

Chailey Heritage Foundation

Impact Report #1

Community Connections

Welcome everyone,



I'm delighted to introduce the first in a regular series of Impact Reports from Chailey Heritage Foundation.

Our 2024-2029 strategy is all about increasing reach and impact, with three core strategic priorities and three strategic enablers in place to help us deliver our plan. With this in mind, each Impact Report will be themed to reflect one strategic priority or enabler, so we can share different, tangible examples of how our work is changing the lives of the children and young people we support.

We want the Impact Reports to be both insightful and engaging, so we'll be producing and sharing them using a range of different channels – including digital and print reports, supporting video and social media.

Our first report will focus on Community Connections, the way we harness the strength of our local community to help us grow.

In June of 2026, we opened The Bradbury Den building on our existing therapeutic Patchwork Farm. We wanted to create an indoor space that brings our community together, whatever the weather, to experience everything our farm has to offer. It's a place where children and young people can grow confidence and develop skills, by learning about the environment and biodiversity, finding out how a farm is run with teamwork and cooperation, and enjoying hands-on, multi-sensory experiences with the different animals we have here.

In this report, you'll find out how Patchwork Farm and The Bradbury Den are creating shared experiences for people of all ages and abilities across our community - whether that's welcoming local schools to take part in activities alongside young people from our school, organising events for adult community groups, or offering volunteering opportunities for people of any age. You'll also meet Reuben and Jess, a pupil at Chailey Heritage School and his teacher, and see a fantastic example of how the opportunities we offer here can be truly transformational.

Together, with your help and support we're building a stronger, more inclusive community where everyone has the opportunity to connect, belong, and grow.

I hope you enjoy our first Impact Report.

Gareth

Gareth Germer, **Chief Executive**



The Bradbury Den, an expansion of the site's already well-established therapeutic Patchwork Farm, was officially opened on 3rd June 2026 by the Foundation's Patron, HRH The Duchess of Gloucester.

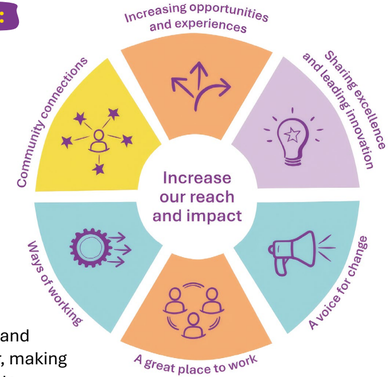
Our 2024-2029 Strategy

Our strategic priorities are:

1. **Increasing opportunities and experiences** - we want to increase the number of children, young people and their families who have direct access to the exceptional services and support we offer.
2. **Sharing excellence and leading innovation** - we will continue to share our skills and expertise within and beyond our sector so that more children and young people can benefit from our approaches.
3. **Being a voice for change** - we want to become a voice for change to amplify the experiences of children and young people living with complex disabilities as well as those of their families.

Our strategic enablers are:

1. **Community connections** - we will aim to harness the strength of our local community to help us grow.
2. **Ways of working** - we want to make best use of our resources and mitigate risk so that we can grow sustainably.
3. **A great place to work** - this means creating a great colleague experience where people feel happy, engaged, and empowered to work together, making the biggest difference possible.



"We want The Bradbury Den to be a special place for everyone who visits and offer a unique opportunity for each young person to get the most out of the farm environment."

From ambition to impact

How a shared vision became The Bradbury Den



AMBITION
A place to belong

REACH & IMPACT
Extend Community Connections

OPPORTUNITY
Make the farm work harder

CONCEPT
Co-created by the community

DESIGN
Sustainable by design

PARTNERSHIP & FUNDING
£600,000+ raised

CONSTRUCTION
A 'barn raising' build

OPENING
The impact begins

THE JOURNEY

Why the project mattered

For more than a decade, Patchwork Farm has shown how the right environment can help children and young people develop communication skills and reach physical, educational and wellbeing goals beyond a traditional classroom. The Bradbury Den grew from an ambition to take that impact further: creating a year-round learning environment and more opportunities to connect with nature, each other and the wider community.

Co-created by the community

We worked with children and young people, colleagues, supporters and local organisations to shape the project. We appointed **BakerBrown Studio** following a local architect selection process, with a brief to integrate the building into the farm habitat using sustainably sourced local materials and traditional techniques.

