Impact Report – Deeplish Community Centre

Report Period:	**(Oct – Dec) 2025**
Publish Date:	**January 2026**

Contact Information

Name of Community Organisation	Deeplish Community Centre Association
Address	Hare Street, Rochdale, OL11 1JT
Phone	01706 860151
Contact email	deeplish@talk21.com
Website	www.deeplishcc.co.uk
Report author:	Sohail Ahmad – Operations & Development Lead

Content - Numbers

How many Participants have attended activities, events and sessions at the centre during this Quarter?	**3689**
How many people have volunteered at the centre?	**45 volunteers**
What was the average amount of weekly activities at the centre?	**14 activities**
How many events have we held?	**24 events**
How many different people attended these events?	**1244 people**
In the period that this report covers, has our staff or volunteers attended any training?	**Yes**

Deeplish Community Centre is a hub for local residents, particularly children, young people, elderly and families. The Centre offers a wide range of social, welfare, educational, wellbeing, and learning activities designed to connect, engage, and empower the community. By offering a safe and supportive environment, Deeplish inspires individuals to improve their quality of life and access the resources they need to survive and thrive.

A key component of the Centre's mission is to address the social isolation, welfare and wellbeing challenges facing the local community. One of the most important services provided by Deeplish Community Centre is its Deeplish Welfare Advice Service, which offers free, multilingual, face to face welfare support to residents in need together with Art for wellbeing – Zinda Dil project. ESOL, Talk English, Digital and other learning as well as volunteering opportunities to support employment and skills development.

Deeplish plays a crucial role in supporting the communities of Milkstone, Deeplish, Freehold and surrounding neighborhoods. This much-needed service offers financial, social, and welfare advice to local residents, helping them to deal with economic and welfare challenges. The Deeplish Welfare Advice Service, offered through the Deeplish Community Centre, is a lifeline for the local community, providing a range of support and guidance to those in need. Based in the heart of the community, the Centre offers a welcoming and inclusive environment where residents of all ages and backgrounds can access various services, support and activities. We design our Services to offer practical support to those experiencing financial hardship, social isolation, or other welfare-related issues. Its services are particularly valuable for individuals who may face language barriers or are unaware of their entitlements. The welfare service operates in multiple languages, including English, Urdu, Punjabi, and Kashmiri, ensuring that residents from diverse linguistic backgrounds can access the help they

need.

During this reporting period, our organisation has achieved significant successes in supporting our diverse and cohesive community. Operating within a multicultural environment, we have made remarkable impact in various key areas of our community work.

- Community Engagement and Support
- Education and Skill Development
- Health and Wellbeing Initiatives
- Social Integration and Cohesion
- Children, Young people and support for asylum, refugee and new emerging community members.
-

The Deeplish Art Almanac

During 2025, the Deeplish Art Almanac has been an intergenerationaland multi-generational project with Zinda Dil Art Group; the Monday ladies group, and children from the Deeplish Playscheme & Saturday Club.

Deeplish Community Centre was awarded Arts Council England funding and has worked in partnership with Cartwheel Arts to deliver the project. The final outcome of the project is to be a printed Art Almanac; documenting the nature, wildlife and seasons over a year in Deeplish.

The two groups worked on the same ideas and themes with the Playscheme children creating poetry, images, printing, clay and moon cycles, seed planting, and learning about birds, insects, paper making and wasps. Both groups created birds, flowers, leaves and cloud sculptures that have been installed in the garden to represent the four seasons and worked on designs for the final Almanac design.

The Zinda Dil group also followed the changes in the seasons, wildlife, plants, and ecosystems. The ladies used poetry, painting, drawing, collage, printing with natural inks, and sculpture to represent nature in all its beauty. The project has been rooted in wellbeing and explored how the natural world can contribute to people's health and happiness.

Sessions with the group included painting, printing, collage, working with sand art, natural inks, making recipes, creative writing, and somatic yoga and movement.

Zinda Dil also had 'digital walks' of photographs of the local area, as well as trips to the local park, Whitworth Art Gallery and the Physic Garden ran by Idle Women in Accrington. Each creative session has featured psycho-social education concentrating on mental health, with meditations and conversations on the seasons of life, the meanings of trees, poetry, childhood memories, the therapeutic benefits of bird song, and breathing exercises.

