



Social Impact Report for 2024

Headlines:

- We saw a record number of visitors for 2024 – **14655 visitors!**
- **£10,000 gifted entries** in 2024.
- BitC has **12 different areas** that contribute to its success.
- **40+ extra activities** engaging beyond our day-to-day activities.
- **448 recorded hours** donated by all who completed their **STEP** program.
- We have donated **£2,940** of our time running the **STEP** program for 2024.
- **78 active volunteers** in 2024
- Our volunteers gifted back to the community **£218,658.44** in saved wages.
- Volunteered time came to approximately **19,114 hours** in 2024.
- Insight into the impact of BitC on 1 homeless person is **HUGE!**
- **18 people** were signposted via Board in the City introductions to counselling

Introduction

Starting off with a break-in was not what we were hoping for, but the love of the community kept our spirits up. You would have thought that after having this happen 3 times, we would be used to it, but we are just more experienced now in how to respond, so that is the bright side.

Our visitor numbers only increased by 1.3%, and 5 of the months of the year for 2024, saw less visitors than 2023. However, an increase is still an increase right?!

The income grew, which was helpful as by August, our electricity bill increased by over 100% per month. The growth in income was very welcomed to help us limp towards the end of 2024.

Then I, (Hayley), was struck with a serious medical condition which meant in December 2024, I went in for major surgery. The recovery of which went well into 2025. This impacted on our end of year joint fundraiser with Beyond Reflections, was cancelled.

Not saying we are getting anxious about the end of year /start of year events, but it is starting to get to us, so thank goodness for the rest of the year feeding into our positive mental health and desire to keep going for you all - Thank you does not seem a strong enough sentiment ...

We love you all xx

Visitors

2024 saw a slightly increased record number of visitors, during trading hours, to the café! We have had an increase in the numbers recorded at the last impact report.

Month	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
Jan		1123	1179	0	857	1061	1306	
Feb		1472	1302	0	879	1183	1231	
Mar		1289	730	0	848	1447	1411	
Apr		1010	0	0	914	1239	1251	
May	97	1366	0	236	929	1164	1244	
Jun	923	1119	0	394	810	1048	1085	
Jul	821	1039	0	561	908	1229	1299	
Aug	927	1233	0	710	767	1333	1151	
Sep	840	1078	119	720	1131	1303	1267	
Oct	1125	1280	465	835	1246	1306	1163	
Nov	1244	1155	70	834	1031	1227	1343	
Dec	822	797	0	453	704	906	904	
	6799	13961	3865	4743	11024	14446	14655	0

The orange and green show if we were up or down compared to 2023 data on visitor numbers. Overall, we had a **1.3 %** increase recorded on the app for our visitors.

We have also been delighted in welcoming a couple of out-of-hour regular groups of visitors, who are not recorded here. This is a Book Club, and the Beyond Reflections Organization.

Value of gifted / free entries	People	2024
Student Thursdays	147	£294.00
Picture House	233	£1,165.00
Painting	44	£220.00
Prepaid entries	639	£1,278.00
Loyalty entries	666	£3,330.00
Carer on Duty	13	£65.00
Staff entries	628	£3,140.00
group entries	242	£484.00
Boulder Shack reduced entry	12	£24.00
		£10,000.00

On reflection, we recorded 12 different elements that make up what is needed to run BitC. In 2024, the Fund Raising team was established and there has been engagement and success in all the events they have put on so far... the funds raised have been absorbed in the running of the business but we are hoping that in 2025, we can start to show in a more obvious way, what their events can achieve :-)



Our Community – Report by Berry Toucan BitC's Grant Writer

I thought about just listing the details of what we've done over the year but decided that might not be the best way (although there is a list below, I like to see a solid bit of data).

Considering the year started with a break in, we've got a lot done. Literally, our first facebook post for 2024 is the break in. What a way to start! Every month we've run D&D drop ins, with extras in November for the new edition. We've run Magic Events, Lorcan, One Piece, Star Wars and welcomed the local Beyblade X group (who if you haven't met yet are a delightfully friendly bunch). Our staff and volunteers have been welcomed across the city and whilst this might seem like just a list, it's actually worth remembering that most places don't take such an active involvement in where they live. Our city is where we exist and in order for it to thrive we take an active role in being a part of the community.