Partnership made it possible

An early donation from the **A & N Daniell Trust** was followed by grants from 14 further funding partners, including **Vistry Homes South East**. A substantial gift from the **Bradbury Foundation, Hong Kong** completed the funding and gave the Den its name.



UP TO 2,500 places on class sessions for Chailey Young People from Chailey Heritage School each year

7,500 to end of 2029

UP TO 900 places on sessions for Activity Place community customers each year

2,700 to end of 2029

BUILT TO CONNECT

A true 'barn raising' build

After three years of consultation, design, planning and fundraising, Lewes-based **Hartley Quinn Wilson** brought the design to life while keeping Patchwork Farm open throughout construction.

The build itself became part of the community programme. Local craftspeople and **University of Brighton** architecture students joined straw-bale and Strock workshops; primary schools made clay tiles and built bug hotels for the habitat wall.



More than **1,000 Strock bricks** were made using clay excavated from the building's own foundations.

And Now, THE IMPACT BEGINS

Completed in April 2026, The Bradbury Den is already enabling sessions that previously could have been cancelled during extreme weather. The children and young people who access Chailey Heritage Foundation's services with local mainstream schools, helping break down barriers.

Future plans include accessible after-school and holiday farm clubs, opportunities for families to connect and winter Patchwork Farm sessions and more.



OVER 500 potential places on visits from local primary schools each year

1,500 to end of 2029

WON 2 Sussex Heritage Trust awards

Case Study

Reuben's Story

When Reuben first came to school, everyday experiences could feel overwhelming. He found different textures challenging, struggled to manage his emotions and had difficulties with fine motor skills and communication.



Patchwork farm has played an important role in helping Reuben to achieve his My Next Steps targets.

By caring for the tortoises on the farm, Reuben has developed fine motor skills and increased his independence. Holding and using a small toothbrush to clean the tortoises has helped him build the strength and control needed for tasks such as brushing his teeth and managing the straps on his ankle-foot orthosis.

Regular sessions with the animals have also helped Reuben become more comfortable with different textures and learn how to stay calm and regulated. As his confidence has grown, he has become more willing to explore activities such as art and tolerate different clothing textures.

The farm has also supported Reuben's communication skills. Learning signs for animals, building new vocabulary and even helping to name a guinea pig, 'Excuse Me', have given him meaningful opportunities to communicate and connect with others. Most commonly through his VOCA (Voice Output Communication Aid).

Physically, the farm provides opportunities to walk on uneven surfaces, balance while feeding animals and develop confidence using his powered wheelchair outdoors. These skills help him become more independent in everyday activities.

Through hands-on experiences with the animals, Reuben is growing in confidence, independence and communication, proving how valuable the farm is in helping children and young people achieve their goals.

Jess
Reuben's teacher

Impact Today

Community Connections
in Action



As a registered charity, we are able to provide these services to the community through our fundraising, meaning we're able to keep costs affordable for all.

The difference it makes

The impact goes beyond the number of people using these spaces. It can be seen in the experiences, interactions and relationships being created.

Step by Step School

Is a small school for pupils aged 4–19 with autism who visited the farm. The Bradbury Den played a pivotal role in supporting their visit by providing a safe and flexible indoor environment alongside their farm activities. Additional classroom-based activities were set up within the space, enabling pupils to engage in a wider range of learning experiences throughout the morning. The classroom provided a calm and safe environment where pupils could relax, take part in additional activities, enjoy a snack, or access bathroom facilities when needed.

"It was worth coming in every way - the pupils got so much out of it and everyone had a brilliant time. We envisioned a few of them needing to head back to school early or to even have to head to the cafe for a bit, but everyone stayed the full time and were so engaged with the animals and the activities. So a really big thank you for being so wonderful"

Downsview School, Woodingdean

Supports children and young people aged 4–16 with Profound and Multiple Learning Disabilities. During their visit, pupils participated in a morning farm session before using The Bradbury Den as a comfortable and accessible space to enjoy lunch and access bathroom facilities.

"Just wanted to thank you again for hosting my class yesterday. Both staff and pupils really enjoyed their time at the farm."



Newick Primary School

Is a local primary school within our community. Pupils have visited a number of times and feel that Chailey Heritage Foundation is a very special place. The children had a great time integrating and building Bug Hotels. The children look forward to coming back again soon!

"We loved the sensory garden and it has inspired us to try and do more with our peace garden at Newick!"