As well as the workshops, there was a variety of celebration events and exhibitions.

Over the summer 2025, work from the project was exhibited at Rochdale Pioneers Museum

as part of their celebration events for the UN Year of Cooperatives. There was a celebration event at Deeplish Community Centre, attended by the Mayor of Rochdale, Councillor Janet Emsley. The event featured a performance, a Mushaira/poetry reading, an exhibition, as well as hands-on creative workshops, accompanied by homemade food and refreshments with a nature theme. Finally, there was a celebration event with the children to plant bulbs and document the opening of the sculpture garden on 27th Sept and 4th Oct 2025. The project was made possible through funding from Arts Council England, Action Together, Rochdale Borough Culture Network, GMCA, and the Cooperative Heritage Trust.	

Content - Text

Who benefits: these questions are based on Reaching Communities funding themes

Example of a great activity that runs from your centre that meets one of the following themes? 1. build strong relationships in and across communities 2. improve the places and spaces that matter to communities 3. help more people to reach their potential, by supporting them at the earliest possible stage	**Kings award for Voluntary Service for Deeplish CC**  Deeplish Community Centre Awarded the Prestigious King's Award for Voluntary Service, the MBE for Volunteer Groups. Deeplish Community Centre is proud to announce that it has been honoured with the King's Award for Voluntary Service (KAVS), the highest national award presented to volunteer-led groups across the UK. Often described as the MBE for volunteer groups, the award recognises outstanding contributions made by volunteers to their local communities. This prestigious recognition celebrates DCC's 36 years of dedicated service, supporting thousands of residents in Rochdale through education, empowerment, wellbeing, community cohesion, advice services, play schemes, preschools and life-changing educational and learning programmes. The award acknowledges the invaluable contribution of our volunteers, whose passion, commitment and lived experience lies at the heart of our success. Speaking on the award, Sohail Ahmad, Operations Manager, said: *"We are deeply honoured, inspired and grateful to receive the King's Award for Voluntary Service. This recognition belongs to our*

	volunteers, past and present, who have worked tirelessly to uplift, empower and support our diverse community. Their dedication reflects the true spirit of community service, compassion, and unity." Mohammed Saleem, Chair of Trustees, added: *"This is a proud moment for our organisation. Our volunteers play an essential role in ensuring Deeplish Community Centre is a safe, welcoming and supportive space for everyone. Their contribution is invaluable and this award is a testament to the impact they make every single day."* Hamza Qureshi, A dedicated Volunteer, shared his experience: *"Volunteering at Deeplish has given me a sense of purpose and connection. I love seeing the difference we make, whether supporting older residents in health seminars, helping families access advice or running children and youth activities ever week. To receive this award is truly inspiring for all of us."* Arshad Mahmood, Community volunteer & Trustee, commented: *"For over three decades, DCC has stood as a pillar in the community, and this award represents the strength, resilience and generosity of the volunteers who give their time to serve others. We are grateful to all our volunteers and partners who have walked with us on this journey."* Attiya Malik, long outstanding volunteer and trustee said, *"This achievement marks a proud moment in our journey. We extend our heartfelt thanks to every volunteer, partner, supporter and resident who has stood with us over the last three decades. This award inspires us to continue our mission with even greater strength and purpose."* Deeplish Community Centre has long been a trusted and culturally rooted organisation in Rochdale, providing accessible services to residents of all ages and backgrounds, including some of the most deprived and vulnerable. From health initiatives and lifelong learning to youth programmes, welfare advice and community transport, the centre continues to serve as a vital resource and safe space for the community. This award highlights the Centre's on-going commitment to promoting inclusion, opportunity and reinforces its reputation as a key grassroots organisation making a difference and deep impact. We are also grateful for GM Lord Lieutenant's office and officers for their continued guidance and support in considering our application for this year's nomination.
	Deeplish Community Centre is committed to ensuring that the services

