ONE IMPOSSIBLE THING
SPORTS SHOE NETWORK

Annual Report
1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026

One Impossible Thing is a CIO and our objectives, as set out in our constitution, are:

the relief of those in need by reason of youth, age, ill-health, disability, financial hardship or social and economic circumstances, by the provision of:

(a) free recycled sports shoes to enable them to participate in sports and activities

(b) promoting the benefits of recycling and reuse of sports shoes

(c) raising awareness of the beneficial effect that participation in sports and exercise has on both mental and physical health.

Summary of our main activities

In this financial year we delivered these objectives in three key ways:

- *Collecting preloved sports shoes*
  We collected preloved sports shoes through our permanent recycling bins in sports venues in Dacorum, St. Albans and Harpenden. We also collected the shoes through one-off Shoe Drives held by schools, sports clubs and businesses. All of these collections promote the benefits of recycling sports shoes and look to change behaviour in the general public.

- *Distributing sports shoes*
  We worked with schools, sports clubs, refugee groups, homeless charities, charitable organisations and individuals, to distribute the preloved sports shoes to those who needed a little extra help.

- *Organising sports challenges*
  We promoted the benefits of sport by partnering with the Boxmoor Virtual, which encourages the general public to complete a marathon in their own way - running, walking, cycling, skating - and in their own time - over a week, or a month or two.

Overview

By the end of the financial year we had distributed 7,673 pairs of preloved sports shoes since the charity started. This equates to a saving of 107.422 tonnes of CO_2 emissions. At an average cost of a pair of preloved sports shoes of £25, this has collectively saved families and individuals £191,825.

Distributions

Schools

This financial year we worked with a number of schools to provide free preloved sports shoes for their students. This included ongoing support to Adeyfield Academy (Dacorum), Chiltern Way Academy (Wendover), Kings Langley School (Dacorum), Longdean (Dacorum), Brockswood School (Dacorum) and Dacorum Education Support Centre. New schools included Ashlyns (Dacorum) and Haywood Grove School (Dacorum).

The majority of senior schools tend to be in need of football boots for students to take part in PE lessons on their 3G astro pitches. The majority of primary schools wanted trainers for PE lessons.

We gave out 197 pairs of preloved sports shoes to schools over the financial year.

Refugee groups
We worked on an ongoing basis with a number of the local branches of the Herts Welcomes Refugees (HWR) groups. We also worked with St. Albans Refugees, Care 4 Calais, the Refugee Council and Peterborough refugee group. We gave out 390 pairs in total to these refugee groups.

Homeless Organisations
We continued our relationship with New Hope in Watford and DENS in Dacorum. We also partnered with Hightown Housing Association, who started organising a number of Homeless Health Days in St. Albans that we attended.

New Hope held two Health Day at their homeless Drop In Centre in Watford, in May and November. Hightown held three similar days in September, December and February, for their beneficiaries. With both organisations, people had access to services such as dental care, liver checks, haircuts and pedicures. We attended with a number of trainers to give out. We gave out a total of 47 pairs across the two days New Hope organised. We gave out a total of 70 pairs across the three days Hightown organised.

Community Foodbanks
We continued our relationship with the three church based community foodbanks in Dacorum. Of these three foodbanks, we visited the Apsley food bank more regularly. Their clients tend to be homeless or residents of the Druglink supported housing. During the years the food bank moved out of the church and is now based at Apsley Community Centre.

In total we gave out 142 pairs to the three foodbanks over the financial year.

Bovingdon Prison
We visited Bovingdon Prison and learnt they were starting a parkrun for their inmates. Many of the inmates didn't have proper running shoes, so we supplied them with six pairs for their first ever parkrun.

We also linked up with 100 Foundation, who run sports projects at the prison, and gave them six pairs of trainers for the inmates they work with.

We continued our work with HACRO, who work with ex-prisoners. They organise various sports sessions for their beneficiaries on their Turnaround Project. We gave them tennis shoes, golf shoes and running shoes so people could take part in their sessions. In total we gave them 13 pairs of sports shoes.

Pop Up Sessions
We continued our Pop Up Sessions at The Active Hub over the school holidays. With our new storage facility we started a weekly Pop Up session from June until the end of October. This restarted again in February. As the Pop Up is next door to Grovehill Adventure Playground, it proved very successful in helping families access free preloved sports shoes for their children. We gave out 711 pairs in total over these sessions.

Shoe Collections
We consolidated our shoes collections to make it more manageable to collect, clean and distribute our shoes. We ceased our collections at the three Active Luton sports clubs so we now have four active collection bins. These are at Hemel Sports Centre, Westminster Lodge, St. Albans, Harpenden Sports Centre and Jarman Park. We recruited a volunteer who collects the shoes on a weekly basis from these recycling bins.

Shoe Drives
We worked with a number of organisations, sports clubs and schools, who held Shoe Drives for us this financial year. Some organisations such as Computacentre, Rickmansworth School and the Chineham Park Running Club were organisations that have held Shoe Drives in the past for us. We linked up with a new organisation, Total Body Fit, a boot camp/fitness club. They held a Shoe Drive with their members and collected over 100 pairs of sports shoes.

Storage
In this financial year we secured a grant from HCF, to rent out half a storage container that The Active Dacorum Hub had bought. This become our base to store all our shoes in one location. Located at The Active Hub, it is next to the Grovehill Adventure Playground, so it has become a good place to hold our weekly Pop Up Sessions. Although our Pop Up's are open to all members of the general public, it has become a great resource for families who visit the Adventure Playground, to access sports shoes for their children and themselves.