Whilst you may not realise it, Hayley and others are regularly called upon to get involved with Southampton City Council initiatives, including spending the year working with Southampton Voluntary Services in deciding the direction for the new council's priorities. Southampton City Council, along with many other statutory bodies, are keen to use co-production to decide what happens next. Co-production means allowing the community to work together to decide what should be a priority. As such, groups such as Board in the City, came together to help create a document to submit to the council. This was completed around September. We don't shout from the rooftops about this work. But this, along with work with the Green Initiative is helping to shape the city for the future, and we want to ensure that all of you are heard from. If you wonder why we're constantly nudging in the staff chat to invite you to take part, this is why. We want the City to be shaped by you, for you to have a voice.

Aside from working within the co-production arena, Southampton University has been a keen partner all year as you'll see from the list of events we ran with them. Helping to support the young people we work with, both in the cafe and who visit us, is a key part of what we do. The CivicMagic project you may have heard about is a revolutionary piece of research being co-produced by several departments and could genuinely impact the way people think. It brings together games development, psychology and computing to try and analyse how co-operative gaming can affect things as far impacting as climate change.

In addition to attempting to change the world, we've been hugely involved in some brilliant local initiatives. Hayley and volunteers have been instrumental in supporting The Big Difference to ensure those without have food to eat, and we've worked with local charities supporting people who need it (such as Beyond Reflections). Sadly, the Art House closed this year, but we've been proud to be able to offer their community pantry a new home without which even more people would be going without. Also, the soup they make is amazing! Alongside this we regularly host Easy TZ who you probably know, utilises food that would otherwise go to waste to make cost effective, home cooked meals for people who are unable to do so. Pilates with Ayla continues to go from strength to strength and is held in the cafe every Friday morning, helping the community to stay fit and healthy.

Hopefully 2025 will be even bigger! Don't forget that you are part of something bigger, being a part of BitC. BitC is the platform, but you make it happen and you are shaping our future as well of that of the community around us.

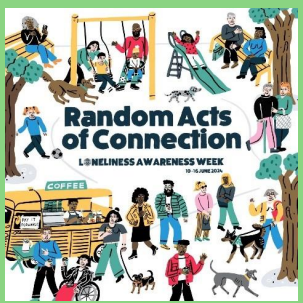
Significant events - 2024

<p>January</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Break in • Working with Rotary Magna, delivering 250 food parcels 		<p>July</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Trans Pride • Award from Solent NHS - Building Confidence • Award from SVS - Volunteer Heroes • Delivering Food - Big Difference • Mela Festival
<p>February</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayley - Police Event - Southampton City Centre Unit • Bring and Buy 		<p>August</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shoebox appeal Starts - Wessex Rotary • Find a book - Summer Reading Challenge • Game Testing for Thomas - Southampton University
<p>March</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hayley - Provides business support to Refugee Led Cafe • Masonic Lodge - Healthy High Street • SOUP event • Southampton University - Science and Engineering day • Southampton University - Sustainable AI 		<p>September</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Shake, Battle and Roll • Beyond Reflections - Trans and Allies Event • Apprentices visit P&O Arvia • Feed the Kraken Fund Raiser
<p>April</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Step Program Begins • Art House Pop-up pantry starts weekly • Southampton University - Green Space/Blue Space • Pheonix Rising - Coffee Morning • Who's got game? - John Hansard Gallery • Tia had a baby! 		<p>October</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comic Con and Collectors Fair • Film Crew from Home Theatre • Gaming Tournament • Halloween Fund Raiser
<p>May</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Comic and Collectors Fair • Southampton University Workshop • Beyond Reflections Workshop • Claim a Brick campaign starts 		<p>November</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Southampton Arts and Humanities Event • Community Hubs at BitC • Southampton University Games Workshop • Authors' Reach Book Launch • CivicMagic Project - Southampton University
<p>June</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Random Act of Loneliness Sessions • Empowered Communities event • Mental Health First Aid 		<p>December</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Co-op Local Cause launches • City Council Leader visits Easy-TZ



A year of games in photos - 2024

A year in Photos - Community Events





More community events!





