



green uniform and  
baby bank

#circularcommunities





# Our Story

In the making for over five years now, Green Uniform and Baby Bank (GUBB) started life in a cupboard in a Dinner Lady's home in Winsford, Cheshire.

Our Emma, mother to four, realised that when her growing children needed the next size school uniform, there was nowhere to readily exchange second-hand items to keep financial and environmental costs low: so the Winsford Uniform Exchange was born. By running the exchange, and understanding the experiences of local families, it became clear that pre-school needs were also creating financial pressures. So, three years later, in 2021, when the opportunity to continue Pass It On Baby Bank community project presented, Emma couldn't say no!

Incorporated together, GUBB helps local communities with the living costs associated with their young families, **aiming to help them to save money whilst reducing waste and inequality to improve their futures.** The cost of living disproportionately impacts people living in lower socio-economic areas, creating health, education and well-being inequalities, leading to lower social mobility [1]. We work to help Mid-Cheshire families who are experiencing these challenges.

Mid-Cheshire, located within the Cheshire West and Chester (CWAC) borough, is where people are living with higher levels of deprivation. Borough Index of Multiple Deprivation results show 16% are deprived neighbourhoods [2]. This includes Northwich, Leftwich and Winsford wards [3.] **At GUBB, we empower communities in these wards by providing them with a platform for participation in the circular economy, presenting much needed cost-saving and sustainability opportunities.**

Our work operates a non-profit social enterprise model; founded on and largely funded by generously donated preloved items into our Uniform and Baby Bank, which are sorted, stocked and sold from our volunteer led Community shop, promoting circular consumption and connection. All the money raised goes back into Mid-Cheshire communities; firstly, to cover associated rent and communication costs with our Winsford shop and pop-ups around our wards so that families can continue to donate and shop second-hand, before the remaining being spent on community events and initiatives.

[1] Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC). (2022) [Poverty Research Pack](#).

[2] Decline 1 or 2 on the Multiple Deprivation Index.

[3] CWAC. (2023) [State of the Borough](#).

# Our Work



## Baby Bank

Our Winsford Community shop provides a place where families can come to donate their preloved baby items and equipment where people can shop with us for these second-hand baby essentials, extending their useful life and saving families money.

**More information is outlined on page 4.**



## Uniform Bank

The Children's Society finds that on average families spend £422 a year on secondary and £287 on primary uniforms, or more with branded items [4] and that where children do not attend with the required uniform it can lead to bullying, detention and exclusion [5]. At GUBB, we offer preloved uniform for a fraction of the cost.

**Further information is on page 5.**



## Community

Where we have the funds, we focus on how we can provide additional support to families. We work to make connections with other organisations to broaden our understanding about the network of support available in the local community, creating a Community Hub, as well as fund initiatives which promote health and inclusion.

**More detail is outlined on pages 6 and 7.**

[4] Thomas, D. (2023) 'Parents forgo holidays over school uniform costs', BBC, 28 June.

[5] The Children's Society. (undated) [Cutting the cost of school uniforms.](#)





# Baby Bank

The cost of preparing for a new arrival can, for many, place huge pressures on the family's budget.

According to the [MoneyHelper](#) [6], the **baby essential items needed for a new arrival are a cot, bedding, a pram, clothing and nappies, totalling £925, £1090 if you need a car seat, or £1125 if you bottle rather than breastfeed** [7]. In the UK, 34% of adults have no savings, or less than £1000 in their savings account [8], and more likely that low-income households are in debt and/ or behind on their payments [9][10]. Even if a family could afford to save £100 every month for the full duration of pregnancy, it still would not be enough to cover the cost of these limited essentials.

If families shop second-hand with GUBB, these items would cost less than £132 [11]. This is possible by working with local communities, by asking them to donate their items and equipment if it is no longer needed. Infants grow through seven clothing sizes in their first two years [13]. [Hubbard](#) estimate that 183 million items of outgrown baby clothes are stored in homes across the UK, with a third of families throwing clothing away as they did not know what to do with them [12]. Our Winsford Community shop provides a place where families can come to donate items and equipment, therefore where people can shop with us for baby essentials extending their useful life.

[6] [MoneyHelper](#): Government-backed financial guidance provider.

[7] The estimates assume a mid-range of costs.

[8] O'Brien, L. (2023) [UK savings statistics 2023](#).

