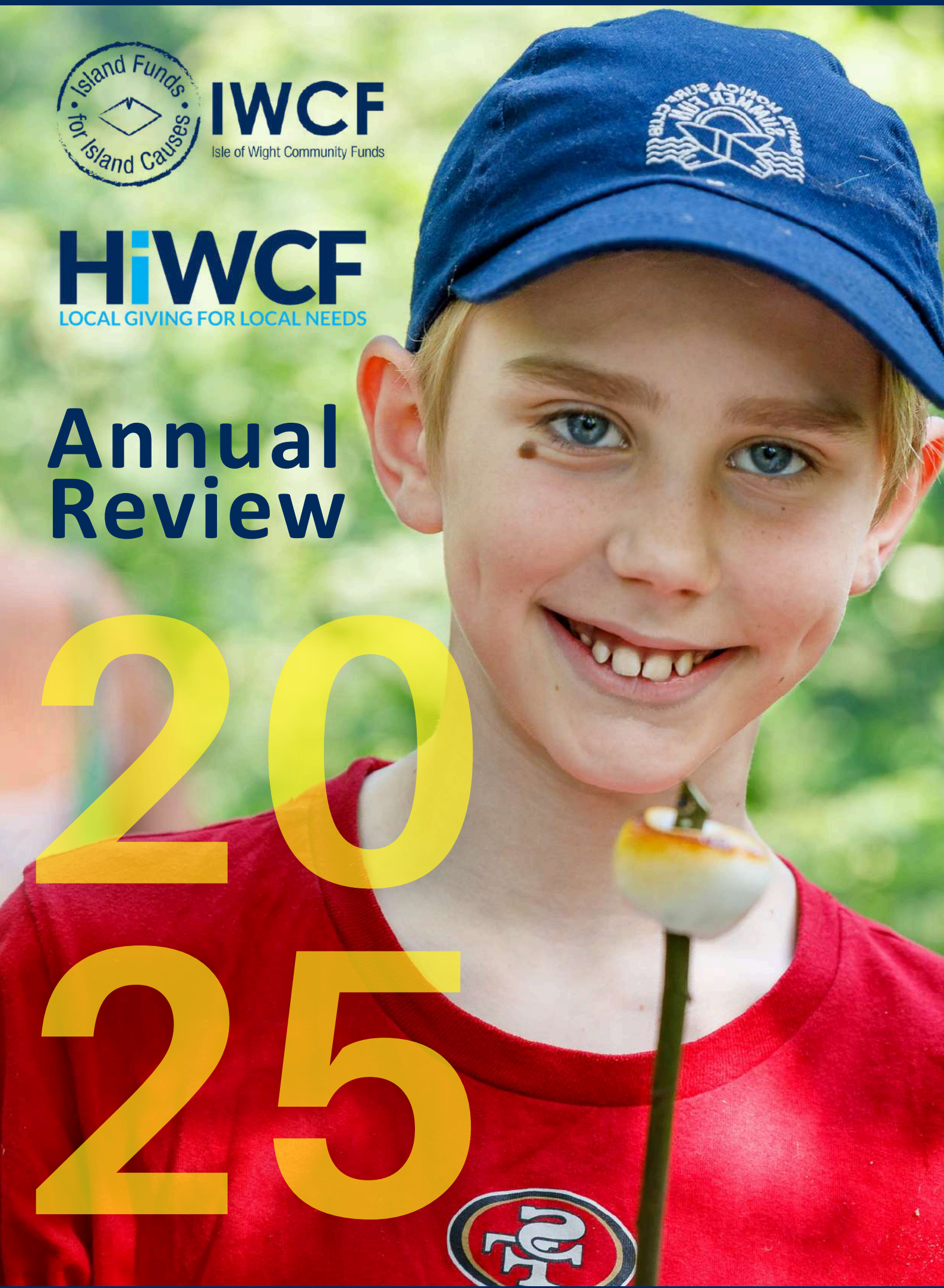
Island Funds for Island Causes

IWCF
Isle of Wight Community Funds

HiWCF
LOCAL GIVING FOR LOCAL NEEDS

Annual Review

2025



Just having someone here touching base, looking in, not just at me, but at the whole family is hugely reassuring... There is a sense of security I don't recall having anywhere else, just knowing that the support that's working is the support that's going to stay in place... I just feel lucky to have the support of SWAY.

- Ellen, client of SWAY, funded by HIWCF

2025

Welcome

Mrs Susie Sheldon, HM Lord-Lieutenant of Isle of Wight and President of Isle of Wight Community Fund

Across the Isle of Wight, community organisations continue to show remarkable dedication to supporting people and strengthening local life. This year's Annual Review highlights just some of the ways in which grants from the Isle of Wight Community Fund, and other funds managed by HIWCF, have helped those organisations turn their ideas and compassion into meaningful support for Islanders.