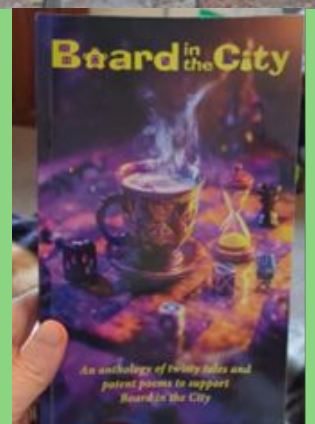
A year in photos - fundraising!

Search on Amazon
'Board in the City book' - to get your own copy!



Still spaces to add your name to the wall :-)

Our massive thanks goes out to Richard Hardie and the contributing Authors' Reach, for our book! Check out their site here <https://www.authorsreach.co.uk/>



Step Programme 2024

2024 has yet again seen people using BitC as a stepping stone to have work experience.

We have helped 14 young people from the following 11 other organisations:

- Crestwood Community School 1
- Crofton School 1
- Eastleigh College 3
- Mountbatten School 1
- New Forest School 1
- Other 2
- Redbridge Community School 1
- Solent University 1
- Tauntons College 1
- Upper Shirley High 1
- Wyvern College 1

How BitC benefitted was with the average person gifting us 32 hours x minimum wage of £11.44ph = they saved us a total of **£5,125.12**

As well as donating of **448 hours** approximately.

All who completed their STEP program whilst with us, **100%** recorded that they had developed in some way on a professional level & personal level because of working with us at BitC!

We calculate that it would cost us in administration of each **STEP: £210 pp.** Therefore, we have donated **£2,940** of our time, just running the program this year.

Feedback from one of our young STEP people:

'My time spent as the KP for Board in the City was an insightful and helpful experience. I learned more about my strengths and my weaknesses and found new ways to improve myself in a safe and understanding environment. My confidence in the workplace grew and I have the amazing team at BiTC to thank for that. I would highly recommend anyone interested to join the team as a Kitchens Porter.'

Step Programme Testimony

We were lucky enough to be given a testimony by one of the parent's of someone who completed our STEP programme on how impactful it has been, you can read the testimony here:

H attended Board in The City for his year 10 work placement.

H was not keen to undertake a work placement as he lives with a degree of social anxiety, and the thought of being on his own, with people outside of his family and friendship circle was a very daunting and anxiety inducing task.

However, H persevered and after submitting his application was invited to an interview with Hayley, MD of Board in The City (BiTC).

H's body language and interaction was such that Hayley picked up on his anxieties, and supportingly led him through his interview. I was able to hear their interaction, and was very impressed with how Hayley maintained the structure and her approach to the interview, so H could have a real experience of a job interview, without overwhelming him. Hayley also chatted with H about a skills development program, and soft targets were discussed.

When it came to the time that H was to start his work experience, he was very nervous and withdrawn. However this changed very quickly after meeting Hayley again and others in the team, to the extent that on day 2 H came home, full of smiles and stated that he has 'found his people!'.

H thoroughly enjoyed his placement, and has continued to volunteer at BiTC.

This has greatly increased his confidence and skills with interacting with others, and has also given him a great sense of responsibility. He refers to his volunteer placement as 'going to work', and is now travelling independently to and from BiTC.

H's responsibilities include taking orders, preparing soft drinks, greeting people and also introducing people to new games and teaching them how to play. he has developed a great fondness for his colleagues, and looks forward to working there.

We have also noticed a big change in H. He is much more outgoing than before, and more confident in everything he does. H has been sitting his GCSE mocks, and has even been offered additional support by Hayley and others at BiTC.