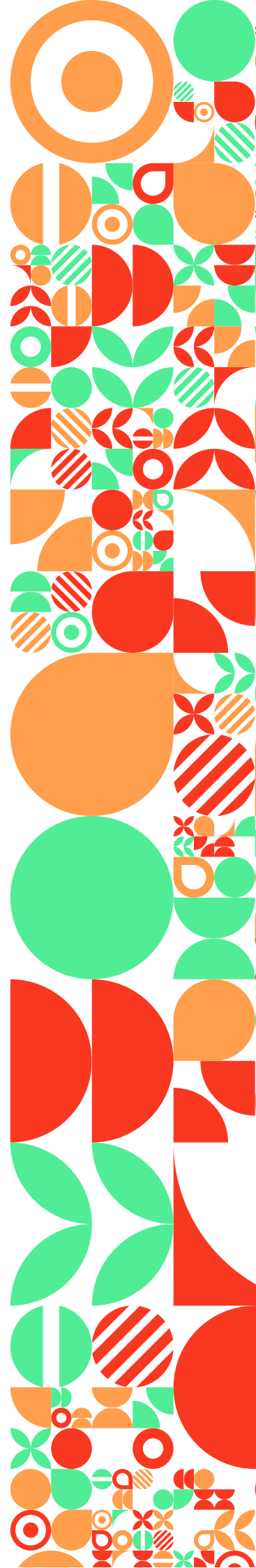
[9] Money and Pensions Advice Service. (2018) [Problem debt and low-income households](#).

[10] Being in arrears is highly-concentrated among low-income households (16% of those in the lowest income decile compared to 1% in the highest decile) (from 8 above).

[11] The maximum prices for essential items are: Cot £50, Pram £60, Bedding £10, Clothing £10 and a pack of first size nappies £2. We subsidise the cost of nappies by buying them and then selling them for half price. This estimate of £2 is based on a pack of 24 first size nappies retailing at £4 full prices.

[12] Chakrabarti, S. (2022) [How can childrenswear become more sustainable?](#)

[13] <https://www.hubbub.org.uk/giftbundle>





# BAG TO SCHOOL

## Uniform Bank

Being in poverty is when your resources are significantly below what is enough to meet your minimum needs, including those needed to fully participate in society. The key factors which result in child poverty include low earnings. In CWAC neighbourhoods, 12% of children aged between 0 -15 live in low-income families; the families in the most deprived neighbourhoods in the borough have an annual income of less than £20,000 [14] Whether to eat or pay for other essentials is a daily decision for many; something made even more difficult when they need to find the money for school uniform.

The Department of Education has introduced [statutory guidance](#) to outline what schools should have regard to when developing and implementing their uniform policies and practices. However, many parents report that policies have yet to be updated [15]. At GUBB, we offer a secondary uniform for £29.50 [16] and a primary uniform for £20.00 [17] per year, or less if logo items are not needed. We provide this through the donation of pre-loved uniform directly into our shop and through partnerships with our local schools that take part in our **Dropbox Scheme**.

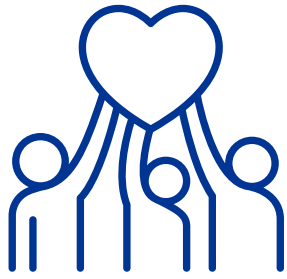
The dropbox provides a way for schools to collect uniform and share it with us, including any lost property that has unfortunately not been reunited with its owner. We provide a box for the school to collect items in and once full, they call us and one of our volunteers arranges to empty it so the items can be sorted and stocked to be shopped. We ask schools who take part in the scheme to promote our services as an alternative to buying brand new, reducing both financial and environmental costs.

[14] Cheshire West and Chester Council (CWAC). (2022) [Poverty Research Pack](#). (pg.1-28)

[15] Thomas, D. (2023) ['Parents forgo holidays over school uniform costs'](#). BBC News.

[16] All secondary items are priced between 25p and £3.00 each. The cost outlined is based on: 8 Skirts/Trousers (£1.00 each), a logo tie (50p), logo Jumper (£2.00), logo Blazer (£3.00), 4 shirts (£1.00 each), a pair of Shoes (£2.00), a Bag (£1.00), 5 pairs of Socks/Hosiery (25p each), P.E shorts (£1.00), P.E joggers (£1.00), P.E T-shirt (£1.00), P.E logo Top/Jacket (£2.00), Trainers (£2.00) and P.E Socks (50p).

