



WINTER 2024

# BULLETIN

Christmas 2024



# CELEBRATING 5 YEARS OF GIVING BACK



**By Jeff Steninger, Chairman, The Community Foundation**

2024 has been an exciting year for the Strategic Solutions Community Foundation as we celebrated our five-year anniversary! Since our inception in September 2019, we've been dedicated to enriching and supporting local communities by donating to causes where we can make a real difference.

The Foundation has donated to 108 charities, and in February, we reached an incredible milestone of £200,000 in donations. This is a tremendous achievement and one that the entire committee is hugely proud of.

This year, we've supported amazing charities such as Parkfield School, Diverse Abilities, Love Glastonbury, Poole Maternity Hospital's Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, Yewstock School, and many more.

Now, in December, we're running our Christmas Kindness campaign—our annual festive initiative shining a spotlight on 15 incredible causes as we count down to Christmas. Each day, we share the story behind one of these causes and why their work is so important. Be sure to follow us on social media to learn more about the charities we're supporting!

To date, the Community Foundation has donated an amazing £231,196 to thoroughly deserving causes and is considered one of the most impactful initiatives we run within the company.

We're always on the lookout for new causes to support. If you're involved with or know of a cause that could benefit from our help, please get in touch with us at [community@ssfs.co.uk](mailto:community@ssfs.co.uk).

Here's to another year of making a difference!



# HELP US SUPPORT MORE CAUSES



**By Rob Silk**

As the Strategic Solutions Community Foundation enters its 6th year, we continue to grow and help more and more causes. On behalf of the Community Foundation and everyone at Strategic Solutions, we'd like to say a massive thank you to all those involved, and the causes themselves for doing such fantastic work in the community.

The more money we can raise, the bigger impact we can have! Three ways you can help us with that follow.

## **1. Leave a legacy**

Many people consider leaving money to charity in their will. As well as making a huge difference to the charity, leaving a gift this way can also be efficient if Inheritance Tax (IHT) is due on an estate.

That's because gifts to UK registered charities are exempt from Inheritance Tax. As an officially registered charity, we would love to be considered as a beneficiary!



What is Inheritance Tax?

Inheritance Tax (IHT) is charged at a rate of 40% on estates that exceed any allowances available. The main allowance is the 'Nil Rate Band', which is currently £325,000. There is an additional allowance of £175,000 called the 'Residence Nil Rate Band', which is available if certain conditions are met, including leaving the property to a direct descendent. In addition, unused allowances can be inherited by a surviving spouse or civil partner.

An example

Mr Barrel's estate is worth £525,000 when he dies. In his case, he has both the Nil Rate Band and Residence Nil Rate Band available. The excess of £25,000 over these allowances is subject to Inheritance Tax. At 40%, this would equate to £10,000 being owed to HMRC.

However, if in his will, Mr Barrel included charitable gifts amounting to £25,000, this figure would be subtracted from the taxable value of his estate, meaning no Inheritance Tax is due.



That not only makes a big difference to any charities that benefit but also helps with the administration of the estate. That's because Executors would need to pay any Inheritance Tax before the estate can be distributed.

### **There's more – reducing the IHT due with the “10% rule”**

Furthermore, leaving a gift of 10% or more of the net estate value (in simple cases, the estate minus the nil rate band) to charity can reduce the rate of Inheritance Tax payable from 40% to 36%.

Where would the money go?

At the Strategic Solutions Community Foundation, we generally target smaller, local charities and organisations, but if given a more specific wishes, the trustees would look to honour this wherever possible.

For more information on Inheritance Tax and legacies, please speak to your adviser.

## **2. Shop through Easyfundraising**

Another way you could help is via Easyfundraising.

They partner with over 8,000 brands and will donate part of what you spend to a cause of your choice (including the Strategic Solutions Community Foundation!) if you click through their website or app to take you to the brand's website. It won't cost you any extra. The cost is covered by the retailer. You can sign up using the link or QR codes below.

## **3. Donate via Kindlink**

Last but not least, we have an online donation portal via Kindlink, which allows one-off or regular donations at the click of a button.

Donations can be made through Gift Aid, enabling us to claim an extra 25p for every £1 you give, at no extra cost (as long as they're not more than 4 times what you have paid in tax in that tax year). If you are a higher or additional rate taxpayer, you can claim tax relief too!

If you have any questions for the Community Foundation, please contact us at [community@ssfs.co.uk](mailto:community@ssfs.co.uk).

Merry Christmas!



[Easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sscf](https://www.easyfundraising.org.uk/causes/sscf)



# AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## Best Financial Planners in the South West!

We proudly took home the regional award for Best Financial Planners in the South West at the Citywire New Model Adviser Awards.

These awards recognise and celebrate some of the best advice firms in the UK so we were honoured to be acknowledged in this category.

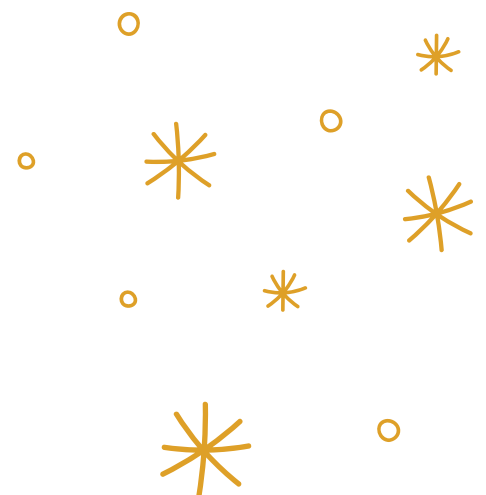


## Advice Firm of The Year - Money Marketing Awards 2024

We were thrilled to win the Advice Firm of The Year at the Money Marketing Awards.