We would thoroughly recommend BiTC to any parent who's child may benefit from a work placement in a safe, friendly and supportive environment, and thank everyone there for their support and their role in providing this life changing experience for H

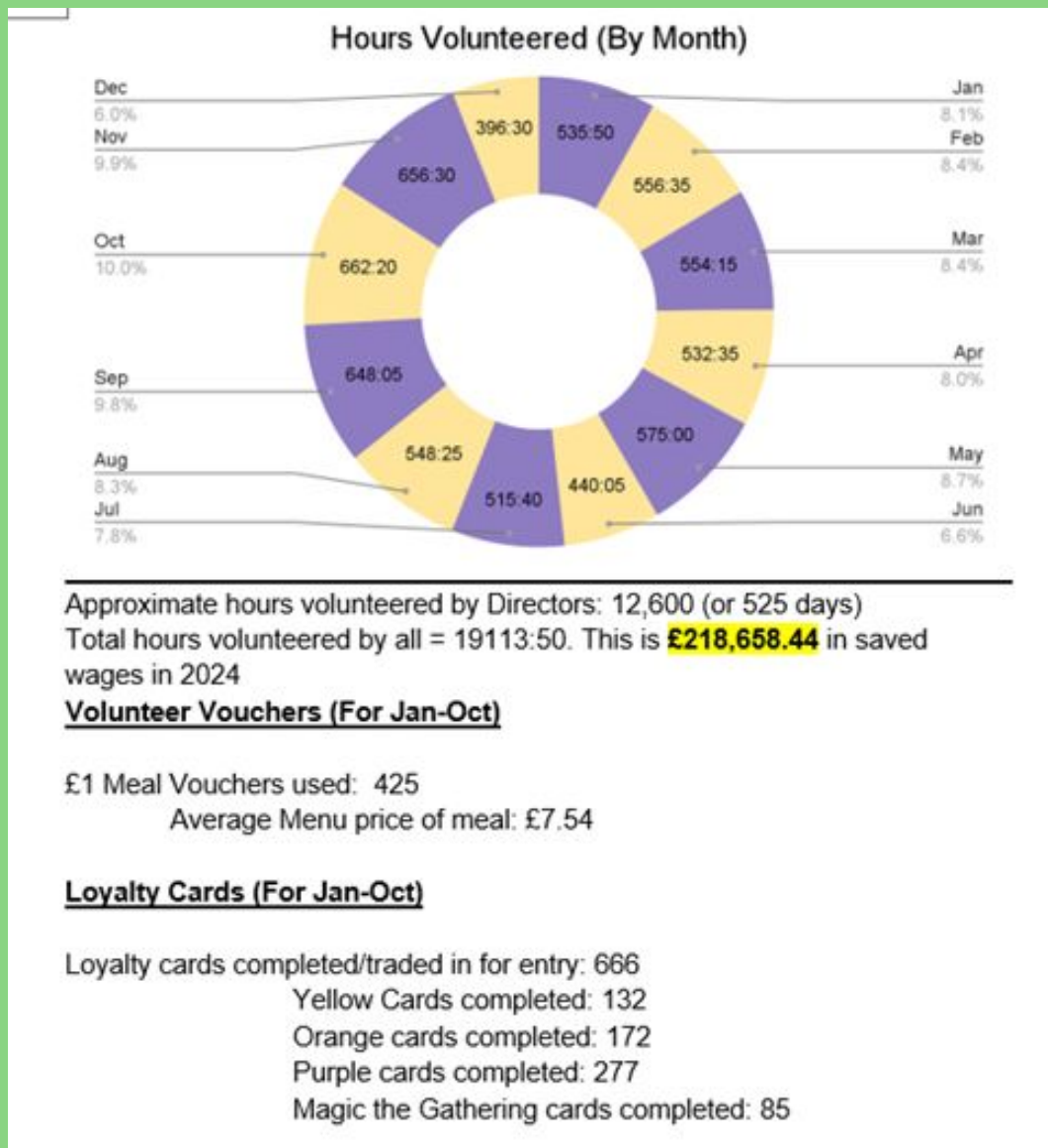
Not only is this such a heartwarming testament from home, but we are delighted to say that H went on to stay with us and is an enrolled team member! Such a legacy!

Volunteers

Volunteer Hours

Total number of active volunteers: **78** this is up by **27** from the previous year. Total number of volunteer hours: **6513:50 (or 271 days, 9 hours, 50 minutes)**

This, rounded up, equates to **£74,514.44** in saved wages gifted back to the community to keep BitC's doors open



£1 Meal Vouchers used: 425. Average Menu price of meal: £7.54 = Total of **£3,204.50** saved on food for the team.