[17] All primary items are priced between 25p and £2.00 each. The cost outlined is based on 8 Skirts/Trousers/Shorts/ Pinafores/ Summer Dresses (50p each), a logo tie (50p), 2 logo Jumpers/Cardigans (£1.00 each), 4 Polos (50p each), 4 Shirts (50p each), a pair of Shoes (£2.00), a Bag (£1.00), 5 pairs of Socks/Hosiery (25p each), P.E shorts (50p), P.E joggers (50p), P.E T-shirt (50p), Wellies (£1.00), Trainers (£2.00) and P.E Socks (50p).



## Community

Where we have the funds available, we focus on how we can provide additional support to families. We first focus on hosting community events, followed by other projects and initiatives, both which aim to promote well-being and inclusion. **Our current initiative relates to helping families with the cost of baby consumables, which includes formula, wipes, nappies, nappy bags and creams.**

It goes without saying that for little people to grow healthily and to their full potential, they need to be well fed. The limited availability of free, impartial postpartum support results in low breastfeeding rates [18], and therefore, families depend on infant formula.

First Steps Nutrition [19] report a 24% increase in the last 24 months in the cost of infant formula, with media reports explaining that this risks a national health crisis [20]. UK families now spend at least 31% of their weekly food budget\* on formula (excluding nappies, wipes, and cream costs). This risks food insecurity for all the family, impacts family health and the educational development of other children in the household [21].

**At GUBB we subsidise baby consumable costs when local families come to us for help.** Whether to eat or pay for other essentials is a daily decision for many; something made even more difficult when trying to find the money for school uniform.

[18] Pérez-Escamilla et al. (2023) 'Breastfeeding: crucially important, but increasingly challenged in a market-driven world', The Lancet, 401, pp.472–85.

[19] UK independent nutrition charity with a focus on infant nutrition from pre-conception to five years.

[20] Grierson, J. (2022) 'High cost of infant formula putting babies in danger, UK charities warn', The Guardian, 6 March.

[21] The All-Party Parliamentary Group on Infant Feeding and Inequalities (APPGIF). (2018) Inquiry into the cost of infant formula in the United Kingdom. London: UK Government.

\*

The latest ONS (2023) [22] results show in Table 1.2 that the average weekly household budget for food, excluding alcohol, was calculated as £31.56. Which reported that cheapest formula was the SMA Little Steps brand (Nestle) (800g) at £9.77 per tub (Mann, 2023) [23]. Tesco (undated) [24] shows 1 tub contains 177 scoops. The guidance on the tub recommends for babies from birth to 2 weeks 3 scoops per feed, with 6 feeds in 24 hours, totalling 18 scoops per day. This was selected based on the average birth weight of UK babies (Ghosh, et al. 2018) [25]. This means that 1 tin will last 9 days (177/18) before another needs to be purchased. With 31 days in the month (31/9) it means 3.5 tins in a month. Almost 1 tin per week. Cost £9.77 – weekly food spent £31.56 - 31% of weekly food budget.

[22] Office of National Statistics (ONS). (2023) Family Food 2020/21.

[23] Mann, V. (2023) 'Formula milk: where to buy and what you need to know', Which, 2 June.

[24] Tesco PLC. (undated) SMA Little Steps First Milk 1 From Birth 800G.

[25] Ghosh, R.E. et al. (2018) 'Birth weight trends in England and Wales (1986-2012): babies are getting heavier', Archives of disease in childhood. Fetal and neonatal edition, 103(3), pp. F264–F270.

Doi:10.1136/archdischild-2016-311790.





**We work to host a community event quarterly when funds allow.** Our Website details our previous and future events, but we have listed a few examples below.

The types of events we have held include a **World Book Day event** so that primary aged children have the opportunity to playfully engage with reading. **The aim is to develop a life-long interest in reading, which brings higher chances of improved social mobility [26].** The charity reported 1 in 5 children receiving free school meals purchased their first book with World Book Day tokens. At GUBB, we provide support by requesting, collecting and sorting donated second-hand costumes that help children engage with the day. Many children in low income families miss out if their parents are unable to afford the additional costs associated with taking part [27].

In 2022, we ran our first **Christmas Toy event.** Christmas in low-income households is a worry for many, and they often turn to borrowing to finance the day. Research shows low-income families pay a premium, known as the poverty premium, for this borrowing as they typically do not have access to credit options at lower rates, and with some families unable to afford Christmas at all [28]. At GUBB, we collected second-hand and donated toys and charged nominal prices to help local families have a Christmas with less worry. **The aim is to provide an alternative for families needing to finance Christmas through high cost credit.** The event was such a success, that we plan to hold one this year, hiring storage and event space to enable the event to take place.