About the community that we support	we provide are relevant to the needs of all sections of the community and that the balance of our workforce reflects the diversity of the communities that we serve. **High levels of poverty and fuel poverty**: 15% of the population is experiencing fuel poverty, and 12% experience food insecurity. Some children we work with are ineligible for free school meals as they have a parent in part-time employment. However, these children are often hungry. **Higher than average level of unemployment**: The 2021 Census revealed that 12.5% of the population have never worked or are long-term unemployed, compared to 9.9% in the North West. We aim to break the cycle of worklessness through building their skills, confidence and supporting them to achieve their academic potential. **Insecure/unsuitable housing**: we work with families in unsuitable or overcrowded housing, including asylum seekers and refugees. We work with children who are unable to sleep properly; have no suitable place to study or play and whose health is impacted by their housing conditions. **High levels of obesity; low levels of physical activity:** 39% of children in Year 6 are overweight. Our sessions especially with children and young people promote physical activity and encourage healthy eating. **Large population of asylum seekers, refugees and newly arrived families**: Children are often lonely and anxious when they first attend sessions, struggling with both unfamiliar language and environment. We support them to build their language skills and their confidence to interact with their peers, as well as introducing them to their neighbourhood through trips to activities in the area. We recognise that we work in a diverse community and understand the strategic importance of achieving a diverse community success, which reflects that community. We undertake to recruit, develop and retain the most talented people by valuing the varied skills and experiences they bring to Deeplish Community Centre. We offer health and wellbeing and lifelong learning activities - ESOL, Talk English classes, employment skills, Digital learning, job clubs, and welfare advice. Energy advice services. We continue to promote climate change, digital inclusion and new approached to digital solutions. We work in the Borough of Rochdale, within one of the most deprived and disadvantaged area of Rochdale “Milkstone & Deeplish ward” and we connect with other neighbouring neighbourhoods.
Upcoming work or opportunities to contribute	Collaborative working with multi agencies, organisations to maximise our offers to our residents. Partnership working with • Living well Rochdale – Health & well-being Health Checks • GM Living well Leadership collaboration – Co design of mental health services, Children, young people and adults. • ESOL, Talk English, Sewing and Digital inclusion classes • RBC Equalities Team – Asylum & Refugee network and coffee sessions • Action Together – Poverty Action Networks • Cartwheel arts – Heritage, Wellbeing and Community projects • Cadent Gas – Social, economic, welfare and wellbeing support • RBC – Public Health • Deeplish Energy Hub • Men’s social net work

	• Extended welfare advice sessions
Case Studies / Quotes	Please see at the end of report • Case studies

Sustainability:

Funding opportunities or Achievements in the period this report covers?	There were varies funders and supporters who supported our programmes of activities including RBC, GMCA, Community Fund, Action Together, Economic Support Network and MSV Housing. • Rochdale Borough Council • Action Together • Rochdale Consortia of Community centres • Lloyds Bank Foundation • Funding support from Action Together, Community Fund • Support from Cadent Gas including extra warm resources, for vulnerable members and families distributed over winter period. • GMCA - Culturally appropriate mental health project • RBC, Public Health, Action Together – welfare advice service extended • CAB – welfare, energy advice and training sessions • Electricity North West Deeplish Energy Hub
In-Kind Contributions in the period this report covers?	- Volunteer's time and contributions are vital part of our operations and an invaluable asset in the development and delivery of community business. - Strategic support and guidance for policy and standards through Action Together – Funding advice and information - Ground work - Cartwheel Arts
Events and activities that we have held in the period that this report covers? **Pictorial view of Events and activities attached**	**1. Overview - Deeplish Community Centre Activities Report** Between October and December 2025, Deeplish Community Centre delivered a vibrant and diverse programme of activities, partnerships, and community events. This quarter focused on community engagement, winter programmes for children and young people, the successful start of Sunshine Preschool's new cohort, ESOL,Talk English, skills assessments, open days, educational initiatives, community gardening, energy efficiency and retrofit projects, the Deeplish Art Almanac project, health and wellbeing programmes, youth sports, Saturday Clubs, outreach, coffee mornings, and capacity-building initiatives. DCC strengthened collaborations with local authorities, voluntary organisations, universities, and sector partners, continuing to serve as a hub for learning, inclusion, and social cohesion.