Over the past year, nearly £160,000 has been awarded to projects across the Island. These grants are helping people living with dementia stay connected to their communities, supporting young people to develop confidence and skills for the future, and bringing people together through creativity and our shared heritage.

Behind every project are committed volunteers, staff and trustees working tirelessly to support others. I would like to offer my heartfelt thanks to them, as well as to the donors and Fundholders whose generosity makes this funding possible. Their support continues to ensure that the Isle of Wight Community Fund can play an important role in helping our Island communities thrive.

Michael Smith, Chair of Isle of Wight Community Fund

The past year has once again demonstrated the value of local knowledge and collaboration when it comes to supporting communities across the Isle of Wight. We are delighted to have distributed nearly £160,000 to Island causes. These funds come both from endowments established specifically for Island causes and from wider funding that HIWCF has sourced for the Isle of Wight. Together, those funds help ensure that community groups delivering vital local work can access the support they need.

As always, demand for funding is extremely high, and we carefully consider each application we receive. I would like to thank my fellow IWCF colleagues for the time and thought they dedicate to this process each year. I would also like to thank the donors whose generosity makes this funding possible. With continued support, we can ensure that resources remain available to help Island organisations respond to the challenges and opportunities facing our communities.

Reflections from the Chief Executive

As I reflect on the past year, I am so pleased with what we have achieved on the Island. Thanks to the generosity of our donors, funders and partners nearly £160,000 in grants has been distributed to Island community groups – supporting projects that are changing lives in very practical, human ways as well as creating new opportunities for Isle of Wight community groups to reflect the special nature and heritage of the Island.

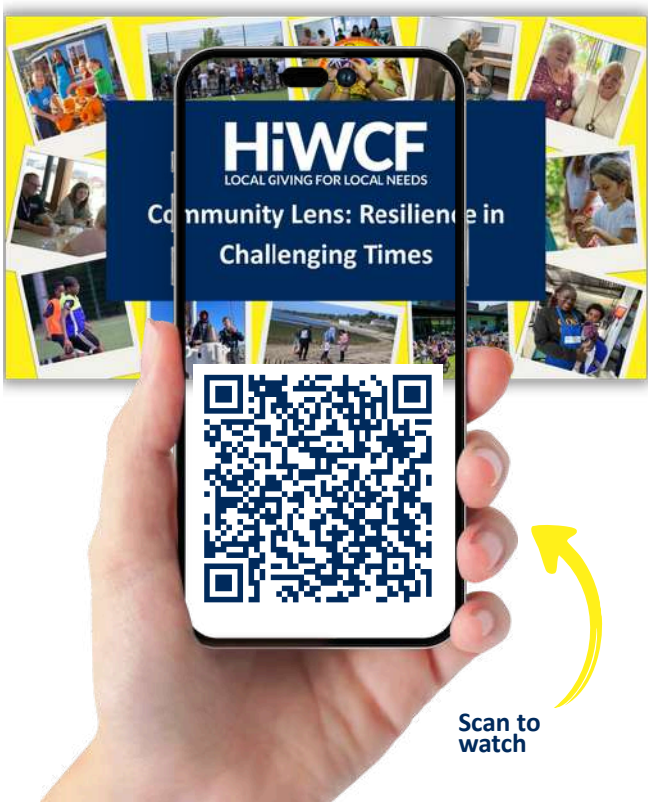
Behind every pound granted is a story It is the person living with dementia who can now attend a cafe or wellbeing session because a minibus journey makes it possible. It is the young person gaining confidence through a work buddy, discovering not only new skills but a renewed sense of purpose and possibility. It is the community member stitching together memories of Island high streets, preserving heritage while building friendships and improving wellbeing.

These projects, from Alzheimer Cafe IOW's transport service, to Care in the Garden's work buddy scheme, to the creative energy enabled through the Past Futures programme, demonstrate the extraordinary strength of character and compassion within our Island communities. They remind us that relatively modest grants, when placed in the right hands, can help to reduce isolation, create connection and help communities to flourish.

And yet, we know that need continues to grow. We hear daily from organisations with powerful ideas and urgent challenges, and we are not always able to say yes and provide grants. That's the reality of limited funding in the face of rising demand.

Listening to our communities remains central to how we work. In 2025, our Community Lens conversations with grassroots leaders reinforced what we see every day: small organisations are responding to increasingly complex needs with compassion, creativity and limited resources. Your support allows them to continue this essential work, often preventing crises before they escalate.