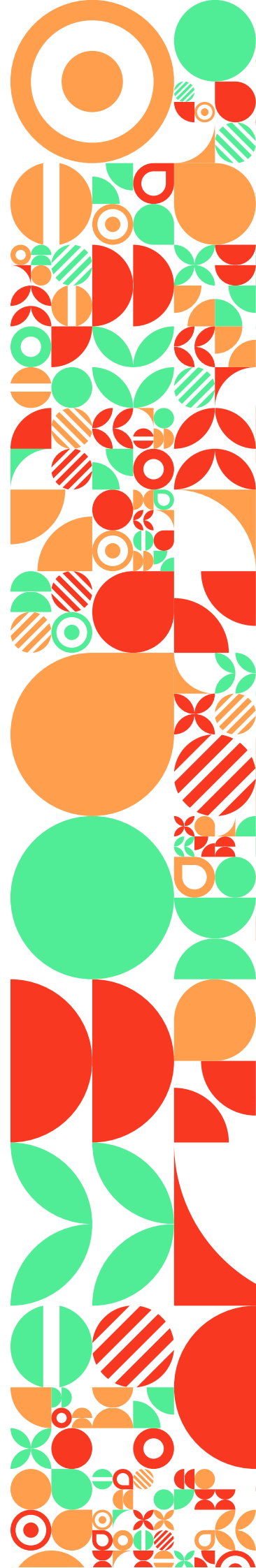
In 2023, we also held our first **School Prom event.** With the average cost of an outfit at £1000, The Prom is another annual tradition placing pressures on the family budget [29]. At GUBB, we advertised for second-hand and donated dresses, suits and shoes so that our young school leavers could shop for an outfit cheaply. No suit or dress was priced more than £30.00, with shoes and accessories at less than £5.00 each. We got other local businesses involved to provide offers for hair, make-up, and nails at reduced rates or a raffle prizes. We also got a seamstress at the event to help and advise on alterations. We decorated the venue, provided changing rooms and mirrors, as well as put on nibbles and drinks to make an evening of it. **As with our Christmas event, the aim is to provide an alternative to getting into debt and ensuring inclusion.**

[26] World Book Day, [About Us](#)

[27] Burt, G. (2023) [A NEW CHAPTER: MAKING WORLD BOOK DAY AN OCCASION FOR EVERYONE](#)

[28] Rabbitt, A. (2022) [Low-income Families Are Still Paying A Poverty Premium On Their Christmas Spending](#)

[29] Carr, E. (2019) ['Prom costs: How families pay for the big night'](#), BBC News.



# Our 2025 Objectives

There is still much to be done to alleviate cost of living struggles. We have ambitions over the next two years to further our work and our reach, both by developing our existing initiatives and looking to establish new ones across all areas of our work. **These objectives are outlined below, followed by our Strategy which shares our initial thinking of how we will work to deliver these objectives by 2025.**



## Baby Bank

We currently subsidise baby consumable costs to local families who ask for help, and typically provide items by purchasing them for full price and selling them at 50% of cost. We have used our discretion to provide this free of charge when it is clear

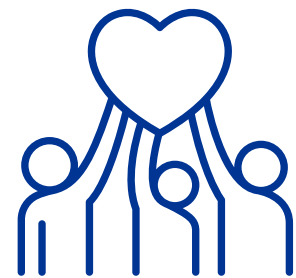
**We would like to find ways to provide baby emergence essentials (BEEs) for free through a referral process, partnering with relevant local agencies to ensure that we are reaching the families who need it.**



## Uniform Bank

Uniform' now includes stationary, noting that not coming to school with the right stationary is monitored and considered a 'misdemeanour' [30], adding to reasons why young people miss valuable classroom time.

**We would like to find ways to provide stationary essentials for free or at low-cost basic stationary essentials to provide children with the correct supplies which helps improve their attendance.**



## Community

It is estimated that 137,700 children miss school days annually because of period poverty [31].

**We would like to find ways to fund personal hygiene items so that we are able to distribute these locally, again removing another barrier to school attendance.**

We also recognise that there are many other local organisations trying to support local families. **We would like to work to build a Community Hub to help families understand the other support available.**

[30] Winsford Academy Uniform guidelines.

