areas within the Birmingham Skills and Employment Plan, increasing employment and training opportunities, through targeted initiatives to help disadvantaged communities and encourage those who want to progress in work by increasing their skills.





THE
PROJECT
www.theproject.org.uk
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THANKS TO FUNDERS



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