The Good Company People

Is a dementia-welcoming community organisation offering practical help, friendly groups and one-to-one support for people growing older. The Good Company People came along to experience a farm session and made use of The Bradbury Den, meeting some of the farm animals and enjoying some after activity refreshments.



"The team at Chailey couldn't have been more helpful and our members loved meeting the animals on the day. The layout and design of the Den was perfect for our members with mobility issues, and it was great to run such an inclusive event. We will definitely be back for another visit."

The Uckfield Chamber of Commerce

We welcomed local community business, The Uckfield Chamber of Commerce into The Bradbury Den for a morning of connections through business, discussing employment law and more.

"Thank you for the warm welcome and the use of such an incredible space! It was a real privilege to spend time at such a remarkable place. The facilities, the people and the impact they have on families are truly inspiring."





Case Study ★

From Farm Volunteer, TO FUTURE VET!

Rosie first approached Chailey Heritage Foundation during the first year of her A levels. She was hoping to gain more experience working with and handling different animals to support her application to study Veterinary Medicine at university.

Rosie left us at Easter to concentrate on her A level revision, and all that hard work has paid off. She achieved the results she needed and started studying at Harper & Keele Veterinary School in September.

Reflecting on her time at Chailey Heritage Foundation, Rosie said she enjoyed volunteering because it gave her an escape from work and college and that it had been a very positive experience.

Rosie quickly became a valued member of the Farm team, learning the role quickly and providing fantastic support.

Measuring Success

The success of building Community Connections is found in the difference these experiences make. Our ambition is to understand these differences – for the children and young people, for the people who visit us, and for the relationships we build within our wider community.



At Patchwork Farm and The Bradbury Den, we are looking at impact through the following areas:

1. **PARTICIPATION** — Creating opportunities for everyone to take part



2. **PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT** — Supporting confidence, communication and independence



3. **CONNECTION** — Bringing Chailey Heritage Foundation and our community together



4. **CHANGING PERCEPTIONS** — Building understanding through shared experience



How we'll evidence each one

We will continue to build our evidence through feedback from young people, families, staff and community visitors; observations and individual stories; participation and repeat engagement; and the relationships and opportunities that develop following a visit. Together, this will allow us to measure not simply how many people come through the door, but what happens because they did.

Be part of what happens next

The Bradbury Den has given us the space. Community Connections is helping us think bigger.

The next stage is to bring people together. More businesses, community organisations, volunteers and supporters to join us in sharing skills, experiences, ideas and opportunities that help build an all-round inclusive community.





There are many ways to get involved

1. **Partner with us**
Share your expertise, resources, networks or time.

2. **Grow our community**
Introduce Chailey Heritage to your colleagues, customers and connections.

3. **Create opportunities**
Offer volunteering, experiences, skills or work-related learning for our young people.

4. **Come and see for yourself**
Visit Patchwork Farm and The Bradbury Den, meet our community and discover what we could achieve together.

What could we create together?

Get in touch today to start a conversation and become part of what happens next.
Call: **01825 724444** or email: **fundraising@chf.org.uk**

More people • More experiences • More connections

Thank you

The Bradbury Den has been made possible through the generosity, commitment and shared vision of our supporters – Bradbury Foundation, Hong Kong, A & N Daniell Trust, The Beatrice Laing Trust, Bede's School, The Childwick Trust, CL Medilaw, ESPTC Ltd, Hurstpierpoint College, The Lennox Hannay Charitable Trust, Lindfield Primary Academy, Newick CE Primary School, Oliver Ford Foundation, The P F Charitable Trust, The Peter Stormonth Darling Charitable Trust, The Richard Radcliffe Charitable Trust, St Nicolas and St Mary CE Primary, Vistry Homes South East, Wivelsfield Primary School and Nursery, The WO Street Charitable Foundation, Firle Church of England Primary School and Laughton Community Primary School.

Together, we are creating connections that will benefit children, families and communities for generations to come.

If you would like to 'connect with us' click on the QR code to complete your details and we'll be in touch from there.

We look forward to sharing your journey with you.

SUSSEX HERITAGE TRUST AWARDS 2026 WINNER

Recognised for excellence

Don't just take our word for it: the Bradbury Den has recently won two prestigious awards from the Sussex Heritage Trust – Sussex Public and Community Building 2026, and Sussex Eco Building 2026.

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