[31] Bodyform. (2023) [What is period poverty?](#)





# Our Strategy

Our work and objectives aim to extend both our reach and impact in Mid-Cheshire.

We work on the principle that our focus should be to provide the Uniform and Baby Bank; the primary impact source and a way to generate the funds needed to continue. Any surplus funds are put first to Community Events, before pursuing any of the initiatives outlined in our objectives.

All activities require item Donation and/or Volunteers; critical inputs. It is a continuous process to recruit and retain volunteers and sources of Donations. This is fundamental to our strategy. In addition, there are further inputs needed to develop activities necessary to deliver our objectives. The following key has been used to indicate the inputs that could be obtained,



Partnerships



Grants



Sponsorship







Referrals




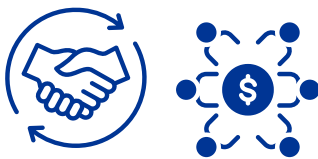


Crowd Funding

The table indicates the priority of our objectives and indicates the inputs being considered to progress towards our aims in accordance with the key outlined:

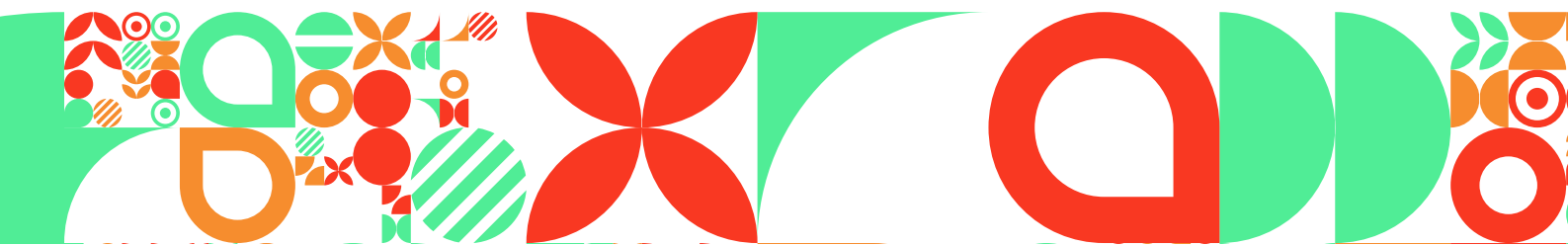
| Inputs  | Objectives   |
|---|--|
|   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>1. Uniform and Baby Bank</b></p> <p>Community shop and pop-ups to provide a place where families can come to donate their preloved items and equipment and therefore a place where people can shop second-hand, extending item useful life and saving families money.</p>            |
|   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>2. Community Events</b></p> <p>Work to host quarterly community events. All our events are aimed at improving family well-being and inclusion and we will engage with the community for 2024 and 2025 events to gain input on what events locally is felt to be of most benefit.</p> |



| Inputs  | Objectives  |
|---|---|
|    | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>3. Community Hub</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">Work to build a Community Hub to help families understand the support available. This will include being able to provide information and referrals to and from other organisations.</p>               |
|    | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>4. Baby Consumables</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To find ways to provide Baby Emergency Essentials (BEEs) for free through a referral process, partnering with relevant local agencies to ensure that we are reaching the families who need it.</p> |
|   | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>5. School Stationary</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To find ways to provide stationary essentials for free or at low-cost to provide children with the correct supplies which helps improve their attendance.</p>                                     |
|  | <p style="text-align: center;"><b>6. Personal Hygiene Items</b></p> <p style="text-align: center;">To find ways to provide personal hygiene items for free through a referral process so that we are able to distribute these to people who need these when they need them.</p>                 |

During the coming years, we are also working to understand and quantify our **Impact Pathway** so that we can improve our articulation of the impact of our work. We are exploring the **inputs** as they relate to our 2025 objectives, shaping the options for **activities** we could take to achieve them. This will give us an expected **output**, which the related **outcome** and **impact** can be measured and reported on to shape our decision-making, aiming to improve our reach and impact.

This will remain our focus into 2025.



Green Uniform and Baby Bank is a non-profit company limited by guarantee. The company was incorporated in 2023, company number 14900040, and the registered address is:



First Floor, Winsford Community Centre  
High Street, Winsford  
CW7 2AS

[greenuniformandbabybankltd.org](http://greenuniformandbabybankltd.org)

July 2023