To everyone who has supported our funding this year: thank you. Your generosity is creating lasting impact. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected Isle of Wight – and with your continued support, we can achieve even more in the years ahead.



Our impact on the Island

Isle of Wight Community Fund

For people living with dementia, staying connected to their community can be life-changing. Yet for many Islanders, simply getting to the support they need is one of the biggest barriers they face.

Thanks to a £5,000 grant from the Isle of Wight Community Fund, Alzheimer Café Isle of Wight has launched a dedicated transport service, helping ensure that people are not excluded from vital support because of where they live or how they travel.

Alzheimer Café Isle of Wight supports people living with dementia, their families and carers through monthly cafés across the Island and a central hub at Parklands Dementia Resource Centre in Cowes, which offers daily wellbeing activities, advice, social opportunities and access to partner services. However, public transport can be confusing or distressing for people with dementia, particularly in rural areas, while many older carers are no longer able to drive.

CEO, Maggie Bennett said:

> **"The minibus service is a missing piece of the puzzle that will help us reach every person living with dementia on the Isle of Wight who would benefit from our services."**

The funding has enabled the charity to lease a nine-seater minibus for a year, providing safe, reliable transport to the Parklands hub and community sessions in East Cowes, Ryde, Totland, Sandown and Newport. Volunteer drivers are fully trained, including in Dementia Awareness, ensuring every journey is calm, supportive and dignified.

Operating 50 weeks a year, the service could enable up to 11,250 individual journeys annually, helping people attend wellbeing clubs, cafés, activities and appointments — and reconnect with their community.

With an estimated 2,743 people living with dementia on the Isle of Wight, this project responds directly to what families have told the charity they need most: access. By removing a practical but significant barrier, the service helps reduce isolation, support independence and improve quality of life.

Maggie said: "Reliable transport helps individuals with dementia stay active in their community for longer, promoting physical and cognitive health, and preserving dignity."

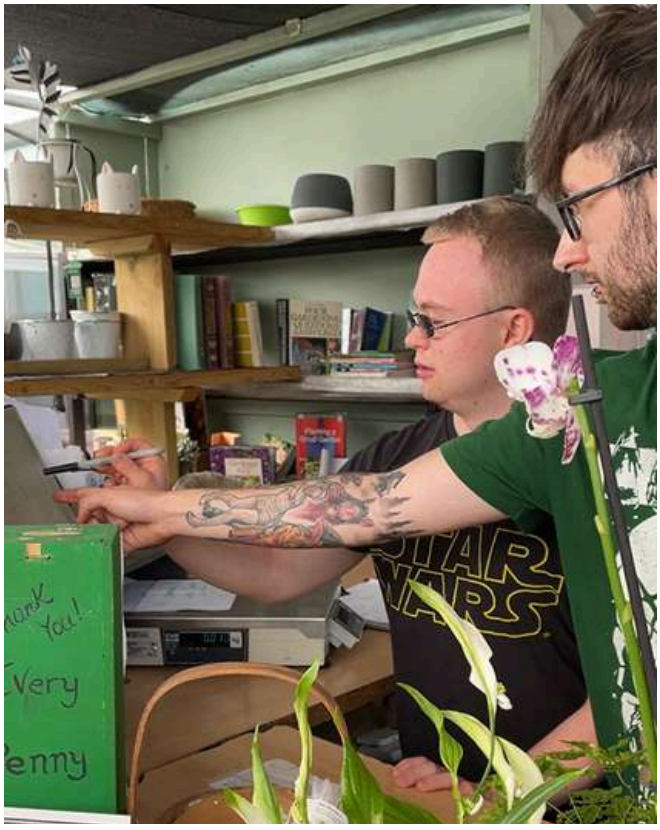
Scan the QR code to listen to Jacqui Scott, Maggie Bennet and Joe Robertson, MP for Isle of Wight East discuss dementia support on the Island.

Young Island Lives

Through our Young Island Lives programme, Care in the Garden received £20,000 over two years to deliver a Work Buddy scheme supporting young people to build confidence, skills and pathways into employment.

Based at Palmers Brook Community Nursery and delivered across the Island, the scheme provides supported, pre-employability training in areas including horticulture, woodwork, retail and gardening. Each young person is matched with a dedicated Work Buddy who offers one-to-one practical support, helping them develop both job specific and transferable life skills in a safe and supportive environment.

As participants grow in confidence and capability, Work Buddies support them to progress into work experience placements with local employers, with the long-term aim of moving into paid employment. Training and placements take place at a range of Island locations, reflecting Care in the Garden's belief that everyone deserves the opportunity to participate fully in the working world.