The amount of saved entries comes to 666 at £5 per entry = Total of **£3,330.00** saved

We have also paid for 10 of the team to gain their Level 2 Basic Food Safety and Hygiene for Catering Certificate. This will last each person for 3 years and is theirs to take with them on their employment journey.

Our team are the heart of the machine that keeps BitC going. When it came to a end of year party, we asked the team to vote on their preference - as for some, Christmas is not always jolly.

The team voted to NOT have a party in December - so a party in March 2025 has been arranged in accordance to their wishes :-)

A drum roll graphic with a green background and white text. The text reads "Drum roll please! In 2024....".

Drum roll please! In 2024....

The total that the whole team saved in wages & gifted to the BitC community is:

£218,658.44

The total the whole team donated in hours & gifted to the BitC community is:

19,114*

**This is a total of 796
days' worth of work
that goes into
running BitC over a
trading year!**

* Rounded up and includes:

- *Increase in team member numbers*
- *The inclusion of the Director hours*
- *This does NOT include the Work Experience / Supported placements hours.*

Dear Hayley and supporters

Wessex Rotary Shoebox Scheme

Thank you so much for your generous support of the Wessex Shoebox scheme this year.

It has been another successful year with 964 boxes collected from Magna Rotary supporters. These have all been checked, packed and delivered to our district depot this last weekend where 20,445 boxes were collected and sorted ready to be transported.

This year we are anticipating sending approximately 6,300 to Ukraine via Poland, 4,000 each to Moldova and Romania and 6,100 to Montenegro. Subject to customs these should easily arrive for Christmas where our fellow Rotary clubs will organise their distribution. Many of your boxes will be going to Ukrainian children who are refugees, as well as to those who are in need in the countries of destination. I am sure the children will be delighted to receive them.

A huge thank you to everyone for your generosity in donating shoeboxes and contents to ensure those less fortunate have a little joy at Christmas.

Successful collaborations this year have included working with Southampton Magna Rotary Club with their Easter Egg raffle and Shoe box appeal.

Plus we worked with:

- Beyond Reflections
<https://beyond-reflections.org.uk/>
- Easy Tz Meals
<https://sites.google.com/view/easytzmeals/home>
- Pilates with Ayla
<https://pilateswithayla.co.uk/>
- The Art House - Community Pantry
<https://thearthousesouthampton.org/community-pantry/>

And finally...

Good mental health is a key part of what we try to achieve at Board in the City, and so when Access Counselling announced the desire to improve the city's wellbeing by offering counselling accessible to everyone we leapt at the opportunity. Their mission is to ensure good mental health, regardless of the financial or personal circumstances of the individual. As part of our holistic approach to supporting our community we worked with Access Counselling to signpost 18 people to online free specialist support.

Part of our practice of this holistic approach can be seen in one of our community, "L".

L suffers from a number of mental health conditions including EUPD and is neurodivergent, they take a range of medication to alleviate and manage the ongoing symptoms which impact their daily life. Board in the City has assisted L since they became homeless in December 2023 (one of 2 that we supported last year). As part of understanding that the whole person needs to be supported, here are some examples of what we assisted with:

- Ensuring she was fed - this included fundraising for L, signposting to support such as the art house pantry, feeding on shift, and other team members looking out for her/cooking meals
- Finances - assisting with forms/benefit admin, fundraising to aid with rent, assisting with sorting out bank statements, taking her to the bank
- Clothing - paying for uniform, washing clothes at regular intervals, buying clothes for drama project
- Mental health - Access to counselling, haircut by mobile hairdresser
- Physical health - Attending Pilates with Ayla, Viso Support, Dancing (also helps with mental health!)
- Housing - 5 homes of team members temporarily housing her, supporting with attending appointments to find housing, contacting/chasing housing team to find out current status
- Social - Attending centre stage youth theatre, providing a mobile phone, gaming at the cafe with peers, camping with team members
- Employability - Volunteering with EasyTzMeals, volunteering at BitC, Basic Food Hygiene certificate, now employed at Board in the City

Hopefully this demonstrates our commitment to the community around us and shows how we will go above and beyond to support those who we work with. L will continue to be supported, as will all of those who we come into contact with.