This win wasn't easy—it involved a detailed entry and a panel interview with the judges, making it our first-ever victory in this category.



# AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS

## Gold CSR re-accreditation

We were so proud to achieve a Gold Corporate Social Responsibility re-accreditation with an incredible 96% score!

This is a major milestone for our team and a true reflection of our commitment to sustainability, community engagement and fostering a purpose-driven workplace culture.



## Women in Financial Advice Awards

Two members of our firm, Rachael Martin and Natasha O'Neill were shortlisted in the 2024 Women in Financial Advice Awards with Rachael receiving highly commended.

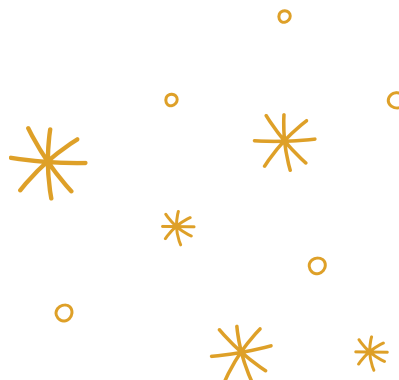
The shortlist was selected from over 600 entries, showcasing the outstanding contributions and excellence of women in our field.



## MoneyAge Awards

We were really pleased to make it as far as the shortlist in the Financial Adviser Award: Small to Medium Firm of the Year!

The MoneyAge Awards celebrate excellence, innovation and professionalism in the personal finance sector.



# AWARDS & ACHIEVEMENTS



## Citywire New Model Adviser Top 100

We once again we made it into Citywire's Top 100 UK Financial Advice Firms for 2024 for the 11th year running!

These awards celebrate the best of the professional financial planning community



## Professional Adviser Awards

A huge congratulations to Jordan Cruse for being shortlisted for Young Achiever of the Year and to Jez Horgan for being shortlisted for Administrator of the Year!

We were also named finalists in the Adviser Firm of the Year – South West & Wales. We will find out if we are successful next March!

## Investment Life & Pensions Moneyfacts Awards 2024 – Highly Commended

We were delighted to come highly commended in the Retirement Adviser of the Year and Investment Adviser of the Year categories.



Investment Adviser of the Year



Retirement Adviser of the Year



# STAFF NEWS

A huge well done to Jack Fawcett, Bryn Pilcher, and Dan Lock on achieving Chartered status this year.

Big congratulations to Katie Brown, Rachael Martin, Jordan Cruse, and Harry Shivas on achieving Fellowship status.

Jordan continues to retain his title as the UK's youngest Chartered Financial Planner.

We're also happy to welcome two new members to the Strategic Solutions family including Natasha Speed who has joined the Folkestone Team and new Student Placement Jamie Haines. Joe McLeish has also returned to the Folkestone team.



## CHRISTMAS KINDNESS 2024

Our Christmas Kindness 2024 campaign is here!

We're shining a spotlight on 15 incredible local causes as we count down to Christmas. These amazing organisations are making a real difference in our communities, and we're proud to support their work.

Stay tuned as we share their stories and highlight the impact they're having. Follow our social media channels until 20th December to find out more.

Below are a few of the charities that we're supporting.





# HOPE FOR FOOD

# TEDDY 20

Supporting Children with Cancer



# CRUMBS


Training for independence



35 gift bags donated to Dorset Mums Gift of Love campaign



# GIVING BACK TO OUR CLIENTS: PLANNING FOR LATER LIFE WITH CONFIDENCE



**By Kerry Saunders**

As we age, adapting to new circumstances often means making financial adjustments. At Strategic Solutions, we help you and your loved ones plan for later life needs with confidence, ensuring peace of mind for the future.

Here's an example from Chartered Financial Planner and Paraplanner Kerry Saunders.

**Client:** Mrs. W, a widow with no children, living full-time in a care home. Her main concern was ensuring she could stay in her chosen home for the rest of her life.

**Situation:** She had approximately £400k in cash but faced a £45,000 annual shortfall, meaning her funds were forecast to run out in 11 years.

**Solution:** By investing around £277k, we secured her an inflation-linked, tax-free income for life to cover the care fee shortfall while retaining the rest of her cash. This ensures she can leave a legacy to her chosen charities and, most importantly, removes the stress and worry of being moved from her home.

**Outcome:** Mrs. W now enjoys a risk-free return of approx 16% in the first year, with income increasing annually to keep pace with inflation. Additionally, we identified she was eligible for Attendance Allowance, adding £108.55 per week to her finances.

This careful planning has brought Mrs. W peace of mind, allowing her to focus on enjoying her later years in comfort.

If you're looking to secure your future or support a loved one in later life planning, we're here to help. Let's create a plan that works for you. Please speak to one of our Independent Financial Advisers.





# Strategic

S O L U T I O N S  
CHARTERED FINANCIAL PLANNERS



Strategic Solutions Chartered Financial Planners

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