The project is delivered by a team of paid staff and volunteers, with funding supporting an additional Work Buddy role for 15 hours a week, working closely with the organisation's Work Buddy Coordinator.

One young person involved in the scheme shared:

"I enjoy going out to work with my work buddy. It makes me feel confident and focused. I feel like it is a step towards a proper job. Working makes me feel good."

Care in the Garden's Work Buddy scheme focuses on ability rather than disability, offering young people meaningful opportunities to learn, contribute and flourish – and helping to lay the foundations for more inclusive employment across the Isle of Wight.

Past Futures

The Past Futures programme is delivered in partnership with Creative Island and funded by the National Lottery Heritage Fund. Six Island organisations were awarded a total of £54,612 as part of the programme's first funding round in 2025. This new initiative is now supporting projects that preserve and celebrate local history and culture, enabling Island not-for-profits to tell untold stories and safeguard traditions - thereby supporting and enabling communities to flourish.

A grant of £9,000 to Stitch Department in Ryde is launching Heritage Threads: a community project exploring the history of Isle of Wight high streets through heritage crafts and local memories.

The project will capture the stories of bygone shops, stores and buildings in Newport and Ryde using hand embroidery, goldwork, slow stitching, beading and patchwork. Twenty inclusive community workshops, open to beginners and experienced crafters alike, will take place in Stitch Department's Ryde studio – a building with its own rich history of craft and making.

The pieces created during the workshops will be brought together to form a large wall hanging, to be exhibited in public spaces across the two towns.

An accompanying book will document the creative process and the memories, photographs and stories behind each square, with a digital version also available.

Creative Manager, Amber Rose, explains that the project aims to do more than just produce a piece of artwork:

"This project aims to bring the community together, to honour and recover disappearing heritage craft and making skills, whilst sharing memories and history of shops and their building's history.

Our workshops will offer social support and positive relationships in our rural community. We will show the importance of heritage craft and its evidenced connection to improved mental wellbeing through the reduction of anxiety and isolation."

We look forward to sharing the outcomes of this work, alongside other funded Isle of Wight projects, in 2026.

Our funding on the Island: 2025

At HIWCF, we are proud to be the largest independent funder of charitable activity on the Isle of Wight, supporting grassroots organisations to tackle poverty and inequality, improve wellbeing, and strengthen local communities. Through our Isle of Wight Community Fund and wider grant programmes, we help ensure vital services and local initiatives can continue to reach those most in need. Our commitment to the Island continues to grow, from sustaining essential day-to-day support to investing in its cultural heritage. We are dedicated to championing local causes and ensuring funding reaches the communities who need it most, helping them to thrive.

We awarded a total of £159,919 to Island groups in 2025, below, you can see who recieved funding.

Alzheimer Cafe Isle of Wight	£5,000
Bembridge Fort Trust	£10,000
Breakout Youth	£4,750
Cowes Baptist Church	£7,500
Discover More CIC	£9,596
Earl Mountbatten Hospice	£1,721
Frontline Advice Centre	£6,500
Isle Access	£3,115
Isle of Wight Youth Trust	£30,000
Lake Parish Council	£10,000
Lemon Jelly Press	£6,016
Newclose County Cricket Ground	£5,676
Pan Together	£5,000
Stitch Department	£9,000
SWEF individual enterprise grant	£2,000
SWEF individual enterprise grant	£1,820
The Earth Museum	£10,000
The Isle of Wight Society for the Blind Known as Sight for Wight	£3,925
The Parenting Network	£5,000
Tidal Family Support	£5,000
Ventnor Exchange	£18,300

HiWCF
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What will your legacy be?

Planning for the future?

If you would like to discuss leaving a gift in your Will, we would be delighted to meet with you.

Email philanthropy@hiwcf.com or scan the QR code below to find out more

Forever Funds

A Forever Fund is an endowment held and managed by HIWCF, designed to support communities in perpetuity.

Revitalising existing charitable trusts

Through the national Revitalising Trusts programme, we work with the Charity Commission to transfer charitable trusts whose trustees want their original mission to live on.

HIWCF Team

HIWCF President
Nigel Atkinson Esq, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of Hampshire

President of Isle of Wight Community Fund
Mrs Susie Sheldon, His Majesty's Lord-Lieutenant of the Isle of Wight

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Grace Cheyney
Ian Prideaux (deceased January 2026)
Jo Ash CBE (retired June 2025)
Josh Hensman
Kirsty Rowlinson (joined June 2025)
Lucy Tennant (joined June 2025)
Matt York
Michael Smith
Oliver Stanley
Rob Wood
Suki Sitaram (retired June 2025)
Simon Cleverly (currently on leave of absence)
Vanessa Shahani (joined June 2025)

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