2. Key Highlights

Community Engagement & Partnerships

- **Kings Award For Deeplish CC Association:** Maintained strong relationships with Lord Lieutenant office, local authorities, TNLCF, Lloyds Foundation, Locality, Cadent Gas and other funders, through meetings and advisory sessions, including council surgeries and collaborative projects.
- **Partnerships:** Worked closely with Action Together, Groundwork, Gaddum Trust, Cadent, GM Live Well, Spotland CC, Culture Coop, and Cartwheel Arts .
- **Celebrations & Community Events:** Hosted Deeplish Art Almanac project celebrations and open day, Christmas Bike & Walk Parade, and cultural trips such as Zinda Dil Women's visit to Bradford.
- **Board & Committee Meetings:** Held regular Board meetings, Sunshine Preschool Committee reviews, Friends of Stoneyfield meetings, and Advisory Board sessions with Deeplish Family Hub, Rochdale South Partnership to plan, promote and monitor community programmes and offers. Meeting with Live well, Actiuo Together's Networks, Poverty Foundation Network

Youth & Family Programmes

- **Saturday Clubs & Winter Play Schemes:** Delivered youth sessions, sports, arts, and winter play activities engaging children and young people.
- **Sports & Outdoor Activities:** Deeplish Sports Club sessions, paddle sport projects with River & Canal Trust, and Saturday Club visits to Bowling Club.
- **Community Leadership & Training:** Provided Community Sports Leadership Training (27–31 October), First Aid training, and workshops on healthy lifestyles and active living.
- **DO JO Karate Club Visit:** Celebrated the achievements of local youth in karate Club, which once stemmed from Deeplish CC and their wider success in competitions.

Learning & Digital Inclusion

- **ESOL & Talk English Sessions:** Conducted assessments and classes across multiple levels to support adult learners.
- **Digital Inclusion:** Continued IT and digital skills sessions, helping residents improve digital literacy.
- **Skills & Career Support:** Delivered RBC Work & Skills

	advice sessions, driving theory sessions with WEA, and energy retrofit guidance. **Health & Wellbeing** • **Women's & Men's Wellbeing:** Zinda Dil sessions, cultural trips, craft and creative activities, and targeted wellbeing events. • **Community Health Campaigns:** Blood pressure checks, immunisation clinics (flu & COVID-19), and health awareness sessions including World Mental Health Day. • **Volunteering & Capacity Building:** Engaged volunteers in planning, delivery, and evaluation of programmes, promoting wellbeing and community participation. **Environment & Climate Action** • **Community Gardening:** Maintained and enhanced Deeplish Community Garden, participated in RHS Neighbourhood Awards, and presented at the Rochdale Good Food Summit. • **Energy Efficiency & Retrofit:** Delivered workshops, assessments, and support to residents in collaboration with Groundwork. • **Sustainability Initiatives:** Environmental action days, climate discussions, and canal-side community improvement projects to reduce fly tipping. **Advice & Support Services** • **Welfare & Social Advice:** Weekly sessions delivered at Deeplish and Spotland CC, supporting residents on welfare, housing, and employment matters. • **Anti-Poverty & Community Support:** Hosted and attend the Anti-Poverty Foundation meetings, contributed to local poverty-reduction strategies and provided financial guidance and social welfare advice. **Monitoring & Reporting to Funders** • Submitted reports and evaluations for multiple projects and partners including Action Together, Groundwork, Peak4 Wellbeing Programme and local authority contracts. **3. Outcomes & Impact** • **Community Engagement:** Over 3000 community members engaged across youth, health, environmental, and cultural programmes. • **Learning & Inclusion:** ESOL, Talk English, and digital

	inclusion sessions improved access to education and digital literacy for adults. • **Health & Wellbeing:** Residents benefited from health checks, wellbeing sessions, and vaccination clinics, supporting physical and mental health. • **Youth Development:** Winter play schemes, Saturday Clubs, and sports leadership training contributed to resilience, skill-building, and active lifestyles. • **Community Cohesion:** Cultural events, Art Almanac celebrations, volunteer recognition, and collaborative projects strengthened community connections. • **Environmental Impact:** Garden activities, retrofit workshops and sustainability initiatives enhanced local green spaces and promoted environmental awareness. **Financial Gains:** Through welfare advice and support services, residents received

Additional Information on Funding and programmes;

Is there anything else you would like to share in the Impact Report for this period?	• Deeplish art Almanac project finalised • Winter playscheme planned delivered for two weeks over Xmas • Coffee mornings, planned for 17th Dec, ESOL and WEA sessions were real success • Talk English sessions are very well attended and success • Saturday Club & Sports session went well this Quarter • Zinda Dil continues until Summer 2026 with new finding from TNLCF, Awards for All.