The only downside of the container is that there is no electricity or heating. This means that it is not a viable location to run Pop Up Sessions during the winter months. This is due to both the cold and security concerns if running Pop Up Sessions once it gets dark on winter afternoons. There is also no toilet facility, so we need to ensure either The Active Hub or Grovehill Adventure Playground is open if the Charity Manger or a volunteer is running a long Pop Up Sessions.

Shoe Cleaning
We continued running regular shoe cleaning sessions, but with our new storage facilities, we moved these sessions to The Active Hub. We also changed the day of the sessions to fit around the bookings that were already at The Active Hub.

Although we have a pool of volunteers that are informed about these sessions, we were not getting a very good turn out, with only one or two volunteers and sometimes no-one, turning up. We tried to recruit teams of volunteers from organisations and clubs to help, and we tried to encourage businesses who offered Volunteer Days for their staff. This had limited success, although HACRO, who we provide sports shoes to, came along with 10 people a couple of times and cleaned a large amount of shoes!

Charity Manager
Fiona resigned as Charity Manager in February this year and the post was taken over by Toni McManus. With finances quite low, Toni had the task of increasing our revenue to ensure the charity could carry on operating and carry on offering our sports shoes for free.

Success story

We helped a lady who had struggled with alcoholism and was on Druglink's rehabilitation program. We met her at the Apsley Foodbank. As part of her recovery journey, she started running. Running is really good as part of a rehabilitation journey

as it installs routine in to a person's life. Routine is vital to those going through rehabilitation, as it replaces the chaos of addiction and fills idle time.

The lady had joined a few people from the rehabilitation program that were running. This gave her the confidence to join the Runner's High Club in Apsley, who organise a free 5k Sunday morning running session.

Our beneficiary had been running in a pair of fashion trainers. These don't have the right grip on the sole and don't have the right support for the foot. We fitted the lady with a pair of our preloved running shoes. They were a proper pair of running shoes that would support her feet during the high impact movement that running entails.

We have seen her since at the Apsley Foodbank and she is still running. She has also persuaded a friend of her to start running and we provided her with a pair of running shoes too.

Financial details

Revenue

The majority of our money in this financial year came through grants.

We received £18,000 from the National Lottery to continue paying our Charity Manager. HCF awarded us £2,400 to pay the rent for a year for our storage container. We were also delighted to receive £500 from National Philanthropic Trust UK.

We received £2,100 in this financial year from the Hertfordshire High Sheriff. This money was prize money awarded to us when we won our High Sheriff Sports Award in March 2025.

We had a number of supporter led events this financial year.

Our partnership with The Patch Quiz continued and we received £186 from the quiz organisers in this financial year.

We again took part in the Hemel Hempstead Rotary Christmas Santa Sleigh and received £320, a share of the money raised.

Denise Burford, who had secured a place in the 2025 London Marathon through the ballot, raised money for us and another charity (Family Rights Group). The funds raised were spread over two financial years, so in this financial year £594.76 was banked.

Our total funds raised for the financial year was £24,859. This was our highest income to date for a financial year.

Expenditure

We spent a total of £19,606, which was very similar to last financial year. The charity has quite low overheads. The main expenditure is the Charity Manager wage (£15,490), followed by rental costs (£2,456) and IT expenses (£622 - website platform, domain, email addresses). A complete breakdown of all costs can be seen in our budget breakdown.

Summary

Renting out a storage has been a game changer, with less time wasted going between different locations to clean, sort and distribute shoes. We can meet group organisers at the storage space and they can take what they need for their beneficiaries, saving us time packing up and delivering shoes

With a permanent base to run our Pop Up Sessions, it has meant beneficiaries can come and visit us and look at the different range of shoes we have. This gives people an element of choice, which is an important factor for those who are often given things they have no say in.

Having a permanent base has also meant that more beneficiaries have discovered the charity. Our location next to Grovehill Adventure Playground, puts us in the right area for those that need us the most.

Our main focus moving in to FY25/26 is how to ensure the charity is sustainable from a funding point of view. We need to look at multiple funding streams - business sponsorship, merchandise, grants, fundraising events - to ensure we the charity is financially viable in to the future.

Report prepared by
Fiona Foulkes
Charity Manager and Founder
One Impossible Thing

Financial year from 1st April 2025 - 31st March 2026	
	Revenue
Our events	
Quiz Night	£501.64
Supporter led events	
The Giving Lottery	£47.20
The Patch Pub Quiz	£186.00
Rotary Santa Sleigh	£320.00
Boxmoor Virtual Marathon	£69.42
Denise London Marathon	£594.76
Lindsey Apple Juice Sales	£24.00
General Donations	£116.25
Community Donations	
High Sherrif Awards	£2,100.00
Grants	
HCF	£2,400.00
National Lottery	£18,000.00
National Philanthropic Trust UK	£500.00
TOTAL	**£24,859.27**

	Costs
Recycling baskets/bins	£113.39
Membership fees	£40.00
Marketing	£247.83
Cleaning and shoe repairs	£60.69
IT	£622.57
Stationery and postage	£70.16
Bank fees	£11.68
Fundraising costs	£48.20
Insurance	£144.14
Salary - Manager	£15,490.00
Rent and utilities	£2,456.00
Petrol reimbursements	£137.69
Volunteer expenses	£164.17
TOTAL	**£19,606.52**