Case Studies: Please see separate report

Case Study:1 -

"Supporting Local Residents through times of change"

Miss JA, a single individual with no dependents, approached Deeplish Community Welfare Advice Service during a particularly difficult period in her life. She had previously left her employment to become the full-time carer for her disabled father. During this time, she did not claim any benefits or seek formal advice and instead relied solely on her personal savings to manage day-to-day living costs.

After her father sadly passed away, Miss JA continued to support herself using the remainder of her savings. As her financial situation became more challenging, she discussed her concerns with a friend, who encouraged her to seek advice from Deeplish Community Welfare Advice Service.

When Miss JA came to us, she wanted to understand whether she was entitled to any financial support. During her appointment, our advisers provided clear and compassionate guidance, ensuring she felt supported throughout the process.

Support Provided:

1. **Council Tax Support**
   An online application for Council Tax Support was completed and submitted on her behalf, helping her reduce immediate financial pressures.
2. **Universal Credit**
   we explained the qualifying conditions for Universal Credit in a straightforward and accessible way. Together, we completed and submitted her online claim.
3. **Enrolment on Digital Inclusion sessions**

   Miss JA expressed concerns about managing an online Universal Credit account due to her limited digital skills. To ensure she could manage her claim independently and confidently, we arranged for her to attend our digital inclusion computer classes. This step not only supported her claim but also helped her develop valuable digital skills and confidence for the future.

Case Study:2

Mrs AB experienced a significant change in her circumstances following the recent passing of her husband. At the time of his death, her husband had been receiving Pension Credit, State Pension, and Attendance Allowance. Mrs AB had been his full-time carer and was receiving Carer's Allowance. The couple also received full Council Tax Support and lived in an owner-occupied property with no outstanding mortgage.

After her husband's death, Mrs AB used the "Tell Us Once" service to notify government departments, which resulted in the prompt closure of all her husband's benefit claims, as well as her own Carer's Allowance. This left Mrs AB with no source of income. Due to the sudden financial hardship, she had been relying on friends to meet her daily living costs.

Mrs AB also faced communication barriers, as she was unable to speak or write in English. As a result, she contacted Deeplish Welfare Advice Service for support in understanding what benefits she might now be entitled to.

Support Provided: Deeplish Welfare Advice Service offered comprehensive assistance to ensure Mrs AB understood her rights and received the support she was entitled to:

1. **Completion of DWP Forms:**
   Mrs AB received several documents from the Pension Service requesting information about her husband's death, marital status, next of kin details, and other relevant matters relating to his State Pension and Pension Credit claims. Support was provided to help her complete and return these forms correctly.
2. **Universal Credit Claim:**
   Mrs AB was advised about her eligibility for Universal Credit and the conditions she would need to meet. The full application process was explained in detail, and support was provided to complete and submit the online claim form.

3. **Bereavement Support Payment:**
   She was informed about Bereavement Support Payment and how this could help her during this difficult time. Assistance was provided to complete and submit the online claim.
4. **Council Tax Support Application:**
   An online application for Council Tax Support was completed and submitted to Rochdale Council on her behalf.
5. **Funeral Payment Advice:**
   Mrs AB was advised about the possibility of claiming a Funeral Payment from the Social Fund to assist with the costs of her husband's funeral. The eligibility criteria were explained clearly, and arrangements were made to complete the application in due course.

Summary: Through culturally appropriate and language-sensitive support, Deeplish Welfare Advice Service helped Mrs AB navigate a complex and emotionally challenging period. She received help to apply for essential financial support, ensuring she was not left without income at a vulnerable time. This case highlights the importance of accessible advice services in supporting community members facing bereavement, financial hardship and language barriers.